

Opening Remarks by the Statistician General of the Federation, Dr. Yemi Kale at the Launch of the Fifth Round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS5) in Nigeria, held at Chelsea Hotel, Abuja on the 14th November 2017

1. Let me start by saying that, I am very delighted that you all made it here today to this very important event, the first of the 6 dissemination workshops, for the 5th Round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 5) in Nigeria, whose planning, design and implementation have been in the works for over the last three years. The planning and preparation for this exercise, has been the longest and most detailed for any major household survey we've executed during my tenure as Statistician General of the Federation and CEO of the National Bureau of Statistics and accordingly, it is heart-warming to finally see the results of all that backbreaking, long-hours and sleepless nights come to fruition, not only because of my professional responsibility as Statistician-General, but also because it is a rare opportunity to support through reliable data, the growing efforts to improve development outcomes in Nigeria and to exchange ideas with you all, as important stakeholders in the Nigerian Statistical System.

2. The MICS survey is over 22 years old, and has now become the largest source of statistically sound and internationally comparable data on women and children worldwide, focusing on issues such as health, education, child protection, water and sanitation, amongst others. The survey also serves as a major source of data in establishing the baseline for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to measure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators. In Nigeria, the MICS program started in 1995, with the first round conducted by the old Federal Office of Statistics, now National Bureau of Statistics. Since its inception, a total of 5 rounds have now been conducted by NBS with support from UNICEF, and it is the result of the 5th round that we are here to officially launch this afternoon.

3. Starting from the first round of the MICS exercise in Nigeria, there have been progressive changes to each of the rounds. With each round of the MICS exercise, has come new improvements and innovations that have brought some form of excitement and enthusiasm for both the collectors and users of the data. These improvements and innovations have been in diverse forms, be it the addition of new modules to the questionnaires, new questions or measurements, or even the application of newer technology in collecting and analysing the data. This is certainly one survey, whose design

and methodology has consistently kept up with the pace of change in society, and has always attempted to track the effect of this change on the lives of women and children in particular, and the general household in general.

4. During this recent round of the MICS exercise, several improvements and innovations were also recorded. Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, permit me to briefly share some of these innovations in what I have termed the Five Firsts of the MICS 5 in Nigeria.

- a) Firstly, for the first time in Nigeria, and in line with our statistical development blueprint which was developed about 5 years ago, to completely replace paper with technology, we deployed the use of Computed Assisted Personal Interviewer (CAPI) Devices for the MICS exercise. This is quite a significant achievement when we consider the huge household sample size covered, and all other necessary logistical arrangements put in place to make it happen. With Nigeria having the largest MICS sample size of households in Africa of over 33,000 households, we can confidently say that this is also the largest MICS survey to be carried out using electronic means of data collection in Africa. In line with our drive to improve data quality, we have worked very hard as a statistical system over the past few years in improving data collection methods. Presently, over 70 percent of our household surveys are conducted using CAPI, compared to virtually zero percent when I took over as Statistician General. With the successful completion of this round of MICS, we have gone another step further along this line.
- b) Secondly, the MICS Survey has traditionally been deployed using 3 questionnaires; that is, Children, Women and Household. However, for the first time in Nigeria and one of the first times in Africa, we deployed an additional questionnaire, to include information on Men during this 5th round. The deployment of this questionnaire has enabled us collect very useful information on men, particularly information related to their health, education and environment.
- c) Thirdly, and also for the first time in Nigeria and the continent, the current round of the MICS survey in Nigeria, included 3 new modules to the questionnaires, namely: Access to Mass Media & Use of ICT, Subjective Wellbeing and Tobacco and Alcohol Use. Accordingly, we now have

extracting new information on areas not previously measured in other rounds of the survey. Interesting information on things like Overall Life Satisfaction and Happiness were among the indicators derived during this round of the exercise. One particular indicator which caught my attention was, the percentage of Women and Men of a certain age, who subjectively thought their lives have improved within the last year. I think the results of an indicator like this is quite fascinating for government, particularly for a government like the present one, which is relatively new. The result can be a good pointer of people's perception of it and its programs over the last year.

