

Stakeholders’ Summit on Reform of the Broadcasting Legislative and Regulatory Framework in Nigeria

Held on Tuesday, July 8 and Wednesday, July 9, 2025

At BON Hotel Octagon, Abuja

Communique

Introduction

Stakeholders in the broadcasting industry, including officials of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), broadcasters and broadcast administrators, representatives of civil society organizations, legal practitioners, media scholars and academics, and other experts, held a two-day Stakeholders’ Summit on Reform of the Broadcasting Legislative and Regulatory Framework in Nigeria in Abuja on July 8 and 9, 2025.

The event was organized by the Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO) with funding support from the European Union under the EU-Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN), Component 4 – Support to Media. The theme of the Summit was “Advancing the Agenda of Broadcasting Reform to Re-energise Democracy”.

The event began with a short opening ceremony with welcome remarks by the Executive Director of CEMESO, Dr. Akin Akingbulu and the Executive Director of the International Press Center (IPC), Mr. Lanre Arogundade, an EU-SDGN project partner.

The Summit also received goodwill messages from the Director-General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Mr. Charles Ebuebu; the Director-General of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Dr. Mohammed Bulama; the President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Mallam Alhassan Yahya; the Executive Secretary of the Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (BON), Dr. Yemisi Bamgbose, and the first National Vice President of the Society of Nigerian Broadcasters (SNB), Mrs. Christabel Iyanya.

Professor Umaru Pate, the Vice Chancellor of the Federal University, Kashere in Gombe State and a media scholar, presented Expert Reflections with Some Thoughts on Salient Issues Awaiting Reforms in the Nigerian Broadcasting Sector in a keynote address titled “Changing Dynamics in the Broadcasting Sector”.

Prof Pate noted that the Nigerian broadcasting sector faces critical reform needs, driven by the digital revolution and evolving information landscape. Key issues awaiting reform include addressing funding and technology gaps, improving content quality and credibility through stringent fact-checking and adherence to professional codes, and reforming existing laws to facilitate the sector's transition. Additionally, there is a pressing need to foster greater independence for broadcasters to investigate public officials, promote media literacy, encourage collaboration

among professionals, and embrace innovation to adapt business models and ensure the industry's reach, revenue, relevance, reputation, and resilience.

Summit Sessions

The summit, which hosted both physical and virtual participants, featured six sessions, with panel discussions from participants across board as follows:

Panel 1: The NBC Act Review Bills (Part 1)

Panel 2: The NBC Act Review Bills (Part 11)

Panel 3: Conversation on Memorandum on the Broadcasting Regulatory Framework (Part 1)

Panel 4: Conversation on Memorandum on the Broadcasting Regulatory Framework (Part 11)

Panel 5: Issues in the Transformation of State to Public Broadcasters (Part 1)

Panel 6: Issues in the Transformation of State to Public Broadcasters (Part 11)

Resolutions

Following the presentations and discussions on the six sessions listed above, participants resolved as follows:

1. That there should be a harmonization of all relevant Bills relating to broadcasting and the regulation of the sector, which are pending before the respective chambers of the National Assembly. The NBC should also present its proposals for reform to stakeholders for their input to ensure synergy within the industry during the advocacy process as well as smooth passage and implementation.
2. The NBC Review Bills should, among other things, strengthen the institutional independence and effectiveness of the NBC by empowering the Commission to be the final authority for the issuance and revocation broadcast licenses, as the case may be, with transparent administrative procedures and subject to judicial review.
3. The appointment of the Board and Director General should be subject to confirmation by the Senate of the National Assembly to enhance the legitimacy and independence of the Commission. In addition, Board members and the Director-General may only be removed from office before the expiration of their terms for inability to discharge the functions of their respective offices as a result of infirmity of mind or body or for misconduct and upon confirmation by two-thirds majority of the members of the Senate.

4. Stakeholders should undertake sustained advocacy to ensure the passage of the Review Bills as well as an amendment of section 39 of the 1999 constitution to confer full powers on the Commission to grant broadcast licences to deserving applicants. In the interim, the President should be requested to delegate executive power to grant licence to the Commission.
5. There is a need to enhance procedural safeguards in the complaints resolution and sanctions processes of the NBC by establishing an independent Broadcasting Tribunal, headed by a retired High Court judge, to adjudicate allegations of infractions of the NBC Act, the Nigeria Broadcasting Code and other relevant extant laws by broadcast stations.
6. Public service broadcasting is broadcasting that is funded and controlled by the public, free from political and commercial interference. Government-owned broadcasters at federal and state levels should therefore be transformed into genuine public service broadcasters to provide critical public service information. To achieve this, the various laws establishing the different government owned broadcasters should be amended or repealed and re-enacted to reflect this role. In addition to the allocation of public funds for their operations, other sources of funding should be explored to enable them function independently and effectively as public service broadcasters.
7. Funding is a major challenge which has led to a reduction in broadcast hours and outright closure of some broadcast stations. The regulator should lead the industry to urgently explore alternative sources of funding for the broadcast industry, including undertaking a review of the administration of the Digital Access Fee and the establishment of a Broadcast Media Trust Fund.
8. Stakeholders should advocate for a constitutional amendment to review the role given to Local Government Councils to collect rates for the ownership of radio and television sets in homes, and require Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), to remit the amounts collected to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) for the purpose of funding the broadcast industry.
9. The Bill seeking repeal and reenactment of the NBC Act should clarify and define the scope of online content regulation. For online regulation to be effective and accepted by all industry stakeholders, all aspects of the issue, including the legislative framework, the making of appropriate regulations, the protection of digital and data rights, the development of human and material capacity and resources, among others, must be addressed.
10. Stakeholders should advocate for the strengthening of the financial autonomy of the regulator as well as ensuring that it has adequate funding to perform its functions by pushing for the NBC to be on a first-line charge to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
11. The Federal Government should expedite action on the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting (digital switchover) while the emerging legal framework should take into

consideration the impact of emerging technologies, and ensuring compliance with the directives of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

12. Expand the reach of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and Voice of Nigeria (VON), through digital platforms, satellite broadcasting and other technologies to ensure accessibility across Nigeria and outside the country.
13. To improve transparency and accountability, the NBC should regularly publicize information relevant to the broadcast industry, including lists of defaulters, sanctions applied, latest trends and developments in the industry, among others, through all its communication channels.

Conclusion

Stakeholders expressed gratitude to CEMESO for organizing the summit and to the European Union for providing funding support for the event and other media-development activities. They also expressed appreciation for the commitment demonstrated by the NBC Director-General, Mr. Charles Ebuebu; the Director-General of the FRCN, Dr. Mohammed Bulama; NUJ President, Mallam Alhassan Yahya; the Executive Secretary of BON, Dr. Yemisi Bamgbose, and Prof. Umaru Pate, Vice Chancellor of the Federal University, Kashere, by participating throughout both days of the summit and enriching the discussions with their knowledge, insights and experience.

Signed:



Dr. Akin Akingbulu
Executive Director, Centre for Media and Society

Adopted this 9th Day of July, 2025