



**WELCOME SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN  
NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION DR. EUGENE  
JUWAH AT THE FIRST WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON  
ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS (EMF) EXPOSURE AND HEALTH  
VICTORIA CROWN PLAZA HOTEL, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS  
27<sup>TH</sup> - 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2012.**

## **PROTOCOLS**

The growth of Telecommunications sector in Nigeria has been phenomenal, and in the last 10 years, following the liberalization of the sector, we have witnessed tremendous transformation leading to the achievement of over 70% tele-density as at the first quarter of 2012.

Even as this growth is still continuing, we are faced with various challenges that are not limited to, but occasioned by, the presence of telecommunications facilities around us.

There has been a steady increase in public concerns pertaining to the possible effects of Electromagnetic (EMF) radiations emanating from telecommunication equipment / infrastructure on human health.

It is in line with these concerns and the commitment of the NCC to public safety and the general well-being of phone users that this International Conference is organized.

The forum will hold discussions on the possible harmful effect that mobile phones could pose to users.

You will agree with me that the conference couldn't have come at a better time than now. Discussions on the level of risk and exposure of people leaving around the vicinity of base stations will undoubtedly be of interest to all.

I therefore welcome you all and call on you to let the best of your expertise prevail as you deliberate over the next two days.

Telecommunications have become an integral part of our life; providing services that range from phone connection, entertainment, information and learning over a broad range of media.

This wireless technology relies upon an extensive network of fixed antennas, or base stations, relaying information via radio frequency waves or signals that travel at the speed of light. A part from telecommunication base station facilities, broadcast towers, radar facilities and even domestic electrical and electronic home appliance such as microwave ovens, television, radio and even remote controls also act as sources of radio frequency emissions.

No doubt, our country has made significant progress in the provision of telecommunication services over the last ten (10) years. This has also placed a burden on the operators to ensure wider access and guarantee an acceptable quality of service through the deployment of critical telecommunication infrastructure. The telecommunication companies need to install masts and towers across the country to ensure adequate coverage and access to consumers.

It is important to note the following points as it affects masts, towers and health concerns:-

1. That in Nigeria, we have only about 20,000 masts and towers while Britain, a country with a lesser population to ours have about 60,000 in urban areas alone.
2. In most developed countries, BTS are mounted on the roof tops because of the preponderance of high-rise buildings which are not enough in Nigeria.
3. That the installation of masts and towers are essential to provide access, coverage and acceptable Quality of telecommunication services.
4. There have been public concerns about possible health consequences from exposure to the RF fields produced by wireless technologies.
5. However, it should be noted that people are often misled to think that electromagnetic emissions from telecommunication facilities is the same as or similar to Nuclear and radioactive radiations.
6. Several reasons for these public fears include media announcements of new and unconfirmed scientific studies, leading to a feeling of uncertainty and a perception that there may be unknown or undiscovered hazards.

It is the responsibility of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to ensure that there are guidelines and regulations governing all aspects of telecommunications service provision, including the installation of masts / towers and radio frequency exposure limits.

For example, in 2009, the Commission published its Guideline on the Technical Specifications for the Installation of Masts and Towers which operators must adhere to. This is to protect the interest (in safety concerns) of the general public and safety of personnel working in the industry.

Non-compliance with the mandatory provisions of these guidelines shall be deemed to be an offence punishable under relevant provisions of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003; the Nigerian Communications (Enforcement Processes,) Regulations 2005 and other applicable laws.

The siting of masts and towers shall take cognizance of provisions of the Act and be guided by provisions of the Collocation and Infrastructure Sharing Guidelines of the Commission in such a way as to minimize their number, protect and promote public safety, and mitigate adverse visual impacts on the community.

On the issue of EMF radiations, however, minimal studies have been conducted worldwide and minimal platforms have been provided for the region to debate on possibility of mobile communication having adverse impact on human health. Relevant international bodies are continually monitoring research findings on the field of EMF exposure and its effects on human health.

I am glad to inform you that this conference, which is the first of its kind in West Africa, is one of the efforts of the NCC to bring together experts from all over the world, to deliberate

and exchange knowledge on current findings in this all important field of EMF exposure and health.

It is hoped that the Conference will provide a platform for policy makers, regulators, legislators, operators, mobile equipment manufacturers, consumer groups and other stakeholders to raise the level of understanding about potential adverse health effects of mobile communications facilities. The Conference will also debate on whether there is need for NCC, ECOWAS / WATRA member states to consider harmonizing the EMF Policies, EMF Exposure Limits and Communication regarding EMF Exposure.

Thank you.

**DR. EUGENE JUWAH  
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN  
NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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