

**PRESS BRIEFING BY PROFESSOR TAHIR MAMMAN OON, SAN HONOURABLE
MINISTER OF EDUCATION HELD ON THURSDAY 20TH ABUJA.**

SHORT TIME BUT IMPRESSIVE GAINS FOR MOVING EDUCATION FORWARD.

Preamble.

Gentlemen of the Press. I warmly welcome you to this Press Briefing designed to intimate you with what the Federal Ministry of Education has been doing under our leadership with the guidance of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR since our swearing in as Ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on August 17th 2023.

2. The Honourable Minister of State and I would want to use this opportunity to thank God for the opportunity to serve and also appreciate President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR for the confidence reposed in us by entrusting the management of unarguably the largest and most important Ministry in the country in our care.

3. We both remain resolute in our conviction that once we get education right, we will get our development right and place our country back on the right trajectory. This is so because a population with the appropriate

4. knowledge, skills and attitude would engender a society with the right economic model for delivering services to the people. 4. I also want to thank all stakeholders of the education sector and indeed all Nigerians for the support they have given us so far and we would continued on more of this as we march positively forward in revamping Nigerian Education.

5. All our strategies, implementation and intervention are focused on the fifth priority of Mr. President's eight point priority and that is inclusivity: Drawing on all Skills.

Strategic Direction.

6. Upon assumption of office, we reviewed existing strategic plans of the Ministry and inaugurated a Committee to develop a Roadmap "Education for Renewed Hope Agenda: Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector 2024- 2027, which was subjected to Stakeholder review, adoption and approved for implementation by the National Council on Education at its 67 Session held on 14 and 15th December, 2023.

7. The roadmap contains Practical, problem-Solving and realistic approaches across thirteen thematic areas delineated to allow for concurrent implementation as parts of a synergistic whole.

8. The Roadmap underpins the Ministerial Deliverables, a compact signed between the management of the Federal Ministry of Education and Mr. President for which our tenure would be held accountable. It is also worth mentioning that the 2022/2022 Nigeria's Annual Education Conference, which was held from 11th 12th September,

2023 provided an opportunity for knowledge and experience which was useful in developing the Roadmap.

9. As you have witnessed this morning and parts of the afternoon, the Federal Ministry of Education has further distilled the implementation of the Ministerial deliverables to a more detailed implementation with turn-around strategies that would be measurable and capable of providing results that would be very visible to the Nigerian public.

Out of School Children

10. Gentlemen of the Press, I would not want to bother you with the number of Out of School Children in the country, suffice it to say that it is an embarrassment that Nigeria is continually associated with the highest number of Out of School children in the world.

11. We would be paying particular attention to this unacceptable phenomenon and in line with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's commitment, would work towards returning 15million Out of School Children back to the classrooms by the year 2027. 230 Out of School Children were brought back to School.

12. A National Basic Education in Nigeria Bootcamp (BEN-B) Summit held in September, 2023 to re-invigorate our focus on basic education including ensuring the harmonization and coordination resources and activities amongst all tiers of government and development partners. This was succeeded by a National Conference on Learning Crisis in Nigeria which has resulted in a framework of action to address identified challenges and bottlenecks to foundational learning in Nigeria.

13. A National Policy on Senior Secondary and Re-Entry Guidelines for Adolescent Girls who dropped out of school prematurely has also been developed and adopted by the National Council on Education. These two policies would considerably advance our interventions for returning more Nigerian Children back to School.

14. To do this, we are placing a high premium on foundational and basic education, strengthening integration of existing non-formal schools into formal education systems, scaling-up adult literacy and non-formal education interventions, increasing opportunities for girl-child education and forging partnerships with all tiers of government as well as our development partners.

15. We have, therefore, began operationalizing the establishment of the National Commission for Almajiri and Out of School Children, approved a policy on Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) and commenced engagement with State Governments on removing bottlenecks that negatively impacted on their ability to optimally utilize the Universal basic Education funds.

16. The partnership compact we would be entering into with states and our development partners will focus on:

- A commitment to improve governance accountability, coordination and relentless focus on results at all levels;

Federal and State Governments commit to increasing public financing as well as transparent and timely release of funds;

State Government fulfill jointly agreed Counterpart obligations on efficient programme execution and achievement of results; and • Funding from Federal Government and Development Partners to the States should be performance-based and disbursed on achievement of agreed results on policy reforms and service delivery outputs/outcomes.

Tertiary Institutions

17. No Nigerian would be happy with the epileptic delivery of academic activities in our tertiary institutions occasioned by long-unresolved agreements. Under the guidance of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, we engaged in informal consultations with the Tertiary Institutions Based Unions and have began to build trust as exemplified by the resolution of the following issues:

- a) 35% increase in salaries of workers in our tertiary institutions;
- b) 4 months payment of salaries for the 8 months they were on strike in 2022;
- c) Removal from the Integrated Payment and Payroll Information System; and
- d) Granting autonomy for recruitment.

