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**High-level segment on “Harnessing science, technology, and innovation to
accelerate progress on the SDGs and addressing COVID-19”**

Statement submitted by

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Federal Republic of Nigeria

"Harnessing Science, Technology, and Innovation to accelerate progress on the SDGs and addressing COVID-19" as well as Harnessing Rapid Technological Change for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

Statement by

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At

**Virtual Meeting of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for
Development (CSTD), Geneva, Switzerland**

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Let me begin this address by saying how delighted I am to be invited to this session. It is my hope and aspiration that through the interaction at this 23RD Session of Commission on Science and Technology for Development all effort will be directed towards finding a lasting solution to the challenges facing our societies in deploying the benefits of Science, Technology and Innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing the novel Corona virus (COVID- 19) I therefore wish, on behalf of the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), the Government of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria thank the organizers of this virtual meeting.

I must state that the priority themes of this session: **“Harnessing science, technology, and innovation to accelerate progress on the SDGs and addressing COVID-19” as well as Harnessing rapid technological change for inclusive and sustainable development”** remain very apt and relevant. They are well chosen topics reflecting on current societies’ challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on the world today.

3. The Government of Federal Republic of Nigeria through its Change Agenda recognizes the role which Science, Technology and Innovation will play in national development; is making important efforts to use Science, Technology and Innovation to diversify the economy in a sustainable manner. The National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, was approved in 1986 and was reviewed in 2012. It is currently under review after eight years of implementation. Since 2016, four other very important policies were put in place by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, to ensure effective utilization of science, technology and innovation in national development. These policies are:

- a. the National Science, Technology and Innovation Roadmap (NSTIR) 2017 - 2030;
- b. the National Strategy for Competitiveness in Raw Materials and Product Development in Nigeria;
- c. Presidential Executive Order No. 5, for Planning and Execution of Projects; Promotion of Nigerian Content in Contracts, Science, Engineering and Technology;
- d. . National Leather and Leather Products Policy, and the National Policy on Methanol Fuel Production Technology, which was approved by the FEC on October 23, 2019.

These policies were approved by the Federal Executive Council. The aim is to use science, technology and innovation to create jobs for both the young and old; generate wealth for individuals and the nation; fight and defeat poverty, as well as industrialize the nation.

4. Today, we live at a very historic and unique period, where COVID-19 is ravaging many countries of the World. The Federal Ministry of Science and Technology is working very hard to support President Muhammadu Buhari in the fight to help defeat COVID -19 pandemic in our dear country. We are working to develop home-grown solutions to meet our urgent national needs through the effective application of science, technology and innovation. We are convinced that deploying home-grown solutions to solving our problems, is the best approach as it affords us the opportunity to solve our problems ourselves, instead of depending on others to do it for us.

It would interest you to know that on 13th February, 2020, the Honourable Minister of Science and Technology; Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu challenged Nigerian Scientists to find cure for the COVID-19, and pledged a financial reward of thirty Six Million Naira (N36, 000,000.00). Since then, many institutions, and individuals have written to us claiming their research results and natural products could cure the COVID-19. Accordingly, a Committee comprising Fellows of the Nigerian Academy of Science has been constituted to help us review these claims. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology has developed a strategy of Prevention, Tracking, Testing and Treatment (PT3) in short, medium and long term basis.

Our Agencies in the Ministry are working to provide indigenous solutions to the problems created by this pandemic. In this regard, nine of our Agencies have been mobilized to start producing hand sanitizers, disinfectants, personal protective equipment (PPE) including high quality face- masks, body immune boosters, vaccines, test kits, disinfectant dispensing equipment, ventilator, telemedicine, etc. Also, a technical committee comprising members of the Ministries of Science and Technology and Health have been constituted and would continue to meet until this goal of fighting and defeating COVID-19 is achieved.

Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; I wish to re-iterate that no one nation can do it alone, hence the need for partnership and collaboration in STI development among member States. There is no gainsaying the fact that STI sub-sector is fundamental catalyst for industrialization. The successful development and deployment of knowledge in

Science, Technology and Innovation would lead to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and the fight against COVID-19.

Thank you.

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