OPENING ADDRESS BY OLUSOLA O. IDOWU (MRS.), THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, BUDGET AND NATIONAL PLANNING AT THE 20TH JOINT PLANNING BOARD (JPB) MEETING HELD IN GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE FROM 3RD – 4TH AUGUST, 2021.

PROTOCOL

I am very delighted to welcome you to this 20th edition of the Joint Planning Board (JPB) meeting, holding here in Maiduguri, ‘*The Home of Peace’*, with the theme: **“Managing the Nigerian Economy for Sustainable Development in a Challenging Environment”** This year’s meeting is organized by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning in collaboration with the Borno State Government, as a follow-up to our last meetings held in Asaba, Delta State, In 2019 and FCT, Abuja in 2021 respectively.

2. Let me specially appreciate Professor Babagana Zulum, the Executive Governor of Borno State, the Government and good people of Borno for the warm reception extended all participants since arrival in the State.

3. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to say that the theme: “***Managing the Nigerian Economy for Sustainable Development in a Challenging Environment***: ***The Way Forward***” was chosen to chart workable means of improving the Nigerian economy to overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19 and chat a realistic pathway to addressing the trending insecurity that is affecting sustainable economic growth and development across all the states of the federation. This August gathering ( in the month of August) is therefore expected to proffer sustainable solutions for repositioning the ailing economy at the 3 tiers of government. I have no doubt that, the array of renowned security, humanitarian/ disaster managers and health experts assembled from the public, private and academia will do justice to the theme.

4. The theme is quite apt considering the potentials of all the states to easily expand their economic base in spite of the rising level of insecurity. For example, Borno State has comparative advantage in expanding its Agriculture and food production base despite the challenges posed by insecurity. All other states here present are also having comparative advantages on what can drive growth and improve the economies of the state.

5. It is therefore heartwarming to know of the giant strides by His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Borno State, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum in the midst of insecurity, insurgency and threat to lives and properties in the State and its environs. While still grabbling with the insecurity and recovering from the ravaging effects of COVID-19 pandemic, Borno State Government has executed a total of 556 Capital Projects, 7 of which were unveiled by the President in June, 2021. I therefore, urge the representatives of the State Governors and including the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory to accord priority attention to the under-served areas of the nation by engaging in various poverty reduction and wealth creation activities. Engagement in commercial agricultural value-chain to reduce unemployment particularly in the Rural areas, may be useful.

6. Permit me to implore you to continue to collaborate with the Federal Government towards effective implementation of all the resolutions/decisions of the Joint Planning Board/National Council on Development Planning (JPB/NCDP) to fast-rack Nigerian developmental objectives.

7. Finally, I want to commend the efforts of the State Commissioners and Permanent Secretaries of Budget and Economic Planning and other Stakeholders, for being true partners in the development of our dear country.

8. On this note, I formally welcome you to the 20th Edition of the Joint Planning Board meeting and wish you fruitful deliberations.

 9. Thank you for your attention and God bless.