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Leading By Example

Governors Preach Peace, Unity And Harmony

A Must Read

Commentary

**We Need To Reset Nigeria
– NGF Chairman**

2022 WORKERS' DAY

**When Governors Talked-up
Welfare, Security**



Integration of Boards

NGF, NSSEC Assess States' Role

The Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat met with the National Senior Secondary Education Commission (NSSEC) on Thursday, May 12th led by the latter's Executive Secretary, Professor Benjamin Abakpa who highlighted the commission's operations. The overall goal of NSSEC is to reposition the senior secondary education to be of the right standard with their counterparts globally.

Professor Abakpa stated the commission started off in April 2021, with his appointment as the pioneer Executive Secretary, the constitution of the governing board by the president and deployment of relevant officers from various MDAs as take-off staff. Related activities however commenced fully in August 2021.

Since commencement in August last year, the commission has engaged in several activities which include the national sensitization fora for education stakeholders in the six geo-political zones of the country. They have engaged in data capturing of all the senior secondary schools in Nigeria, which is currently on-going. In addition, the commission conducts a needs assessment from all the senior secondary schools in Nigeria. This is also on-going.

The core mandate and function of the commission is to prescribe the national minimum standard for education and intervene in Senior Secondary Education with the overall goal of repositioning the senior secondary education to be of the right standard with their counterparts globally.

According to Professor Abakpa, "there is a role for each state government to play. We need harmony in each state. Each state should have a senior secondary school education board," adding that that the commission is non-partisan and for everybody.

Also at the meeting was the Executive Director of Strategy and Research at the NGF, Mr. Lateef O.T Shittu who stated that states are supposed to be independent and there should be implementation at the state level.

"States that set up this body would have channels around the commission. There should be a regulation with public and private schools," he said.

Professor Abakpa responded that the goal is to carry everyone along so that during the time of implementation, there

will be movement to monitor schools. "We are going to have grassroots mobilisers to identify schools that don't meet the standards," he said, adding that there should be no challenges with funds disbursement when it comes to their commission. It is simply dependent on how many schools they have.

Some states are enthusiastic about establishing a senior secondary school education commission. In Kano, they were so excited that after interacting with us, they told the Commissioner that they should harmonise," he said.

The Senior Secondary School Education Commission aims to have a full-fledged unit in each state. They would investigate the needs in each state. They would also carry the commissioner along with all the projects undertaken.

The Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru said that the senior secondary education commission would add a lot of value to what is happening at the secondary school level in the states, and he doesn't see anyone going against this at the state level.

Professor Abakpa revealed that the FG in its passion to fund and reposition Senior Secondary Education has equally commenced an expedited amendment of NSSEC law as an Executive Bill at the National Assembly (NASS) and its currently at its 2nd reading in both Houses.

According to him, "The main purpose for the amendment is to first include the word 'Senior' in the Commission. Then, to articulate the source and total amount for the NSSEC fund, which is approved to be sourced from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. To give the commission support to enforce minimum standard in senior secondary schools across the Nation. Then it would be to expand the functions of the commission to include STEM, TVET, etc in view

of emerging realities.

"To tie the disbursement of funds to states to specific tasks such as infrastructure, capacity building for teachers and instructional materials and any other task as shall be directed by the President from time to time."

The Executive Director of NGF, Mr. Shittu said that once the law has been amended, they would pass on the message to the governors with the hopes of having a meeting and a future stakeholder meeting with the boards of education.





NEWS



Governor Abubakar Sani Bello Congratulates Hajo Sarki Bello As The Chief Registrar Of The Supreme Court Of Nigeria

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State has felicitated with Hajo Sarki Bello on her confirmation as the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court.

Governor Sani Bello in a congratulatory message, expressed delight seeing a Nigerite and a woman rising to the peak of her chosen career.

The Governor who saluted her diligence, commitment, resilience and doggedness in all she does, acknowledged that she has made the state and the entire women folk proud for being successful in her career.

He enjoined her to remain focused and steadfast in her new position reminding her of more and better opportunities ahead.

"I am extremely glad to receive the news of your confirmation as the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court following the good and progressive leadership in your acting capacity for 8 months. You are indeed a seasoned judiciary administrator.

"It is a well deserved appointment going by your dedication and hardwork. For me, the people of the state and women generally, is a delightful one. I wish you more successes in your new position and better opportunities in future", he said.

Hajo Sarki Bello hails from Paiko in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State and worked in several law firms in Lagos and Minna Niger State.

She joined the Supreme Court in 1996 as a Senior Registrar and rose through the ranks.

Hajo Sarki Bello was in August last year appointed as the Acting Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court from the position of a Deputy Chief Registrar of the apex Court to replace Hadizatu Uwani Mustapha who retired on the 8th of August 2021.

She was recently confirmed as the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court, the highest civil servant of the apex court, handling the general administration of the court and by that position, she is expected to assist the Chief Justice of Nigeria in discharging his administrative duties.

...Governor Abubakar Sani Bello Calls For Investment On Development Of Skills In The Country

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State has stressed the need for government at all levels to invest more on developing skills in the society considering the increasing population of the country.

Governor Sani Bello stated this at the commissioning and handing over of a multi-purpose Women Development Skills Ac-

quisition Centre constructed by the Total Energies in collaboration with Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation NNPC as part of their Corporate Social Responsibilities.

The Governor who noted the long standing and mutually beneficial relationship existing between the state government and the NNPC, also recounted the huge investments the Corporation has done at the state-owned University IBBU Lapai and the ongoing construction of a state of the art diagnostic Centre at the IBB Specialist Hospital Minna.

He lauded the efforts of NNPC and Total Energies as well as other partners in the construction of the skills acquisition centre pointing out that the centre will help in engaging women in acquiring skills that would make them independent and supportive to their families to the betterment of the society.

Governor Sani Bello assured the people that more attention will be given to the plight of the women as they constitute two third (2/3) of the population in the state and they are mostly without skills.

The Governor also tasked the Ministry of Women Affairs to maintain the property by putting in place a sustainable mechanism that would keep the structure and equipment in good condition to the benefit of women and the society at large.

"I will engage the Commissioner more, we will put in place a robust system to ensure that the property is well maintained.", he assured.

The Chairman, Nigeria Governors Forum and Ekiti state Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi in his remarks said women should be encouraged to and be given priority in terms of development of skills, adding that "no women, no nation".

He opined that leaders should always create opportunities that would benefit women as doing so would translate to helping the entire society.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development Hajiya Tasalla Fati Ibrahim explained that the projected started to about two years ago after the Ministry provided a land for the development partners.

She further disclosed that the state government has so far empowered 1500 women and that 50 more women will be graduating as part of activities to mark the official commissioning and handing over of the centre to the Ministry.



Commentary

WE NEED TO RESET NIGERIA, SAYS NGF CHAIRMAN

...advocates devolution of powers, strengthening of LG system

Nigeria Governors' Forum Chairman and Ekiti State Governor who is also a Presidential aspirant on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr Kayode Fayemi, has reiterated calls for the country to be re-organised, saying that this remains the only way to correct the challenges facing it.

Speaking Tuesday in Abuja at the annual Leadership Lecture organised by the Leadership Newspapers Group, Dr Fayemi re-affirmed his stance that Nigeria needs "an all-round reset" necessary for national rebirth considering the plethora of challenges confronting it.

In attendance at the event were the Vice President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo (SAN), Governor of Gombe State, Muhammad Inua Yahaya; Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed and Minister of FCT, Mohammed Musa Bello among others.

Dr Fayemi who admitted that reforming a political system is a "permanent work in progress" noted that the nation does not need a make-shift and short term approach which would only resolve "some immediate problems for a season".

He said greater attention should be placed on issues such as strengthening the local government system, devolution of more powers over internal security, decentralization of the polity and the adoption of a fiscal federalism which is fair to all, among others.

"I would like to suggest that there are many domains of a national reset which we need to pay attention to than we have done before. These include deepening of

the decentralization of the polity, the strengthening of the local government system, the devolution of more powers over internal safety and security of the States and the adoption of a fairer system of fiscal federalism, the pan-Nigerianization of citizenship rights on the basis of place of residence, the pursuit of new approaches to diversity management, the autonomization of the legislative and judicial arms of government, a wholesome reform of the judicial system, the revamp of the civil service for a radically more efficient delivery to citizens, and an institutionalized zero tolerance approach to the fight against corruption", he said.

The Governor opined that these are the crux of the changes which Nigerians are advocating for; adding that when leadership is able to understand these challenges and summons the will and courage to surmount them, the belief of Nigerians in the viability of the Nigerian Project becomes rekindled.

The Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum urged Nigerians not to lose hope but rise up to do the right thing so that "we can open a new chapter in our journey of unfinished greatness".

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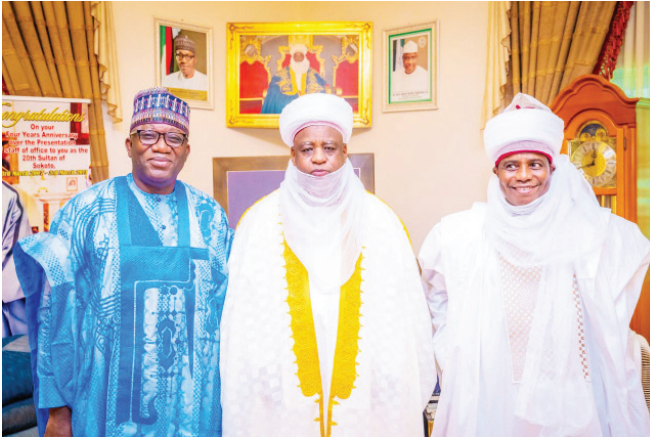
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Leading by Example: The Governors' Counsel at Sallah



The Governor of Abia State, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu congratulated the Moslem Community in the State on the successful completion of the Ramadan Fasting period which is one of the pillars of the Islamic Religion.

In his Sallah Message to Moslems in the State, as reported by his Chief Press Secretary Sir Onyebuchi Ememanka, Governor Ikpeazu charged Muslims to make the lessons of the Ramadan a permanent part of their lives. The Governor rationalised that the Ramadan is synonymous with the lessons of sacrifice, forbearance, tolerance, self-control, love for others and peace, which are critical elements required for a united and peaceful life. Ikpeazu tasked the Muslims to use the opportunity of the Sallah to pray for the sustenance of peace and security in the State and the country at large.

He thanked the Moslem Community in the State for maintaining peaceful and harmonious coexistence with the people of the state and for living up to their civic responsibilities as citizens.

The Governor further assured Muslims and adherents of all religions that his administration shall continue to uphold the Rights to Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion of all citizens, provided that such rights will be exercised lawfully.

In Adamawa State, Rt Hon. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri extended his warmest greetings to the Muslim Ummah across the world. While thanking God Almighty for the successful end of the Ramadan, he also congratulated the Ummah for fasting in the Islamic holy month.

Governor Fintiri said this in a press release signed by his Press Secretary Humwashi Wonosikou stating that the oc-

casation called for sober reflection and deep thoughts on the unity and cohesion of the nation. Fintiri prayed for "May Almighty Allah to make Eid a great occasion for interaction, harmony, tolerance and happiness for all".

The Governor who described peace as an essential ingredient to the development of any country urged citizens and residents of the State to keep praying and working for the peace and unity of the country and Adamawa State, especially. He said he was glad that the people celebrated without the restrictions of COVID-19 this year, as they did a couple of years back.

Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri admonished Nigerians to focus on the things that bind them together more and eschew those issues capable of dividing the country, especially going into an election year.

He challenged Nigerians to see the diversity of the nation beyond artificial divisions including ethnic and religious differences in the society and abide strictly by the teachings of the Holy Quran as propagated by the Holy Prophet Mohammed.

The Governor sermonised that "Sacrifices you have all made during the holy month of Ramadan should draw everyone closer to the Almighty Allah. I enjoin all our Muslim brothers and sisters to draw enduring lessons from the holy month of Ramadan, which includes personal sacrifices and self-denial. I call on you to emulate the good virtues and teachings of Prophet Mohammed."

Governor Fintiri called on citizens and residents of the State to ensure the state's hard-earned peace is sustained.

It was the same message from the governors of Akwa Ibom, Sokoto, and Ekiti States, Mr. Udom Emmanuel, Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal the Matawallen Sokoto and Vice



Gov. Akeredolu



► Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, as well as Dr Kayode Fayemi Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of the NGF all together.

Governor Emmanuel urged Muslims to reflect on the virtues of Ramadan for the well-being of the individual and the overall good of society. "The month of Ramadan is the month of forgiveness; we must learn to forgive and pursue peace with our fellow human beings. Ramadan preaches giving, especially from the rich to the poor. This promotes the idea of redistribution of wealth for a more equitable society. Udom Emmanuel preached.

Furthermore, he added, "Ramadan is the month of holy living where the faithful run away from sin and live a life of piety and abstinence."

On his part, Tambuwal thanked Almighty Allah for seeing them through despite difficulties and hardships associated

with fasting. "I am indeed elated to address you on this great and memorable occasion of the Eid-ell fitr Sallah Celebration, which marks the end of the obligatory fasting in the blessed month of Ramadan for the year 1443 AH," he stated.

"We must thank Allah that despite the difficult weather and the attendant economic difficulty, coupled with the inflation that affects the prices of goods and services, we are, by God's grace, able to see through the period. Certainly, our reward will come from Allah, who does not require our worship for Himself but rather, so that it will benefit us here and, in the hereafter," he added.

He urged the Muslim Ummah to extend the discipline exhibited in the past few days by making sacrifices and depriving themselves of many lawful things in pursuit of greater advantages and admonished that this should be their signposts in their system in dealing with their fellow country



men and women. In Ekiti State, Fayemi congratulated the Muslim Ummah for witnessing this year's Eid el Fitr festival.

Describing Ramadan as an important pillar of Islam, the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum Dr John Kayode Fayemi said it was fulfilling for the Muslim faithful to participate in the exercise and see its end to celebrate the Eid el Fitr.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Anambra State Chris Aburime wrote that Governor Chukwu-Charles Soludo, congratulated the Nigerian Muslim Ummah on the occasion of Eid-el-Fitr celebration which is being celebrated across the globe. Soludo also heartily rejoiced with all Muslims in Anambra State, across the country, and the entire world on the successful comple-

tion of the 30-day fast, in total submission and obedience to Almighty Allah.

He prays that the sacrifices and supplications made by all adherents of the Islamic faith in this holy month will engender progress, peace, and unity in Anambra State and the nation at large. Governor Soludo called on all Muslim-faithful to use the occasion of the celebration of Eid-el-Fitr to re-dedicate their lives, pray for peace and unity as well as continue to live in harmony in their various communities and across the nation.

Bauchi State is another bastion of Islam in the north-eastern part of the country. Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir, on his part advised Muslims to apply the lessons of the Ramadan towards solving personal, communal and national problems with the aim of



Gov. Ikpeazu



Gov. Fintiri



Gov. Bello

▶ deepening personal discipline, family values, and love of one another, national unity and above all, our personal relationship with Allah.

He said: "We must work hard at deepening the values of tolerance, love and peaceful co-existence and never take the relative peace we enjoy in Bauchi State or Allah's mercies for granted".

Governor Bala told politicians to "Lower the temperature of politics that is ravaging the country and deepening its historical fault-lines. Let us be inebriated by the Eid-el-fitr spirit, to see politics as a service to God and humanity, and not as a winner-takes-all battle or a do-or-die affair.

We must play politics by the rules, either as contestants or in support of our proffered candidates. To this end, Governor Bala Mohammed called on all political parties and contestants of various elective offices, to prevail on their supporters to be of good conduct in the course of their campaign to guarantee a free and fair election, under the Constitution, where the will of the people prevail and through which credible candidates, with track records of performance, are elected to pull the country back from the brink and restore the confidence of the people in Government".

Furthermore, the Bauchi State Governor berated "the unfortunate communal crisis that erupted in Gudun Hausawa community of Bauchi State which led to the loss of lives and destruction of property despite the sustained effort of the state government to ensure peace and security.

There are still miscreants among us who are hell-bent on causing confusion and disorder. Such people do not represent who we are. I would therefore like to reiterate the resolve of the state government, to deal decisively with the perpetrators of the mayhem, some of whom have been arrested by the security agencies. I have also directed the security agencies to dig into the remote and immediate causes of the incident and to act, to forestall a recurrence not only at Gudun Hausawa but across all the communities in the state".

Governor Bala said: "As a government, we will not relent in our drive to ensure continuous peaceful co-existence among the heterogeneous ethnic and religious groups in the state. I appeal for your continued understanding and support towards the realization of this noble objective".

He thanked and praised the Almighty Allah (SWT), for seeing us through the holy month of Ramadan during which all Muslim Ummah across the world observed the obligatory fast at the end of which was Eid-el-Fitr."

The governor congratulated the Muslim Umma for this year's Eid-el-Fitr. Coming after a highly demanding fast, amidst gruelling and unprecedented socio-economic, political and security challenges besetting our dear nation, this year's Eid is therefore highly significant, he emphasised.

He said: "The Eid should be marked by the usual fanfare and merriment, the more enduring positive impact should be demonstrated in our utterances and





Gov. Ortom

actions; in the way, we relate with Allah (SWT), our fellow Muslim Umma, adherents of other faith systems and our willingness to emulate Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by sacrificing for others, particularly the less privileged in our society.

Governor Bala said: "The rigorous self-denial, religious teachings and piety of the Ramadan have armed us with the spiritual weapons of tolerance, forgiveness, love, mutual respect, and the fear of God. With these, we can defeat the cankerworms of hunger, greed, mutual suspicion, insecurity, nepotism, separatist agitations, etc, that put a wedge between our peoples, deepen mutual suspicion, and erode confidence in government and threaten the country's corporate existence".

From Cross River State, Governor Ben Ayade urged Muslims to imbibe the teachings of Prophet Muhammed (SWA) on the essence of the religious obligation, insisting, "This is the time, more than ever before, to connect to the virtue of love, compassion, unity and generosity, which Prophet Muhammed (SWA) symbolises

and which the holy month of Ramadan teaches us". Governor Ayade, whose spoke through his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Christian Ita, appealed to the Muslim Ummah, particularly in Cross River State, to shun divisive tendencies capable of drawing back the country's wheel of progress and development.

For traders in Benin City the capital of Edo State, as Muslims observed the Eid el-Fitr, at the Benin Eid ground, located along the Benin-Auchi Road, Eid provided an opportunity to cash out.

The traders made brisk business selling caps, biscuits, clothing, mats, beverages and other items, Eid brought with it a financial windfall. Many said the period would remain indelible in their minds.

One of the traders, Abubakar Yohana, said, "within three hours, I made N10,000. I sold eight caps. Before then I struggled to sell two caps a day. I thank God for today's business."

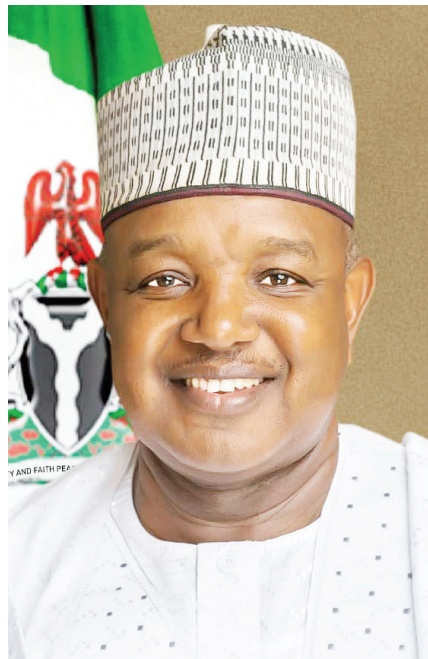
Another trader, Mutari Salisu, who sells prayer mats, said, "I appreciate God for today because of the money I have made. I came here by 7 am, and by 10 am, I made N13,000.

As you know, many people don't come to the mosque with a prayer mat, so they bought from us. I am happy."

At the subnational governance level, Chairman of Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF), Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State, visited Kebbi State, to celebrate the Eid-el-Fitr with the people and government of Kebbi. He extolled the extraordinary commitment and sacrifice of Governor Abubakar Bagudu of Kebbi to the Nigerian project.

The visibly elated Fayemi acknowledged the indispensable contributions of the Kebbi governor to the Federal Government led by President Muhammadu Buhari.

"It is not easy to superintend over the affairs of 22 governors on different perspectives and objectives, although we are on the same mythological orientation," he said.



Gov. Bagudu



Gov. El-Rufai

- ▶ The NGF chairman described Bagudu as a dependable pillar to him as the forum's chairman and Ekiti governor.

"I have been enjoying unflinching, consistent support and solidarity from my bosom friend, the Kebbi governor and our indefatigable chairman. With such support, I am sure we will triumph over our challenges in this country," Fayemi averred.

He said the visit was to felicitate with the government and people of Kebbi on the successful completion of the Ramadan fast and the Sallah. His words: "We pray that following this month of reflection, sobriety and supplication that God, in his infinite mercy, will continue to watch over us, watch over our people and our country at a time that requires a lot for us to overcome whatever issues we are dealing with."

Responding, Bagudu described Fayemi as a reliable friend and ally, both as the NGF chairman and Ekiti governor. He also recalled that before Fayemi became Minister of Solid Minerals Development, no fewer than 20,000 artisanal miners from the state were registered.

"They are now conducting their activities on an environmentally-friendly and legal bases, which has boosted the economy of the state and country," Bagudu said. According to him, Fayemi has been leading the NGF "equitably and justly."

In the South-east, Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State called on Muslims, and indeed all Nigerians, to continue to pray fervently to God for the peace, security, unity and progress of the country.

Gov. Ugwuanyi, congratulated Muslims as they celebrated Eid-el-Fitr. He wished Muslims the blessings and guidance of Allah, urging Nigerians to embrace peace, love, tolerance and sacrifice, which are the exemplary virtues of the Holy Prophet Mohammed.

He, therefore, prayed for a peaceful and pleasant celebration, stressing that the significance of the Islamic event towards the enhancement of peace, security, unity and progress of the nation is enduring.

But it was the visit to the Sultan of Sokoto that stood out. From some of the sermons that Governors issued during the Sallah festivities marking the end of the month of Ramadhan it became apparent that the famed notoriety that the Nigerian people associate with the leadership of this country at all levels, the sub-national leadership have [proved they do not just talk the talk but walk the walk as well.

Their message of peace and harmony among the populace was on display in their actions. There were visits, there were also messages. The Chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum and Governor of Ekiti State was on Eid visits to several parts of the country including the Sokoto Caliphate. On all occasions he was received by the State Governors.

