



2018: Raising the bar in data production, data quality and statistical advocacy

As yet another year rolls by, it is pertinent to reflect on how far we have come in raising the standard of data production in Nigeria, while increasing awareness about its usefulness for policy and business decision making. The year 2017 witnessed a considerable uptick in activities at the National Bureau of Statistics, driven in large part by an ever-growing demand for more – and better- data by governments, businesses and citizens. As 2018 beckons, it is clear that we are unlikely to see a slowdown in such demand, and I am pleased to affirm that

NBS is ready, willing and able to rise to the occasion again this year.

No doubt, 2017 was a remarkable year. A total of 198 reports were released, an increase of 85% over 2016. With the country's emergence from economic recession in the second quarter came greater demand for data by policymakers and business leaders seeking to identify how to sustain the recovery, implement policies, prioritise programmes and ensure that the Nigerian economy gets on a more sustainable path of inclusive growth. Concerned citizens, eager to witness immediate changes in their socio-economic circumstances, also paid closer attention to statistical reports. As a result, the Second Quarter 2017 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Report ranked as one with the most downloads (relative to its release date), followed by the National Survey on Corruption Perception, each with over 5000 downloads within 120 days months of their release. My personal engagement with a vastly diverse sample of our clients convinces me of the growing appreciation for Nigeria's official statistics. Yet, we can - and must - do better.

In 2018, NBS is committed to surpassing these milestones. As seen on our revised [data release calendar](#), 176 reports are already planned. As usual, they will be accompanied by clear, informative infographic materials, and disseminated widely across all our social media platforms. We remain committed to quality improvement across all our service delivery channels, in order to continually justify our multiple awards in 2017, which included Public Service Excellence Award (BusinessDay Newspapers), Special Institution of the Year (Finance Correspondents Association), Public Sector Institution of the Year (Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry), Public Sector Star Website Award (Nigeria Internet Registration Association), SERVICOM Commendation, and the Federal Government's National Productivity Order of Merit Award.

It is our desire to earn each day the trust, respect and confidence that has been accorded the Bureau's work, despite pressing resource constraints. As ever, the Bureau will remain steadfast in guarding its professional and operational independence granted by the Statistics Act (2007), especially as the political climate builds up. Every effort will be made to provide adequate explanations and context for data releases, and prioritise statistical advocacy efforts to limit, as much as practicable, the misuse of data.

We acknowledge the support of our government and institutional partners towards improving the availability and quality of official statistics, and hope that 2018 will be a year of better statistical funding, both at the federal level and to State Statistical Agencies (SSAs). The importance of statistical data for identifying development priorities and shaping public policy should not be subject to vagaries of the socio-economic or political climate. Rather, leaders must continually emphasise and utilise evidence-based approaches, whether in policy or business. If this is not done, it becomes impossible to objectively identify key areas in our society that actually require change, or accurately determine what policy prescriptions will best respond to the real needs of the country, or take advantage of the next big business opportunity in this resilient economy.

We are confident that the year will bring numerous opportunities for us to effectively support policymakers and look forward to another fulfilling year for us at the Bureau, our partners and data users.

Best wishes in 2018!

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