PRESS STATEMENT

NITDA ISSUES MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD GOVERNMENT DATA AND INSTITUTIONS AGAINST LOOMING CYBER THREAT

The management of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) would like to bring to the attention of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), other government establishments and the general public of looming cyber-attacks.

The information is based on the report by a Senior Security Researcher at Kaspersky, who warned that hacking firms; TransparentTribe, Oilrig, MuddyWater and Unknown are targeting military, healthcare, education and diplomatic institutions in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya.

TransparentTribe targets national security information and data using macro-based malicious documents. Oilrig steals sensitive information using stolen credentials and malicious documents to exploit backdoors. Muddywater targets Microsoft and open source tools such as secure socket funneling. Unknown specializes in compromising legitimate websites using coronavirus related content to lure users.

In efforts at ensuring a safe and secure cyberspace, as well as critical national infrastructure, the Agency's Computer Emergency Readiness and Response Team (CERRT) Center therefore advocate the need for all to be vigilant and proactive as far as cyber security is concerned. In this regards, we wish to advise that the following precautionary measures should be taken:

• Efforts should be intensified at ensuring that data is encrypted, particularly any sensitive or personal data;

• Ensure that operating systems and other software applications are regularly updated with the latest patches;

• Ensure that anti-malware protection is installed on all IT systems as this will help in protecting your organisation's network from potential attacks through virus-laden software and email attachments. Also, all security software should be adjusted to scan compressed or archived files;

• Ensure that networks are fully secure through the use of wired network thereby protecting them from possible hackers' attempt at using Wi-Fi security lapses to remotely break into computer systems;

• Ensure that appropriate guidelines are in place for connecting personal devices into the organisation's network;

• Ensure the use of credential vaults and multi-factor authentication instead of user passwords;

• Ensure that the organisation's data and critical files are regularly backed up;

• Ensure that there is an organisation-wide enlightenment campaign, awareness and measures put in place to deal with cyber security threats as well as the procedures they must always follow when using their workstations.

NITDA is working with all critical stakeholders to come up with effective ways of adequately protecting the Nigerian cyberspace. We therefore call on all Nigerians to support the Agency by doing their best at protecting themselves as well as the information and systems under their care.

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) is an Agency under the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Agency was created in April 2001 to implement the Nigerian Information Technology Policy and co-ordinate general IT development and regulation in the country. Specifically, Section 6(a, c & j) of the Act mandates NITDA to create a framework for the planning, research, development, standardization, application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and regulation of Information Technology practices,

activities and systems in Nigeria; and render advisory services in all information technology matters to the public and private sectors including introducing appropriate information technology legislations and ways of enhancing national security and the vibrancy of the industry.