

The Executive

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NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM

SUMMARY

2023 UHC DAY

NGF Champions Universal Health Coverage



AfDB approves \$80m loan for Ekiti knowledge zone development

From Promise to Impact: State Health Commissioners Set Sail



Engr. Tamunominini Makinde: Engineering a Legacy of Empowerment

No security without food, says NGF advisor



Commentary

Tweaking the Health Space, Leveraging Governance

In this edition, the 2023 Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day, where, in a decisive call to action, Nigeria's 36 state governors converged in Abuja for its commemoration, an event graced by His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, is our cover choice.

Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGE, His Excellency, Abdulrazak Abdulrahman, the Executive Governor of Kwara State, highlighted the imperative to "save lives, reduce physical and financial pain, and produce health for all, "through a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp).

The recent convergence of state health commissioners at the induction retreat organised by the NGE, Secretariat, Abuja, and Nigeria Commissioners of Health Forum, NCHF, underscores the centrality of health in the human development story.

Obviously raring to go, the health sector technocrats entrusted with managing the sub-nationals' health space in consonance with their governors' broad health governance visions did not betray misapprehension of their critical mandates.

"Health is not merely a sector; it is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of a thriving society. Your leadership is pivotal in achieving health equity, improving healthcare access, and addressing the numerous health challenges facing our states," NGE Chairman, H.E. Abdulrahman, told the rapt state health minders.

Dr. Oyebanji Filani, NCHF Chairman, advised his peers to expect multifaceted challenges in their new offices, "ranging from technical and administrative hurdles to navigating complex political landscapes," and stressed the need for "a profound understanding of the complex and dynamic healthcare landscape in Nigeria."

On their parts, former NGE Chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi and the World Health Organisation (WHO) representative in Nigeria, Dr. Walter Kazadi Mulombo, respectively, spoke to critical health sector issues as captured in our cover story: "From Promise to Impact: State Health Commissioners Set Sail."

Going forward, we present a report of the third African Sub-sovereign Governments Network (AfSNET) conference held on the side line of IATF2023 in Cairo, Egypt.

In our special interview, eminent Professor of Virology and infectious diseases expert, and ex-Regional Virologist for WHO, Africa Region, Oyewale Tomori, says that subnationals must step-up in managing

epidemiological challenges. Among other riveting insights, he notes that lack of capacity retention fuels brain drain.

Meanwhile, as Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State initiates the third phase of state-wide polio immunization, targeting 981,710 children under five years old to eradicate polio, his Ekiti State peer, Governor Biodun Oyeibanji, advocates better and improved living standards for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) at this year's International Day for Persons With Disabilities held at Jibowu Hall, Government House, Ado Ekiti.

Our "Achieving Zero Grazing" story explores how modern livestock production techniques must be enlisted to end the farmers/herders crisis and upscale the sector's contribution to the nation's GDP.

Then some of our stories like: "Effective Service Delivery, Panacea to improved Agric Productivity," "Made-In-Akwa Ibom Trade Fair: Gov. Eno Donates N250m To Ibom-LED," "Gov. Oborevwo Kicks Off Construction of N78bn Effurun/Warri Flyers," "Sanwo-Olu Empowers MSMEs, Celebrates Local Talent At Exclusive Fair," "A Case Of the \$1.5 billion States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS)," capture some of the specific positives on leveraging governance by the subnationals.

Activities at the First Ladies' front cannot be of course discounted. In Oyo State, the First Lady, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde, is resolutely powering a legacy of empowerment through her "Omituntun for Life Foundation," which has become a beacon of hope and encouragement for the people of Oyo State, giving aids to improve the lives of women, children, widows, the fatherless, and orphans who are less privileged and impoverished.

Meanwhile, in a groundbreaking move to fortify the health and future of young girls in Cross River State, First Lady Reverend Eyoanwan Bassey Otu inaugurated a revolutionary campaign, in collaboration with Pink Africa, providing free Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations for girls aged 9-14. The launch event, held at the Asiukpo Medical Centre in Calabar, was a vibrant convergence of healthcare professionals.

These do not of course exhaust our stories' menu for this edition but it communicates a sense of scope. Please read on...

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FROM PROMISE TO IMPACT:

State Health Commissioners Set Sail

At the induction retreat of health commissioners in the 36 states of the country, recently organised by the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF, Secretariat, Abuja, health sector technocrats entrusted with managing the sub-nationals health space in sync with their governors' broad visions were inaugurated.

The induction themed, "Navigating Health Leadership: From Promise to Impact," fundamentally underscored the immense responsibility that comes with leadership of the health sector at the subnational level. The Mandate Secretary for Health of the Federal Capital Territory also participated.

Not surprisingly, chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, His Excellency, Abdulrazak Abdulrahman, Executive Governor of Kwara told the rapt audience of health commissioners that their ability to champion the governors' vision for the health sector in their respective states was very important.

His words: "I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the Honourable Commissioners of Health. Your appointment is a testament to your capabilities and the confidence that my colleagues and I have in your ability to champion our vision for the health sector in our respective states. We are confident that your wealth of experience and fresh perspectives will invigorate our collective mission to ensure the well-being of our citizens."

The Chairman who was represented by the Director-General, NGF Secretariat, Mr. Asishana Bayo Okauru, reminded the new health arrowheads at the states that their appointment comes with its own set of challenges, especially against the backdrop of the poor health indices in the country. "It is indeed a time that calls for visionary leadership and unwavering



commitment to improving the health outcomes of our country," he noted.

Capturing the essence of health in human development, the NGF Chair said: "I would like to emphasize the vital role that each of you plays in the overall governance and development of your states. Health is not merely a sector; it is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of a thriving society.

"Your leadership is pivotal in achieving health equity, improving healthcare access, and addressing the numerous health challenges facing our states. In our pursuit of improved health outcomes, collaboration and coordination are of paramount importance.

"Our roles are inherently interdependent, and it is by working together, transcending political, geographical, and ideological boundaries, that we can truly make a difference. The success of our collective efforts will be measured not only in the policies we craft but in their effective implementation and the tangible improvements in the health and well-being of our people.

"I would like to commend the NGF Secretariat and the Forum of the Commissioners of Health for meticulously planning and organizing this induction program. I also appreciate the excellent choice of our keynote speaker, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, who not only served as a former Governor but also as a former Chairman of the NGF. His insights will undoubtedly enrich our discussions during this event.

"To our Commissioners, I encourage active participation, inquisitiveness, and meaningful engagement throughout the program. Seize this opportunity to learn, network, and gain new perspectives. The relationships you cultivate here



can serve as invaluable resources as you lead your respective states.

"I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the invaluable support of our development partners and the various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to the states.

"Let us approach this program with an open mind, a spirit of collaboration, and a resolute commitment to enhancing the state of healthcare in our beloved Nigeria. Together, we can make a significant difference, and together, we can ensure that our promises lead to real, lasting impact."

At the event, Dr. Oyebanji Filani, Chairman, Nigeria Commissioners for Health Forum, NCHF, advised the commissioners to expect multifaceted challenges in their new office "ranging from technical and administrative hurdles to navigating complex political landscapes."

According to him, "To surmount these challenges, Commissioners need a profound understanding of the complex and dynamic healthcare landscape in Nigeria and this induction ceremony is designed to equip them with practical tools and insights necessary for addressing the challenges ahead.

"This induction ceremony is not merely a one-time event; it is the beginning of a lasting engagement. As a forum, we will continue to provide support to our members through periodic engagements and our flagship programmes to ensure that every State is well positioned in their journey towards universal health coverage."

Speaking at the induction event, the World Health Organisation (WHO) representative in Nigeria, Dr. Walter Kazadi Mulombo, raised concerns over poverty-induced ill-health and the increase in the

burden of non-communicable diseases in Nigeria, regretting that Nigeria has the highest out-of-pocket expenditure on health in the West African region.

His words: "The health situation in Nigeria requires uncommon approaches to

make a remarkable difference. With the on-going increase in the burden of non-communicable diseases on the background of the high burden of communicable diseases, multiple outbreaks, and the highest out-of-pocket expenditure on health in the region, more Nigerians are falling into poverty due to ill health while many do not have access to the quality essential health services they need."

Mulombo charged the new health commissioners not to be deterred by the prevailing economic

challenges in their respective states, but ensure to take advantage of their new positions to steer their state governments towards the right direction in line

To surmount these challenges, Commissioners need a profound understanding of the complex and dynamic healthcare landscape in Nigeria and this induction ceremony is designed to equip them with practical tools and insights necessary for addressing the challenges ahead



MUHAMMAD ALI PATE, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE



DR. OYEBANJI FILANI, CHAIRMAN, NIGERIA COMMISSIONERS FOR HEALTH FORUM (NCHF)

with federal government policies and agenda for the health sector.

In line with the recent 45th anniversary of Alma-Ata and 5th anniversary of Astana declarations on primary health care in Astana Kazakhstan, he urged the commissioners to prioritise primary health care by “shifting focus from mere concepts to actions with demonstrable results, for greater resilience in the health sector, even in the face of emergencies.”

On his part, the former Chairman, Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF), Dr. Kayode Fayemi, asked the Nigerian Dental and Medical Registration Council (NDMRC) to seize the license of newly graduated health workers until they complete between three to five years of service in the country.

Fayemi who was also former governor of Ekiti State, held this course is important to address the scourge of brain drain which was currently crippling the Nigeria health sector.

He said: “First, for doctors that we’ve trained. I think we should have even for our health workers generally, there’ll be some kind of scheme, call it National Health Service scheme for newly licenced health workers that would enable them to spend some time in a fixed period not limitless three, five years.

“Whilst you’re doing that your licence is

For countries that want to come and recruit doctors from Nigeria, or health workers from Nigeria, you should pay for the training of the substitution

held by the Nigerian dental and medical registration body that gives you that licence. Once you’re done, you can leave you can decide you want to stay or you want to leave.”

While noting that his recommendations were not heart-shaking, he further recommended that countries interested in recruiting health workers, especially doctors from Nigeria should pay for the training of their substitutions, and partnerships with governments of other countries should be established to train health workers in Nigeria.

“For countries that want to come and recruit doctors from Nigeria, or health workers from Nigeria, you should pay for the training of the substitution. So it isn’t just about you taking a doctor you want outside yourself for three or five years or an optometrist or a pharmacist or a nurse.

“I’m worried about the entire health resource force that we have not just doctors, you must pay us. I would say equivalent of training two doctors if you are taking one doctor out of our system. You must give enough funding for training those two doctors.

“Train people on the ground with support from the British government and other partners that would enable an accelerated training of health workers, particularly nurses on the ground. We cannot continue this way.”

Fayemi who argued that by such a policy he was not downplaying the need to improve the remuneration packages of doctors, urged state governors to prioritise the health sector by improving its funding.

“You heard what I said about health financing so we can ramp up the figures of people who are benefiting from health insurance. Not 100,000, not 200,000. We need to do it in the millions. We will be the third most populous country in the world by 2050 and it is not just enough to have a huge population, we need a viable population that can replace the workforce in the world.”



NGF PHC Leadership Challenge Regional Peer Review Meetings

The NGF Secretariat in partnership with NPHCDA and UNICEF hosted a series of regional review meetings on the PHC Leadership Challenge for key state health officials from October to December 2023.

The purpose of the review meetings was to disseminate the findings of the PHC performance assessment, share best practices that can improve PHC outcomes, and guide state teams on how to improve PHC performance ahead of the next assessment/Award slated for next year.

The meetings had in attendance, a total of Thirty (30) Honourable Commissioners of health, Thirty-four (34) Executive Secretaries of the State Primary Health Care Boards (SPHCBs), Thirty 30 Executive

The PHC Leadership Challenge was put together to accelerate the implementation of the Seattle Declaration made by Governors in 2019 and to catalyze renewed political commitment of all Governors to improve PHC outcomes at scale

Secretaries of the State Social Health Insurance Agencies, Thirty-seven (37) Directors of Planning, Research and Statistics of the SPHCBs, and Twenty-nine (29) ALGON Chairmen. In addition to the State participants, members of the PTC (NGF, NPHCDA and UNICEF), the Independent Verification Agents (IVAs) and Independent Judging Panels (IJPs) were also in attendance.

Amongst the various lessons learned, a major highlight is the need for improved knowledge management through experience sharing and proper documentation of activities and best practices.

With a commendable spirit of sportsmanship, state teams unanimously committed to improved performances at the next round of assessment. Ostensibly, this initiative is seen to foster the needed performance-driven and positively competitive intent to serve communities better and improve health outcomes in the country.

The PHC Leadership Challenge was put together to accelerate the implementation of the Seattle Declaration made by Governors in 2019 and to catalyze renewed political commitment of all Governors to improve PHC outcomes at scale. The challenge provides an opportunity for the 36 states and FCT to equitably compete within their respective geopolitical zones for an annual best performing and most improved awards in PHC delivery, of which Borno state emerged as the national winner in the maiden edition.



2023 UHC DAY

NGF Champions Universal Health Coverage



In a resounding call to action, the 36 state governors of Nigeria converged at the Banquet

Hall of the Presidential Lodge, in Aso Rock, Abuja recently for commemoration of the 2023 Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day.

The NGF Chairman, Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara State, who represented the collective voice of the governors, delivered an emotional speech reiterating their unwavering commitment to the pursuit of universal health coverage.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of collective dedication, the chairman highlighted the imperative to "save lives, reduce physical and financial pain, and produce health for all" through a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp).

The event which was graced by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, underscored the commitment of global leaders following the political declaration made at the UNGA in September 2023.

Acknowledging the significance of high-level political commitment, the chairman extended gratitude to the president for exemplifying dedication and translating vision into actionable strategies.

The presence of dignitaries, including the Director-General of the World Health Organization, WHO, signified a global urgency toward ensuring health equity for individuals worldwide.

A milestone moment of the celebration was the signing of the compact between the federal and state governments, titled "Health Sector Renewal to Improve

Population Health Outcomes at Scale Using a Sector-Wide Approach."

This act symbolized the theme of this year's UHC Day, emphasizing the time for substantive action towards achieving

universal health coverage.

The chairman lauded the coordinating minister of health and their team for transforming the president's vision into reality through the sector-wide approach. He underscored the pivotal role of collaboration among commissioners of health, executive secretaries of State PHC Boards, and States Social Health Insurance Agencies. These entities were entrusted with translating the compact's provisions into practical and measurable actions, ensuring alignment with the president's vision.

Highlighting the

These entities were entrusted with translating the compact's provisions into practical and measurable actions, ensuring alignment with the President's vision

NGF's commitment to tangible outcomes, the chairman emphasized the secretariat's robust support in tracking the implementation and assessing the impact of these actions.

In closing, the chairman reaffirmed the NGF's unyielding dedication to realizing universal health coverage for every Nigerian, regardless of their location or social status.

The event served as a clarion call for concerted efforts, uniting political will and actionable strategies, to propel Nigeria towards the goal of health for all by 2030.

The NGF's commitment echoes a steadfast resolve to transform the healthcare landscape, signaling hope for a future where access to quality healthcare is a reality for all Nigerians.



Subnationals Must Upscale Management of Epidemiological Challenges

- Prof. Tomori

Eminent Professor of Virology and infectious diseases expert, educationist and ex-Regional Virologist for the World Health Organization, Africa Region, **OYEWALE TOMORI**, says that sub-nationals must step-up in managing epidemiological challenges and speaks on wide ranging and crucial health sector issues. **LOUIS ACHI** provides excerpts

You are a key father figure in Nigeria's health sector and internationally, over decades, in terms of mentoring personnel and conceptualizing policy. Would you say Nigeria's broad health sector situation today meets with your growth and development expectations?

No, it doesn't. We should have done much better than we are doing. Part of it is that - you know there are two aspects of development. There is something we call capacity building. There's also capacity retention. So if you build and you don't create an enabling environment for them to function, then they will go to where they can function. That's why we have "Japa" today.

Okay, the brain drain?

Exactly. A lot of people think that brain drain is because you are looking for better life. That's part of it but there is also the fact that you train me to be a doctor or a lawyer or whatever and then the environment does not allow me to have fulfillment professionally. So a lot of people go out making the mistake they are all looking for money and for whatever.

Sometimes, professional fulfillment is more satisfying. A little bit of money here and there, but if you are professionally satisfied you'll stay. There are a lot of people holding back in this country not because they can't go anywhere. But rather because you know, whatever it is they are doing, they are professionally satisfied.

