

U.S. Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders

Opening Ceremony - Train the Trainers Course on New Media

Ministry of Information and Communications

Abuja, July 27, 2009

11:00 a.m.

PROTOCOL:

Honorable Minister of Information, Dora Akunyili

Target of Opportunity Speaker, Dr. Barbara Jones

Members of the U.S. Mission

All other protocols duly observed

I want to welcome our Workshop Facilitator, Dr. Barbara Jones, who has stopped in Abuja on her way to the Nigerian Library Association Conference to do this workshop. Thank you for interrupting your travels to talk about the challenges and opportunities for Information Professionals. I also want to welcome the Ministry of Information Officials and staff who have helped to put together this workshop together, and thank the Ministry for investing in their most important resources, their people.

One of the Pillars of Democracy is that of an informed citizenry. We at the U.S. Mission welcome the chance to partner with the Ministry of Information in providing this workshop on new ways to use information and social media to better inform and reach the people of Nigeria. Governing justly and democratically requires that citizens be informed about their government, encourage trust, combat corruption and ensure the rule of law. And new technologies help us achieve these goals. But they also develop quickly. By being here today, you are taking the necessary steps to stay ahead of the game. Just last year, I had only heard of things like blogs and twitter, but I took the time to learn about these new tools, and recognized how important they are to reach new audiences. I now have my own blog, which you can read by visiting our U.S. Mission website [Nigeria.USEmbassy.Gov], and I am even starting to use twitter.

Again, as information specialists, the people of Nigeria rely on you to know what is happening in this country. This capacity building workshop is a sign of the continued partnership between the U.S. Mission and the Ministry of Information, and I want to once again thank the Honorable Minister, for her commitment to transparent government and the free flow of information. I am pleased to be able to partner with you to ensure that your staff has the tools and training they need to communicate with the people of Nigeria.