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FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA REPORTS 50% RISE IN OPERATING INCOME FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2012

First Bank of Nigeria Plc (ñFirstBankò or the ñGroupò) today announces its unaudited IFRS compliant results for the quarter ended March 2012.

Key Highlights for the Quarter Ended March 2012:

- 42% growth in gross earnings to ₦92.29 billion (Q1 2011: ₦64.77 billion)
- Net interest margin of 9.5% (Q1 2011: 6.7%)
- 27% growth in non-interest income to ₦19.14 billion (Q1 2011: ₦14.97 billion)
- 50% growth in operating income to ₦74.18 billion (Q1 2011: ₦49.39 billion)
- 102% rise in profit before tax to ₦28.85 billion (Q1 2011: ₦14.31 billion)
- Continued improvement in the cost to income ratio to 60.9% (Q1 2011: 70.3%)
- Impairment charge for credit losses of ₦5.42 billion (Q1 2011: ₦4.57 billion)
- Year-on-year increase of 4.0% in net loans and advances to customers to ₦1.33 trillion, (Q1 2011: ₦1.28 trillion) and ytd growth of 3.7% (Dec 2011: ₦1.28 trillion)
- Total deposit growth of 31.1% to ₦2.07 trillion (Q1 2011: ₦1.58 trillion) and ytd growth of 5.7% (Dec 2011: ₦1.95 trillion)
- NPL ratio of 2.7% (Q1 2011: 7.6%)
- 54.7% liquidity ratio (Q1 2011: 57.9%)

Selected Financial Summary

(₦ billion)	Q1 2012	Q1 2011	∆%
Gross earnings	92.29	64.77	42%
Net interest income	60.46	38.98	55%
Non-interest income	19.14	14.97	27%
Operating Income	74.18	49.39	50%
Impairment charge for credit losses	5.42	4.57	19%
Profit before tax	28.85	14.31	102%
Basic EPS (kobo)[1]	301	149	102%
Total Assets	2,978	2,550	17%
Net Loans & Advances	1,328	1,276	4%
Deposits	2,066	1,576	31%

Key Ratios %	Q1 2012	Q1 2011
Cost of funds	2.1	2.0
Net interest margin	9.5	6.7
ROA[1]	3.3	1.9
ROE[1]	27.0	12.0
Cost to income ratio	60.9	70.3
Cost of risk	1.6	1.4
Gross loans to deposit ratio	64.3	81.0
NPL ratio	2.7	7.6
NPL coverage ratio	117.1	55.8
Liquidity ratio	54.7	57.9

Commenting on the results, Bisi Onasanya, Group Managing Director of FirstBank said:

"It is pleasing to see FirstBank continue to build on its performance and deliver a solid set of results for the first quarter of this year and adequately position the Group to achieve the full year 2012 targets. This quarter we were able to grow income lines across the board and expect to see this continue through the course of the year.

Our aim is to drive income aggressively over the year by rebalancing our asset mix toward higher yielding assets, expand business volumes by providing bespoke products across our various customer segments and sustaining efficient services to customers. Progress against this can be seen in the continued expansion in asset yields as well as non-interest income.

The Group continues to focus on increasing efficiency; we have significantly reduced our cost to serving our customers by over 15% over the course of the past year, as transaction volumes grow at a higher rate than expenditure. We envisage further reduction in our cost to income ratio as the full impact of our transformation strategy become evident."

Business Review

Gross earnings grew year-on-year by 42%, boosted by growth in interest and non-interest income of 51% and 27% respectively. Interest income was positively impacted by strong growth in income from treasury bills and debt securities (+132%) as well as income from loans and advances (+45%). This combination increased average yields on interest earning assets to 10.7% (Q1 2011: 8.3%). Non-interest income (NII) was positively impacted by rising fees and commissions (+24%). Growth in NII was driven by credit related fees, service fees, recoveries, commissions on transactions and continued benefits of improving service delivery.

The Group's activities over the quarter were driven by a renewed focus to deepen the Bank's market share on existing product offerings, breaking into untapped segments with new

[1]Annualised

innovative products and harnessing available opportunities. Underscoring the success of our approach, in the period under review, we recorded significant increase in the number and quality of sign-ons to our e-payment platform from large corporates, Government and its agencies, Oil& Gas players, States` Governments, Transportation, Health, Educational and micro finance banking institutions. As part of expanding our footprint, and increasing access to our services, we opened 21 new business locations during the quarter, deployed 111 additional ATMs and 2,411 Point of Sales (POS) terminals, bringing total business locations, ATMs and POS terminals to 738, 1,649 and 5,122 respectively. Since the end of 2011, we have increased the number of customer accounts by 300,000 to over 8 million, grown the number of cards issued by 900,000 to 5.2 million, with the card activity rate also improving to 80% from 76%. To ensure long term sustainable growth, we remain focused on further strengthening our operational platform.

