

**ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, NYSC, BRIGADIER  
GENERAL S IBRAHIM DSS PhD MTRCN AT THE MEETING OF  
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY, 2020**

**Your Excellencies**

I feel highly honoured for the unique opportunity to address this distinguished gathering of State Chief Executives. Let me begin by expressing the profound gratitude of NYSC Management, Staff and Corps members' nationwide to Your Excellencies for your support to the Scheme, especially in the area of Corps welfare.

2. Since my assumption of duty as Director-General, one of the focal points of my policy thrust has been the strengthening of our collaboration with critical stakeholders with a view to engendering greater involvement in the running of the Scheme. As a deliberate policy, we have carried out sustained advocacy on the proper performance of roles of all key players as enshrined in the **NYSC Act Cap N84 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004**. This informed our decision to host a national sensitization programme on the Act.

3. There is no gainsaying the fact that the roles of State Governments are critical to the smooth operations of NYSC. While the Federal Government shoulders a greater part of the responsibility of running the Scheme, the Enabling Act saddles States and Local Governments with complimentary responsibilities. These include the provision of facilities like Orientation Camp, Corps Transit Lodge, Corps Lodges, Office Accommodation and other forms of intervention that are essential for the welfare of Corps members and the general success of the Scheme. In a bid to court further support of State



Governments through the performance of the aforementioned obligations, Management held a meeting with your representatives on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 in Abuja. We used the occasion to highlight the various challenges facing the Scheme and how the discharge of State Governments' responsibilities would help surmount them. The forum also offered opportunity for peer review and sharing of best practices among all States and the FCT in our quest to further strengthen NYSC and deepen its impact on our socio-economic development.

4. Your Excellencies, the purpose of my appearance before you today is to thank you both individually and collectively for all your gestures in support of the NYSC. These include various intervention projects being carried out in some of our Orientation Camps, payment of State Allowance to Corps members, release of State Subvention to some of the NYSC State Secretariats, and the provision of accommodation for Corps members amongst others. However, I am constrained to most respectfully inform this Forum that more need to be done in some States so as to make the operating environment conducive for the Scheme. Permit me at this juncture to highlight some of the key issues that require your kind attention:

- a) **Establishment of State Governing Boards:** The appointment of NYSC State Governing Board is germane to the success of the Scheme. The Board in each State is expected to serve as a key driver of the Scheme's operations with its specific functions spelt out in **Section 6 Sub-Section 2 of the NYSC Act**. I wish to express our profound gratitude to States that have appointed the State Governing Boards and empowered them to function effectively. However, we wish to appeal to States that do not

have the Boards in place to do same in order to enhance the operations of the Scheme.

- b) **Formation of Local Government Committees:** **Section 8 Sub-Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the NYSC Act** provides for the establishment, composition and functions of the NYSC Local Government Committee in each of the Local Government Areas of a State. Therefore, to ensure smooth operations of the Scheme at the grassroots, the Local Government Committees need to be put in place and empowered with the necessary resources to enable them function effectively. However, the committees do not exist at the Local Government level in many States of the Federation. I therefore appeal to Your Excellencies to help in persuading Local Government Councils that do not have the committees in place to establish and make them functional.
- c) **State of the Orientation Camps:** The Orientation Camp serves as the first point of contact with NYSC for Corps members and goes a long way to influence their impression about the Scheme and the State of deployment. Therefore, a camp is expected to meet at least the minimum standards with essential facilities such as adequate hostel accommodation, conveniences, multi-purpose hall and good parade ground amongst others to make it fit for habitation. I am pleased to report to this distinguished Forum that Orientation camps in several States have met the minimum standards while general renovation and upgrade of facilities are ongoing in others. However, some other Camps across the country are in bad conditions and can, in all honesty, be described as unfit for human habitation. I, therefore, wish to humbly appeal to the State Governments to accord priority to the provision of



adequate facilities in the Orientation Camps as a way of ensuring the wellbeing of Corps members and facilitating the smooth conduct of Orientation Course. Furthermore, in view of the speedy rise in Corps population, I wish to also request Your Excellencies to begin to consider upgrade and expansion of facilities in all our Orientation Camps to conveniently cater for at least five thousand Corps members. This is to avert widespread overstretch of facilities in the foreseeable future.

d) **Accommodation for Corps members:** Part of the responsibilities of State and Local Governments as spelt out in the NYSC Act is the provision of accommodation with some basic facilities for Corps members. This is essential not only to ensure decent living for them, but also help them to focus on discharge of selfless and patriotic service. I am constrained to humbly report that some States and Local Governments have left many Corps members with neither accommodation nor sufficient rent subsidy in lieu of accommodation. I, therefore, seek the kind support of Your Excellencies in addressing the situation so as to enable us optimize the potentials of these young patriots.

e) **Payment of State Allowance to Corps members:** I wish to use this opportunity to express gratitude to the State Governments and Local Government Councils that have not only approved fair and decent Allowance for Corps members, but are also regular in effecting payment. However, there are also States where Corps members are either paid inadequate allowances or are being owed arrears for several months. I am confident that this distinguished Forum will help to improve the

situation so as to boost the morale of our young men and women on National Service.

