

Remarks by the Statistician General of the Federation, Dr Yemi Kale at the Signing Ceremony of a MoU between the National Bureau of Statistics and the National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office for the Conduct of the National Living Standard Survey.

21st February 2018

1. Let me start by saying that, I am delighted that you all made it here today to this very important event, the signing ceremony of the MoU between the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office (NASSCO) for the Conduct of the National Living Standard Survey. This brief ceremony today, which is also a sensitisation forum for the Survey, is the culmination of over 2 years of hard work put in by the staff of the NBS, NASSCO and the World Bank, and I am personally very delighted that we can finally kickstart this long overdue exercise. So please permit me at this point to applaud the effort and commitment of the staff of these three organisations, it has indeed been a long struggle to get to this point, and I am very pleased that we finally are here to commission this exercise.
2. The National Living Standard Survey as you know, is a very important exercise, not just for NBS or the statistical system, but also for our dear nation. It is from this exercise that we derive statistically sound indicators for measuring poverty and inequality in Nigeria. It also serves as a major source of data for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda for tracking Nigeria's attainment or otherwise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as updating indicators on overall living standards of our people in Nigeria. The consumption expenditure data that will be collected from the project will also form a critical input in rebasing our consumer price index for the first time in over a decade and for the next routine rebasing of our gross domestic product to move the base year from currently 2010 to possibly 2017/18. It is indeed an extremely important data gathering exercise with respect to its scope and usefulness. The subject of poverty for example is very critical to a developing country like Nigeria. Most if not all of the government effort is geared towards ensuring that citizens attain a decent standard of living, and not live within the traps of poverty, with which comes several negative effects and

implications for households and the society. As the principal agency responsible for the production and management of official data in the country, we are keen on providing the public, government and policy makers useful and reliable statistics to be used for designing and implementing poverty alleviation interventions and programs across the country. Personally, As Statistician General of the Federation, I must state that this is one of the projects I was keen to complete before my term was up at NBS so it is a project that I hold very close to my heart. It is for this reason that we have partnered with NASSCO and the World Bank to carry out this exercise. The massive amount of data from this survey will help government at federal and state levels as well as policymakers and researchers including NASSCO and the World Bank and many other development agencies and NGOs to evaluate and assess their current programs, and redesign and re-strategize them for better effectiveness.

3. The planning and preparation for this survey, has been one of the longest and most detailed for any household survey in the history of NBS, and just like many of you, I can't wait to see the result of this effort early next year when the work will be completed, and final results published. That being said, we intend to be publishing quarterly preliminary findings on household consumption and other indicators as we continue the project throughout the next 12 months. Just like all NBS household-based surveys in recent terms, NLSS in Nigeria will for the first time be carried out using electronic means of data collection. This is no small task when you compare the size of our country and the number of households to be visited. Trained enumerators will be deployed to selected households across the country over the next 12 months, to collect information on consumption, expenditure and general living conditions. As you can imagine, this is expected to be a very long and thorough process exercise, requiring the cooperation of households and communities that will be canvassed. Accordingly, in the presence of the press here today, I want to use this medium to seek the kind support and collaboration of households and communities across the country in providing us with the requested information. The accurate provision of this information will ensure that we produce indicators that reflect the true living condition of households in the country and ensure that our government and partners have the best possible information to work with, thereby giving their policies and programs the best chances of success.

4. Every agency here represented today has been invited to this event as a key stakeholder in this survey. You will be called on periodically during the course of the survey to be updated with its' progress, and I want to urge you to please see yourselves as critical partners, and actively participate, asking questions and making valuable contributions so that we can altogether be satisfied with the final output.

5. With these brief remarks, I thank you all for honouring our invitation to this signing ceremony and look forward to larger gathering in about a year's time for the unveiling of the results of this exercise we have commissioned here today. I thank you for your attention.