

GOODWILL MESSAGE at the 7th Agricultural Policy Stakeholders' Forum and 1st Annual International Conference with the theme: Towards a Resilient and Sustainable Agri-Food System in Nigeria and Sub Sahara Africa by 2025

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I bring warm greetings on behalf of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) office here in Nigeria to the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet). As IFPRI's long-term collaborator and having engaged in organizing events in the past, we are very pleased to collaborate with APRNet to co-host this event. The theme for this stakeholders' forum and conference, namely 'Towards a Resilient and Sustainable Agri-Food System in Nigeria and Sub Sahara Africa by 2025' is apt and has been made even more relevant by the risks posed by various challenges such as conflict and insecurity, climatic shocks, and of course, the post-COVID food price inflation that we have all experienced, now further exacerbated by the world market shocks resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.

IFPRI has been working in Nigeria since 2007 implementing the Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP). With the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), we are implementing the USAID Feed the Future Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity, in partnership with Michigan State University. The Activity has been working closely with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), state ministries of agriculture, and other partners to support the implementation of Nigeria's national development plans. We are also working closely with other development partners, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Food Programme, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and Google Inc/International Rescue Committee (IRC) on various research topics.

We aim to achieve three objectives. First, we are enhancing knowledge, information, data, and tools for the analysis, design, and implementation of pro-poor, gender-sensitive, and environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development policies and strategies in Nigeria. Secondly, we seek to strengthen the capacity of government agencies, research institutions, and other stakeholders to carry out and use applied research that directly informs agricultural and rural policies. Thirdly, we are improving communication linkages and consultations among policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries on agricultural and rural development policy issues.

In conducting this work, IFPRI has found APRNet to be a willing and determined partner in strengthening the link between policy analysis, research, capacity strengthening, and decision-making. IFPRI has worked with APRNet to support FMARD by engaging in policy dialogues on various topics such as agricultural inputs and mechanization, extension, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. We have also worked on state-level agricultural policy development, and our collaborators are usually members of APRNet. We are honored to be a key partner with APRNet and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the network and other partners in generating and disseminating research findings and improving the use of research in policymaking. We wish everyone a successful and engaging forum and time of interaction together at this year's conference.