Interest expense rose 35% to ₦12.7 billion (Q1 2011: ₦9.4 billion); reflecting growth in deposit volumes, the generally high interest rate environment and heightened competition for customer deposits. Despite these headwinds, we improved our net interest margin to 9.5% from 6.7% in Q1 2011.

The cost to income ratio improved to 60.9% (Q1 2011: 70.3%) on the back expanding revenues.

Impairment charge on credit losses rose to ₦5.4 billion from ₦4.6 billion in the corresponding period last year. These charges were driven by prudent and proactive classification of impaired loans as well as timing delays in some loan repayments, on which we expect reversals in the coming periods. We will continue to review our credit policy to ensure high quality new loans are being underwritten while also ensuring early warning signs of deterioration are promptly highlighted and remedial action is set in motion.

We continue to deliberately rebalance our fixed income portfolio in favour of higher yielding assets in order to guarantee future earning streams.

The Group recorded profit before tax of ₦28.9 billion (Q1 2011: ₦14.3 billion), up 102% year-on-year, driven by strong revenue growth. Annualised after-tax return on equity came to 27.0% (Q1 2011: 12%). We continue to optimise all revenue streams to further drive the bottom line.

Loans to customers (net) grew by 4.0% year-on-year and 3.7% year to date to ₦1.3 trillion; driven by loans to corporate banking customers. Reflecting sustained benefits from our enhanced focus on risk-based pricing, yields on loans and advances improved to 15.1% from 10.8% in Q1 2011. We continue to take an innovative approach to our product development, delivering relevant solutions for our customers and driving growth in our loan book as a result.

Deposits grew 31.1% year-on-year and 5.7% year to date to ₦2.1 trillion. Though the deposit mix remains 83% funded by low cost deposits (Dec 11: 85%), year to date growth was predominantly driven by term deposits. This reflects changing customer preferences in a sustained high interest environment. As a result, cost of funds increased marginally to 2.1%, from 2.0% in the corresponding period in 2011. We remain focused on low cost liability generation and continue to develop products to drive growth in this segment. During the quarter we launched two new products ï First Instant and First Current Business Accounts. First Instant account is specially designed to increase penetration in the unbanked/under banked segments, while the First Current Business account is structured to cater for the needs of micro, small and medium-scale enterprises.

Asset quality improved over the period; NPL ratio improved to 2.7% (Q1 2011: 7.6%), while the coverage ratio further improved to 117.1% (Q1 2011: 55.8%)

In Q1 2012, we repaid $175 million (₦26.4 billion) tier 2 capital and the Group balance sheet remains liquid with a 54.7% liquidity ratio (Q1 2011: 57.9%).

– ENDS –

IFRS Statement of comprehensive income	31 March 2012 N' million	31 March 2011 N' million	31 December 2011 N' million	31 March 2012 N' million	31 March 2011 N' million	31 December 2011 N' million
Gross Earnings	92,286	64,767	301,669	82,479	56,215	279,013
Interest income	73,148	48,410	238,159	68,076	43,201	221,491
Interest expense	(12,685)	(9,427)	(36,950)	(10,717)	(6,967)	(30,772)
Net interest income	**60,463**	**38,982**	**201,209**	**57,359**	**36,234**	**190,720**
Impairment charge for credit losses	(5,419)	(4,570)	(15,626)	(5,399)	(4,550)	(13,950)
Net interest income after impairment charge for credit losses	**55,044**	**34,412**	**185,583**	**51,960**	**31,684**	**176,770**
Fee and commission income	15,573	12,544	49,444	12,184	9,525	40,661
Fee and commission expense	-	(48)	(145)		(48)	(140)
Net Fee and commission income	**15,573**	**12,496**	**49,299**	**12,184**	**9,477**	**40,521**
Net gains / (losses) on investment securities	104	1,603	2,705	(60)	1,472	6,234
Net gains / (losses) from financial assets classified as held for trading	(2)	(1,336)	0	(2)	(1,336)	0
Other operating income	3,461	2,211	11,361	2,280	2,018	10,627
Other Income	**3,563**	**2,478**	**14,066**	**2,217**	**2,154**	**16,861**
Operating Income	**74,180**	**49,386**	**248,948**	**66,361**	**43,315**	**234,152**
Staff Costs	(21,685)	(14,309)	(59,814)	(19,651)	(13,087)	(55,117)
Depreciation on fixed assets	(2,459)	(2,122)	(8,975)	(2,221)	(1,976)	(8,517)
Deposit Insurance Premium	(2,283)	(1,487)	(6,504)	(2,268)	(1,474)	(6,504)
Other Operating Expenses	(18,724)	(16,777)	(93,896)	(15,097)	(15,347)	(85,255)
Total Operating expenses:	**(45,151)**	**(34,695)**	**(169,189)**	**(39,237)**	**(31,884)**	**(155,393)**
Operating Profit	**29,029**	**14,691**	**79,759**	**27,124**	**11,431**	**78,759**
Share of profit / (loss) of associates	(177)	(377)	(1,507)	-	-	-
Profit before tax	**28,852**	**14,314**	**78,252**	**27,124**	**11,431**	**78,759**
Income tax expense	(4,328)	(2,147)	(11,738)	(4,069)	(1,715)	(11,814)
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	**24,524**	**12,167**	**66,514**	**23,055**	**9,716**	**66,945**
Other comprehensive income:						
Net gains on available-for-sale financial assets:						
- Unrealised net gains/(losses) arising during the period, before tax	(4,309)	(9,078)	(6,454)	(4,714)	(5,560)	(6,454)
Income Tax on Other Comprehensive Result	646	1,288	1,288	707	834	834
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	**(3,662)**	**(7,790)**	**(5,166)**	**(4,007)**	**(4,726)**	**(5,620)**
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	**20,862**	**4,377**	**61,348**	**19,049**	**4,990**	**61,325**
Total comprehensive income attributable to:						
Owners of the parent	20,661	4,354	61,348	19,049	4,990	61,325
Non-controlling interests	201	23	0	-	-	-
Earnings per share for profit attributable to owners of the parent						
Basic (k)	301	149	815	283	119	821
Diluted (k)	301	149	815	283	119	821
No of Shares in Issue	32,632	32,632	32,632	32,632	32,632	32,632

