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**USAID Funds Office of Consumer Advocate Trip to Assist Nigerian
Communications Commission**

CHEYENNE, WYOMING –

The sharing of regulatory experiences and basic concepts of regulatory oversight was the topic as Denise Parrish, Deputy Administrator of the OCA, spent last week with the Nigerian Communications Commission. “With Nigeria recently having privatized its telecommunications markets, after years of service being provided by a government owned entity, the Nigerian Communications Commission is learning how to oversee the private markets to assure that customers are provided service at fair and reasonable prices,” Parrish stated. “I was specifically asked to provide some insight about establishing a consistent and meaningful accounting and reporting system.”

Parrish was invited to Nigeria to complement additional regulatory training being coordinated and provided by the Center to Bridge the Digital Divide at Washington State University. The trip was funded by the U S Agency for International Development (USAID), an independent federal agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States.

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Parrish spent the week in Nigeria's capitol, Abuja, meeting with members of the Nigerian regulatory staff. Throughout the week, she provided some basic training in regulatory principles and worked with the Nigerian staff on a draft of a uniform system of accounts for Nigerian wireless and wireline telecommunications companies. "While we were able to start with the basic regulatory accounting system used in the United States, changes needed to be made to better reflect the Nigerian communications market, which is primarily served by wireless providers," Parrish continued. "This is different from the United States, where wireline service is available nearly everywhere."

While the composition of carriers serving the United States and Nigeria differ, Parrish found many similarities in the goals of the Nigerian Communications Commission and the Office of Consumer Advocate. Both would like to see ubiquitous and effective competitive telecommunications markets, with quality service at reasonable prices. Both would also like to see universal service at reasonable prices extended to all rural areas.

"The ability to communicate globally is vital in today's world, and is a key to economic independence in today's international economy," stated Bryce Freeman, OCA Administrator. "We are proud and grateful that the Office of Consumer Advocate was provided an opportunity to play a role in assisting regulatory colleagues across the globe. It is important to share the lessons we have learned with others, and to look at new methods of examining similar problems, as competitive telecommunications markets become more global."