

Welcome Remarks Presented at the Occasion of the Official Launch of Grand Challenges Nigeria

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Protocols.

On behalf of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria, it is my privilege and honour to extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you as we gather here today for the official launch of the Grand Challenges Nigeria (GCNg) Project. Today marks a significant milestone in our journey towards transformative progress in health and sustainable development across Nigeria.

The Nutrition Society of Nigeria is deeply grateful to the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology (FMIST), for accepting to sustain GCNg Project. We must also acknowledge and sincerely appreciate all our partners, especially the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI), the Aliko Dangote Foundation, Dalberg Global Development Advisors, and FHI360/Alive & Thrive for their commitment to the GCNg project with Memoranda of Understanding signed.

Grand Challenges Nigeria is launched in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology and coordinated by the Nutrition Society of Nigeria (NSN). These partnerships ensure that GCNg aligns with national priorities and builds on Nigeria's existing capabilities in science and innovation. The Grand Challenges Nigeria Project is poised to address some of our most pressing health and development challenges by cultivating local innovation and providing targeted support to the areas where it is needed most. The approach of the Grand Challenges model is unique in its dedication to building solutions that are *indigenous, impactful, scalable, sustainable, and locally contextualized*. This aligns perfectly with our nation's aspirations to address complex health, nutrition and other developmental challenges, particularly as they impact the most vulnerable in our society—women, children, and marginalized communities. By integrating research, innovation, and indigenous knowledge, this project will help establish Nigeria within the global Grand Challenges network and support our national commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our core objectives reflect our dedication to an ecosystem of *collaboration and shared learning*. Through Grand Challenges Nigeria, we aim to create a robust platform for local researchers, healthcare providers, and innovators to develop solutions tailored to Nigeria's unique needs. These solutions span key areas such as maternal and child nutrition, food and health systems transformation, climate-smart agriculture, infectious disease prevention, and gender equity.

At the heart of this project is our commitment to ensuring that the solutions we develop are *inclusive and equitable*, bringing together public and private sectors, academia, community stakeholders, and other key players. Our efforts will not only advance health outcomes but also build indigenous capacity and forge partnerships that will drive sustainable progress.

We are excited to embark on this journey together, and we invite you to join us in advancing the mission of Grand Challenges Nigeria. Let us all work together to foster a culture of innovation that champions the health and well-being of every Nigerian.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests and colleagues, we stand united today with a common goal: to make meaningful and lasting impacts on the lives of Nigerians. I am confident that together, we can catalyse the change we envision and ensure a healthier, more resilient future for generations to come.

Thank you and God bless.

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