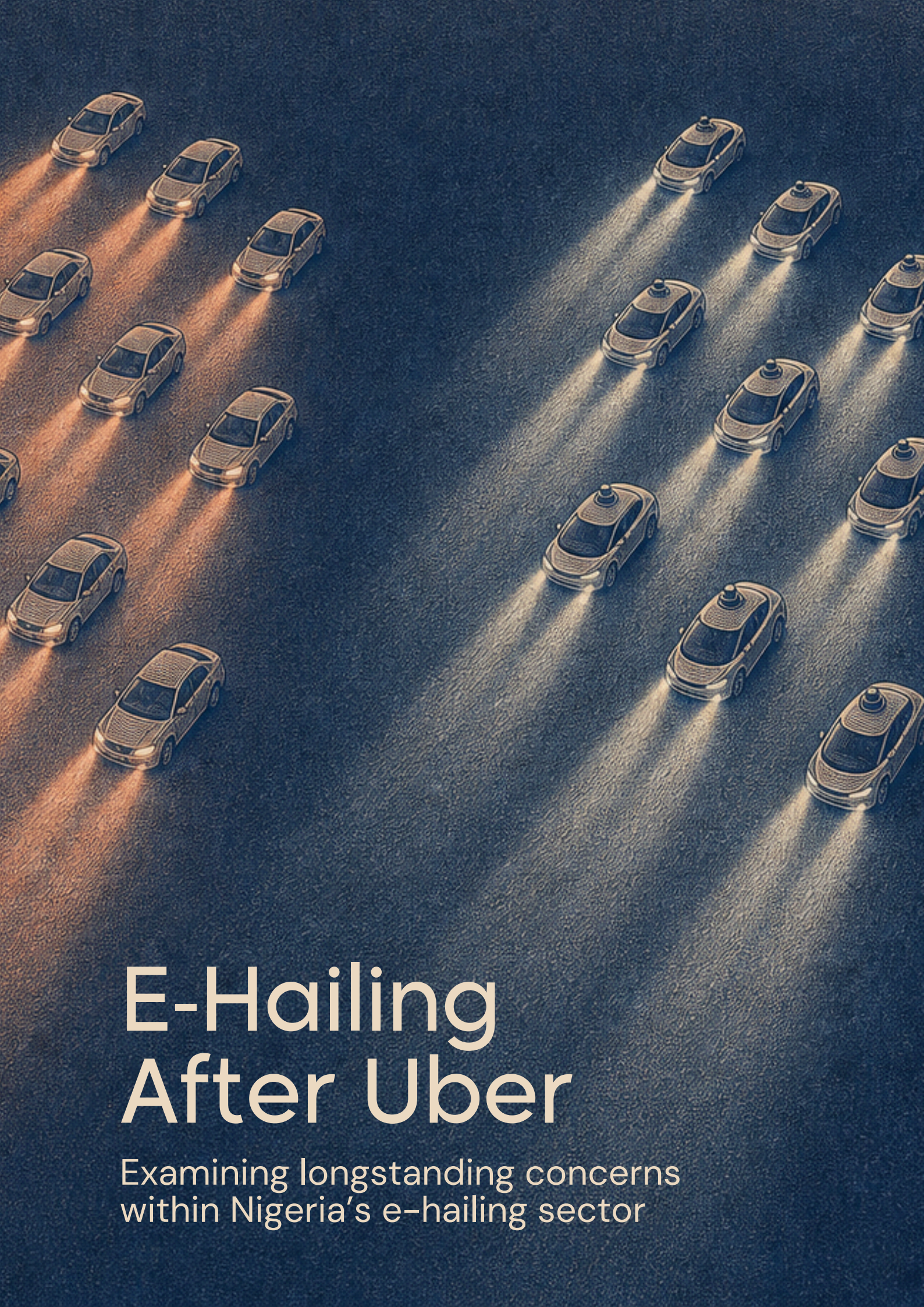


E-Hailing After Uber

Protecting Consumers, Drivers
and the Future





E-Hailing After Uber

Examining longstanding concerns
within Nigeria's e-hailing sector

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Country Operations: Aitokhuehi John

Research and Data: Naiyeju Hannah

Creative Development: Justin Chuka

Editor: Uche Oti

Contact: partnerships@orodata.org +234 8034333640, +234 7038645898

Address: 42 Montgomery Rd, Sabo Yaba, Lagos 101245

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Abstract

The abrupt exit of Uber from Nigeria after more than a decade of operations has generated concerns about consumer protection, driver welfare, competition, employment, and regulatory oversight in the country's rapidly evolving e-hailing industry.

