

**Statement by Denis Thieulin, Chargé d'Affaires a.i, Delegation of the European  
Commission at the opening of the Data Centre at the EFCC, Abuja,  
Tuesday August 12 2008.**

Protocol

I'm pleased on behalf of the European Commission to be part of this ceremony for the opening of the Data Centre for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). And I'm pleased to say that the European Union supported its creation through the European Development Fund.

The establishment of the Data Centre is a component of the Project – *Support to Law Enforcement against Economic and Financial Crimes* which is funded by a grant of N4.4billion from the EU. The project aims to strengthen the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Judiciary by providing them with the necessary technical and material support. It is encouraging to the European Commission that the project purpose is being achieved including a better equipped EFCC staff with skills, knowledge and the requisite equipment and technical support.

In addition to the Data Centre at the EFCC Headquarters, the project will support the establishment of 2 additional Data Centres, one at the EFCC Office in Lagos and the other at the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Abuja. The project will also equip the EFCC forensic investigation unit, and the EFCC Training Centre among others.

The judicial component is also proceeding well: approximately 500 judicial officers have received training in the areas of Judicial Ethics and Alternative Dispute Resolution, while court recording equipment were provided to judiciaries in 10 states. A recent survey of the justice system has highlighted significant improvement in court users experience in terms of access to and timeliness of justice; independence, fairness and impartiality. Judicial research centres are also being designed for these states.

The EC is proud to be associated with the hard work and successes of the EFCC in the fight against corruption. Corruption has not only undermined the capacity of Nigeria to utilise its enormous resources to uplift the lives of its people, it has also badly affected its image in the eyes of foreign investors.

Supporting institutions like the EFCC therefore is strategic to significantly changing the fortunes of Nigeria positively. Accordingly, the EU will continue to support Nigeria in the area of good governance and the fight against corruption.

I will like to, on behalf of the European Commission, appreciate the support and cooperation of the Nigerian government, the EFCC, and the UNODC for the establishment of the Data Centre and to the whole project.

The Data Centre is a state of the art facility and an IT solution that is important for law enforcement agencies and financial intelligence units. We have now an efficient and impressive tool but a key condition for success is that banks and the relevant financial institutions must provide the data required to ensure it works. We are convinced that this Data Centre will contribute to enhance the reputation of the EFCC. The EFCC is therefore encouraged to fully utilise and maintain it for its operations.

I thank you for listening