



TEXT OF SPEECH

BY

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AT THE

BUREAU OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS

ON

**NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPERATIVES OF 2023
POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS**

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(Protocols)

On behalf of the entire members and staff of the National Population Commission, I wish to express my profound appreciation to the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) for extending to me the unique privilege of being the Guest Speaker at this BPSR Lunch Time Seminar to speak on the topic “National Development and the imperatives of 2023 Population and Housing Census.” We also appreciate BPSR for providing us the strategic platform to speak on the plans of the Commission to conduct the first fully digital and transformative census in Nigeria come April 2023 as it affects national development.

BPSR being a Federal Government Agency is established to “initiate, coordinate and implement a workable public service reforms in Nigeria. The fundamental reforms by the Federal Government of Nigeria using data as the key driver to unlock developmental planning in Nigeria was why His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR acting on the advice from the National Council of States approved the conduct of the 2023 Population and Housing Census. The 2023 Census is the first ever digital census in the history of the country and it’s expected to generate data for socio-economic development.

Coming at a time when preparations for the conduct of the 2023 Population and Housing Census are in top gear, the topic of this year’s Seminar fits perfectly into our plan to provide accurate and reliable demographic data for national development. A national census provides important information on a country’s population that is used in government planning and to underpin the national

statistical system. Therefore, the quality of such information is paramount to national development.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to seize this opportunity to speak a little on the imperatives for the conduct of the 2023 Census and provide an update on the level of preparations so far.

I. IMPERATIVES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE NEXT POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

Population is a critical factor in a nation's efforts towards achieving sustainable development. The people are both the agents and beneficiaries of the development process. Knowledge of the country's population in terms of size, distribution and socio-economic characteristics is required for planning purposes. This therefore makes the conduct of census an essential governance activity. The imperatives for the conduct of the next population and housing census rest on the following grounds:

1. Nigeria has one of the fastest growing populations, with a growth rate of 3.2% and an estimated population of over 200 million. Capturing the essential dynamics of such a population requires the regular conduct of censuses, preferably every 10 years as recommended by the United Nations. The country's inability to conduct a population census in the last 16 years has created an information vacuum as the data from the last Census conducted in 2006 has been rendered less useful for planning purposes.
2. Preparations for the conduct of the next Census have reached an advanced stage with the demarcation of 98% of the total land area of the country into enumeration areas. The

demarcation exercise began in 2015 and further delay in conducting the next census will make the products thereof less optimal for the next census in view of the rapidly changing environmental landscape and settlement patterns in the country.

3. The Federal Government has introduced several poverty reduction and youth empowerment programmes, which are making concrete improvements in the living standards of the people. There is need to ensure that further implementation of these programmes is driven by current data from the 2023 Census. that will improve the implementation of programmes targeting vulnerable populations and ensure we **Leave No One Behind**.
4. The continuous usage of the 2006 Census for the estimation of Nigeria's population has created a data gap in global population which does not do credit to the nation's reputation. Nigeria is the seventh most populous nation on earth and will be the third most populous country after China and India in 2050 going by the current rate of growth. Relying on an estimate from a census conducted 16 years ago for a country that hosts a significant proportion of the world population is counterproductive.
5. While the Commission is mindful of the current economic recession, which has reduced revenue at the disposal of the government against the background of competing demands including Covid-19 pandemic, the Commission is convinced that conducting the next census is one huge investment the nation must make to launch Nigeria into the path of economic

prosperity through proper planning and optimal allocation of resources.

6. The Commission is also not unmindful of concerns that have been expressed over the grave security implications. However, with the recent successes being recorded by the gallant Armed forces in the fight against insurgency and the technical defeat of Boko haram, and the successful conduct of general elections in 2015 and 2019, the security situation for the census can be handled.

II. STATE OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

Preparations for the conduct of the next Population and Housing Census began with the formulation of an Implementation Plan with detailed information on the strategies, activities, timeframe, and budget covering all phases of the Census process. The document, which was formulated in accordance with the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for 2020 World Programme on PHCs and international best practices, sought to leverage on technology to make the census process more efficient and cost effective through the conduct of a fully digital census process. In furtherance of the Plan, the following activities have been implemented:

1. **Mapping and Enumeration Area Demarcation:** The most significant preparatory step taken by the Commission is the Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD), which is the process of delineating the entire land area of the country into small (mutually exclusive) geographical and demographic units called Enumeration Areas (EAs). The units comprise a specified number

of persons and households, which a team of enumerators can cover during a Census. Planning for the census is anchored on the EAD as the basis for estimating both the human and material resources required for the census. The Commission as of today is the repository of the country's most accurate and reliable geospatial database.

