



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY ENGR. SULEIMAN H. ADAMU FNSE, FAEng The HONOURABLE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES ON THE OCCASION OF A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP ON PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM HELD AT CHIDA HOTEL UTAKO, ON 28TH TO 29TH OCTOBER 2019.

PROTOCOL

It is my privilege and honour to address you all on this occasion of the two-day workshop on Private Sector Engagement and Collaboration in the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Forum. The purpose or essence of this forum is to identify areas of private sector involvement and collaboration on issues of (WASH), and ultimately come up with innovative solutions on how this pressing challenge can be effectively addressed. I am particularly excited to be a part of this forum, given that this is the first of its kind for the sector, pertaining specifically to Sanitation and Hygiene in Nigeria. This workshop will address the challenges of financing the WASH sector through the collaboration of all stakeholders including the private sector in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) WASH targets by 2030. As such, it is a great pleasure to participate in what I believe will yield ground-breaking results, in light of the challenges at hand.

2. Nigeria currently ranks at number one, in terms of the number of people practicing open defecation in Africa. Moreover, we are on the brink of being ranked first globally, as approximately 47 million people do not have access to sanitation services in its most basic form. Understandably, this is a serious concern to all of us as it has immense economic consequences and also hinders the social development of the country.

3. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 is aimed at ensuring availability of WASH services as well as the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. Target 6.2 is focused on achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and to end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. Although the SDGs have stipulated these targets, they have also highlighted some hurdles that will

require collaborative efforts to overcome them, with which we are concerned for the course of this workshop.

4. Besides the exposure to diseases, there is a lack of dignity that is inherent in open defecation practices, particularly with regard to women and girls. As such, there is also a gender inequality issue which must be addressed with urgency. If effective solutions are not found, the non-availability of sanitation facilities inadvertently further exposes women and girls to violence, including rape, when they are forced to go out at night to defecate in the open. Again, I will emphasize that this problem has many layers in terms of the vast consequences it rears. As part of the efforts to address this issue, with particular reference to ending open defecation, a National Roadmap towards making Nigeria Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2025 was developed and launched in 2016. However, only minimal progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Roadmap, with only 14 LGAs across the country so far being certified as open defecation free according to the National ODF Protocol.

5. The 2018 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) National Outcome Routing Mapping (WASH-Norm) data showed that access to basic water supply services in the country is 67.9% while access level to basic sanitation is 41.5%. Access to basic sanitation in institutions and public places are also not encouraging, with the statistics sitting at a meagre 35.7%. Furthermore only 34% of schools have access to basic water supply and sanitation facilities. Only 15.7% of schools have access to basic WASH services out of which only 5.5% of them are gender sensitive.

6. We are all aware that globally, water and sanitation are pivotal to achieving the sustainable Development Goals target. According to a World Bank Report (2012), around 122,000 Nigerians including 87,000 children under 5 die each year from diarrhoea with nearly 90% of these deaths being directly attributed to water, sanitation and hygiene. The 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey indicated that about 43.6% of children under the age of 5 are moderately and severely stunted due to poor nutrition and recurrent or chronic illness. This of course has severe consequences for the educational development of our children.

7. However, it is comforting to note the positive efforts being made by my Ministry in the WASH sector, towards improving the living standards of our people both in the rural and urban areas. Access to Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene are part of the indices for socio-economic development of any nation and thus cannot be ignored.

8. The Ministry developed and launched the Partnership for Expanded Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (PEWASH) programme in 2016, which was designed as a national collaborative instrument for the improvement of access to water supply and sanitation in Nigeria. PEWASH is aimed at building on previous efforts and complementing existing water supply and sanitation strategies by instituting a coordination and prioritization framework for project delivery. The programme is also expected to provide an opportunity for the (WASH) sector to leverage the available expertise, technology and financial resources from Governments (Federal, State and Local), Development Partners, Civil Society, Private Sector and Communities.

9. Other National efforts include, the launch of the National WASH Action Plan for the revitalization of the WASH sector and the declaration of a state of emergency by Mr. President on 8th November 2018, with a strong statement to end open defecation in the country by 2025. Earlier this year, the Federal Executive Council approved the roll out of the National Programme to End Open Defecation in Nigeria tagged “Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet” Campaign. This is geared at mobilizing a high level of political support, resources and the entire populace towards building a new culture of safe sanitation.

10. A national Secretariat for the programme has been set up by the Ministry to coordinate activities across the country and the national launch and flag-off of the campaign is to be performed by Mr. President on 19th November to coincide with the 2019 World Toilet Day Commemoration.

11. The role of the private sector in the revitalization of the WASH sector cannot be overlooked. As we all know, the private sector is the engine for economic growth and are the key players when it comes to creating innovative structures such as that which pertains to the financing of WASH services. Historically, the private sector has always been adept at coming up with new technologies and solutions relating to development. However, this is the first time that there is a call towards leveraging the capabilities of the private sector in a collaborative manner, in light of dealing with inadequate WASH services globally. The SDGs have also reiterated this point that the eradication of inequality in water and sanitation cannot be achieved without greater emphasis on private sector engagement. We are thus very lucky to be gathered at such a unique workshop, as it is an unprecedented opportunity to come together under one umbrella, called Organized Private Sector in Water Sanitation

and Hygiene (OPS-WASH). I therefore call on you to utilize this unique initiative to support the Federal Government of Nigeria to end Open Defecation in the country.

12. On this note, I wish to assure all stakeholders of my Ministry's commitment towards improved co-ordination, partnership and implementation of (WASH) programmes which is expected to address the water, sanitation and hygiene inadequacies in our cities and communities, and add to the scale-up processes in our joint effort to tackle the situation. As I inaugurate the OPSWASH group, I wish to appreciate the contributions of all our development partners who have contributed immensely to the organization of this forum, particularly UNICEF and Zenith Water Projects. Their immense efforts and persistence have resulted in this incredible initiative. We are now one body, with one goal.

13. Thank you for your attention and God bless us all.