

**Draft Statement by the Nigeria Head of Delegation and Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina at the International Conference on Nutrition 2 in Rome.**

Your Excellencies and distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nigeria is happy to be a part of this 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Nutrition taking place here in Rome.

We remain committed as a nation to join hands with all other countries of the world and the international development community to effectively address the challenge of hunger and malnutrition.

We are clear about the need to prioritize policy and programme efforts around the first 1000 days, but also to create a broader positive environment by addressing nutrition challenges post the first 1000 days and across the life course. We are also clear that agriculture can contribute to significant reductions in under nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity.

As a nation, we have taken several bold policy initiatives to sustainably address the problem of hunger and malnutrition in Nigeria cutting across key sectors.

Our National Policy on Food and Nutrition that was launched in 2002 has been revised in 2014 to better position our country to address malnutrition and hunger from a wider and more comprehensive perspective than was earlier envisaged in the 1990s when the policy was formulated. Our revised policy can now take care of HIV/AIDS and nutrition, bio fortification and a broadened micronutrient deficiency control that includes home fortification; the role of agriculture in nutrition, due considerations for climate change and the place of social protection and resilience for improved nutrition.

Building on the Policy, a new strategic and costed strategic plan of action has also been developed which when resourced and effectively implemented will significantly impact nutrition. The priority areas of focus that are clearly articulated in the plan include maternal nutrition, infant and young child feeding and management of severe acute malnutrition in children under the age of five.

While this strategic plan was predominantly a health sector response to the Food and Nutrition Policy, more than ever before, we are taking strategic steps to maximize the potential of agriculture to impact positively on nutrition outcomes.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the Nigeria of today, the days of separating nutrition from Agriculture are over! We need to send the message that productivity and volumes are as important as food quality and diversity!

We articulated the Agricultural Transformative Agenda with a holistic view of making our agricultural policy nutrition sensitive. We were clear that a system of agriculture that engenders intergenerational poverty cannot improve nutrition. We decided to do agriculture as a business using a government-enabled-private-sector leadership approach to developing agriculture. The strategic objectives are to grow food, create jobs and wealth, but also to improve nutrition.

We elaborated four pillars across 4 domains: the agricultural production domain, market development and infrastructures, income generation and processing and retail enhancement. The pillars include the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme, the Staple Crops Processing Zones, Nigeria Incentive Based Risk Sharing Lending and the Marketing Corporation.

To ensure we maximize the potentials of agriculture to sustainably improve nutrition, we decided to undertake the following specific nutrition relevant actions:

1. Developed a Food Security and Nutrition Strategy in the context of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA).
2. Formed an inter-ministerial committee for nutrition sensitive agriculture to drive the implementation of the ATA Food security and Nutrition strategy.
3. Inaugurated a National ATA Policy Working Group of eminent Nigerians to work towards the development of a more nutrition transformative agricultural policy in Nigeria.
4. Identified some priority initiatives for mainstreaming nutrition into agriculture such biofortification, home fortification and large and medium scale fortification in a value chain approach;
5. In May this year at the World Economic Forum Africa, I and the Minister of Health joined hands to launch the Transformative Partnership for High Energy Nutritious Foods for Africa. It builds on the understanding that Africa must look inwards and take advantage of its own food resources and the private sector to produce all the high-energy and nutritious foods it needs.
6. We saw opportunities in school feeding linked to local agriculture as a way to sustainably address the problems of hunger and malnutrition.
7. Other initiatives include nutrition education and behavior change, empowering women through targeted innovative financing models, integrated Food Security and nutrition for Mothers and Adolescents linked with Infant and Young Child Nutrition, leveraging social protection and resilience building initiatives.
8. We ensure alignment and coherence with the related policies and institutions across relevant sectors such as Health, Education and Women Affairs amongst others and

within our Country Framework for the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. We engage with multisectoral platforms such as the National Committee on Food and Nutrition, Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition and are keen to explore opportunities for improved nutrition - agriculture linkage through these platforms.

9. We recognize the place of partnerships to address challenges around human, financial and effective institutional capacities and resources to sustainably drive the whole agenda for promoting nutrition sensitive agricultural policies and are open to a wide range of partnerships with FAO, GAIN, UNICEF, Save the Children, WFP, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition and various donor partners that include the Gates' Foundation, DfID, the EU, the World Bank, IFAD, USAID and regional multilateral and financing organizations such as the AU and African Development Bank, amongst others.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nigeria appreciates the understanding behind the priorities highlighted in the ICN2 Framework for Action. In recognition of the enormity of the malnutrition in Africa, we enjoin the Conference to be very clear and explicit about the following:

1. Large scale food fortification will continue to be relevant in addressing micronutrient deficiencies sustainably in Africa. Efforts should be prioritized around strengthening associated regulatory frameworks and empowering consumers with adequate knowledge to drive compliance for impact.
2. Bio fortification must be rigorously supported within the broader context of promoting diversified and healthy food base for improved nutrition.
3. Considerations for Innovative Financing for Nutrition through public private partnerships require significant attention.
4. Fostering a supportive policy environment for the enhanced role of the private sector in sustainable reduction of hunger and malnutrition is a crucial imperative.
5. Placing the adolescent girl in policy discussions around maternal and child health, agriculture, water, sanitation and hygiene and sustainable livelihood programs will go a long way to ensuring a successful first 1000 days campaign.

Thank you