So we must always look at both together. First, yes, you need money to survive, but at the same time after you've trained me to be a doctor, I have no hospital to go. I go to the hospital there's no drug. I can't be of any help. I'm trained to help people for the good and then because you don't give me the resources, I cannot help the people.

What is the use of an engineer who you sent to go build a bridge and you don't provide him with all the materials to build a bridge. What use is he? So there is the issue of professional satisfaction as well as you know the



monetary livelihood - all those combined. So we train; we build capacity. But we don't retain our capacity because we don't create the enabling environment for them to be fulfilled.

Creating enabling environment is the key issue here. Do you foresee any change in this narrative in the nearest future, as new administration is in place?

You see, one keeps hoping. But I know how many times our hope has been dashed in this country and so it's difficult even though we have the hope that a new administration will do better. But then if we look back too and you said how many administrations have we had. What have they done? So you hope that they will, but you don't have any confidence from past experience that anything better will come out of the new administration.

In confronting epidemiological challenges, what should be the role of subnationals? The federal government usually takes the lion share

The diseases start at the subnational level not at the federal level. Most of the cases are occurring in the rural areas. It starts from the subnational level, not even at the state level but at the local government level. We need to strengthen those local government areas at the state level to take responsibility for solving disease problems in their region.

Then our National Center for Disease Control will not be running helter-skelter all over the place. In fact they will do less of control and do more of coordination so that you know when the things are happening. We will only need the federal to assist and coordinate. The central government's role is to empower the states and the state will contribute to it so that we can spread the capacity to do this work well.

If each state is handling its own problem and it needs minimal support the NCDC can provide that one. But when NCDC is the one providing the full support when is it going to be able to handle the situation and that's why we are having the problem we are having.

States and local governments must take care of their responsibility. They must be responsible for solving those initial problems. Actually let me start from how those pandemic starts. It starts with one case. So a case occurs in a place just like we are seeing diphtheria. Now, a case starts in one place and you don't do anything about it, more cases arise in a local government.

If we don't do anything about it, it spreads to the state. If the state doesn't do anything about it, then it spreads to the country and where the country doesn't do anything about it, it spreads to the world and that's how COVID started.

COVID started with one single case in Wuhan, spread to other parts and cities of China then to the world. That's where we are today. So epidemic starts with one case. If you manage to control it at that point, then you won't have an epidemic and you cannot sit in Abuja and see the epidemic in my mother's village.

There are people in the villages, officers, who will see that single case, who will report it and take the appropriate actions so that it doesn't spread from my village to my town to my local government to my state to my country and to the world.

Is there a linkage to the structure of our federalism with states' apparent inability to handle certain critical health sector responsibilities?

You know everything is in the center in this country and I think someone said the center can no longer hold. We started this country not as these federal parts; we had regions. At the time there were two regions that had set up governments and we were developing then. I grew up in the Western region. It was what made me to be what I am today.

In my region we had free education, free health and other free things. Then we broke all that down and now have a federal that is running everything. The state has been incapacitated. The local government has been

We need to strengthen those local government areas at the state level to take responsibility for solving disease problems in their region



incapacitated. But if go back to those days, let everyone manage his own.

Let each state own it and contribute to running the federal. That's the way things can be handled. That is what people have been saying. It worked very well for us in those days before independence and soon after. So why did we move into federalism. Remember in our constitution we never really had a Nigerian constitution. It was made by the military fiat. So we need to go down to base on what works well for us in the past. That's all.

A few months ago, the Nigerian government confirmed the outbreak of diphtheria. The NCDC reported dozens of deaths then, mostly children from the disease and even more clinically suspected cases and said it's monitoring situations in Lagos, Kano, Osun and Yobe states. What do you think is driving the resurgence of diphtheria in Nigeria, given that world-wide, diphtheria has reduced dramatically in the past five decades?

We are reaping the result of our poor immunization coverage. Over the years, go and check the records, our immunization coverage has never gone beyond sixty percent. Go and check their record. They will give you some figures they are seventy to eighty but all those data they are not correct. It is better to check the WHO, UNICEF data. It will give you the true situation of things.

So in the last 10 years or more, we've never had coverage of GPG or the petal reaching sixty percent. So let me break it down. Five years ago we had a hundred children; we vaccinated only sixty of them. So what happens as we have forty left. Next year we have another hundred children which should be more than hundred, but let's just assume its hundred.

We still vaccinate only sixty percent. You've added another forty to the one you didn't vaccinate. So in the next three, four, five years, you are accumulating children who have not been vaccinated because diphtheria is a vaccine preventable disease.

So when you now add forty over the next five years, we have two hundred children who have not been vaccinated. Of course so when the thing comes, you see a lot of children going down. It's not that we are not getting diphtheria every year but they are occurring one there, two there, three there and our detection system doesn't catch this things so we don't know that this is going on.

The signs are there for us but we miss all those signs. So now we've accumulated and that will have this large number coming out about the same time and because it's coming out in different places at different times, it becomes obvious that there is a big problem going on. All those figures they are giving you - forget it - is probably premised on their simulation than on what exactly is happening.

So if we upscale our vaccination, we can contain it better?

Of course; I mean go and check the children, the age group of the children who are having the disease now. You will find many of them maybe five years and above or something and also who have never received vaccination. So vaccination is the key. Vaccinate your people.

All other parts of the world have prevented diphtheria occurring. They have mass-vaccinated their people; I mean their children and you rarely find them reporting diphtheria as we are doing now. So it's the failure of our immunization program that is leading us to what we are getting now.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the serious inadequacy of Nigeria's domestic vaccine production and this has national health security implications. What kind and scope of intervention should the government deploy to urgently address this gap?

It is not that we have not been making attempts to produce vaccine locally. We were producing vaccine locally before in the 1990's for yellow fever and so many others. But each time we have

a change in government policy and one government comes and does not build upon what the others have built, and that's where we are today.

A country that in the 1990's was producing vaccine and no longer producing now is a failure of continuity of government in good programs. You mentioned the words - this a health security issue. A country that cares about the health security of its people will make this a priority no matter which government is coming in.

But that's not what is happening in Nigeria. One government does it another one forgets about it and then that's the end and that's where we are. So it's not as if we have not been producing vaccine in Nigeria before. We have been doing that. We've been producing vaccine regularly since 1924, so how come in the human side we have failed to achieve that. Again I use one word, I think it's were your self-interest overrides your national interest - you get yourself to where you are right now.

You have been an active player in the lassa fever case management for the last fifty years in Nigeria, what is the government doing wrongly in the management of this disease?

Let me make a small correction. I've not been that active in the management. I've been involved with laboratory diagnosis but there are doctors who are involved in the management. But having said that lassa fever has been with us since 1959. That's almost fifty something years ago and we are still behaving as if it's a new disease every year.

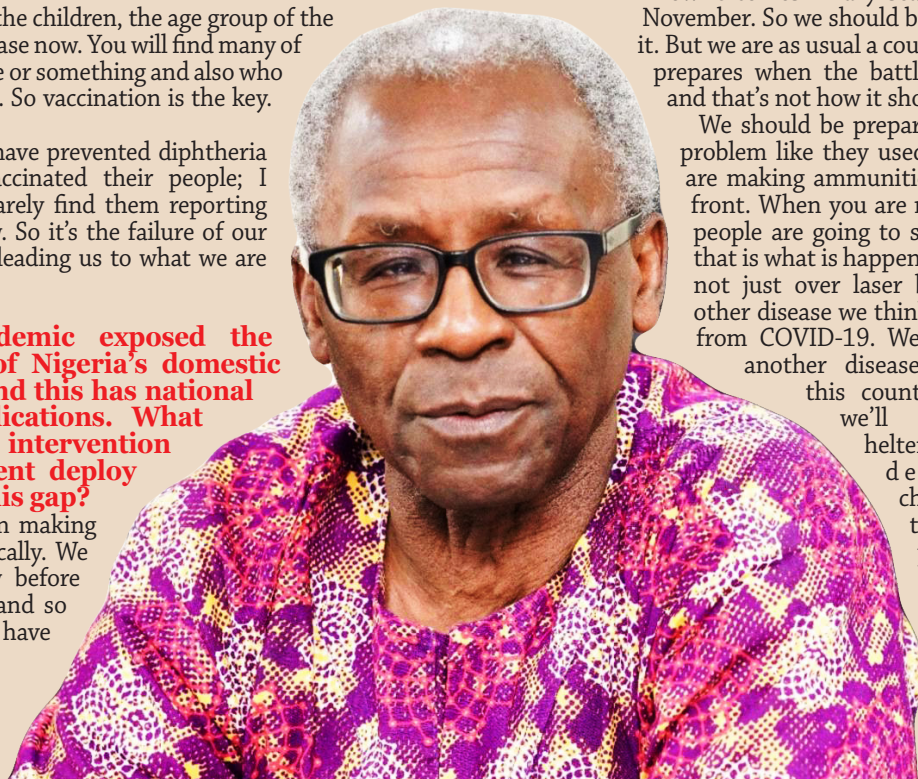
This is because we have not learnt from past lessons. If we learnt any lesson at all, we have forgotten about it. It's a disgrace and a disaster for Nigeria to be every year shouting "oh lassa fever is here, doctors are dying" we've been saying that for the last twenty years or more and we know the number of cases.

We know the seasonality of lassa fever, it occurs throughout the year and we know it comes in dry season, October, November. So we should be prepared for it. But we are as usual a country that only prepares when the battle has started and that's not how it should be.

We should be prepared before the problem like they used to say - you are making ammunition at the war front. When you are making it, the people are going to shoot you and that is what is happening to us now, not just over laser but for every other disease we think we've learnt from COVID-19. We have not. If

another disease comes into this country tomorrow we'll be running helter skater like decapitated chicken all over the whole place.

A country that in the 1990's was producing vaccine and no longer producing now is a failure of continuity of government in good programs





Polio: Gombe Targets 981,710 Children For Vaccination

Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State has initiated the third phase of polio immunization, targeting 981,710 children under five years old to eradicate polio from the state.

Represented by the Commissioner for Health during the launch, Dr. Habu Dahiru, the governor emphasized the importance of this action to eliminate the disease.

Mai Kaltungo, the deputy chairman of the Gombe State Council of Chiefs, along with Engineer Sale Muhammad and the Lamido of Gona, Alhaji Umar Abdulqadir Abdussalam, urged community leaders, parents, especially women, and caregivers to support health workers by ensuring their children receive vaccination. They highlighted how immunization would bolster children's immune systems against deadly illnesses.

Dr. Abdulrahman Shu'aibu, the Executive Secretary of Gombe State Primary Health Care Development Agency (PHCDA), detailed that the vaccination program covered polio,

deworming, malaria, and more to protect children's health.

Meanwhile, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, advocated for enhanced access to vaccinations to strengthen comprehensive health coverage during a visit from the New Incentives-All Babies Are Equal (NI-ABAE) initiative management.

In response, the emir pledged complete support and encouraged a respectful and collaborative approach with various stakeholders in expanding vaccination efforts. Zaharadden Sabi'u, NI-ABAE's Senior Stakeholder Manager (SSM), highlighted their efforts to address the lack of transport fare hindering parents and caregivers from taking their children for immunization.

Sabi'u detailed how NI-ABAE provides cash incentives totaling N6,000 over six visits to caregivers bringing their children for routine vaccinations against fatal childhood diseases. He noted that the program, operational across 41 LGAs and over 1,000 public primary healthcare facilities in Kano, has disbursed N528 million to caregivers and enrolled over 250,000 children for vaccination since its launch in February.

Gombe launches Health campaign to safeguard communities

In a momentous collaborative effort, the Gombe State Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Gombe State Primary Health Care Development Agency, has launched a holistic health campaign.

This significant initiative, inaugurated at Kofar Dagacin Tumfure in Akko Local Government Area, marks the beginning of an integrated campaign addressing outbreak response while focusing on the health of mothers, newborns, and children.

The collaborative endeavor involves partnerships with esteemed agencies including the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, WHO, TAIMAKA, NEW INCENTIVE, Chigari Foundation, Professor Idris Mohammed Foundation, among

others.

Dr. Abdulrahman Shu'aibu, Executive Secretary of Gombe State Primary Health Care Development Agency, highlighted the pivotal importance of the campaign. He emphasized its focus on polio vaccines and diseases affecting mothers and newborns, outlining the agency's strategic vision to combat health challenges and bolster immunization efforts.

Engineer Saleh Muhammad Umar Mai Kaltungo underscored the crucial role of traditional leadership in fostering health awareness within communities. He emphasized the campaign's significance in ensuring the well-being of mothers and children.





Prominent Delegation Explores Borno's Impressive Health Sector

A delegation from the Niger State Ministry of Health recently embarked on a study tour to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, to gain valuable insights into the tremendous progress achieved by the Borno health sector. Borno State, having emerged as the overall best in the country for Primary Health Care service delivery, is the prime inspiration behind this visit.

It is truly astonishing to witness the remarkable resurgence of a state that has endured a decade-long armed conflict, one of the deadliest in history, in which it was reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. However, the astonishing success of the state's health sector should no longer come as a surprise, as it is undeniably the result of the unwavering political will exhibited by His Excellency Governor Babagana Umara Zulum, supported by the coordinated efforts of stakeholders led by HCH Prof. Baba Malam Gana, alongside the vibrant endeavors of humanitarian and developmental partners.

Among the priority areas to be explored by the delegation is the Borno State Contributory Health Care Management Agency (BOSCHMA), which serves as a crucial pillar for health system strengthening. The purpose is to gain insights into the agency's daily operations and study its effective functioning.

During their visit, the delegation had the pleasure of being hosted by Dr. Saleh Abba Kaza,



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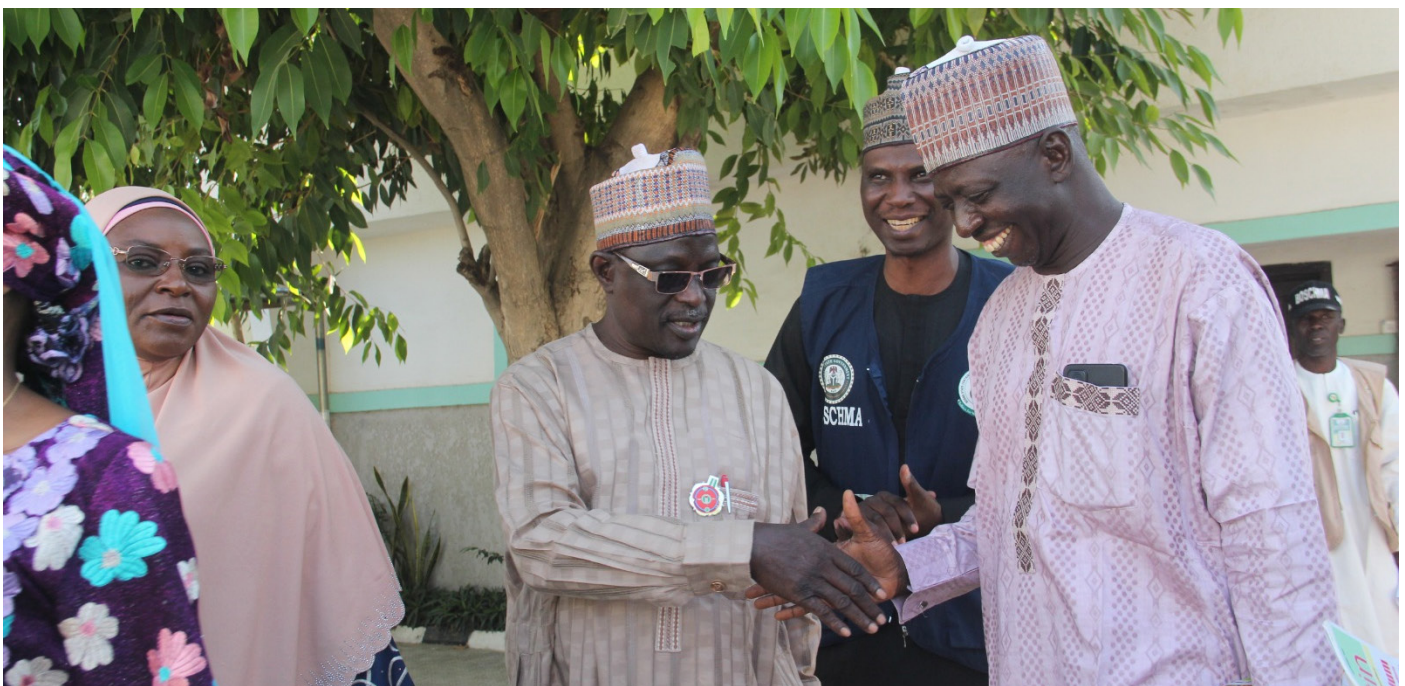
the Executive Secretary of BOSCHMA, and his team. The delegation was accompanied by the HCH Prof. Baba Malam Gana alongside the PS SMoH Dr M. Ghuluze among other health

stakeholders, the Niger team comprises the Commissioner for Primary Healthcare, Dr. Dangana; the Commissioner for Secondary and Tertiary Care, Dr. Tukur Bello; the Executive Secretary of Niger State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency, Pharm. Attahiru, along with 15 other stakeholders from the Niger State Government.