The beauty of the period was that all Governors irrespective of religious inclination issued out messages admonishing their people to imbibe the teaching of the faith. Far from the paucity of belief, what the governors observed is that there was urgent need for unity in the country. This is among the reasons why the visit to the Sokoto Caliphate to greet the Sultan becomes instructive. ▶▶



Gov. Bala Mohammed



- ▶ It began with the Sultan himself. His Eminence, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar, on Monday hailed the harmonious working relationship between Ekiti State Governor/ Chairman Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), Dr Kayode Fayemi and Sokoto State Governor/ Vice Chairman of NGF, Rt. Hon. Aminu Tambuwal, describing it as a good example in leadership.

Sultan Abubakar stated this when the two governors paid him salah homage at his palace in Sokoto, in celebration of the Eid el Fitri, festival.

The Sultan who, in company of his chiefs and religious leaders in the sultanate, welcomed both Govs Fayemi and Tambuwal to his palace, said he loves and admires the way the two governors work together harmoniously at the NGF and other national assignments, despite belonging to different political parties.

As usual, the Sultan spoke out of genuine love for the country. He says: "I admire the mutual love and respect as well as the excellent working relationship between the two of you. Leadership is about service- service to the people.

"The way the two of you work together as Chairman and Vice chairman of the NGF and relate like brothers, despite belonging to different parties, is a good reference point in exemplary leadership.

"At the end of the day, it is about progress and development of our country. I must say you are leading by example.", the Sultan said.

Speaking further, Sultan Abubakar thanked Governor Fayemi for visiting him in his palace for the Sallah celebration. He told those present, that his relationship with the Ekiti State Governor predates his ascendance to the throne, adding that Dr Fayemi has always demonstrated his love for the country and the people.

Governor Fayemi, who brought greetings on behalf of his other colleagues at the NGF, also praised the Sultan for his interventions in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives in different parts of the country.

This visit to traditional institutions, and the messages from Governors all over the country shows the genuine concern of the NGF to bring the country together. The Forum has tasted first-hand what cohesion among the various dissenting views in the country would mean if all put their differences away.

The Forum under Dr Fayemi and Rt Hon Aminu Waziri Tambuwal as chairman and Vice Chairman respectively has brought the subnational part of the country together in several ramifications. There is synergy in execution and the thought process before decisions are taken is usually harmonious. In spite of their tight schedules, Governors who are assigned committees or other assignments took them seriously and did them diligently. Those like Governor Lalong of Plateau State,



Gov. Okowa



Gov. Sule

Akeredolu of Ondo State, Sani Bello of Niger State or Umahi of Ebonyi State who headed the regional arms of the Governors' Fora all aggregated the ideas of such platforms and ensured that all their meetings were merely like break-out sessions of a regular NGF meeting. That sincerely is what the Sultan Muhammadu Saad Abubakar was talking about.



NGF, ICRC To Host First NPPN Meeting

The Nigeria Governors' Forum hosted its First Public Private Partnership Network in Health meeting (NPPN) via zoom with the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) on Tuesday, April 26th.

The meeting was the first of its kind in 2022 and the Executive Director of the NGF, Mr. Abdulateef Shittu said he was glad to meet all on the journey to recovery.

"I believe the deliberations from this meeting would be robust and there would be a sustainable approach to improving social structure and thus, a better use of taxpayer's money," said Mr. Shittu.

The objectives of the meeting were to discuss the NPPN interventions that came about in Kaduna and Yobe State.

To better inform participants of the work being done by the ICRC, a presentation was made by Mike Ohiani, the Acting Director General of the ICRC.

He highlighted that some of the responsibilities of their agency are to take custody of every concession agreement made under the Act and monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of such agreement.

The responsibilities also include to ensure efficient execution of any concession agreement or contract entered by the Government.

They ensure compliance with provisions of Act and perform any other duties as may be directed by Mr. President.

Other responsibilities of ICRC also pertain to the partnerships with the United Nations in delivery of the Sustainable development goals (SDG), the partnership with FGN in achieving the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and other government health policies.

They also ensure that PPPs have cost-efficient and high-quality healthcare thereby reducing financing gap.

In terms of what the PPP entails, a PPP (Public-Private Partnership) is a contractual agreement between a public agency (federal, state, or local) and a private sector entity.

Through the agreement, the skills, and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service of facility for the use of the public. In addition to the sharing of resources, each party shares in the risks and rewards potential in the delivery of the service and or facility.

The benefits of the PPPs are equitable risk sharing; innovation; service delivery and private financing, opportunities abound for private sector participation along the healthcare value chain in Nigeria.

The PPP framework in Nigeria is common law jurisdiction, the framework preceded the ICRC Act. There is the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission Act 2005, the National Policy on PPP and the Regulations, Guidelines and Circulars.

Regarding ICRC achievements in line with the PPP framework, it includes the concession of the Garki Hospital to a private party as the first in the health sector.

The PPP contract was signed in March 2007 for a period of 15 years after which the hospital will be handed back to the Federal Government.

The ICRC took custody of this contract through a legacy project and has been managing it. The ICRC has also been involved in mediation between both parties when they had issues when the contract was about to expire.

The PPP contract is currently in dispute and parties are in court. But contracts still render quality medical services to the community.





▶ A second achievement of the ICRC is the Warehouse in a Box project that was in response to the substantial gap in warehousing of essential primary and secondary healthcare products.

The ICRC worked with FMoh and the USAID/Donors to concession the operation and maintenance of a 2 world class warehouses in Abuja and Lagos to a private party for a period of 5 years.

As for the implementation of the project, it was a huge success with over 100% utilisation even during the COVID period. The project was also a major revenue earner for the Government.

Thirdly, the ICRC issued a certificate of compliance to the NNPC Medical Limited for the establishment of multi-specialist hospitals in Abuja and Port-Harcourt through PPS.

Fourth was the renovation and upgrading of School of Nursing Student Hostel University College Hospital Ibadan. ICRC issued a certificate of compliance.

Though the ICRC has recorded some success, there are some challenges that they must overcome.

Some of the challenges the ICRC faces is that Nigeria spends less than 5% of its budget on health as opposed to the recommended 15% of total budget best practice.

Another challenge is most of the stock of 55 Federal Tertiary care facilities in Nigeria built and equipped are between 20-115 years ago.

There is also the issue of quality in financing, efficiency, and sustainability of health care.

More healthcare challenges include maternal mortality rates. There are 576 per 100,000 live births, an infant mortality of 64.6 per 1,000 live births. This is often due to the wrong diagnosis, poor sanitation and hygiene, diseases surveillance, accidents and emergencies and corruption.

After the discussion on the challenges faced by the ICRC, the Honourable Commissioner of Health in Kaduna State, H.E. Amina Mohammed Baloni informed the participants on the Investments in the State Health Sector.

The vision of the Public Private Partnership in Kaduna State is to contribute to the attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through effective public-private partnerships.

The mission is to promote equitable and effective partnership between the public and private sectors for the provision of quality and affordable health service.

The overall goal of this policy is to use the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement to enhance and harmonize access to quality and affordable healthcare services across the state, especially in the rural communities.

Kaduna state entered PPP arrangements on drugs and other health technologies among others.

This includes a zipline that has a logistics network of autonomous delivery drones to improve access and availability of routine and emergency medicine to health facilities, services will operate around the clock from there distribution centres equipped with 30 drones and deliver to over 1,000 health facilities.

A second initiative is the PMG MAN: this is in the pursuance of the State Government in ensuring the supply of quality and affordable essential medicines to the citizens of the state the PMG-MAN local pharma companies were engaged in a Public-Private Partnership.

Some of the success in Kaduna State are the zipline operations which includes the construction of the first out of 3 distribution centers for Kaduna State in Pambegua that is complete.

There is also the step-down training and baseline assessment for onboarded zipline health facilities conducted.

Some of the benefits of the zipline to the state are that it will improve the on-shelf availability of life-saving health commodities like essential medicines, vaccines, and biologics.

It would eliminate delays in delivering life-saving commodities to hard-to reach areas in terms of difficult terrain and insecurity thereby making available commodities that would impact improvements in key health indices such as maternal and child mortality.

The zipline would also transform the setting in which healthcare is delivered, expanding equitable access while decreasing costs and enabling more data-driven decision making in public health.

As for the interventions in Yobe State, the Honourable Commissioner for Health, Dr Muhammad Lawan Gana discussed YODMA.

The Yobe State Government established Yobe State Drugs and Medical Consumables Management Agency (YODMA) as an Agency under the Ministry of Health to strengthen the State's public health care value chain towards achievement of universal health coverage.

YODMA was established in December of 2019 for governance and coordination of procurement, storage and distribution of medicines, medical and laboratory supplies, and medical consumables in Yobe State.

The Agency started storage and distribution of health commodities initially with the Central Medical Stores (CMS) in Damaturu and scaled up through the establishment of zonal warehouses in Gashu'a and Potiskum Zones respectively.

Some of the key milestones of YODMA include that from August 2020, ARC_ESM has brokered PPP relationship between YODMA and 5 members of the Pharma Group and one International Distributor for supply of high quality and affordable health commodities.

As a result, YODMA stockout rate has significantly improved from 23.5% baseline in December 2020 to 12.24% in the year 2021, and 7% in Q1 2022.

In addition, YODMA conducts periodic forecasting and quantification with the Local Manufacturers for improved planning at both levels, thereby contributing to strengthening of local manufacturing.

YODMA has achieved 98% coverage rate for planned health facilities in 2021, that is the 200 of the targeted 204 capitalised health facilities that were covered with uninterrupted supply of health commodities.

Other key milestones include that YODMA partnership with PMG-MAN has led to capacity building of YODMA staff through on the job training and internship placements.

During health emergencies, there is easy access to medical supplies.

YODMA and other DMAs are working with PMG-MAN and the NGF to improve conditions for local manufacture to ensure medicines security for the country.

There would also be periodic review meetings that help to align business processes thus ensuring smooth implementation of the MoU.

“**THE MISSION IS TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS FOR THE PROVISION OF QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH SERVICE**”



NEWS

Body Of Attorneys- General Of The Federation Warn FG Not To Tamper With \$418m Paris Club Loan Refund

The 36 States of the Federation have warned the Federal Government not to tamper with funds accruing to them and the 774 Local Government Councils in the guise of satisfying alleged \$418 million London/Paris Club refund-related judgement debts.

They said they were not parties to any suit on the London/Paris Club refund, and thus 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 proceed to make any such deduction, it would be acting illegally and in contempt of their appeal challenging the judgment.

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 state from the Federation Account for the liquidation of London/Paris Club Loan refund-related judgment debts on behalf of the 36 states of the Federation and 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 judgement debts arose."

CS/1313/2021 between A.G. Abia State v. President, Federal Republic of Nigeria & 42 Ors.

"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 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 res of the suit, which is now a sub-



Lalong, Governor of Plateau State and Former Chairman Conference of Nigerian Speakers



Akeredolu, Governor of Ondo State and Former NBA President

They gave the warning in a 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 36 states' reply 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 Attorneys-Generals of Rivers, Abia, Taraba,

"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 of 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 Federal High Court's (per Honourable Justice I.E. Ekwo) judgment delivered on 25th March 2022 in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/

ject 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."



Why States Remain Low On Debt Sustainability Performances – DMO

States of the federation have continued to perform poorly in debt sustainability practices due to their inability to prepare their Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA) and Medium-Term Debt Strategy (MTDS), the Debt Management Office (DMO) has said.