IFRS CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	GROUP			BANK		
	31 March 2012	31 December 2011	31 March 2011	31 March 2012	31 December 2011	31 March 2011
	N' million	N' million	N' million	N' million	N' million	N' million
ASSETS						
Cash and balances with central banks	175,869	204,730	45,789	165,533	204,594	45,581
Loans and advances to banks	567,271	406,630	513,397	314,090	223,399	257,349
Loans and advances to customers	1,327,534	1,279,983	1,276,372	1,153,322	1,130,797	1,112,238
Financial assests held for trading	1,533	1,584	137,646	886	30,876	86,645
Insurance receivables	29	111	-	-	-	-
Investment securities	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Available for sale	364,970	354,925	372,232	287,184	322,380	212,600
-Held to maturity investments	280,150	331,313	-	332,255	298,947	139,125
Asset pledged as collateral	72,160	72,160	-	72,160	72,160	-
Investments in Subsidiaries	-	-	-	37,492	32,416	-
Investments in associates accounted for using the equity method	8,032	8,209	5,814	12,599	12,599	33,190
Managed funds	-	21	27,412	-	-	-
Investment property	7,149	10,708	7,982	-	-	-
Property, plant and equipment	60,743	57,171	62,907	55,749	55,352	51,603
Intangible assets	4,112	1,006	-	2,178	1,361	-
Deferred tax asset	10,617	10,617	7,375	8,877	8,877	-
Other assets	97,762	91,269	92,585	55,608	53,456	69,436
Total assets	**2,977,931**	**2,830,438**	**2,549,511**	**2,497,933**	**2,447,214**	**2,007,767**
LIABILITIES						
Deposits from banks	233,434	182,189	240,062	47,570	51,648	21,297
Deposits from customers	2,065,505	1,953,498	1,575,979	1,849,737	1,784,456	1,388,228
Borrowings	72,986	93,961	115,087	60,256	92,816	113,651
Insurance liabilities	824	824	-	-	-	-
Liability on investment contracts	31,479	39,104	25,951	-	-	-
Retirement benefit obligations	8,132	7,627	10,640	8,132	7,222	4,408
Current income tax liability	24,977	23,844	16,512	21,353	21,354	16,775
Deferred income tax liability	23	1,067	-	-	-	-
Other liabilities	176,934	171,968	158,201	132,452	126,663	129,898
Total liabilities	**2,614,294**	**2,474,082**	**2,142,432**	**2,119,500**	**2,084,157**	**1,674,257**
EQUITY						
Share capital	16,316	16,316	16,316	16,316	16,316	16,316
Share premium	254,524	254,524	254,524	254,524	254,524	254,524
Statutory credit reserve	-	3,852	-	-	3,852	-
Retained earnings	36,133	41,163	84,748	61,470	63,376	30,689
Other reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-
-Statutory reserve	35,804	35,804	27,730	35,413	35,413	27,515
-SSI Reserve	8,960	8,960	9,193	8,960	8,960	9,193
-AFS Fair Value Reserve	1,429	(11,823)	7,584	(3,466)	(24,599)	(9,942)
-Revaluation reserve	2,379	2,379	2,379	2,379	2,379	2,379
-Contigency reserve	13	13	-	-	-	-
-Foreign currency translation reserve	4,434	4,203	4,087	2,836	2,836	2,836
	359,992	**355,392**	**406,562**	**378,433**	**363,057**	**333,511**
Non-controlling interest	3,645	964	517	-	-	-
Total equity	**363,638**	**356,356**	**407,079**	**378,433**	**363,057**	**333,511**
Total equity and liabilities	**2,977,931**	**2,830,438**	**2,549,511**	**2,497,933**	**2,447,214**	**2,007,768**