Uber announced on Sept. 2, 2026, that it was ending operations in Nigeria and Uganda following a strategic review of its business priorities and investment focus in Africa. The company had operated in Nigeria since 2014 and had become an important part of urban mobility, particularly in Lagos and other major cities.

The development has raised questions about the responsibilities of technology-driven transport companies to consumers, drivers, and employees when they withdraw from a market. The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) subsequently said it was probing the manner of Uber's exit, particularly its handling of unfulfilled services to customers.

The exit also provides an opportunity to examine longstanding concerns within Nigeria's e-hailing sector. Drivers have previously protested over fares, platform commissions, and alleged poor treatment, while consumers have raised

concerns over pricing, service quality, and passenger experiences.

The report examines the implications of Uber's departure against the backdrop of competition from Bolt, inDrive, LagRide, Rida, Shuttlers, and SafeBoda. It also considers developments in South Africa, where drivers have reported low earnings, high fuel costs, substantial platform commissions, and limited bargaining power.

The report finds that Uber's exit should not be viewed solely as a corporate business decision. It exposes structural weaknesses in the regulation of platform-based transport and highlights the need for stronger consumer protection, driver welfare, competition policy, transparency, accountability, and responsible corporate exit procedures.

It recommends a coordinated regulatory framework requiring e-hailing platforms to protect consumers and drivers, ensure transparent pricing and commissions, provide effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, strengthen safety requirements, and establish mandatory procedures for withdrawing from the Nigerian market.



Introduction

Introduction

E-hailing has become an increasingly important component of urban transportation in Nigeria, providing commuters with alternatives to conventional taxis and other forms of public transport.

The arrival of Uber in Nigeria in 2014 represented a significant development in technology-enabled transportation. Over the years, the platform became part of the daily mobility system of many Nigerians, particularly in Lagos and other major urban centres.

Uber's operations also expanded beyond conventional car-hailing. In Lagos, the company launched a boat service in 2019 as an alternative means of navigating the city's notorious traffic congestion. However, the company's operations were accompanied by tensions involving drivers, particularly over fares, commissions and working conditions. Drivers reportedly protested against fares, commission rates and treatment by the company in 2017, 2023 and 2025.

These concerns became more significant following the removal of the petrol subsidy in 2023, which increased operating costs for drivers. Inflation and subsequent increases in petrol prices further placed pressure on the economics of e-hailing driving.

The source material indicates that drivers complained that fares had failed to keep pace with rising fuel and operating costs, while platform commissions remained high. At the same time, e-hailing companies faced increasing competition from Bolt, inDrive, and locally developed platforms.

On Sept. 2, 2026, Uber announced the immediate closure of its Nigerian and Ugandan operations, saying the decision followed a strategic review of its business priorities and investment focus across Africa.

The decision has generated mixed reactions among Nigerian consumers. While some users believe other platforms can readily replace Uber, others argue that its departure will reduce competition and consumer choice.

A journalist interviewed by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Mrs. Florence Okonkwo, said Uber's departure could complicate transportation challenges and put additional pressure on other e-hailing operators. She also expressed concern about the effect on drivers whose livelihoods depended on the platform.

Similarly, banker Ms. Edith Nwafor described the departure as negative for

consumers because competition allowed passengers to compare fares and select the service that best suited their needs.

Mrs. Funke Ajijala, a businesswoman, said Uber had created an important alternative for commuters and that its absence could create a vacuum that other operators might find difficult to immediately fill.

