



---

**OPENING ADDRESS**

**BY**

**SEN. UDOMA UDO UDOMA**

*Honourable Minister*

*Ministry of Budget and National Planning*

**AT THE STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT ON THE ERGP IMPLEMENTATION  
ROADMAP HELD AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE HON. MINISTER**

---

**2<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2017**

I wish to sincerely thank you all for coming for this important dialogue. I know you are all very busy people so I really appreciate the time you are willing to devote to support us in this important task of turning the Nigerian economy around. Let me acknowledge the contributions of many of you gathered here in the development of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). We have invited you again today, firstly to thank you for all your assistance so far and secondly, to seek your continuing support and suggestions as we roll out our implementation strategy.

2. As you are all aware, the global economic recovery is currently gaining momentum with an improved world outlook for 2017, and beyond. In the case of Nigeria, the IMF/World Bank have projected that we will be moving back to a positive growth trajectory of 0.8% in 2017. Whilst this is much lower than our target of 2.19% by the end of this year in the ERGP, it underscores one fact: all projections indicate that we will be climbing out of recession this year.

3. Recent reports by the NBS confirm that inflation rate has been trending downwards in the past two months. Our Agricultural sector, one of the key sectors expected to drive growth in our Plan, continues to show growth. These positive results and projections, though modest, are all evidence that our economic policies are the right ones. However, much more needs to be done to sustain and build on this momentum. We are not out of the woods yet. As a Government, we are determined not just to restore growth, but growth that is diversified; growth that is inclusive; and growth that is sustained in the long term, irrespective of whatever happens to the price of crude oil.

4. And that is the importance of the ERGP. The Plan sets out what we need to do to achieve all these. In particular, the ERGP indicates that to achieve sustained growth we must continue our current initiatives aimed at driving fiscal stimulus through a package of spending to stimulate private consumption and investments by businesses. This is why our 2017 Budget proposal has dedicated 30%

of the Budget to capital expenditure. We intend to achieve a minimum capital expenditure allocation of 30% in subsequent Budgets throughout the life of the Plan. To do this we must improve our revenue base so that we don't continue to rely on borrowing to fund our capital budgets. As we improve our revenues we will be able to bring down our debt service to revenue ratio, which rose sharply when our revenues dipped.

5. As the ERGP indicates, our revenue mobilization efforts will involve, amongst other things, introducing measures to increase our independent revenues from our revenue generating agencies, as well as, cutting out waste by intensifying our current efforts to plug revenue leakages and inefficiencies in government spending. In the ERGP the government has also committed itself to exploring options to generate additional revenues by the restructuring and privatisation of carefully selected public enterprises. But, most importantly, the ERGP states that we will be taking measures to expand our tax to GDP ratio from the current 6% of GDP to at least 15% of GDP. We are already working on these tax review initiatives. The immediate focus of this Government is therefore on revenue enhancement. For the ERGP to achieve its intended results we must be able to mobilize substantial increases in government revenues over the life of the Plan. Revenue mobilization is therefore our number one priority.

6. Beyond this, we are focused on the full and effective implementation of every aspect of the ERGP. As you will recall, the ERGP sets out three broad objectives, namely, (a) restoring growth to a positive and sustained path, (b) investing in the Nigerian people to improve their living standards, and (c) building an economy that is globally competitive. To achieve these objectives the Plan outlines five key execution priorities which are to (i) stabilize the macroeconomic environment, (ii) invest in agriculture to achieve food security, (iii) tackle the country's protracted energy problem to

achieve self-sufficiency in power and petroleum products, (iv) improve transportation infrastructure throughout the country and (v) accelerate the pace of the country's industrialization, particularly by encouraging the growth of SMEs.

7. In summary, we are pursuing a path that will move Nigeria away from a jobless growth driven mainly by petroleum revenues to an inclusive and broad-based growth. This will involve as the President, Muhammadu Buhari, has, repeatedly said, changing Nigeria in a fundamental way. As he has emphasized, the ERGP is this Administration's blueprint aimed at building a new Nigeria where we grow what we eat, consume what we make and produce what we use.

8. Ladies and Gentlemen, I must say that this Administration is very encouraged by the positive feedback we have been receiving on the ERGP. We thank Nigerians for all the words of encouragement. Also, internationally, the ERGP has been well received. I have just returned from a visit to the United States of America, during which I attended the World Bank/ IMF Spring meetings. Most of the comments we received there, were very encouraging.

9. However, we cannot enjoy the benefits of the ERGP unless it is effectively and faithfully implemented. Ladies and Gentlemen, I must admit that as a country our track record on implementation of our plans has not been very good. Conscious of this the ERGP has dedicated a section, Section 7, to implementation. Just a reminder of what it says. Firstly, we must focus on our priorities. Secondly, we must establish clear accountability. Thirdly, we must set targets and develop detailed action plans. Fourthly, we must mobilize and allocate resources to the priorities. Fifthly, we must create an enabling policy and regulatory environment. And, finally, we must set up delivery unit, or units, to monitor and drive progress.

10. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to inform you that we have already commenced the process of developing a detailed implementation road-map. This will lay out the roadmap for a step

by step delivery of each of the strategies. Each strategy will be further broken down into component activities, sub-activities and actions. Each action will be supported by clearly assigned responsibilities, which will be sequenced against clear milestones and timelines for ease of monitoring. We have also commenced the process of establishing a Delivery Unit, as well as Implementation Units, to facilitate the effective implementation of the Plan. This is to be complemented with the establishment of special task forces on the key execution areas of the Plan.

11. However, before we go too far down the implementation road we felt that we should gather experts and stakeholders for further consultations. As a government we believe that we can only succeed in transforming Nigeria if we work closely with stakeholders. This is the first of many consultative processes we will be holding on plan implementation, as well as to get feedback from stakeholders. Just as the ERGP was developed through an extensive consultative process to ensure collective ownership, plan implementation will involve constant and continuous dialogue and consultations with relevant stakeholders. Today's gathering is therefore the first of many dialogue sessions this Ministry, and indeed, the Government, as a whole, will be conducting to obtain citizen's participation in the collective endeavor of transforming Nigeria.

12. Let me, once again, thank all of you for honouring this invitation. I am confident that, given your wide and varied experience, your contributions will be invaluable in helping us achieve effective and successful plan implementation.

13. Thank you for your attention. I look forward to a most engaging and useful session.