

STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, MUHAMMADU BUHARI,
PRESIDENT, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

AT

**THE TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Check Against Delivery

**Mr. President,
Heads of State and Government,
Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General for convening the Transforming Education Summit, which is aimed at mobilizing action, ambition, solutions and solidarity to transform education; to take stock of efforts to recover pandemic-related learning losses; to re-imagine education systems for the world of today and tomorrow; and to revitalise national and global efforts to achieve SDG-4.

2. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has not only revealed the weaknesses of our educational system as a nation, it also highlighted our opportunities for expanding knowledge and learning. The impact of COVID-19 on children's access to school and learning was felt most significantly by poor children

and children living in rural areas, due to government's inability to reach them with remote learning options on time. Some of the gains that were already made in getting these marginalised children, particularly girls, into school and ensuring that they remained there were reversed due to the pandemic.

3. Despite the challenges, we have now put in place various mechanisms to return us back to the path of progress. We are efficiently leveraging digital transformation to reach children wherever they are through a combination of online, offline and mobile solutions. Accordingly, the Federal Ministry of Education, in conjunction with UNICEF, recently launched Nigeria Learning Passport to support pre-primary and secondary-aged learners with over 14,000 curricula mapped learning and instructional materials, as well as tailor-made training programme to integrate technology in classroom instruction.

Mr. President,

4. Utilizing information technology as a teaching tool holds the promise of transforming and erasing the boundaries of learning and re-engineering how learning occurs within and

outside the classroom. There is no doubt that bridging the digital divide will offer Nigeria opportunities to expand learning and transform the education system, even as we build an ecosystem of knowledge, and a truly resilient society.

5. Also, Nigeria is restoring trust with its people, in order to provide safe learning environment and responsive services. That was why we were among the first to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD), while developing a national policy on school safety and security. Nigeria also hosted the 4th International Conference on Safe Schools Declaration in partnership with the African Union, Norway, Spain, Argentina and Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) on 25th – 27th October, 2021. The implementation of the SSD has offered an avenue to address school safety in a broader context that now includes gender-based violence and the protection of girls from hazards that contribute to insecurity and violence. While this is a step forward for promoting the well being of girls and ensuring they stay in school and learn, there are still many more grounds to cover.

6. Nigeria has also demonstrated its commitment towards strengthening learning outcomes and accelerating skills development by implementing cash transfer programs, dedicating special statutory funds to Universal Basic Education and special programmes, prioritizing the scaling-up of play-based early childhood education, as well as foundational literacy and numeracy programmes.

Mr. President,

7. I am pleased to announce Nigeria's participation in the Programme for the Analysis of Education System (PASEC 2024), as a complement to the ongoing efforts towards the institutionalization of national and school-based assessment. Doing so requires significant investment in schools and teacher training. This informed Nigeria's launching of a New National Teaching Policy to address the career path, remuneration, and general welfare of our teachers. We are now prioritizing the full implementation of professional teaching standards and teacher

qualification framework while improving their recruitment, deployment and management.

8. In July 2021, I joined the Global Partnership for Education Heads of State Call to Action to increase domestic education expenditure towards the 20% global benchmark by 2025. Accordingly, an allocation of N742 billion (1.7 billion USD) was made in 2021, and we will continue this in the coming years through coordinated action in partnership with the private sector and all our development partners. We will empower schools with the resources to truly transform teaching and learning, as we understand that efforts to improve the quality of education provision and learning outcomes are underpinned by the understanding that learners, teachers, and school leaders are the key stakeholders in education reforms.

9. In transforming education, we must not erect borders. Where they exist, we must bring them down, as we have much to learn from each other. Nigeria therefore, calls on the global community for collaborative partnerships that build a framework

of ideas and ideals and enable it position learners at the core of its national efforts to transform schooling. As we are aware, improving equitable and inclusive access to quality educational opportunities is germane to ensuring the full development of our societies. No country can develop beyond the capacity of its educational system.

Mr. President,

10. It is almost difficult to have a meaningful conversation around transforming our national education systems without transforming the teaching profession. Accordingly, Nigeria calls for more deliberations on efforts to expand innovations and research on teacher education and the professional development of teachers. The process of building a sustainable teacher supply chain to address the challenges of teacher shortages is important, and calls for global action. Nigeria also wishes to reiterate the need for all Member States and stakeholders to address the systemic and structural issues that hamper access to

quality education. It is only when we do this, that we can create a world truly fit for all, and where no one is left behind.

I thank you.