



**GOODWILL MESSAGE DELIVERED BY BOSS MUSTAPHA, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION (SGF), AT THE 11TH ANNUAL BANKING AND FINANCE CONFERENCE HELD SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 AT CONGRESS HALL, TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL, ABUJA**

**Protocol,**

I am pleased to deliver a goodwill message at this auspicious event being the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Banking and Finance Conference holding in the city of Abuja today. I congratulate the Governing Council and Executive Management of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) for undertaking this laudable initiative to gather Nigeria's experts and players in the financial services space under one roof to discuss **“MSMEs: The Game Changer for Economic Growth and Development”**.

2. I am delighted that the Annual Banking and Finance Conference provides a platform for all stakeholders in the banking and finance industry which include policy makers, regulators, operators, clients in the industry, etc. to share experiences and exchange ideas on contemporary issues affecting the banking and finance sector as well as the economy. I believe that this conference will generate new ideas, innovations and strategies to address the challenges MSMEs face in other to engender economic growth and development in the country.

3. The theme of this edition is highly germane to the country's current economic experience. The imperative of economic development and importance of a thriving SME sub-sector is not only critical for achieving a robust growth trajectory and improved business performances but also essential in realizing the much desired inclusive growth and development in our country. It is therefore important to note that Small and Medium Enterprises not only contribute significantly to the economy but can also serve as an impetus for economic diversification. In addition, innovative and technology-based SMEs can provide an interesting platform for expanding outside domestic borders, and entering intra-regional and international markets.

4. Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, this administration's Change Mantra remains the pledge we made to all Nigerians in the areas of Security; Corruption; and Economy. We are working round the clock to put Nigeria in its pride of place in the World economy. This fact holds true particularly in Nigeria whose SMEs contributes approximately 48% to the national GDP over the last five years as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). It is also worthy to note that the SMEs in Nigeria accounted for 96% of all businesses in the country and employed 84.02% (57.7 million people) of the workforce in 2016. This is still work in progress. I am confident that at the end of this administration, Nigerians will have experienced the deserved Change that we promised.

5. I want to use this opportunity to assure both the local and international business communities that this administration we will continue to provide a more secured business environment and commit more to these ideals in the

interest of the economic development of Nigeria. We will also continue to provide physical infrastructures for existing investments to thrive and make every part of the country attractive to new investors. This administration is committed to building institutions that will make data more available for research, building sound regulatory environment, the provision of sufficient investor capital and financial education amongst others.

6. Let me also use this opportunity to encourage all stakeholders here present today to take advantage of the policies of Government on the ease of doing business in Nigeria. I also urge you to maximize the opportunity created by the objectives, targets and goals of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). Nigeria is ready for business and the market is expansive for quicker and bigger returns on investment.

7. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I look forward to robust discussions and recommendations that would proceed from this Conference, let me remind you not undermine the power of SMEs as it holds the bane to the economy of every nation. I believe that it is the engine that will propel Nigeria into the much-anticipated economic growth and development.

8. I thank you all for listening and God bless our Country, Nigeria.

**Boss Mustapha**  
**Secretary to the Government of the Federation**  
**Tuesday, September 11, 2018**