



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY, TRADE AND INVESTMENT, AMB. MARIAM Y. KATAGUM AT THE 7TH AFRICA-IRELAND ECONOMIC FORUM, DUBLIN, IRELAND, THURSDAY 30TH JUNE, 2022

PROTOCOLS

It is a pleasure to participate at this 7th Edition of the Africa-Ireland Economic Forum. Permit me to especially thank the government of Ireland, for organizing and inviting me to deliver a Keynote address at this auspicious and important gathering.

2. This year's theme: **"Prospering Post-Pandemic: Towards a Sustainable, Greener Future"** directly aligns with the global agenda on sustainability and doing good, as the foundation of **solving social, environmental and governance** issues, in addition to doing well, which is the current profitability focus of most institutions.

3. Let me first of all convey the warm greetings of His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR and the entire people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and also thank His Excellency, Michael D. Higgins, the President of the Republic of Ireland, for hosting this important Forum.

4. I would also like to extend our sincere regards to the other African countries also participating today. As part of our continental growth and development strategy, we are intentionally prioritizing cooperation, particularly in attracting responsible, inclusive, balanced and sustainable investment, that can enhance the prosperity of our citizens.

5. Nigeria and the Irish Republic enjoy excellent bilateral relations, marked especially by the work of Irish medical teams and missionaries during our country's unfortunate civil war, and the ongoing efforts in dealing with the humanitarian situation in North-Eastern Nigeria. We appreciate what your country is doing for us.

6. At the risk of stating the obvious, one of the most pressing issues of our time is climate change. The effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on the atmosphere and the subsequent impact on our climate has created visible and devastating global challenges. In Africa, a lot of our issues around conflict and unsafe migration are rooted in climate



change. The increased frequency and severity of droughts, floods, and other destructive events are especially hard on the already impoverished populations in Africa's more rural locations.

7. Leaders, counterparts and friends, with a global population set to reach 10 billion people by 2050, our current production and consumption patterns are, again to state the obvious, highly unsustainable. The global economy consumes over 100 billion tons of materials annually, with over 90% of these volumes turned into waste. I will say that again: more than 90% of what we take from the earth is wasted. Essentially, the world is only 10% circular.

8. We need to make the environmental and social changes needed to conserve our planet. Countries have a huge role to play in closing this gap and to aid the global transition to a cleaner, circular, and sustainable future. A circular economy can contribute significantly to climate change mitigation. It is essential to reaching the goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement, which is to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

9. The United Nations has set a target of 2050 for global carbon neutrality, which is in alignment with several national governments, whose net zero targets are between 2050-2060, including a majority of G7 and G20 member countries. Key developing nations like Nigeria, China, Saudi Arabia, also align their net zero emission target of 2060 with some of these countries. Scientific evidence suggests that achieving net zero emission will limit global warming. This will affect all countries and all sectors of the economy, either directly or indirectly. Africa, with its population of 1.2 billion people and a combined GDP of \$3.4trn, currently accounts for 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, while being a home to 17% of the world's population. The potential impact of increased production, higher consumption, and in turn, higher waste generation is therefore quite apparent.

10. In Nigeria, less than 10% of the over 17.5 million tons of plastic waste generated annually is collected or recycled. This means that annually, over 15 million tons of plastic waste is generated. Without targeted interventions, a lot of this plastic waste will end up in our oceans, waterways or in landfills.



11. In November 2021, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR made a commitment for Nigeria to achieve net zero emissions by 2060, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Subsequently, the Nigerian Climate Change Act was signed into law on 18th November, 2021. This has provided our country with a legal framework for reducing low GHG emissions and ensuring green and sustainable economic growth.

12. The Nigerian Climate Change Act also provides for the creation of a **National Council on Climate Change** to form policy, mobilise climate finance, implement a carbon trading framework and achieve our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

13. In addition to the Act, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved on 2nd February, 2022, Nigeria's **Energy Transition Plan (ETP)**. The ETP paves a pathway to achieve our net zero target by 2060. Nigeria is amongst the few countries in Africa with an ETP. It aims to lift over 100 million people out of energy and economic poverty, connect the population to modern energy services, and manage the transition of the oil and gas industry, on the pathway to net zero.

14. The Energy Transition Plan focuses on five sectors with concrete decarbonization levers, namely:

- (i) **Power:** increase solar and gas power utilization;
- (ii) **Transport:** uptake of electric vehicles in the passenger car segment;
- (iii) **Industry:** carbon capture in cement/ammonia production and 100 percent shift to zero emission fuels for heating;
- (iv) **Residential buildings:** shift to bio-gas based and electric cooking and a transition away from generator sets; and
- (v) **Oil & Gas:** a reduction in global demand and a fully diversified economy, as well as reduced flaring and improved energy efficiency.

