

**GOODWILL MESSAGE DELIVERED BY THE HON. MINISTER OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, INUWA ABDUL-KADIR, ESQ. AT THE OPENING OF THE 53<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO) COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (CAF) AT TINAPA LAKESIDE RESORT, CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, ON MONDAY JUNE 25, 2012**

**PROTOCOL**

It gives me great pleasure to stand before this distinguished audience to deliver the goodwill message. I am particularly motivated by the decision of the United Nations World Tourism Organization to focus on and highlight the opportunities of responsible tourism for our youth. This is coming at a time when the Federal Government of Nigeria, through Mr. President's Transformation Agenda, is paying special attention to youth development. Government is vigorously pursuing policies aimed at creating opportunities and avenues that can empower the youth to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to the country at large.

As we are aware, some regions of the world are faced with low birth rates and ageing population. Africa however, is blessed with a large and vibrant youth population. In Nigeria, the youth constitutes over half of the population. The theme of this meeting is for us in the Federal Ministry of Youth Development, a pointer to the opportunities that abound in domestic and international tourism, for the nation's teeming youth.

We are exploring areas of collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, as well as other national and international organizations to re-orientate the Nigerian youth in order to

create jobs and opportunities for them, as we believe in their potentials and ability to transform Nigeria. After all, inevitably, they will one day take over the baton of leadership.

Towards this end, one of the initiatives my Ministry is championing is the resuscitation of organizations that encourage the youth to develop to their full potentials, while inculcating good values. The existence of such associations as Girls Guide, Boys Brigade, Scouts Association of Nigeria, and the Brownies, etc., particularly in our institutions of learning will help our youth develop and embrace sound core values. This will undeniably make them more altruistic and responsible citizens, and good leaders of tomorrow. In this regard, the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, in collaboration with all tiers of government that are concerned with youth development will organize special programmes that will instill the sense of responsibility, good citizenship and entrepreneurship amongst our youth.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I must warmly congratulate the President and Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, on Nigeria's hosting of this important meeting. I also commend the efforts of the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, Chief Edem Duke and the entire Ministry for winning the confidence and recognition of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

This address would be incomplete if I do not pay glowing tribute to our gracious host, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Cross River State, Senator Liyel Imoke, for the exceptional reception accorded us and the splendid facilities put at our disposal. I also thank the good people of Cross River State for their warmth and hospitality since our arrival.

I look forward to meeting and discussing further with delegates. My expectation is to leave here with information and strategies that will help create jobs for the Nigerian youth in the tourism industry.

Thank you for your kind attention.