However, Mr. Ola Akanni, a journalist with an online medium, offered a different perspective. He argued that drivers could migrate to other platforms such as inDrive and LagRide and therefore would not necessarily become unemployed as a result of Uber's exit.

The divergent reactions demonstrate that the implications of the exit are complex. For some consumers, it represents a reduction in choice; for drivers, it could represent either an opportunity to move to competing platforms or an additional source of economic insecurity.

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has also raised concerns about the quality and safety of some e-hailing experiences. FAAN Managing Director Olubunmi Kuku said the agency had received several complaints, particularly during the December 2025 holiday

period, from passengers who had unpleasant experiences with some e-hailing and car-hire services.

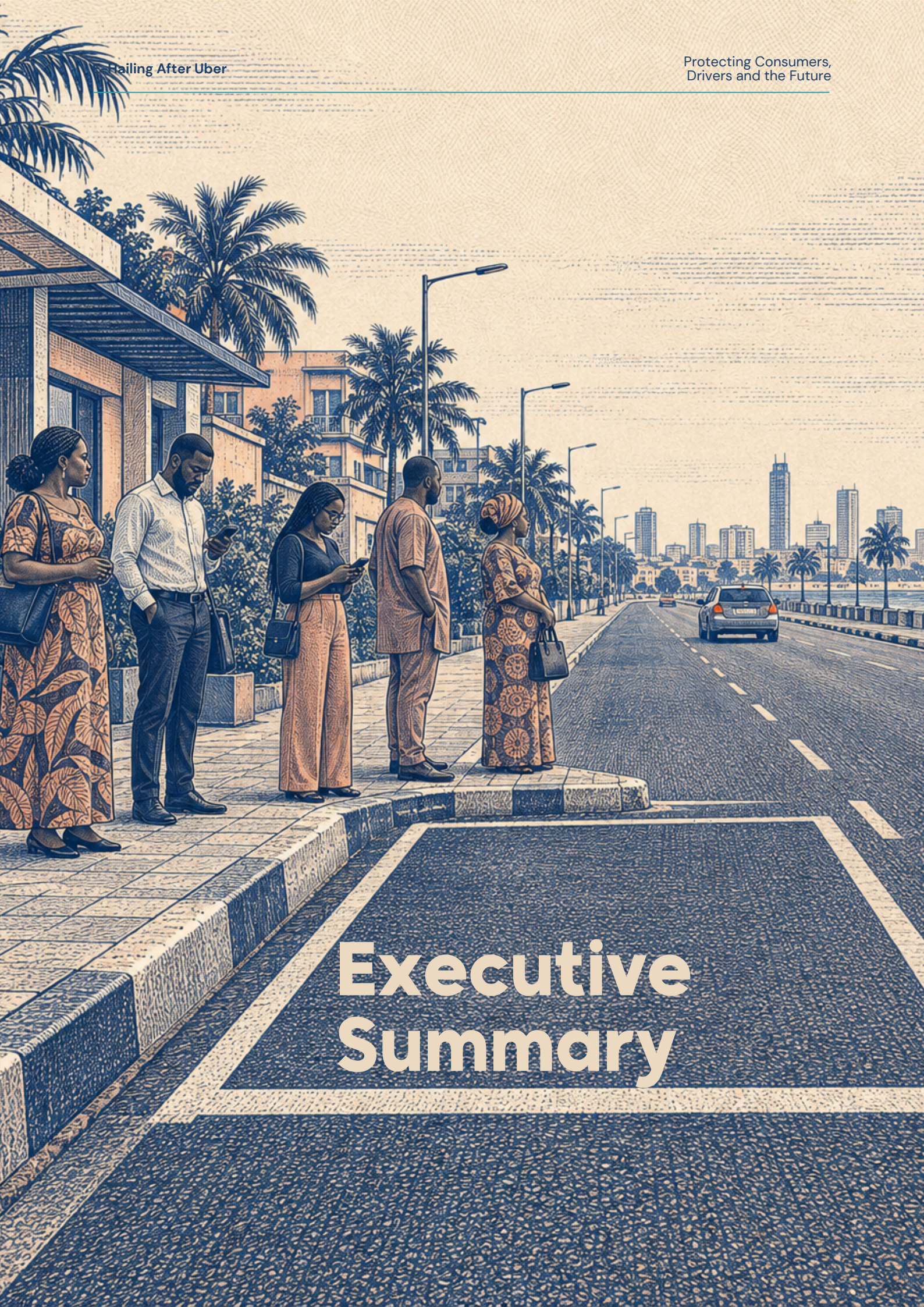
These developments make Uber's departure an important case study for examining the future of Nigeria's e-hailing industry.

