

**KEYNOTE/OPENING ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE
HONOURABLE MINISTER, MINISTRY OF BUDGET AND
NATIONAL PLANNING, SENATOR UDOMA UDO UDOMA,
CON, DURING THE AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY
CELEBRATION IN ABUJA NIGERIA,
18TH NOVEMBER, 2016**

The Statistician - General, National Bureau of Statistics,

Chairman of the Occasion,

President, Nigerian Statistical Association,

Chief Executives of Government Ministries,
Departments & Agencies (MDAs),

Representatives of Development Partners here present,

Resource Persons,

Distinguished Participants,

Gentlemen of the press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to address this gathering of distinguished people at this important occasion. I am indeed delighted to note that this occasion was planned as a grand finale of the celebration of the African Statistics Day. I understand the African

Statistics Day (ASD) is a yearly advocacy tool aimed at raising awareness on the importance of Statistics in the economic and social development of Africa. The event which is celebrated every year on 18 November was declared by the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development during its 1990 session in Addis Ababa. The theme of the 2016 African Statistics Day is **“Strengthening economic statistics for regional integration, structural transformation and sustainable development”**. There is no doubt that this theme was well thought out, particularly, as there is currently the need to produce high quality economic statistics for Africa’s regional and economic transformation, and in achieving the targets set by the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and by the African Union in Agenda 2063 - **“The Africa we want”**.

2. Indeed, the 2016 celebration is in line with an aspect of the vision of the present democratic Government of

Nigeria which is devoted to raising awareness on the importance of reliable statistical production processes and usage for evidence - based policy decisions. In this regard, I note with satisfaction that the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the apex statistical agency in Nigeria in collaboration with other data producing agencies is already putting in place necessary infrastructure that would facilitate the production of basic statistical information capable of meeting the expectations of the nation under the present democratic dispensation. I, therefore, wish to commend NBS for ensuring that this year's ASD is celebrated in Nigeria through this important forum. I believe the forum will help to come up with ideas that would help to strengthen the development of statistics in Nigeria.

3. As you are already aware, economic statistics and national accounts data, provide a comprehensive assessment of the performance of a country's economy over time. A strong national statistical system with good

infrastructure for collection, processing, compilation, analysis, dissemination and archiving of all economic statistics, is vital to national development. The African Common Project on the implementation of the 2008 United Nations Systems of National Accounts (SNA) is making steady progress in assisting countries to improve their economic statistics. The SNA is an overarching coordinating framework for economic statistics in two important ways: as a conceptual framework for ensuring the consistency of the definitions, standards and classifications used in official statistics; and as an accounting framework to ensure the numerical consistency of data drawn from different sources. The African Common Project has brought together regional economic communities, Afristat (the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa), pan-African institutions (the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Union), regional and international organizations and development partners to assist countries in implementing the SNA.

4. Furthermore, I wish to use this opportunity to urge all users of statistics to effectively collaborate with the producers of statistical information to enable the desired results to be attained. In this regard, the use of data should form an essential element in Government's decision-making process as timely statistical information is expected to provide the basis for decision making in the governance of the country. Statistical information could equally serve as an important tool for championing the course of users in every sphere of endeavour. In addition, it is important to note that production of Statistics is not only time consuming but time sensitive. For this reason,, users of data should endeavour to assist NBS as well as other data producers of statistics to resolve the paradox by providing accurate information and responding promptly to all statistical enquiries/surveys.

5. Before concluding this address, I wish to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to Development Partners and other International Organizations for offering

to provide support for the development of statistics in Nigeria. I hope that today's forum would address the various challenges in the Nigerian Statistical System and provide the way forward for better effective statistical delivery, in the country. It is equally my sincere belief that the forum will come up with appropriate and improved method of data production in Nigeria including the application of modern ICT tools.

6. While I look forward to your recommendations and conclusions, I wish you fruitful and successful deliberations.

On this note, I hereby declare this occasion open.

7. Thank you for your attention.