

**GOODWILL MESSAGE TO THE STAKEHOLDER’S ON THE 4-DAY WORKSHOP
ON ADVANCING SATELLITE-BASED CROP MONITORING TO INCREASE
RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY AT JOHNWOOD
HOTEL, ABUJA, NIGERIA, 2nd -5th JULY 2024**

CHIEF UCHE GEOFFREY NNAJI

**HONOURABLE MINISTER OF INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
MINISTRY**

PROTOCOL.....

It is with great pleasure and sincere gratitude that I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our partners, the United Nation Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Chinese Academy of Sciences project of its Aerospace Information Research Institute (AIR/CAS) and the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) for collaborating with us on a 4-day workshop titled “Advancing Satellite-Based Crop Monitoring to Increase Resilience in the face of Global Food Security”.

The timing of the workshop aligns with one of the core agendas of the Nation’s mandate towards ensuring food security to liberate Nigerians from poverty and hunger. As such, The Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology under my watch is focused on the utilization of latest cutting-edge technologies towards the achievement of food security. The National Space Research and Development (NASRDA) was set up 25 years ago to ensure that the core mandate of the Ministry is achieved in various sectors with the use of space science, technology, and innovations.

Presently, there is problem of food insecurity in the West Africa sub-region including Nigeria. Increasing agricultural productivity through space technology is the only sustainable manner to meet the growing food demand both national and global. The CropWatch program provided a robust platform for adaptation to a changing climate that poised greater challenges to the agricultural sectors. To meet these challenges, agricultural production and food systems need to undergo a profound transformation through the use of technology such as Earth Observation (EO) techniques.

In spite of the giant strides made by CropWatch on the advancement of crop productivity using satellite-based approaches, we still have a long way to go with the adoption of rapid advancement in Artificial Intelligence, robotics and development of nano satellites, we are positioning the nation to adopt these approaches towards monitoring and increasing the productivity of agricultural products, taking into account regenerative agriculture, sustainable agriculture and Carbon Dioxide Reduction (CDR) approaches, aligning with Climate Change mitigation approaches.

At this juncture, let me reiterate the premium I placed on the the importance of partnership and working across different sectors of the government towards achieving food security and appreciate other stakeholders for honoring our invitation to participate on this critical workshop. The workshop is specifically tailored to facilitate and stimulate agricultural monitoring in the beneficiary countries for the advancement of the SDG goal of zero hunger.

In my capacity as the Honourable Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology and overseeing Africa's leading space agency, I am pleased to welcome the high delegation from China led by the Director General of AIR/CAS and his distinguish members. I waould like to charge the participants to explore how space technologies can be leveraged to advance agricultural production in Nigeria. It is my hope that each participant will serve as a true ambassador for his or her respective country, institutions by contributing valuable insights and collaborative energy towards the success of this workshop. Let us embark on these four days of productive discussions, innovative thinking, and strategic planning, united by our common goal of transforming ECOWAS region into a model of food security and agricultural sustainability.

Finally, the Nigeria CropWatch monitoring system will be strengthened to serve our peculiarity of small-farm-holders needs. This underscores the importance of this workshop to explore some of the new methods and data involves, we need all the necessary knowledge, advice and data to help actualize our objective. It is expected that the participants from other countries will gain critical skills through this workshop to establish training related to Cropwatch as well as be able to transfer knowledge gain to implement same in their respective countries.

Thank you and do have a great deliberation and training. I hereby declare this training workshop open. Thank you all. May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.