- d) The fourth first, relates to the fact that in this round NBS conducted Water Quality tests to ascertain the quality of water being consumed by households in Nigeria. In previous rounds of the survey, we just asked subjective questions about the source of drinking water, and its overall fitness for consumption. However, in this round we carried out actual water quality test, using specialised testing kits, to test if water being consumed by households is contaminated by E.coli, a type of bacteria which causes food poisoning.
 - e) Finally, we are getting information on all these indicators at the senatorial zone level. Each indicator for Lagos and Kano state, being the States with the largest populations, have been disaggregated to senatorial district level, providing more lower level information for data users and policy makers in those states, for them to take very important decisions that will have effects on the livelihoods of persons living in those states. This is the first time we are getting information at this level from any household survey and I believe this will challenge more states in the country to follow along this line. Accordingly, I commend the government and statistical bureaus of Lagos and Kano for their commitment to making the exercise successful.
5. On a lighter note, this is also the first time that results of a MICS survey, or a national household survey of this magnitude and importance is being launched in the afternoon. Our data launches are typically organised early in the morning which I arguably often the best time to dissect volumes of data. However, in cognizance to the realisation that this launch was long overdue, we had to make sure we did it today

without delaying it further, as I also know many of you have waited long enough to be able to use such an important dataset and ask questions about the results.

6. Over the next few days, staff of NBS and UNICEF, alongside other partners will be traveling across the 6 geopolitical zones of the country to launch this report. The same process of launching this report here today will be repeated across the 6 geopolitical zones. The main purpose of this is to ensure that the whole country, not just Abuja and Lagos, as much as possible get to hear and see the report. As we do with the launch or publication of any of our statistical reports, it will be published on our website and on social media for easy access by those who cannot get a hard copy. We will also be advocating and encouraging the use of these results being launched here today for evidenced based planning and decision making which is the main objective of data. Users of data, particularly government, development agencies, NGOs and policy makers at all levels, should therefore, see these results as another rich source of information, from where they can draw from, to do their work. The level of resources that have been deployed to produce this information has been massive, not just in relation to monetary terms but more so because of the level of technical skills time, and capacity involved. Having spent so much resources to arm ourselves with such important information, it will be a huge waste and disservice to ourselves and our people if we do not use it to design and shape policies that will better the lives of Nigerians.
7. At this juncture, I must acknowledge and commend the support provided by our main partner on this project, UNICEF. Since the inception of the MICS program in Nigeria, UNICEF has stood side by side with NBS and indeed Nigeria on this project, supporting us technically and providing the financial resources for the survey. Most of our staff have benefitted immensely from this technical support, so much so that some have served as Technical Experts for other African countries in the conduct of their own MICS survey and other household surveys. On behalf of NBS and the Nigerian statistical system, I thank you very much for this support and hope that it will continue going forward. May I also acknowledge and thank the other partners in this exercise for their support and collaboration, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organisation (WHO), National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), The World Bank, the Bill and Melinda

Gates Foundation, Save the Children and the National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA). Your commitment and hard-work to the successful completion of this exercise has not gone unnoticed. It is very much appreciated, and the entire statistical system owes you a huge debt of gratitude.

8. For my staff and colleagues at the NBS and the wider Nigerian statistical system, I want to thank you all for your hard work and dedication, despite the very challenging environment in which we work. We must not relent in this very important work that we do, as the future of this country is dependent on the kind of statistical system we build today. In this regard, we must acknowledge the successes and achievements that have come our way as a statistical system such as the completion of another round of MICS which we are launching today, while at the same time doubling our efforts in overcoming the remaining challenges. Our vision still remains to be a world class statistical system and I believe that despite some persistent challenges we are definitely moving in the right direction. The task ahead of us does not diminish, the work environment and conditions remain harsh, and funding, though improving on many fronts, is hardly ever enough. Yet, we must deliver on our mandate, as a National Statistical Office and the coordinator of the National Statistical System (NSS). Hence, I encourage you to continue to give it your best, as Nigeria will be better for it.
9. Let me conclude by thanking everyone for your presence here today and wishing everyone a successful launch and I hope that you find the results of this MICS 5 Survey exciting and interesting for your work. I also hope that the deliberations and inputs to come will be the catalyst for the growth and development of the NBS and Nigerian Statistical System in particular and Nigeria in general. I believe that if we continue to do the right things at the right time and in the right way and for the right reasons, just as we are doing here today, we will be able to transform Nigeria through the production of good quality, accurate, timely and reliable data to guide evidenced based policies, programmes and projects.
10. I now have the pleasure to formally declare open this dissemination workshop for the 5th round of the MICS survey in Nigeria, and I thank you for your attention.