ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MUHAMMADU BUHARI, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, AT THE MID-TERM MINISTERIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW RETREAT HELD ON 11TH OCTOBER, 2021 AT THE STATE HOUSE CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA

PROTOCOLS

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Mid-Term Ministerial Performance Review Retreat organized to assess progress made towards the achievement of the nine key priorities of this Administration.

2. This third retreat comes at a significant time in our economic foreline, a time when Nigeria strives to remain resilient as it recovers from an economic recession and from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. In addition to economic activities slowing down in 2020, due to the resultant lockdown measures necessary to curtail the spread of the virus, the Pandemic necessitated adjustments of our Policy approaches and methods of working to achieve Government objectives.

3. Last year, upon reviewing the overall performance across all priority areas, it was evident that to achieve our ambitious plans and bring several ministerial deliverables back on track for completion by 2023, we would have to make concerted efforts to refocus our activities to deliver on projects which were delayed as a result of the Pandemic. The progress made in the year 2020 also illustrated the need for setting of intermediate targets to address the disconnect between MDA deliverables and key macroeconomic priorities. In addition, it is evident that inter-ministerial collaboration is vital to driving increased impact and effective delivery.

4. In view of the importance of this year’s retreat, I will sit through all the sessions to listen to the cumulative assessment of our performance over the last 2 years, and join the discussion on best approach/strategies to implementing planned policies, programmes and projects that can significantly diversify our economy away from its dependence on oil revenue, while sustaining the current economic growth trajectory.

5. As I stated recently, “Two years and some months into the second term, the tradition of subjecting our projects and programmes to independent and critical self-review has taken firm root, through sector reporting during Cabinet meetings and at retreats. These steps have helped to identify and strengthen weak areas, close gaps as well as build cohesion and synergy in governance, to manage the economy and improve the delivery of public goods and services to Nigerians.”

6. I am glad to note that, over the past two years, Ministers have rendered reports to the Federal Executive Council on their activities related to the achievement of their Ministerial Mandates.

7. Some of the notable achievements include the establishment of InfraCo Plc in 2020, as a world class infrastructure development vehicle, wholly focused on Nigeria, with combined debt and equity take-off capital of N15 trillion, to be managed by an independent infrastructure fund manager. The Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) was also established in 2020 with more than USD 1Billion in funding.

8. In addition, we have launched the Nigeria Innovation Fund by the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA). This is aimed at addressing investment opportunities in the domestic technology sector: data networking, datacenters, software, Agri-tech, Bio-tech, and more.

9. On transportation, we are growing the stock and quality of our road, rail, air and water transport infrastructure. The Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund projects are also advancing remarkably. These include the 11.9km Second Niger Bridge, 120 km Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, 375 km Abuja – Kaduna – Zaria – Kano Expressway and the East West Road. Most of these projects are expected to be completed within this 2nd term of our Administration.

10. Furthermore, we Administration has made tremendous progress on railway projects in the Country. Upgrading of our railway network is being extended with the recent completion of the Lagos – Ibadan line. The Itakpe-Ajaokuta rail line has finally been completed and commissioned after 30 years of its conception. Work is expected to commence very soon on the Port-Harcourt Maiduguri line and Calabar – Lagos Coastal Line to connect the Southern and Eastern States of our Country. Progress is also being made on the upgrading of our Airports, with the state-of-the-art facilities in line with world class safety standards.

11. On the economy, we witnessed three consecutive quarters of growth, after negative growth rates recorded in the second and third quarters of 2020. The GDP grew from 0.8% in 2017 to 2.2% in 2019, but declined in the first quarter of 2020, as a result of the downward trend in global economic activities triggered by the COVID-19 Pandemic. As at Second Quarter 2021, GDP growth rate was at 5.01%, the highest since the inception of this Administration.

