

ADDRESS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, PROFESSOR YEMI OSINBAJO, SAN, GCON, AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE NATIONAL HGSF STRATEGIC PLAN,
THE '*GLOBAL SCHOOL FEEDING SOURCEBOOK*' AND THE
INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATING TEAM

Theme: "Stimulating Socio- Economic growth through the National Home Grown School Feeding program".

Thursday, 9th of June 2016

The Home Grown School Feeding Programme is one of the 5 Social Investment Programmes of the Buhari administration. The Social investment programme is the largest single dedicated provision for social investment in Nigeria's economic history. Of the 6 trillion 2016 budget, 500 billion is devoted to the social investment programme. It is a victory for a point of view namely that the inalienable right to life confirmed in the Nigerian Constitution is meaningless in a society where large numbers are poor if government does not invest significantly in getting people out of poverty and addressing health and education issues of children and other vulnerable groups. It is also important to emphasise that the SIP is not a welfare scheme, which merely gives handouts to the poor. Rather the programmes have had to pass stringent tests of their direct economic benefit to the target groups and the economy as a whole, especially in terms of jobs. So this morning we are here to formally present:

1. National strategy on Home Grown School Feeding Programme;
2. An important new book titled THE '*GLOBAL SCHOOL FEEDING SOURCEBOOK*'
3. And the National Co-ordinating team of the Home School Feeding Programme.

The Strategy sets out simply how the federal, state and local governments are to work together to deliver the primary objectives of the programme, namely the feeding of children in primary schools with healthy, nutritious meals prepared from local agricultural produce, cooked and served by food vendors and cooks in the local communities where the schools are located. The ultimate objectives are bringing real change to the lives of twenty million children and creating the multiplier effect on the local economies in communities where these schools are located by boosting agriculture, entrepreneurship and employment.

Just for emphasis, The Home Grown School Feeding Programme has four main benefits.

It will improve school enrolment and completion and curb the current dropout rates from primary school estimated at 30% and thereby also reduce child labour.

It will improve child nutrition and health. As a result of poverty many children have poor nutrition and worrying health status, which affects learning outcomes. The programme aims to address this.

It will also increase local agricultural production. This will not only increase production but provides a structural demand for agricultural produce and thus creates local economies that have a ready-made market for their produce and guaranteed profit.

Finally, it will create jobs that will help lift families below the poverty line over that line and into a brighter future.

We will work hard to ensure that all these benefits are not just a good pitch but become real and bringing desirable change in the lives of our people and in the midst of our communities.

However, the strategic plan will only work when we imbibe a new level of cooperation between the federal, state and local levels of governments. It is said that all politics is local. So too development! We therefore recognise the fact that these plans must have specific interpretations in the specific communities. It is called “Home Grown School Feeding” for the reason that it must be owned by the people for whom it has been designed

On its part, the Federal Government has taken responsibility for the provision of part-funding and also secured sound technical support. Yet the Federal Government is just one partner in a value-chain of governance, if you will, that will also include development partners, financial institutions, educational institutions and civil society groups. Indeed the book we are presenting now titled Global school Feeding Sourcebook, Lessons from 14 countries, underscores the fact that our school feeding programme actually launches us into an international school feeding ecosystem with all the benefits of synergy and collaboration that brings. We are pleased to have with us today Leslie Drake, one of the co-editors of the book, Leslie is a great friend of Nigeria and has personally been extremely supportive of our efforts. Leslie is from The Partnership for Child Development at the Imperial College London, The PCD is our technical partner on this school feeding programme. We have also constituted an inter ministerial technical team which has the participation of our technical partner PCD, led here by Bimbo Adesanmi.

Today we formally lay an important building block in securing our future as we lay out the implementation plan to ensure that even children from the most disadvantaged homes are freed from the destructive effects of malnutrition and distractions as they learn. While we attain this objective we incentivise agriculture, food vendor ring and catering. Yes nothing on this scale can be without major implementation difficulties. Smooth flow of funding, sourcing of food, organisation of payment of participants in the value chain are significant challenges. There is nothing novel about these challenges, what is important is to ensure that under no circumstances should we be discouraged from surmounting the problems and doing our duty to the millions of Nigerian children especially the large majority from disadvantaged homes.

I am therefore privileged and delighted to present the National Strategy for the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, The Global School Feeding Sourcebook and the National Coordinating Team.

Thank you.