The Commission made efforts to ensure that the EAD exercise was carried out meticulously, professionally, and scientifically. This involved the deployment of very high-resolution satellite imageries, the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) for geo-referencing and the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) for data management. Also, Personal Data Assistants (handheld devices/tablets) that include computer software for population estimation were used for data capture. Presently, the Commission has demarcated all the 774 Local Government Areas across the country.

The EAD will prepare the basis for the next census and establish the National Frame for the conduct of future censuses, specialised Surveys & Continuous Compulsory Civil Registration & Vital Statistics for the country.

- 2. Conduct of Pretests:** Conducting a successful census requires a continuous review of processes and tools at both planning and implementation levels to enable adjustments where necessary. Towards this end, the Commission has conducted two Census pretest activities whose objectives were to evaluate the census instruments, particularly the quality of enumeration area (EAs) delineation and Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) application.

The first pretest was conducted between 31st May, 2021 and 13th June, 2021 in the thirty-six states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory. From the first pretest, it was established that among others, the enumeration areas (EAs) demarcated for the next Population and Housing Census are of high quality.

The second Pretest was conducted from November 24th to December 10th, 2021, in randomly sampled 444 EAs in the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The aim was to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the census instruments and applications and to specifically, assess the functionality of all instruments for the census, the functionality of the transmission channels of data at all levels, assess the workload on a set of Enumerators and the duration of enumeration among others. Following the outcome of the second pretest, a hybrid software that integrates a home-grown application and the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) software has been developed for digital data collection in the next Population and Housing Census.

- 3. Conduct of Pilot Census:** In furtherance of the preparation for the next census, the Pilot Census, which is a dress rehearsal of the main Population and Housing Census will be conducted in May, 2022 to assess the overall preparedness to undertake the conduct of the next PHC successfully in terms of the quality of data collection, quality assurance, measures and strategies, field procedures, analysis and dissemination. The exercise is intended to evaluate every aspect of the census methodology starting with an e- recruitment system, to e- learning programmes, virtual training, physical training, data capturing, data streaming, data quality evaluation, data analysis and dissemination. It will also

assess the effectiveness of logistics management system for the census.

4. **Census Methodology:** Nigeria's next Population and Housing Census will be fully digital. Data capture, processing and database management will be undertaken using CPro, an open-source software developed by the US Census Bureau and widely used across countries to great effect. Indeed, for Nigeria Census, a bespoke hybrid census App which combines CensusPad and CPro has been developed indigenously to facilitate collection and integration of rich geospatial and population data—an innovation of sorts that will certainly be replicated or adapted by other countries.

Cloud computing systems will be used to handle data transfer during collection and data management and storage, another innovation which will improve efficiency and enhance the safety and security of the data. Finally, the results will be released and disseminated via both static and digital media or platforms to enable distilling of policy relevant and animated presentations (data visualisations) of user-friendly reports.

5. **Identification and Mapping of Special Population:** To ensure that everyone is counted during the Population and Housing Census, it is usually important to identify special populations that are hard to reach or hard to count because of their profession, location or other characteristics. They are usually identified and highlighted on a map for plans to be made for the enumerators to reach them during the census period. There are plans to identify and map special populations in all the LGAs of the country before the census. The identification exercise will begin with a pilot

planned for 12 LGAs with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

6. Advocacy and Publicity/Stakeholders Engagement:

Conscious of the need to mobilize the public and create a broad-based consensus for the conduct of the next census, the Commission has embarked on a nationwide advocacy and publicity drive. The objectives are to create awareness and educate the public on the next census and more importantly geared towards addressing some concerns that have been raised on the desirability for the conduct of the next census. The approach is to engage the stakeholders with a view to explaining possible misperception of the census process.

7. Also, to ensure transparency in the recruitment process for the next Census, the Commission has launched a portal where Nigerians will be recruited to participate in the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

8. The Commission has completed the training of the Trainers (TOT) for the 2023 Population and Housing Census and stepped the training down to States and LGA level.

9. The Commission in collaboration with other national stakeholders has finalised and commenced the presentation to the grassroots the final list of the Localities, chiefly the Local Government Chairman.

10. Training of facilitators/ Enumerators is in the final phase of preparation for the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

In conclusion, the data that will be generated from the 2023 Census will greatly assist in governance and the socio- economic planning and development of the country at large. I want to also use this opportunity to assure Nigerians that the Commission is irrevocably

committed to positively rewrite the history of censuses in Nigeria and deliver to this great nation accurate, reliable and acceptable census that will be purposefully relevant in the drive towards sustainable national development. The Commission is confident that the prospect for an accurate and reliable census appears brighter than ever.

I wish to appeal to Nigerians to join the Commission in the bid to give our dear country, reliable demographic data through the forthcoming 2023 census. This is because our population remains the greatest asset in national development and it must be harnessed in order to make life worth of living for our people.

Once more, I sincerely thank the Bureau of Public Service Reforms for inviting me to this epoch making occasion.