Rather than pay attention to these two tools and approaches to support them in achieving the minimum requirements for the debt-related Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs), the debt management agency said states' adherence to the provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act on contracting their debts remained a major concern.

The Debt Management Office – Nigeria (DMO) is one of the government's implementing agencies providing Technical Assistance (TA) by utilizing a combination of tools and approaches to support the State Governments to achieve the minimum requirements for debt-related Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs).

Speaking in Abuja on the topic "Paths to sustainable debt management: The States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability (SFTAS) Programme approach", the Director General of the DMO, Patience Oniha, said the states' performances have been poor since 2018 when the Annual state debt sustainability analysis and medium-term debt management strategy were introduced.

Oniha, who was represented by a senior official of the agency, Isyaka Mohammed, lamented the inability of the State implementing state-level debt legislation to meet the three stipulated DLI criteria for strengthening public debt management and fiscal responsibility framework, namely DLIs 7, 8 and 9.

DLI 7 focused on strengthening public debt management and fiscal responsibility framework for the state governments, while DLI 8 was designed to improve the clearance/reduction of stock of domestic expenditure arrears of the state governments, and DLI 9 was meant to improve the debt sustainability of the various states.

In terms of States that produced quarterly state domestic debt reports (SDDR) approved by the DMO on average two months after the end of the quarter, the DMO said for 2018, only the

fourth quarter was assessed following the roll out of the new quarterly report template.

For the period between 2019 and 2021, the DMO said all four quarters were assessed, with quarterly state debt reports for Q2, Q3 and Q4 of 2020 accepted on average two months or less after the end of the quarter in 2020 and Annual state debt sustainability analysis published by end of December 2020.

The DMO said quarterly state debt reports were accepted on the average of two months or less after the end of the quarter in 2021 and Annual state debt sustainability analysis and Medium-term debt management strategy published by end of December 2021.

In 2018, the DMO described the States' performance as good, in terms of submission of quarterly debt report within two months of the end of the quarter, as 19 out of 24 States were eligible.

In 2019, the DMO described the performance as excellent, as 31 of the 32 eligible States submitted quarterly debt report within two months of the end of the quarter.

In 2020, the performance was still adjudged good, with 15 States expected to meet the requirements for DLI 7.2, considering that the criteria became more stringent due to inclusion of Debt Sustainability Analysis.

In 2018, Oniha described the performance of the states, in terms of exercising responsibilities for contracting state debt, recording/reporting state debt, and fiscal and debt rules/limits, as fair.

A total of 10 states met the three and other businesses criteria for the debt sustainability legal framework.

The DG said the performance improved significantly in 2019, describing the performance of the states as great, following a cumulative 23 States that met the criteria for the debt sustainability legal framework.

In 2020, she described the performance of the states as excellent, as indications are that 34 of the 36 States would meet the three criteria for the legal framework when the results are finally published.

A state's public debt is considered sustainable if the government is able to meet all its current and future payment obligations with-



Patience Oniha, DG, DMO



► out exceptional financial assistance. To encourage the state to achieve sustainable debt, the federal government in 2018 introduced the grants to be paid under the States Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) facility of the World Bank as an incentive.

In 2018, the DMO said legible states received \$29.5 million grants for meeting the requirements of DLI 7; \$1 million for DLI 8, and \$24 million for achieving DLI 9.

In 2019, the agency said the legible states received a total of \$84 million as performance based grants, made up of \$51 million for achieving DLI 7; \$7 mil-



Gov. Kayode Fayemi

lion for DLI 8, and \$25.5 million for DLI 9, bringing the total grants extended to the state governments to \$138.5 million for the two years.

Despite the encouraging performance of the states, Oniha Identified states' adherence to the provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act on contracting state debts as a major challenge to debt sustainability for the state governments.

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IN 2018, THE DMO SAID LEGIBLE STATES RECEIVED \$29.5 MILLION GRANTS FOR MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF DLI 7; \$1 MILLION FOR DLI 8, AND \$24 MILLION FOR ACHIEVING DLI 9

”

Besides, she said the capacity and willingness of the state governments to prepare their Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA) and Medium-Term Debt Strategy (MTDS) was equally a problem.

She called for the institutionalization of debt reconciliation with a standing committee comprising the staff of the DMO, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Account- General of the Federation.

She said the biggest challenge to debt sustainability legal framework was the reluctance of the States to implement the important components of the law, by adhering to the responsibility for contracting State



Gov. Godwin Obaseki

debts.

On Debt Sustainability Analysis and Preparation of Medium-Term Debt Strategy, the DMO DG said these are two laws in their early stages, as 2020 was the first year of preparing the DSA reports at the sub-national level, while 2021 for the MTDS.

She identified other challenges to include ensuring actual use of DSA and MTDS reports; ensuring that debt stock to revenue ratio remains low in absence of performance-based grants; arrears clearance still weak across most States, and general lack of motivation in the absence of performance-based grants.

To ensure debt sustainability among states, the DMO DG suggested engagements with States to ensure that Debt Management and Fiscal Responsibility Laws are implemented, while ensuring continuous capacity building on DSA and preparation of MTDS as well as .

Besides, she stressed the continuous sensitization of States on the benefits of DSA and MTDS; training for States on Debt recording and reporting; engagement with the Commissioners of Finance and DG of Debt Management Offices at the States; employment of peer review, and ensuring debt sustainability and strategies on the agenda of the Nigerian Governors Forum.



Revitalising the education sector with Leo the Great

Head, NGF Education

Background: (Education & Career)?

I studied Education and Political Science at the University of Ibadan. My school was an affiliate, so I had to come down to Rivers State College of Education which is now called Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt.

I've been a lecturer for more than 12 years. I have lectured at the Federal College of Education (Technical) as a Senior Lecturer. Then, I was an affiliate lecturer at University of Nsukka.

In addition to research, I've published a lot of books, articles, and journals both here and abroad thanks to the Green Publishers, a publishing house in Germany.

I was the pioneer Project Coordinator for the Global Coalition Against Exam malpractice in Africa.

Why did you choose to work at Nigeria Governors' Forum?

NGF is a dream come true. It gives me the opportunity to coordinate and contribute towards educational development across the federation.

What do you hope to bring to the NGF?

The challenge of education is what the sub-nationals would need to do more to resolve when it comes to the primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions.

Through the NGF, we have an opportunity to engage with stakeholders. This is the right platform to create more synergy.

We would engage and collaborate with stakeholders, federal ministry of education, the respective states, national assembly, and state houses of assembly and MDAs.

Furthermore, another challenge would be the capacity of states to fund and provide infrastructure to universities which is not even.

Is there Additional Information

Nelson Mandela said "education is the most powerful weapon which can change the world."

A nation can't thrive without true investment in education. To work towards the development of strengthening the educational structures in Nigeria, the Nigeria Governors' Forum recently brought in Ebenezer, Leo the Great.

His unique name was derived due to his religion as a Catholic. He was born on November 10th and that was the feast day of Saint Leo the Great.

Leo's parents who are devout Catholics looked at the calendar and then decided to baptise and name their son after the saint.

Therefore, when you call the name: Leo the Great, you are referring to a great man in Catholic History, Saint of Leo the Great.

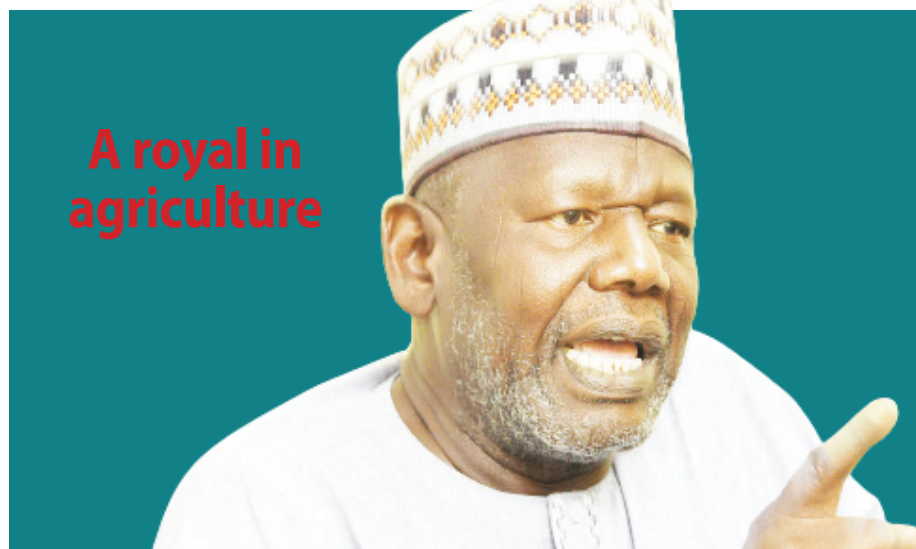
Leo says that though he did not become a priest, within the academic and social setting, he embodies the significance of what his name is.



You Want Us to Know?

I believe that the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat is well positioned to support the states as an intellectual think-tank.

A royal in agriculture



Professor Abba Gambo comes to the Nigeria Governors' Forum as the Senior Agricultural Advisor.

Abba Gambo has always had a deep love for Agriculture.

"My mother had a small garden within the palace so that triggered me into Agriculture."

Majority of his family were all farmers. From his academic days, he continued to develop himself in the field of Agriculture which garnered him great respect and consequently a demand for his expertise.

In this candid interview with the NGF media team, he elaborates on his education/background, career, and his new role at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat.

Background: (Education & Career)?

I attended the University of Maiduguri where I became the very first Horticultural Graduate.

I then did my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) at the deformed Gongola State before it was split into Gongola and Taraba.

I got admission into the University of Ibadan for my Masters, MSc in Agronomy. I passed out in flying colours and gained automatic admission for PhD.

I was admitted to Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto for my PhD where I finished my degree in record time. It took me only three years.

What do you bring to the table that is different from the past?

First, I want to commend the management and staff for being here at the beginning. We started with a small office, and it has now expanded and there are meeting rooms where Governors can come and discuss.

Secondly, I come at a time when there is a global food crisis. The Russian and Ukraine war is affecting the production of wheat. These two countries produce 50% of the global wheat in the world.

Because of the war, that 50% is lost. Now, 45 countries are dependent such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria.

Out of the 45, 18 are developing nations. Now, due to the war, the farmers are all on the battlefield.

There is also a sanction on Russian products.

Then, the second alternative is India that is producing plenty of wheat.

Then, countries turn to India and suddenly, India says they are not exporting one

A PROUD GREEN PASSPORT HOLDER RETURNS TO THE NGF

Head, NASS Liaison

Hajiya Fatima Y. Usman Katsina, an indigene of Katsina State calls herself a product of the Nigerian government because her father worked in the Foreign Service and retired an Ambassador.

She states enthusiastically that her father instilled a strong sense of patriotism in all his children.

"Baba had always told us about the Golden Age of Nigeria, the time when the educational system was one of the best in the world and transportation, school materials, the quality of education was functioning well and high," said Hajiya.

However, when she came back to Nigeria, what she saw on ground did not match the stories that she was told.

Regardless, Hajiya Fatima believes in a better Nigeria. She wants to contribute towards the solutions of the nation.

"I wanted to come back to

Nigeria to serve. Service is the reason why I am in Nigeria. I want to give back to the country that gave so much to me," she said.

She adds that even though we are experiencing an extreme security crisis now, she won't let that take away from her positive outlook for Nigeria.

