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Governors On Investment Drive

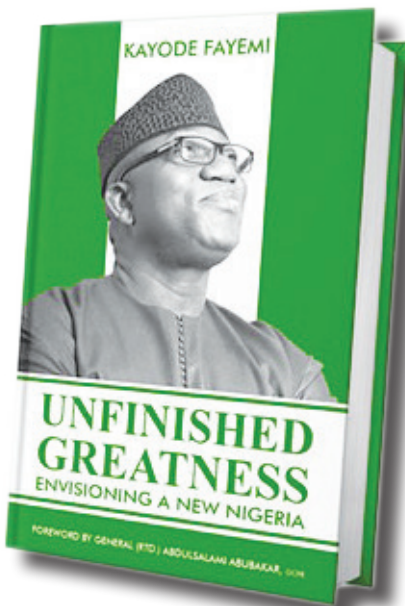


NGF Commiserates with the Government and People of Kaduna State on the recent Abuja-Kaduna train attack



Do you want to know what materials were recently added to the NGF library? Then the place to look in the NGF Library is the “new arrivals” section; this section displays the latest additions. When a book arrives the library, it is recorded, stamped, catalogued, and displayed on the new arrival shelf in the library for a period of three weeks for patrons to have easy access to them. This section is strategically positioned for the library patrons to easily browse through the shelves and see what book catches their attention.

One of our new arrivals in this month of April 2022 is the newly launched book titled **“Unfinished Greatness: Envisioning a new Nigeria”** authored by His Excellency Dr. Kayode Fayemi, Chairman Nigeria Governors’ Forum and Governor of Ekiti State. The 198 pages, ten-chapter book offers the perspectives of a firm believer in a Nigerian national agenda of unity, freedom, justice, and equity.



THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM LIBRARY: NEW ARRIVALS SECTION

- 1 The opening essay from which the book derives its title – Unfinished Greatness: Envisioning a New Nigeria – was the fiftieth anniversary lecture of that intellectual powerhouse – Arewa House – in Kaduna in October 2020.
- 2 Chapter Two - Fixing Nigeria for a Better World was delivered on the 60th anniversary of the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in Lagos in December 2021.
- 3 Chapter Three - Intellectuals in Politics was originally a 70th birthday lecture in honour of Professor Sonnie Tyoden, current Deputy Governor of Plateau State and former Vice Chancellor of the University of Jos, a quintessential Intellectual in Politics.
- 4 Chapter Four – Between Autonomy and Restructuring was the Zik Birthday Lecture delivered in Akwa, Anambra State, in honour of Nigeria’s first President, Dr Namdi Azikiwe, in November 2021.
- 5 Chapter Five – Democracy, Good Governance, and the Question of National Integration: Remembering Aminu Kano was delivered in Mambayya House, Bayero University, Kano to mark the twenty first anniversary of the establishment of the Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Development, Research, and Training in Mallam Aminu Kano’s house on December 4, 2021.
- 6 Chapter Six – The Media, National Security and Nation-Building was the keynote lecture at the 60th anniversary of the Nigeria Institute of Journalism in Lagos.
- 7 Chapter Seven – Church, Politics and Future Elections was originally delivered as the First Convocation Lecture of the Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Kaduna, Kaduna State.
- 8 Chapter Eight – Covid-19: Turning Adversity to Opportunity was the authors’ contribution to The Platform Annual event in Lagos in May 2020 and it explores the trajectory of Covid 19 pandemic in Nigeria.
- 9 Chapter Nine - Towards a Safe and Secure Nigeria: National Security Challenges and the Way Forward was originally a lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan in honour of Honourable Babs Oduoye.
- 10 Chapter Ten – Twenty Years of Democratisation in Nigeria was delivered as the Keynote Address at the Conference of the same topic organized by the Centre for African Studies, Oxford University, England in December 2019, just before the world succumbed to the ravages of Covid 19 pandemic.

In the preface of the book, the author stated that the topics that makes up the chapters of the book were delivered at different settings and different times, but all the essays collectively embody his humble assessment of Nigeria’s nation – building predicament and present a vision of the opportunities and possibilities that lie ahead.

This book is a must read! It covers subject areas such as – Nation Building, Politics, Security, Autonomy, Good Governance, Restructuring, Democracy, National Integration and more! In between chapters of the book are pictures of the author in programmes and events that were neatly captured and recorded.



Dateline Dubai, Osinachi, The Train Attack And 419

commEntary

A myriad of historical events took place in Nigeria, most of them with filial connections to the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF. Some emerged from internal planning and logistics while others came very fast and furious. But in the traditional phalanx of the griot, it is always best to tell the last story first.

Suddenly Attorneys-general of the 36 states of the federation have awoken from their slumber and proceeded to warn the federal government not to tamper with funds accruing to the states and the 774 local government councils under the guise of meeting up with the alleged \$418 million London/Paris Club Loan refund-related judgment debts.

This heat from the Attorneys-General, mild as it may seem, gives the fillip which the Governors under the aegis of the NGF have been expecting from their appointees to smoothen the battle to wrest almost \$419m from the hands of a bunch of greedy lawyers.

They further warned if the federal government proceeds to make any such deductions, it would be acting illegally and in contempt of their appeal pending in Courts in Abuja.

The body of attorneys-general also maintained that they were not parties to any suit on the London/Paris Club refund, and as such were not liable to any person or entity in any judgement debt the federal government is relying on. This matter which was considered limp from the onset has suddenly grown feet, crawled and was running when the Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, called the bluff of the lawyers and engaged the support of his colleagues to let reason flourish. Finance, Budget and National Planning Ministry, had already started advertising the commencement of the deductions for the liquidation of the alleged judgement debts. Today, it is becoming a different story, to the consternation of the recipients, some of whom had already been served promissory notes, that are becoming as worthless as toilet tissue.

And there was the Dubai trip by some governors in search of foreign direct investment (FDI). The mission was like a coat of many colours. It left a sour taste in some of the participants while some got it sweet. When the trip was at planning stage, the Dubai officials at the Annual Investment Meeting office in Dubai made the Nigerian organisers, mostly from the NGF, feel like they were riding the clouds. The

Director General of the Forum himself, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru believed that the trip would bring value and serious investments to the participating states. But alas!

There were though a few successes. Abia, Plateau and Niger states have beautiful stories of interest to tell their citizens, but many other states did not return as lucky. Lessons have been learnt and it is expected that future arrangements of a similar nature will be more meticulously investigated before it is embarked upon.

Back home in Nigeria, there was death. Some of those who boarded the Abuja-Kaduna evening train of March 28th may never live to tell their stories. About sixty-eight of them are still on hospital beds recuperating. Many of their co-travellers have since been interred while several more are cooling their heels in the kidnapper's dungeon. The full story is in this edition.

And just as this narrative was unfolding with the visit to Kaduna by the NGF Chairman to commiserate with the Government and people of the state, the death, under circumstances that are widely believed to be the result of domestic and gender-based violence erupted, of Osinachi Nwachukwu. Until this April 2022, Osinachi was famous only among the Christian who enjoyed her sonorous rendition of church hymns. She became more popular in death because her husband Peter Nwachukwu is alleged to be behind her demise and has since been in incarceration.

But why are we mentioning this story and even relating it to the NGF? It is because the Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF) has boldly embraced the fight against gender-based violence in the country, gotten their husbands to sign a state of emergency on the issue and then this occurred. It is a call to duty for the powerful women who must rise to make an example of the culprit to provide a deterrent action for all to see. With all these stories carefully collected and served, even without the mention of dear old agitation for state police, that governors have championed, this edition is indeed a Governor's dish any day!

Follow us on:



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AIM DUBAI

GOVERNORS ON INVESTMENT DRIVE

In March, the NGF Secretariat mobilized and coordinated the states representation at the Annual Investment Meeting, AIM 2022 held in Dubai between March 29th and 31st 2022. This event coincided with the Dubai 2020 Expo which apparently held at the same venue under the same management of the Dubai Government.

Fourteen Nigerian States were represented; 8 governors were to lead their State delegations and the remaining six had top government functionaries leading their teams.

The event which is technically tagged AIM 2022 had over 200 nations in attendance. The Nigerian states contingent which was midwifed by the NGF Secretariat convened several technical meetings, working with the AIM organizers and the UAE embassy. The aim of those AIM/NGF meetings were to carve out strategically customized and designed programs for the Nigerian States' with an objective of being investment—driven by identifying sector top priority projects in each State as the focus of

the meetings.

Government-to-Government (G2G) meetings and sector oriented Business-to-Government (B2G) meetings were incorporated into the programs all designed towards making the meeting and indeed the participation of states more result oriented than several previous outings of states and the NGF to China and other destinations around the world.

According to a report by the technical team of the NGF, the following items were to be pursued in earnest in order to extract maximum benefit for all the participating states.

The organizers of the event AIM and the UAE Embassy were carried along all the time for proper coordination. Their task included:

- I. Planning the general event
- II. Installation and furnishing of the Country pavilion and State exhibition booths.
- III. Processing visas for State delegates
- IV. Providing VIP reception for HE's (where required)
- V. Hotel Reservations for HE and State delegates
- VI. Providing vehicles for State delegates transportation (1 car for HE, 7-seater vehicle for other State delegates)
- VII. Providing access passes for State delegates
- VIII. Providing event and States' publicity before, during and after the event via the questionnaire
- IX. Selecting the special investors and matching them to the respective States priority projects.

The NGF Secretariat was saddled with the following responsibilities:

- I. Sensitization and preparation of the participating States for the event
- II. Collating participation requirements such as: State profile, Priority projects, disseminating the questionnaire
- III. Coordinating travel documentation for visa processing and sharing delegate information with the organizers
- IV. Validating hotel reservations through confirmed travel





AIM DUBAI



- plans for HEs and delegates with the organizers
- V. Coordinating hotel accommodation preferences for HE and State delegation on arrival
- VI. Co-ordination of the G2G meeting with the organizers
- VII. Onsite sequencing with the organizers of the B2G meetings for each State based on the priority projects
- VIII. Coordinating the 2-Day State presentations

The execution of the itemised program of activities may seem straight forward to the naked eye but things turned out not to be as easily compiled as several of the duties that hung on the AIM and Dubai foreign ministries were shabbily handled. This may not be for any fault of the NGF delegation but for future coordination, more attention needs to be injected into the details of the demands from states and some frugal responsibility must be attached to delivery on the part of all service providers. Indeed, the observation of the media team to the event departs strongly from the clumsily held belief that the quest was a success. It was not. This is short of pronouncing the entire event a fiasco, for the fol-

lowing reasons:

The Opening ceremony was well attended by delegations from around the world but the Nigerian States delegation did not receive any attention or a proper mention as the three governors from Nigeria, Lalong, Obaseki, Diri and the NGF Chairman Dr John Kayode Fayemi were obsequiously seated in a motley crowd with no real notice of their mission to the AIM. They also did not get a chance to speak at the opening,

which did not reflect the promises made by the Ambassador and the Foreign minister during the discussions that preceded the event. A Dubai official who spoke to this paper agreed that AIM was largely thrown into obscurity by the Expo to the extent that the AIM faded away in relevance, comparatively.

