

## **Remarks by the Statistician General of the Federation at the Launch of the National Drug Use Survey in Nigeria**

The Honourable Minister for Health,

Head of the European Union in Nigeria,

The Country Rep, United Nations Office for Drug and Crime,

Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

Representatives of Development Partners here present,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am delighted to be here with you today at this very important event, the launch of the first ever comprehensive National Drug Use Survey in Nigeria. I am happy that we finally get to witness the unveiling of the results of what have been a very long and difficult process, which started well over 3 years ago with the planning and preparation for the survey.
2. Today's launch is yet another step in our commitment as a National Statistics System to deepen the production and use of evidence from data, to correctly understand our challenges, prescribe solutions to them and to over time, monitor and evaluate the efficacy of those prescriptions. 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 community.
3. As we all know, drug use and its consequences are fast becoming one of the increasingly talked about challenges across our country today. It has, and still continues to affect the lives of many individuals, families, organizations and communities across our country. Many families have been broken, lives lost and relationships destroyed as a result of drug use. It has also contributed to several adverse public health conditions and increased criminal activities. Accordingly, it is time to put in place, comprehensive measures designed to tackle this growing problem before it becomes an even worse national challenge.
4. In line with international best practice and as is fast becoming the norm in Nigeria, no complete or effective policy, strategy or intervention programme can be developed without the use of adequate and reliable statistics. It is for this reason,

that the NBS and the entire statistical system in Nigeria is pleased to be associated with this exercise.

5. The survey results being unveiled here today provide a good and comprehensive basis for understanding the nature and severity of drug use in Nigeria. It also provides information on high drug users, health consequences of drug use and the social implications of drug use, including harm to users and others. In addition to being a good source of sound information on drug use in Nigeria, it also serves as a good source of data for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to measure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators, particularly for indicators under Goal 3 of the agenda which aims to *Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages* and in particular goal 3.5 which aspires to *Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol* by 2030 .
6. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as Statistician General of the Federation and CEO of the National Bureau of Statistics, I can assure you that the methodology adopted for the conduct of this survey was sound and robust, with a complete pre-test, pilot and listing exercise carried out before the main survey. In fact, at the time this survey was carried out, it was one of the very first nationwide surveys to be conducted entirely using GPS enabled Computer Assisted Personal Interview Devices (CAPI devices), which provided a great learning experience for us. Since then, in line with our drive to improve data quality, we have worked very hard as a statistical system on improving data collection methods, and presently, all our household surveys are conducted using CAPI. We can now provide better monitoring for our workers and operations in the field, both remotely and in real time, which has translated to better returns and better analysed results, such as is being unveiled this morning.
7. At this juncture, permit me to acknowledge and commend the support provided by our partners on this project, UNODC. This is the second major exercise we have worked on together - the first being the first ever corruption survey in Nigeria. We are currently working on updating the corruption survey, also with the UNODC which will provide yet another interesting set of data for policy makers to take informed decisions.
8. I am happy to say that the UNODC has become a close partner with NBS and I want to express my appreciation and that of the NBS and the entire National

Statistics System to you. Our collaboration on this and other projects, has enabled our staff further strengthen their technical capacity and gain valuable experience, something for which we are very grateful. I want to also acknowledge and commend the effort and support of both the technical and steering committees of this project. Your commitment and hard-work to the successful completion of this exercise has not gone unnoticed, it is very much appreciated, and the entire statistical system owes you a huge debt of gratitude. For my staff and colleagues at the NBS and the wider statistical system, I want to thank you all for your hard work and dedication, despite the very challenging and sensitive environment in which we work.

9. While the task ahead is daunting, I believe 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. The task ahead of us does not diminish, and the demand for data will continue to soar. While the work environment and conditions remain harsh, and funding, though improving on many fronts, is hardly ever enough, we must nevertheless deliver on our mandate. We must not relent in this very important work that we do, as the future of this country is dependent on the kind of statistical system we build today. Therefore, I encourage you to continue to give it your best, as Nigeria will be better for it. In so doing, this country will not only be great, but will serve as a model for other African countries and indeed the developing world.
10. Once - again, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you immensely for your kind attention