"The future is bright, and the glass is half-full. I believe in a great Nigeria, and I want to participate in the solution and not just complain about the challenges. I encourage everyone to vote and be part of the solution."

Hajiya Fatima recently sat down with the NGF Media team to discuss more on her background, her return to the NGF and what she aims to bring in her roles as both the Head of Legislative and the Head of the Peace and Inclusive Security unit at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat.

Background: (Education & Career)?

I thank God to have received a wonderful education both academically, culturally, and spiritually.

My educational background spans from Morocco to France and Nigeria.

I completed my secondary education in Morocco. For my

grain of wheat until December of 2022.

So, the price of bread in Abuja you initially bought from N150 to N200 is now selling for N900.

Now, what I want to do is bring a solution towards the wheat crisis in Nigeria. We have identified the areas in Nigeria that produce wheat.

We want to do a national roundtable on wheat as quickly as possible in conjunction with agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Central bank of Nigeria and all the states and commissioners so that we fill the gap.

The demand for wheat in Nigeria is 6.1million metric tonnes per annum. That is the demand for the 200 million people but what we produce presently is just 100, 000 metric tonnes.

We must start thinking and talking about this challenge so that we can go practical.

The second issue is that I want to gear up and give results as quickly as possible.

Also, the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria has given us plenty of agriculture materials.



tertiary education, I'd say I'm versatile. My first degree is in International Business Administration with an emphasis on Emerging Markets. I also hold a second degree in French Civilisation and History from La Sorbonne where I was fortunate to study urban planning, management, culture, and civilised structure.

Thereafter, I went to South Korea through a fellowship program that pertained to rural community development, women, and youths. Finally, I attended the Nigeria Defence Academy (NDA) where I studied International Relations and Strategic Studies.

Why did you choose to work at the NGF?

NGF was the first organisation to recruit me in Nigeria. I first joined the NGF in 2009. I later left. As a returning staff, I'm happy to see the great evolution and growth of the forum.

▶▶ Continues on page 29



NGF Staff Oluwatosin Oke Gets Mandela Washington Fellowship

About the Fellowship

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is the flagship program of the U.S. Government's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) delivered annually. Since 2014, nearly 5,100 young leaders from every country in Sub-Saharan Africa have participated in the Fellowship.

The Fellows, between the ages of 25 and 35, are accomplished leaders and have established records of promoting innovation and positive impact in their communities and countries.

The Fellowship's selection process is very competitive and open to all Young African leaders who meets the following criteria:

Proven record of leadership and accomplishment in business, civic engagement, or public service.

A demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship.

The ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and to respect the opinions of others.

Strong social and communication skills.

An energetic, positive attitude.

A demonstrated knowledge of, interest in, and professional experience in the preferred sector/track; and

A commitment to return to Africa and apply leadership skills and training to benefit the applicant's country and/or community after they return home.

How did you hear about the Fellowship?

I first learnt about the Mandela Washington Fellowship in 2018 from a former colleague while working with DAWN Commission in 2018, a regional development commission for the South West States (Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Ekiti and Lagos State) in Nigeria.

Although I applied then, I was not selected as a finalist by the fellowship, perhaps my experience at the time was inadequate and not of national impact, even though I had worked to support various interventions that advanced economic cooperation, integration, and competitiveness amongst the southwestern States.

In addition, I had also supported a few civic engagements and the advancement of government-citizens' partnership across the 6 States.

How did you Feel about not making it in 2018 and how was the Journey from there on?

I appreciated the experience even though I didn't make it to the final list in 2018. I understood the need to build on my experience working with the public and private sector, embrace purposeful mentorship and pursuing impact wherever I find myself.

In 2020, I joined the Nigeria Governors' Fo-

rum (NGF) Secretariat, the technical and policy hub of the Forum as a Senior Project Officer. The decision to pursue a career with the NGF was borne out of my desire to broaden my experience and support far-reaching macro-fiscal reforms with nationalistic economic and socio-economic impact.

As a Senior project officer, I support the NGF States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Technical Assistance Project, working with States actors across MDAs and 36 States on various Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms.

I work collaboratively with subject matter experts in budgeting and financial reporting, revenue and expenditure management, audit and procurement reforms and capacity building activities.



Over the last two years, reform efforts I contributed to, have transformed fiscal transparency and accountability at the subnational level with dividends in form of greater Value for Money in government procurement, enabling environment for ease of doing business, greater efficiency in government expenditure through better cash management and blockage of revenue leakages, etc.

Working with the NGFS, I got to interact with various State and non-State actors including government functionaries, MDAs at both federal and State-level, CSOs and devel-

opment partners with mutual interests in advancing fiscal reforms to enable government guarantee inclusive governance and better service delivery to citizens.

This has broadened my network with reform enablers who with the right mix of incentive, opportunity, advocacy, and engagement can advance desired changes in governance.

I also volunteer with iEngage Hub, a non-profit organisation that provides advocacy and builds citizens' capacity to engage the government constructively and effectively. Focus includes citizens awareness of governance reforms, how it affects them, their rights to engage government, pathways to change and varying impacts.

These experiences strengthened my resolve to reapply to the fellowship. I reapplied during the 2021/2022 application window, spotlighting the additional experience and impact-based projects I had undertaken. After a keenly competed selection process with over 35,000 applicants, I was selected to take part in the fellowship round holding June/July 2022.

I consider the fellowship to be a veritable platform to further develop my technical and leadership competences in governance and Civic Engagement. I am delighted to be selected for the Public Management Track of the Fellowship at the Texas Tech University and I hope to bring on board skills I hone during the fellowship, as well as share adaptable experiences I find beneficial to the NGF and the country.

What specific skills and experiences do you look forward to gaining from the fellowship and how do you see yourself contributing back to your country?

As an advocate for collaborative governance and public value creation, the Mandela Washington Fellowship will afford me the opportunity to advance my skills in leadership, reform programming, policy analysis, evaluation, and advocacy, as well as collaborative economic development frameworks and strategies, especially at the sub-national level. These skills will help me to better interrogate Nigeria's governance and development intricacies, and how to navigate core policy problems requiring multi-stakeholder engagement and active citizens participation. Advancing these skills will increase my job performance at the NGFS which requires me to constantly engage with public sector stakeholders, either on policy advocacies or in technical capacity building activities. These, in addition to my occasional voluntary work in advancing civic engagement under the platform of iEngage Hub will add up to support the drive for inclusive and sustainable development in Nigeria.



Diamond in the Rough: Nasarawa's mission to self-rediscovery

The Nasarawa State Investment summit was meant to serve as a platform to present credible and bankable investment opportunities that are market-ready for investor engagement, to foster a closer collaboration and partnership between the private sector and the government in building a stronger business environment.

It was also organised to serve as a platform to engage with Government and Business leaders to invest and do business in Nasarawa State.

At the summit, the Governor of Nasarawa State, His Excellency, Abdullahi Sule stated that the Summit is aimed at positioning Nasarawa State in the investment destination amongst the top three most competitive States in Nigeria by 2023

in terms of accelerated growth, increased economic opportunities, social inclusion, and improved quality of life of citizenry.

The Summit was held on the 11th and 12th of May at Lafia, Nasarawa State with the theme of "Diamond in the Rough," the making of a new investment frontier.

The Governor further stated that as a state, they have been deliberate in stimulating the economy, building human capacities, creating wealth, and generating employment.

In 2019, they constituted the Economic Investment Advisory Council, headed by Prof. Konyisola Ajayi (SAN) and other respectable members both within and outside the country, with the objective of providing strategic advice and support to Government in promoting economic development and attracting investment into the State.

"I am happy to inform you that the recommendation of the Council has resulted in the development of the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) and subsequent establishment of the Nasarawa State Investment Development Agency (NASIDA), under which auspices we are gathered here today, as well as the enactment and signing into law of the Nasarawa Public Procurement Law



toward ensuring transparency, accountability, and prudent management of public resources," said the Governor.

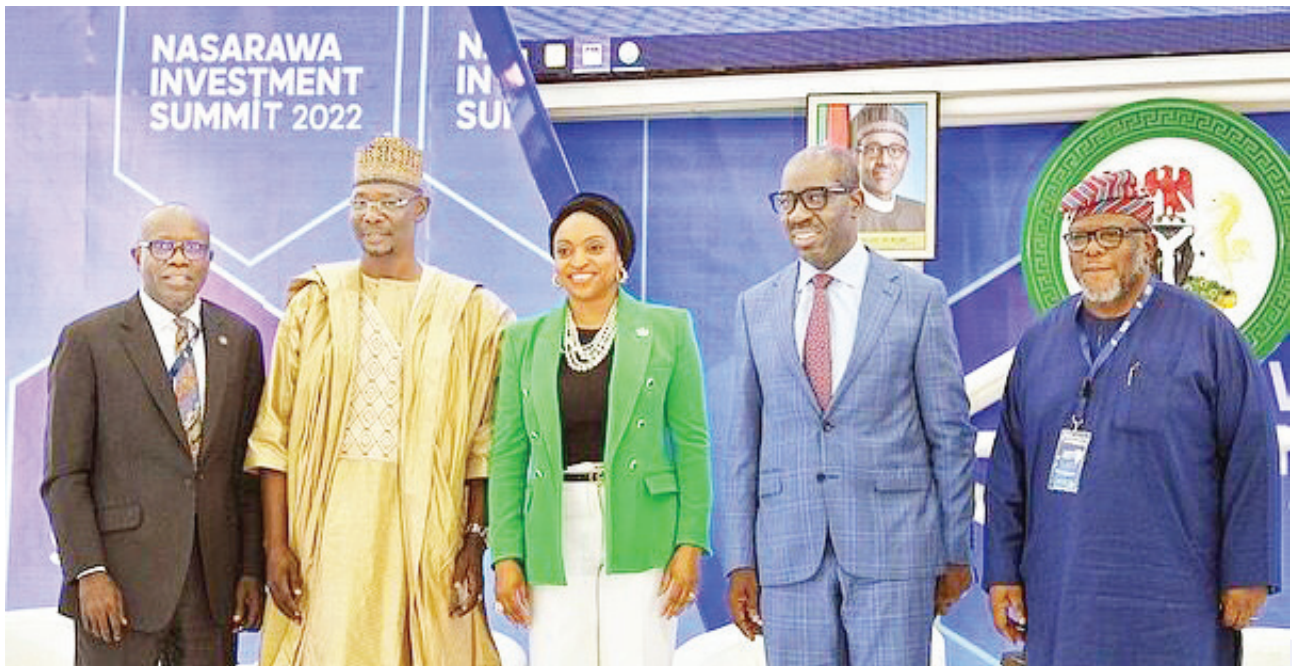
As part of the discussions for the summit was the theme of "Collaboration for Growth: a discussion on how sub-nationals can utilize their shared strengths" which was chaired by the Director General of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Mr. Asishana

B. Okauru.

Mr. Okauru said that at the NGF, we have a policy hub for driving action, we interface on behalf of all the states, federal ministries, departments, and agencies.

He added that just as we are attracting investments, we must be mindful of the kind of investments we attract to the state.





► The DG then commended the Governor of Edo State for his track record with the work done in his state.

“The Governor of Edo State has a track record that is unbeatable. He has done so much. He chairs a lot of the committees at our forum. He would be able to drive home why we think collaborating for growth is important,” said Mr. Okauru.

