



OPENING REMARKS

BY

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

BUREAU OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS

ON THE OCCASION

OF

THE BPSR LUNCH TIME REFORM SEMINAR

HELD AT

**THE CONFERENCE HALL OF NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR COLLEGES OF
EDUCATION**

ON

2ND DECEMBER, 2019

OPENING REMARKS BY D. I. ARABI, DIRECTOR GENERAL BUREAU OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS (BPSR), ON THE OCCASION OF THE LUNCH TIME REFORM SEMINAR HELD AT THE CONFERENCE HALL OF NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR COLLEGES OF EDUCATION ON 2ND DECEMBER, 2019

PROTOCOL

It is indeed my honour and great pleasure to welcome you to the December, 2019 Edition of the Lunch Time Reform Seminar and the last Edition for the Year. This Edition has the theme **“The Imperative of Developing a Sustainable Framework for Citizens Engagement with Government towards Nation Building”**. I wish to, particularly, extend a warm welcome to our Distinguished Guest Speaker for today’s Seminar, the Director General, National Orientation Agency (NOA), Dr. Garba Abari.

2. The spirit of Public Service extends well beyond Government and Public Institutions. People from all walks of life and various fields of human endeavour contribute to the achievement of Public results. In doing so, they are acting as Citizens, whether or not they enjoy all the privileges of Citizenship and regardless of the amount of time they have spent in a given Country. People are at once Citizens of their Country and Citizens of the World; they are members of their Local Community and of their chosen Communities of interests.

3. Achieving collective results requires a strong Institutional capacity to provide the necessary checks and balances to exercise power, to propose Laws and ensure their enforcement, to encourage social justice, and to guarantee the efficient use of Public funds and the accountability of Office holders.

4. An increasing number of Public Policy Issues require the active contribution of Citizens as users, value creators or active Agents of change to achieve desired public results towards Nation Building. Governments achieve results by working through vast networks of Actors and Institutions, including Citizens and Civil Society Groups, who have a stake in achieving common policy outcomes.

5. This collective results achieved so far on various fronts, whether from the Public and Private spheres or Civil Society, reflects the state of our Society to Citizens and decision-makers, helping to shape the collective interests that, in turn, inform Government actions.

6. In the present Democratic setting, Public Sector Institutions are expected to live up to the ideal of democratic principles and to advance Civic results, which they do in many ways. They allow their oversight by a legislative assembly, ensure that holders of Public Office are accountable for the exercise of power, provide for transparency, ensure access to information, and encourage participation in the policy cycle to ensure greater buy-in and support for Government initiatives.

7. Evidently, the World has become vastly more interconnected and networked. Local problems can quickly become Global problems, and Global problems can have a wide and unpredictable range of local impacts. An increasing number of people, groups and organizations make important decisions in an increasing number of locations. There is growing fragmentation. Their decisions are influenced by the decisions of others and by their expectations of what others may do. There is increasing interdependence. With fragmentation and interdependence comes uncertainty. Each decision and each action has limited effect, but the power of multiple decisions moving in a similar direction can change the course of events around the Globe at the speed of light.

8. Citizens play a critical role in advocating and helping to make Public Institutions more transparent, accountable and effective, and contributing innovative solutions to complex development challenges. The International Community is recognizing the vital importance of engaging Citizens with the strong growth of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the active discussion of Citizens engagement within the Sustainable Development Goals process.

9. As you all may be aware, the Open Government Partnership was launched on September 20, 2011 to provide an International Platform for Domestic Reformers to make their Governments more open, accountable and responsive to Citizens. The partnership is governed by four key principles:

- i. Transparency;
- ii. Accountability;
- iii. Citizen participation; and
- vi. Technology and innovation.

The present Administration is committed to three top priorities of security, economy and fighting corruption. In its effort at fighting corruption, Mr. President, made a commitment at the London Anti-Corruption Summit on May 10, 2016 to flag off the process of producing a National Action Plan on OGP in Nigeria.

10. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is worthy to note that, BPSR considers the Federal Government's initiative on OGP extremely important. It is, therefore, not surprising that, the Bureau has been actively involved in OGP right from its inception.

11. On this note, the need to develop a sustainable framework for Citizens engagement with Government towards Nation building cannot be underestimated. The transformation that has taken place all over the World,

along with recent global crises, signal the need to search for a new balance between the masses and democracy; between the Public and Private interests; between freedom in the private sphere and common responsibility in the collective sphere. A new balance that requires, new insights and a synergistic working relationship between Government and Citizens.

12. It is for this reason and in accordance with its Mandate, the Bureau is organising this all important Seminar to provide the platform to educate Public Servants on the activities of National Orientation Agency, with emphasis on today's theme. The Lunch Time Seminar as an important component for capacity building, also promotes exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices around core reform areas in the Federal Public Service.

13. At this juncture, the Bureau wishes to express its profound gratitude to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (HCSF) for their exemplary leadership, all year round, which focuses on creating sustainable value for an accelerated progress towards Nation building.

14. The Bureau is deeply obliged to Mr. President for the opportunity given to BPSR as champion of reforms in the Federal Public Service.

15. It is my earnest hope that, you will find today's Seminar, rewarding, educative and beneficial. I look forward to your comments, questions and recommendations at the end of the presentation, which will set in place positive changes to help advance and further our goals and objectives. .

16. Finally, let me use this opportunity to wish you all a happy Yuletide Festival and a prosperous New Year in advance. Thank you.