

WELCOME ADDRESS BY NTUFAM FIDELIS UGBO, ESQ
SECRETARY, NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, AT THE MEETING
OF THE JOINT PLANNING BOARD HELD AT THE LE' MERIDIEN HOTEL &
RESORTS, UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE ON TUESDAY 29th OCTOBER, 2013

Protocol

It is with great delight that I welcome you to the meeting of the Joint Planning Board, which is organized jointly by the National Planning Commission and the Akwa Ibom State Government. I also like to welcome those attending the meeting for the first time, in particular, those who were recently elevated to their positions as Permanent Secretaries in 15 States. This meeting with the theme: **“Imperatives of Strategic planning as a Framework for Effective Policy Formulation and Implementation for Nigeria’s Transformation”**, is unique.

2. This is because it is coming on the heels of the completion of the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) and the development of the successor, the 2nd NIP. It is expected that recommendations arising from the meeting will serve as critical input for the development of the new plan.

3. As you are aware, the meeting of the Joint Planning Board (JPB) precedes the meeting of National Council on Development

Planning. The first and second day of the meeting is to be devoted to technical level discussions with the Secretary to the National Planning Commission and the Permanent Secretaries and Directors from the States' Planning Commissions and representatives of Federal MDAs and the private sector. This is to be followed on the third day, by the meeting of the Honourable Commissioners responsible for Economic Planning at the State level with the Hon. Supervising Minister/Deputy Chairman, NPC presiding. With the caliber of members here present, I trust that the quality of discussions and recommendations arising from the Joint Planning Board (JPB) meetings would be highly enriching.

4. The purpose of this meeting is to review the extent of implementation of key recommendations arising from the last meeting of the JPB held at Benue State and also to interact among ourselves, Permanent Secretaries and Directors of States' Planning Commissions at the Federal and State level on the modalities for strengthening strategic planning for enhanced policy formulation and implementation. This is expected to pave way for effective realization of the objectives of the

Transformation Agenda and the NV20:2020. The Forum will also allow for building capacity of public servants for sustained implementation of strategic plans at the National and sub-national levels.

5. The meetings of today and tomorrow are therefore very important, and members are urged to accord priority to the deliberation of all items on the agenda. The outcome of the meeting is expected to serve as input for the meeting of the National Council on Development Planning, which comes up on Thursday.

6. Let me reiterate that much is expected of us as technocrats and experts on development planning and economic management in Nigeria. I also expect that far reaching recommendations will be reached with respect to institutionalizing strategic plans, policy formulation and performance management system at the sub-national level. This will no doubt facilitate the realization of the objective of the Transformation Agenda and Nigeria's Vision 20:2020.

7. As part of the effort to also improve strategic planning and the transformation process of the country, the Government's Transformation Agenda is currently being faithfully implemented. A mid-term report of the Transformation Agenda was formally launched by Mr. President on May 29, 2013. A 30 year National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (NIIMP) has also been developed to complement the TA and NV20:2020. This is aimed at allowing for a coordinated approach to infrastructure development in Nigeria. The scope of coverage of the NIIMP is 2014-2043. The investment size is approximately N464 trillion (US\$2.9) and to be implemented through 6 no., 5 year operational plan and 3 no., 10 year strategic plan. The NIIMP has been concluded and currently being validated. It is gratifying to note that the Permanent Secretaries of States Planning Commission were actively involved in the plan development process. I trust that you will also be involved in the NIIMP implementation process in your respective States to give meaning to the process, in which we were all actively involved.

8. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, given the relevance of infrastructure to growth and development of any nation, it is our belief that the NIIMP will pave way for effective transformation of Nigeria's economy. I therefore urge that States should ensure that their annual budgets and medium term plans are aligned with the priorities of the NIIMP with effect from 2014 budget.

9. Our gathering here today, therefore, provides a great opportunity for us to learn from experience of States Permanent Secretaries responsible for Economic Planning, and other development experts at the federal level, especially in the area of strategic plan formulation and its implementation process. I am also confident that the deliberations will be intellectually stimulating, refreshing and rewarding, especially as the rest of the agenda have been devoted to technical level presentations on major topical issues namely:

- (i) Aligning the Budgets with the National Plans: Federal and States' Experiences
- (ii) The relevance of Geospatial Data in the delivery of Infrastructure Master Plan (2014-2043)

- (iii) Leveraging on Public Private Partnership (PPP) as a financing model for the delivery of National Integrated infrastructural Master Plan (2014-2043) in Nigeria
- (iv) Evolving robust Monitoring and Evaluation System at the National and Sub- national levels
- (v) Resetting the Nigerian Statistical System for Evidenced based Policy, Programme and Project Implementation
- (vi) The Role of Research in Policy Formulation and Implementation
- (vii) The Role of Capacity Building in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of Strategic plans

10. Finally, let me express our thanks to the uncommon transformation Governor, His Excellency, Governor Godswill Akpabio and good people of Akwa Ibom State for the hospitality extended to Permanent Secretaries and all Delegates from the various States. Our special thanks also go the Hon. Commissioner and Permanent Secretary responsible for planning in Akwa Ibom State.

11. Once again, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you to this very important meeting and wish you very successful deliberations.

10. I thank you for your attention.