Dr. Saleh Abba Kaza delivered a concise presentation about BOSCHMA's activities, highlighting its achievements from its inception to the present day. Additionally, the delegation had the opportunity to visit the Zulum ICT complex, where they witnessed

the cutting-edge facilities installed there. Mustapha Mohammed, the Head of ICT, showcased the digitalization efforts driven by the agency's local content policy. The ICT team also presented the software they developed to streamline operations within the agency.

This collaborative exchange of information and experiences will undoubtedly contribute to a shared environment, fostering insights, and advancements in healthcare management.





Gov Sani Offers Succour To Victims, Orphans And Families Of Tudun Biri Tragedy

Following the devastating accidental bombing in the Tudun Biri community of Igabi local government area in Kaduna State, Governor Uba Sani has offered comprehensive assistance for the victims and families of the tragic event.

Governor Sani also expressed heartfelt concern for the individuals currently undergoing medical treatment at Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital and has committed to covering all their medical expenses.

Additionally, the Governor has vowed to provide financial, psychological, and emotional aid to the orphans who have lost their caregivers in this tragic incident.

The Governor disclosed these during a meeting with a distinguished delegation from the Federal Government, including Vice President Kashim Shettima, Speaker of the House of Representatives Abbas Tajuddeen, Minister of Defence Mohammed Badaru Abubakar, and the APC National Chairman Dr Abdullahi Umar Ganduje.

Governor Sani also conveyed his appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for promptly addressing the situation by ordering a thorough investigation into the incident.

Vice President Kashim Shettima, representing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, conveyed their sympathies and expressed solidarity with the Government and people of Kaduna during this challenging period

He assured the delegation that the findings of the investigation will be made public and emphasized President Tinubu's commitment to compensating the victims' families and initiating the reconstruction of critical infrastructure in the Tudun Biri community.

"The Vice President announced today that the Fulako program under his office, Mr President has also directed that it should start in Kaduna and in this very community that is the community that has been affected by this unfortunate incident that is Tudun Biri because of the fact that they have lost everything".

"So they are going to rebuild the houses and also provide a hospital for them and also to provide farming facilities for them, build schools for them and creating a city for them right now. So I want thank Mr President and vice President", said the Governor.

Vice President Kashim Shettima, representing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, conveyed their sympathies and expressed solidarity with the Government and people of Kaduna during this challenging period.

Gender Issues

NIGERIA
GOVERNORS'
WIVES FORUM

Vol.1. No. 4 Oct/Nov 2023 Edition

...An NGWF monthly publication



- Engr. Tamunominini Makinde,

ENGINEERING A LEGACY OF EMPOWERMENT

– Engr. Tamunominini Makinde,

ENGINEERING A LEGACY OF EMPOWERMENT



Engr. Tamunominini Olufunke Makinde was born on 9th June, 1972, to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Songo Batubo of Buguma in Asari Touri Local Government Area of Rivers State. She attended Port Harcourt primary school before proceeding to the Holy Rosary Secondary School, Port Harcourt. She thereafter attended the River State University of Science and Technology where she obtained a Bachelor of Engineering: Chemical/Petrochemical Engineering and graduated in 2001.

Tamunominini Makinde is an alumna of St. Thomas University in Houston, Texas, USA where she bagged a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree with a double major (Finance and General Business). She also earned a Master in Business Administration (MBA) degree from the same institution in 2017. She is an Engineer and business woman who has contributed greatly to the success of Makon Group of Companies. Undoubtedly, she is one of Nigeria's most elegant female Engineers.

Her Excellency, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde has shown tremendous commitment to the well-being of the citizens of Oyo state through her foundation, "Omituntun for Life Foundation". The foundation aims to empowering women and children in Oyo State in a bid to improve their family's standard of living through economic empowerment, skill acquisition, and financial management education. Omituntun for Life Foundation has become a beacon of hope and encouragement for the people of Oyo State, giving aids to improve the lives of women, children, widows, the fatherless, and orphans who are less privileged and impoverished. Through her Omituntun for Life Foundation, Her Excellency, Engr.

Tamunominini Makinde has carried out various welfare outreaches and empowerment programs where women were provided with start-up



items such as sewing machines, grinding machines, industrial gas cookers, etc., as well as start-up capital to help these women establish and expand their businesses successfully.

As the former Chairperson of the Oyo State Agency for the Control of AIDS (OYSACA), she has proven to be an advocate of people living with HIV/AIDS, by supporting them and hosting them in the state during the yearly World AIDS Day. She is also the Vice Chairperson of the Nigerian Governor's Wives Forum through which they support Nigerian children, youths and women.

Engr. Tamunominini Makinde is happily married to the current Governor of Oyo state, His Excellency, Engr. Oluseyi Makinde. They are blessed with three children. She is a devoted wife and nurturing mother who has continued to be a strong pillar of support to her husband's administration.

Some of the different Projects and Activities Her Excellency carried out in the last couple of months:

1. Her Excellency, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde, in commemorating this year's campaign against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), hosted the Oyo State Commissioner of Police, CP Adebola Ayinde Hamzat and other stakeholders in the fight against GBV.

At the meeting, the achievements of the Oyo State government in ending the menace of Sexual and Gender based Violence were mentioned, including the establishment of a family court, which deals with matters relating to child rights, marital issues and other related matters. As part of the fight against SGBV, the Oyo State Governor assented the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law in 2021.

Her Excellency, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde also gave financial assistance of one hundred thousand naira (#100,000) each to 10 survivors of GBV, because of her belief that financial empowerment is an important aspect of rebuilding lives. She made it known that the fight against GBV is not limited to a particular gender.

2. Sensitization walk by Her Excellency, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde, to mark the Grand Finale of the annual 16 Days of Activism against Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

3. Global Handwashing Day: Engr. Tamunominini Makinde demonstrating

how to properly wash hands at the commemoration of the global handwashing day 2023. The commemoration of the global handwashing day was done for 300 secondary school students, and the importance of handwashing was emphasized. After the event, the students with their teachers were given hand sanitizers among other things to prevent different diseases that can be contacted through uncleanness.

4. Breastfeeding Week: At this year's World Breastfeeding Week program organized by the office of Oyo State First Lady, nursing mothers in the State were urged to adopt Exclusive Breastfeeding for their babies for the first six months to ensure their optimal growth and good health.

This program is an annual week-long event to sensitize pregnant women and nursing mothers on the need to imbibe the culture of exclusive breastfeeding for babies because, it has the right amount of nutrients. At this year's event, Her Excellency commended the Oyo State Government for approving six months maternity leave with pay for nursing mothers in the state.

5. On the platform of Omituntun for Life Foundation, Her Excellency, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde, as the Chairperson, was at Saki, to encourage, as well as empower members of the Strong and Able Persons with Disability Association of Nigeria (SAPDAN), as they celebrated their 7th anniversary. She admonished them to improve on the skills they have learnt and let the challenges they are currently facing inspire them to do better for themselves.

Fifty people from the association benefitted from the empowerment, with #50,000 and a bag of rice each.

Her Excellency, Engr. Tamunominini Makinde has shown tremendous commitment to the well-being of Oyo state through her foundation, "Omituntun for Life Foundation"



Mrs. Zulaihat Dikko Radiates Hope With SASHIN's Groundbreaking Breast Cancer Initiative

Amid the World Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the First Lady of Katsina State, Mrs. Zulaihat Abdullahi Dikko, stands as a beacon of hope, unveiling an impactful initiative that mirrors her role as a nurturing figure to the state's citizens.

Championing the cause with compassion and determination, she initiated free mammography screenings, emphasizing early detection and prevention, resonating deeply within her community.

At the forefront of this pioneering effort lies the Safe Space Humanitarian Initiative (SASHIN), a testament to her unwavering dedication to her people's welfare.

Through SASHIN's compassionate embrace, individuals facing a positive diagnosis receive reassurance in the form of a two-year comprehensive

medical insurance plan.

This gesture, which is rich in empathy, not only alleviates financial burdens, but also cultivates resilience, hope, and fortitude in adversity's face.

Mrs. Dikko's heartfelt aspiration is to spare her community the pain of positive cancer diagnoses. Her commitment, intertwined with the collective endeavours of those she serves, forms an unbreakable support network that fosters unity and determination.

Together, they stand resolute, united against breast cancer, striving for a future where this disease is a distant memory.

During this awareness month, let us echo the First Lady's clarion call to action. Let us amplify awareness, disseminate knowledge, and extend a helping hand to those impacted. Together, we possess the ability to transform fear into hope, pain into resilience, and despair into unwavering determination.

With steadfast solidarity, we can craft a world where breast cancer bows before the might of compassion, awareness, and love.

Mrs. Dikko's heartfelt aspiration is to spare her community the pain of positive cancer diagnoses

Cervical Cancer Prevention: Akwa Ibom First Lady Tasks WALGON On Successful Vaccination Of Girls



In a bid to fortify the defenses against cervical cancer, the Women Association of Local Government Chairmen of Nigeria (WALGON), Akwa Ibom State Chapter, has been entrusted with the crucial task of spearheading the successful vaccination of teenage girls aged 9 to 14 in their respective localities.

The beacon of this mission is none other than Pastor Patience Umo Eno, the esteemed wife of the State Governor, who passionately delivered this charge during a courtesy visit by WALGON members to the Government House in Uyo.

Pastor Eno, recognizing the pivotal role of the Chairmen's wives as frontline leaders in their communities, urged them to actively engage with the grassroots, fostering regular dialogues aimed at elevating family standards and nurturing a secure and safe society.

She articulated her vision for a society where the well-being of families takes center stage, emphasizing that her upcoming pet project, already underway, is dedicated to reaching out to the less privileged and offering them solace. With a call for support, constructive ideas, and collaborative efforts in hosting events and programs, the

Governor's wife underscored the alignment of her pet project with the ARISE Agenda championed by her husband, Governor Umo Eno.

She implored the wives of local government chairmen to become ambassadors of her vision, actively contributing to the success of initiatives that prioritize the essence of family life.

"The crux of my impending pet project revolves around the family, and I eagerly await your input on how we can uplift the average Akwa Ibom family.

My concern for families deepened during my time in a local government where I witnessed the challenges of fractured family units.

I urge you to project and support the family, as my project aims to mend the rifts within hurting families," expressed Pastor Eno.

She continued, "God has granted me the opportunity to address these challenges, and I see you all, as front-line female stakeholders, as pivotal in modeling the ideal family structure for others to emulate. Remember, you cannot give what you do not have." In essence, WALGON finds itself at the

forefront of a health-driven campaign against cervical cancer, guided by the unwavering vision of Governor Umo Eno's wife, Pastor Patience Umo Eno. Together, they embark on a journey to not only shield the vulnerable from the threat of cervical cancer but also to foster unity, support, and strength within Akwa Ibom's families.

The crux of my impending pet project revolves around the family, and I eagerly await your input on how we can uplift the average Akwa Ibom family



Mrs Basseyy Otu Launches Groundbreaking HPV Vaccination for Young Girls



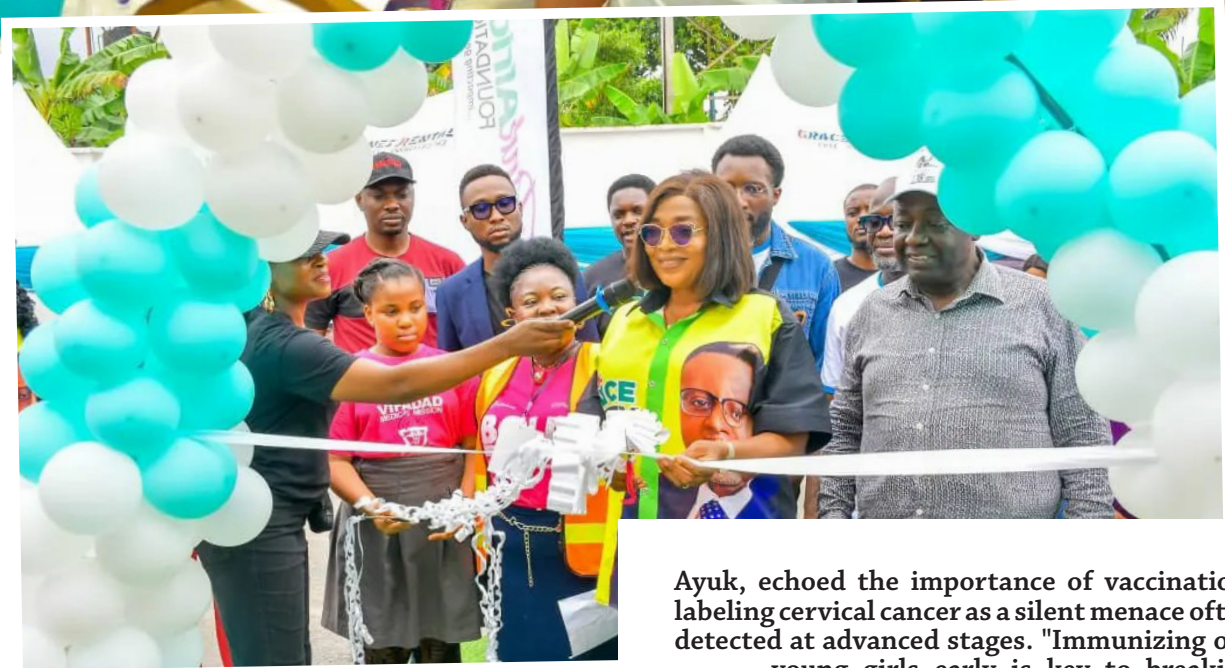
In a groundbreaking move to fortify the health and future of young girls in Cross River State, Reverend Eyoanwan Basseyy Otu, the esteemed Wife of the Governor, has inaugurated a revolutionary campaign, in collaboration with Pink Africa, providing free Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations for girls aged 9-14. The launch event, held at the Asiukpo Medical Centre in Calabar, was a vibrant convergence of healthcare professionals, community

members, and the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Egbe Ayuk.

Reverend Otu, expressing her heartfelt appreciation to Pink Africa for their pivotal role in this initiative, articulated that the partnership's noble objective is to shield the health and futures of young girls, empowering them to lead lives unencumbered by preventable diseases.

Represented by her Senior Special Adviser on Administration, Dr. Comfort





Oko, the First Lady delivered a powerful speech underscoring the urgency of proactive measures against HPV. "The Human Papillomavirus, a major catalyst for cervical cancer, poses a threat to thousands of women globally. By administering free HPV vaccinations to girls aged 9-14, we are taking a momentous stride in averting cervical cancer and securing a brighter future for our daughters."

Commissioner for Health, Dr. Egbe

Immunizing our young girls early is key to breaking the cycle of this devastating illness

Ayuk, echoed the importance of vaccination, labeling cervical cancer as a silent menace often detected at advanced stages. "Immunizing our young girls early is key to breaking the cycle of this devastating illness," remarked Dr. Ayuk.

Dr. Nchewi Ani, the visionary Founder of Pink Africa, accentuated the significance of early vaccination, assuring that the vaccines are safe and will play a pivotal role in curbing the escalating instances of cervical cancer among girls.

The event reached its zenith with a captivating showcase of songs and dances by schoolgirls, symbolizing the vitality of health and resilience. Two hundred and fifty girls from various schools across the state received the life-changing vaccination, marking a monumental stride towards a healthier, cancer-free future for the daughters of Cross River.

Osun Governor's Wife visits sexual assault referral centre in Oshogbo

...Pledges collaboration with relevant agencies to make it functional

Osun Governor's Wife, Chief Mrs Titilola Adeleke, has reiterated her office avowed commitment, to collaborate with relevant Agencies of Government to ensure the functionality of the State Sexual Assault Referral Centre in the State.

The Osun Governor's Wife, made the disclosure during her team's inspection visit to the centre, located at the State Teaching Hospital, Asubiaro, Osogbo.

She explained that the visit is in line with the recently concluded training on Gender Based Violence held in Abuja, by the Nigeria Governor's Wives Forum, as part of campaign to ensure that sexually assaulted and abuse victims receive adequate care and advice.

According to her, SARC Centre offers wide range of services which include, crisis care, medical and forensic examinations, emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections etc.

Mrs Adeleke and her team who was conducted round the offices at the centre by the workers there, led by the Permanent Secretary Hospital Management Board Dr. Abayomi Oni, adds that, the Centre can also arrange access to an independent sexual Violence advisor (ISVA), as well as referrals to mental health support and Voluntary sector sexual violence



support services.

She stressed the need for all to rally support for the protection of women, children and vulnerable against violence in the interest of their holistic Development.

She expressed dissatisfaction toward the spate of rape cases and other assault in the country which according to her requires drastic approach to stem its tide.

Mrs Titilola called for robust working synergy with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Human Right Activists, Nigeria Police and Ministry of Women Children and Social Affairs to work together to co-develop a health and wellbeing focused strategy which take into account adequate care for survivors of sexual Assault in the society.

On the entourage of the wife of the Governor to the SARC centre was, Hon commissioner for Women Children and Affairs Social Affairs, Hon Mrs Ayobola Awolowo, Special Assistance to the Governor on Children Affairs, Hon. Sekinat Temilade Khalid, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Children and Social Affairs, Mrs Abimbola Babatunde, Osun Speaker's Wife, Monsurat Egbedun, Wife of the Chief of Staff, Director Gender Based Department Mrs Lola Adewale, the PDP women leader and Iyaloja general of Osun state, Mrs Alice Otunla and Mrs Chief Oyebode Aderonke Mary among others.

Niger gov's wife seeks collective effort on discrimination against women's rights

Hajiya Fatima Bago, the wife of Governor Umaru Bago of Niger State, has called for collective efforts to end all forms of violence and discrimination against women.

Bago made the call in Minna on Friday, at a two-day training on etiquette protocol, security and empowerment, organised for female political office holders in Niger State.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the event was organised by Mrs Bago, in collaboration with the Special Adviser to the Governor on Women and Affirmative Action, Mrs Mary Berje.

The governor's wife also advised women against

any form of violence and discrimination against their fellow women.

According to her, it is incumbent on government at all levels, to create a safe and supportive environment where women could strive without fear.

"The discussion on women empowerment is not complete without addressing the issue of gender-based violence.

"Together we must stand united against violence and discrimination against women."

Bago said that affirmative action serves as a cornerstone for bridging gender disparity and ensuring that women were not misrepresented in governance.

She called on women to strive to live with integrity and set a high ethical standard for themselves and the future generations, stressing that they play critical roles in reshaping the narrative across the globe.

According to her, the involvement of women in governance is not just an option but a necessity for the growth and development of societies.

She also advised women to explore opportunities in small and medium enterprises and take advantage of the vast arable land in the state and the agriculture value chain to key into the new Niger agenda.

Earlier, Berje, Special Adviser to the Governor on Women Affirmative Action, advised women in political positions to justify the confidence reposed in them by the governor.





Bauchi State First Lady and Governor received members of the Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum at The NIGWF 2023 Annual Retreat In Bauchi

Bauchi State Governors' wife, her excellency Hajia Dr. Aisha Bala Mohammed and her husband, Governor Bala Mohammed CON received members of the Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum led by the Chairperson and First Lady of Kwara State Her Excellency Ambassador Prof Olufolake Abdulrazaq who were in the State for their 2023 in person

quarterly meeting and annual retreat.

The meeting which was hosted by the First Lady of Bauchi State Her Excellency Hajia Dr. Aisha Bala Mohammed is an annual event of the Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum whereby the Forum meets in one of the states of the Federation which provides avenue for the forum to deliberate and chart courses for the incoming year.

The retreat which held from Monday 6th of November to Wednesday 8th of November featured meetings, project commissioning and courtesy visits to the Governor of Bauchi State and the Emir of Bauchi

The maiden edition of the annual retreat of the Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum was held in Lagos in 2021 while the 2022 edition was held in Uyo Akwa ibom State.



...An NGWF monthly publication

Communique

**COMMUNIQUE
ISSUED AT THE
END OF THE
QUARTERLY
MEETING OF
THE NIGERIA
GOVERNORS
WIVES' FORUM
HELD IN BAUCHI
ON THE 7TH OF
NOVEMBER 2023.**

The Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum (NIGWF) successfully concluded its third annual retreat, a momentous occasion that provided a platform for members to deliberate on a realistic course for the incoming year 2024. This retreat also served as an avenue for members to fraternize and gain a deeper understanding of the diverse states within our great nation.

The retreat which was held on Tuesday 7th in the beautiful state of Bauchi brought together Governors' wives from various states across Nigeria. It was a testament to the commitment of these remarkable women to unity, collaboration, and progress in the service of their states and the nation as a whole.

The meeting observed the achievements of the Forum for 2023 to include:

i. The successful and wide-reach mobilization and engagement of the First Ladies in the World Breastfeeding Week sensitization, hand washing awareness, Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine sensitization, drug eradication campaigns, sustained advocacy on sexual and gender-based violence, improved nutrition, women and girl child education, skills acquisition and empowerment of women and youths, among other engagements in their various states.

At the end of the meeting, the following resolutions were made:

1

The transition from the "Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum" (NIGWF) to the "Nigeria Governors Spouses' Forum" (NGSF). This change underscores the active role the First Ladies play in advocating for increased women representation in leadership positions.

2

The First Ladies have collectively endorsed the Women Digital Upskilling program in partnership with the Labour Business School and Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC). This initiative is designed to have the First Ladies sponsor girls and women from their respective states for digital training, with the goal of reducing the gender gap in the digital industry and ensuring that women can benefit from this significant sector.

3

The First Ladies have committed to intensify their advocacy and awareness efforts regarding the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines. They will collaborate closely with primary health workers and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to ensure this comprehensive awareness campaign effectively addresses the resistance being encountered at the grassroots level.

4

Demonstrating their ongoing commitment to capacity development, the First Ladies will actively participate in a workshop on Sexual and Gender-based violence organized by the Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum (NIGWF) in partnership with UN Women on the 9th and 10th of November 2023. Additionally, in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Forum will facilitate a capacity-building program focused on drug abuse prevention and mitigation. These initiatives are designed to equip the First Ladies with the essential knowledge and skills needed to effectively engage and advocate for these critical social issues within their respective states to drive change.

5

The First Ladies endorsed the joint compact on ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices. This is a joint collaboration of the NIGWF and UNICEF

The meeting was attended by 17 First Ladies and closed at 3pm.

Gombe Wins NITDA's Most Digitally Compliant State Award

Gombe State has been conferred with the 'Most Digitally Compliant State' Award by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA).

The award was presented to Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya by the Hon. Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Dosun Tijjani during a ceremony at the end of the Digital Nigeria Conference 2023, organized by NITDA at the International Conference Center in Abuja.

The Gombe State Governor was represented at the ceremony by Retired Federal Permanent Secretary and member of Gombe State Special Advisory Council, Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Daudu and Commissioner for Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Abdullahi Bappa Garkuwa.

Receiving the award, Governor Inuwa reiterated the commitment of his administration to ensuring that Gombe State becomes the hub of information technology (IT) and innovation in Nigeria.

The Governor emphasized that digitalization has created a conducive environment for business in the state and outlined plans to further improve internal revenue generation (IGR) and transform Gombe State into Nigeria's Silicon Valley.

He revealed that his administration aims to automate all government operations within the next four years, citing the successful implementation of the biometric personnel management system in the state civil service.

"Gombe State is poised to lead in the digital revolution and address real-world governance, business, and social challenges through innovative projects".

The Director-General of NITDA, Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, had in a letter conveying the nomination to Governor Muhammadu

Gombe State is poised to lead in the digital revolution and address real-world governance, business, and social challenges through innovative projects

Inuwa Yahaya, stated that the award was a direct result of Inuwa's impressive strides in the field of Information Technology.

As reported earlier, the recognition was earned through a series of remarkable initiatives of Governor Inuwa Yahaya-led administration through exceptional policies which encompass a wide range of accomplishments, including reducing Right of Way (RoW) fees, enhancing digital infrastructure development, supplying essential ICT devices to government departments, and implementing automated revenue collection systems.

Also, Gombe State has made strides in digitizing the Gombe Geographic Information System (GOGIS) for improved land management, revolutionizing salary payments through automation, and introducing Biometric Machines to combat truancy and enhance efficiency and productivity among civil servants.

Recall that just recently, Gombe State stood out brilliantly among many Federal establishments and state agencies at the GovTech Digital Governance Award organized by the Presidency through the Bureau for Public Service Reforms, and received three prestigious awards for its remarkable achievements in advancing digital governance.

During that event, Gombe State Geographic Information System (GOGIS) received the coveted "Best State in Geographic Information System" Award, Gombe State Due Process Office clinched the best State MDA in innovative Digital Services and Gombe State University (GSU) was recognized as the best State University in Website Operations.





By Prof Abba Gambo

ACHIEVING ZERO GRAZING

Nigeria is an agrarian country, with 87% of the total population directly and indirectly involved in agriculture.

The country is also adorned with an array of different agro-ecological zones comprising Sahel Sudan and guinea savanna in the North. While the South has the mangrove, rainforest and the derived savanna.

Nigeria has abundance of livestock population estimated at more livestock than the human population. The livestock sub-sector has contributed greatly to the GDP of Nigeria, through the exportation of hides and skins and other animal by-products.

Nigerians are also “natural meat lovers”. Most Nigerians do not take a meal without meat and it’s common in Nigerians to see a single pot of soup with pieces of meat like - lamb, goat, chicken, snail and other orishirishi combined.

However, the pattern of raising livestock - nomadic pastoralism - has since become rudimentary and archaic.

The constant movement of cattles from Borno to Port Harcourt and Sokoto to Lagos on annual basis has significantly reduced the by-products of the cattle. This applies particularly to dairy and beef, in addition to the myriad of security challenges all over the country.

The constant farmers versus pastoralist conflicts include cattle

Gombe State is poised to lead in the digital revolution and address real-world governance, business, and social challenges through innovative projects

rustling and other negative vices keep on increasing as a result.

The modern method of grazing all over the world now is termed “Zero Grazing.” Instead of moving with the animals to look for food and water, the animals are now stationed “in-situ,” in one place and their feed and water served to them.

A typical zero grazing concept involves a piece of land, grasses (pastures and forages).

A permanent source of water, a shed for protection from the sun and rainfall are also key related factors.

Another is a special shed for delivery and calving; also another for pregnant cattles as well as a vet clinic with a veterinary doctor on stand-by.

As part of the farm’s corporate social responsibility, a school, hospital and a market should be provided for the workers tending to these animals.

Security is another point of attention. The area should be well secured to prevent harm to both the livestock and its tenders.

One major challenge is the lack of access roads to the farmlands or pens. This should be improved on for commuters to include the farmers, livestock as well as distributors and buyers.

The above scenario will make the cows produce more dairy products such as milk, yield better quality of beef and also increase the calving ratio.

The zero grazing policy if well-articulated, will end the constant farmers /pastoralists clashes.

Effective Extension Service Delivery, Panacea to improved Agric Productivity



...Boosts national food security

Agricultural extension is referred to as the Method of disseminating Agricultural information from Researchers, policy Makers, Institutions to the farmers at the rural areas.

In Nigeria, most of our farmers have very low literacy levels.

The Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN), a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, has the Mandate for all Research activities.

In Nigeria, The ARCN has about 18 Research institutes, Oil palm Research Institute at Benin, Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), Samaru Zaria, National Institute for Horticultural Research, Jericho Ibadan, Rice Research Institute Badagri.

Roots and Tuber Crops Research Institute,

Umudike etc.

However, there is a big disconnect between the Research Institute and the real farmers on the field.

Similarly, with about 5 Federal Universities of Agriculture, several federal, state and public universities, polytechnic and colleges of education and the massive research conducted ends up on the shelves of scholars.

The rural farmers, through subsistence need all the information they can in Agricultural inputs, planting modules, weather data forecasts, impending pests, diseases, grasshoppers and quell birds infestation etc

With the launch of state of emergency on food security, there is no better time to assist the farmers than now.

- The massive unemployed youths can be trained as extension agents.
- Local languages can be used to pass information.
- Gender-based issues is crucial as for examples, women enjoy discussing with fellow women.
- Jingles on Television and Radios
- Flyers, brochures and pamphlets can be deployed
- Text messages, as virtually every famer in Nigeria has a telephone.

With the above scenario, the much awaited "National Food Security" can be achieved.

...No security without food, says NGF advisor

The Senior Agricultural Advisor to the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Prof. Abba Gambo, has described food security as an important component of national security.

Gambo noted that the importance of food could not be overemphasised, adding, "Food security equals national security. So, if one is missing, the other one is also missing."

The NGF advisor, who stated this in an interview with Sunday PUNCH, explained that the peaceful nations of the world were countries that could feed themselves.

"In Nigeria, we cannot feed ourselves and unless and until

this is achieved, honestly, the needed national security has a question mark," he added.

On what the NGF is doing to complement the effort of the Federal Government, Gambo, who described the forum as a policy hub, disclosed that they had developed several policies as far as food security was concerned.

He stated, "We pass it to our principals for quite a very long time; some have been implemented, some have been executed excellently but then, in some cases, you have to give them some leverage because of politics."

International Day for PWDs: No one is created without potential - Oyebanji

Ekiti State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji has advocated better and improved living standard for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) noting that God has not created anyone to be useless or without potentials.

Governor Oyebanji, who stated this recently at an event commemorating this year's International Day for Persons With Disabilities held at Jibowu Hall, Government House, Ado Ekiti, assured persons with disabilities that his government would continue to make policies that would bring them at par with other citizens as regards fulfilling their God-given talents and potentials.

He added that his administration would not relent in prioritizing their welfare.

The event which was attended by Speaker, Ekiti State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Adeoye Aribasoye; his deputy, Rt. Hon. Bolaji Olagbaju; Secretary to the State Government, Dr Habibat Adubiaro; members of State Executive Council and House of Assembly has as theme: "united in action to rescue and achieve the SDG's for, with and by persons with disabilities",

The Governor noted that the remarkable and landmark improvement in the lives of Children in the Government Special schools has shown that his administration had not made mistake by taking the affairs of persons with disabilities out of the Ministry of Education and creating the office of Special Education and Social Inclusion.

He highlighted some of the interventions in the special schools to include, several ongoing projects such as renovation of hostels and classrooms, adding that his administration has given approval for employment of 17 therapists and 91 permanent support staff which may include qualified people with disabilities and single mothers with children with disabilities.

The Governor added that his government has also developed a new curriculum for pupils in the Special Class to address their special needs and prepare them for independent adulthood.

Governor Oyebanji called for renewed efforts to create a fully inclusive world where



everyone must work together to break down barriers and build a just society that values every individual's unique perspectives and potentials.

"When it gets to the issue of Persons with Disability (PWDs), I get a little emotional about it and as long as I remain the Governor of this State, we are in it together. Because, my Bible tells me, we are fearfully and wonderfully made and we are made in the image of God and God doesn't make mistake, so in whatever form God has created us, its for a purpose and God will use me to achieve those purposes in your lives.

"I don't agree that anybody is created useless but I agree that if you don't have the right support, you don't have the right access to opportunities, it may be challenging to fulfil your potentials, so, the duty of any government is to create opportunities for those of us that don't have access to those opportunities so that we can fulfil those God-given potentials in all of us.

"It is vital to support people with disabilities (PWDs) by creating employment opportunities for them. Advocacy for fair job advancement and placement of PWDs has been quite effective in this government. As a result, Mr Victor Olowokere was recently appointed to the admin cadre after successfully going through the rigorous process.

