

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER,
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AVIATION AND AEROSPACE DEVELOPMENT,
FESTUS KEYAMO SAN, CON. FCIArb (UK)**

**AT THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE 2026 SEASONAL CLIMATE
PREDICTION (SCP), ON FEBRUARY 10, 2026,
AT THE NAF CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA.**

[Protocol]

I am delighted to welcome you to the public presentation of the 2026 Seasonal Climate Prediction (SCP) and 2025 State of the Climate in Nigeria. This has become an annual ritual for NiMet and the Aviation Ministry. In recent years, NiMet has received testimonies and commendations on how the use of SCP information has contributed to improved crop yield and helped in disaster risk mitigation and reduction. These commendations have come both from government institutions and the private sector. I am particularly glad that the early warnings of the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) through such products and services is having positive impacts on the socio-economic development of our Dear Nation.

Ladies and gentlemen! The impact and effect of climate variability and climate change remain daily realities of modern times, shaping aviation safety, economic decisions, national security planning, food security, infrastructural development, and the well-being of our people. Globally, there are hardly any days without news on extreme weather events like severe and destructive thunderstorms, heatwaves, droughts, windstorms, sandstorms, and many more. These realities demand that governments place climate science and data, as well as early warning systems, at the very heart of national planning.

The Federal government of Nigeria, under the able, competent, and transformational leadership of **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR**, places strong emphasis on economic stability, food security, infrastructure resilience, climate adaptation, and the protection of lives and livelihoods. In this regard, the provision of timely and accurate weather information and climate services is no longer optional, but a strategic enabler of national development and good governance.

Through our actions and programmes, we have shown that the days of viewing weather and climate warnings as a distant danger are truly

behind. The level of government representation here today shows how seriously we are ready to deploy early warning tools and climate science for sustainable development. Permit me to state that the Seasonal Climate Prediction is directly aligned with the priorities of the present Administration. It is an example of science for action. Translating complex climate signals into clear, actionable guidance for decision-makers across all sectors of the Nigerian economy.

As the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, and the minister in charge of meteorology, I recognise that safe, efficient, and sustainable aviation cannot exist without reliable meteorological input. Beyond the safety of daily air operations, our goal is to build an industry with the potential to meet and support the economic development of our growing population. Climate data remains a critical part of the resources we are relying on to achieve this. The Ministry has been very supportive to NiMet and will continue to do so, to ensure that the Nigerian people have access to the best weather and climate information and services available.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the credibility of any climate forecast lies in its scientific foundation. This foundation was laid one hundred and forty (140) years ago in 1886 when the first weather observing station was established. Through these years, the science of meteorology in Nigeria has grown in leaps and bounds, transitioning into efficient service delivery in weather and climate services value chain embodied by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet).

NiMet has, for over a century, remained a cornerstone of Nigeria's safety, resilience and development architecture by safeguarding aviation operations and supporting agriculture, water resources management, disaster risk reduction, health services, energy planning, transportation, among others. NiMet's mandate cuts across every sector of national life. It is a huge task to be responsible for all these, and I must commend the Agency for consistently meeting its mandate, vision, and mission.

The 2026 Seasonal Climate Prediction is built on global best practices of meteorology and climate science, combining weather with long-term climatological data and climatic drivers. Key global climate drivers such as the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) were used in the production of this year's SCP. For 2026, these indicators point to a predominantly neutral ENSO phase, with important implications for rainfall distribution, temperature

patterns and of course, sectoral risks across Nigeria. This scientific robustness ensures that the SCP remains a trusted national reference document, supporting policy formulation, investment planning, and risk management at all levels of government and the private sector.

Highlight of the 2026 SCP

We have already seen some significant rains across the southern parts of the country this year. **Let me reiterate that these should not be taken to mean that the rainy season has started in these places.** Those engaged in rainfed agriculture and other rainfall-dependent activities in Nigeria are therefore advised to refer to the predicted onset dates in this publication or consult NiMet for proper guidance.

Early onset is expected in Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Oyo, and parts of Kebbi, Niger, Jigawa, Katsina, Kano, Adamawa, and Taraba States. While a late onset is expected over Borno State.

Rainfall cessation is anticipated to be earlier than normal in parts of Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Imo, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Kogi and Niger States. However, a delayed end of season is expected in Lagos, Ogun, Anambra, Enugu, Cross River, Benue, Nasarawa and Kaduna States.

A longer-than-normal length of rainy season is expected in Lagos, Benue, Enugu, Ebonyi, Ogun, Oyo, Nasarawa, Anambra, Kwara, Kebbi, Kaduna, Gombe and Taraba States. Whereas, parts of Borno, Yobe and Niger States are expected to have a shorter-than-normal length of rainy season.

A normal annual rainfall amount is anticipated in most parts of Nigeria compared to the long-term average. Above-normal rainfall is expected in Borno, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, Enugu, Cross River, Abia, Ebonyi, Akwa Ibom States, and the Federal Capital Territory; while in parts of Katsina, Zamfara, Kwara, Oyo, and Ogun States, below-normal rainfall is expected.

During the season of March to May, severe dry spells exceeding 15 days are likely in parts of Oyo and Ogun States, while moderate dry spells are expected over Ekiti, Kogi, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Edo, Ebonyi, Abia, Cross River, and Delta states, as well as parts of Kogi and Kwara states. Furthermore, during the June-July-August season, a severe dry spell that may last up to 21 days is predicted for parts of Bauchi, Borno,

Gombe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara states.

The Little Dry Season (LDS), also known as 'August Break,' is predicted to begin by late July and would be severe and prolonged over Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti and parts of Oyo States. The number of days with little or no rainfall will range between 28 and 40 days. A moderate LDS effect is expected over Ondo, parts of Kwara and Edo States.

Both daytime and nighttime temperatures are predicted to be warmer than the long-term average over most parts of the country in January, February, March, and May 2026.

Details of the Prediction and the socioeconomic implications for various sectors of our national economy are contained in the document.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to emphasise that climate science is fundamental to sustainable development. Any developmental effort that is not informed by credible weather and climate knowledge is vulnerable, costly, and ultimately unsustainable. Nigeria must be at the forefront of building and adopting systems that can survive and thrive in future climate scenarios.

The document that we are unveiling today reflects Nigeria's growing commitment to science-based planning, foresight, and resilience. It underscores the need to continually strengthen our homegrown scientific expertise, invest in human capacity, and ensure that climate information effectively supports decision-making at Federal, States and Local Government levels.

I would like to call on all stakeholders, federal government MDAs, state governments, academia, the private sector, development partners, and the media, to lend sustained support to climate science, particularly in the dissemination and application of this SCP document.

On behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria, I reaffirm our resolve to continue empowering the Nigerian Meteorological Agency to serve as a centre of excellence in weather and climate services, and a trusted provider of scientific guidance for national development.

Thank you.

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!