

Communique

A Communique Issued At The Nigeria E-Government Summit 2024, Which Held On Friday, September 20, At The Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The sixth edition of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2024 was held on Friday, September 20 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, with full representation of attendees that cut across government, industry service providers, stakeholders and the media.

The summit, which was slated to last from 8am to 5pm, eventually started by 8am but stretched beyond 5pm because of its loaded activities.

The summit commenced with registration and visit to exhibition stands, recognition of special guests and speakers, and the recitation of the national anthem.

The Executive Chairman, DigiServe Network Services and convener of the eGovernment Summit, Engr. Lanre Ajayi, opened the floor with his welcome address.

This was followed by several goodwill messages and three keynote addresses, as well as an interactive session by all the keynote speakers and those that delivered goodwill messages. The interactive session set the tone of discussion at the summit, which ushered in six powerful panel sessions that discussed various sub-themes that were built around the main theme of the summit.

The eGovernment Summit had 65 distinguished professionals as speakers lined up for the summit, and among them were panelists that discussed several topics built around the theme: ‘Transforming Governance with Technology for Improved Economy’.

The Nigeria eGovernment Summit is an annual programme, designed to bring together, government and technology services providers, including the citizens who are the beneficiaries of technology services, to discuss the importance of leveraging emerging technologies that will enhance government services that are delivered to the citizens.

Objectives Of The Nigeria eGovernment Summit

The objectives of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2024 are as follows:

1. To set agenda for the federal and state governments on the adoption of technology for service delivery.
2. To encourage government at all levels to drive their service delivery with technology.

3. To propose to governments, solutions and strategies required for effective deployment of eGovernment services.
4. To make governance easily accessible and productive.
5. Offer recommendations on policies that will drive government processes and make them beneficial to the citizens.
6. Design strategies for implementing eGovernment processes.
7. Build a mutual beneficial relationship between government and technology services providers that will positively impact on citizens and the Nigerian economy.
8. To encourage collaboration between government and technology services providers.
9. To grow capacity building and boost local content development through the use of technologies.
10. To expose government and participants to emerging technologies that will enhance the financial inclusion drive of the federal government.

Observations

The panelists acknowledged the importance of technology in governance, but observed that only few states are leveraging emerging technologies in providing services to the citizens.

The speakers and panelists commended the federal government for signing into law, the Critical National Infrastructure and Information (CNII) Bill, but emphasized the need for full implementation of the Act, in order to truly protect telecoms infrastructure from willful damage.

They also observed the low awareness created by government in their efforts to sensitize the citizens about the benefits of e-governance, insisting that the annual Nigeria eGovernment Summit, organised by DigiServe Network Services Limited, should be a proper channel to sensitize the citizens on e-governance.

They panelists and speakers also decried the various data that are sitting in silos, and called on National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) to expedite action in harmonizing the entire database of the country that are in silos, into a single database for easy access.

They also frowned at the low rating of Nigeria by international organizations and called on Nigerian government to adopt international best practices from countries like Estonia, India, and Sweden that have leveraged technology in providing public services to their citizens.

The panelists also observed that most government agencies were still slow to technology adoption and decried the situation where government agencies do not

use the .ng domain name for their official emails and websites, which is Nigeria's identity in the cyberspace.

Recommendations

Some of the recommendations from the summit include:

1. Government must take proactive steps towards using technology to promote innovation, and to boost economy.
2. There should be increased interface and collaboration between government and the private sector.
3. Technology adoption in governance will eliminate inefficiency and promote economic growth, making government to become more transparent, more accessible, more reliable, and more credible.
4. Technology adoption in governance is a necessity for advancing development and building trust among the citizens.
5. When government takes proactive steps towards promoting innovation, there will be economic boom that will further drive healthy competition among industry players.
6. Government agencies must embrace technology and ensure that all government websites are hosted on the .ng domain name, which is Nigeria's identity in the cyberspace.
7. Government must not only adopt technology, but must also champion technology innovation among all government parastatals.
8. Government must digitize its processes, in order to minimize opportunities for corruption, improve transparency and build trust between government and the people.
9. Nigeria needs to learn from countries like Estonia and Korea that have done very well in e-governance.
10. Government agencies need to collaborate in order to provide better services to the people.
11. Government must work together to expand and protect the network infrastructure in their various states.
12. To enhance economic growth and job creation, the right infrastructure must be put in place to drive connectivity.
13. The summit commended the federal government for signing into law, the Critical National Infrastructure and Information (CNII) Bill and called for full implementation of the CNII Act.
14. There must be a balance between regulation, obligation, and levies in order to help bridge the rural, urban, and e-government initiative.

15. Nigeria needs to build satellites to enable all Nigerians have access to digital services provided by government.
16. There should be more citizen participation and engagement through various channels to sensitize Nigerians of the various benefits of e-Government.
17. The summit stressed the need for systems interoperability and data sharing, that would enable data-driven decision-making, especially in urban planning and healthcare development.
18. Although the summit hinted on the need to adopt best practices from developed countries of the world, it however cautioned that adopting best practices of other countries without first analyzing Nigeria's local expectations, needs and challenges, could lead to colossal failure.
19. Government should prioritize education and agriculture by using technology to provide access to education and food for all citizens.
20. Government should use technology to reduce the rate of infant mortality among children, since 2,000 infants die daily, according to global statistics.
21. Nigeria must co-create and collaborate with government to drive digital evolution.
22. Nigeria needs data infrastructure to unlock emerging technologies.
23. Government should establish synergies across the cybersecurity ecosystem and also invest in the people, the institution and the ecosystem.
24. Government must promote national and regional cooperation to drive essential digital services to the citizens.
25. Nigerians must learn to protect critical national infrastructure located in their various domains.

The Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2024, attracted large number of participants who were captivated by the different panel discussions, to stay till the end of the summit, despite the fact that the summit stretched beyond the scheduled 5pm closing time.

In closing Engr. Lanre Ajayi thanked all the participants for their valid contributions and promised to work with their feedbacks. He announced that the next Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2025 would hold on Tuesday August 5 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The communique was put together by **Emma Okonji**, ICT Editor, THISDAY Newspapers, in collaboration with DigiServe Network Services.

