****Nomination of President Muhammed Buhari as the Africa ICT Champions of the Year 2022.****

**The duo of President Muhammadu Buhari and Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have played pivotal role in mainstreaming ICT in the Digital Transformation of the Nigerian Economy and Government Processes.**

**They are not only the number one advocates for the use of ICTs in Nigeria but have themselves led by example by using ICTs to conduct the business of Government. Below is a partial list of their achievements in enabling a Digital Nigeria and by extension Africa.**

1. **Enabling ICT contribution to Nigeria’s GDP by 18.2% in 2022 and overall ICT values chain Contribution to the economy by 40%.**
2. **Energised series of digital economy Institutions, Laws, Policies, Regulations and mechanism to strengthen the Nigerian Digital Economy. Some of the efforts include:**
	1. **The transformation of the Ministry of Communication Technology to the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy**
	2. **The launch and implementation of the** National Digital Economy and Policy Strategy (NDEPS).
	3. Establishment of The Presidential Council on Digital Economy and e-Government with a framework for the harmonisation of digital economy, e-governmance initiatives at federal and state levels.
	4. **The creation of the Nigerian Data Protection Regulation**
	5. **The establishment of the Nigerian Data Protection Bureau**
	6. **The establishment of the Nigerian Centre for Robotics and Artificial Intelligence**
	7. **Signing to Law of the Nigerian Startup Bill 2022**
	8. **Directive to Ministries, Departments and Agencies to comply with eGovernment Masterplan.**
	9. **Establishment of 6 Tech Hubs across Nigeria**
3. Attracted more than USD32 billion to the Nigerian ICT Industry which has made the Nigerian digital economy more robust
4. Mobilization on the Use of ICTs in Africa through special intervention at the Stanford Africa Business Forum
5. Promised to build one $1 billion ICT company in 2017 but ended up building six $1 billion company by 2022. The companies are Jumia, Interswitch, Opay, Flutterwave, Andela, PiggyVest and Paystack (which has been bought by Stripe (an American company).

“What is responsible for some of these successes? Providence and good policies.” said Vice President Osinbajo.

“Providence because COVID-19 was a boom period for online payment systems.

“Policy because the president approved the establishment of a technology and creativity advisory group that helped to formulate new banking policies to accommodate new tech enabled payment systems, such that these tech companies could process payments without being full scale banks.

“The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was then able to issue new types of licences for payment processing; the Federal Government has established a N75 billion National Youth Investment Fund. This provides financial support for small businesses in any field.’’

The vice president said that CBN had also established a Creative Sector Fund for young people in entertainment or technology.

He said there was the new programme called Investing in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) programme.

According to VP Osinbajo, iDICE is an over 600 million dollars programme that will support young tech and creative sector entrepreneurs through the provision of finance, skills development and infrastructure.

He further said, “Earlier this year, the federal government partnered with the UNDP and the private sector to start a programme called the Jubilee Fellows internship programme.

“For the next five years every year 20,000 students after youth service will be given internship opportunities in private sector companies and in public agencies.

“The idea will be for the participants to gain relevant career and life skills that will enable them transition seamlessly into professional, business or public sector careers, while also earning very good pay during the internship.

“These snapshots of possibility are enough to show us that we are not facing an uncertain future without any tools at our disposal.’’

The vice president said, however, that if Nigeria was to inaugurate a new age of accelerated growth, it must adopt a new strategic direction and policy orientation.

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