

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY H.E. GEOFFREY ONYEAMA

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AT THE COMMISSIONING

OF

THE D – 8 HEALTH SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

OFFICE

HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2020

H.E Honourable Minister of Health,

D – 8 HSP Global Programme Director,

Your Excellencies, Representatives of D-8 Member Countries

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to attend the official launch of the D-8 Health and Social Protection Programme Office in Abuja. On this special occasion, may I on behalf of the Government and good people of Nigeria congratulate Member States for this great milestone which undoubtedly would promote human development, inclusive growth, wealth creation, and enhance the well-being of our citizens. In the same vein, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Ado Muhammad for his zeal and enthusiasm towards undertaking one of the missions of this noble Organisation by transforming the health sector.

2. Early this year, the Country Partnership Agreement establishing the Health and Social Protection Programme Office in Nigeria was signed between Nigeria and the D-8 General Secretariat. The exercise was an important step in ensuring that members achieve improvement health care systems. As part of our obligations, we pledged our unwavering commitment to the successful implementation of this initiative. I am, therefore, convinced that the commissioning of this office would help drive our shared aspirations towards achieving affordable healthcare cost, inclusive social protection programme, and reformation of health care system.

Ladies and Gentlemen

3. Today's event is historic and timely, in view of the recent global health challenge which has brought about unprecedented pressure on our

health and humanitarian sectors. Undoubtedly, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the need for nations to build a good and sustained health system as well as a call for us to commit to the realization of health-related Sustainable Development Goals. However, I am delighted that the D-8 had preemptively established this Office to respond more quickly and effectively to health and social emergencies such as the one currently ravaging the world.

4. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Office has been taking responsive steps to cushion the negative impacts of COVID-19, despite the fact that the Office had not formally been commissioned, these efforts are quite commendable and has shown the significance of the D 8 HSP Office to the socio-medical comfort of the people.

5. There is no gainsaying that the task ahead of us is daunting and requires concerted efforts of member states and relevant stakeholders. Therefore, for us to achieve the core objectives of the Programme and ensure it's success, I wish to solicit the political will of member states towards realisation of this initiative through prompt funding and technical cooperation. The long-term willingness of our respective Governments to support the Office will play a pivotal role in strengthening the primary healthcare system of our Countries. It is my hope that we will continue to share experiences and transfer knowledge in a bid to have a healthy population that would not only promote economic development but also reduce poverty.

6. To this end, on behalf of the Government and good people of Nigeria, I wish to reiterate our commitment to the success of this initiative and assure of the continuous readiness of Nigeria to collaborate with Members and relevant stakeholders including the private sector to actualize a health sector of our dream.

7. I thank you.