

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING WITH PROFESSOR MAHMOOD YAKUBU,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, EDUCATION TRUST FUND (ETF) ON THURSDAY,
15th OCTOBER, 2009**

S/N	NOTES/RESOLUTIONS	ACTION BY
	<p>ATTENDANCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A.B. Okauru – Director General 2. L.O.T Shittu – Executive Director (Strategy & Research) 3. M.A. Jibia – Executive Director (Finance & Administration) 4. Chuku, C.C – Head of Legal 5. Fatima U. Katsina – Technical Assistant to the DG 6. Professor Mahmood Yakubu – Executive Secretary, ETF <p>The meeting started at 6pm with the DG, NGF expressing gratitude to the Executive Secretary (ES) for seeing the team from the NGF at short notice in spite of his very busy schedule. He gave a brief exposé of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF), its activities and the role of its Secretariat.</p> <p>He informed the ES that the NGF had done a lot of work with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). There had been observations that some States were unable to access the UBEC funds and as a result, the Secretariat was directed to meet with the leadership of the UBEC to seek a clear explanation as to the criteria for access. That meeting with the UBEC officials yielded results culminating in the Executive Secretary of UBEC making a presentation at the Forum’s last meeting.</p> <p>He concluded his remarks by stating that the Secretariat recognising the need to work closely with the ETF decided to pay him a visit, in order to familiarise itself with the workings of the ETF as well as seek areas of mutual cooperation.</p> <p>In his response, the ES of ETF informed the NGF team that the ETF was perhaps the most transparent Government Agency. Every activity of the ETF was properly recorded and preserved. The ETF would avail the NGF of information regarding monies that it had expended on every institution from 1998 to the present day. This would include the amount that had been accessed and what was outstanding.</p> <p>He identified four areas that required urgent attention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. A vast majority of institutions funded by the ETF belonged to States. The visiting team from the Secretariat learnt that there was about N26 billion un-accessed funds and that whilst institutions determined their priorities, it was the responsibility of the ETF to reconcile these priorities. The function of the ETF was basically to fund and to monitor. ii. The core mandates of ETF would be re-focussed. In other 	

words, ETF funds would no longer be used for fencing of schools or construction of gates.

- iii. There was an unfortunate confusion of ETF with UBEC. Both bodies had clear and distinct mandates and there was a need to make information available on these distinct functions. While UBEC provides matching grants when other criteria had been met, the ETF only insists on past grants being reconciled and accounted for before new grants can be accessed. As a result of this, ETF did not have any single abandoned Project. The ES also enlisted the support of the Forum in the monitoring and setting of proper priorities.
- iv. Another area of concern was in the area of proliferation of institutions. He expressed the belief that rather than open up small and unviable institutions, the best course would be to strengthen the existing. He felt there was a need to correct the erroneous impression that ETF ran and funded institutions. According to him, the ETF mandate was not to provide alternative funds but to scale up projects within existing institutions. He expressed the hope that he would be given an opportunity to make a presentation to the Forum at one of its meetings. This, he believed, would afford him an opportunity of throwing more light on these issues of concern as well as explaining grey areas.

The ES also informed the team from the Secretariat that the legal Framework of the ETF was in the process of amendment. It had gone through the first and second readings at the House of Representatives and would be at the Senate in the next couple of days. Preparations were on-going for a Public Hearing. This amendment would among others ensure that ETF exits basic and Secondary Education. He pointed out that the Act was originally designed to fund higher education but during the Babangida era, a directive was given to include basic and secondary education.

The Federal Executive Council had directed that ETF exit basic and secondary education and concentrate on higher education. He further added that Ghana which had borrowed the ETF concept from Nigeria appeared to have done a better job of it because they had concentrated their resources on higher education.

He emphasised that the support of the Forum was expedient in the achieving of the core mandate of ETF and felt that the first step would be to properly create awareness among the Governors on the mode of accessing funds as well as criteria for access.

He reported that the ETF had published list of States that had defaulted in coming forward to access their funds and noted that there had been a remarkable improvement in the response of States in accessing their funds. The visiting team also learnt that funds that were not accessed accrued interest that went to other States.

The ES informed the Secretariat of ETF's plans to host a Tax Payers' Forum for the purpose of showing its appreciation to the myriad of taxpayers who have shown good faith to the Fund over the years. They were currently compiling the names of these taxpayers which could run into seven (7) volumes.

The meeting ended at about 7pm and the NGF team were taken to the office of the Chairman, Board of Trustees, ETF, Dr. Musa Babayo, who received the team very warmly. He assured the team that the ETF was receptive of any efforts to strengthen relations between both organisations.

The visit ended about 7.30pm.

Chuku, C.C, Esq