

**COMMONWEALTH ICT MINISTERS FORUM 2016, 14 - 16 JUNE  
2016, LONDON, UK**

**DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE ADEBAYO SHITTU,  
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS OF NIGERIA AND OUTGOING  
CHAIR OF THE COMMONWEALTH ICT MINISTERS FORUM**

**CLOSED-DOOR MEETING, 14 JUNE 2016**

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat,  
The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications  
Organisation,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A little more than two years ago, in March 2014, Nigeria had the honour to chair the first **Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum**, here in this very building. Prior to that, in September 2013, we hosted a preparatory ministerial meeting in our capital city Abuja, which was instrumental in helping us take full stock of the importance of this meeting. So Nigeria has a special attachment to this Forum.

Looking back, I have to say that our previous discussions had succeeded in bringing to the surface issues that had not yet been given full consideration in many of our countries: the importance of universal and

affordable broadband access; the need for implementing cyber governance frameworks and tackle cybercrime to make the Internet safer for all; technology applications in sectors such as education; or our even collective voice as a group of nations on international information and communications technology issues. And as we make progress in implementing previous resolutions to these issues, new ones continue to surface. Above all, we have a new global development agenda to fulfil by 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals.

So let us keep in mind that in practice, discussions like these must lead to practical change. They help create the political momentum for positive change, and in the case of information and communications technology, especially mobile technology it is the one area of development and social inclusion that is being most felt in our countries.

Indeed, after some 20 years, the information revolution carries on; for instance, many of you would have learned of Nigeria's last presidential elections and our successful use of a biometric voting system, thanks in significant part to communications networks, putting resolutely into history decades of logistically challenging, almost ever contested and nation-ripping elections.

For my country, this is tangible proof of how we can leapfrog challenges and achieve desirable results with the right use of technology. More importantly, this is just one of many examples of how technology can bring a nation together, and the same can be applied to health and education and many other areas of public life. If we think more carefully

about such changes, we have to recognise that we owe them not just to technology itself, but to our commitment to applying technology to our national development goals, and I am sure that similar results are being achieved by all countries represented here today.

Thanks to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, it is because of fora such as this one that we catch up in some areas and stay ahead in others. So I am in no doubt that each one of us has something to contribute here today, and most likely many lessons to learn from others. And as we do share views, not only would we help give our peoples a place in the information age, we will also speak increasingly as one on international issues.

Once again, Nigeria is grateful for the privilege to have chaired the previous Forum, and we wish you a successful **Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum 2016**.

Thank you.