

## Speech by Adedoyin Odunfa.

### MD/CEO, Digital Jewels at the Galaxy Backbone ISMS Award Ceremony

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The Honourable Minister for Communications Technology, distinguished ladies & gentlemen.

First, we give glory to God for this landmark achievement for GBB: today the very 1<sup>st</sup> public sector organization in Nigeria, the very 1<sup>st</sup> ICT company in the entire WA region to have attained accreditation to the globally reputed ISO standard for Information Security. I salute a the MD of GBB Plc, Mr. Gerald Ilukwe, a technology visionary, an idea generator, a purpose driven professional, for taking the path less travelled and staying the course. I salute management and members of the entire ISMS teams of GBB & Digital Jewels, led by the respective dynamic and focused Project Managers, I salute you, for your hard work, doggedness, focus and staying power.

I consider it a special privilege for Digital Jewels to have been selected amidst stiff competition to provide consulting support and subject-matter expertise for the end-to-end process to accredit GBB to this international standard. Over a 2year process, commencing with the conduct of the gap analysis and risk assessment, we progressed to devise an actionable roadmap and blue print to close identified gaps and attain compliance with the standard, provide project assurance and management of the remediation process, conduct a detailed mock audit and finally facilitate and shadow the final audit. We were there with, and for, the GBB every step of the way. The end result was a successful audit. At the time we at Digital Jewels started the project, GBB had a fresh mandate and needed to earn its credibility with its stakeholders: it needed to shake off the unfortunate toga of “inefficiency” often associated with public sector organizations. It needed to demonstrate its seriousness and ability to be trusted to provide a high speed secure communications platform to transmit sensitive and highly confidential data and information of the Federal Government of Nigeria and her MDA’s. This was no mean feat: a formidable challenge indeed.

We understood the challenging dilemma and proposed an equally challenging solution. At that time, GBB was our first ISMS certification client. Today, we have 2 certified clients and others in the process of certification – emerging as the leading player in the implementation of global best practice standards in Nigeria and beyond. Indeed, we are grateful to God and thank the management and staff of GBB for the opportunity and the confidence reposed in us: without doubt it’s been a great deal of hard work, sometimes tedious, sometimes tough, often painstaking, but always exciting. We would not always agree, indeed there were battles to be won and hurdles to be overcome but never did we lose sight of the goal, and overcome we did... Or we will not be here today.

I close with some thought generators:

- “Why would a public sector organisation choose to subject itself to the rigor of attaining an International standard especially when it is not a regulatory requirement?”

- “ Why would an organisation choose to go through the painstaking process of conforming with a standard that is no respecter of the 'Nigerian Factor': spend months reviewing, strengthening and documenting processes, enhancing capacity & capability, raising the stakes on the application of technology whilst continuously evaluating its risk profile?
- “Why would an organization willingly subject itself to the scrutiny of an international certification authority?”
- “Why would this company choose to take the road less travelled?”
- It would have to be because of an uncommon awareness of its operating environment: an understanding of the rising threat profile and the proliferation of vulnerabilities be they technical, operational or managerial – already 2011 is being heralded “the worst year yet for security breaches” by leading Information Security experts worldwide: what with rising attacks on global corporations of which Government institutions seem to be a prized target. This year alone, NASA, the European Space Agency, the FBI, the British and French treasuries amongst others have suffered large scale, high exposure braches.

Closer to home, we have the notorious Niger Cyber Hactivist group who have successfully hacked and defaced the websites of NCC, EFCC, Nigerian Army, The National Poverty Eradication Programme, The Niger Delta Development Commission amongst others.

- It would have to be because of exceptional far sightedness & inherent pro-active nature enabling this company boldly break ranks with a lackadaisical “BAU” approach to running government organizations and seek to compete on world class standards
- it would have to be because of an unusual sense of responsibility to its mandate and its customers to exercise due care in the handling of information assets, given a deep understanding of the sensitive nature
- it would have to be because of a rare commitment to realizing a new Nigeria in which public enterprises are willing to compete openly, fairly and on a level playing field. I commend to you: GBB Plc.