The central issue is therefore not simply whether Uber has left Nigeria, but whether the country has adequate systems to ensure that consumers, drivers, and employees are protected when technology companies operate, restructure, or exit the market.



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An illustration of a city street scene. In the foreground, five people are standing on a sidewalk, looking at their smartphones. From left to right: a woman in a patterned dress, a man in a white shirt and dark trousers, a woman in a dark top and orange pants, a man in an orange suit, and a woman in a patterned dress and headscarf. A silver car is driving away on the road. In the background, there are palm trees, modern buildings, and a city skyline. The overall style is a detailed, textured illustration with a warm color palette.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Uber's departure from Nigeria has brought renewed attention to the opportunities and challenges associated with the country's e-hailing industry.

The company operated in Nigeria from 2014 until Sept. 2, 2026, when it announced its withdrawal from the market. Uber cited changing priorities and investment focus across Africa, but the company's exit occurred against a background of increasing operating costs, driver dissatisfaction, and growing competition.

The FCCPC has said it is probing Uber's exit, particularly how the company handled unfulfilled services to customers. This represents an important regulatory response because e-hailing platforms do not operate merely as conventional technology companies. Their platforms directly affect mobility, employment, income, and consumer welfare.

Key issues from the study

Consumer protection

Consumers may be affected by the loss of a major competitor, particularly if reduced competition leads to higher fares or fewer service choices. Some Lagos residents interviewed by NAN expressed concern that Uber's absence

would reduce their ability to compare fares across platforms.

Driver welfare

The findings show a recurring conflict between drivers and e-hailing platforms over commissions, fares, and working conditions. Rising fuel prices have increased the cost of operating vehicles, while drivers have argued that fares have not always kept pace with those costs.

A former Uber driver, Mr. Kola Alabi, said that Uber lacked a cost-reflective tariff, arguing that despite the rising fuel prices, Uber increased what it collected from drivers without allowing an increase in the driver's commission.

Employment insecurity

Uber's exit raises questions about the status of people who depend on digital platforms for their livelihoods. Although affected drivers can potentially migrate to competing platforms, this does not necessarily guarantee comparable income, working conditions, or access to social protection.

Platform accountability

The exit highlights the need to define the responsibilities of companies that

provide essential digital services. A company should have the freedom to make legitimate commercial decisions, but its departure should not eliminate obligations owed to consumers, drivers or other stakeholders.

Competition

Nigeria still has several e-hailing alternatives, including Bolt, inDrive, LagRide, Rida, Shuttlers and SafeBoda. However, the presence of multiple operators does not automatically guarantee effective competition.

