

Opening Remarks Delivered at a Webinar organized by the National Centre for Technology Management, Nigeria and Global Development Network (GDN), India

By

Engr. Dr. Mohammed Jibrin, Director-General, National Board for Technology Incubation, Nigeria

On behalf of

**Mohammed H. Abdullahi,
Minister of State for Science and Technology, Federal Republic of Nigeria**

to launch the Report

Doing Research in Nigeria 2020: Assessing & Benchmarking Social Science Research Systems

Tuesday, September 8, 2020
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Nigerian Time

I feel highly honoured to be invited to give an opening remark at this webinar organized by the Global Development Network (GDN), India under the initiative titled *Doing Research: Assessing & Benchmarking Social Science Research Systems*. I also thank the Doing Research Team Nigeria from the National Centre for Technology Management (NACETEM), an Agency under our Ministry for the opportunity to give this opening speech. On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I thank the organizers of this virtual meeting.

Research and development (R&D) as described by the OECD's Frascati Manual, is one of a range of activities that can generate innovations, or through which useful knowledge for innovation can be acquired. In particular, social science research which deals with issues around societies and human behavior, has become a veritable tool that can help nations to understand and deal with development challenges. However, for us to be able to harness these potentials, there must be significant domestic research capacity and evidence-based policies premised on reliable data. Therefore, I am very delighted to know that the main purpose of the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) in Nigeria is to assess and understand how the strengths and weaknesses of the national social science research system can enhance the capability to produce, diffuse and use social science research for Nigeria's social and economic development. It is

indeed exciting that the report of the DRA in Nigeria that we are launching today has thoroughly diagnosed the social science research system and thrown up specific policy issues.

This webinar could not have come at a more opportune time given socio-economic challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic has reminded us that investments in scientific, technological and productive human capacities are essential to respond to and build resilience during socio-economic and health crises. It will interest you to know that His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari has constituted the Economic Sustainability Committee (ESC) comprising all the Federal Ministries and other key stakeholders to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of such critical activities in the Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) is to create a special fund for medical and pharmaceutical research including by pooling funds from existing schemes such as in Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). Other laudable initiatives related to the national research system in the ESP include increased investment in Research and Development (R&D) in renewable and alternative energy sources and establishment of programmes for utilisation and commercialisation of research outputs from Federal Institutes by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. Despite these lofty initiatives, the present administration understands that more still need to be done to have a vibrant and efficient national research system. The DRA report will indeed be helpful in charting the course of national interventions in the social science research domain.

To conclude, I would like to thank GDN, NACETEM and all other stakeholders at this webinar. It is my belief that this strategic collaboration will help us to appreciate the importance of research, while researchers and other key stakeholders gain first-hand appreciation of their impact on the national research system. I am optimistic that the discussions which will take place here would facilitate acquisition of knowledge on how to improve the national social science research system towards accelerating innovation for sustainable development in Nigeria. I am therefore using this opportunity to pledge our unreserved support on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology that the policy recommendations of this research will be taken into consideration in our socio-economic development programmes.

I wish you all success in your discussions to address the challenges facing social science research system in Nigeria.

Thank you.