



Address By

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Justice***

*At the Meeting of the Working Group Members of the Open
Government Partnership (OGP) To Develop the 2017 OGP Work
Plan.*

Chelsea Hotel, Wuse II

7th-8th February 2017

Protocol:

1. Introduction

I wish to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to members of the working group of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) for honoring my invitation to this very important and timely meeting. I am also grateful to United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Justice for All (J4A) for their support in making today a reality as well as civil society organizations, the media and everyone present.

2. Background

Nigeria has been recognized as one of the largest economies in Africa but currently in recession as evidenced with the declining GDP growth rates and its accompanying high inflation rate. The country's revenues have also experienced a significant drop from projected values with the current weak global oil prices.

We also witnessed in November 2016 the fall of our nation's external reserves to a ten year low of about \$24.6 billion, which is a 30% decline from the October 2014 figure. This shows the effect of lower oil prices, falling production volumes and dwindling foreign investments.

The unfavourable statistics above is partly a consequence of corruption which has been one of the biggest obstacles to Nigeria's development.

President Muhammadu Buhari is dedicated to the fight against corruption in his administration and has made commitments to making Nigeria more open, accountable and responsive to citizens through several important reforms and initiatives one of which is the Open Government Partnership a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on improving transparency, accountability, citizen participation and responsiveness to citizens through technology and innovation.

Following Nigeria's OGP membership, the President approved the constitution of the OGP National Steering Committee made up of representatives of government ministries, agencies and departments (MDAs), civil society organizations, organized private sector and professional associations with the Federal ministry of Justice as the lead agency. These organizations working hand in hand, co-created the two year National Action Plan at a retreat held in Kaduna, October 2016.

Following the draft of the NAP, a consultative roundtable comprising of presentations and interactions on the thematic issues around the OGP commitments was held separately for both the CSOs and MDAs with the aim of validating the contents of the draft NAP.

The draft NAP was hosted online for two weeks for further inputs and observation from citizens and thereafter submitted to the Economic Management team for review.

The NAP was formally submitted and approved by the OGP secretariat at the OGP Global Summit in Paris December last year.

3. NAP Outline

The NAP seeks to deepen and mainstream transparency mechanisms and citizens engagement in the management of resources across the sectors, and spans into four key thematic areas; ***fiscal transparency, access to information, anti-corruption and citizens' engagement*** with key deliverables such as ***open budgeting, open contracting, revenue transparency and a publication of a register of beneficial ownership especially in the extractive industry.***

The NAP will ensure that corruption is rooted out through the establishment of a public beneficial ownership register, the development of a platform for sharing information between government MDAs to detect and prevent corrupt practices, the strengthening of Nigeria's asset recovery legislation and taking appropriate actions to coordinate anti-corruption activities.

Beyond these commitments, the NAP took into consideration crosscutting issues such as Technology and Innovation, Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication Strategy. These cross-cutting issues will empower citizens to engage with the government and ensure proper dissemination and management of information as well as ensure effective deployment of these tools across all the thematic areas.

The uniqueness of the OGP process lies in the implementation of the NAP as it provides an organizing framework for networking in addition to establishing a domestic policy mechanism through which the government and civil society can have an ongoing dialogue.

I believe in the ability of the members of this working group to articulate action plans as well as develop implementation strategies that will support the work in each thematic area today and tomorrow.

Conclusion

I have every confidence that with your hard work in drafting the work plan, we will undertake its implementation in a manner that will produce anticipated results for citizens in the shortest possible time.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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