18. The Federal of Education would work with the Honourable Minister of Finance/Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation to ensure a seamless implementation of the above issues.

19. I want to sincerely appreciate the uncommon understanding the unions have shown for this administration and assure them that we would soon implement all the above. I want to apologies for the two unions we are yet to interact with and promise them that we would do so early in 2024.

20. In line with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's directive to stagger the establishment of already approved tertiary institutions, we have taken over the sites for establishment of the following Federal Colleges of Education:

- 1. Federal College of Education Ilawe City, City State;

on Eliminating Sexual harassment in Our Tertiary Institutions, which would ultimately culminate in prosecuting perpetrators in line with the SOP

26. The blueprint Against Social Vices Amongst Children and Youth have also been disseminated to reduce the occurrence of all form of vices in our school system.

27. Master Trainers are being trained on Safe Schools Implementation for Education Secretaries and Safe Schools Desk Officers and Capacity Building Workshop for Teachers on Education in Emergencies (EIE) Strategies were also conducted. Complementing this was a Capacity Building Training/Workshop and Empowerment for Traditional Rulers on the Role of Traditional Rulers in ensuring Safety and Security of Senior Secondary School Environment.

Technology for Education.

28. We have started deepening the application of Technology to the Education sector by opening up discussions with the Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy and engaging MasterCard in exploring: innovative teaching materials, Integration of digital tools into technical education and developing a Digital Public Infrastructure for Education through data capture, analysis and information exchange would be readily available and possible.

29. In line with the above, we have enhanced the capacity of FME Desk Officers on Geospatial Technology for Education Technologies [GIS & GPS] Application in governance and social development planning as well as improved the capacity of Informatics and Documentation Officers on Data Gathering, Collation, Editing and Video Coverage for effective reportage of programmes and activities in the Education Sector.

30. The Ministry has also completed the Full Business Case for establishing a National Education, Research and database (NERD) System, which would be developed through a Public Private Sector Partnership and is based on existing policies on ICT in the country. The NERD The National Education Repository and Databank System (NERDS) is a digital platform for the historical digitization of all academic and education outputs ever generated in the history of Nigeria starting from 1932 when the first polytechnic was established and 1948 when the first university was established. Under the NERDS, the nation will literally go back in time to preserve her historical knowledge, mainstream live digitization for extant education documents as well as set up a credential verification system for the validation of all education-related credentials.

31. Similarly, we are also deepening discussions with the Nigerian Mid- Stream and Downstream and Regulatory Agency (NMDRA) on finding lasting solutions to the power issues in our Tertiary institutions including the use of Compressed Natural Gas.

32. Digital resources centres have been set up, through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), for the development of electronic digital content for basic education delivery in the 37 Smart Schools and 111 effective other schools.

International Positioning.

33. At the recently concluded 42nd United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in Paris, Nigerian was elected into the following UNESCO's Executive Board and Intergovernmental Bodies:

- a) UNESCO Executive Board Membership (2023-2027);
- b) Intergovernmental Council of the Management of the Social Transformation Programme (2023-2025);
- c) Intergovernmental Council of Hydrological Programmes (IHP) (2023- 2025);
- d) Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) (2023-2027); and
- e) Committee for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Events of Armed Conflicts (2023-2025)

34. Similarly, Nigeria was elected as the Board Member for Africa 3 constituency (West Africa) on the Board of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) held in December, 2023 in Zanzibar.

35. Nigeria was also elected as a member of the ICESCO Executive Buruea for the Environment in the Islamic World with Saudia Arabia as Chairman during the 9th Session of Islamic World Conference on Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO) Conference of Ministers of Environment in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in October 2023.

36. Our Board membership of these international bodies provides opportunity for ensuring that we take our place in the comity of Nation on education matters.

Teacher Improvement

37. Distinguished gentlemen of the press. Conscious of the importance of teachers in the education system, especially at foundational and basis levels, we have revised the National Teacher Education Policy (NTEP) in collaboration with all stakeholders. The review intends to chart the course for teacher education and development in Nigeria and ensure that it equips our educators with the tools, knowledge, and skills they need to provide high-quality education. The draft document would be validated by stakeholders early in 2024 for implementation.

38. An Exhibition and Competition for Hoisting of Innovative Projects and Skills (E-CHIPS) maiden edition in Colleges of Education as a means of taking technology top our Colleges of Education.

39. Gentlemen of the press. I have just given you a brief on what we have been doing for the past four months, some of which you were part of and 1 want to thank you profoundly for your support. I count on more of it as we all work collectively to change our educational system for the better.

40. Finally, I want to thank Mr. President for his consistent display of commitment to the education sector and every ready guidance and proactive directives that has enabled us to make such inroads.

41. Thank you all and merry Christmas