

RESTRICTED



REMARKS

BY

THE SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR

HIS EXCELLENCY

**THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
MUHAMMADU BUHARI, GCFR**

REPRESENTED

BY

**THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION
BOSS MUSTAPHA**

***ON THE OCCASION OF*
THE NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE COURSE 26 GRADUATION
CEREMONY**

AT

**NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM
ABUJA**

FRIDAY 3RD AUGUST, 2018

Protocol

1. It is always a great pleasure to be at the National Defence College (NDA), particularly on auspicious occasions such as this. On behalf of His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, in whose stead I stand before you, it is fitting, that I salute the hard work and endurance of all the participants of NDC Course 26 and their spouses, particularly, our friends from allied nations.

2. National Defence Colleges all over the world, are iconic institutions of the state, established to promote strategic thought, national strategy and the fundamentals of security as critical inputs to national development and stability.

3. The National Defence College, Nigeria, has undoubtedly proven its capacity as an effective national institution. Every year since 1992, it has unfailingly conducted the Higher Defence and Strategic Studies (HDSS) Course, thus fulfilling its primary role of grooming senior military and civilian officers of the State. It has, shown its defining character as a learning institution with a sense of creativity and innovation in its training and research activities.

4. I am pleased to note that the College has sustained its reputation as the foremost military training institution in Nigeria and as a destination of choice in Africa and beyond for strategic military education. In particular, it has retained its long-standing designation by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as a Centre of Excellence, for strategic level Peace Support Operations training in Africa. The College has continuously

embarked on positive transformation and change in order to improve its capacity.

5. This is in line with the aspirations of the Federal Government, to strengthen institutional and human capacities, increase environmental resilience and improve our future national outlook. I recall that at the inception of this Administration in 2015, it was confronted by a wide range of fault lines in governance, security and development of our dear nation. In particular, it observed immediate dangers from past missteps arising from the erosion of national and ethical values and gross economic mismanagement. These findings ultimately led to a process of deep introspection, which culminated into decisive changes that we all truly deserved. Consequently, the 'Change Agenda', which was based on a three-pronged strategy to rigorously fight corruption, improve the economy and deliver on national security, was launched amidst overwhelming public support.

6. In the past 3 years, Government's rapid intervention has recorded some interesting results. The fight against corruption is on course. We have stopped the huge haemorrhaging of our national economy, checked the culture of impunity, recovered huge funds siphoned from official treasuries, restored international confidence in Nigeria and successfully prosecuted some high profile politically exposed persons in spite of their party affiliations. Indeed, on Thursday, 5th July, 2018, Mr. President signed the Executive Order No.6 to energize the fight against corruption. I therefore call on all men and women of goodwill to join hands with this Administration in its stand against corruption, to enable the delivery of value-laden ethical and corrupt-free governance in the interest of our nation.

7. The intervention strategy for the revamp of the economic sector is based on the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) which is premised on three strategic objectives: restoring growth, investing in our people, and building a competitive economy. These milestones will be achieved through attaining macroeconomic stability and economic diversification, investing in the Nigerian people by increasing social inclusion, creating jobs and improving the human capital base of the economy, and increase competitiveness by investing in infrastructure and improving the business environment.

8. The ERGP has also delivered some remarkable results, such as our quick exit from economic depression, increased oil production and earnings as well as stable foreign exchange rates. We have witnessed improved overall effectiveness and efficiency of economic resource application, as Government is now able to deliver more development, even while earning less. Our Social Investment Programme (SIP) has brought hope to millions of Nigerians in diverse ways. Going forward, Government has concentrated efforts in creating amenable conditions for economic diversification to release the collective endeavours of the Nigerian people through entrepreneurship, industrialization and investments. In this regard, we are encouraged by recent improvements in the ease-of-doing-business ratings in Nigeria.

9. The periodic prognosis of our economic strategies and micro economic indicators show that although, more work needs to be done on several fronts, our collective efforts are definitively producing the desired dividends. Government is assured that the economic outlook of Nigeria can only improve from now.

10. The third and perhaps, the most urgent of our expressed mandates, is to deliver improved national security. As a result of concerted national and international efforts, I am pleased to state that Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism is decidedly, in recession. We have also enjoyed the longest period of peace in the Niger Delta in recent memory. Government is not unmindful about the wave of wanton killings in Northern Nigeria, which places a dent on the overall achievements in the security sector. This Administration is saddened by this ugly development and commiserate with all Nigerians, particularly those who have lost loved ones and property in these mindless expressions of violence.

11. Government is however encouraged by the efforts of our Armed Forces and other security agencies that have borne the burden of providing security in areas of violent conflicts in Nigeria, and I express the feelings of a deeply grateful' nation to the gallantry and sacrifices of our fighting forces. I also salute the memory of fallen officers, men and women of the Services and security agencies in defence of our nation. Nigerians are assured of Government's total commitment to ensure sustainable peace and security in the nation.

12. At this juncture, let me affirm Government's believe that contemporary challenges of security call for fundamental changes in some of our current national security values, structures and practices. First, in line with the prevailing national model of civil military relations, I enjoin the Armed Forces of Nigeria, as a foremost national institution, to continue to promote democratic values in the nation This is more so, as we approach another electioneering season. Secondly, the time has truly come, for us as a nation to explore a fundamental review of the national security architecture to enable

the Nigeria Police Force, play a more active role to prevent the constant recourse to the Armed Forces. Thirdly, in view of the fundamental asymmetries between national forces and threats, I enjoin the Armed Forces to continue to strengthen its operational procedures to deliver national security and defence, in accordance with long cherished military values and international best practices.

13. In the pursuit of national security in a holistic manner, the present Administration has promoted and will continue to promote whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. This reflects our basic inclination to aggregate and exploit the comparative advantages of all the thematic elements of national security, including the military. In furtherance of this philosophy, the new National Defence Policy was recently signed to promote our strategic vision of a violence-free, safe, peaceful, self-reliant, prosperous and strong nation. The policy is envisioned to consolidate the strategic responses and capacity elements of our national security.

14. An associated task is to develop national contingencies for all the strategic and operational objectives in the policy. As the foremost military strategic institution in Nigeria, the National Defence College will no doubt be involved in these initiatives and critical processes of implementation and review. Indeed, our graduands will most likely be thrust into the frontiers of these tasks. I therefore enjoin you to guard your loins and reenact the national and military strategic values that you have so arduously imbibed in the College.

15. Once again, I congratulate the Commandant and staff of the College for graduating the National Defence College Course 26, and the graduating participants for successfully completing the course. A new lease in your

career awaits you. Your Services and establishments await you but more importantly, your nations await you.

16. God bless you all and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.