By the culmination of the event, few, if any investors indicated any willingness to partner with some Nigerian States. The few that showed interest after several haphazardly arranged meetings with states, made stop-gap follow-up discussions as the investors they met with during the B2G meetings seemed disoriented and without any fibre to make pronouncements on whether or not their FDI would flow into Nigeria, any time soon.

“**THE AIM OF THOSE AIM/NGF MEETINGS WERE TO CARVE OUT STRATEGICALLY CUSTOMIZED AND DESIGNED PROGRAM FOR THE NIGERIAN STATES' WITH AN OBJECTIVE OF BEING INVESTMENT—DRIVEN BY IDENTIFYING SECTOR TOP PRIORITY PROJECTS IN EACH STATE AS THE FOCUS OF THE MEETINGS**”



AIM DUBAI



There were however, positive interactions between states like Plateau, Bayelsa, Edo and Niger where some far from concrete conversations seemed to have taken place and yielded what looked like crumbs from the tables of the Emiratis. The stories from Niger and Plateau are examples as reported by their chief press secretaries, Mary Berje and Simon Makut respectively. In this edition of The Executive Summary.

Although self-inflicted, the challenges that the teams from Nigeria encountered would not have been insurmountable. But the organisers stood aloof from any attempts to remedy the situation, as if once a team was in Dubai, its mission had been accomplished. This must be taken into consideration in future, according to a member of the NGF team who does not want his name in print.

In the estimation of the NGF team, a few notable domestic hitches had caused the apparent failure to win more FDI than was sourced. In his report, the scribe of the team Eghosa Omoigui, said the pitfalls which impacted the desired outcome were; the untimely remittance of participation fee by majority of States, the organizers had issues with coordinating the hotels reservations due to the change in travel plans of some States, and also caused by some States opting to not use their reservations resulting to a substantial no-show and cancellation fees.

Another reason given by the team, which in all fairness did not resonate with the shabby manner of the entire sojourn is that, some of the investors for the specially organized B2G meetings had to withdraw last-minute due to their team contracting COVID, and lastly the low turnout of investors at the 2-Day State presentations due to the perception of Nigeria not being an investors priority due to the ongoing environmental and security challenges, the most recent being the Kaduna train attack which happened on the eve of the event. This position is largely inaccurate.

The NGF team however believes that there are lessons learnt from the mission, which include more time for planning on the actual meeting, provision of sectoral advisory notes to aid governors steer their discussions with investors ensuring that qualitative objectives are achieved, and less reliance on third parties for logistics.

All of which will be reviewed and adopted to ensure the NGF has a better outcome in future engagements. The Governors of Ekiti, Edo, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Kwara and Plateau attended the meeting while eight others that had earlier indicated interest did not show up.

Meanwhile, the Plateau State Governor Simon Bako La-long who was among the Nigerian Governors that attended the 2022 Annual Investment Summit (AIM) 2022 in the Dubai Exhibition Centre, United Arab Emirates scored some firsts.



AIM DUBAI



Alongside Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum, Kayode Fayemi, Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State, Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom State, Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State, Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State, Godwin Obaseki of Edo State, Kwara among others, Governor Lalong attended the official opening of the event where focus was on Investment in Sustainable Innovation for a thriving future.

Speakers at the event including President of Tar-tazan, Vice President of Colombia, UNECA President and others, spoke about creating investment opportunities in technology, energy, mining, environment, education, agriculture, tourism and hospitality among others targeting the vulnerable and women.

They emphasized the need for expanding opportunities for more citizens of the world particularly in developing countries where infrastructure, education and funding has denied many the opportunities for inclusion in tapping from the vast economic opportunities available within their immediate environment.

Governor Lalong and his colleagues thereafter visited the exhibition stands where already, various States including Plateau have started displaying some of their products and opportunities for investors.

Governors present at the opening ceremony visited the booths where Plateau State received commendation for the level of display and packaging of information for prospective investors in key areas of comparative advantage in the State.

On hand to provide details to visitors to the Plateau State pavilion were the Chairman, Plateau State Economic Advisory Council, Nde Ezekiel Gomos, MD PIPC Mr. Chrysogonus Yilzak, and DG of the Plateau State Public Private Partnership Agency Mr. Felix Rwang-Dung

Governor Lalong made a presentation to investors from various parts of the world.

Also, Niger state government in partnership with Commodities Development Initiative (CDI), a firm that facilitates investments and export development secured a letter of intent to supply Rhodes Grass from Nigeria to Al Dahra Global Forage Company at the 11th Annual Investment Meeting at Dubai, United Arab Emirates UAE.

This was sequel to the extensive interactions between Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State, Roland Oroh, the CEO of CDI and the Acting CEO and COO of Al Dahra Global Forage, Gianluca Fabbri, held at the corporate headquarters of Al Dahra Global Forage in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Governor Sani Bello who acknowledged that Niger State in particular and Nigeria in general is an emerging market, stressed that lots of opportunities abound for investors who are willing to invest.

He told the partners that Niger state which has the highest landmass in Nigeria also has 21 grazing reserves, part of which could be used for massive production of Rhode Grass for export, pointing out that the state has already commenced the development of super Napier grass at the Bobi Grazing Reserve.

He said the state government will make every effort to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Al Dahra Global Forage.

The Acting CEO, Al Dahra Global Forage, Gianluca Fabbri explained that the company is a major player in the global forage market, contributing three (3) million tons out of the 11 million tons of forage traded globally. He expressed optimism that the investment will be mutually beneficial.

The meeting agreed to come up with an action plan within a month so as to translate the immediate market opportunity to reality within the shortest time possible.

A technical task force that would take necessary steps to actualize all that needs to, would be constituted. It is hoped that this would expand and further strengthen the existing trade between Nigeria and UAE.



NGF to host Conference of African Sub-Sovereign Governments

The Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat (NGF) plans to host a conference of African Sub-Sovereign Governments, later this year.

This was due to the success of the maiden edition of the conference in South Africa last year. The Chairman of the NGF was in attendance of the IATF2021 Trade and Investment Conference, in Kwazulu-Natal held by its government, in partnership with the African Export -Import Bank (Afreximbank).

Some of the aims of the conference are to understand the capacity of sub-sovereigns in conceptualising and implementing development programmes and to understand the role sub-sovereigns can play in implementing the AfCFTA.

It is also planned to agree on the need for setting up of a sub-sovereign's network as well as the form it should take and to define membership, such as who is a sub-sovereign for the purpose of membership.

It is critical to define the objectives of the network and to agree on potential benefits of the network and the implementation plan. The conference noted that promoting intra-African trade would enable Africa to reduce over-reliance on export of primary commodities and the risks of reliance on global value chains. It

would also help increase economic integration and build the resilience of African economies against the vagaries of a global economy, that is constantly subject to fluctuations.

The conference also acknowledged that there would be great value added by local enterprises in local and regional economic development. Sub-sovereign economies have opportunities that can contribute towards trade across African regions.

Furthermore, the conference recognised that African sub-sovereign authorities and economies have a critical role to play in expanding, growing, and deepening intra-African trade, thus contributing to the overall economic development and integration of the continent.

This is in addition to the fact that the conference welcomed efforts to strengthen sub-sovereign governance across the continent as a sound basis for economic development including intra-African economic trade and investment.

Some of the resolutions of the conference include to establish the African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network as a vehicle for enhancing their role in expanding, growing, and deepening intra-African trade and investment.

To use the Network as a platform for exchanges on existing financing instruments in the form of financial products,

programmes and initiatives for trade financing, facilitation, and technical assistance to sustain the initiatives.

Another resolution is that the network will help African Sub-Sovereign governments to participate effectively in the AfCFTA with a view to promoting an integrated African economic market and achieving the objectives of the AU Agenda 2063. The network is expected to generate opportunities for enhancing intra-African trade and investment that stretches into the African diaspora that is designated as the sixth region of the African Union.

The network also seeks to promote industrial development in a manner that is sensitive to transitions towards green economies in a careful and just way by enhancing export development.

It resolved to hold annual meetings routinely hosted by various members on a rotational basis through an open selection process, allowing potential hosts to express interest in hosting sub-sovereign conferences. That is where the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum Dr John Kayode Fayemi dropped the offer to bring the conference to Nigeria

Lastly, the network membership aims to include African sub-sovereign authorities duly recognised as such by the national constitutions of African countries.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Plateau Executive Council Approves Reconstruction Of Jos Main Market

The Plateau State Executive Council has approved the reconstruction of the Jos Main Market burnt down many years ago.

The decision was reached by the Council at its recent weekly meeting presided over virtually by Governor Simon Lalong who was visiting Dubai, United Arab Emirates alongside other Governors to participate in the 11th Annual Investment Summit.

The approval was sequel to a memo submitted by Hon. Idris Gambo, the Commissioner for Urban Development who is supervising Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the Council with the proposal for a Public Private Partnership Joint Venture to be funded by Jaiz Bank Nigeria Plc.

Briefing newsmen after the Council meeting, Commissioner for Information and Communication Hon. Dan Manjang said the reconstruction of the Jos Main Market has been one of the priorities of the Lalong Rescue Administration which despite several attempts delayed because of conditions given by various prospective investors.

Manjang explained that the determination and resilience of Governor Simon Lalong to fulfill his campaign promise to the people by ensuring that the market is reconstructed has finally paid off with the agreement by Jaiz Bank Plc. to partner with the Plateau State Government in funding the project.

Lalong visits Bassa; vows to confront those working against Restoration of Peace

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong along with some of his top officials were in Miango, Bassa Local Government Area on Thursday, 14th April 2022 to meet with the stakeholders over the recurring attacks in the area.

At the meeting attended by the Paramount ruler of Irigwe nation, HRH Bra Ngwe Rigwe Rev. Ronku Aka, community, youth and women representatives as well as political and religious leaders, Governor Lalong said his mission was to again condole with the people over the incessant killings and destruction of properties in the area which are a major setback to the progress of the entire state.

He commended the Irigwe people for their resilience, patience and efforts to live in peace with their neighbours despite the losses they have incurred overtime from attacks by criminal elements.

The Governor praised them for their positive

attitude towards peace building which led them to signing a peace pact with the Fulani with whom they have lived together peacefully for a long time, until criminal elements came in to fan embers of hate, destruction and crises.

He said the Irigwe made the right decision to work together with the Fulani they know and have dwelt together peacefully over many years in order to isolate criminals who come in and try to exploit faultlines and cause chaos. This he said will assist both sides identify criminal elements who use ethnicity, religion and other excuses as a cover to perpetrate while leaving many innocent people in pains and agony.

He urged them to resist the incitement and provocation by criminal elements both external and internal who seek to stop the development of the area and the prosperity of the State, assuring them that Government will follow them and ensure that they are dealt with ruthlessly.



