In the Eurozone, unemployment rate dipped to 7.9% in November 2018 from 8% reported the previous month. According to the European Statistical Office, it is the lowest jobless rate since October 2008 as the number of unemployed people declined further. Among EU Member States, the lowest unemployment rates in November were recorded in Czech Republic (3.1%), Germany (5.3%) and the Netherlands (5.7%). It also observed in Greece (18.6%) in September 2018 (19.7%) and France (10.3%) in November 2018. In a separate development, China’s consumer price inflation dipped to 1.3% in December from 2.2% reported in November. This slowdown came on the back of lower prices seen in non-food, which remained its lowest level in three months according to the National Bureau of Statistics, China. Annual core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, stood at 1.5% in December, unaltered from the previous month. Elsewhere in Japan, unemployment rate notched up to 2.5% in November from 2.4% in the prior month according to the statistics office of Japan. Jobs-to-application ratio edged up to 1.63 from 1.62 in October. However compared to a year earlier the unemployment rate was higher by 2.7%.

**Stock Market**

The All Share Index (ASI) lost 2.64% to close at 29,830.70 on February 16. The ASI fell below the 30,000 psychological line amidst high selling pressure as the market capitalization fell by 2.64% to close at N11.12 trillion compared to the same period last year. In contrast, foreign transactions showed that there was a decrease in foreign inflows in the month under review by 16.72% to N34.97 billion from N40.82 billion in the previous month. In the same light, total domestic transactions at the nation’s bourse jumped by 23.28% to N149.72 billion from N120.00 billion in the prior month. As a result, total domestic transactions surged by 72.13% to N165.48 billion from N95.82 billion in the previous month. In contrast, foreign outflows edged up by 15.78% to N45.39 billion in November from N44.26 billion in the preceding month. The cumulative transactions from January 2018 to November 2018 increased, drew 10.48% to N27.08 trillion compared to the same period in 2017 (N26.02 trillion).

**Commodities Market**

Gold prices edged up 0.3% to $1,294.95 per ounce. Precious metals prices are expected to remain bullish, buoyed by partial US government shutdown and the US President’s threat to declare a national emergency.

**Bond Market**

Bond yields declined last week following demand from institutional investors which pushed up the price of bond. Yield on the longest maturity, a twenty year debt papers finished at 15.35%, 15.41%, 15.21% and 15.40% from 15.40%, 15.54%, 15.59% and 15.45% respectively the previous week. The Access Bank Bond index rose marginally by 8.20 points or 0.30% to 5,712.39 points from 5,704.19 points the previous week. This week, we expect the market to remain quiet as investors look forward to macroeconomic news to determine their position.

**Foreign Exchange Market**

The local currency took a beating in most market segments last week. At the Investors’ and Exporters’ (NAFEX) window the naira lost 0.09% to close at N364.84 to US$1.00 from the previous week. The parallel rate also trended lower, settling at N355.75 relative to N355.18 in the week before. In contrast, the official window slightly appreciated by 5 kobo to close at N306.50 to US$1.00. The relative stability of the local currency continues to be supported by the intervention of the apex bank. This week, we envisage the naira remaining at prevailing levels, as the CBN continues to support the currency.