Safety

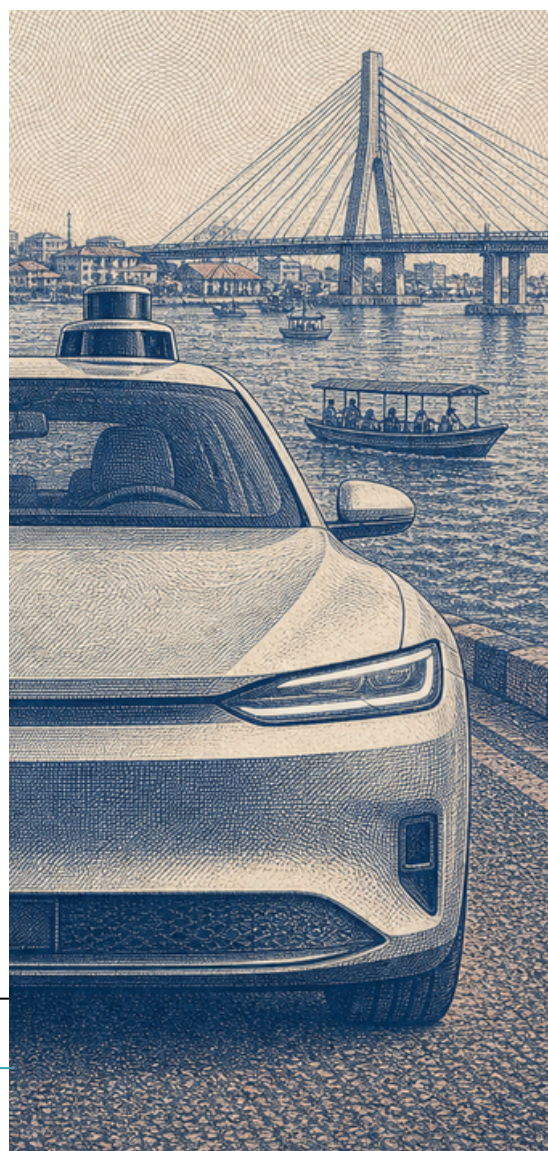
FAAN's reported complaints concerning unpleasant passenger experiences point to the need for stronger standards for driver identification, vehicle safety, passenger protection and complaint resolution.

Future of the industry

The developments surrounding Uber also point towards a broader technological transformation. According to Uber investor, Uber is increasingly investing in autonomous vehicles and recently launched supervised autonomous rides in London in partnership with Wayve.

This raises a longer-term policy question for Nigeria: how should regulators protect human drivers and other workers as transportation platforms become increasingly automated?

This study therefore proposes an approach based on consumer protection, fair competition, driver welfare, transparency, safety, social protection and responsible corporate exit.





Research methodology

Research methodology

This report adopts a qualitative desk-research methodology based primarily on interviews and various reports on the subject matter.

The research draws on reports, stakeholder statements, media interviews, consumer perspectives, and comparative information on e-hailing operations in Nigeria and South Africa.

The methodology involved five principal approaches:

Documentary review

The study examined materials relating to Uber's exit from Nigeria, including statements attributed to the FCCPC, FAAN, Uber and other stakeholders. Particular attention was paid to issues concerning the circumstances of the exit, consumer obligations, driver concerns and the broader competitive environment.

Stakeholder perspectives

The research considered views expressed by Nigerian consumers and other stakeholders. The interviews reported by NAN provided contrasting perspectives on the impact of Uber's departure. Some respondents expressed concerns about reduced consumer choice and driver livelihoods,

while another argued that drivers could move to competing platforms.

Regulatory perspective

The study considered the intervention of regulatory and public institutions, particularly the FCCPC and FAAN. The FCCPC's decision to examine the manner of Uber's departure is relevant to questions of consumer protection and corporate accountability, while FAAN's reported passenger complaints provide evidence of concerns around service quality and safety.

Comparative analysis

The study examined the experience of e-hailing drivers in South Africa as a comparative case. The South African experience shows that drivers on major platforms have faced rising petrol prices, low fares, significant commissions, and long working hours. The material indicates that some drivers work 12 hours a day for six or seven days a week while still struggling to make ends meet.

The "Fairwork" experience cited in the material raises questions about whether platform workers should be treated solely as independent contractors when the platforms exercise considerable control over their work.

Emerging technology analysis

The research also considers the implications of autonomous vehicles for the future of platform-based transportation.

Uber's investment in autonomous vehicles and its partnership with Wayve indicate that the global e-hailing industry may increasingly shift from human-driver-dependent models towards technology-enabled autonomous transportation.

The methodology is therefore designed not merely to examine Uber's departure but to identify lessons for the regulation and sustainability of Nigeria's wider e-hailing ecosystem.