Plateau Governor, Lalong Orders Security Agencies To Go After Terrorists

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has vowed to make it difficult for terrorists and other criminals to set their bases in any part of the State and use same to launch attacks on innocent citizens.

Governor Lalong while reacting to the terrorist attacks on some communities in Kanam and Wase Local Government Areas where many people were killed with houses and properties destroyed, condemned the irresponsible act and vowed that those behind it will be made to pay a heavy price.

Lalong who expressed deep regrets over the dastardly act said he has directed secu-

rity forces to dominate the area after their initial response which put a stop to the carnage. He also charged them to go after the fleeing terrorists and ensure that they pay for their crimes.

This was contained in a statement by Dr. Makut Simon Macham, Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Governor of Plateau State to Apex News Exclusive Monday.

According to the Governor, Plateau State will never be used as a safe haven for terrorists to set up camps and use same to wreak havoc on communities and innocent citizens in the State and elsewhere.

Governor Lalong said the State Security

Council has adopted far reaching measures to strengthen all security measures and enhance the capacity of the security agencies to respond to all situations that cause a breach of the peace in any part of the State.

Lalong who sympathised with the communities affected, promised them justice as those behind the attacks will not be allowed to go without punishment. He also directed the State Emergency Management Agency and the Peace Building Agency to immediately visit the areas, assess the situation and provide relief as well as trauma management.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE JOINS NGF, HiiL

The Nigeria Governors' Forum hosted the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) to a discussion on the potential for a collaborative effort with Nigerian states to explore how the people of the country can enjoy better access to justice.

HiiL is a social enterprise devoted to user-friendly justice, which means it is engaged in opening up all avenues that make justice available to the ordinary man, that is easy to access, easy to understand, fair and effective for all.

HiiL ensures that by 2030, 150 million people will be able to prevent or resolve their most pressing justice issues by stimulating innovation and scaling what works best at any given time. It believes in improving access to justice and making it more affordable and accessible.

As of recent, HiiL has begun interventions in states such as Imo, Ogun, and they are in the process of dialogue with Kaduna State. HiiL seeks to establish a global language, plus a local interpretation to bring justice to the people.

"A partnership would ensure that the language is brought into reality. We are trying to put Nigeria at the forefront of the movement," said Ijeoma A. Nwafor, the Justice Transformation Country Representative in Nigeria.

Dr. Sam Muller, the CEO of HiiL stated that they believe in people-cen-

tered justice. He added that for change to happen, three to four things need to take place. One being that there needs to be data. Data is not collected widely but through the forum, they aim to have surveys regularly to know what the challenges around justice are?

Secondly, there must be the collection of best practices to know among the justice interventions being put in place, which works and which doesn't?

Charity, they say, begins at home. For example, there could be intractable family disputes surrounding inheritance that are requiring urgent resolution. Someone has to fashion out how to collect evidence, based on what works?

"We need to create capacity on the best practices and share them," said Muller.

Another important factor has to do with the delivery modules not reaching as many individuals. That means building game-changers. The other factor would be bringing in the leaders together to discuss the set goals and creating an enabling environment to make things happen.

Theresa Smout, the Director of Justice Transformation said that Nigeria's 2017 Justice Strategy was impressive and what is needed is to know how to go from vision to mission and ultimately to implementation.

"The question to ask is also how do you measure the results?" said Smout in a rhetorical manner. Smout empha-

A PARTNERSHIP WOULD ENSURE THAT THE LANGUAGE IS BROUGHT INTO REALITY. WE ARE TRYING TO PUT NIGERIA AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE MOVEMENT



sised that HIIL wants to take the conversation to the next level in Nigeria.

Responding to HIIL's asks, the Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru revealed that the NGF is eager to partner as, that apparently is at the heart of what the NGF essentially does. The NGF Director General declared, in the true spirit of the NGF Secretariats work ethic, that however things go, that it is necessary to draw up a plan on how to engage and to set timelines?

He further stated that it is necessary to consider and work assiduously on strategies to attract the attention

of the states, for acceptance so that states would take ownership of the program. The DG concluded that the next best step would be to set an agenda and an MoU. That expectations should be tied to a strategic plan, and this would be put in the forefront for the Governors.

Kuseme Iseh, a Barrister at the NGF highlighted that the NGF recently had a meeting with the Attorneys General to discuss the harmonisation of the criminal justice system.

She stated that the NGF works with different ministries of Justice,

but the challenge is that the Attorneys-General are not all aware of the issues on the plates of all the different states.

Dr. Muller said that the way forward would be to have a team sign the MoU. That the Governors are at the centre of the vision and each state can have a partnership based on its need, affirming that the vision is to move to state level surveys to know the challenges that are common for each state and to have a shared vision for innovation language, stressing that data must be the starting point.



L-R: ED/F&A, Mohammed Abubakar Jibia; Justice Sector Advisor, Armi Kortonen; Dir. of Justice transformation, Theresa Smout; Justice Transformation, Country rep, Ijeoma A. Nwafor; CEO of HIIL, Dr Sam Muller; DG of NGF, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru; TA, Juliet Chima; Legal Officer, Kuseme Iseh; Research Economist, Abdulazeez Olorunshola



SECRETARIAT NEWS

\$418M PARIS CLUB REFUND**Don't Touch States' Allocations, Governors Warn FG**

Governors of the 36 states of the federation have warned the Federal Government against tampering with funds accruing to them and the 774 local government councils under the pretense of satisfying an alleged \$418 million London/Paris Club Loan refund-related judgment debt.

The states said they were not parties to any suit on the London/Paris Club refund, and as such were not liable to any person or entity in any judgment debt being relied on by the federal government.

Speaking through the body of Attorneys-General of the Federation, the states warned further that should the federal government make any such deduction, it would be acting illegally and in contempt of their appeal challenging the judgment.

They gave the warning in an April 4 letter as part of their response to a November 11, 2021 letter from the Minister of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, advertising the commencement of the deduction for the liquidation of the alleged judgment debts.

The reply of the states was signed by the body of Attorneys-General of the Federation Interim Chairman, Mr. Moyosore Onigbanjo (SAN) of Lagos State and Interim Secretary, Dr. Abdulkarim Abubakar Kana of Nasarawa State as well as the Attor-

neys-Generals of Rivers, Abia, Taraba, Benue, and Zamfara states, for and on behalf of all the state Attorneys-General.

It reads in part: "Their Excellencies have drawn our attention to your letter referenced above, which the various states of the federation received at about the end of March 2022. The letter notifies the States of your intention to commence deduction from allocations due to the States from the Federation Account for the liquidation of the London/Paris Club Loan refund-related judgment debts on behalf of the 36 States of the Federation and the 774 local government councils.

"Please note that the states of the federation were not parties to any contract or suits concerning the London/Paris Club refund, from which the said judgment debts arose. Consequently, the 36 States of the federation are not liable to any person or entity in any judgment debt."

The letter noted that the deduction of the allocations due to the 36 states of the federation from the Federation Account to liquidate the London/Paris Club Loan refund-related judgment debts is the subject of an appeal filed by the 36 States at the Court of Appeal, Abuja.

It explained that: "The appeal challenges the Feder-

Court's (per Honourable Justice Inyang Ekwo) judgment delivered on 25th March 2022 between A.G Abia State v. President, Federal Republic of Nigeria & 42 Ors. and, therefore, the issue is sub judice."

In addition, it noted that the states have also filed a Motion on Notice for an Order of Injunction pending appeal.

The letter added that the body's legal representatives had published a public caveat in national dailies notifying the public of the pending appeal, which also advised concerned parties "to desist from dealing with the subject matter thereof pending the hearing and determination of the Appeal and the application for Injunction pending appeal".

It said that given the above, "The law requires you to restrain from taking any step whatsoever that is capable of interfering with the rest of the suit, which is now a subject of an appeal.

"Accordingly, Nigerian case law enjoins you to refrain from effecting any deduction whatsoever from the allocations due to the 36 States from the Federation Account for the liquidation of the London/Paris Club Loan refund-related judgment debts purportedly on behalf of the 36 States of the Federation and the 774 local government councils, pending the hearing and determination of the appeal by the states of the federation. Doing otherwise in the face of the pending Appeal and Motion on Notice for Injunction pending appeal shall be at your peril."





Osinachi:

A Brief for Governors' Wives

The Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum, NGWF, under the chairmanship of the Loud Whisperer and First Lady of Ekiti State, Erelu Bisi Fayemi has been served a dish it cannot reject. The NGWF was in the news a few weeks back for reasons that are far from complimentary. At one very inauspicious time, when the country was experiencing collective misery, they were reported to have been in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, to fete the First Lady Hajiji Aisha Buhari.

Shortly after the video hit the internet, the visit sparked outrage especially on social media as Nigerians knocked the first ladies, based on their perceived actions. But in a statement, the NGWF issued a denial signed by the Chair, in which they explained:

That the governors' wives were on an official visit to Dubai and not to present a birthday cake to Mrs Buhari. Mrs Fayemi stated that the visit coincided with the first lady's birthday, so the governor's wives decided to surprise her.

They said, in their denial, "Our attention has been drawn to a social media post shared on the 1st of March 2022 suggesting that some Nigerian Governors' Wives were in Dubai to surprise the First Lady of Nigeria Dr Aisha Buhari on her birthday which falls on the 17th of February 2022. "For the avoidance of doubt, and in the interest of the public, the Nigerian Governors Wives were on the entourage of the First Lady of Nigeria who was on an official visit to the UAE.

"The trip included visits to Dubai Expo 2020 (still called 2020 because Covid didn't allow it hold at its appointed time), and tours of the Dubai e-learning centre, Dubai Youth Hub and meetings with foundations and agencies in UAE who are interested in investing in education, health and technology in Africa, with priority given to women and young people in Nigeria.

NGWF further explained, that the trip coincided with the birthday of Her Excellency, Aisha Buhari. On the morning of her birthday, which was February 17, the delegation of Governors' Wives paid a private visit to present the Nigerian President's wife with a cake and flowers. After

the brief presentation, they proceeded to attend their scheduled meetings for the day.

The NGWF stated that they were shocked to see, in just the twinkle of an eye, a misinterpreted news of the video online.

"We were therefore dismayed to see footage of the visit interpreted as to mean Governors' Wives left Nigeria for the sole purpose of celebrating HE's birthday.

"This is not true, and we find this assumption scandalous. We are all dedicated to supporting our spouses as well as our First Lady, and we would never be a party to anything that will bring embarrassment to them and to ourselves, the statement emphasised.

The NGWF further stated that "Our key learnings from our visits to the various agencies in Dubai and the briefings we received points to the need for Nigeria to scale up investments in education, science and technology and provide more opportunities for young people, who are the key to the future. We will continue to address these issues in our own work as well as advocate for increased commitments in these areas from our leaders."

