

ICPC INVESTIGATES NBC, DSO :

STATEMENT BY PINNACLE COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED

The Management of Pinnacle Communications Limited is constrained to issue this statement as a matter of record in response to the flurry of news reports in the media on Thursday evening copiously quoting a statement allegedly attributed to the spokesperson of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Rasheedat Okoduwa disclosing that the Commission was investigating the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission over the *“misapplication of N2.5 billion seed grant released to the agency by the federal government for its digital switch-over programme” for which the Commission has so far quizzed the Director General, Dr. Ishaq Moddibbo Kawu, and other top management staff of the agency over their alleged involvements in the misapplication of the fund”*.

In view of the references made to Pinnacle Communications Limited in connection with the investigation and the necessity of providing the correct account of the involvement of Pinnacle Communications Limited in the issues raised, which were deliberately omitted and/or distorted in the ICPC spokesperson’s alleged statement as widely reported in the media, we hereby state as follows:

1. Pinnacle Communications Limited is the only private licensed signal distributor for the Federal Government approved implementation of the Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting in Nigeria in accordance with the 2012 Government White Paper section 11.2 (a) which approved that “more than one signal distributor be licensed in addition to NTA, the public licensed signal distributor. Another signal distributor should be licensed immediately.”
2. In the year 2014, Pinnacle Communications Limited emerged successful bidder out of 9 companies after a rigorous public tender and full compliance with due process. Pinnacle Communications was licensed following payment of the stipulated license fees to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), NOT NIGERIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION as stated in the alleged press release of ICPC spokesperson.
3. Since then, Pinnacle Communications Limited has been a major facilitator of the Digital Switch Over (DSO) implementation process in Nigeria, notably as the broadcast signal distributor for the National Launch of the DSO in Abuja in 2016 at its state-of-the-art Broadcast Centre on Mpape Hill, performed by His Excellency, Yemi Osinbajo,

Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Company was also responsible for the Kaduna Digital Broadcast Signal Distribution Centre commissioned in 2017 by the Kaduna State Governor, His Excellency, Nasir Ahmed El-Rufai.

4. This factual background to the involvement of Pinnacle Communications Limited in the DSO project in Nigeria is contrary to the alleged statements attributed to the ICPC spokesperson that the company was "fraudulently recommended to the Minister of Information and Culture for the release of N2.5 billion against the guidelines contained in the White Paper" and further reference to Pinnacle Communications as "an unqualified company." The 2014 licensing of Pinnacle Communications in the DSO predates the appointment of the current DG of NBC in 2016.

5. The DSO is all about the transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT).

Broadcast Engineering is a field in which Pinnacle Communications Limited has earned recognition and patronage for more than two decades of expertise and dependability of world class service and installations across Nigeria.

6. Neither the DSO nor Pinnacle Communications Limited has anything to do with "*migration of telephone lines from analogue to digital platforms*" as the ICPC spokesperson is alleged to have stated.

7. Pinnacle Communications maintain that the facts and clarifications provided above sufficiently define the context and extent of its involvement in the implementation of the DSO program in Nigeria and the nature of its working relationship with the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC).

8. While noting that the ICPC spokesperson allegedly stated that the Commission was investigating "*misapplication of N2.5 billion seed grant released to the agency (NBC) by the federal government for its digital switch-over programme*" we wish to clearly emphasize that Pinnacle Communications Limited has not and cannot as a licensee of NBC trespass into the statutory functions of the NBC and/or the Federal Ministry of Information on the implementation of the DSO program.

9. To this extent therefore, all transactions between NBC and Pinnacle Communications have always been transparent and within the official approved operational guidelines and regulations as processed and executed by the NBC and in compliance with the terms and conditions of the license for signal distribution that Pinnacle Communications duly obtained.

10. Having made all the necessary statements in response to the ICPC's investigations and taking cognisance of the pendency of Suit No FHC/ABJ/CS/779/2018 that Pinnacle Communications instituted in July 2018 in the Federal High Court, Abuja on a related matter against ICPC and 2 others, (NOT RELATED TO STOPPING ANY INVESTIGATION

BY ICPC) Pinnacle Communications considers it unprofessional, ill-advised, injudicious, prejudicial and unfair for the ICPC spokesperson to make as alleged random references to disjointed portions of comprehensive submissions to its investigators, clearly skewed to portray Pinnacle Communications Limited as complicit in the alleged or any "misapplication" of funds by the NBC, over which Pinnacle Communications have no responsibility or control. Pinnacle Communications challenges the ICPC spokesperson, if the alleged press release was indeed made by her, to publish the full statements made to the ICPC by Pinnacle officials.

11. Moreover, if truly made, the ICPC statement went beyond mere announcement of on-going investigations into the realm of unsubstantiated incriminations in the fashion of trial-by-media that invariably paints a premature and amateur picture of guilt, prior to judicial determination.

12. In the circumstance, Pinnacle Communications Limited shall refrain from further clarification of the muddled statement allegedly issued by the ICPC spokesperson in its firm belief that judicial process will provide the appropriate and fair opportunity to comprehensively and decisively prove its hard-earned reputation as a world class company that, unlike the ICPC spokesperson, upholds integrity, ethics and legality in all its transactions, in accordance with international best practices.

13. Pinnacle Communications wishes to assure NBC, stakeholders in the DSO, its staff, international and local business associates and numerous clients that it remains committed to meeting all its obligations notwithstanding the malicious statement by the ICPC spokesperson.

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COO

PINNACLE COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED