

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CHIEF AUDU OGBE, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF ASAN-NIAS JOINT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT NAF CONFERENCE CENTER, AHMADU BELLO WAY, KADO, ABUJA, ON 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

PROTOCOLS

It is with great pleasure and honour that I welcome you to the 6th Joint Annual Meeting of the Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS) and the Animal Science Association of Nigeria (ASAN).

I would like to laud the Animal Science Association of Nigeria and the Nigerian Institute of Animal Science for the choice of the theme for this meeting: **Sustainable Livestock Production for National Development** which could not have been more apt at this period of renewed emphasis on diversification of our economy and as the country wriggles out of recession.

The concerted effort of your great Association (ASAN) in fostering the welfare of its many members and promoting their common professional culture is commendable. Similarly I congratulate the Institute (NIAS) on the progresses made so far in the achievement of its professional, industry and social mandates which includes regulating the practice of Animal Science in Nigeria. As you are aware, implementation and conformities with standardized regulations will

promote acceptability of our animal products and resources in international markets. This indeed is the present focus of government as it strives to earn foreign exchange through trade in livestock and livestock products.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is heartwarming to note that the Livestock sector has an exciting future and that government is not relenting in its effort to identify solutions to the challenges in the Livestock industry. We are reviving positive policy actions that are geared towards accelerating structural reforms to set the sector in the brightest spot on the country's economic landscape.

There are obviously many challenges ahead. However, there is a renewed determination to leverage on the enormous opportunities that abound to turn the livestock sector around. This will be achieved through Government and private investment support for profitable livestock enterprises to achieve self-sufficiency in livestock production, processing and marketing. This will ensure food security, reduce import dependence and economic losses, stimulate foreign exchange earnings, conserve indigenous breeds, enhance wealth and job creation, strengthen our institutions and thus make Nigeria depend less on oil.

In recognition of Livestock as a vital component of the Agriculture sector, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has been engaging with the World Bank, FAO, AfDB and other international agencies on the development of the sector. Undoubtedly, government will continue to support and cooperate with all stakeholders in the Livestock sector to deliver maximum benefits to Nigerians. I am quite confident that the production levels achieved in the poultry segments will stretch to other commodities such as beef, dairy, micro livestock,

beekeeping, fodder and animal by-products such as leather, bones, hides and skins.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen it might interest you to learn that in the development period of 2018-2020, the Ministry would focus on ten (10) priority projects namely: (1)Comprehensive Livestock Development, (2)Input Transformation, (3)Expanded Access to Finance and Market, (4)Value Addition and Processing Support, (5)Agricultural Water Management, (6)Agricultural Research, (7)Agricultural Manpower Development, (8)Produce and Commodity Storage, (9)Commercial Agricultural Expansion Supply and (10) Nutrition Quality Control and Standardization.

It is our strong belief that these prioritized areas would address the palpable national yearning for the urgent exploitation of the enormous potential inherent in our agricultural resources to once and for all deliver a buoyant and growing economy less dependent on oil.

Once again, I congratulate you for this meeting where newly admitted and licensed Registered Animal Scientists, Associate Animal Scientists and Graduate Animal Scientists would be inducted. I invite you to explore the warm hospitality of Abuja and wish you very fruitful deliberations.