

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY NTUFAM FIDEL UGBO, ESQ, SECRETARY
TO THE COMMISSION, AT THE CEREMONIAL FLAG-OFF OF THE STATE
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) COMPUTATION IN NIGERIA HELD AT
THE RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AUDITORIUM, MOSCOW ROAD,
PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE ON MARCH 15, 2012**

PROTOCOL

I am highly honoured to be part of this history-making occasion of the Flag-off of the first ever State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) Computation project in Nigeria, organised by the National Planning Commission, in close collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics, the Nigerian Governors' Forum and the Rivers State Government. The importance of this event is greatly underscored by the presence of the Executive Governor of Rivers State and Chairman, Nigerian Governors' Forum, The Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, CON and the Hon. Minister/Deputy Chairman of National Planning Commission, Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman, CON; who despite their tight schedules are personally here today.

2. Your Excellency, we are indeed honoured by your acceptance to host and Flag-off the State GDP computation project in this beautiful Garden City of Port Harcourt. Your Excellency's name will certainly go down in the annals of our dear Country, adding yet another first to your burgeoning political career, having been the first Speaker to serve as

the Chairman of the Nigerian States Legislators' Forum and the first Governor, South of the Niger to be the Chairman Nigerian Governors' Forum and now the first Governor to host the Flag-off of the State GDP computation project, South of the Niger. We thank Your Excellency for all the support and excellent facilities provided by His Government to make this event a huge success.

3. Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, today's event is designed to further sensitize stakeholders on the rationale for implementing the State GDP Computation project in Nigeria. It is also aimed at highlighting the benefits of the exercise and subsequent publication of the State GDP data for national development. This is expected to complement the national GDP and other macroeconomic data currently being computed on aggregative basis for policy analysis and formulation. It is in recognition of this critical role that States are encouraged to establish their State Statistical Bureaux, which will work closely with the National Bureau of Statistics in the execution of the project. In this regard, I like to commend Your Excellency, for being the first Governor in Nigeria to sign the State Statistical Edict into law. This is also consistent with the Statistical Master Plan and the aspirations of the Government's Transformation Agenda and Nigeria's Vision 20:2020.

4. As you are aware, the Government has established the necessary framework for the execution of the State GDP Computation project in

Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics is statutorily empowered to compile and publish GDP data at the national and the sub-national levels. In compiling the data at the sub-national levels, the National Bureau of Statistics will work closely with the State Bureaux of Statistics and the States Planning Agencies which will use the data for Policy formulation and implementation. Towards this end, capacity building programmes are being arranged for the States Statistical Agencies. This is expected to facilitate the generation of the SGDP data sets and ensure the sustainability of the project and its benefits overtime. It will also help in creating the needed synergy between the State Planning Commissions, State Bureaux of Statistics and the National Bureau of Statistics for the realization of their mandates.

5. Our gathering here today therefore provides an opportunity to share experiences on good practices in the computation of State GDP. I am confident that the follow up technical deliberations will be intellectually stimulating and rewarding as the rest of the agenda has been devoted to technical level presentations on key topical issues including:

- (i) The State GDP Framework and Methodology;
- (ii) The Institutional framework and workplan for implementation of the State GDP computation in Nigeria; and
- (iii) Media chat on State GDP related issues with the Press by the Hon. Minister/Deputy Chairman, NPC and State Commissioners of Planning.

These presentations have been carefully selected to signal the sustained commitment to the push for the actualization of the State GDP computation and improvement in good governance at all levels of government in Nigeria.

6. Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I will like to assure you that this is a new dawn in statistical and economic management process at the Federal and State levels. The successful implementation of the initiative is expected to facilitate improvement in the management of the economy at the Federal and sub-national levels. It will also facilitate good governance at the sub-national levels.

7. Once again, I welcome you to this very important Forum and wish you successful deliberations.

8. I thank you for listening.