Statement

by

H.E. Ambassador Bagudu Hirse

at the

Debate of the Second Committee on Information and Communication Technologies for Development

New York 21 October, 2013

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria welcomes the opportunity to deliberate on Agenda item 16: Information and Communication Technologies for Development and commends the efforts of the Secretary-General for putting together a detailed report on this agenda item. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representatives of Fiji and Ethiopia on behalf of the G77 and China, and the African Group respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria welcomes positive trends in connectivity and affordability, including increased Internet access, rapid diffusion of mobile communications and development of new services and applications. We believe that information and communication technologies hold tremendous potential for poverty eradication and socio-economic advancement of developing countries. Also, it has contributed immensely to globalization by bridging the technological divide between developing and developed countries.

We are particularly happy to note that African countries have continued to make progress in access to ICTs and their application as veritable tools for development. More specifically, the continent has witnessed growth in investment in international and national broadband infrastructure, improved connectivity, increased bandwidth and services including e-governance and development applications. Ownership of mobile telephones and internet accessibility have grown rapidly, while some countries within the continent are positioning themselves to export ICT goods and services.
However, Nigeria believes that broadband deployment in Africa has not kept pace with other regions. We therefore express deep concerns about the continuing gap in digital and broadband access between developing and developed countries, and the potential adverse impact of difficult economic circumstances on ICT investment and diffusion. Nigeria believes unless concerted efforts are directed towards redressing the digital divide, many Africans may miss economic opportunities that depend on high-quality communications.

Mr. Chairman

Nigeria stresses that, for developing countries to benefit maximally from information and communication technologies, greater emphasis should be placed on reducing the cost of such technologies, including the cost of broadband connectivity and on capacity building for greater use and application in the developing countries. Also, we call for an upgrade of the quality and quantity of telecommunication infrastructure in developing countries as a way of maximizing the dividends of ICT.

In recognition of the transformative power of ICT in national socio-economic development, the Government of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan has provided ICT infrastructure to galvanize job creation and enhance business productivity and growth and generate wealth creation. Furthermore, the Government is developing the local ICT industry to deliver on its promises to critical sectors as Housing, Transportation, Water supply, Health, Agriculture, Education, Banking and Research.

Nigeria welcomes the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information System (WSIS+10) begun by the United Nations and international agencies which will be completed in 2015, alongside the
review of the Millennium Development Goals. Nigeria stresses that the reviews should take due cognizance of the progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS at the regional and international levels as well as identified obstacles and constraints encountered.

Mr. Chairman,

We also commend the United Nations system for their active engagement in the promotion of the use of ICT for security, knowledge propagation and providing opportunities for economic development. Nigeria believes that ICTs are critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare. We stress that many innovations in the sector have had profound impacts on the ways in which governments deliver services, businesses relate to consumers, and citizens participation in public and private life. Thus, we support its consideration in the global discourse on the post-2015 development agenda.

We also stress the need for improved capacity-building in policy and regulation including more systematic data gathering and analysis to promote developmental outcomes.

I thank you