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“SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR THE POST-2015
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA”

BY

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Once again, I wish to commend the leadership of our able Chair of CSTD - Mr. Andrew Reynolds for the excellent work of the Commission under your watch.

2. Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, please let me stand on established protocols.

3. It gives me great pleasure to present Nigeria’s progress on the science, technology and innovation (STI) for the post 2015 development agenda.

4. In the globalised knowledge economy innovation is recognised as the key element for competitiveness and economic growth. Unfortunately many emerging economies have natural resources but lack technologies required to add value to these resources. A deeply embedded culture of innovation in science and technology is an important way to break out of the vicious cycle of under development and poverty.

5. You may recall that in 2013, at the 16th session of the Commission, the focus of Nigeria’s presentation was the successful revision of Nigeria’s STI policy which was supported by UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank. This revised policy aims to transform and optimise STI for Nigeria’s self reliance and global competitiveness, enterprise development, wealth and job creation.

6. Importantly, the revised STI policy articulates the establishment of a National Research and Innovation Council to facilitating the transformation of Nigeria into a knowledge based economy with strong capabilities in STI. Through the NRIC, STI will be repositioned as a national priority, the growth of innovation based entrepreneurship will be accelerated and the translation of scientific capacity into business opportunities sufficiently leveraged ie the necessary conditions for the commercialisation of research in our universities and research institutions will be created. Chaired by Mr President, and with members drawn from relevant
Ministries, academia and the private sector, the political commitment and importance placed on the national research and development agenda is underscored.

7. It is pleasure to report to the Commission that, the NRIC has been inaugurated by Mr. President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in February 2014. The priority impact areas of focus by NRIC in Nigeria, in line with the Science, Technology and Innovation for Africa 2024 Strategy (STISA-2024) include the following:

   i. Eradicate Hunger and Achieve Food and Nutrition Security;
   ii. Prevent and Control Diseases and ensure welfare;
   iii. Develop physical and intellectual communication;
   iv. Protect our space;
   v. Live Together- Build the Community; and
   vi. Create Wealth.

8. Also, Nigeria is glad to report that we have developed a framework for the National System of Innovation (NSI) which include Innovation councils at the Sectoral, Regional, State and Local levels to evolve a unique model of innovation with a focus on inclusive growth for the economic emancipation of our people.

9. Mr Chairman and Your Excellencies, Nigeria is taking a pragmatic approach at actualizing an STI led inclusiveness and inclusive growth at the grassroot through a the novel Ward Based Cluster Programme (WBCP) that provides the platform for the demonstration and further deployment of requisite technologies for value addition to the resource endowments of each of the 9,555 political wards into useful products and services. WBCP when fully implemented, will not only create wealth and jobs at the ward (local) level through spin off enterprises but
will also support the development of local capacity and talent. The mapping of the raw materials in the 9,555 wards has been completed and nine wards have been selected for implementation as pilots. The planning of the pilot projects has commenced (land, skills acquisition, identification of existing SMEs that can buy into projects etc) and the technologies to be deployed in ensuring food security include cassava processing, plantain processing, fish processing, okra processing, oil palm processing, milk processing and tomato processing. Successful pilots will lead to the replication of these projects across the 9555 wards. Let me bring to your attention that, the WBCP has special focus on developing youths and women entrepreneurship.

10. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Nigeria through its Presidential Standing Committee on Inventions and Innovation as a component of the National System of Innovation has been supporting Youths through grants for their innovation in Science. Mr President, the importance of promoting and supporting innovation in Science and Technology especially among our youths cannot be overemphasised. We stress the need to promote every effort that inculcates the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in our youths.

11. Great success has been recorded also in our technology incubation programme deployed through a network of 25 approved centres all operating under the auspices of the National Board for Technology Incubation (NBTI). It is an integrated support programme that creates and nurtures value added and technology based enterprises in the low to high tech and emerging technologies space. NBTI provides a platform for speedy commercialisation of technologies by effectively linking talent, technology, capital and know-how. NBTI has successfully nurtured over 400 entrepreneurs who on graduation have created about 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.
12. Your Excellencies, Nigeria in our strategic focus have identified five technologies as having potential for great impact in Nigeria and these include – Space Science and Technology, Biotechnology, Renewable Energy especially Solar Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing Technology and Building and Roads Technology. This will ensure that Nigeria continue to lead as the largest economy in Africa.

13. Progress has also been made on the Sheda Science and Technology Complex (SHESTCO) Science and Technology Park, located on an area of about 79.5 hectares in Sheda a suburb of Abuja, Nigeria. SHESTCO S&T Park is modelled after the triple helix model that seeks to ensure that governments, industry and university/research institutions assume some of the capabilities of the other even as each maintains its primary role and distinct identity. SHESTCO S&T Park has 7 (seven) feeder institutions which today include universities, research institutions that are focussed on the development of the technologies that we have prioritised as a nation to fast track our development. National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), a feeder institution is already manufacturing solar panels.

14. SHESTCO S&T Park project is expected to drive innovation and create massive economic activities through the complete value chains of Solar Technology, Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, ICT and Agricultural Technology. It will among others open ways to indigenous manufacture of microprocessors, silicon chips, integrated circuit, printed circuit boards and other products associated with solar technologies. This project has successfully attracted international support from the Public and Private Sectors in Poland, USA, China, France, Germany and other International Organisations including UNESCO, with
MoUs signed in some cases. The UNESCO expert mission to Nigeria in August 2013 produced a report that will provide valuable input into the development of a more detailed operational business plan that can attract the national and international funding required to make SHESTCO a reality.

15. Mr. Chirman, other parts of the world have demonstrated clearly that creating and developing technology based enterprises is the surest and fastest way to fast track industrial development. To achieve the desired impact of science technology and innovation in national development a National Research and Innovation Fund (NRIF) will be established to evolve reliable and sustainable funding frameworks and mechanisms from government, private sector and development partners.

16. In conclusion, Nigeria as the largest economy on the African continent, desires and needs to be an active player in the global web of STI activities contributing to and benefitting from the global pool of STI knowledge for sustainable development. We will continually seek partnerships, collaboration and build local, regional and international networks to support the achievement of our national aspirations.

17. Mr. Chairman, thank you once more for the opportunity to speak at this panel and I thank Your Excellencies for listening.