



**WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY BOSS MUSTAPHA, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION AT THE THIRD NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION SUMMIT HELD ON TUESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT THE STATE HOUSE CONFERENCE HALL, PRESIDENTIAL VILLA, ASO ROCK, ABUJA.**

**Protocols**

I am always humbled and delighted to welcome Mr. President to any event, especially such that deal with anti-corruption, a subject so close to His Excellency's heart and for which Mr. President's passion and commitment is providing the propelling force to drive this menace out of our country. In spite of the unrelenting push-back from beneficiaries of corruption, Mr. President's support and guidance had always provided the needed impetus. I thank you, Your Excellency.

2. As I welcome all of us to the Third National Anti-Corruption Summit, I want to sue this opportunity to commend all the Anti-Corruption Agencies for the progress being made in this very necessary campaign that would see Nigeria having more resources, which would have hitherto been unscrupulously diverted, to tackle our development challenges. Permit me to particularly commend the ICPC for its foresight in introducing and consistently convening the National Anti-Corruption Summit since 2019. Its

alignment with one of the nine priority areas of President Muhammadu Buhari's nine point governance roadmap, that is fighting corruption and improving governance, provides a necessary condition for effective and efficient utilization of resources that are becoming more scarce as our population grows and demands to satisfy this growing population equally expands.

3. Today's event, with the theme Corruption and the Cost of Governance: New Imperatives For Fiscal Transparency, is meant to appropriately re-focus all arms of government and their agencies on the need for more openness in the use of financial resources to purposes for which they are meant to reduce the cost of governance, which have been shown to be a major facilitator of corruption

4. Your Excellency, sir, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is incontrovertible to say that the dual objectives of this Summit – self – assessment as a government, and the public service integrity award was designed to strengthen the fight against corruption and encourage citizens, especially youths to imbibe the principles of integrity, selflessness and accountability. Recognizing and giving persons of integrity awards by no less a person than a President locally and globally recognized as one who personifies integrity is no doubt a life - changing experience to the awardees and Nigerian youths watching the programme, as they would know that this administration recognizes and rewards integrity, and that integrity pays.

5. In line with the theme of today's Summit, It is I speak on the role of the Executive arm of government to lead, as it has been doing, the constant quest for improving cost of governance by ceaselessly reinventing itself. This is imperative because we are dealing with systemic corruption and this implies that corruption has permeated the fabric of society including governance thus the institutionalization of corrupt practices in the machinery of governance must be ruthlessly rooted out. Systemic corruption prevents government from maximizing its potential of providing good governance for the people with available little resources especially at this time of Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Government is highly worried that about 60 per cent of Federal Government's Overhead Expenditure in three years (2012 to 2014) was spent on travels, maintenance, local and international training, welfare, office stationery / consumables, honoraria etc. Recent data from the Budget Office indicates that "actual MDAs recurrent spending is still on the rise viz. from N3.61 trillion in 2015 to N5.26 trillion in 2018 and N7.91 trillion in 2020."

7. President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration, has, therefore, been unrelenting in making sure that our little resources will no longer be budgeted and/or used for frivolities, hidden in fake projects, unnecessary travel, wasteful overhead costs, meaningless capital projects and remuneration of ghost workers. We also remain focused on getting back our resources that have found their ways into the private pockets of those who fraudulently orchestrate the budget process for their selfish desires.

8. As a government, our concerns have always been and would always be continuously reflect and take measures to mitigate the negative consequences of unrestrained cost of governance.

9. It is increasingly becoming public knowledge that our anti-corruption agencies, especially ICPC, are doing a lot in the area of prevention and also recovery of diverted or stolen public funds, building the capacity of MDAs to resist corrupt practices, promoting ethical values through the National Ethics and Integrity Policy of government. Some of the capacity building measures include System Study and Review of operations of MDAs; Corruption Risk Assessment and the establishment of Anti-corruption Monitoring Units in all MDAs. Recoveries of public funds in recent years have no doubt demonstrated the strong resolve government to stem financial hemorrhages and promote initiatives towards curbing illicit financial flows.

10. Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, you would all agree that this administration has so far demonstrated and still continues to demonstrate its determination to fight corruption and improve governance no matter what it takes and howsoever corruption fights back with the stolen resources at its disposal.

11. I wish to once again congratulate the ICPC for its result-oriented, technology – driven, law and order and prevention based initiatives in the fight against corruption. We must do all we can to eliminate corruption from governance and strengthen fiscal transparency rather than focus on pursuing the money after it has taken flight.

12. I must not fail to congratulate the Integrity Awardees of this year. Presidential recognition by President Muhammadu Buhari a global icon of integrity is a one in a lifetime opportunity that you and your families will cherish forever. Finally, I would like to urge all members of the public to support the anti – corruption agencies in its fight against graft, because the fight against corruption is a collective responsibility of all.

13. I thank you all for your attention.