

**Opening Speech and Official Opening by Rt. Hon. Austin Opara,  
Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the National  
Assembly of Nigeria on the Occasion of the International Workshop  
“Options for the Establishment of an Africa Knowledge Network on  
ICT, Legislation and Documentation in Parliament**

*Your Excellency Dr. Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan African Parliament,  
Your Excellency, Dr Veronica Macamo, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of  
Mozambique,*

*Clerk of the National Assembly of Nigeria,*

*Clerk of the Pan African Parliament,*

*Coordinator, Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments*

*Officials of the United Nations here present,*

*Distinguished Stakeholders, Resource Persons and Participants*

*Ladies and Gentlemen.*

On behalf of the host Parliament the National Assembly of Nigeria, It is my pleasure to declare open this first of a series of planned international organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, within the framework of the “*Strengthening the capacity of Parliaments in Africa to harness Information and Communication Technologies*” Project, the *Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments* and the *Africa interconnected-Parliaments Action Plan*.

This inaugural workshop with the theme “*Options for the establishment of an Africa Knowledge Network on ICT, Legislation and Documentation in Parliament*” aims at addressing the issues related to the formation of a

permanent continental platform to meet the need for the promotion of continuous dialogue and cooperation among all African parliamentary administrations in the areas of ICT capacity enhancement, parliamentary documentation and legislation using ICT tools.

No doubt strengthening the exchanges of information and experiences among parliamentary administrations in Africa on the use of ICT to promote parliamentary processes is not only crucial but will also serve to enhance their effectiveness in performing their constitutional functions and increase inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The existence of such knowledge networks in Europe and the United States respectively as the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation and the National Conference of State Legislatures has shown the numerous benefits derivable particularly as regards information sharing and capacity-building among participating parliaments. This workshop is therefore timely as African parliaments collaborate on ways of strengthening information management in the legislative domain.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as this important workshop explores the various options and receives the interventions of all stakeholders, it is our shared expectation that the report and recommendations of the workshop lay the foundation for the realization of the Africa Knowledge Network on ICT, Documentation and Legislation in parliaments.

The National Assembly of Nigeria is committed to supporting this important initiative towards boosting capacity in our parliaments.

On this note, I want to officially declare open the workshop and wish you fruitful deliberations and stay in Abuja.

Thank you