These are noble objectives and to cap it all the NGWF has made the fight against gender-based violence, GBV, its flagship project. In fact, the NGWF already runs a desk at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat in Abuja, singularly dedicated to Gender-Based-Violence. Last year the NGWF hosted the UN Women and the Spotlight initiative at a conference on GBV. That conference which took place at the Banquet Hall of the Transcorp Hilton might have looked like all talk. Now they have a reason to walk their talk. Their call to action.

As if to provide the NGWF an opportunity to redeem itself from the misconception of the birthday cake, a most graphic and gruesome act of gender-based-violence took place under their watch, right here in Nigeria. The alleged killing of famous Gospel singer Osinachi Nwachukwu by her husband must interest the governors' wives. Before her death, Osinachi was only known to Christians. But as if she was born-again in death, she has now become known to Muslims as well, anywhere in the world.

Recalling what late Osinachi endured in the hands of her husband Peter will only hurt people the more. To put it mildly, she went through hell in the name of marriage, just as she also suffered in silence in the name of the Church. In order not to lose her positions in the church and her dignity as a married woman she gave her life to a most ungrateful, unkind and wicked man, in her own home, before her own children, her family and her pastors.

However, Osinachi Nwachukwu may be dead, but sometimes, dead people speak. They come alive through family members, groups or evidence, forgotten at the crime scene. Already her family, friends and some public-spirited individual gender activists have taken up her case. The National Council of Women Societies, NCWS, through its president Hajiji Lami Maikwabbai has also made encouraging pronouncements on the matter.

But there is nobody in Nigeria, nay the whole world that is better qualified to hit the road with this matter than Nigeria's Governors' Wives. It is a fight they must win, as they promised and the late Osinachi Nwachukwu has brought the fight right to their doorstep. It is their challenge!





NEWS FROM THE STATES

Ikpeazu Inaugurates First Phase of Aba, Umuahia Roads

The first phase of the reconstructed Aba-Umuahia -Isicourt road built by Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has been commissioned with a firm promise by the governor to complete the next phase by the end of the year.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony Governor Ikpeazu recalled that the road was deplorable and impassable for several years before 2014 until his administration undertook the reconstruction of the road.

According to him, he employed the services of a grade "A" Construction firm, Arab Contractors which did a good job on the road. Dr Ikpeazu noted that the road had defied solution for the past 35 years and remained a nightmare to motorists to the point that people joked that there was an evil spirit on the road. He disclosed that work has started on the second phase which is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

In his speech, the National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Senator Iyorchia Ayu commended the Governor for providing his people with the dividends of democracy. He urged him to use the remaining months of his tenure to serve Abia people in order to be remembered by them when he leaves office.

To that end, he implored the Governor to continue to work till the last minute of his administration as well as to work with the people of the state, while assuring him that PDP at the national level will continue to support them.

First Abia State Children Specialist Hospital Commissioned



History was made in Umuahia as the first Abia State Children Specialist Hospital, named after Anne Marie Jackson, built and equipped by the administration of Governor Okezie Ikpeazu in partnership with Abians in Diaspora was recently commissioned for use.

Speaking at the event which took place at the Hospital premises, opposite the Central Police Station, Bende Road Umuahia, Governor Okezie Ikpeazu said his decision to establish the Specialist Hospital stems from the need to tackle infant and maternal mortality and improve on health care delivery in the state.

The Governor revealed that his administration was keen on building a center that will cater for the healthcare needs of children adding that the Children's Specialist Hospital boasts of all equipment needed to speak to the needs of children between 0- 18 years.

The Governor while pointing out that it is

the right of every child to live, said it is the responsibility of government to give every Abia child an opportunity and a fair chance to live.

He further explained that the hospital was fully funded by the state government while critical and technical collaborations and expertise of Abians in the diaspora were sought in order to achieve the project.

Governor Ikpeazu explained that the second name AnnaMarie Jackson Medical Center was adopted to keep to his promise to Dr. Jackson who facilitated the importation of medical equipment that has supported the project.

Speaking while commissioning the project, the National Chairman of the PDP, Senator Iyorchia Ayu described the health facility as of international standard based on the state of the art facilities in the hospital, adding that Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has through the project written his name in gold.

ABIA

Peace, Socio-Political Stability Are My Most Enduring Legacies - Ikpeazu

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has revealed that one of the most important legacies he will leave as Governor is the enduring peace and sociopolitical stability the state has enjoyed under his administration.

The governor stated this recently when he received a delegation of the leadership of the State Traditional Rulers Council and the Chairmen of the 17 Local Government Areas Traditional Rulers Councils at his Country Home at Umuobiakwa, Obingwa LGA.

Describing the atmosphere of peace and security in the state as God's special gift to him as governor and the people of Abia State, the governor stated clear-

ly that no development can take place in any environment where there is insecurity and unending political feud.

Governor Ikpeazu noted that the ranking of Abia State as the 3rd highest in the country in the attraction of foreign direct investments by the National Bureau of Statistics is a clear evidence that peace and sociopolitical stability are clear enablers of development.

He urged the royal fathers to continue to preach the virtues of peace in their domains and further challenged them to read and digest the Abia Charter of Equity of 1981 and help explain its philosophical foundations to their various communities

and advise youths from their communities to avoid being used as instruments of confusion.

He used the opportunity to inform the Royal Fathers that on the 29th of May 2022, five major infrastructural projects including the Osioma Flyover will be commissioned that day and assures them that our Royal Fathers will be part of the events of that day.

He assured them of his readiness to look into the issues they have raised, noting that our Royal Fathers in the State have been catalysts of peace and development, and as such are deserving of all attention from his administration..



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Easter: Governor Inuwa Felicitates With Christians, Preaches Love, Sacrifice

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has felicitated with Christians in Gombe State and the world over on the occasion of this year's Easter celebration, urging them to pray for continued peace and stability of the state as well as Nigeria in general.

In a goodwill message, Governor Inuwa said the Easter period provided an opportunity for strengthening of unity of purpose, reinforcement of bond of brotherhood and dedication in service to God and humanity as exemplified by Jesus Christ.

He said: "Easter symbolises love, sacrifice, service to God and country as well as triumph of good over evil. We should always reflect on the lessons and significance of the season and demonstrate the same in our lives.

"On this occasion of Easter feast, I want to enjoy our Christian brothers and sisters in Gombe State and the world over to continue to demonstrate love, promote peace and show good neighbourliness.

"I also want to urge you to remain steadfast in prayers and continue to sacrifice for the good and advancement of our dear State.

He, equally, urged all Christians "to continue to pray fervently against the socio-economic and security challenges in the country.

"We are indeed in a trying moment but I am optimistic that with collective commitment, sacrifice and by turning to God through prayers we shall overcome all the trials and emerge stronger," Governor Inuwa said.



Yahaya

Fayemi Greet Muslims at Ramadan

Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi, has congratulated Muslims in the State and in Nigeria on the commencement of the Ramadan fasting period.

Dr Fayemi, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Olayinka Oyebo, described Ramadan as "the glory of all months in the Islamic calendar", adding that Ramadan fast is one of the five pillars of Islam that Muslims must strictly adhere to in line with the injunction of the Almighty Allah.

The Governor noted that Ramadan offers an opportunity to draw closer to Allah and deepen relationship with him. He therefore urged Muslims to use the period to pray for peace to reign in all the troubled spots in the country and in nations of the world.

He also urged them to use the Ramadan season to pray for peace and prosperity in Ekiti State, especially the forth coming governorship election in the state. He said through prayer and cooperation of the people, the state would witness a peaceful election and smooth transition of power to the eventual winner.

Dr Fayemi prayed that the holy month will usher in abundant grace and blessings for the faithful.

"We all must be grateful to Allah for being alive to witness another Ramadan season. I urge my Muslim brothers and sisters to use the op-

portunity of the Ramadan period to pray and seek the face of Allah for peace, progress and prosperity of our dear country.

"We should always seek divine intervention for our nation and the Ramadan season provides such a unique opportunity to collectively seek the face of Allah through prayer. May Allah accept our prayers and may the holy month usher in abundant blessings for the faithful and restore peace and prosperity to our dear country", he said.



Fayemi

Ramadan: Governor Inuwa Enjoins Muslims to Intensify Prayers For Peace, Security, Prosperity Of Gombe State, Nigeria

As the Ramadan fast begins today, Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya (Dan Majen Gombe) has enjoined the Muslim Ummah in Gombe State and the citizenry in general to dedicate more time to pray for Nigeria in the holy month and beyond for Allah's intervention as the country grapples with security and other socio-economic challenges.

In a goodwill message to mark the commencement of the Ramadan fast, Governor Inuwa stressed the need for all and sundry to play their roles in finding new directions toward fixing the problems bedeviling the country.

He encouraged the people to use the opportunity provided by the Holy month to pray fervently for peace and security as well as property of the State and Nigeria.

He said, " as one of the five pillars of Islam, Ramadan fast avails the Ummah a golden opportunity for spiritual rejuvenation and devotion through supplication and other acts of worship".

Governor Inuwa added that "We therefore must use this opportunity to pray fervently for our dear state and the nation as well as for those in authority as we collectively battle to combat the many challenges facing our nation and humanity such as banditry, kidnappings and insurgency among other

criminalities.

He expressed optimism that with prayers, commitment and patriotism of the citizens, the country will surely overcome its challenges and emerge stronger.

The Governor urged the clerics to preach on the importance of peaceful coexistence during their Tafsir sessions and avoid anything that would jeopardise the peace and unity of the state and the country, just as he admonished the well-to-do individuals in the society to assist those in need.

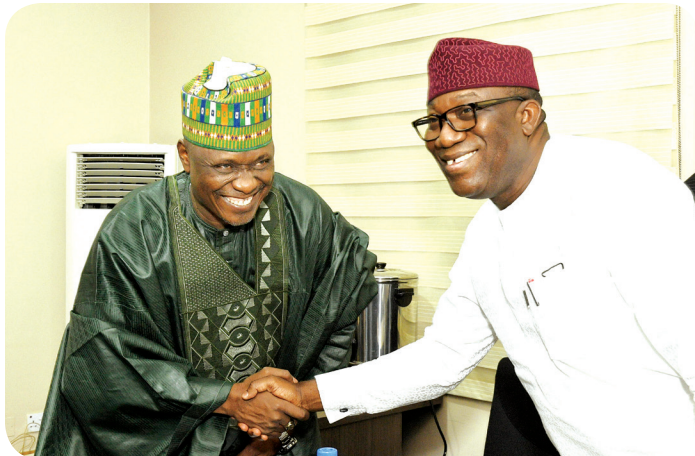
Governor Inuwa, particularly admonished the Muslim Ummah to always demonstrate in their lives the spirit and ideals of Ramadan and by extension, Islam by living according to the tenets of the religion, which promotes peace, kindness and obedience.

He urged the people of the state to continue to be law-abiding and not to compromise the prevailing peaceful co-existence of the jewel state with any myopic sentiment.

"On our part, we shall continue to live up to our commitment of ensuring the provision of basic amenities, equitable distribution of infrastructural facilities and social services across the nooks and crannies of the state to promote unity and facilitate social inclusion".

NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM MEETS WITH 36 STATE HOUSE SPEAKERS

On Friday, April 8, I chaired the Nigeria Governors' Forum's meeting with 36 Speakers of the States' Houses of Assembly. The meeting deliberated extensively on issues of critical national importance and reached concrete action points on constitutional amendment in our collective quest to strengthen our democracy.



Governor of Conference of Speakers with NGF Chairman



Governor of Conference of Speakers greets NGF Chairman and Vice Chairman



Plateau State Governor, Simon B. Lalong exchanges pleasantries with Chairman of conference of speakers



Kaduna State Governor, Mallam El Rufai and f speakers



The NGF Chairman and Vice Chairman deliberate at meeting



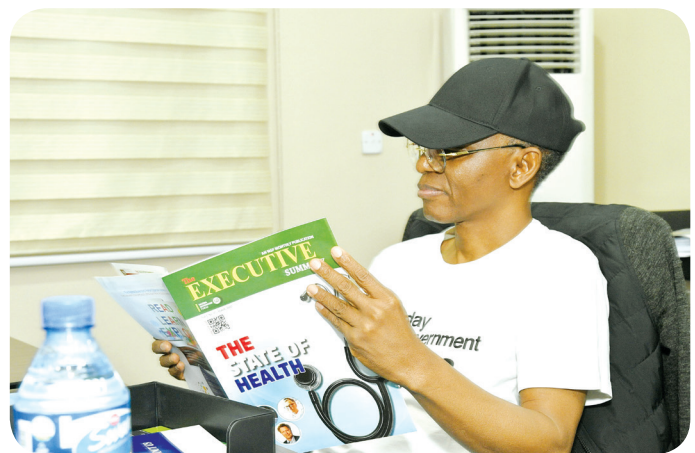
DG of NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru and Chairman of NGF, Dr. KAYode Fayemi discuss



NGF meeting with speaker of State House of Assembly



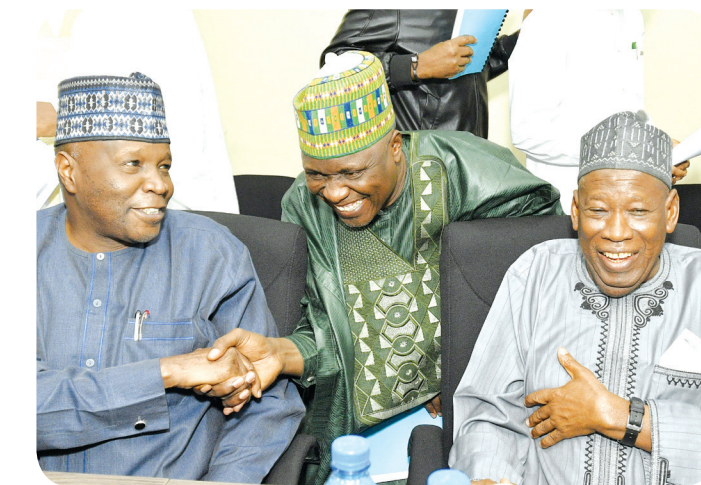
NGF Chairman and Vice Chairman exchange pleasantries at meeting with Lagos State House of Assmby Speaker



Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir El Rufai reading the NGF magazine



Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo Olu discusses with speakers



Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya and Kano State Governor, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje exchange pleasantries with Chairman of Conference of Speakers



Governors meet with 36 speakers at State House of Assembly



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Gov. Inuwa Yahaya Grants Approval for Recruitment of 1000 Fresh Teachers

Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State has granted approval for the recruitment of 1000 fresh teachers by Gombe State Teachers' Service Commission, TSC as part of efforts towards consolidating on the objectives of his declaration of a 'state of emergency' on education.

This development was made known by the Chairman of the Teachers' Service Commission, Mrs Naomi Philip Maiguwa. She said the Governor's approval was as a result of his genuine concern over shortage of teachers in public secondary schools across the state.

"I'm very delighted to inform you that His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya (Dan Majen Gombe), moved by the huge shortage of teachers in government schools, has on Wednesday 6th April, 2022 graciously approved the recruitment of 1000 fresh teachers", she said.

"His Excellency equally approved the transfer of 288 staff of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) who had applied for transfer of service from the board for placement into the State Ministry of Education's secondary schools and technical colleges," she added.

"This development is one of the steps the Governor has taken to turn around the fortunes of education in the state. He had earlier in January this year, consented to kick starting the teachers' recruitment process at the TSC. This approval is a continuation of the process to place qualified teachers in the state's post basic education schools."

The TSC chairman noted, that this is the first time since the creation of Gombe state that government is recruiting and deploying as many as 1288 teachers, as the last exercise which was carried out in August 2018 involved only 700 teachers, less than 60 percent of the number involved in the current exercise.

Ramadan: Governor Inuwa Orders Distribution of Thousands of Bags, Cartons of Food Items

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State has approved the immediate distribution of food items to individuals, groups and associations across the 114 wards of the state as part of Ramadan relief package.

Items to be distributed include 25,000 bags of sugar, 15,000 bags of rice, 15,000 gallons of cooking oil as well as 15,000 cartons each of Spaghetti pasta and Tomato paste respectively.

This humanitarian gesture by Governor

Inuwa is aimed at providing succour, especially to the less privileged persons in the society in the holy month of Ramadan.

To ensure smooth distribution exercise across the 11 LGAs, the governor has approved a template to be implemented by Local Government Councils Chairmen in their respective areas with Hon. Members of the State House of Assembly, Commissioners and Party Chairmen as members with SSA's (Community Relations) as Secretaries.



Wheat Production, Agric Value Chain: Inuwa visits NALDA Abuja, Assures of Sustained Partnership

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya says his administration remains committed towards strengthening the existing partnership between Gombe State and the National Agricultural Land Development Authority, NALDA in order to boost agricultural value chain in the State.

The Governor stated this while answering questions from journalists shortly after visiting the Director General of NALDA, Prince Paul Ikonne in his office in Abuja to discuss issues that are beneficial to Gombe State.

Governor Inuwa observed that the partnership between the Gombe State Government and NALDA in the area of wheat production will go a long way to encourage its cultivation in the

State, especially now that the Russia-Ukraine war rages on.

"With what we did and with the raging war in Ukraine and Russia, where we import all our wheat and use in our daily lives; the efforts of NALDA towards making us sufficient in wheat production is very fundamental and the people of Gombe have already embraced and aligned. You saw the output, you saw that we cultivated 200 hectares this year and the result was so fabulous and we are going to continue with that and that is why I came to NALDA to see that we expand on that relationship for the betterment of our people and the country at large".

On his administration's ability to sustain the momentum of

wheat production in the state, Governor Inuwa Yahaya said with the support of the ordinary people and the inherent economic benefits attached to wheat cultivation, the Gombe State Government under his leadership will continue to encourage its production through the provision of farm inputs and all necessary support.



Yahaya



Governor Inuwa Commended Over Compliance With Federal Character Principle In Execution, Projects Distribution, Social Services

The Federal Character Commission (FCC) has commended Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya over fair and equitable distribution of social services, amenities and infrastructural facilities across nooks and crannies of Gombe State with strict observance of Federal Character principles. FCC Executive Chairman, Dr. Muheebba Dankaka made this commendation while speaking during a courtesy visit to Governor Inuwa Yahaya at the Government House, Gombe.

She said, "I am happy to note that at the state level, your Excellency has exemplified these vital national aspirations; your administration has extended projects across all the senatorial zones and the local Government areas, thus enhancing the sense of belonging among the people".

Dr. Muheebba added that, "Yours was a gamut of developmental projects that have impacted positively on the lives of the people. The Industrial Park under construction is novel, so also the massive infrastructure in health care,

roads, schools, women and youth empowerment among others.

"We are particularly encouraged by your rising profile as an emerging leader in the country. Your governance style of firmness, prudence and decisiveness yet accommodating, has earned you laurels and appreciations across the entire country. Certainly, there is no vacancy in Gombe State Government House", she stressed.

The FCC chief executive said, with what her commission has witnessed in Gombe, it will make sure that same is replicated in other states "We are taking the Gombe model under your able leadership and we'll request other states of the Federation to copy from you as public and political posts as well as democracy dividends are distributed evenly here", she said.

The chairman explained that the visit was part of wide consultations embarked upon by her commission with critical stakeholders to help deliver on its mandate of nation building, inclusiveness and promoting peace and unity among diverse people of Nigeria.

She said the consultation became pertinent considering the enormous challenges the country is facing. "Our nation is at crossroads; decades after independence, there is still a scramble for resources, job opportunities amongst the contending ethnic groups. The cry of marginalization by one section or another has remained recurring decimal in our political and economic history.

"These pressing issues are what necessitated the creation of the Federal Character principle to address these vital national questions" she added. In his response, Governor Inuwa, who lamented the bad condition of roads linking Gombe to other parts of the region, urged the commission to ensure enforcement of Federal character principle in provisions of infrastructural facilities like roads and railways which he described as prerequisites for development.

"We are at the centre of North East, but for us to reach to any of our neighboring states, we spend hours of difficult journey because of bad roads". The governor called for the extension of the eastern railway network to Adamawa and Taraba States to provide easy movement of goods and services across different regions of the country.

"The rail line that reached Gombe since 1962 would have been extended to Yola and to Jalingo, so that it will connect to Cross River and the rest of South-East and South-South states for economic growth and development of our region and the country entirely".

The governor also called on the commission to ensure equitable distribution of Federal government job opportunities for the people considering the looming challenge of unemployment, especially in the insurgency-wrecked Northeast. He expressed confidence that despite enormous challenges this country is facing, with strong political will and determination, the country will come out of the woods.

He appreciated the Commission for choosing Gombe to crown its consultation visits, adding that his administration is ready to collaborate with any organisation willing to help the government in improving the lives of the people.





GoHealth: Gombe Launches Mobile Application Technology

..As NHIS Executive Secretary, Others Applaud Governor Inuwa's Commitment To Repositioning Health Sector, Ensuring Universal Health Coverage

Determined to revolutionize the health services in Gombe State, Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya earlier today launched a mobile application technology for Gombe State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (GoHealth).

He launched the mobile app during a stakeholders engagement meeting on Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF) organised by GoHealth in collaboration with the German International Cooperation GIZ, Legislative Initiative for Sustainable Development (LISDEL) and Saif Advocacy Foundation.

The Governor maintained that the launch of the mobile application is in line with his administration's aspiration towards providing quality and affordable healthcare services for the people through GoHealth.

Let me specially welcome the Executive Secretary of the National Health Insurance Scheme Prof. Mohammed Nasir Sambo for finding time out of his very tight schedule to be with us here in Gombe. We are proud of your sterling achievements at NHIS and your presence today is a testament to your incredible vision and result-driven approach towards transforming the entire health insurance ecosystem in Nigeria”.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya described the occasion as special because it combines both the stakeholder engagement with the launching of GoHealth mobile app which aligns with his administration's policy of embracing innovative and technology-driven solutions to ensure effective and efficient healthcare service delivery to the people.

