

SPECIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. OLUSOLA SARAKI, EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, KWARA STATE & CHAIRMAN, NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM TO THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM ON NICEP ORGANIZED BY GALAXY BACKBONE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL & NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM

PROTOCOL

It is indeed gratifying to note that practical, seeing practical steps are being taken to forge a greater harmony between the Federal and State Governments in the application of ICT to the critical spheres of development, of our great country.

This workshop is taking place today following the decision of the National Economic Council and the Nigeria Governors' Forum after the impressive presentation by Galaxy Backbone on how State Governments can effectively leverage National Information, Communication and Education Programme (NICEP) to build their own State Information Infrastructures.

NICEP is an ICT initiative of the Federal Government for the accelerated provision of connectivity for broadband internet, data, voice and video communications to rural areas and under-served communities including health and educational institutions at state levels. I am reliably informed that more than one thousand locations have already been connected across the country. This is highly commendable.

This current political dispensation is committed to efficient and transparent governance for which ICT is a quick and an effective enabler. No doubt, this is a remarkable shift from the norm – that is – business as usual, with its attendant negative impacts on our people.

I am confident that the various developmental initiatives such as in education, health, agriculture and economic empowerment being undertaken by all the states of the Federation can be accelerated by the application of appropriate ICT tools. To this end, we (State Governments) need to constructively engage and/or partner with Galaxy Backbone Plc to replicate this lofty ICT initiative in our respect states.

The proposed network, in addition to providing internet access, the network is capable of supporting ICT based solutions targeted at universal access, health, education, poverty alleviation, wealth creation, as well as those focused on enhancing public sector efficiency. With so

many public services going online e.g. JAMB, NECO registration and recruitment into some government agencies, the need to provide access to people in rural areas becomes imperative.

These engagements and/or partnerships will facilitate the delivery of the benefits of ICT to the underserved areas or grass roots by December 2009.

I urge all the participants from the states to take full advantage and benefits of this workshop so that Federal Government initiative in this direction can be fully realised.

Thank you.