Governor Godwin Obaseki stated that in Edo State, they know that the most important resource in their state is its people. “Almost 70 percent of our people, the demographics, is skewed towards the young people and if you don’t invest in people, then what is the purpose of our infrastructure or of our existence?” said Mr. Obaseki.

He added that education is a priority in Edo State and not just having an education but obtaining quality education. “For us, ensuring that children go to school and learn is key. That means investing and prioritising teachers and making sure that they are equipped to pass on knowledge to children.”

As far as accomplishments in terms of education in Edo State are concerned, the Governor beamed that in his state, they have almost 300,000 children in public and private schools, from primary 1 to primary 6 that are reading at a 70 percent level compared to that of their peers in Europe or Asia.

In terms of numeracy, there are 65 percent in terms compared with their peers in developing countries. “The point for us is that in all we do, the priority is our people and making sure that we change the imbalance in the education eco-system. It’s important to make sure that the foundation is laid because it is from this foundation that you would build everything else,” he stated.

Concerning his own state, Governor Sule dis-

closed that they designed a document with their vision and mission explaining why government has no business being in business, rather, he said that government is there to ensure that they provide the right infrastructure and environment to be able to facilitate businesses.

“We design what we want. We know exactly what it is. We know the kind of people that we have, and we know we have great potential in Nasarawa State,” said Governor Sule.

AA Sule emphasized that they focus on their area of competitive advantage which is agriculture. Mining is the second. “Agriculture is not only the biggest employer of labour. It is also the low hanging fruit for us,” said Governor Sule and further stated that in his state, they use their competitive advantage to get to where they should be.

“We have a people who are willing and determined to make Nasarawa State great,” said Governor Sule.

The summit consisted of other panel sessions that highlighted on sustainability, providing innovative solutions to complex problems: financing infrastructure in sub-nationals, a discourse with existing investors in the state, promoting a knowledge-based economy as a critical pillar for growth and funding, fostering, and fuelling SME and IT growth.

Some of the overall goals of the summit are to build and enhance private sector involvement in good governance and policy making, especially as it involves the delivery of the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS), and to provide an inclusive platform and methodology that promotes the participation of all key stakeholders in NEDS implementation.



NEWS

Worsening Insecurity, Currency Depreciation Affecting Taxations in States – NGF

The Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) at the weekend lamented that the worsening insecurity and currency depreciation is affecting the business environment and consequently, productivity and income to be taxed.

Olanrewaju Ajogbasile, the Senior Programme Manager at the NGF Secretariat, gave the hint at a one-day capacity building for members of the Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN) on Friday in Abuja.

Ajogbasile, also said that the lack of trust between the government and the citizens continues to be a drawback to tax collection in Nigeria.

Speaking on the theme: New Approaches to Tax Administration in States, Ajogbasile added that it has made tax collection difficult as many are unwilling to pay because they do not trust as their monies will be used judiciously.

Perceived weak social contract between citizens and the government continues to threaten the legitimacy of taxation.

Nigeria still recovering from a combination of adverse fiscal and macroeconomic conditions that had exerted strong pressures on the fiscal sustainability of its national and sub-national governments, leading to low revenue generation.

He also pointed out that worsening insecurity and currency depreciation has affected the business environment and consequently, productivity and income to be taxed.

With revenue from Nigeria's main source of revenue –oil on the decrease, experts say that tax revenues are becoming es-

sential for state governments at all levels.

Maintaining fiscal sustainability, especially with the boom-and-bust cycles of the Nigerian economy.

He further added that “lack of standard operating procedures and processes guiding operations of SIRSs and their zonal/area offices; proliferation of private contractors/consultants for same revenue items; and weak collaboration between State and Local Governments on joint collections, among others.

To address this imbalance, Ajogbasile said several reforms have been introduced by National and sub-National governments, and according to him, it has yielded results.

“Improved collaboration between SIRSs, trade unions and associations; establishment of tax appeal tribunals to improve turnaround for closing out tax disputes.

Engagement of mobile money agents for informal sector revenue collection, where the SIRS lacks reach.

However, this is done under a performance contract and driven by a technology-enabled process to ensure transparency in the collection.

Passage of Consolidated State Revenue Codes by States to address the multiplicity of taxes; Implementation of tax relief in response to COVID-19.

The prohibition of tax consultants for the assessment and collection of Personal Income Tax – where the SIRS has the competence and reach.

Passage of Consolidated State Revenue Codes across 26 States to address the multiplicity of taxes; innovative IGR mo-





► bilization strategies for improving/sustaining nominal IGR growth – Presumptive tax, HNWI units, USSD offline payment, risk transfer strategies; Implementation of structured tax relief in response to COVID-19.

The prohibition of tax consultants for the assessment and collection of Personal Income Tax; Improving property records for effective property tax administration.

Publication of annual budgets and audited financial statements to promote transparency and accountability, and citizens' budget and citizens accountability report.

"The structure of the Nigeria economy reflects a predominance of the services sector which accounts for nearly 55% of the GDP for Q4 2021. Unfortunately, economic activities in this sector still suffer low productivity and wages.

"According to the 2017 GDP record for 22 States', the Service sector accounted for 54% while Agriculture and Industry accounted for 23% each, respectively.

"The poor employment record (33% unemployment rate for Q4 FY20 and estimated 35% for FY21) reflects low productivity and the absence of a strong manufacturing base.

"According to the 2017 data, only three and four States out of the twenty-two states that reported data on the gross domestic product had agriculture and industrial base that accounted for up to 20% of economic activities in their States.

"Over 25 collectable items for State governments under the Taxes and Levies (Approved list of collection) as amended, 2015.

"A total number of registered taxpayers (States & FCT) was estimated to reach 35 million persons 2019/2020. This is about 50% of the total labour force of 70 million persons (NBS, 2020).

Average tax effort (tax-to-GDP) of States stood at ~2% (NGF, 2018).

"The adverse fiscal pressure has been primarily due to over-dependence on FAAC transfers which are constantly threatened by the increasing volatility in oil prices

and mounting subsidy payments. The impact of this has been exacerbated by long years of increases in government permanent expenditures arising from the increased cost of governance, new minimum wage and rising debt service.

"The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted government spending, economic activities and invariably government's internally generated revenue.

"The Tax-to-GDP ratio in Nigeria was estimated at 6% (2019, OECD). In comparison, the average for 30 African countries according to the OECD Revenue Statistics in Africa 2021 report stood at 16.6%. Examples of the Tax-to-GDP ratios in other African Countries analysed included Ghana (13.5%), Niger (10.1%), Egypt (14.2%), DRC Congo (8%), and Kenya (17.3%), Uganda (12.1%) and South Africa (26.2%).

"Worsening insecurity and currency depreciation is affecting the business environment and consequently, productivity and income to be taxed" stated the NGF representative.



AIR TRAVELS BY GOVERNORS: Daily Trust Got it Wrong

The attention of the Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi, has been drawn to a news report by the Daily Trust Newspaper, May 20, 2022 edition, where the Governor was alleged to have squandered millions of state funds on chartered flight in the course of his recent political activities.

The unduly generalised report, titled; "Wike, Fayemi, Tambuwal, six other governors squander millions on private jets," is not only inaccurate and misleading, it is bereft of facts, which made it fall short of the journalistic standard for which the Daily Trust is known.

One wonders how the newspaper arrived at the number of chartered flights

purportedly taken by the Governor in the course of his recent political activities, which it put at 16. We also consider it poor journalistic work for the newspaper to assume that all the trips to the states mentioned in the report were via private jets.

For the avoidance of doubt, while it is correct that Governor Fayemi occasionally uses private jets to get to some difficult to reach places and when commercial flights disappoint, alternative arrangements are made for such trips, more often than not supported by friends.

It must be stated that Governor Fayemi does not use state resources for

his personal or political trips, as these are distinct from official trips.

While we do not dispute the role of the media to inform the public, we are of the opinion that such should be done with due regard for fairness and accuracy of information.

We therefore challenge the newspaper to provide evidence that Ekiti State funds were used for private jets. Otherwise, we demand that the report be retracted.

Governor Kayode Fayemi, a man of high ethical standards, holds dear the tenets of financial discipline and accountability in his public service engagements.



A team of agri-business investors from South Africa with over 40 years experience are in Plateau State to explore opportunities for investing in farming, processing and export of exotic crops and perishables which are synonymous with the State.

The team was led to the Government House Little Rayfield Jos by the Managing Director of the Plateau Investment and Proper Property Development Company (PIPC) Mr. Chrysogonus Yilzak. Mr. Yilzak explained that the PIPC had been in talks with the investors who would have been in the State long ago, but for COVID-19 restrictions.

He said the investors were in the State under Plateau Fresh Project which is targeted at harnessing the abundant and untapped potentials of the State in production, marketing, processing and export of exotic crops and perishables.

He said so far, the survey conducted shows that 18 potential crops are ready for investment initiatives across the State.

Technical partner to the project Mr. Ian White said Plateau State is very ideal for growing many varieties of crops and vegetables that are in high demand in Nigeria and around the world.



He said they have gone round to identify some areas and crops that are produced by over 4,000 farmers who are shortchanged by middle men who do nothing except moving the products to the cities.

According to him, their company plans to conceive, design, build and operate a tested agri-business model that will train farmers using technology and modern farm inputs to guarantee high yield.

In addition, he explained that they will establish value addition mechanisms to ensure that products are processed and packaged before being taken out for export and domestic consumption.

Ian regretted that Plateau with high capacity for tomato production is not able to meet domestic demands as Nigeria has to spend huge foreign exchange in importing tomato paste.

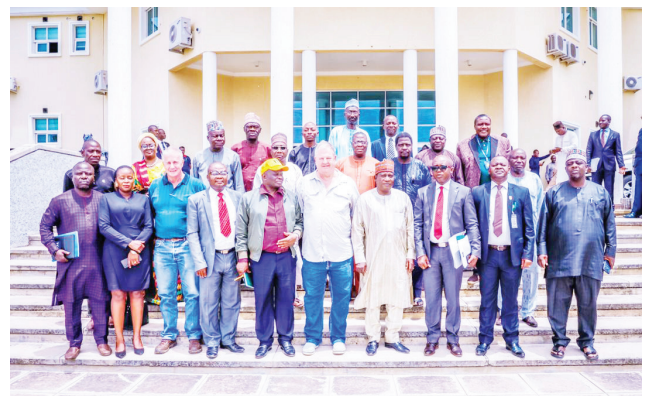
This he said will be addressed with the efforts of his firm which intends to start small, but expand gradually through training and building the requisite management teams and workforce. He commended Governor Lalong for doing his best to restore peace to the State and also creating an enabling environment for investors. Responding, Governor Lalong thanked the team for visiting Plateau State and expressing interest to invest in agriculture. He said the Government will continue to do its best in providing an enabling environment for investors particularly in agriculture which is a main source of employment and economic prosperity of the citizens.

The Governor told the team that already, the Yakubu Gowon Airport has been designated as Special International Airport for agricultural products while the Inland Container Depot has also been acquired and will soon be put to use.

He promised to continue to work towards enhancing the security of lives and properties of the citizens and investors.

Lalong hosts SA farmers

...To invest in exotic crops and perishables





THE CHRONICLE OF GOMBE CAPITAL SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE (GCSDZ)

By **Dr. Kabiru Usman Hassan**

In the last decades, Gombe metropolis has experienced drastic changes not only in its shape and vast geographical expansion, but also in its internal transformations which is the pinnacle of urbanization. As the Gombe city populations grow, they increase the demand for goods and services, rise in economic development, which tend to expand the metropolitan or suburban into the surrounding environment.

