

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF BUDGET AND  
NATIONAL PLANNING, SENATOR UDOMA UDO UDOMA, AT THE  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION CROSS-LEARNING SUMMIT,  
HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY, 2019 AT THE TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL,  
ABUJA**

**PROTOCOL:**

I am delighted to be with you on this occasion of the International Social Protection Cross-Learning Summit organised by International Development Partners working closely with the Ministry of Budget and National Planning. Let me start by congratulating the Development Partners who are the organizers for sustaining this bi-annual summit. The Government of Nigeria appreciates the various contributions you have been making towards the upliftment of the poor and the vulnerable in Nigeria.

2. The objective of this summit is to deepen stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the benefits of continuing investments in social protection related programmes in Nigeria. It will also provide the opportunity for Nigeria to review the implementation of various social protection programmes put in place by this Administration since we assumed office three and half years ago.

3. It is in this context that the theme of this year's Summit which is "Improving the Lives of Poor and Vulnerable Nigerians: Lessons from Implementing Social Protection in Nigeria", has been selected to enable us review and share ideas on how best to further build on the momentum towards lifting our people out of poverty. This summit is a follow up to that of 2016 which focused on "Evidence and Learning in

Improving Social Protection in Nigeria”. One of the key resolutions of that summit was for member nations to develop Community of Practice for Social Protection. I am glad to inform you that Nigeria has developed her National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) which will be formally launched during this summit.

4. The NSPP has 16 measures aimed at addressing the challenges of human development. It provides a mix of policies and programmes designed for individuals and households to reduce poverty and socio-economic shocks, promote and enhance livelihood and life of dignity among our people. This policy is meant to cater for the vulnerable citizens of this country from cradle to grave.

5. As you are aware, the issue of social protection is a core component of our Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) which was introduced in 2017. The Plan has three broad objectives, namely: Restoring Growth, Investing in our People, and Building a Globally Competitive Economy. We are committed to the implementation of the ERGP. Social protection is part of our programme of ‘investing in our people’, one of the three broad objectives of the Plan.

6. As a demonstration of that commitment we have, since 2016, consistently set aside a provision of N500 billion in our annual budgets to address issues of social protection. This is unprecedented in the history of our country. In addition, the total capital budget for social development programmes across MDAs (Health, Education, Labour and Employment, Youth and Sports) experienced a quantum leap from N48.17 billion in 2015 to N214.48 billion in 2018.

7. The implementation of these programmes has made Nigerians, particularly the poor and vulnerable, to feel directly the impact of governance. Just last Sunday I was at an event organised by the Ministry of Information at which beneficiaries of some of our social investment programmes gave very moving testimonies of how their lives have been impacted by the programmes. We had market women, farmers, traders, food suppliers and young graduates testify about how the SIP has brought hope to them, have helped them to expand their businesses, have given them jobs and helped them to learn new skills. Listening to these testimonies brought home to me the importance of the work we are doing and how real lives are transformed by these interventions. This work is important, and we must all work hard to do more. Step by step we are helping to reduce poverty and ameliorate the plight of the poorest of our citizens.

8. As the Vice President said poverty does not disappear on its own. Whilst there is no doubt that we have made a remarkable difference we have to continue our current focus on poverty alleviation programmes and have to continue to apply them consistently over a number of years to make the kind of dramatic reduction in poverty that we are determined to make. We must continue with our programmes and intensify their implementation in order to reduce substantially the level of poverty in Nigeria. We need to continue to grow the economy so as to create a prosperous society with life more abundant for all our citizens. In line with the strategies outlined in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), we intend to continue to promote sustainable economic development which will impact on all

our people and create opportunities for all our people. We are indeed very encouraged that our programmes are producing positive results, but we are determined to do even more. And that is why we are assembled here to see how we can apply the lessons from implementing our social protection programmes to further improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable.

9. In concluding, let me commend everyone who has worked assiduously to make this event a success. I would also like to acknowledge the participation of the delegates from the States. You are very welcome. Your participation is critical for the success of our collective desire to improve the lives of our people.

10. While wishing you fruitful deliberations, I look forward to receiving the report of this summit.

11. I thank you for your kind attention.