

WELCOME REMARKS BY DEACONESS ARIT IBANGA MNI, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10TH JOINT PLANNING BOARD (JPB) MEETING HELD IN UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE FROM 29TH – 31ST OCTOBER, 2013

PROTOCOL

Let me formally convey the best wishes of the Ministry of Economic Development and indeed of the Government and people of Akwa Ibom State to my colleagues and delegates to this 10th Joint Planning Board (JPB) meeting. We are glad you have found time to come despite your tight schedule at very short notice, being that this meeting has been shifted at least on three occasions due to unforeseen exigencies and the final decision to host this meeting, on this date, was taken barely a fortnight ago. This impressive turn out can only be explained by the seriousness and commitment that you attach to this meeting. For this I salute you all.

This meeting, we will admit, comes at a very important time in our national life. This year marks the end of the 1st National Implementation Plan of the NV 20:2020. It is my hope that we shall use this occasion to sincerely review how we have fared on this programme, the challenges, and gains and also share experiences that will assist us as we put together the 2nd National Implementation Plan (NIP 11) based on our peculiarities. The question of dwindling revenue due largely to oil theft in the Niger Delta and the growing insecurity in the North are having severe implications in our development planning processes as a country. Nigeria as a country has one national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and anything that affects any part of the country will impact on us all. As a country, we all share a common destiny.

There are even other issues, to which we have limited control that may have very significant impact on our planning process. The outcome of the current review of the revenue allocation formulae, the national dialogue and the ongoing Constitution review are some critical variables, the outcome that will severely impact on our planning process. There is also the issue of 2015,

where there will be changes in leadership in most States in the Federation. We must therefore be able to develop a more robust framework and response capability that will be easily amendable to the possible distortions these changes may bring.

It is for this that the theme for this year's meeting "Imperative of Strategic Planning as a Framework for Effective Policy Formulation and Implementation for Nigeria's Transformation" is most apt as it brings to focus the importance of strategic planning in addressing these perceived challenges. I am convinced that the future of the country lies in effective policy formulation, coordination and implementation.

These two days meeting for me looks quite loaded from the programmes I have seen, but I hope you will still find time to look around the State to see how our modest efforts in development management is changing our landscape. I salute the National Planning Commission for their leadership role in directing planning activities in the Country. We in Akwa Ibom State share your vision. We are committed to work together with the Commission and other stakeholders in our effort to build a better future for ourselves and posterity.

Once again, I welcome all of you who have come from far and near to this Joint Planning Board (JPB) meeting and it is my hope that we shall have a very fruitful deliberation.

Welcome to Akwa Ibom State, the land of the uncommon transformation