



**WELCOME ADDRESS**  
**BY**  
**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. DALHATU SARKI TAFIDA, OFR,**  
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**AT**  
**THE FORUM ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BONDS**  
**FOR NIGERIANS IN DIASPORA.**  
**ROYAL GARDENS HOTEL, KESSINGTON HIGH STREET,**  
**LONDON, SATURDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2009**

Honourable Members of the National Assembly  
Honourable Ministers  
Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you all to this public awareness forum and sensitisation campaign on Federal Government of Nigeria's Bonds, which is intended to benefit Nigerians in Diaspora, particularly those in the United Kingdom and friends of Nigeria. I am sure that many of us here are not quite familiar with Bonds as a form of investment. Indeed, most of us are probably more familiar with investments in stocks and shares, with very faint idea of how Bonds work. Today, we have the privilege to listen and be educated on the workings and benefits

of investing in bonds, especially those of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

2. As you may wish to recall, Nigeria's Debt Management Office (DMO) was established in October, 2000 to centrally coordinate the management of Nigeria's domestic and foreign debts. Prior to its creation, debt management in Nigeria was poorly coordinated. This resulted in inefficiency and confusion. Until later in its existence, no one was sure of how much Nigeria owed in external debt; not to mention the circumstances under which some of the debts were incurred. The situation was the same as far as domestic debts were concerned.

3. The establishment of the Debt Management Office has succeeded in sorting things out for the benefit of our country. One of the immediate fallouts of this positive development was the monumental debt relief that the combined efforts of the Presidency and the National Assembly achieved for Nigeria in 2005.

4. In addition to restoring sanity in Nigeria's debt management strategy, I am pleased to note that the DMO has gone beyond debt management. It has assumed a strategic role in resource mobilisation for development. In this regard, it has succeeded in raising funds for the construction of roads and other critical infrastructure in Nigeria, thereby demonstrating its capacity to partner with not just the Government but also the private sector.

I commend the management of DMO and Federal Ministry of Finance for this innovative approach.

5. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is significant to note that today's event is not so much about debt management. It is focussed on investment. The DMO is here today to continue with the programme of public enlightenment and awareness, to promote investment in Federal Government bonds. Indeed, I understand that the campaign has taken different forms in Nigeria, with the theme **“Good Investor, Good Citizen”**. This theme, in my opinion, is still relevant today. I therefore urge Nigerians in Diaspora to give concrete expression to this theme by taking maximum advantage of today's forum and also to network and exchange information about Federal Government Bonds, with a view to investing in them.

6. I am sure some of us, whose knowledge of bonds is limited, will be wondering what would be the benefits of investing in Federal Government bonds. The benefits are many. They include safe, regular and guaranteed returns on investment. The involvement of Nigerians in Diaspora will also increase the investor base, diversify it and in effect increase foreign exchange inflow to Nigeria. I am sure that the Director General of the DMO and his team will throw more light on this during their presentations.

7. I would like to remind you that the main target of the Federal Government is to transform Nigeria into the league of the

top 20 largest economies by the year 2020. Investing massively in Federal Government bonds will contribute in no small measure to the attainment of this important national objective. In this respect, I would like to note that one of the most important aspects of life is the ability to make informed decisions that affect our future. To my mind, this occasion presents a unique opportunity for Nigerians in Diaspora and friends of Nigeria to make such a decision.

8. May I end this welcome address by thanking you for choosing London as the first location for your foreign enlightenment campaign on this investment drive. I am confident that our compatriots and friends would respond favourably to this initiative.

9. I thank you for your attention.