Findings

Findings

1. Uber's exit exposes regulatory gaps

The most significant finding is that the departure of a major e-hailing operator creates questions that cannot be answered solely by market forces.

The FCCPC's decision to investigate Uber's exit demonstrates that the withdrawal of a digital platform can have direct consumer-protection implications.

The regulator's focus on unfulfilled services is particularly important because consumers may have ongoing relationships with a platform even after the company decides to stop operating.

This suggests that Nigerian regulation needs to address not only how e-hailing companies enter and operate in the market but also how they leave.

2. Consumers depend increasingly on platform competition

The loss of Uber reduces the number of major international e-hailing operators competing for Nigerian consumers.

Bolt currently has a significant presence in the country, while inDrive offers a peer-to-peer fare negotiation model. Local and specialized platforms include LagRide, Rida, and Shuttlers, while

SafeBoda provides services in Ibadan.

However, consumers' experiences demonstrate that competition is valuable because prices and service characteristics differ between platforms.

One NAN respondent specifically recalled checking multiple applications before choosing Uber because its fare was lower for a particular journey.

This suggests that consumers benefit when several platforms compete on price, reliability, safety, and customer service.

3. Pricing models create different experiences

Reports by 'The Nation Online' identify important differences between the pricing systems used by Bolt and inDrive. Bolt uses an algorithmic pricing model in which passengers receive an upfront fare. Prices may increase significantly during periods of high demand through surge pricing.

inDrive, on the other hand, operates through a peer-to-peer model in which passengers can propose fares while drivers can accept or counter the offers.

These differences illustrate why

regulators need transparency rather than imposing a single pricing model.

Consumers should understand how their fares are determined, while drivers should understand how much of each fare they retain.

4. Driver welfare remains a major concern

The report also shows that driver welfare has been a persistent challenge. Drivers have protested against fares, commissions, and treatment by platforms on several occasions.

The increase in fuel prices following the removal of the petrol subsidy in 2023 has intensified the problem. Drivers have to bear expenses, including fuel, vehicle maintenance, insurance, and other operating costs. When platform commissions and other deductions are added, the amount remaining to the driver can become inadequate.

An article by 'Daily Maverick,' a South African online paper, shows The South African experience provides a useful comparison. The article shows that Uber and Bolt drivers there pay commissions of about 25 percent and 23 percent, respectively, while some drivers also pay weekly amounts to vehicle owners. Many work extended hours but continue

to struggle financially.

The Nigerian situation therefore needs to be considered within a broader international debate over whether platform drivers are genuinely independent entrepreneurs or workers operating under substantial platform control.

5. The classification of drivers requires policy attention

The South African comparison raises a fundamental question concerning the legal and economic status of e-hailing drivers. Platforms may describe drivers as independent partners, but drivers often depend heavily on platform rules, pricing systems, ratings, algorithms and disciplinary mechanisms.

The Fairwork report cited in the South African experience by 'Maverik' argues that workers on many platforms are under platform control and deliver the platform's brand much like employees. Nigeria therefore needs a policy framework that recognizes the unique characteristics of platform work.

This does not necessarily mean treating every driver as a conventional employee. Rather, it requires minimum protections appropriate to people whose income depends vastly on digital platforms.

6. Passenger safety and service quality require stronger oversight

FAAN's reported complaints concerning e-hailing and car-hire services indicate that safety and customer experience remain significant issues.

According to FAAN, passengers reported unpleasant experiences, particularly during the December 2025 holiday period.

This demonstrates the importance of proper driver identification, vehicle standards, airport access rules, complaint mechanisms, and platform accountability.

A passenger using an e-hailing platform should know the identity of the driver and vehicle and should have an effective avenue for seeking redress when something goes wrong.

7. Uber's exit does not necessarily mean the end of driver employment

The impact on drivers is complex. One perspective is that drivers who previously worked with Uber can register with competing platforms. The availability of Bolt, inDrive, LagRide and other operators creates alternative opportunities.

However, switching platforms does not automatically guarantee equivalent earnings. A driver may face new registration requirements, different commission structures, different pricing systems, and potentially different working conditions.