"To improve the inclusion of people with deafness in essential interaction within the office space, all civil servants are currently

having sign language lessons online.

"Across the community, particularly in schools, we have several ongoing projects to improve the lives of children with disabilities. These projects include the renovation of hostels and classrooms, approval of 17 therapists and 91 permanent support staff for employment, including people with disabilities and single mothers with children with disabilities. We have also developed a new curriculum for pupils in the Special Class to address their needs and prepare them for independent adulthood." The Governor added.

Earlier in her welcome address, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Special Education and Social Inclusion, Mrs Adetoun Agboola expressed her appreciation to Governor Oyebanji for his consistent support for people with disabilities noting that the Governor's support is a rare gesture.

Mrs Agboola commended the unwavering commitment of the Governor towards promoting their welfare and advancing their rights through various initiatives and policies that his administration has put in place to improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

She highlighted the various initiatives of the government towards this direction to include employment opportunities, education and training, as well as sensitisation and awareness campaigns.

The Special Adviser called on government to create a more inclusive society where

everyone has equal opportunities to thrive as people with disabilities face numerous challenges in their daily lives, including discrimination, lack of access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, stressing the need for a united effort to achieve an egalitarian society of equal opportunities.

There were goodwill messages from the Speaker of the state House of Assembly, Rt Hon Adeoye Aribasoye; Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Peju Babafemi and the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Dayo Apata (SAN) among others.

The event featured dance, quiz competition, choreography, panel discussions, and award presentation.

During the Panelists session which featured persons with disabilities, parents and government officials, it was agreed that the three special schools at Ikere, Ido and Ikoro had witnessed tremendous increase in enrolment since the inception of Governor Oyebanji one year ago.

The panelists opined that the perception of residents of the state about special schools has changed and many parents have been encouraged to register their children and wards in the schools.

When it gets to the issue of Persons with Disability (PWDs), I get a little emotional about it and as long as I remain the Governor of this State, we are in it together

Made-In-Akwa Ibom Trade Fair: Gov Eno Donates N250m To Ibom-LED

Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State has pledged a generous donation of 250 million naira to the Ibom Leadership and Entrepreneurial Development Centre (Ibom LED) to support the training and empowerment of around 400 entrepreneurs in the state.

During the official commencement of the Made in Akwa Ibom Trade Fair held at the Ibom LED Headquarters on IBB Avenue, Uyo, Governor Eno expressed admiration for the various tradespeople and urged entrepreneurs to proudly showcase their innovations and creativity at the trade fair.

Explaining the breakdown of the donation, Governor Eno outlined that 50 million naira would be allocated to cover the business school fees for entrepreneurial students, paid by the state government for their registration and training. Additionally, upon completion of their respective training programs, each student would receive a startup grant of 500,000 naira to assist in establishing their businesses.

The Governor reiterated his commitment to fostering the growth of small and medium-scale enterprises in the state, emphasizing his administration's dedication to creating a conducive environment for business prosperity. He affirmed that this move was in line with his campaign promise to support and nurture entrepreneurs for success.

Governor Eno underscored the importance of empowering

individuals through skill development, recognizing the potential of entrepreneurship in generating employment opportunities beyond government jobs or political appointments.

Regarding the transformation of the Ibom E-Library to house the Entrepreneurial and Leadership School, Governor Eno highlighted the facility's conversion, attributing it to his administration's objective to offer local training opportunities rather than sending citizens elsewhere for similar education, thereby saving substantial resources.

The Governor also acknowledged the legacy of former Governor Godswill Akpabio in establishing the facility and expressed gratitude to individuals, including Pastor ImoAbasi Jacob, Director General Mrs. Ekaette Umo, and Senior Special Assistant Mr. Ime Uwah, for their efforts in redefining the space to align with the vision of an entrepreneurial center.

Governor Eno commended the Ministry of Trade and Investment, as well as the Ibom-LED team, for swiftly organizing the exhibition, acknowledging their accurate interpretation of his vision for the Entrepreneurial Center and their dedicated efforts in accomplishing their tasks within a short notice.

This significant donation and commitment reflect the Governor's dedication to fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth in Akwa Ibom State.



Cally Air Resumes Flight Services At Calabar Airport

Cross River State-owned airline, Cally Air, managed by Aero, has resumed flight operations at the Margaret Ekpo International Airport in Calabar to cater to increased air traffic.

Governor Sen Bassey Otu praised his predecessor, Sen. Ben Ayade, for initiating Cally Air, highlighting plans for continuous flights from Lagos and Abuja to Calabar.

The Governor expressed intentions to expand the fleet with three more aircraft soon, aiming to elevate Calabar's status to

an international airport. He acknowledged the Ministry of Aviation and FAAN for their efforts in improving the airport's functionality, including extending flight timings till 9 pm.

Governor Otu welcomed investors and tourists, encouraging them to utilize Cally Aero when visiting Cross River for business or leisure. He emphasized on the partnership's viability and commitment to strengthening it further.

CEO of Aero Contractors, Captain Ado Sanusi, commended Governor Otu's vision and approved the return of aircraft services to Calabar, expressing readiness to cover the Carnival Calabar International Festival fully.

Sanusi urged air travelers to consider Aero Cally, highlighting the affordability of their fares as the most pocket-friendly in the country.

GOV ALIA Flags Off Another Phase Of Palliative Distribution In Benue

Governor Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia of Benue State recently launched the third phase of palliative distribution in Benue. He praised the President Bola Ahmed Tinubuled federal government for offering palliatives to states, aimed at mitigating the impact of subsidy removal in the country. The governor emphasized that these measures were meant to alleviate the effects of the subsidy removal temporarily.

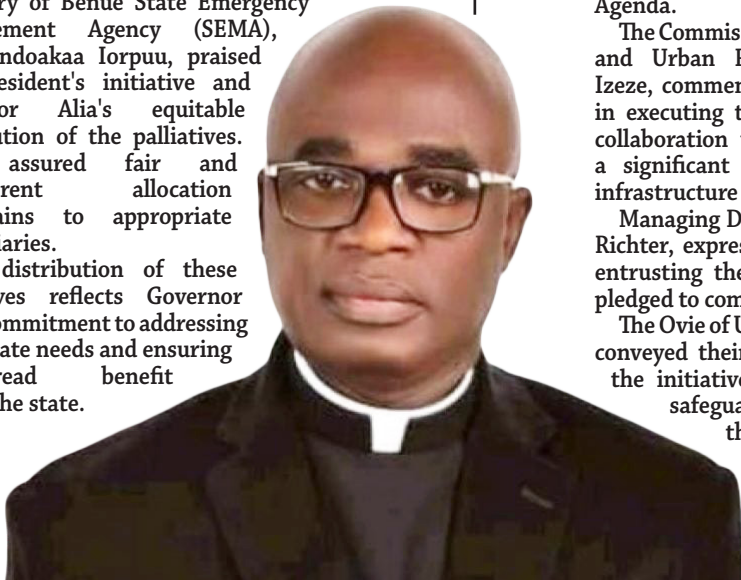
During the distribution at the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) office in Makurdi, Governor Alia highlighted the receipt of 25 trucks of maize and 35 trucks of rice, designated for widespread distribution across the state. He emphasized that the distribution would not be based on political affiliations, aiming for inclusive benefits to all citizens.

Governor Alia also mentioned prior initiatives, such as procuring 100 buses for Benue Links Transport Company Limited and distributing fertilizers to farmers. Additionally, plans were unveiled to support educational initiatives, including registering students for WAEC and NECO exams and training youths in ICT programs. He pledged a focus on rural road construction in the near future and discussed intentions for civil service recruitment in January 2024.

Emphasizing his commitment to providing infrastructure, security, and ensuring prompt payment of salaries and pensions, Governor Alia reiterated his party's, the APC's, dedication to offering support and good governance in the state. He warned against disturbing the peace enjoyed in the state and vowed not to permit any disruption.

The Chairman of the Palliatives Distribution Committee, Barr. Omale Omale, and the Secretary of Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Mr. Aondoakaa Iorpuu, praised the President's initiative and Governor Alia's equitable distribution of the palliatives. They assured fair and transparent allocation of grains to appropriate beneficiaries.

The distribution of these palliatives reflects Governor Alia's commitment to addressing immediate needs and ensuring widespread benefit across the state.



Gov Oborevwori Kicks Off Construction of N78bn Effurun/Warri Flyovers

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori has initiated the commencement of construction for three flyovers, cloverleaf, road expansion, and pedestrian bridges in Effurun and Warri metropolis. The projects aim to enhance traffic flow, alleviate congestion, and transform the appearance of Effurun and Warri.

During the groundbreaking ceremony held in Effurun, Governor Oborevwori highlighted the projects' significance in improving traffic flow, boosting economic activities, and providing employment opportunities. The Governor emphasized the release of the agreed sum to the contractor, Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, to enable preliminary activities and construction commencement.

The cumulative contract sum for the projects amounts to N77,997,159,339.91, with a completion period of twenty-seven months. Governor Oborevwori reiterated the projects' objectives to tackle gridlocks along Effurun Roundabout to DSC Roundabout and ease vehicular movements in Uvwie and Warri South Local Government Areas.

The Governor urged the contractor to adhere to the agreed schedule and called for community support to ensure swift project completion. He affirmed the government's commitment to improving road and transport infrastructure across the state's three senatorial districts as outlined in the administration's MORE Agenda.

The Commissioner for Works (Highways and Urban Roads), Comrade Reuben Izeze, commended the Governor's vision in executing these projects, noting this collaboration with Julius Berger marks a significant milestone in the state's infrastructure development.

Managing Director of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Mr. Lars Richter, expressed gratitude to the State Government for entrusting the company with these crucial projects and pledged to complete them within the stipulated time frame.

The Ovie of Uvwie Kingdom and the Olu of Warri Kingdom conveyed their appreciation to Governor Oborevwori for the initiative, pledging their communities' support to safeguard and ensure the successful completion of the projects, describing it as a symbol of unity.

The projects aim to enhance traffic flow, alleviate congestion, and transform the appearance of Effurun and Warri



Report of the third African Sub-sovereign Governments Network (AfsNET) conference held on the sideline of IATF2023

Introduction

The third AfsNET Conference was held on 18 November 2023 in Cairo, Egypt, as a side event of the IATF2023 Trade and Investment Conference. The theme of the conference was “African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network as a Vehicle for Promoting Intra-African Trade and Investment”. The Conference was co-hosted by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in collaboration with the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA).

The conference aimed to provide a platform for African sub-sovereign governments, such as states, regions, provinces, counties, municipalities, and cities, to share their experiences, challenges, and opportunities in promoting intra-African trade and investment.

The conference was attended by more than 250 participants, including governors, mayors, ministers, business leaders, financial institutions across the continent.

Objectives of the 3rd AfsNET Conference

The main objective of the conference is to strengthen the institutional framework established between Afreximbank and UCLG Africa and to facilitate increased collaboration in the promotion of trade, development and investment initiatives within the context of AfCFTA.

Specifically, it will aim to:

- i) Promote dialogue and advocate for the smooth and efficient implementation of the AfCFTA
- ii) Identify challenges which are currently

or likely to impact attainment of the Network’s objectives

- iii) Support sub-sovereigns to identify and showcase/promote trade and investment projects in the sub-sovereign governments, with a view to attracting support and funding/investors
- iv) Facilitate Business to Business (B2B) and Government to Business (B2G) sessions and engagements, joint ventures, partnerships, and deal-making
- v) Generate opportunities for enhancing



intra-African trade and investment,

vi) Effectively engage the African diaspora, the Sixth African region as designated by the African Union

vii) Present and create awareness around the Bank's suite of products and initiatives designed to facilitate and boost intra-African trade and investment

viii) Identify a host for the fourth African Sub-sovereign governments network

ix) Promote the participation of sub-sovereigns in the IATF2023

Panel Sessions

The conference featured two panel discussions, moderated by Dr François Paul Yatta, Director of Programs, UCLGA, and Hon. Fredrick Gume Ngobi, Minister of State for Cooperatives of Uganda, respectively.

The first panel discussion focused on the role of sub-sovereign governments in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which entered into force in January 2021. The panelists highlighted the importance of sub-sovereign governments in creating an enabling environment for trade and investment, such as providing infrastructure, services, security, and regulatory frameworks. They also discussed the challenges they face, such as lack of capacity, resources, and coordination, as well as the opportunities they have, such as leveraging their comparative advantages, diversifying their economies, and attracting foreign direct investment.

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Summary of Conference Proceedings

OPENING STATEMENT: EVP, H.E. Mr. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat

WELCOME REMARKS: Dr. John Olukayode Fayemi, FORAF President and H.E. Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Governor of Kisumu, highlighted the proactive role of sub-sovereigns: "African sub-government local and regional governments have developed institutions and structures for investment advocacy at the local and international level.

AfSNET: The Journey So Far (Reflection on the Past, the Present, and Envisioning the Future) by Prof. Ogechi Adeola, Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria

Showcasing of Afreximbank's Products: Dr. Gainmore Zanamwe, Acting Director, Intra-African Trade Bank presented its suite of products and initiatives, specifically designed to support African sub-sovereigns in their trade and investment endeavours.





discussed the challenges they face, such as lack of capacity, resources, and coordination, as well as the opportunities they have, such as leveraging their comparative advantages, diversifying their economies, and attracting foreign direct investment.

The panelists for the first session were:

- Peggy Nkonyeni, MEC for Finance, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, who spoke about the initiatives taken by her province to support the AfCFTA, such as establishing a trade and investment promotion agency, developing a provincial trade strategy, and hosting the IATF2021 Trade and Investment Conference.

- H.E. AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, Governor, Kwara State of Nigeria & Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum, who shared his vision of transforming Kwara State into a trade and investment hub, by improving infrastructure, security, and governance, as well as fostering partnerships with other sub-sovereign governments and the private sector.

- H.E. Prof. Peter Nyong'o, Governor, Kisumu County, Kenya, who highlighted the potential of Kisumu County as a gateway to the East African Community and beyond, by leveraging its strategic location, natural resources, and cultural diversity. He also emphasized the need for sub-sovereign governments to align their policies and plans with the national and continental agendas.

- H.E. Oluwaseyi Makinde, Governor, Oyo State, Nigeria, who outlined the steps taken by his state to boost trade and investment, such as establishing an economic advisory council, launching a one-stop shop for investors, and creating a special economic zone. He also stressed

the importance of sub-sovereign governments in addressing the social and environmental impacts of trade and investment, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change.

- Governor James Orono, Siya County
- H.E. Senator Prince Bassey E. OTU, Governor, Cross River State, Nigeria, who showcased the achievements of his state in attracting and retaining investors, such as building a deep seaport, an industrial park, and a garment factory. He also called for more collaboration and integration among sub-sovereign governments, especially in the areas of infrastructure, energy, and transportation.

The second panel discussion focused on the need and modalities for setting up a sub-sovereign network to enhance intra-African trade and investment. The panelists agreed that there was a strong rationale for establishing such a network, as it would enable sub-sovereign governments to share best practices, exchange information, access resources, and advocate for their interests. They also discussed the possible objectives, membership, structure, and functions of the network, as well as the role of Afreximbank and other development partners in supporting its formation and operation.

The panelists for the second session were:

- H.E. Godwin Obaseki, Governor, Edo State, Nigeria, who proposed that the network should aim to create a common market for sub-sovereign governments, by harmonizing standards, regulations, and policies, as well as facilitating trade facilitation, dispute resolution, and market access. He also suggested that the network should have a rotating leadership, a secretariat, and a steering committee, as well as



thematic working groups and regional chapters.

A poignant quote by H.E. Godwin Obaseki, Governor of Edo State, Nigeria, underscored the significance of sub-sovereign governments: "There are no federal citizens." This statement highlighted the crucial role of sub-sovereign entities in directly connecting with and impacting the lives of the people.

- H.E. Mbarka Bouaida, President of the Association of the Regions of Morocco, who shared the experience of her association in promoting regional development and decentralization in Morocco, as well as its involvement in various regional and continental initiatives, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Charter on Decentralization, and the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa. She also recommended that the network should adopt a bottom-up and inclusive approach, involving all levels and types of sub-sovereign governments, as well as other stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, and academia.

