

# UN confers SDGs' Champion award on Prince Clem Agba



The United Nations (UN) in Nigeria has conferred the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) award on Nigeria's Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanade Agba for his passion and enthusiasm in championing SDGs in Nigeria. UN Resident Coordinator, Mr Mathias Schmale, said on the occasion, which held at the UN House in Abuja, that he was, on behalf of the UN Nigeria, conferring the award on Agba as "our First SDGs award" recipient. Schmale listed some significant attributes that stood the recipient out in consideration for the award. He said Agba's private sector background, which came into play in his interactions with the UN system during his official engagements was remarkable as he was always asking questions geared towards result orientation and value for money. Describing Agba as a champion of transparency, Schmale pointed out that the minister had always talked about the need to be open. UN RC, Mathias Schmale, Minister Clem Agba's wife, Princess Catherine and UNDP Country Director Mohammed Yahya Schmale referenced the minister's introduction of the Eyemark, a web application, which enables citizens to track and report progress of federal government capital projects with their android phones, saying it would aid transparency and accountability of government's expenditures.

He also commended Agba's time discipline as he was always coming early to meetings as well as his staying

connected with the people countrywide, through monitoring and inspection of government projects, ensuring in the process that what the government was doing was in the interest of the people. Schmale noted that Agba had demonstrated courage by profoundly and in an evidence-based manner challenged state governors on their failure to contribute to development of their rural communities. He underscored the minister's significant partnership with the UN system, saying that "you are key in terms of partnership with us on this SDGs issue. You are not the only one, but you are key; and, as your administration is coming to an end, we feel we should honour you for your contributions."

Responding to the conferment of the award, Agba said he wholeheartedly accepted it as the first minister to be so honoured from 1999 until now and expressed his appreciation to the UN Nigeria Office for conferring him with the award in recognition of his passion and enthusiasm in championing sustainable development goals in Nigeria. Agba, who was in company with his wife, Princess Catherine Agba, and a select group of well-wishers and some top management staff members in the ministry and agencies under it, declared: "I am deeply honoured and humbled to be the recipient of the SDGs Champions Award by the United Nations in Nigeria in recognition of my passion and enthusiasm in championing sustainable development goals in Nigeria "The award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of my colleagues and staff members at the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and I dedicate it to His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, for giving me the privilege to serve in his cabinet. "As the Honourable Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, I have had the privilege of working on a wide range of initiatives that have allowed me to contribute to attaining the SDGs in Nigeria and being part of the progress made in its implementation has been an immensely rewarding experience. "I recognize that this progress would not have been possible without the support of Mr. President, my colleagues in the Federal Executive Council, development partners, and my family. "I am grateful for the support and remain committed in my

contributions to the development of Nigeria and attainment of the SDGs."

Agba added: "I would like to use this opportunity to also emphasize how particularly meaningful it has been to work in close collaboration with the UN System, and indeed the Development Partners Community in Nigeria. As Partners in the growth and development of Nigeria, it is imperative for us to continue to work together in our shared vision and common strategies for sustainable development and peace. "You would agree with me that; the 169 Targets underpinning the SDGs are actually 169 ways of explaining how no one is to be left behind. In other words, these 17 Goals and 169 targets for which indicators exist and monitoring systems are being set, form the fulcrum of a new social contract between the world's leaders and their people." According to him: "Upon assumption of Office as the Honourable Minister

Development Agenda. "Also, as part of galvanizing efforts to ensure buy-in and ownership of the process by all stakeholders, and working towards the sustainability of the multidimensional way of addressing poverty, the MPI has been adopted as the key policy tool and measurement method (complementing income-based measurement for poverty, within the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2021-2025. "It has been a truly rewarding experience to be a part of the progress that has been achieved in-terms of SDGs implementation in Nigeria. In fact, the progress would have been a mirage without the support from Mr. President, my Colleagues in the Federal Executive Council, and very importantly, our Development Partners. "I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all your respective positive contributions to my assignments as a Federal Minister. At the same time, I would not gloss over

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of State for Budget and National Planning, I have had the privilege of working on a wide range of initiatives that have allowed me to contribute to attaining the SDGs in Nigeria. "From preparation of the Succession Plan to the ERGP in 2020 and the National Development Plan 2021 – 2025, to negotiating economic Agreements and strengthening international relations including technological and cultural exchange, Chairing the National Steering Committee of the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative, cochairing the Open Government Partnership, I have been fortunate to be a part of some truly remarkable endeavors' towards achievement of the 2030 Global

the invaluable support of my wife and family without whom my public life would have been a daunting task. "Once again, I am deeply grateful to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR and to the UN System in Nigeria for this huge honour. It is a moment that I will always treasure, and I will strive to continue to earn this recognition through my ongoing efforts and contributions to the development of Nigeria and attainment of the SDGs."