Consequently, government should not assume that market availability alone adequately addresses the welfare consequences of platform withdrawal.

8. The exit creates an opportunity to strengthen Nigerian-owned platforms

The withdrawal of Uber creates space for Nigerian and other locally based platforms to expand. Platforms such as LagRide and Rida demonstrate that local businesses can participate in the digital mobility ecosystem.

However, local operators need a regulatory environment that encourages innovation without compromising safety, consumer protection or worker welfare.

Government should therefore pursue policies that promote healthy competition rather than simply replacing one dominant international company with another dominant platform.



9. The future of e-hailing may become increasingly automated

Uber's global strategy demonstrates that the economics of e-hailing are changing. The company is investing heavily in autonomous vehicles and positioning itself as a technology marketplace through which autonomous vehicles can reach passengers.

Its partnership with Wayve has already produced supervised autonomous rides in London, with the vehicles operating through the Uber platform. The development has implications for Nigeria.

If autonomous vehicles eventually become commercially viable in African markets, thousands of drivers could face another technological disruption. Nigeria therefore needs to anticipate the future rather than regulating only the current human-driver model.

10. Corporate restructuring can affect employees beyond the Nigerian market

The Uber Investor report also highlights wider restructuring within Uber, including plans to reduce management layers and cut thousands of jobs globally.

The restructuring is partly linked to the changing economics of transportation and the growing importance of autonomous vehicles and artificial intelligence.

This reinforces the need for Nigerian policymakers to recognize that platform employment is vulnerable to strategic decisions made at corporate headquarters outside Nigeria.

Local employees and contractors can therefore be affected by global decisions over which they have little or no control.



Recommendation

Recommendation

1. Establish a unified national e-hailing regulatory framework

The Federal Government, through relevant agencies and in consultation with state governments, should develop minimum national standards for e-hailing operations.

The framework should address licensing, pricing transparency, commissions, driver welfare, insurance, passenger safety, data protection, taxation, complaints and corporate exit.

States should retain their constitutional and statutory responsibilities over transportation while complying with agreed national minimum standards.

2. Introduce mandatory responsible-exit procedures

E-hailing companies should be required to notify the appropriate regulators before withdrawing from Nigeria.

The notice should include a transition plan covering customers, drivers, employees, outstanding payments, refunds, complaints, personal data and other unresolved obligations.

A company should not be permitted to simply deactivate its platform and leave consumers without an effective avenue

for redress.

3. Establish minimum driver welfare standards

Government and industry stakeholders should establish minimum protections for e-hailing drivers.

These should include access to affordable accident insurance, health insurance, pension or retirement savings arrangements, and other appropriate social protection.

The framework should also recognize the financial burden imposed by fuel, vehicle maintenance and other operating costs.

4. Improve fare and commission transparency

Platforms should clearly disclose the fare charged to passengers and the amount retained by the driver and platform.

Drivers should be able to see the expected amount they will earn from a trip before accepting it.

Consumers should also be informed when surge pricing or other dynamic-pricing mechanisms are being applied.

5. Create a driver–platform dialogue mechanism

Government should facilitate a permanent forum involving regulators, e-hailing companies, driver representatives and consumer organisations.

The forum should address fares, commissions, safety, deactivation, insurance, working conditions and emerging technology. Drivers should have an opportunity to participate in decisions that directly affect their livelihoods.

6. Protect drivers against arbitrary deactivation

E-hailing companies should establish transparent procedures for suspending or deactivating drivers.

Drivers should be informed of the reason for disciplinary action and provided with an opportunity to appeal where appropriate.

A regulator should have the authority to review systemic complaints concerning unfair deactivation practices.

7. Establish an independent e-hailing dispute-resolution mechanism

Consumers and drivers should have

access to an independent mechanism for resolving disputes involving platforms.

Complaints could include:

- unpaid driver earnings;
- disputed fares;
- wrongful deactivation;
- passenger safety;
- lost property;
- accidents;
- refunds;
- service cancellations;
- discrimination; and
- unresolved customer–service complaints.

