

**KEYNOTE SPEECH OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL**

**NATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**(NITDA)**

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**AT THE VIRTUAL EVENT OF**

**9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SUMMIT OF THE AFRICA ICT ALLIANCE (AFICTA)**

**THEMES:**

**ACCELERATED DIGITALIZATION FOR ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN  
AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES**

**8<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

*All protocol duly respected.*

*May the peace and mercy of the Almighty be with you all*

1. I am very grateful and delighted to be invited to this important summit, a summit which focuses on the need for an accelerated digitalization for economic revolution in Africa. This summit is very apt and timely, considering the need for Africa to increase its sources of foreign exchange earnings and develop its economy by taking advantage of digital technologies. Digital technologies present an opportunity for Africa to partake as a front seat driver in the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution. It also presents an opportunity for Africa to diversify and further boost its economy. Therefore, it is imperative for African leaders to engender, promote, accelerate, and sustain development through digitalization of the economy by adopting digital technologies. Adoption of digital technologies may help increase GDP in a country, however, development of digital technologies may further help a country diversify its exports, thus increasing its sources of foreign exchange earnings.

2. Nigeria is regarded as Africa's largest ICT market with 82% of the continent's telecoms subscribers and 29% of internet usage. Sub-Saharan Africa is also projected to be the fastest growing region with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.6% and an additional subscriber enrollment of over 167 million in the next five years. Nigeria is expected to account for over 55% of this. The NCC estimates that the country has 192 million subscribers as of October 2021, representing 100.6 % teledensity. Another country of interest in Africa is Rwanda who as at 2019 has ICT constituting 16.02% of its total exports. This same country had petroleum product constituting 46.52% of its total export as at 2002. This is a very good sign that some African countries are already taking advantage of digital

technologies as a source of development and wealth for their countries, therefore all other countries in Africa should follow suit by promoting and engaging in digital transformation.

3. Implementing a nationwide digital transformation is not a straightforward venture. It is plagued with intricacies, risks, and other encumbrances. Therefore, African leaders must champion digitalization by first showing commitment and willingness to engender and support the culture of digitalization. This commitment can be shown in terms of genuine commitment, continuous public pronouncements, funding, creation of developmental policies, roadmap, strategies, awareness and sensitization, deployment of infrastructure, industry collaboration, and creation of an enabling environment for organizations to contribute to digitalization. Government must have a policy statement that focuses on achieving a digital economy which is supported by a realistic and actionable strategy. The strategy must identify important pillars to support the achievement of its goals and objectives, and each pillar must have initiatives with projects and programmes that implement digitalization at a granular level. The NDEPS policy document by Federal Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy of Nigeria has presented strategic pillars necessary for nation's digitalization drive. These pillars include development regulation, digital literacy and skills, solid infrastructure, service infrastructure, digital services development and promotion, soft infrastructure, digital society and emerging technologies, and indigenous content development and adoption. These 8 strategic pillars were further broken down into Strategy document by Agencies under the Ministry for implementation.

For example, NITDA has developed a Strategic Roadmap and Action Plan (SRAP) towards implementation of the NDEPS. There are various initiatives of projects and programs designed to give effect to the SRAP document.

Other sister Agencies under the ministry have also done their strategic initiatives as well.

4. Accelerating the digitalization of the economy of any nation is not a responsibility of government alone. There is the strong need for any serious government to make deliberate effort to identify relevant entities that can be instrumental to the achievement of a national digitalization and engaged them on a continuous basis. These entities should also include countries that have achieved a significant level of digitalization. So, this effort put in place by AfICTA is a step in the right direction and Africa as a continent should be proud of AfICTA. NITDA as the regulator of the IT sector is always ready to support deliberate actions or initiatives that can accelerate the achievement of meaningful digital economy for Africa. I therefore challenge all participants in this summit to provide useful and actionable information and strategies that can help Africa accelerate the achievement of an effective digital economy.

4. Finally, I urge AfICTA to be guided by the popular saying that "What cannot be measured, it cannot be achieved". This underscore the need to put in place a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that all efforts and initiatives are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. This will also serve as a basis for the continual improvement of digitalization efforts.

I wish you all a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you very much.