The Governor explained that the engagement was aimed at sensitizing all relevant stakeholders and the general public on the recently introduced contributory health care scheme and its various programmes targeting all categories of residents in the state.

“You will recall that on the 18th of March, 2021, I officially flagged off enrolment into the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) at Daban Fulani in Kwami Local Government Area. It is gladdening to see that the agency thereafter successfully enrolled over 25,000 poor and vulnerables across all the 114 wards of the state who have been accessing the Basic Minimum Package of Health Services at our revitalized primary healthcare centers since the 1st day of July, 2021”.

He maintained that the participation of Gombe State in the BHCPF was made



possible because of his administration's commitment towards revamping the health care delivery system following years of neglect by the past administrations.

“On our assumption of office, we declared a state of emergency in the health sector. Over the past three years, we recorded tremendous achievements across all areas of the health ecosystem. These include the establishment of the Gombe State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency, the settlement of all outstanding counterpart obligations and earmarking not less than 1% of our consolidated revenue of the state and local governments as equity fund to complement the BHCPF in order to extend coverage of this laudable intervention to more vulnerable persons in our communities”.

Governor Inuwa also noted that GoHealth beneficiaries enjoy effective medical consultations, admissions, provision of regular medications and surgical operations all at no cost to them.

He added that healthcare providers are also receiving regular funding which enables them to maintain their facilities, ensure the availability of drugs and other medical consumables as well as improving the capacity of human resource in the health sector.

The Governor remarked that the stakeholder engagement also highlights the commencement of the second phase of GoHealth enrolment.

“I would therefore like to use this opportunity to urge all stakeholders to mobilize the poor and vulnerable in our various communities for enrollment in order to meet the healthcare needs of our people.

Our target this year is to enroll a minimum of 40,000 poor and vulnerable people into the program. We are committed to improving the lives of our people across all the nooks and crannies of the state, in line with our electoral promises and plans”.

“Similarly, you might also recall that on the 2nd day of June 2021, I officially launched the formal sector programme of the scheme. Today, I'm proud to see that nearly 60,000 state civil servants and their dependants have been enrolled and have started accessing care since 1st October, 2021. This will provide subsidized healthcare services for our civil servants, thereby enhancing workers' welfare and improving productivity”.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya revealed that the Informal sector programme has also commenced and therefore urged all residents to take advantage of the programme to register themselves and their loved ones so as to prevent rising healthcare cost and its devastating social and economic consequences.

“Through this model, they can sponsor and enroll family members, friends, neighbors and dependents into the program by paying an agreed premium fee to enable them enjoy access to quality and affordable healthcare services”.

He said in order to accelerate the drive towards achieving Universal Health Coverage in the state, his administration adopted innovative use of ICT for health in order to improve service delivery, ensure responsiveness, increase access, expand coverage and offer financial risk protection to the people.



Youths Empowerment: Governor Inuwa Distributes 1,000 Tricycles

...Operators Describe Gesture as Unprecedented

...As Governor Inuwa Rides Keke-NAPEP To Venue Of Event



Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has flagged off the distribution of 1,000 tricycles as part of his administration's sustainable economic plan to empower the teeming unemployed youths in the state. He described this as historic as it once again demonstrated his government's commitment to improving living conditions and providing opportunities, especially for the teeming youths.

Governor Inuwa said it was evident that his administration was steadily reducing the state's dependence on federal allocations through the institutionalization of a framework that guaranteed a geometric surge in internal revenue more than ever before in the 25 years of the existence of the state.

He said as part of his administration's continued quest to improve the socio-economic life of the ordinary people, it had extended the welfare and economic support programme to an important economic group, the Keke NAPEP riders.

"Like other support and economic empowerment programmes of our adminis-

tration, this intervention is aimed at promoting the socio-economic advancement and self-reliance of the common man and increasing the availability of easy-to-use means of transportation for our people," the governor said.

He said 1,000 tricycles were provided for 1,000 individuals through his administration's Human Capital Development Initiative.

He said this was, among other interventions, in addition to the training of 1,000 youths that had been engaged through the At-Risk Children Programme (ARC-P) and GOSTEC.

"Similarly, you may also recall that we recently engaged more than 3,000 persons across all the 114 wards as development facilitators working for the progress of our communities. Our goal is to support and empower not less than 10,000 youths before the end of this year," he stated.

He said beneficiaries of the empowerment programme were nominated from the 11 local government areas of the state through their umbrella association, Keke Riders Association of Nigeria (Gombe State Chapter) regardless of their political affiliation, religion or tribe.

"This further affirms our determination to support every citizen of the state without bias. By this discounted revolving rider-owner arrangement, it is envisaged that these beneficiaries will earn a living for themselves and their families through this partnership and subsequently give a window for another batch of beneficiaries to be selected in due course," he added.

Governor Inuwa urged the beneficiaries to take advantage of the opportunity to pursue a decent livelihood devoid of any wrongdoing, recklessness or violation of the law. He expressed the hope that the distribution of 1,000 tricycles would ease transportation challenges and help reduce accidents and security threats associated with motorcycles popularly known as "achaba", especially within the Gombe metropolis.

"You may recall that since assuming office in May 2019, I emphasised the importance of eschewing short-term expediency and gains, and instead committed to implementing long-term solutions to deeply complex developmental problems. I firmly believe that by introducing better ways of doing things in government,



we will not only address difficult developmental challenges, but also establish a solid foundation for long lasting prosperity, peace and progress in our dear state," he said.

According to the Governor, economic development and progress do not just happen without realistic visions, careful choices as well as resolute commitment of leaders and followers to doing the right thing.

"For this reason, our first two years in office was marked primarily by unprecedented efforts to institutionalize accountability in government, minimise wastages of scarce resources and revenue leakages, develop the capabilities of our institutions, pursue bold civil service reforms and provide necessary critical infrastructure that will enable Gombe become an industrial hub in the North East subregion," he said.

He said his administration had created a conducive environment for private businesses to thrive, noting that this had led to the state's rating as the number one in the ease of doing business in the country.

The Governor said in order to accelerate the progress in human capital development, his administration established a data base for unemployed graduates that had so far captured over 27,000 applicants.

He said the strategy was designed to link the youths with appropriate jobs for their skills in both private and public sectors. Governor Yahaya said Gombe State had always been recognised as the most peace-

ful, secure and socially cohesive state in the country.

He said his administration was working hard to create an environment where all citizens and residents could pursue their livelihoods and realise their God-given potentials without fear of harassment, discrimination or violence.

"We are aware, like any other democratic government, that our administration is being constantly scrutinized by the people – the media, members of opposition and even by ourselves. As we approach another election season, questions are being asked continuously regarding the extent to which we have fulfilled the promises we made to the people.

"What gladdens my heart and of course every well-meaning citizen of the state is the consensus reached by the people, regardless of political affiliation, that we have delivered on the vast majority of the promises we made in 2019 and have done a lot more!! The evidence is clear for anyone to see", he said.

The governor used the the opportunity to thank the entire people of the state for their individual and collective support, assuring that his administration would continue to work harder in order to provide good governance and bring economic prosperity to the citizenry.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Secretary to the State Government, Professor Ibrahim Abubakar Njodi, had noted that the empowerment programme forms part of Governor Inuwa administration's sustainable economic agenda for the citizens of the

state. Also speaking, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Human Capital Development, Barrister Sani Ahmed Haruna, said the series of empowerment programmes of the present administration were broad-based, multi-disciplinary and just a tip of the iceberg.

The Managing Director of Simba-TVS group of companies, represented by the Head of Business Development, Mr. Mahendra Pratap expressed delight for being part of the success story of the Gombe empowerment scheme, disclosing that his company is poised to take advantage of the enabling business environment, especially the Industrial park to set up an assembling plant in the state.

Chairman, Gombe State's branch of the Tricycles Riders Association of Nigeria, Mohammed Abdullahi Sarki, said the distribution of 1,000 tricycles marked a turning point in the history of the association.

He expressed gratitude to Governor Yahaya for considering the association in the state government's sustainable economic plan.

"This is the mother of all empowerment programmes since the state was created some 25 years ago. As a matter of fact, this will go a long way in the annal of the history and we, as an association, shall continue to cherish this gesture for a long time to come," he stated.

The Governor had earlier arrived the venue riding a tricycle in company of the SSG to the admiration of the crowd.



Update on ESUT Teaching Hospital and College of Medicine projects, Igbo-Eno, Enugu State

The administration of Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi in Enugu State commences construction of internal access roads and parking areas at the permanent site of the Enugu

State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Teaching Hospital and College of Medicine, Igbo-Eno (ongoing), as the State Commissioner for Works and Infrastruc-

ture, Engr. Greg Nnaji, inspects ongoing massive works at the site. The road project is being handled by Ferotex Construction Company Limited. point.





Time to Unleash State Police

Against the backdrop of extreme insecurity haunting the nation and stunting socio-economic development, it's about time to constitutionally unchain the governors by allowing them to establish the State Police so that they can change this narrative of destitution in the face of apparent failing security solutions of the country.

The 'chief security officer' moniker daintily hung on the necks of the nation's governors has clearly become stale and needs to be fundamentally reconceptualised. Today, unparalleled, multifarious insecurity is driving extreme uncertainty in both the political firmament and the economy.

These days, every state in Nigeria is under the siege of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping-for-ransom, and ritual killings. Openly, state institutions are under attack from non-state actors. And no state governor, hard as they try, has the power to call the police to action.

Worse, the level of insecurity across the country not only jeopardises citizens' safety and means of livelihood, but also impedes the exercise of the rights of Nigerians. Relevant human development metrics mirror significant socio-economic and political regression on this account.

More curiously, many governors are even uncharitably perceived as being lazy crybabies in grappling with security situations bedevilling their jurisdictions. Some believe that governors find it easier to hop into a private-jet and take a less-than-one-hour flight between any two places

in Nigeria on taxpayers' money or to the well-protected Aso Rock to complain to the president than summon their theoretical security chiefs and evolve a strategic plan on how to deal with security issues within their territory.

In spite of all that, Governors are being hung for the lack-lustre performance of security operatives that they do not control. A former governor of Abia State, Orji Kalu, expressed this position recently. According to him, the state governors, not President Muhammadu Buhari, should be held responsible for the insecurity across Nigeria. Governors should put boots on the ground, he suggested.

"The issue is not Buhari, the issue is that if every governor is putting their feet down in their state and say you cannot do this thing here, we would not be where we are. Governors need to stand up and fight the war, I am pleading with them, more of those fights lie with the governors, not with Buhari," Kalu said in a recent interview with Arise TV.

But the principal claim of the governors is that they are handicapped by the 1999 Constitution that ties security to the federal government. This is a fundamental issue and cannot be glossed over. With this arrangement couched in the constitution, no state governor is able to harass the snake in his monkey's shadow.