The mechanism should operate within clear timelines.

8. Strengthen passenger safety requirements

All licensed e-hailing operators should be required to comply with minimum standards for driver identification, vehicle inspection, insurance, and passenger safety.

Airport operations should receive particular attention because airports represent major points of contact between visitors, passengers, and e-hailing operators.

Platforms should also maintain effective emergency-response and complaint systems.

9. Protect competition and consumer choice

Regulators should ensure that licensing and operational requirements do not unnecessarily prevent new competitors from entering the market. Competition should be encouraged among international, local and specialised platforms.

The objective should be to create a market in which companies compete on price, safety, reliability, innovation and service quality, rather than merely competing for market dominance.

10. Develop a national e-hailing data and accountability system

Relevant regulators should maintain an industry database containing information on licensed platforms, registered drivers, vehicles, complaints, accidents, insurance compliance and other relevant indicators.

Aggregated industry data should be published periodically. Better data would allow government to identify emerging problems and develop evidence-based policies.

11. Encourage Nigerian-owned e-hailing innovation

Government should create an enabling environment for Nigerian technology companies to develop competitive mobility platforms.

Local operators should have access to innovation funding, digital infrastructure and appropriate regulatory support while meeting the same safety and consumer-protection standards as international companies.

12. Prepare for autonomous transportation

Nigeria should begin developing a regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles before the technology becomes widespread.

The framework should address safety certification, liability, insurance, data, cybersecurity, employment implications and interaction with conventional vehicles.

Most importantly, government should develop transition strategies for drivers whose livelihoods may eventually be affected by automation.

13. Establish social-protection mechanisms for platform workers

The government should explore portable social-protection schemes that follow workers across different e-hailing platforms.

Such schemes could allow drivers who move from one platform to another to retain access to insurance, pensions and other benefits.

This would reduce the vulnerability associated with dependence on a single company.

14. Require companies to maintain accessible customer support

E-hailing companies should maintain functioning customer-service channels for a defined period after a major service disruption or market withdrawal.

Customers should be able to resolve outstanding issues, seek refunds and recover eligible payments even after a company has announced its departure.

15. Make responsible corporate conduct part of operating licenses

Every e-hailing licence should contain provisions dealing with the responsibilities of operators towards consumers, drivers,

and employees.

These provisions should remain enforceable when companies restructure, merge, sell operations, or withdraw from the Nigerian market.

The principle should be clear: companies have the right to make legitimate commercial decisions, but those decisions should not extinguish obligations already owed to Nigerians.

16. Establish a multi-stakeholder e-hailing council

Nigeria should consider establishing an e-hailing industry council comprising government regulators, state transport authorities, e-hailing companies, driver associations, consumer organisations, technology experts and other relevant stakeholders.

The council could monitor industry developments, review emerging risks, promote dialogue and advise government on policy.



Conclusion

Conclusion

Uber's departure from Nigeria is more than the withdrawal of a single company from a competitive market. It provides an opportunity to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the country's broader e-hailing ecosystem.

The experience shows that consumers value competition because it gives them choices in terms of price, convenience, and service. At the same time, the experiences of drivers demonstrate the economic pressures associated with fuel costs, commissions, vehicle expenses, and uncertain earnings.

The reported complaints received by FAAN also demonstrate that passenger safety and service quality require continuous regulatory attention.

The FCCPC's investigation into Uber's exit is therefore significant because it raises the larger question of how companies operating essential digital services should manage their responsibilities when leaving the market.

Nigeria should use the moment to develop a regulatory framework that balances innovation and investment with consumer protection and worker welfare.

The country does not need to prevent companies from leaving when their business models are no longer commercially viable. Instead, it should ensure that such departures are orderly, transparent, and responsible.

The future of e-hailing should be built around fair competition, consumer choice, passenger safety, decent working conditions, transparent pricing, social protection, and corporate accountability.

Uber's exit can therefore become a turning point, not the end of Nigeria's e-hailing story, but an opportunity to build a more resilient and equitable digital mobility industry.

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