- H.E Charles Soludo, Governor of Anambra State, Nigeria, was represented by Christian C. Udochukwu, the Commissioner for Industry. Mr. Udochukwu conveyed Anambra's commitment to leveraging its position as an entrepreneurial hub, outlining the state's strategic initiatives to become a leading trade center, not just within Nigeria but across the African continent, in alignment with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). He highlighted Anambra's focus on harnessing technological advancements, emphasizing the state's ambition to foster tech startups and develop e-commerce platforms. These initiatives are aimed at tapping into broader African markets, positioning Anambra as a key player in the digital economy under the auspices of the AfCFTA

- H.E. Dauda Lawal, Governor, Zamfara State, Nigeria, who highlighted the challenges faced by his state in terms of insecurity, poverty, and underdevelopment, as well as the efforts made to overcome them, such as launching a peace and reconciliation initiative, implementing a social protection program, and developing a mineral resources strategy. He also expressed his interest in joining the network and learning from the experiences of other sub-sovereign governments, especially in the areas of peacebuilding, governance, and resource management.

- Mr. M'Houdine Mohamed Zeine, Special Adviser to the Governor of Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Union of Comoros, who presented the specificities of his island, which is part of the Union of Comoros, a federal state composed of four autonomous islands. He also explained the challenges and opportunities of being an island state, such as the vulnerability to natural disasters, the dependence on maritime transport, and the potential for tourism and fisheries. He also expressed his willingness to participate in the network and benefit from the support of Afreximbank and other partners.

- Mr. Humphrey Oriakhi, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, PAC Holdings, who represented the private sector perspective and underscored the role of sub-sovereign governments in creating a conducive business environment, by providing infrastructure, security, and incentives, as well as reducing bureaucracy, corruption, and red tape. He also highlighted the benefits of the network for the private sector, such as providing a platform for dialogue, partnership, and advocacy, as well as facilitating access to markets, finance, and technology.

Gombe Governor COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

...Pledges continued support, inclusive policies

In commemoration of the International Day of People with Disabilities, the Governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, CON has felicitated with the resilient individuals facing challenges due to disabilities across the state.

In a goodwill message, the Governor emphasized his administration's resolve to encourage inclusive policies, promote diversity, equity, and empowerment for every segment of society.

While reflecting on this year's theme, 'United in action to rescue and achieve the sustainable development goals for, with and by persons with disabilities,' the Governor reiterated his commitment to ensuring the dreams and aspirations of People with Disabilities (PWDs) are not only acknowledged but fully supported by his government.

"We remain resolute in our commitment to providing necessary support for the empowerment and dreams of our PWDs".

"Efforts are underway to establish an Agency to cater for the unique needs and welfare of our PWD community," the Governor stated.

He assured that a bill which will seek to create this Agency has received the full attention and support of his administration. He pledged that upon its submission and passage by the State House of Assembly, he will expedite its enactment into law, to ensure that the voices and concerns of PWDs are comprehensively addressed.

Governor Inuwa acknowledged the strength and resilience demonstrated by the disability community in Gombe State, urging continued support and loyalty to his administration's inclusive initiatives.

"We renew our resolve to champion inclusivity, celebrate diversity, and continue our collective journey towards a more supportive society", the Governor assured.

Northern Governors' Forum Chairman Bemoans Tudun Biri Tragedy

The Chairman of Northern States Governors' Forum and Governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, CON has expressed deep sorrow and heartfelt condolences to the families of the Maulud celebrants who were tragically affected in the unfortunate accidental bombing by the

Nigerian army in Tudun Biri Community of Kaduna State.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya extended his condolences to the government and people of Kaduna State during this profoundly distressing time, describing the loss of innocent lives as a heartbreaking tragedy. >>

Governor Inuwa Constitutes Committees On Open Governance Partnership, Civil Society Organizations



Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, CON, has approved the constitution of 2 committees.

The Secretary to the State Government, Professor Ibrahim Abubakar Njodi who conveyed the Governor's approval, said the development is in line with Governor Inuwa's commitment to furthering collaborative efforts towards open governance and targeted developmental programmes in Gombe State.

The committees are as follows:

1. The Open Governance Partnership (OGP) State Steering Committee (SSC), with the Secretary to the State Government as Co-Chairman.

The OGP State Steering Committee is constituted to promote transparent governance and foster synergy among government departments, etc.

Members of the SSC include Head of Civil Service, Commissioners of Finance and Economic Development, Information, Culture and Ethical Orientation, Education, Women Affairs & Social Development, Budget & Economic Planning, and Justice as well as a representative of the State House of Assembly, the Permanent Secretary Bureau for Public Procurement and the Senior Special Assistant (Budget Planning and Development Partners Coordination) who will serve as Secretary.

2. Civil Society Organizations Committee

Governor Inuwa Yahaya expects members of the committees to serve as catalysts for progressive change, leverage their diverse expertise and collective experience to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery in Gombe State

The Civil Society Organizations committee is set up to foster community engagement and ensure the implementation of inclusive policies.

Members include the Chairmen of the Association of Non-Governmental Associations Gombe State, Foundation for Youth Awakening and Empowerment, Jewel Health Initiative, Wilden Care Foundation, People Empowerment Initiative, Advocacy Centre for Development (AC4D), Voice of Hopes, Jewel Care Foundation, Newage Initiative for Youth, and Dandalin Matasa.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya expects members of the committees to serve as catalysts for progressive change, leverage their diverse expertise and collective experience to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery in Gombe State.

All the appointments are with immediate effect.

The Governor emphasized that while the fight against banditry and terrorism remains crucial, it must be executed with the highest level of professionalism and care to prevent such heart-wrenching accidents.

He strongly called for a comprehensive and thorough investigation into the unfortunate incident.

"It is imperative for the authorities to

take prompt and necessary measures to not only address the immediate concerns of the victims and the affected community, but also to prevent any future occurrences".

In these trying times, Governor Inuwa Yahaya assures the affected families and the community of Tudun Biri as well as the people of Kaduna State of the support and commitment of the Northern Governors to ensuring justice, healing, and security in the region.

AfDB APPROVES \$80M LOAN FOR EKITI KNOWLEDGE ZONE DEVELOPMENT

Ekiti State is set to become West Africa's premier tech hub with the African Development Bank's (AfDB) approval of an \$80 million loan for the Ekiti State Knowledge Zone (EKZ).

This loan approval marks a pivotal moment, reaffirming the foresight of the State's Development Plan, demonstrating the benefits of continuity in governance and serving as a major step in executing the job creation agenda of both the State and Federal Government.

Commenting on the approval, The Governor of Ekiti State, Mr. Biodun Oyebo, stated, "This historic moment for Ekiti State is a testament to our commitment to fostering innovation, job creation, and sustainable economic growth. EKZ is not just a project; it's a commitment to a better future for our State and Nigeria.

"We thank the AfDB, but also specially thank Mr. President, His Excellency, Bola Ahmed Tinubu; the Federal Executive Council, the Ministry of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, and all other stakeholders



This historic moment for Ekiti State is a testament to our commitment to fostering innovation, job creation, and sustainable economic growth

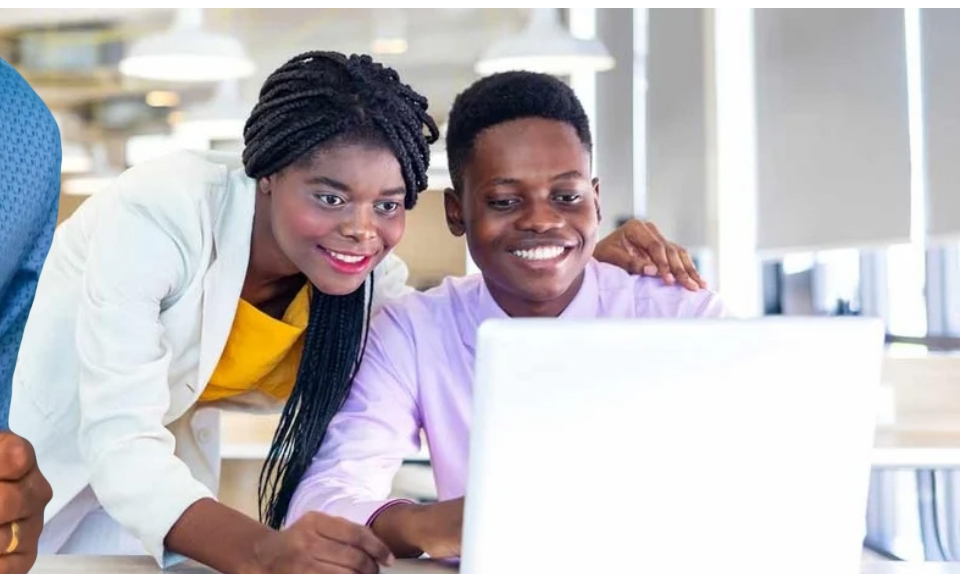
for their unwavering support during the approval process."

The Commissioner of Finance for Ekiti State, Mr. Akintunde Oyebo, highlighted the impact EKZ will have on Ekiti State's economic landscape, stating, "This funding will play a crucial role in realising our vision for EKZ—a world-class hub attracting premier local and international companies, unlocking value for investors and businesses. EKZ is not just about buildings; it's about building communities, generating thousands of jobs, including opportunities for women and youth, while fuelling the State's progress.

EKZ's tagline, 'Where Innovation Thrives,' isn't just a mantra—it's a pledge to investors and businesses, local and international alike. Come to Ekiti and you will thrive. We're working hard to improve key indicators crucial to your success, spanning transportation networks, healthcare, concessions, and streamlined bureaucratic processes."

"We are building a legacy of excellence with EKZ," declared the Director-General of Ekiti State Development and Investment Promotion Agency (EKDIPA), Mrs. Lolade Oke-Olutola. "Join us in transforming this fountain of knowledge into a fountain of innovation."

The immediate focus is to meet the conditions to draw down on the approved funds, ensuring that EKZ is completed within the shortest possible time while adhering to globally benchmarked standards. With a groundbreaking planned for 2024, the Ekiti State Knowledge Zone is set to be built on a sprawling 209 hectares of land strategically located close to the newly constructed airport and a robust pool of highly skilled talent. With the support of key stakeholders, the State is confident that EKZ will not only be a beacon of innovation but also a testament to the power of collaboration in driving economic growth and prosperity.



Turkish Agric Company Mulls Tractor Assembly Plant In Yobe

A Turkish Agricultural manufacturing firm, Abollo Agricultural Machinery Company, has indicated interest in establishing a tractor assembling plant in Yobe State.

Mr. Tefvik Gumus, Chief Executive Officer of the Company, disclosed this when a delegation from the state visited the company in Konya, Turkey, recently.

He said the plant will assemble the tractors with complete accessories and equipment needed for agriculture, from planting to harvests to make farming easy, attractive, and profitable to farmers in the state.

Tefvik assured that the company will produce equipment that is suitable for the state topography and climate and the North East in general.

The CEO said the company had been in existence 40 years ago and producing equipment suitable to



conditions of over 60 countries.

"We provide solutions to agricultural challenges from planting to harvests.

"The company also works on soil preparation and testing, training, and equipment.

"Our company is most willing to partner your state to design, manufacture, and establish a plant in your state to serve you and other states close to you," he assured.

Gov. Buni assured the preparedness of his administration to partner private investors and to provide the necessary incentives to the company and other investors.

He said Yobe state government is committed to improving agricultural production to ensure food security and sufficiency.

"We are determined to improve agriculture through irrigation, fight food scarcity, and unemployment to boost our economy," Buni said.

...As Gov Buni Seeks Partnership With Turkish Investors in Irrigation, Meat Processing

Yobe State government has engaged Turkish investors to develop irrigation farming and meat processing in the state to ensure food sufficiency and security and drive economic growth.

The state Governor, Hon. Mai Mala Buni CON, who led a state delegation to Turkey, said it has become necessary to explore and expand irrigation programmes to meet the food needs of the state and export some for revenue.

He assured the management of AFKO Pivot Irrigation Systems, "We have the lands, the youthful population for adequate labour, and water resources for large irrigation projects.

"We will deploy resources to make irrigation farming attractive, profitable, and a major source of employment of our youth," Buni said.

Government would support individual farmers and cluster farming groups to cultivate food crops like corn, rice, and wheat

"Government would support individual farmers and cluster farming groups to cultivate food crops like corn, rice, and wheat.

"Government will also facilitate cultivation of cash crops including Sesame seeds and groundnuts among others," the Governor emphasized.

Abdulgani Affura, the General Manager of AFKO, assured that his company would provide all the required equipment to develop irrigation in the state.

"We are working in 45 countries across the world with a few in Africa, we will manufacture the required equipment that is most suitable to your environment," he assured.

Similarly, the delegation had discussions with meat processing companies to take advantage of the large deposit of livestock in the state.

"Yobe state is a hub of livestock deposit in Nigeria, we will take advantage of the large deposit to process and export meat to other parts of Nigeria and abroad" Gov. Buni said.

"We are committed to processing both ruminants and cattle meats to provide healthy meat locally and internationally," he added.

Ismail Bagdu, General Manager, Teknotes Tasarim, said the company would provide modern abattoirs with modern equipment for a good package system suitable for exports.

Melik Ceyhun, international manager of CEMSAN, also expressed the commitment of their company to partner Yobe state government to turn the economy of the state from the available livestock deposits.

Sanwo-Olu Empowers MSMEs, Celebrates Local Talent At Exclusive Fair

The Lagos State Government continues to fortify the local economy by championing Trade Fairs and Business Expositions tailored for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the State.

Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade & Investment, Mrs. Folashade Ambrose-Medebem reiterated this commitment during the conclusion of the 8th Lagos State MSMEs Exclusive Trade Fair held in Lagos. Themed "Empowering MSMEs For AfCFTA Excellence Through Sustainable Economic Growth," the event aptly aligns with the State's development agenda, particularly in positioning women and youths to explore opportunities within AfCFTA and the global market.

"In the last five days, this remarkable Fair has significantly boosted local economic activities within the Lagos Division. From

exhibitors' sales and marketing activities to engaging entrepreneurs, vendors, artisans, and various service providers, we've fostered employment opportunities and elevated living standards," Mrs. Ambrose-Medebem affirmed. She pledged the government's continuous support to sustain the Fair and catalyze more local economic activities.

Highlighting the Fair's achievements, the Commissioner emphasized its role as a platform for networking among MSMEs, fostering productive interactions during Business Clinics, and serving as a cost-free avenue for promoting entrepreneurs' products and services.

Mrs. Ambrose-Medebem acknowledged Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's unwavering dedication to the MSME sector's growth. She lauded his support through initiatives offering market access, financial aid, infrastructure, among others, ensuring the sector's competitiveness within Africa and globally.

Hon. Cornelius Ojelabi, Chairman

of the APC Lagos State Chapter, praised the Sanwo-Olu administration's support for female entrepreneurs. Recognizing women's pivotal role in development, he emphasized that empowering women ultimately benefits the nation.

Tunde Sodade, Managing Director of Lekki Worldwide Investment Limited, advised MSMEs to stay focused and dedicated, encouraging them to exhibit their talents confidently, which would eventually reap deserved rewards.

The General Manager of Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency (LASCOPA) urged participants to uphold quality standards and secure NAFDAC approval for their products, suggesting that the Ministry aid MSMEs in navigating NAFDAC's registration process for reasonable fees.

Yemisi Ransome-Kuti, Co-founder of Lagos Island Connect, stressed the importance of supporting locally-made products, emphasizing that such patronage is crucial for the country's genuine economic growth and currency stability.



Lagos Continues to Achieve Zero Bank Robbery Incidents for 4th Consecutive Year

In an impressive streak, Lagos State has once again reported zero occurrences of bank robbery for the fourth consecutive year, marking a significant milestone in the State's security track record. This feat was highlighted in the recent report released by the Lagos State Security Trust Fund.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu attributed this accomplishment to the ongoing review of the State's security framework and the diligent surveillance efforts in place to curb organized criminal activities.

During the 17th Town Hall Meeting organized by the

Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF) held at Eko Hotel and Suites, Victoria Island, stakeholders, security personnel, and private sector donors convened to assess security issues in Lagos between October 2022 and September 2023.

