

**Hayija Amina M Az Zubair, Senior Special Assistant to the President (MDGs), Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**Hon. Minister of State of Chad Oumar Boukar Gana**

**Mr. Shantayan Devarajan, World Bank Chief Economist for Africa Region**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like once again to convey the apology of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), for his inability to be here. I have been asked to read his closing statement.

Mr. Janneh would like to thank the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for agreeing to collaborate with ECA in the organization and conduct of this very important meeting that has addressed an important issue in our continent's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The importance that the Government attached to this meeting was graphically demonstrated by the presence of the Hon. Minister of Finance, the Hon. Minister of Women Affairs, the Hon. Minister of State (Ministry of Education) at the opening of the meeting three days ago, the chairing of a session by the Hon. Minister of Planning yesterday and the attendance of the meeting from the first day by the Senior Special Assistant to the President (MDGs) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I am sure that you will all agree with me that her presentation, interventions and comments throughout the meeting were insightful and pregnant with hand-on and innovative ideas and experience in using a complex constitutional order to achieve the MDGs in Nigeria.

There have been very lively, frank, informative and useful discussions about the role of Sub-national Jurisdictions in efforts to achieve the MDGs in federal settings in Nigeria and Ethiopia, quasi-federal arrangement in

South Africa and unitary states that are pursuing decentralized governance in Africa; we have also discussed a host of issues including inter-governmental relations and transfers, coordination, governance and accountability, capacity especially at the local level, mainstreaming of MDGs in planning and development processes and the contributions of sub-national jurisdictions to service delivery in key development areas of health, education, water and sanitation; and Monitoring and Evaluation and attendant state and role of statistical information in Africa were also discussed extensively.

As we indicated at the beginning, the outcomes of this meeting will feed into country processes towards meeting MDGs, Ministerial processes of the African Union and the ECA as well as feed into the annual Reports on Assessing Progress in Africa towards the MDGs. I would, therefore, urge all participants to factor issues, discussions and some conclusions from this meeting into discussions of their MDGs and dother evelopment processes back home.

Let me once more thank all the participants for accepting to come to this meeting. Special thanks go to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the UNDP and the World Bank. We look forward to continuing partnership with UNDP, the World Bank and other development agencies to much more effectively assist countries to achieve the MDGs. We would like again to thank the Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and her able team for the special roles they have played in the organization and conduct of this meeting. Finally, we would like to thank the people of Nigeria for their usual and wonderful hospitality during our stay in Abuja.

I wish you all God's journey mercies as you travel back to your stations and countries.

Thanks you.