

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
FEDERATION, ALHAJI AHMED YAYALE, CFR, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL SPACE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
(NASRDA), 23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2009.**

**Honourable Minister of Science and Technology**

**Gentlemen of the Press**

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me first congratulate the National Space Research and Development Agency through the supervising Minister, for ten years of activities and service to the nation. When this Agency was established in 1999, the Federal Executive Council envisaged that the Agency would enable Nigeria build indigenous competence in space science and technology as an essential tool for harnessing space-based information for the socio-economic development of the country. On this, I believe the Agency is on the right course.

Government is at all times guided by the need to provide the enabling environment for the socio-economic development of the country. In so doing, government is guided by the ability of such investments, to advance the well being of its people. When NASRDA was established, government's objective was to put Nigeria among space-faring nations to harness the benefits of space technology for the sustainable development of the country. Today there is proven evidence that space science and technology can provide invaluable solutions to agricultural development, water resources management, security, disaster mitigation, tele-education, health services delivery in the rural areas through tele-medicine, and other critical services. The nexus between the wide range of applications of space technology and this Administration's Seven-Point Agenda has further encouraged government to support all programmes and projects that will contribute to the realization of the Agenda.

As you are well aware, there is a wide gap between government's desired programmes and available resources. Our wants are endless but our resources are limited. It is for this reason that Heads of Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government must find new and innovative ways of executing their mandates with optimum resources. Government is well aware that no nation can develop without innovative technology. The development of space

infrastructure is capital intensive but government is committed to the development of space science and technology which it believed will contribute immensely towards the achievement of our Millennium Development Goals and ultimately, to our Vision 20: 2020.

I know, as you also know that it is not free to develop a Nigerian-made satellite, it is not free to put an astronaut in space neither is it free to produce and launch our own rocket. Therefore, government's initial investment in earth observation and communication satellites is not accidental but a strategic and calculated attempt to challenge our scientists and engineers to use technology to accelerate our economic growth, well-being and development. I therefore encourage you to deploy all your human and material resources for maximum utilization because the nation expects so much from you. In support of your best efforts, Government will continue to fund all approved programmes and budget. It is in this sense that I assure you that government will ensure that the second earth observation satellite, -Nigeriasat 2-, is launched as scheduled in order to ensure continuity in service delivery.

The Almighty gave us the innate ability to rise up to any situation when we are challenged. While I commend you for the journey so far, I challenge you again to re-focus your strategies, deepen and widen your productive capacities and make breakthroughs for Nigeria. We cannot afford to be a giant of Africa by words of mouth alone, it must also be in deed and I believe you will rise up to this challenge.

Honourable Minister, the entire management and staff of NASRDA and the sister agency, the Nigerian Communications Satellite Ltd; I congratulate you.

Thank you very much.