



A4AI ALLIANCE FOR
AFFORDABLE INTERNET

Press Release

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Alliance for Affordable Internet Names Outgoing Nigerian Cabinet Minister as New Chair

1 September 2015. The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) has today announced that Dr. Omobola Johnson, the immediate past Minister of Communication Technology of Nigeria, has joined A4AI as its Honorary Chairperson. Drawing on her 30 years of experience, Dr. Johnson will provide A4AI with strategic policy guidance and will lead high level international advocacy efforts, all designed to help the Alliance as it works to drive down unacceptably high broadband prices, and bring billions more online, fast.

A4AI is the world's broadest technology sector coalition, with over 70 diverse members. Working closely with governments, companies and civil society, the Alliance uses a blend of research, advocacy and on-the-ground engagement to create policy and regulatory change that pushes broadband prices down. In under two years, A4AI has doubled membership and started work in five countries on three continents (Dominican Republic, Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, Myanmar), meaning over 300 million people stand to benefit from the Alliance's work. A4AI's global sponsors are Google, UK DFID and USAID, and the World Wide Web Foundation serves as the secretariat. Other high-profile members include the Internet Society, MainOne, Microsoft, and UN Women.

An experienced ICT policy professional, Dr. Johnson brings to the role over 30 years of experience across both the private and public sectors. Between 2011 and 2015, she served as Nigeria's Minister of Communication Technology, where she oversaw the creation and implementation of policy to enable affordable Internet, including the development and presentation of the country's 2013-2018 National Broadband Plan. During her time as Minister, the percentage of Internet users in the [country nearly doubled from 24% \(2010\) to 43% \(2014\)](#), and Nigeria became the first African country to join A4AI in 2013. Prior to 2011, she spent over two decades at Accenture, including a five-year stint as country managing director for Nigeria. Dr. Johnson holds a DBA from Cranfield University in the UK, and from 2014 to 2015 served as the Chair of the 18th session of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

Remarking on her new role, Dr. Johnson said:

"In this era of technological innovation, it is simply unacceptable that policies and regulations still conspire to keep Internet access unaffordable for billions. Today, an entry-level mobile broadband package costs the average African over 15% of their monthly earnings, while an average European would pay just 1%. That affordability gap helps to

explain why over 80% of European households are online, compared to just 11% of African households.

“I’ve seen firsthand the incredible power of the Web to improve health, education, economic and development outcomes, particularly for women and rural populations, and I’ve also seen how smart, collaborative policymaking can drive prices down fast. Now, I’m excited to be able to use my experience and networks to accelerate the progress A4AI is already making.”

A4AI Executive Director Sonia Jorge added:

“We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Omobola Johnson to the A4AI team. A long-time advocate of universal and affordable Internet access and active supporter of the Alliance’s work since our launch in 2013, Dr. Johnson brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge in the ICT field. As Minister of Communication Technology in Nigeria, she achieved great success in developing the policy framework for the extension of broadband infrastructure, increasing competition and focusing on reaching the most marginalised, women and rural dwellers. These policy steps allowed prices to drop and more Nigerians to come online. We look forward to working together with Dr. Johnson to advance our work and goal of making affordable broadband for all a reality, and have no doubt she will make a significant contribution.”

Dr. Johnson replaces Dr. Bitange Ndemo, former Permanent Secretary of Kenya’s Ministry of Information and Communication, who served as A4AI Honorary Chair from the Alliance’s creation in October 2013 until 2014.

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About the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI):

The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is the world’s broadest technology sector coalition working to drive down the cost of Internet access in less developed countries. Comprising over 70 organisational members from across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors in both developed and developing nations, A4AI works through a blend of international advocacy and on-the-ground engagements to support policy and regulatory reforms in line with international best practices proven to help reduce industry costs and improve affordability. The [World Wide Web Foundation](#), founded by Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee, initiated the Alliance in 2013. A4AI global sponsors include Google, USAID and the UK DFID.

For more, please visit: www.a4ai.org.

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