15. As I indicated, regarding the industry levers of the ETP, Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technologies will play a key role in achieving carbon neutrality, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and World Bank, have begun supporting the Nigerian government to develop a domestic market for CCUS for industrial emissions. Under the



leadership of the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, the International Energy Agency has also helped develop a **National CCUS Work Programme**. Both programs aim to sensitize stakeholders on the effectiveness of industrial CCUS in Nigeria and to scale up the deployment of relevant technologies.

16. With over 200 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves, Nigeria's gas is amongst the ten largest reserves globally. The Nigeria Energy Transition Plan (ETP) data analytics shows that natural gas will be a key transition fuel for achieving net zero emission by 2060, as it will address the clean cooking deficit and provide grid stability, for the integration of renewables at scale.

17. The Nigerian government is striving toward utilising our abundant natural gas reserves by constructing the **Trans-Nigeria Gas Pipeline (TNGP)**, which is expected to transport 3,500 million metric standard cubic feet per day, from several gas gathering projects in the southern part of Nigeria, to the North. The right infrastructure investments are needed to take full advantage of this opportunity. Nigeria's ETP shows that infrastructure investments will total \$1.9 trillion by 2060, in a net zero scenario.

18. Distinguished Participants, the United Nations predicts that about two-thirds of the growth in population between 2020 and 2050 will take place in Africa. It is therefore the responsibility of African leaders to **balance economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental protection**, to ensure a sustainable future for the next generation. We must therefore improve governance at all levels, strengthen institutional capacity and policy instruments, enhance technological capabilities, as well as, and most importantly, effect changes in our human behaviour and lifestyles.

19. Achieving a smooth transition to a clean or circular economy, will depend on achieving important goals, such as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

20. Additionally, the possibility of creating a greener future requires countries to establish and ring-fence an adequate budget, create public awareness, improve legislation and champion the enforcement of sustainable practices. These things are challenging at any time, but even



more challenging in today's climate. Every country was negatively affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic, but developing countries have suffered disproportionately, due mainly to the socio-economic fallouts that wealthier nations were better equipped to absorb. In Nigeria, the country with the largest population in Africa, it was truly challenging to ensure that the most at-risk populations, who rely on daily work for subsistence, did not fall further into poverty.

21. Our people are however, very resilient, and we are beginning to see a great deal of improvement in our economy. Increasing international partnerships and foreign direct investment (FDI), is key for us as a nation, and Nigeria is back open for business. Last year, FDI announcements increased 100% on 2020. Nigeria has one of the most promising poles of growth in Africa and is a good diversifier for any investment portfolio, due to its rapid growth rate and high levels of political stability. In fact, the global consulting firm – PwC - has projected that Nigeria will be among the top economies in the world by 2050.

22. We have also begun to witness Nigerian start-ups getting international attention. Early last year, the Nigerian tech company Flutterwave raised a landmark \$170m, with the support of U.S hedge-fund - Tiger Global; and we are seeing many other small businesses achieve similar feats. Stories like these are so important to me, because small businesses are the backbone of Nigeria's economy and we have so many innovative, fledgling businesses that just need the right environment, to be able to impact not just Africa, but the world.

23. For the past few years, the phrase the "new normal" has been used a lot; and I think for me, the new normal creates opportunity to move from the world we inherited into the world we curate. A world where everything is ecologically friendly, but women are disenfranchised, or people remain in poverty, isn't what we are building. I believe that European and African countries can work more closely, to share ideas on how we can build resilient structures that promote environmental protection and the active participation of our global populace. Governments cannot achieve this alone; all of our citizens must also support global sustainability efforts.

24. With over 32 million people being pushed into poverty in least developed countries due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to UNCTAD, a post-pandemic world undisputedly relies on the aspiration to do good,



by doing well. Many economic pressures stemming from the pandemic are rooted in tight fiscal spaces, restricted global trade flows and undeveloped productive capacities. However, a global effort to pursue sustainable growth is the key to not only post-pandemic prosperity, but security. Global efforts to pursue green trade, flexible economic strategies, diversified economies and societal resilience will usher in a prosperous era, after the universal standstill that was the pandemic; one that hopefully, will be stronger than before.

25. Conserving the diversity of life on Earth is critical to human welfare. Essential resources are at risk from the direct results of our unsustainable practices. Sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone. We need to change the way we think and act.

26. Ladies and gentlemen, the future is here, and I trust you will all help to build it. Thank you all for your attention.