



**Opening Remarks
at the US-Africa Municipal and Sub-Sovereign Investors Forum
The Wall Street Hotel, New York
Monday 18th September 2023**

Protocol

Greetings from Nigeria. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this US-Africa Municipal and Sub-Sovereign Investors Forum, which is aptly themed “Investing for Local Impact”.

A major megatrend that is shaping the world today is rising urbanization, with 56% of the world’s population – about 4.4 billion inhabitants – living in cities, and these numbers will continue to grow. The building blocks of a productive and competitive economy is access to affordable and reliable infrastructure including power, transportation, communication, and clean water.

Globally, development partners and agencies have increased the size of their investment portfolios towards grass root infrastructural development to match the teeming demand. On the continent for example, the AfDB has been investing heavily in infrastructure. Since 2016, they have invested well over \$44 billion on roads, airports, seaports, digital infrastructure, water and sanitation and energy infrastructure.

Several countries on the continent have developed their Economic Recovery and Growth Plans to guide the administration of these interventions. In Nigeria, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan identifies several priority sectors which require both local and international investment. These include transportation and energy infrastructure projects such as the Lagos-Ibadan railway project, the

ongoing development of the Mambilla Hydropower plant, and four new international airport terminals in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano.

In addition, the recent establishment of the Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria (InfraCo), which aims to raise near \$40bn for projects with seed capital of N1 trillion from the Central Bank of Nigeria, and the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Agency (NSIA) marks a significant step forward in closing the infrastructure gap.

The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) manages the Nigeria Infrastructure Fund (NIF) which focuses entirely on domestic investments in certain sectors of the Nigerian economy, some of which include motorways, healthcare, power and agriculture. The fund aims to invest in domestic infrastructure projects that meet targeted financial returns and contribute to the development of essential infrastructure to stimulate the growth and diversification of the Nigerian economy, attract foreign investment and create jobs for Nigerians.

The NSIA can invest up to a maximum of 10% of the funds in NIF in social infrastructure projects, which promote economic development in underserved sectors or regions in the country.

Some of the recent investments and strategic sectors include:

- **Gas Industrialization:** Co-developing a US\$1.4 billion Ammonia Plant with OCP of Morocco
- **Technology:** Set up a US\$200 million innovation fund for investments in Information technology in Nigeria
- **Agriculture:** Sponsored a new local currency-denominated agriculture fund with 10bn seed capital.
- **Healthcare:** Invested US\$202 million in Cancer treatment and development of diagnostic centers in Nigeria

In 2020, the Authority received an additional contribution of US\$250 million from the Federal Government. And in accordance with its fund allocation, 50% of the new contribution (US\$125 million) was allocated to the NIF for domestic investments in selected infrastructure sectors.

These are some actions taken to shore up Nigeria’s rising infrastructure demand in the face of increasing urbanisation and escalating population growth. In 2020, Nigeria was ranked 160 out of 163 countries on the 2020 world's SDG Index and in 2021, we climbed 21 places to rank 139th. However, there is more that can be done, and there is little time left. We are in the “Decade of Action” as we race towards joining the rest of the world to achieve the Global goals by 2030. We must optimize the tools and resources at our disposal to achieve the goals.

I thank you all for joining us today.

Dr Kayode Fayemi

President, Forum of Regions of Africa (FORAF)

Former Chairman, Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF) and Governor of Ekiti State, Nigeria.