On the other hand, it is not totally true that the governors have no role to play in national security. Some



provisions of the 1999 Constitution assign certain roles to them, which they often ignore. In the Third Schedule, Sections 27 and 28 make each governor an automatic member of the Nigeria Police Council.

Section 28 gives the NPC the power of “general supervision of the Nigeria Police Force,” and “advising the President on the appointment of the Inspector-General of Police.” Governors have however not been able to exercise any powers for inexplicable reasons, and this is doing so much damage to the system.

Today, violent banditry, kidnapping and terrorism are shifting from the North East geopolitical zone to the North West, North Central and Southern zones.

The governors' attitude is that they want to put their heads together to frontally attack the situation. Whatever the dissonant arguments are, if governors had state police and they can easily use such constitutionalised powers within their domain to deal with these existential threats from audacious, criminal non-state actors, citizens will be free to go about their daily lives.

Recent reports indicate that large numbers of terrorists are moving into Niger State, incidentally the largest state in Nigeria. But Niger State can do little about this. All hopes lie with the federal government which the extant constitution has vested policing powers with.

One of the key demands from the governors is granting them state police. Governors do far more in paying money for security from their security votes and more. In this connection many references to security votes in states often miss this key dilemma. Security expenditure by states often eats into other critical budgetary sectors.

Speaking at the opening of the two-day Multi-stakeholders Summit of the NGF Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative, PISI, in partnership with the Centre for Democracy and Development, CDD, in Abuja, late March, NGF Chairman and Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, reiterated that state governors fund police more than the

federal government.

His words: “We buy them vehicles. We pay them allowances. In some cases we even buy ammunition. If we are to engage our military in aid to civil authority, which you will find, actually in 36 states in this country today, the military is involved in internal security operations, which really is a problem because, for me, it's role inflation.

“Now, when you inflate the role of the security institution, beyond its primary responsibility, you also have consequences that will come. As Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, I am happy to report that the Forum supports any effort to create a more inclusive and collaborative platform to mobilise an immediate national response to our country's security challenges.”

Governor Fayemi who also noted that police had been abused at the federal level, expressed grave concern over the opposition against state policing, against the backdrop of it being abused by the sub-national governments.

Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State speaking at the same forum cut to the heart of the sub-nationals' dilemma. His words: “To support multi-level policing is not necessarily the same thing as supporting state police. The existence of vigilantes is an aspect of multi-level policing. But we have not been able to get the best out of the situation, because the vigilantes have not been really treated as part of the security super-structure we operate.”

The recent smash-kill-and-kidnap operation that targeted a train in Kaduna State exemplifies the helplessness of the sub-nationals in effectively combating terrorism in their jurisdictions. All the intelligence gathering agencies belong to the federal government. Ditto for all the armed security agencies. How then should a Governor be blamed for that bloody incident or others occurring in his state?

It's time to constitutionally unshackle the governors to fundamentally change the situation to address the big-picture.





NEWS FROM THE STATES

KADUNA TRAIN ATTACK

NGF Greets Government, People Of Kaduna State



KADUNA

NGF Chairman and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr John Kayode Fayemi, led a two-man delegation of the Forum to Kaduna State to commiserate with the Government and people of the state on the recent Abuja – Kaduna train attack which claimed many lives, injured many people while several others were kidnapped.

Addressing the Kaduna Governor, Mallam Nasiru el Rufai, the NGF Chairman expressed deep sympathy to Kaduna State and its people and described the attack as “mind-boggling” because of the huge number of casualties and other fatalities.

Regrettably, he added, the criminals were audacious enough to also take away some hostages which according to the NGF Chairman raises the state of insecurity in the region to the cusp of uncertainties, which has virtually thrown Kaduna in the mix.

The Ekiti State Governor wondered if the entire crime was the handwork of some enemies of the state government or its Governor who is transforming the state to their chagrin and are therefore working to distract the

state from its path to development.

Dr John Kayode Fayemi rued that everything is currently unnecessarily revolving around 2023, the election year, which we are not even sure we will be alive to see with the prevailing state of circumstances, and advised that more should be done towards securing the country.

He said the Northwest of the country had been a region of calm and consensus before now and emphasised that whatever it is, to do, Governors will continue to put heads together along with the President whom he added is himself very worried about the sequence of attacks to bring sanity back to the country.

Dr Fayemi also concurred with the Kaduna Governor on his solution to banditry in which he has always advocated that Government takes proactive action by going after the bandits right in their enclaves and rooting them out. “I agree that we as Governors must join hands with the President to deal ruthlessly with the bandits, that they be crushed, as you have always advocated”, concluding that

the primary purpose of government is ensuring the safety of lives and property but the impression in the minds of most Nigerians presently is that nothing is being done by the security agencies in the country to bring an end to this.

However, Fayemi said, “we are here to commiserate with you, your Government and the people of Kaduna State, to show solidarity with them and align with the Governor who as a public servant all his life, has been a focused leader from who “we must learn, to ensure peace in our communities.”

Before announcing a donation of N50m the NGF chairman admonished Governor el Rufai not to relent in his efforts at building the state and told him to continue to be the leader that he has always been, concluding emphatically, that regardless of whatever anyone thinks, “Nigeria is worth dying for.”

The Kaduna State Governor who looked emotional during the discussion welcomed the party and ceded the opportunity to respond to his deputy, Dr Hadiza Balarabe, whom he said has been in the forefront of finding solu-



NEWS FROM THE STATES



tions to the problem from the beginning.

The Deputy Governor also welcomed the delegation to Kaduna State and called the train attack a demoralising experience which she prayed the state never witnessed again.

She said the NGF and its members have been such good friends whose support the state values and places

high premium on.

She pledged that the Kaduna State Government will continue to do its best in supporting the security forces in the state to accomplish the task of securing lives and property while still working hard to find lasting solutions to the problem, in such a way that it never repeats itself.

When he finally spoke, el Rufai dis-

closed that there were 61 Kaduna indigenes still recuperating from the train attack, including a top government official and his 8-months pregnant wife and further stated that the bandits are currently hiding somewhere in Niger State.

El Rufai regretted that the attack was avoidable because the state government had tipped the Nigeria Railways.

KADUNA

...Northern Govs. Horrified, Demand Immediate Action

The Northern Governors Forum has expressed deep sorrow and fury over the barbaric attack on a train along Kaduna-Abuja route by terrorists where some were passengers were killed, injured or kidnapped, describing the act as horrifying and totalling reprehensible.

Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Plateau State Simon Bako Lalong while responding to the sad development, said the entire Governors and people of the region as well as other Nigerians are distressed over the unfortunate attack on innocent commuters by terrorists who have demonstrated total disregard for human lives and compassion.

He said while the Forum sympathises with the families of those killed as well as those kidnapped or injured, it condemns the terrorist act in totality and commends the armed forces for their quick intervention which prevented further escalation of the incident.

The Northern Governors therefore encourages the security forces to intensify their search and rescue efforts in ensuring that those kidnapped are released without further delay and the fleeing terrorists are arrested and brought to justice.

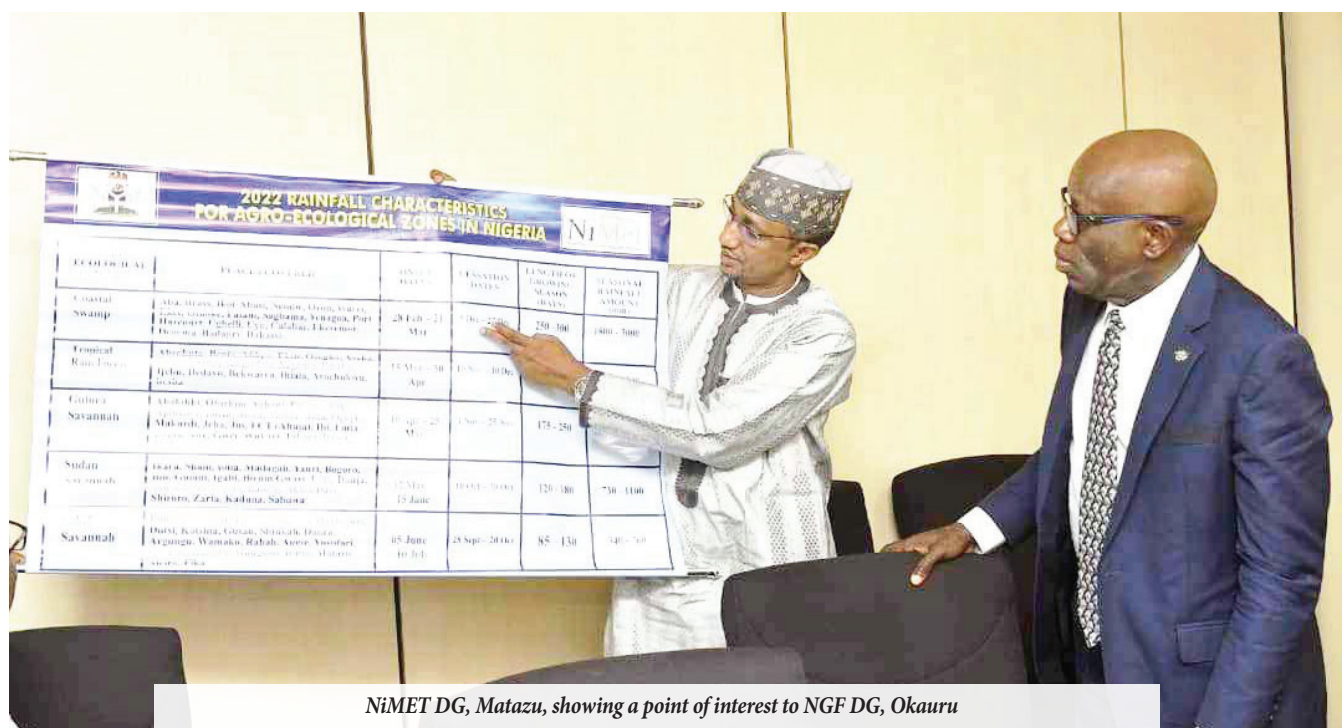
Governor Lalong said the Forum is working with the Federal Government and Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State to ensure that this incident and other recent terrorist attacks on communities in the State

are dealt with decisively.

He called for the support and collaboration of citizens by volunteering relevant information about criminal elements throughout the region and the country, as well as supporting the armed forces to carry out their mandate of security lives and properties effectively.

Lalong said more investments are being made into the security sector by State Governments within the region as part of the collaboration with the Federal Government to boost the capacity of the security forces to be on top of the situation.

He also appreciates the compassion demonstrated by Nigerians who have come forward to donate blood to victims currently undergoing medical care in various health facilities.



NiMet DG, Matazu, showing a point of interest to NGF DG, Okauru

Climate Changes at NGF

Weather and climate issues have become central to all conversations around the world. In Nigeria where the subject is still alien to many, rains and floods are challenges that affect the cities adversely yet, the country has not considered how to resolve the issues?

