

Goodwill Remarks by the UNDP Resident Representative / UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Daouda Toure, at the launch of the “Computation of State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) for Nigeria” Project on 15 March 2012, at Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.

Your Excellency, the Governor of Rivers State and Chairman, Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF), Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi

The Honourable Minister/Deputy Chairman, National Planning Commission,

Dr Shamsuddeen Usman

Head of Service

Commissioners

Ladies and gentlemen

I am greatly delighted to be invited to deliver a goodwill message at another launch of the Computation of State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) project for Nigeria. This is the second in the series of stakeholders’ sensitization workshops to be organized within two weeks and I commend the extraordinary commitment of the National Planning Commission and the Rivers State Government for making this event possible.

The Gross Domestic Product, as you know, is the most comprehensive and widely acceptable parameter for measuring the level of economic growth in any economy. The importance of GDP disaggregated data for planning at both national and sub-national levels cannot be overstated. It is a vital tool for policy makers and analysts to make evidence-based contributions to policy design, formulation and implementation. In addition, publication of state-level GDP on a periodic basis will help to engender healthy competition among states of the federation. In fact, sub-national GDP data is most useful for planning purposes among pluralistic economies like Nigeria.

As you are aware, some countries like the United States of America (USA), Australia and India have used sub-national GDP in their economic management efforts and there is a lot of experience to be gained and lessons to draw from them. I, therefore,

encourage our technical experts to continue to explore such technical opportunities in order to deepen the credibility of the computation process.

For us at UNDP, the series of sensitization workshops are necessary for creating the required level of awareness and getting the needed buy-in from key stakeholders. We see these workshops as an important step towards an output that will significantly raise the profile of planning and policy making at both the national and state level. It is a contribution to the outcome of evidence based planning as at the centre of economic development planning to address human development challenges. It is against this background that we supported the sensitization workshop that targeted Commissioners and Permanent Secretaries of Planning that was held in Calabar in September, 2010, as well as the first flag -off that was held in Minna, Niger State, about three weeks ago. This is in addition to the financial and capacity building support to the National Bureau of Statistics for generating and computing State level Indices on Human Development, multidimensional Poverty, and Inequality.

Let me once again assure the Honourable Minister of the UNDP's readiness and willingness to continue to support the state GDP project. As you are aware, the UN system is in full support of government efforts to achieve sustainable economic transformation through the development of medium and long term strategic planning for which the availability of disaggregated data is critical. We are therefore ready to partner with our network of expertise which you may find useful and relevant in this project.

Finally, let me conclude by placing our best wishes on this project. We hope that the ideas to be harnessed from this launch will contribute in significant measure to the ultimate output.

I thank you for your attention.