Conference call

First Bank of Nigeria plans to host a teleconference call for analysts and investors on **Thursday, 3 May 2012 at 3:00pm GMT/ 3:00pm Lagos / 10:00am New York/ 4:00pm Johannesburg & Cape Town**, during which senior management will present the audited results for the 12 months ended 31 December 2011 and unaudited results for the first quarter ended 31 March 2012.There will be an opportunity at the end of the call for questions.

The teleconference call facility can be accessed by dialing:

+44 207 784 1036 (UK/Lagos) or 0800 279 4841(UK); +1 212 444 0412 or 1 877 249 9037 (US); +27110 197 015 or 0800 991 539 (South Africa)

And then entering the following confirmation code: **8493618#**

Participants are advised to register for the call at least five minutes before the start of the presentation.

For those who are unable to listen to the live call, a recording will be posted onto the company's website as soon as possible. Replay facilities are available by dialing:

+44 20 7111 1244; +1 347 366 9565; +44 20 7111 1244 (Pin code: **8493618#**)

The presentation will be posted to First Bank of Nigeria Plc website 24hrs before the conferencecall.http://www.firstbanknigeria.com/ir/FinancialInformation/Presentations/tabid/488/Default.aspx

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- Notes to Editors -

First Bank of Nigeria Plc (ISIN: NGFIRSTBANK7, NG00000FBNP9, US31925X3026) the most diversified financial services group in Nigeria, providing services to over 6.9 million customers, through 738 business locations and 1,649 ATMs, has its headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria and presence in London, United Kingdom; Paris, France; Johannesburg, South Africa; Beijing, China; Abu Dhabi, UAE and Democratic Republic of Congo. Drawing from our experience, spanning 117 years, we continue to consolidate our footprint in Nigeria, diversify and transform our bank and build scale internationally. The Bank enjoys natural premium respect and first-mention privilege in the market (an excellent corporate governance structure underpinned by strong institutional processes, systems and controls, a history of seamless leadership succession, a sound risk management framework, several globally recognised awards and experienced management).

The FirstBank Group is well diversified with contribution to national economic development through subsidiaries involved in capital market operations, insurance services, asset management and investment banking, private equity/venture capital, pension fund custodian management, registrar services, trusteeship, mortgage and microfinance banking. Within the Bank, we are structured along corporate, public, retail, institutional and private banking customer segments, giving us the ability to drive deeper product penetration and develop sector expertise with relationship management based on a deep understanding of customer needs.

With a listing on the Nigerian Stock Exchange, about 32.6 billion issued shares and one of the highest shareholders' funds in the Nigerian landscape, FirstBank is owned by over 1.3 million shareholders across the globe and has an unlisted Global Depositary Receipt (GDR) programme. The Bank continues to enjoy strong ratings from Standard & Poor's, Fitch, Global Credit Rating and Agusto & Co. FirstBank is ISO/IEC 27001 certified indicating its strictest adherence to the security and protection of customer information. More information can be found on our website www.firstbanknigeria.com

Cautionary note regarding forward looking statements

This release contains forward-looking statements which reflect management's expectations regarding the group's future growth, results of operations, performance, business prospects and opportunities. Wherever possible, words such as "anticipate", "believe", "expects", "intend", "estimate", "project", "target", "risks", "goals" and similar terms and phrases have been used to identify the forward-looking statements. These statements reflect management's current beliefs and are based on information currently available to the Bank's management. Certain material factors or assumptions have been applied in drawing the conclusions contained in the forward-looking statements. These factors or assumptions are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties surrounding future expectations generally. Forward-looking statements therefore speak only as of the date they are made.

FirstBank cautions readers that a number of factors could cause actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from the results discussed or implied in the forward-looking statements. These factors should be considered carefully and undue reliance should not be placed on the forward-looking statements. For additional information with respect to certain of these risks or factors, reference should be made to the Bank's continuous disclosure materials filed from time to time with the Nigerian banking regulatory authorities. The Bank disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.