

**STATEMENT BY IBRAHIM USMAN JIBRIL, HONOURABLE MINISTER OF STATE
FOR ENVIRONMENT, NIGERIA, AT THE 6TH ASSEMBLY OF THE GLOBAL
ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF), DA NANG, VIETNAM, 24 – 29 JUNE 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

I want to join other delegates in expressing our appreciation to the Government and people of Vietnam, our host country, for the warm reception and wonderful hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Da Nang. We are truly impressed by the level of success in economic growth achieved by Vietnam, particularly over the past two decades. We commend the efforts of the government.

Let me also thank the CEO of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and her team for their hard work and excellent organisation of this 6th GEF Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

Environmental problems come in various ways and forms. The food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we till are all prone to pollution and degradation when the carrying capacity of our ecosystem reaches a tipping point. Effects of this dislocation in equilibrium can be seen in increase in diseases, climate change, desertification, erosion, sprawling urban environmental problems, oil pollution etc.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has put in place relevant institutional arrangements and mechanisms, including legal framework, to address various environmental problems facing our country.

We are encouraging programmes and initiatives that will not only protect our environment but create wealth. Various pilot projects are being established in this regard.

The Government has initiated the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programme to encourage industry to shift to closed-cycle manufacturing and efficient take-back schemes for remanufacturing and recycling. This is in line with

the tenets of green economy and circular economy in which the use of materials and generations of waste are minimized, and waste is recycled or reused as raw material, and any remaining waste treated in a way that causes minimal damage to the human health and the environment. The era of “cradle to grave” in waste management is over. The new paradigm is “cradle to cradle”, meaning that every waste is a potential raw material for another product.

We are strengthening our environmental institutions in order to improve environmental governance. We are providing enabling environment for private sector participation and partnership in environmental sustainability. We are promoting circular economy and clean technologies that will drive research, eco-innovation and actions in various areas, including climate change mitigation and adaption measures. We have initiated the Sovereign Green Bond to raise funds to address environmental problems.

Let me use this opportunity to reiterate government’s commitment to the clean-up of Ogoni-land and the rest of Niger Delta in the South-South Zone of Nigeria following decades of negative environmental impacts due to oil exploration and exploitation activities. We have established the Hydrocarbon Pollution and Remediation Project (HYPREP), appointed a coordinator, and put in place a Governing Council (GC) and the Board of Trustees (BoT). In addition, free medical services and potable water are being provided to the communities. It is expected that the actual clean-up exercise will commence between August and September 2018 after the conclusion of the on-going procurement process.

Mr. Chairman,

We are committed to the global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), low carbon economy, fight against climate change, desertification, erosion, biodiversity lost, and other forms of environmental pollution and degradation.

Nigeria has been a strong ally/partner of GEF since inception of the organization. We have been actively involved in GEF programmes and projects over the years. We thank GEF for its support to Nigeria in addressing environmental problems.

Nigeria is a huge country with a lot of environmental challenges. We would therefore like to appeal to GEF for more support in addressing these environmental challenges. We would also like to request for increase in GEF grant to the West Africa Coastal Constituency of GEF, in which Nigeria belongs. There is need to address delays in project document preparation and submission to GEF from the region.

Finally, as we enter into the new GEF cycle, we must all continue to work together as one entity of the global community to protect and preserve the global commons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.