Since Gombe town assumed the status of a state in 1996, the infrastructural development coupled with demographic increment have no doubt increased tremendously. This is beside the eradication of problems associated with development control in the town, thereby affecting the infrastructural and socio-economic development of Gombe State. The tremendous growth

of Gombe metropolis in all ramifications is obviously clear and to some extent quite disturbin. This is evident considering the sad reality that settlements are sprinkling up on a daily basis without proper and strong guidance of planning and development control exercise. This has resulted to the total neglect and abandonment of basic amenities, infrastructural facilities and essential services provision across the metropolis.

Demographic imbalance, governance, social economic status, limited resources, data gaps, inequalities, and discrimination can be identified as major impediments for the achievement of sustainable urban development in Gombe state. Thus, the Gombe state government in its bit to provide a comprehensive solution to the development control problem within the state and address the challenges of housing development and delivery holistically

decide to create a special zone called "Gombe Capital special development Zone".

GOMBE CAPITAL SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE, is a State Government's project that aims to provide a safe and conducive environment to both local and foreign investors in the state, most especially in terms of land use and urbanization as well as to accommodate the influx of people seeking meadow-land. Significantly, this resulted to the creation of Gombe capital special development zone.

The Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya's administration conceives the new project which is geared towards reviving the Gombe metropolitan area, and the development of the State with a specific interest of constructing a befitting city center and structures so as to draw investors in the State. The Gombe state government idea of the land reform is to ensure every land holder enjoys the





► social benefit as well as the economic advantage from a proper legal documentation. However, this is geared towards paving ways for a suitable space for the creation of structures and other infrastructural facilities needed within the state. The zone consists of an area of about one-thousand, four-hundred and seventy-eight point one-seventeen (1,478.17) hectares which includes the following Government layouts; BAG1048, GDP 12, GDP 16, GDP 16A, GDP 16B, DP 65, GDP 4, GDP 4A, GDP 5, BAP 4, and other customary titles.

Equally, the Gombe state government decided to revive and upgrade this Residential areas within the Gombe metropolis for the purpose of creating functionality, efficient and esthetically pleasing physical environment for living, working, circulation and recreation. The physical space will be organized and managed in such a way that its present condition will meet the demand of the future and at the same time gain the attention of foreign investors to the state. This is to ensure that the environment is not overdeveloped, overbuilt, overused, or overpopulated. It recognizes the signs of tension that indicate when the environment is overstressed and can adjust its demands on the environment, to avoid pollution, natural disaster, and social disintegration.

One major reason for the creation of Gombe Capital Special Development Zone can be attributed to none availability of educational facilities, health centers, office

complex, community facilities, poor alignment of road network and uncoordinated pattern of development which tend to disrupt the functionality, social cohesion, economic viability, dignity, convenience and aesthetic value of the area. It is pertinent to give it a physical planning touch so as to prevent the possibility of the era



Gov. Inuwa Yahaya

generating into slums and as a result, orderliness within the environment will be restored; dignity will be lent to the resident who will live, work, in the areas.

The Gombe Geographic Information Systems (GOGIS) on its part under my leadership, constituted a high powered technical team, which did a fantastic job and rigorous

exercise of layout auditing within the earmarked area (zone), from August 2021-Dec 2021 and uncovered some distortion, land racketeering, and manipulation of high significance ranging from roads blockage, illegal subdivision of schools, children playground, maternity, and public places. Similarly GOGIS also, organize a

workshop for all relevant stakeholders, traditional rulers, land officers and law enforcement agencies in Nov, 2021 which intimate the audience on the activities of GOGIS and the state government objective on land reform and land administration system while seeking support and cooperation of all the relevant stakeholders for the purpose of achieving state-wide integrated physical development in Gombe state and also the state government objectives of creating the special zone called Gombe Capital Special Development Zone.

This is informed by the understanding of the need to think ahead to accommodate the city's growth and deciding which lands should be built on and when and whether they should be used for residential development, industry or for some more specialized function. Cities that are

sustainable, resilient and inclusive are dependent upon good governance that encompasses: Strong effective leadership, which helps overcome fragmentation across departments, multilevel governance and investment sectors when building consensus and eliciting action on specific agendas and one of the effective ways to accomplishing these physical planning stand-





► ard is through layout auditing and the preparation of a community base approach and implements it through phasing programme.

The phase 1 of the project commences around July 2021 with special Re-Design of BAP 4 and Southern BAP 4 area (Wuro Liman) as well as land auditing of the other earmarked layout that has followed up by land title verification of the applicant's information and documentation to ensure adequate provision of services and infrastructure within the area. The Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya's administration being a sincere government that believes in transparency, accountability, quality, effective service delivery and good governance, established the state's Project Implementation, Monitoring and evaluation team (PIME) in Jan 2022 which are charged to maintain close working relationship with GOGIS to ensure the smooth running and implementation of the land verification exercise and ensure adequate provision of infrastructure and services within the zone.

So far, over 2000 plots out of the 3150 within the earmarked area have been duly verified by the state Project Implementation,

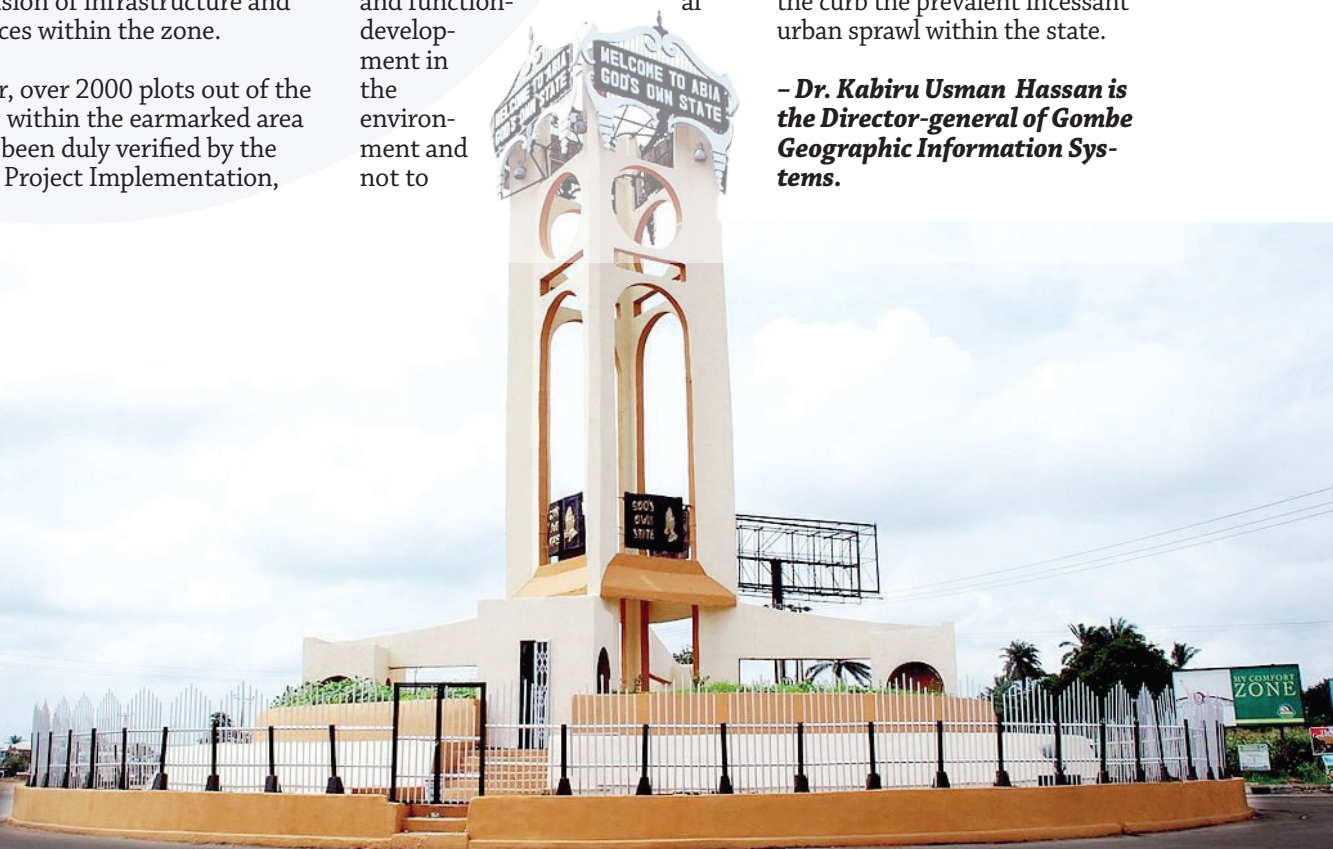
Monitoring and evaluation team (PIME) in full collaboration with GOGIS which has since taken back to the agency for the recertification (Digital C/O) program for the respective plots owners after the issuance of final clearance. Also, GOGIS in Conjunction with the Project Implementation, Monitoring and evaluation team has resolved cases of Double allocation, overlap, missing plots/block and other lingering land issues bedeviling the land administration system in Gombe state for decades now.

MY DEAR LOVERS OF GOMBE STATE, honest, concerned, keen followers and observers of events and happenings in the state under the administration of His Excellency, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya let me at this juncture convey to you that this exercise is meant to promote orderliness within the environment as well as the desired sense of belonging in the society and to achieve a good relationship between people, jobs and functional development in the environment and not to

repeal anyone's land ownership. However, it is within this zone that the state Government is embarking on one of the Mega Project ever executed in the history of Gombe state which are; THE STATE SECRETARIAT, STATE HIGH COURT, AND THE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY amidst the roads network and infrastructural facilities that will be placed within the zone by the Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya's administration.

Therefore, for the purpose of achieving state-wide integrated physical development in Gombe state there is need for the involvement of PHYSICAL PLANNERS to formulate long term perspectives of physical planning in the state. Thus, it is my honor and privilege as the DIRECTOR GENERAL GOGIS to be part of this gigantic and historic project in our dear state and as a Town Planner i will continue to provide professional and moral support so as to attain a notable degree of benefits to the populace as well as the curb the prevalent incessant urban sprawl within the state.

- Dr. Kabiru Usman Hassan is the Director-general of Gombe Geographic Information Systems.





2022 Workers' Day

When Governors Talked-up Welfare, Security

Millions marked the 2022 May Day - the international day of workers - with rallies in Nigeria, several African nations, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Serbia, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Greece, France, Cyprus and many other countries. Annually, May 1st is celebrated as International Labour Day - or May Day - around the world.

While in some cities in Africa, Europe, Asia and others, there were scuffles when citizens and trade unions took to the streets for marches with protest messages to their governments against economic hardship caused by raging inflation, others marked a comparatively quiet May Day.

In Nigeria, the 2022 workers' day was themed "Labour Politics and the Quest for Good Governance and Development in Nigeria". Significantly, this theme may have influenced the core messages, concessions and gestures

ly food items; high cost of living; increased rents which have shortened the initial euphoria and totally eroded the gains of the minimum wage. But it could not be denied that despite some gloom, there were bright sides to May Day 2022.

Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State probably took the cake when he seized the bull by the horns and approved N40,000 as new minimum wage for workers in the state (up from N30,000), in commemoration of this year's Workers' Day. Obaseki also solemnly pledged he would continue to prioritise the welfare of Edo workers, equipping them with capacity and the environment to deliver efficient and quality service to the people.