While lauding the commendable achievement of zero bank robberies, Governor Sanwo-Olu acknowledged that despite this success, challenges persist. He emphasized the State's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of Lagosians, highlighting ongoing efforts to

support security agencies with resources, including vehicles and equipment, to bolster their effectiveness.

The Governor also announced upcoming security measures for 2024, including the provision of an additional 300 patrol vehicles for security agencies in collaboration with local government authorities. He reaffirmed the repositioning of the Lagos Neighbourhood Safety Corps (LNSC) Agency to enhance intelligence gathering, with plans to improve operational intelligence reporting at the State's Emergency Call Centre.



Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI), African Union's Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board (AU GGWI YAB) and Youth Climate Council Nigeria (YCC Nigeria)

COP28 DUBAI REPORT



Introduction

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place from November 30 to December 12 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The event, held under the theme 'Unite, Act, Deliver,' marked a crucial moment for the global community to assess progress on the Paris Agreement, culminating in the first-ever Global Stocktake. This report focuses on the contributions and engagements of the Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI), the African Union's Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board, and the Youth Climate Council Nigeria during COP28. At the Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI), we champion a sustainable future. Our work focuses on climate education, sustainable agriculture, Clean Energy and empowering youth as the driving force for positive change. The YCCGA, a network fostering youth engagement in climate policy making globally, celebrated its success in having Youth Climate Councils established in various countries. By 2023, the alliance had representation in Ghana, Costa Rica, Brazil, Denmark, Poland, Uganda, and the Netherlands, with preparatory processes underway in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Colombia. The Youth Climate Council Nigeria (YCCN) Supported by the Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI) and endorsed by the United Nations Information Center Nigeria (UNIC). African Union Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board (AU GGW YAB), It shall strive to create and nurture a network between African youths, youth-led and focused organizations and decision-makers in order to reinforce AUC's mission of meaningful engagement of young people in sensitizing communities on sustainable land management, restoration and climate change resilience in the dry lands. The regional representation of youths reflects the desire to enhance youth involvement.

Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI), African Union's Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board (AU GGW YAB) and Youth Climate Council Nigeria (YCC Nigeria)



Reflecting on COP28 and looking ahead to a sustainable future

Active participation in the Youth Climate Councils Global Alliance retreat allowed us to connect with passionate representatives from various countries. This collaboration is a crucial step towards shaping a sustainable future collaboratively, drawing on the strength of our collective efforts.

The collaborations with Hon. Rep. Sam Onuigbo, the World Resources Institute, and the National Climate Action in Nigeria team are significant steps toward empowering youth to contribute meaningfully to national climate policies. Representing West African Countries as member of iGST WA hub, the Global Stocktake into Action on the Ground was an honor.

As we continue this journey, let us carry forward the momentum from COP28. The insights gained, relationships formed, and commitments made are the seeds from which a sustainable future will flourish. Let us remain steadfast in our dedication to global climate action and collaboration.



ABDULHAMID TAHIR HAMID

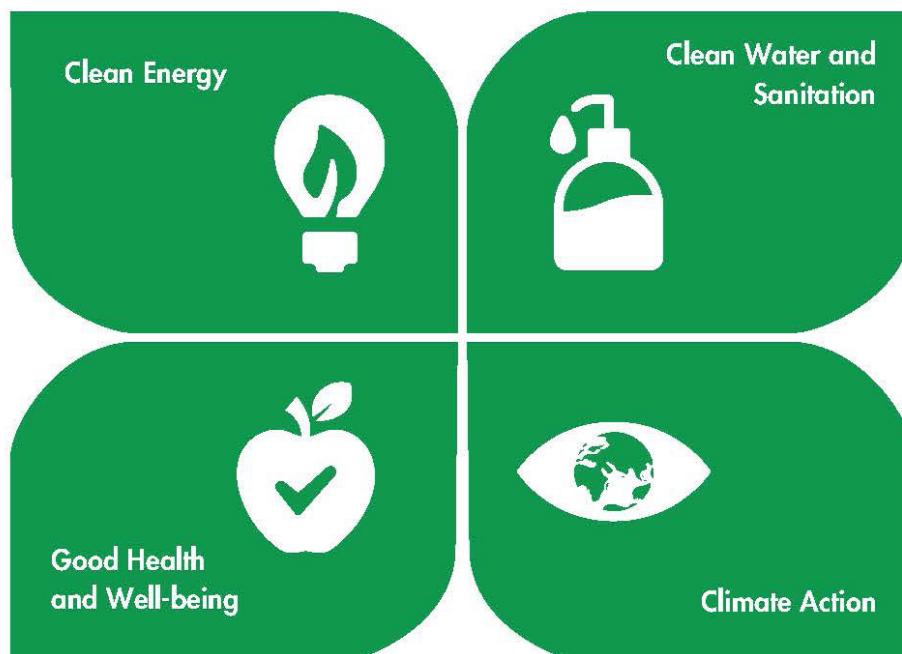
Global stocktake and key outcomes



The Global Stocktake at COP28 highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive, climate-resilient transformation on a global scale. Despite acknowledging the urgency of action across all pillars of the Paris Agreement, negotiations faced challenges, leaving critical issues such as climate adaptation, loss and damage, and climate finance for the Global South inadequately addressed.

African Perspective and Climate Finance

For Africa, COP28 presented a critical platform to address issues crucial to the continent's sustainable development. With rich natural resources, Africa can pursue green growth and climate objectives, relying on climate finance to support a just energy transition and enhance resilience to climate change impacts.



Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI), African Union's Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board (AU GGWI YAB) and Youth Climate Council Nigeria (YCC Nigeria)

GECCI, Great Green Wall, and Youth Climate Council Nigeria engagements

Meetings and Collaborations

Meeting with Mr. Ovais Sarmad: Expressing gratitude for meeting the former UNFCCC Deputy Secretary-General, Abdulhamid highlighted the inspiring mentorship received.

Collaboration with Bauchi and Kaduna States Delegates: Emphasizing collaboration for a sustainable future at the Nigeria Pavilion.

Youth Climate Councils Global Alliance: Actively participating in the alliance retreat, connecting with representatives worldwide including representatives from Ghana, Costa Rica, Brazil, Denmark, Poland, Uganda, Netherlands, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Colombia.

Climate Initiatives and Media Coverage

Night Stage Celebration: Highlighting the vibrant atmosphere at the Night Stage during COP28, celebrating sustainability, unity, and positive change.

Media Coverage: The CEO's attendance featured in Nigerian newspapers, showcasing Gombe State's initiatives leveraging the global climate conference, following the insightful side event organized by Gombe

Youth Involvement in Climate Action: Emphasizing the urgent need for youth involvement in policymaking during a Green Zone side event.

GECCI's CEO engaged in the Ministerial Meeting for the Sahara and Sahel Great Green Wall Initiative, focusing on discussions with ministers and key figures for a sustainable future.

African Union's Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board: Abdulhamid chaired a vital meeting at the African Union Pavilion, emphasizing the passion and collaboration of youth leaders toward a greener future.

Collaborations and Future Initiatives

Meeting with Hon. Rep. Sam Onuigbo: Discussing collaborations with the Representative of the South East on the Governing Board of the North East Development Commission (NEDC) and former Member of the House of Representatives.

World Resources Institute and National Climate Action in Nigeria Team: Collaborating to empower youth in Nigeria to shape national climate policies and contribute to NDCs/LTS.

Blue Zone Representation: Representing GECCI at the Blue Zone on Tuning the Global Stocktake into Action on the Ground, focusing on transitioning from global commitments to impactful actions.

GECCI, Great Green Wall, And Youth Climate Council Nigeria (YCC) engagements at COP28

Meetings and Collaborations

Climate Initiatives and Media Coverage

Collaborations and Future Initiatives



International Global Stocktake (iGST) Reception:
As part of stakeholders, GECCI's CEO attended the Friends of the GST Reception, exploring the Turkmenistan Pavilion and enjoying the COP28 experience. following the insightful side event organized by WRI, Climate Works Foundation, NewClimate Institute, WWF, and CAN Europe. Let's turn global discussions into on-the-ground action!



Faith Pavilion Inauguration:
-Abdulhamid, alongside global leaders, attended the inauguration of the first-ever Faith Pavilion at COP28, recognizing the role of faith communities in climate action.



Social Media Engagement:
-Regular updates were shared on social media, reflecting GECCI's commitment to sustainability, grassroots mobilization, and education values during COP28.



Social Media Engagement:
-Regular updates were shared on social media, reflecting GECCI's commitment to sustainability, grassroots mobilization, and education values during COP28.



Agricultural development, enabling youth and women empowerment In Niger State

Recently, 50 young people from Niger State through Niger State Social Investment Programme (SIP) office left for Ogun State to attend training on management of soilless farm, fostering teamwork and innovation under the Youths in Agriculture (EYiA) Program, they returned certified as a farmer to present their certificates and appreciate the Executive Governor of Niger State, His Excellency Mohammed Umaru Bago through the SIP office led by Hauwa Bako for the great opportunity to acquire skills in farming, entrepreneurship and leadership.

Beyond being trained, certified and leaving them to their fate, Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago ensured 100% absorption of the entire 50 graduates into Niger State Foods for 6months with a monthly pay of N100,000, where they will also have the opportunity to go for further training. N20million donated by Mr Governor to these young graduates which 70% are women, is another package for sustainability to support them as young entrepreneur.



We're not going to be poor again as a State. Let's be proud to tell the world that we're farmers, it's our pride



Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago is focusing on repositioning the Agricultural sector as follows;

- To commence the disbursement of N250,000 each for youths and women to facilitate farming activities
- 200 young people will benefit from EYiA yearly
- Presentation of land development and preparation equipment in Wushishi LGA and in the process of purchasing N500billion worth of Earthmoving equipment for land preparation
- Additional N1billion to be paid as matching grant to enable more women to benefit from the "Nigeria for Women" projects of the World Bank and the State Government is committed to off-taking their products (Rice, Shea Butter, Vegetable Oil, Palm Oil)
- Signed agreement with NNPC Ltd on establishment of a 500 million liters Ethanol Plant with associated cultivation of Maize, Sugarcane, and Sweet Sorghum on 100,000 hectares of land in Niger state, producing over 500,000 tons of crops to fuel the ethanol plant as well as planting of trees amongst others.
- MoU signed with National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) to enhance agricultural technology
- Agreement signed with Knight a.s/Agroservis Salek of the Czech Republic on the supply of 1,000 tractors and accessories
- Agreement signed with Sun Farming in Germany on establishing comprehensive Farm Estate in Niger state
- On 19th of August, 640 farmers across the 25LGA's got improved seedlings, fertilizers and farm inputs as intervention.
- On 10th of July, Governor Umaru Bago flagged off the 2023 wet season sales and distribution of fertilizers.

Fight Against Hepatitis: Gov Sule Receives Continental Recognition

The Nasarawa State Government has received an award of recognition for outstanding contribution to the elimination of viral hepatitis in Africa.

The award was presented to the Nasarawa State Governor, Engineer Abdullahi Sule, during this year's African Hepatitis Summit in Abuja, recently.

According to Dr. Danjuma Adda, President, World Hepatitis Alliance, the award was to recognize champions whose efforts and contributions helped saved the lives of several people that would have died as a result of hepatitis.

Egypt, Rwanda and Nasarawa State were all honoured and recognized as champions in the fight against hepatitis in Africa.

Speaking shortly after receiving the award, Engineer Sule said his administration was prompted to make inroads in the fight against hepatitis because of the high prevalence of the disease in the country and particularly in Nasarawa State.

The Governor explained that some of the decisions taken by his administration leading to the recognition were actions taken out of panic and as a fallout of the commitment as a result of the alarming data which was indeed frightening.

"When we actually started in Nasarawa, we never had any slightest idea whatsoever that our humble efforts and initiative would earn us an award on a day like this. We started purely from our commitment to provide leadership and our believe not money. if, indeed, is the issue, Nasarawa State would not be here," he said.

The Governor disclosed how he commissioned a consultant to undertake an independent assessment of the opportunities and challenges confronting Nasarawa State ahead of his joining politics to contest for the position of the Governor and how the survey discovered the startling prevalence of Hepatitis C, with the state recording 13.2 prevalence way above the national average of 1.1 percent.

"Some of the actions that we took that brought us to today that we are getting an award, we took some of these actions because of the panic that



I am happy to tell you that awareness today in Nasarawa State, especially at the rural areas, is 80 percent

we had. And so we became committed because the data was alarming and it was frightening," he said.

He added that, the study conducted showed that while Africa has the prevalence rate of 4.6 percent, with Nigeria recording 8.1 percent for Hepatitis B, Nasarawa has 11 percent which was even above the national average.

"That was what we got from the studies. As if that was not bad enough, Hepatitis C, whose prevalence is 1.1 percent, but in Nasarawa, it was 13.2 percent. These were the realities that we faced. And I was shocked to learn that one of the reasons was awareness. As simple as awareness. That awareness in Nasarawa State was less than 25 percent.

"I am happy to tell you that awareness today in Nasarawa State, especially at the rural areas, is 80 percent," Engineer Sule stated.

He used the opportunity of the event to highlight on other key initiatives taken by his administration to tackle the menace of hepatitis and other health challenges in the state.

"By the time we carried out the baseline studies in the area of health, we now came head-on with the realities of our challenges in the state. We needed to upgrade and equip our primary, secondary, and tertiary health care facilities. We went ahead with the little resources at our disposal, equipping, renovating, and staffing the various categories of health care facilities in the state.

"We now have to look at a project that was started by the previous administration. At the time, it was just the civil works that were done. That is the Infectious Diseases

Diagnostic and Research Center. We completed it, and in relation to that, we went ahead and equipped it and staff it for it to start working.

"But we also went ahead and established one of the best things that ever happened to Nasarawa State in the area of health. That is the health insurance. I think my deputy as a doctor has so much impact on whatever we did in the area of health.



KDSG Reaffirms Commitment to Free Primary, Secondary, Technical Education

The Kaduna State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to providing every child resident in the state free primary, secondary and technical/vocational education. An extraordinary meeting of the Kaduna State Executive Council, held on Monday, 7th November 2022, described the provision of free education for the first 12 years of schooling as a legacy achievement of the State Government. The Council meeting, chaired by Malam Nasir El-Rufai, stated that free education is the pillar of the Kaduna State Government's commitment to human capital development and social mobility for the children of the most vulnerable residents of the state.

With careful implementation since 2015, this policy guarantees every child access to education from the first year of primary school to the completion of the final year of senior secondary school or technical/vocational school. Free education, up to the completion of senior secondary school, reflects the government's abiding belief in promoting equality of opportunity and expanding access to education as a lever of social mobility.

KDSG's deep conviction that government has an obligation to provide free education up to senior secondary level or its equivalent has been expressed in legal provisions that make it compulsory for every child to go to school for 12 uninterrupted years since the financial obstacle represented by school fees has been removed.

The extraordinary meeting of the Kaduna State Executive Council discussed a memo from the Ministry of Education on sustainable funding for the maintenance of school facilities. The Executive Council stated that the Kaduna State Government will continue to faithfully implement the free senior secondary education policy and to discharge the primary responsibility for its public schools. The Council recalled that in 2015 the government explicitly banned payment of PTA fees and other levies in public schools in order to ensure that the free education policy actually delivers education without burdening parents with hidden fees or levies.

Therefore, the Council observed that the circular issued by the Ministry of Education to school principals on collection of nominal fees is not consistent with government policy, and is thus invalid. The circular from the Ministry of Education to the heads of schools, dated 1st November 2022, is therefore

rescinded with immediate effect, and all monies that may have been collected should be refunded forthwith.

The State Executive Council has noted that community participation and ownership in the administration of public schools is what led to the creation by law, of School Management Boards and School-Based Management Committees with membership drawn from all concerned stakeholders.

Accordingly, and noting that some alumni associations, community groups, charities and persons of means may be interested in further supporting particular schools, the Council directed the Ministry of Education to develop a suitable framework to guide school heads, parents, old students' associations, communities and other donors that may want to contribute to the development of any public school in the State. This framework is necessary in the interest of accountability and transparency. Such a framework will be widely debated by stakeholders and approved by the State Executive

Council before subsequent dissemination as an official directive to the Principals and Heads of Schools.

