

AN ADDRESS

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At the Official Unveiling of the

***Survey Report on Awareness and Perceptions
of Migrants on the dangers of Irregular
Migration in Nigeria, 2020***

June 9, 2021

PROTOCOL

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

- 1) It is an honor and a privilege to welcome you today on the occasion of the public release of a product of fruitful collaboration between the National Bureau of Statistics and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as well as several government partners. Today, we formally present the **2020 Report on Awareness and Perceptions of Migrants on the dangers of Irregular Migration in Nigeria.**
- 2) This occasion affords us a rare opportunity to highlight a growing concern that has the potential to escalate to a major humanitarian crisis if not urgently and adequately addressed. Many of us have seen images and heard stories of citizens who, some out of aspiration, others out of desperation, embark on the difficult journey across the sea and the desert. While it is fairly easy to make assumptions about the causes and drivers of migration push and pull factors, the availability of data represents a fundamental and necessary ingredient if the challenge is to be addressed holistically.
- 3) But data to inform and guide policy decision making in this area has been lacking – up till now. This has made it difficult to answer important policy relevant questions. It is only when we get our statistics right, and are able to collate, understand and interpret data correctly; as well as develop our ability to identify key areas in our society that require change, that our policy prescriptions would be better poised to respond to the real needs of the Nigerian society. Such questions include:
 - i. *How can irregular migration challenge be addressed?*
 - ii. *What is the level of public awareness on the dangers of illegal migration?*
 - iii. *How can returned migrants be best supported, rehabilitated and re-integrated into society?*
 - iv. *What lessons can be or have been learned from their experiences?*

- 4) The 70-page Report we are launching today, including 20 pages of data tables, fills an important gap in this regard. It is a pioneer initiative in Nigeria with the primary objective to identify the level of awareness and perceptions of intending and returned migrants as to the dangers of irregular migration. Furthermore, it establishes a baseline upon which future data gathering efforts can be built, and more importantly, informed policies can be designed and targeted to address the challenge of illegal, unregulated immigration as it affects Nigeria. Four target states of Delta, Edo, Imo and Lagos were selected for this round of the survey.
- 5) This collaborative initiative is very much in line with our philosophy at the National Bureau of Statistics, as well as the broader strategy for the development of Nigeria's national statistical system. It embodies our preference for partnerships with multiple stakeholders within the national statistical system, enabling us to leverage on both technical, human and financial resources to deliver relevant data products. It also emphasises our increasing expertise with technology-driven data collection methods to ensure that data is accurate, timely and reliable for policy-making, business investment decisions, intervention planning by the development sector and awareness of the citizens. Finally, the initiative is a major contribution to Nigeria's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) tracking framework, particularly Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) which have migration-related indicators.
- 6) I therefore express our sincere appreciation to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) team, led by Frantz Celestin, for the successful outcome of this effort and look forward to more productive initiatives in the near future.
- 7) With respect to the survey design and methodology adopted, four target states of Delta, Edo, Imo and Lagos were selected for this round of the survey with 2,740 households completed, representing a response rate of 93.6%. The survey was undertaken using GPS-enabled Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) system which enabled a smooth, secure and quick transmission of field data to our data servers. In addition, several layers of data quality controls were introduced including

unbiased selection process for trainers/monitor, two-level trainings, as well as remote and on-field data monitoring by team supervisors, states officers and directorate level coordinators from both NBS and IOM. The analytical results are also disaggregated by gender. Future iterations of this survey will be expected to involve broader scope and scale.

8) At this juncture, permit me to quickly highlight some of the most important findings in this Report.

- i. **The major justification for intending migrants in the four states surveyed are considerations for better economic outcomes (i.e in search of the proverbial ‘greener pasture’).**
 - a. *Between 50 (Lagos) and 67% (Imo) of intending male migrants indicated they were traveling for greener pastures but this proportion is lower for females (between 32.7% in Imo and 50.3% in Lagos)*
- ii. **The most common rout of migration involves passage through the desert and over sea.**
 - a. *Nearly all male respondents in Lagos (91.7%) indicated intention to travel through the desert compared to 57.4% in Edo, whereas the results are reversed for females: 42.6% of intending female migrants in Edo planned to travel through the desert compared to 8.3 percent in Lagos.*
 - b. *Further, between half and two-thirds of male respondent s intended to travel by sea, mostly in Lagos and Edo.*
- iii. **Illegal migrants face considerable travel risks and dehumanising conditions.**
 - a. *Across states and irrespective of gender, returned migrants reported facing dehumanising conditions of detention, sexual abuse, hunger, slavery, forced labour in significant numbers.*
 - b. *Across all four states, more than 70% of returned migrants indicated having no passports or visas*
 - c. *By destination, strong preference was for North America, South America and Australia/Oceania, but respondents from Edo and Lagos indicated preference for Europe.*
 - d. *As expected, there was no response for interest in Antarctica.*

iv. State support for rehabilitating migrants is present in some form

- a. *Nearly 80% of Imo state returnees indicated receiving assistance after training. Many also go on to practice what they are trained on.*

9.) Further details will be provided during the technical presentation but I will encourage our esteemed clients to access the full report on our website, www.nigerianstat.gov.ng where the data and report will be made available today.

10.) In conclusion, I would like to convey special thanks and appreciation to all our governmental partners and stakeholders, who have made this outcome possible. This includes:

- i. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ii. Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment
- iii. Nigeria Immigration Service
- iv. Central Bank of Nigeria
- v. National Population Commission
- vi. Nigeria in Diaspora Commission
- vii. National Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons
- viii. Political and Economic Affairs Office, OSGF, and
- ix. National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons

It is my sincere belief that we can continue to collaborate to achieve great success in raising the standard of data production on the continent, and that we can achieve what we have set out to do if we do the right things at the right time and for the right reasons.

11.) I welcome you all to this launch event, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for listening.