



**CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON BUDGET MONITORING AND EVALUATION
FOR OFFICIALS OF MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES
ABUJA, NIGERIA
9 February 2021**

Goodwill message by Neil Cole, Executive Secretary, CABRI

It is an honour to deliver a goodwill message on behalf of the Collaborative Africa Budget Reform initiative (CABRI) - of which the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a valued member country. I am especially honoured to be in the virtual presence of the Director-General, the distinguished participants from various ministries, departments and agencies, the Transparency Champions, and the impressive group of consultants that will be guiding you through the various sessions of your workshop.

It was my intention to be with you all in-person, in Abuja, but such is not going to be possible for the foreseeable future, especially now that the AstraZeneca vaccine has been found to have limited efficacy against the variant of COVID that we have here in South Africa. This is a major setback for efforts to turn the tide on the COVID pandemic. Managing the COVID response has once again brought to the fore in a very stark way the many complexities in governance and service delivery. We know that governments are frequently confronted with changing circumstances that disrupts even the best prepared spending plans. Some of these are routine and require no more than regular adjustments to plans, while others become chronic and have a greater impact. Then there are extraordinary shocks, which can be sudden and significantly threaten stability and service delivery, such as the COVID pandemic.

Complexities, like what is happening with the vaccine rollout programmes, make it necessary for governments to have systems in place that are capable of monitoring service delivery and evaluating performance. Systems must be able to assist in the production of good data on value for money measures, such as economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Stated differently, did we get the best price for the goods and services that were bought, did we get the best outputs for

the quantity of inputs invested, and were services delivered as intended. The systems that are already in place need to fulfil the purposes that they were intended for.

The problem statement that the Transparency Champions have been working on is not only common to many countries, but it is also critical for purposes of good planning, budgeting, implementation, reporting, and also oversight and accountability. In essence, the problem statement is about improving governance.

I want to wish you all the best, but before I conclude, let me leave you with the following: don't get too caught up in the form of a monitoring and evaluation system. Focus rather on the functionality. What do I mean? Ask yourselves, what is it that the system needs to do, and not what the system looks like. Many governments have made huge investments in beautiful systems that can be called the GL Wagons of monitoring systems, when all that was needed, and likely to have a greater utility, is a Toyota Hilux van. Having interacted with the DG Budget Office, I believe strongly that he is looking for something that is more akin to a Toyota Hilux van. Systems need to traverse your terrain, and you are best at knowing your own terrain.

So, once again, thank you for the invitation to address this crucial workshop hosted by the Budget Office of the Federation (Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning), in collaboration with CABRI.