Hear Obaseki: "As we all know, the minimum wage of N30,000 can barely sustain a family. It will be immoral and mindless of us to continue to pretend we do not know our



by state chief executives who talked-up workers' welfare and security amongst several thoughtful interventionist gestures.

These positive considerations by governors can be best appreciated against the backdrop of worsening economic conditions; hike in transportation fare; negative impact of the COVID-19, intermittent disruptions in tertiary academic activities, sky rocketing prices of goods, especial-

workers are suffering. The government of Edo has now decided to review the minimum wage for Edo workers from N30,000 to N40,000. Undoubtedly, Edo is the first state since the current outbreak of coronavirus to take this initiative. Even though we would have loved to pay more, we hope that this little adjustment would enable us to cushion the impact of the inflation that we are faced with."

On his part, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos ►►



► State commended all the workers in the state for their patience, strength, passion and commitment to the development of Lagos State and Nigeria as a whole, urging them not to relent in their positive contributions to the economy.

In his words: “Nigerian workers are the fabric that makes up the society as a result of their tireless contributions to the socio-economic development of the country. We appreciate all workers, both in the public and private sectors for their patience, strength and commitment to the growth and development of our dear Lagos State and Nigeria.” While the Chairperson, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Lagos State

operational processes of the state civil service to be in line with the technological realities of the time.”

In the spirit of the Workers’ Day celebration, Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State acceded to some of the demands of the state National Labour Union (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) bordering on welfare to motivate the government’s workforce.

He gave approval for the implementation of the requests while responding to ‘a shopping list’ contained in the joint address presented by the state Chairman of the NLC, John Ndiomu, at the May Day event which was held at the Peace Park, Yenagoa.

The approvals include the payment

imum wage arrears as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Governor Akeredolu of Ondo State commended the state’s workers and lauded the civil servants’ perseverance and dedication, which he said had resulted in optimum service delivery to the people of the State. In his words:

“The workers are the strong engine room of every government. Their contributions to the success of any administration cannot be over-emphasized. It is in recognition of the importance of our workers that this administration has continued to place premium on their welfare.”

Ogun State Governor Prince Dapo Abiodun, on his part, revealed that



Gov. Obaseki



Gov. Wike



Gov. Makinde

Council, Mrs. Funmi Sessi, expressed gratitude to Governor Sanwo-Olu for implementing the N35,000 minimum wage in the state she however noted the poor economic situation and negative impact of the COVID19 had eroded the benefits of the new wage.

For the mint-new governor of Anambra State, Professor Charles Soludo, who ordered the immediate employment of more teachers, his government is committed to ensuring “the safety and improving the welfare of the Anambra Workers” assuring that he must transform “the

of annual salary step increment; provision of funds for the Civil Service Commission to conduct the 2022 promotion exercise; implementation of 2021 promotion; payment of call duty allowances to specialist nurses as approved in 2014; and addition of N200million to a monthly N200million for payment of April pensions and gratuities to reduce the backlog of unpaid retirees.

Diri also directed the necessary government officials to negotiate with the two labour centres and come up with feasible recommendations on the payment of eight months’ min-

his administration has paid the sum of N8.4bn out of the N14.4bn owed the state workers from May 2019 to March 2022 from deductions and loans just as efforts are on to settle the outstanding balance of N6bn.

According to Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State and chairman of Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF), “We’ve disbursed over N1.8bn housing/car loans to workers, N2.9bn gratuity to retirees, to boost welfare in the last four years as in appreciation for their commitment and as a demonstration of government’s commitment to their welfare.”



- Dr. Fayemi conceded government has a duty to do more for workers admitting that inflation has eaten deep into the gains made by his first and second administrations in the last decade in which workers enjoyed wage increase not less than three times.



Gov. Ayade

Observably, similar positions saturated the messages from several governors as they congratulated all workers and organised labour in their respective states on Workers Day. Governors Sani Bello of Niger State, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State, Hope Uzodinma of Imo State, Yahaya Bello of Kogi State, Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara State and Samuel Ortom of Benue State acknowledged that civil servants remain at the core of every government since they are tasked with carrying out government objectives and programs



Gov. Masari

The governors reaffirmed that their respective administrations were committed to continuing to develop measures to improve the efficiency of the civil service and ensure effective service delivery. They further assured of their dedication to workers' well-being and pledged to provide a favorable working environment for improved performance, reiterating their administrations' resolve to always prioritise workers' welfare and security at all times.



Gov. Zulum

Nimble Governor Dom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom, who counseled workers to organize instead of agonizing - and perhaps with an eye on his presidential ambition - told workers that help is on the way for suffering Nigerian workers. "The suffering of Nigerian workers has not gone unnoticed

and their cries for help have not gone unheard," he proclaimed.

Health conscious Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State noted that the 2022 Labour Day was being celebrated in a peculiar atmosphere of sobriety engendered by the prevailing COVID-19, which had jolted the world. "We commend our health workers and other frontline personnel in this fight, and in order to encourage them, we have increased their daily hazard allowances and have also approved that they earn half of that allowances when they are off-duty," he told workers while cautiously promising the goodies not unlike his peers.

According to the renowned ancient Greek dramatist Sophocles, "Without labour nothing prospers." Indisputably, labour is the ladder through which human dignity and creative excellence are expressed. But it must be complemented by societies' political leadership for its deeper meaning to become complete - leveraging fairness, justice and empathy.

During the May Day 2022 celebrations, despite their warts, pimples and all, Nigeria's sub-nationals political leadership certainly spoke to these imperatives. Meanwhile, for the masses, it is still morning yet on creation day.

►► From page 17

What do you bring to the forum?

Well, within the 15 years that I was away from the forum, I have experience at all three tiers of government, at the parliamentary and at the subnational. I was initially the pioneer Technical Assistant, working with the DG and now, I am blessed to head the Legislative, Peace and Inclusive Security Unit.

As part of the experience, I bring to this role, I was the Chief of staff to then Distinguished Senator, Gbemisola Saraki.

I also ran for the House of Representatives in 2015. I was moved by the notion of making Nigeria great and re-building Nigeria beyond its former glory.

I also served as Senior Special Assistant on Development Partner and Donor Agencies and State Coordinator for Katsina state.

That was such an interesting role because it allowed me to work across all ministries, departments and agencies in the state and make sure we didn't duplicate and maximize impact. What I bring to my role at NGF is a vast experience. I'm now in a position where I can impact all the sub-nationals, promote good governance and improve our existing structures.



NGF partners REA for access to electricity in rural areas

Electricity enables functional business. Electricity also enables businesses to navigate the tech space. Electricity contribute phenomenally to the global economy. Between May 9th and 19th the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) in collaboration with the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and the Africa Clean Energy

Technical Assistance Fund (ACE-TAF) hosted a 2-Day workshop focused on the collaboration with states for accelerated rural electrification. The Rural Electrification Agency is the implementing agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the Federal Ministry of Power tasked with the electrification of unserved and underserved rural communities through the deployment of off-grid solutions such as mini-grids and standalone systems and extending grid con-

nections to communities that are close proximity to the national grid. Some of the objectives of the workshop were to foster a harmonious working relationship between REA and States to create access to data on unelectrified communities and to enable proper co-ordination and flow of information among stakeholders such as the Federal and State Governments, private developers, and energy access companies. The stakeholders include the Federal Ministry of Power and Development Partners such as the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and, the World Bank, State Government representatives (State Rural Electrification Focal Persons including Honorable Commissioners and Heads of the Rural Electrification Boards, amongst others. During the meeting, the Managing Director/CEO of REA, Engineer Ahmad Salihijo Ahmad appreciat-

ed the efforts of the NGF for supporting the project to ensure there is proper coordination to deliver on the mandates.

“The success of our attempt to increase energy access is linked to our association with state governments whose presence through the NGF will ensure that what we do will benefit communities,” he said. Furthermore, Engineer Ahmed stated, there is the need to have private-sector partnerships, but regretted that lack of communication and synergy between states is an existential challenge, concluding that “the aim of the workshop is to showcase all that we do and the key role of the states, in the entire gamut of the partnership”. Gail Warrander, the Team Leader for Economic Development, UK, FCDO stated that Nigeria has not yet made the progress that it requires, declaring that the country has more people with no energy per demographic than any other in the world. She highlighted that there are three key lessons to gain from the workshop which include the need for technology and Fin-tech, to get incomes up, consid-



er policy and improve customs. She advised on the productive use of income to work uncover synergies, mini-grids, and solar systems with a view to commercialize in order subsidise domestic use.

The Executive Director of the Rural Electrification Fund Dr. Sanusi Ohiare, on his part, disclosed that government would partner with stakeholders and the private sector while States play a critical role in ensuring sustainability. However, it was revealed at the meeting that some of the challenges militating against the smooth implementation of such projects include delayed implementation due to bureaucracy and red-tapism when it comes to following due processes to get approvals.

A further concern is in bridging the communication gap between the developers and financiers apart from the issue of security with some staff having been shot in the South-East.

Engr Barka Sajou, the Executive Director and Technical Services of REA said that "there is need to look at various options that have a productive use of energies for communities that are far from the grid". Engineer Sajou emphasised that the state government is key in how the projects would be actualised because the states represent the people.

He lamented that some of the challenges can be ascribed to lack of continuity which is usually blamed on budget constraints.

Among the speakers at the workshop were Mr. Chibuikem Agbaegbu- Nigeria Country Manager, Africa Clean Energy-Technical Assistance Facility (ACE-TAF) which already working with interventions Zambia and Ethiopia.

They support the government by conducting studies on creating an enabling environment, knowledge management and coordination between donors and Governors to ensure solar delivery. In Lagos State, they support the state in the development of the Lagos State Electricity Policy, specific especially off grid electrification. They have also supported the state to develop the Lagos State Off Grid Solar (OGS) Strategy Plan to support the implementation of the Electricity Policy.

In addition, they have undertaken capacity building for Lagos State Electricity Board (the State Government focal OGS institution). In the Nigerian hinterland, they supported Jigawa state to develop the State Off Grid Solar Policy. In addition, they have also supported in capacity Building for State Ministry of Works & Transport (the State Government focal OGS institutions) and State Rural Electrification Board.

There were breakout sessions to discuss how REA can collaborate better with states to interface on projects. As the groups came together, some of the main highlight was that there should be more data shared with the focal persons in each state and better synergy. It was also stated that through the focal person, the REA would be able to get a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) report. They emphasized that the focal person should be the one to present to the states what would be needed for implementation. Closing the event Alhaji Abdulateef Shittu, the Executive Director of the NGF said that accelerating the rural economy in Nigeria is important, it to be Nigeria's biggest challenge and not insecurity explaining that electricity can reduce insecurity lamenting that Nigeria loses 25 billion dollars annually due to a lack of electricity. "It's important that we come together and see how we can improve the situation," Shittu emphasised.



The Nigeria Governors' Forum Special Library

THE LIBRARY YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR IN 2022 AND BEYOND!



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- ▶ LIBRARIES SHOULD BE THE NEW PLACE FOR INNOVATIONS
- ▶ A LIBRARY SHOULD BE A PLACE OF CREATIVITY AND IDEAS
- ▶ A LIBRARY SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF PATRONS

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A Special library which serves an organisation should be special indeed and meet the organisational goals and objectives.

The write up above captures what the new Nigeria Governors' Forum Library is all about.



The new NGF library is a place to read, learn and explore!

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