- f) **Security of Corps members:** The issue of security is germane to the smooth operations of NYSC, hence Management has continued to emphasize the safety of Corps members in all service locations. We are in constant liaison with Security Agencies who have been very supportive in this regard. On this premise, I wish to make a passionate appeal to Your Excellencies to prioritize Corps members' safety in your security agenda. May I also humbly request that you kindly use your good offices to influence Local Governments as well as other stakeholders such as traditional rulers, religious and community leaders to compliment the efforts of the security agencies in this regard.
- g) **Other Corps Welfare Matters:** The general welfare of Corps members occupies a central place in our policy thrust as Management of the Scheme. Therefore, we humbly request State Governments to do their utmost in catering for the welfare needs of these young patriots. In addition to the welfare matters already mentioned in my presentation, I most respectfully appeal to States to further encourage Corps member through gestures such as defrayal of medical expenses or provision of free services at Government hospitals. I also seek your support in the integration of Corps members with the host communities and ensuring that all stakeholders, including traditional rulers, community and religious leaders accept and accord them hospitality. Furthermore, it will be appreciated if the Corps members are guided to explore and avail themselves of opportunities for employment or business in the states of deployment.



- h) **Rejection/under-utilization of Corps members by employers:** One of the current challenges NYSC is grappling with is the rejection of Corps members by some employers. Where Corps members are accepted, we have cases of some State Government Agencies who do not optimize their potentials. Such employers do not help in monitoring the Corps members but leave them redundant for most of the time or even aid them to absent themselves from duty. I am aware that, just like the Federal Government, several State Governments have issued directives to their Ministries, Departments and Agencies mandating them to accept Corps members posted to them. I wish to use this medium to appeal to State Governments to help in prevailing on Corps Employers not only to accept the Corps members, but also ensure effective utilization of their potentials for the socio-economic development of our dear country.
- i) **Provision of Office Accommodation:** We have observed that the condition of some of our State offices leave much to be desired. While some of the Secretariats are housed in dilapidated structures others have inadequate office spaces thereby hindering effective performance of official duties. Even more disturbing is the lack of befitting accommodation for our Zonal and Local Government offices in many States. While we thank State and Local Governments that have provided befitting office accommodation, I appeal to others to do same so as to enhance the smooth operations of the Scheme.
- j) **Establishment of NYSC Area Offices:** I am pleased to inform Your Excellencies that NYSC recently secured approval of the Federal Government to establish an Area Office in each of the six geo-political zones. The offices, which have already taken off, are located in Asaba,

Bauchi, Enugu, Kaduna, Minna and Osogbo. They are to coordinate NYSC activities in each of the zones and will be carrying out field Monitoring and Inspection as well as ensure effective liaison with relevant stakeholders among other functions. Therefore, I use this opportunity to appeal to State Governments to support the Area Offices in their zones for smooth operations.

**k) Reward for excellence/post-service employment for Corps members:**

While we appreciate all State Governments for conferring Honours Awards on deserving Corps members, I wish to emphasize the need to enhance the quality of incentives given to the Award winners. In particular, the provision of automatic employment for the most outstanding Corps members will not only serve as a mark of appreciation of their contributions, but will also meet the NYSC's objectives of promoting the free movement of labour and national integration.

- l) Support for community development service:** Community Development Service (CDS) is a Cardinal Programme of the Scheme aimed at deploying the innovativeness and creativity of Corps members for the execution of development projects in conjunction with members of the host communities. Indeed, among the major achievements of the Scheme since inception is the array of Corps members' projects that have dotted the entire landscape of the country. However, there is the need to increase the tempo of CDS through material support from States and Local Governments as well as stakeholders in the host communities. This will go a long way in complimenting the development efforts of



these two tiers of Government as well as inspire communities to embark on self-help projects.

m) **Entrepreneurship development for self-reliance:** NYSC is determined to compliment Government's efforts at curbing the rate of graduate unemployment; hence our focus on empowering Corps members with skills for self-employment and wealth creation. To achieve, this we introduced the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Programme in 2012 with two components, namely: the in-camp and post-camp training. However, one of the challenges to the implementation of the programme is the absence training centres, especially in rural areas where majority of Corps members are posted for the Primary Assignment. As a way of addressing this challenge, the Scheme planned the establishment of a mega skill acquisition centre in each of the six geo-political zones through public-private-partnership. Already that of the North East has been completed and equipped in Gombe State. The one for the South West is nearing completion in Ekiti State while work is also ongoing on that of the North West in Jigawa State. We are reaching out to more partners to actualize the provision of the skill centres for the remaining geo-political zones. Our ultimate goal is to have the skill training centres in all the States of the Federation. In the meantime, I wish to appeal to Your Excellencies to avail Corps members of training at the State-owned Skill Acquisition Centres as well as waive the cost of training as a way of encouraging our youths to embrace the self-employment option.

n) **Provision of lands for agriculture:** In pursuit of one of the objectives of the Scheme, which is **to contribute to the accelerated growth of**



**the national economy,** NYSC has since inception been engaged in agricultural practices in our farm settlements across the country. With the current focus of the Federal and State Governments on harnessing of the nation's agricultural potentials as part of steps to diversify the economy, we are making efforts to rejuvenate our agricultural programme. Already, full scale farming activities have commenced in four NYSC Farm settlements across the country. Apart from contributing to the national efforts on food security, the farms are to serve as training grounds for our Corps members under the agricultural component of our Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Programme. On this note, I wish to make a passionate appeal to Your Excellencies to assist the Scheme through the allocation of farmlands to NYSC in all States where the Scheme does not have any. This will enable us implement our agricultural and entrepreneurship programmes seamlessly and contribute to the economic development of our host States and the country as a whole.

5. Your Excellencies, while I once again appreciate your contributions to the success of NYSC over the years, I equally seek your kind consideration of the foregoing issues in order to put the NYSC in a good stead to achieve its mandate. I am confident that given your unwavering commitment to the progress and development of the Nigerian youths, greater priority will be accorded to optimization of the potentials of our young men and women on National Service.

6. I thank you most sincerely for this unique opportunity.