Apparently, Nigeria is not known to question the priority of tackling weather and climate issues in our region. These are some of the many challenges that the Nigerian Meteorological Agency is seeking to resolve.

The agency is currently under the Federal Ministry of Aviation and is charged with the responsibility of providing meteorological services such as weather forecasting, climate information, early warning systems and weather and climate related disaster mitigation strategies with a view to supporting sustainable development across all socio-economic sectors of the nation.

The mission of NiMET is to observe Nigerian weather and climate and provide meteorological, hydrological, and oceanographic services in support of national needs and international obligations.

NiMet is mandated to advise the government at all levels on mitigation of climate change challenges, as well as exploring opportunities on weather and climate related phenomena.

They analyse all data to provide timely and accurate forecasts and most of their forecasts achieve an impressive, according to NiMET, 90% accuracy.

It was the rubric when the NGF met with the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMET) on Monday, April 11th at the NGF Secretariat to discuss the potentials for partnership.

The team from NiMET was led by their Director General and CEO, Professor Mansur Bako Matazu, who suggested that when it comes to the weather, there are no boundaries.

"We are present in every state of the federation. In some states, we have more than three offices. We are present in all Nigerian airports whether it is the local or international airports," and when it comes to Agriculture, he stated, the relationship depends on second-guessing the climate to know the prevalence and availability of water as rainfall or from underground.

"For agriculture, we have tailored products. Farmers need information for when to plant, the season and so they know how to plan their



Mr Okauru explaining the working of the NGF to NiMET DG, Matazu, as DG's TA, Juliet Chima takes notes

activities. Our activities are tailored for small holder farmers," said Mr. Matazu.

In addition, as it relates to educational institutions having access to such information, he stated that across schools and educational institutions, NiMET has more than 113 weather stations. However, he proposed that instead of students and researchers seeking to obtain data, they can generate data themselves.

Mr. Matazu added that in Nigeria, NiMET is one of the few institutions that builds capacity and skills.

Each year, he disclosed, his agency invites ten Governors to relay information to.

"We can't execute our goals without partnership. We translate all our reports into different languages.

”

WE WANT TO HAVE LOCAL LITERATURE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS AFFECTING SPECIFIC AREAS AND THE REASONS WHY; TO ATTACH VALUE TO THE FORECASTS AND TO HAVE THE COSTS INCLUDED INTO THE GDP SECTOR

”

Every year, we review the previous year's climate and try to link it to the long-term trend. We have been doing this for the last 10-12 years," he said.

NiMET believes that they can still do more through having effective partnerships.

The Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru commended NiMET for the great work they are doing, which emerged clearly from the presentation made.

Mr. Okauru said that when it comes to partnering with the Governors, the first task would be how to force it into the priority of the states and advised that it would be best for the team at NiMET to regularly present on what they do to Governors at the induction stage.

The DG added that once you get the buy-in of the Governors, it makes the process easier. Mr. Okauru also stated that they need to engage the stakeholders at the state level.

Mr. Matazu said the team would be delighted to provide information about their meteorological services at the induction adding that that would get NiMET moving from societal acceptance to becoming more visible and relevant.

He requested the NGF Secretariat to set up a desk with the Governors.

"We want to have local literature that climate change is affecting specific areas and the reasons why; to attach value to the forecasts and to have the costs included into the GDP sector," said Mr. Matazu.

Mr. Matazu further concluded that sensitization and advocacy is critical and invites the NGF Secretariat to the NiMET studio to see wonders.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Bagudu Lauds NDLEA on Efforts to Rid the Nation of Illicit Drugs

Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu of Kebbi State has expressed satisfaction with the sterling performance of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), to rid the nation of illicit drugs and intoxicants.

Receiving the new State Commandant of the Agency at the Government House, Birnin Kebbi, the governor remarked that NDLEA has been doing wonderful job in spite of its challenges.

Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu made it clear that his administration has placed premium on fighting the scourge of drugs in the society.

The governor noted this has prompted

the government to establish an anti-drug control committee towards facilitating the war on drugs addiction.

The governor emphasized the necessity for involving communities in the struggle to eliminate dangerous drugs in the society.

Bagudu said that drugs have been identified to be the major sources of motivation for insurgents, bandits, terrorists and other criminals inflicting havoc and bloodshed in the federation.

He commended the Chairman of the NDLEA, retired Brigadier-General Buba Marwa for his incisive approach to the drugs war that culminated in reducing the

menace nationwide.

Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu expressed confidence about the capability of the new Kebbi State Commandant of the Agency, Isa Likita Muhammad, to perform creditably.

The new Commandant, Isa Likita Muhammad, informed the Governor that he was at the Government House to solicit for co-operation and assistance from the Government in the task of eliminating the menace of dangerous drugs among the people.

He added that such supportive disposition was highly desirable in view of the location of Kebbi state sharing a common border with Benin Republic.

The Commandant explained that the United Nations has identified the Republic of Benin as the drug hub of West Africa.

He urged the State Government to embark on collaborative efforts with the NDLEA to stop the influx of drugs into the state through border towns such as Bagudo, Lolo, Dole-kaina and Kamba.

Isa Likita Muhammad, who is an indigene of Zuru Emirate, commended Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu for setting up anti-drug control committee.

He extended similar applause to his wife, Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu, for refurbishing the female rehabilitation centre at the headquarters of the Agency in Birnin Kebbi.



Over 8,000 Farmers to Benefit from NG-Cares Loan in Kebbi

More than 8,000 small-scale farmers drawn from all the twenty-one Local Government Areas of Kebbi State have been shortlisted to enjoy the Fadama component of the NG-Cares programme.

The programme, is a tripartite scheme financed by the World Bank, the Federal Government and Kebbi State Government to assist small-scale farmers to cushion the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on agriculture.

Under the arrangement, Kebbi State Government would receive a loan of twenty million US dollars but would disburse the money to beneficiaries as grant.

The Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Abba Sani Kalgo made this explanation at a news briefing on the outcome of a meeting with the Commissioner for Local Government and all the twenty-one local government Chairmen, chaired by Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu at Government House, Birnin Kebbi, recently.

Dr. Abba Kalgo said Kebbi State Government has completed processes for the take-off of the programme which primarily centre on food security, Fadama Cultivation, Access Roads, Livestock Production, Fisheries and provision of Agricultural Input.

He added that part of the proceeds would be used to construct five kilometres of road in each of the local government areas of the State towards facilitating the movement of farm produce and livestock.

The Commissioner further explained that all farmers cultivating variety of crops as well as those engaged in livestock production and fishery were eligible to benefit from the grant.

Dr. Abba Kalgo announced that Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu who is highly committed to the progress of Kebbi State in all facets of development has mandated the ministry and relevant authorities to work out sustainability strategies for continuation of the scheme after the expiration of the two-year period designed for the programme.

Ramadan: Kebbi approves reduction of One hour working period

The Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has approved the reduction of One hour working period in the State in view of Ramadan Fasting.

This is contained in a statement signed by the Kebbi State Acting Head of Service, Alhaji Safiyanu Garba Bena and made available to newsmen in Birnin Kebbi this Tuesday.

According to the statement, the reduced working hours are, Mondays to Thursday, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm daily while on Fridays, the period is reduced from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm.

This gesture by His Excellency, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu is in line with the established tradition of the State and in consideration that the reduced working hour period could cushion the effect of Fasting on Civil Servants in this Holy month of Ramadan.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello has sent his warmth congratulations to the richest man in Africa and founder as well as president of Dangote Group, the largest conglomerate in West Africa, Alhaji Aliko Dangote GCON on his 65th Birthday Anniversary.

The Governor in a statement, acknowledged the celebrant as the highest employer of labour in Africa who has made a mark in World Economic Forum and has greatly contributed to global initiatives especially in the areas of health and education.

He said Dangote has a standing multi billion naira partnership with the Niger State Government in Agric business which would help create jobs and boost the economy of the state.

Bello observed that the celebrant has remained an invaluable Nigerian who is steadfast in promoting international

Gov. Sani Bello Lauds Dangote @ 65, Describes Him as Invaluable Nigerian

business which has made you the richest in the entire African continent, and 73rd in the world.

He saluted the zeal, tenacity and desire of Dangote to contribute his quota in the rapid growth and development of not only the Nigerian and African economy but global economy.

“At 65, you are healthy and active. You have continued to contribute to every definable aspect of global economy, you are indeed a major contributor of food security, a market leader in cement and the highest employer of labour in Africa who is presently building Nigeria’s first private oil refinery and the largest in Africa.



Bello

Boat Disaster: Bello Mourns the Death of Many

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State has expressed grief as many people including women and children drowned in Guni-Zumba River while fleeing terrorists attacks in Guni and Kurgbaku communities in Munya Local Government Area of the state.

Governor Sani Bello in a condolence message, described the incident as painful and disturbing, condoling with the family members of the deceased and the entire people of Munya Local Government Area.

He decried the unprovoked attacks on innocent citizens in the these communities.

The governor emphatically stated that no matter how hard the criminals sustain their atrocious activities, government will remain steadfast and not be dampened in its efforts to end criminality in the state.

While appreciating the efforts and sacrifices of the

joint security operatives, Governor Sani Bello enjoined them to continue with their activities and be more proactive in their operations.

He then prayed God to forgive all those who lost their lives and grant their loved ones the fortitude to bear the loss.

The Governor also directed State Emergency Agency to immediately commence a search and rescue operations as well as provide succour to the rest people in the affected communities

Recall that some people including women and children were said to have drowned in Guni-Zumba River while trying to flee attacks on Guni and Kurgbaku communities in Munya LGA.

The attacks which were said to be simultaneous, forced the people to flee to safety in an overloaded boat which later capsized killing all on board as no one was said to be rescued.

Sani Bello Urges Muslim Ummah To Pray For Peace At Ramadan

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State has congratulated Muslim Ummah in Niger State and beyond on the commencement of Ramadan fast

Governor Sani Bello who described the Holy month as a period for sober reflection, sacrifice, abstinence and supplications to Almighty Allah, explained that Ramadan fast is one of the five pillars of Muslim faith, and urged Muslims to take advantage of the period to pray for Niger State in particular and Nigeria in general for an end to the security challenges bedeviling the society.

Governor, Abubakar Sani Bello enjoined Muslim faithful to use Ramadan to show love to their neighbours and pray for sustainable of peace and unity.

The governor also urged Muslims to exemplify the

teachings of the holy prophet (PBUH) by remembering those who are in need and use it as a period of intense spiritual renewal.

He reiterated the need for the people to use the period to offer prayers to God to bring about healing and repentance.

“This is a period of intense spiritual renewal and when Muslims everywhere reflect upon the guidance that comes with faith.”

“A time to focus and reflect on the deeds of empathy and spiritual growth, forgiveness, and resilience, compassion for those less fortunate, and unity across communities.”

Governor Sani Bello reassured Nigerlites of his commitment to their security and well-being despite the challenges, stressing that they are surmountable.

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