12. On the Power Sector, implementation of a ‘Willing Buyer-Willing Seller’ Policy has opened up opportunities for increased delivery of electricity to underserved homes and industries. We are also executing a number of critical projects through the Transmission Rehabilitation and Expansion Programme, which will result in achieving the national goal of improved power supply by 2025.

13. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on 16th August 2021, I signed the much awaited [Petroleum Industry](http://www.petroleumindustrybill.com/) Bill 2021 into law. The Act provides legal, governance, regulatory and fiscal framework for the Nigerian Petroleum Industry, as well as the development of host communities, and related matters. To ensure speedy implementation of the PIA, I have directed the Implementation Committee to complete all processes for the successful operationalization of the Act within 12 months.

14. As part of the efforts towards strengthening our national security, we have increased investments in arms, weapons and other necessary equipment; expanded the National Command and Control Centre to nineteen states of the Federation; and established a Nigerian Police Trust Fund, which will significantly improve funding for the Nigeria Police Force. We have also approved the sum of N13.3 billion for the take-off of the Community Policing initiative across the Country, as part of measures adopted to consolidate efforts aimed at enhancing security nationwide.

15. To address our over-dependence on other countries for military equipment and logistics, I have instructed the Defence Ministry to create "a modest military industrial complex for the local production of weapons to meet some of the requirements of the country's armed forces. This is been implemented under the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON), a military department responsible for arms manufacture.

16. It is gratifying to note that only recently, we received six A-29 Super Tucano aircrafts as part of our efforts to boost the nation's campaign against insecurity. The propeller-driven aircrafts are being used for training and attack by the Military.

17. Efforts are also being made to empower the youth and other vulnerable groups by enhancing investments in our Social Intervention Programmes. To achieve this, I have approved the expansion of the National Social Register (which is the official database for the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer programme) by 1 million additional households.

18. We have established the N75Billion Nigerian Youth Investment Fund created to boost the Nigerian economy through leverage and access to finance for youths. The fund will serve as a catalyst to unleash the potential of the youth and to enable them build businesses that will stimulate economic growth and create jobs. These accomplishments are a testament to the fact that all hands are on deck in establishing a solid foundation for even greater successes in future.

19. Distinguished Guests and participants, to address our current economic challenges, and consolidate on our achievements over the past year, this retreat has been designed to:

(a) Review the performance of each Minister in delivering the Ministerial Mandates, including programmes and projects assigned to them upon their appointment in 2019;

(b) Identify key impediments to implementation; and

(c) Re-strategize on how to accelerate delivery of results, given the current economic situation.

20. The retreat will also provide the opportunity to effectively evaluate the activities of the Ministries over the last two years in delivering our promise to Nigerians.

21. Ministers are urged to work closely with the Permanent Secretaries to ensure accelerated and effective delivery of the policies, programmes and projects in their respective priority areas. I have also directed the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to consolidate efforts at strengthening the work of the Delivery Unit under his coordination towards ensuring the effective implementation of Government Policies, Programmes and Projects during the remaining period of this Administration. All issues relating to the implementation of the Ministerial Mandates must be taken seriously by all Ministers and Permanent Secretaries, towards the attainment of the laudable objectives of our Government.

22. In our continuing drive to ensure accountability, we have incorporated a Performance Management Framework into the functions of the Central Delivery Coordination Unit for ease of tracking of the Ministerial Deliverables along the lines of the 9 priority areas of this Administration.

23. This initiative has provided me the opportunity to track the performance of all Ministries and by extension this Administration. This process has been in effect since January 2021 and today it gives me great pleasure to unveil the Performance Management System and Dashboard to track projects in real time with live data and early warning system to proactively resolve bottlenecks.

24. I wish to finally encourage optimal participation and contribution by all participants throughout this retreat.

25. I look forward to a very fruitful session and stimulating exchange of views and on this note, it is my pleasure to formally declare this Retreat open and unveil the Presidential Priorities Performance Management System.

26. Thank you.

27. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.