Free education is the pillar of the Kaduna State Government's commitment to human capital development and social mobility for the children of the most vulnerable residents of the state

Climate Impacts, Policies, and Actions at the Subnational Level In Nigeria

1. Introduction

Climate change is one of the biggest development challenges facing Nigeria today. Climate change impacts such as flooding, desertification, drought, erosion, and sea level rise are destroying ecosystems, livelihoods and pushing many Nigerians into poverty. The Nigerian government has committed to achieving net zero carbon economy by 2060 and has recently signed a National Climate Law which establishes a National Council on Climate Change (NCCC).

The federal government has a national climate policy, a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) and some flagship projects such as the Great Green Wall, and the Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP) to address climate change. However, most climate change activities and initiatives have focused at the federal level, with very limited attention paid to the state of climate change policy, plans, and investment at the state level. This is a big gap considering that the impacts of climate change are mostly borne by states and that policies and actions at the subnational level are critical to addressing climate change and attaining Nigeria's net-zero target.

The current situation calls for an improved understanding of the climate change governance landscape at the subnational level including the level of awareness of climate change, the extent and range of policies, and the degree of implementation.

The study was conceived as a first step towards raising awareness on climate action at the subnational level in Nigeria and facilitating improved climate change action and resilience among the state actors. It aims to assess the level of climate change awareness and action in the 36 states of the Federation and the FCT. The results of this effort at highlighting climate change actions, awareness, and policies across Nigerian states are expected to help guide future actions particularly policy designs and implementations across the 36 states and the FCT.

This study underscores the importance of understanding local challenges, formulating effective policies to address local challenges, and coordinating climate action across the tiers of government. Successful approaches and experiences can be shared, replicated, and scaled up to benefit other regions.

2. Research Approach and Methodology

2.1 Methodology

The research approach comprised two key methods as follows:

- Desk review include scanning of the internet, literature, policies, secondary data review, and the creation of a reference list for key documents. The research team used this method to assess states' online visibility, presence of climate policy and action plan, and climate change appropriation in state budgets.
- The second was using a survey tool to collate feedback on the perceptions of stakeholders on a number of issues including (i) respondents' knowledge of climate change; (ii) respondents perception of the level of climate awareness of the people and governments of their states; (iii) respondents perception of climate activities, plans and investments in their states, among other questions.
- The survey tool used was a simple questionnaire developed with Google Forms and circulated through the Climate Desk Officers of the 36 states as well as directly to other civil servants, climate organizations, and selected members of the general public who were identified as having some interest on climate change. A total of 1,306 participants responded to the survey (see section 2.1 below for the demography of the survey respondents).
- Results from the two sources were combined to produce a picture of the most significant climate impacts in the states.

2.2 Demography of Survey Respondents

A total of 1,306 participants responded to the survey. The distribution of these respondents, ranged from the state with the lowest respondents (Katsina with 10 respondents) to the state with the highest respondents (Taraba with 118 respondents).

Distribution of Survey Respondents by State

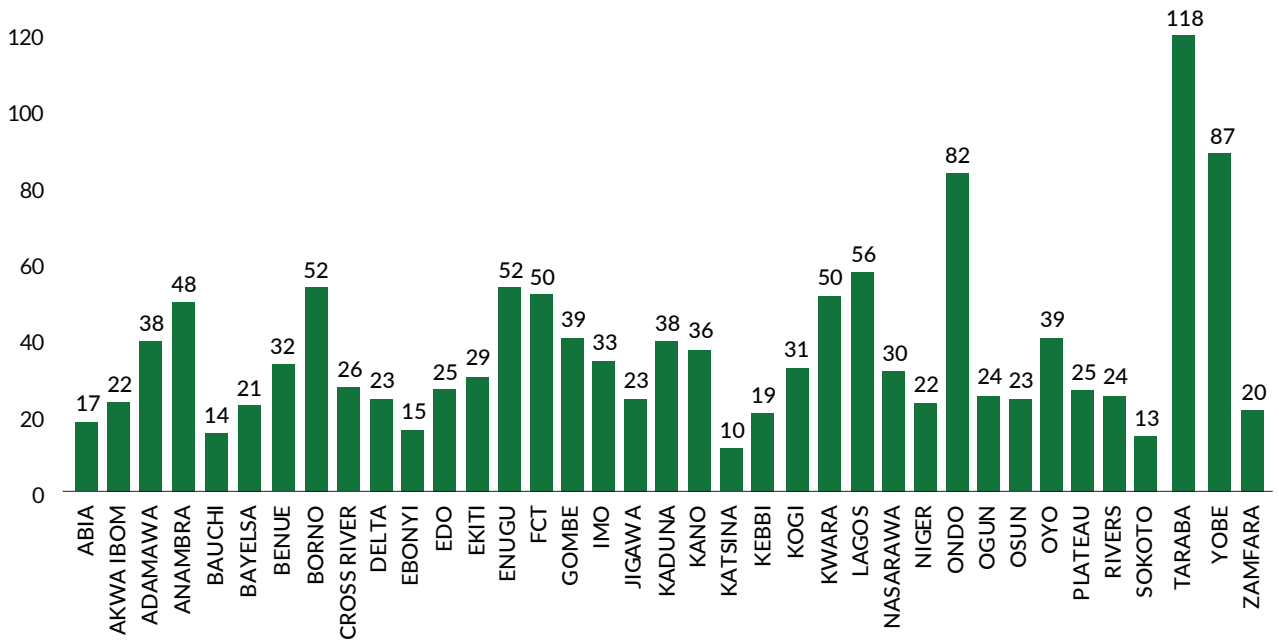


Figure 1: Total Number of Respondents from the 36 States of Nigeria and the FCT

The gender distribution, age group, level of education and employment institution of the respondents are presented in the graphs below.

More males responded to the survey, with about two-thirds (72.7%) of the respondents being male and about one-third (27.4%) being female. See Figure 2 below.

Gender

1,306 responses

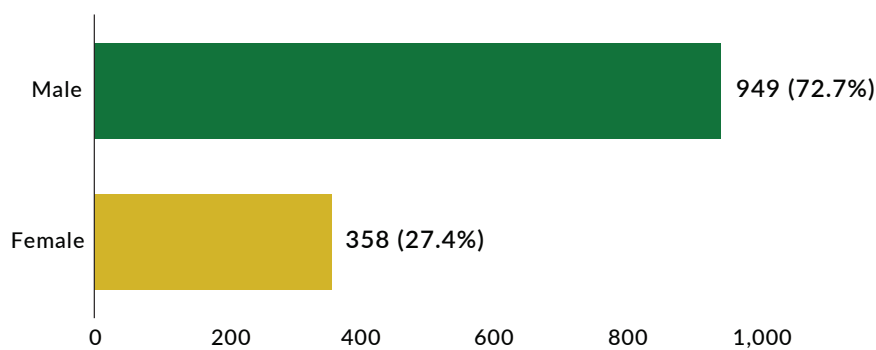


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

People within the age groups of 26 – 45 years made up about 60% of the respondents. Those above 60 years were the lowest percentage of respondents comprising about 2% of the total. See Figure 3 below.

Age Group

1,300 responses

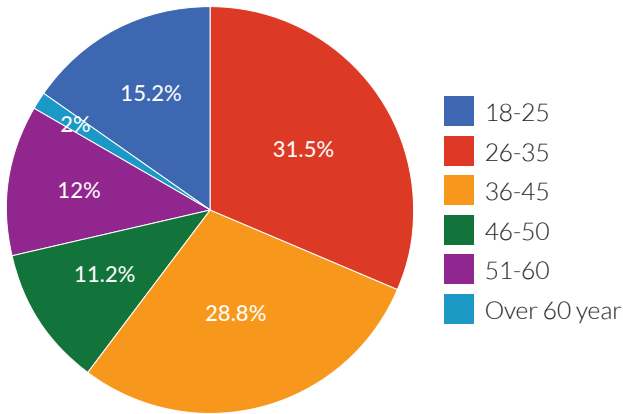


Figure 3: Age group of respondents.

In terms of level of education, majority of the respondents (50.1%) have HND/BSc. The others were MSc. (27%), PhD (10.3%), OND (4.3%) and SSCE (6.2%). See Figure 4 below.

Level of Education completed

1,296 responses

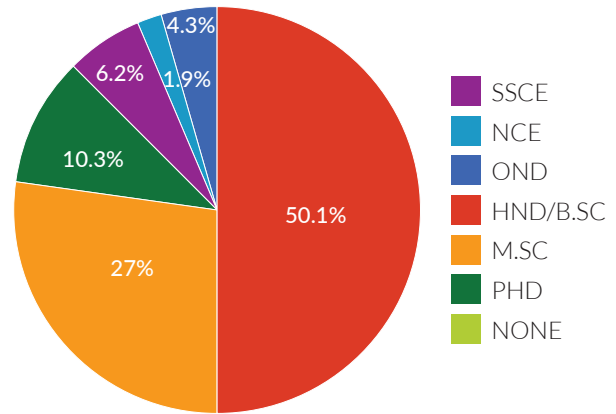


Figure 4: Level of education of respondents.

The majority of the respondents to the survey were civil servants (52.5%). Roughly 25% of the respondents were from the private sector and the rest (23%) were from NGO and CSO institutions. See Figure 5 below.

Employment Institution

1,233 responses

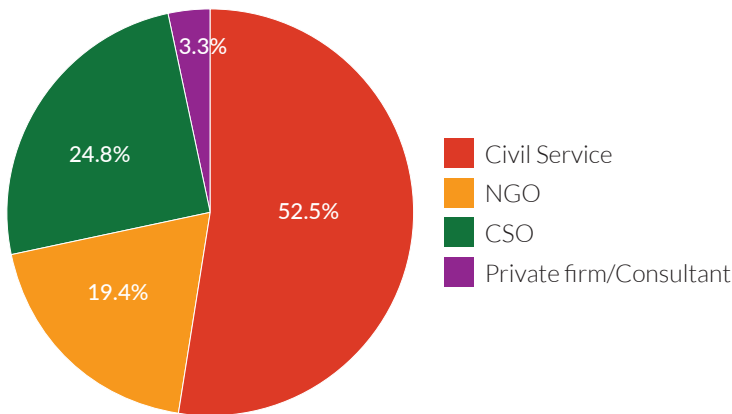


Figure 5: Employment institution of respondents.

3: CLIMATE IMPACTS, POLICY AND ACTIONS (DESK REVIEW)

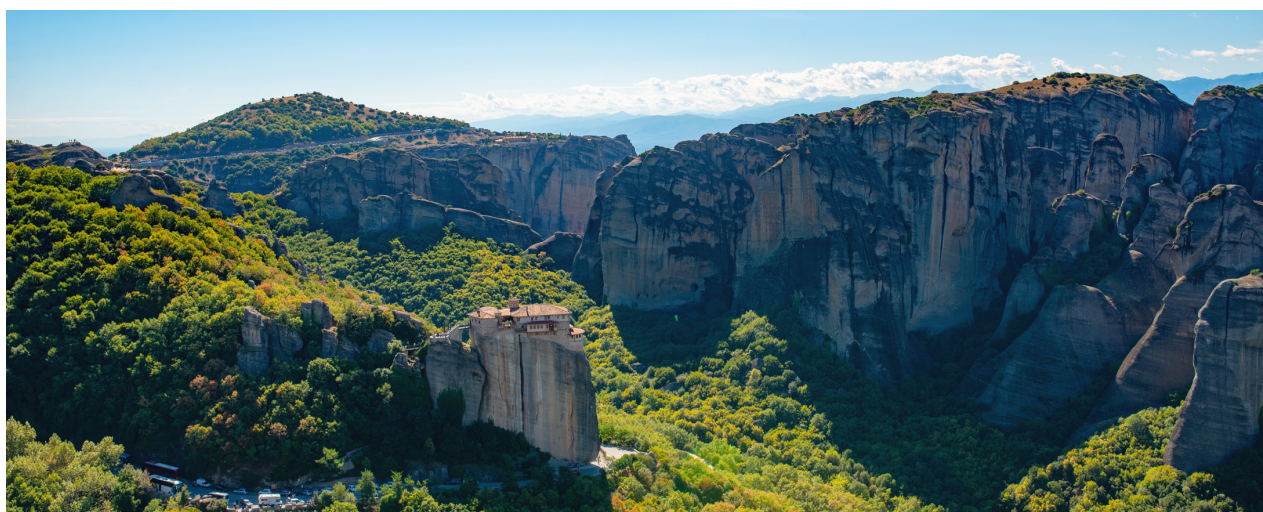
This section presents the results of the desk review. As previously indicated this involved a review of websites, newspapers, published literature, and budgetary provisions of the states. The results gathered were without recourse to the results of the survey we administered.

3.1 Online Visibility and Publicity on Climate Change

We measured the online visibility of the states on climate action using the criteria in the table below

Online Visibility Ranking Criteria	Score
States with functional websites for the ministry of environment/climate change and with several mention of climate change in the websites, plus significant evidence of climate activities by the states from other independent websites.	High
States that have functional websites for the ministry of environment/climate change but with only one or two more mention of climate change in those websites; plus decent evidence of climate activities by the states from other independent websites.	Medium
States that do not have a functional website for the ministry of environment/climate change but have significant mention of climate change activities by the states by other independent websites (up to 7 websites/links and above)	Medium
States that do not have functional websites for the ministry of environment/climate change but have some mention of climate change activities by the state by other (independent) websites (4-6 websites/links)	Low
States that do not have functional website for the ministry of environment/climate change and have very limited mention of climate change activities by the state government by other websites (0-3 websites/links)	Very low

Table 1: Criteria and rank for online visibility



Based on the above criteria, the states that scored high include Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Taraba, Plateau, Lagos. For the rest of the scores please see the figure below.

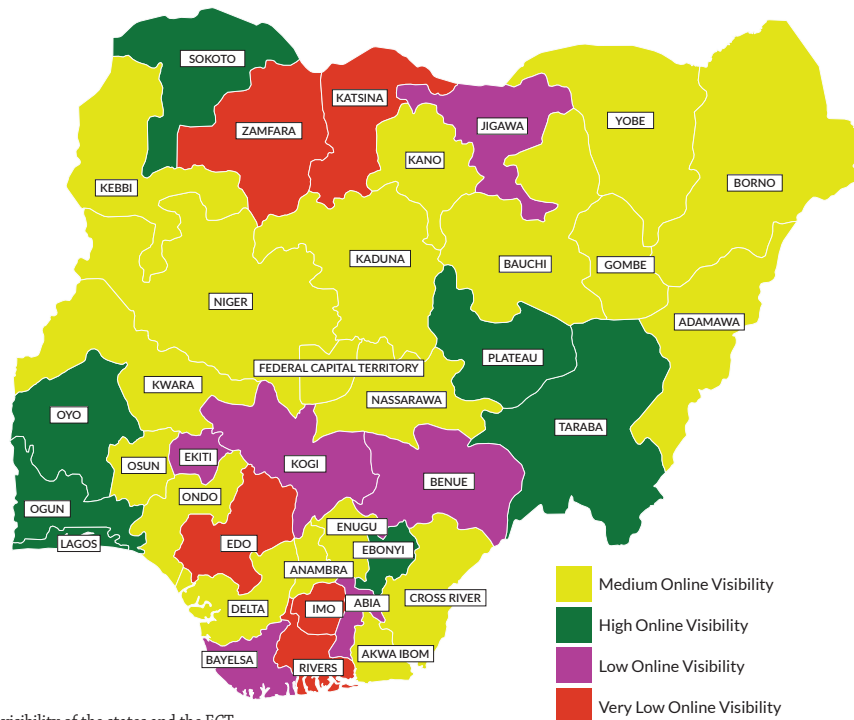


Figure 6: Climate change online visibility of the states and the FCT.

3.2 Climate Impacts and Vulnerabilities

As might be expected, climate impacts vary across the states. States within the same or similar ecological zone share broadly the same climate impacts and vulnerabilities. Flooding is a dominant climate impact in the north-central states of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, FCT, and Niger. Niger State also experiences drought, and this can be linked to its proximity to the northwest. The main impact of climate change in the North is desertification, land degradation, and drought. For the south, the major types of climate change impacts are flooding, gully and coastal erosions which have led to loss of arable land. It is important to point out that for the entire country, temperature changes are constant climate change impacts. This has resulted from an increase in global warming, and of course irregular rainfall patterns.

The map below shows the Climate Impact, as spread across the entire subnational.

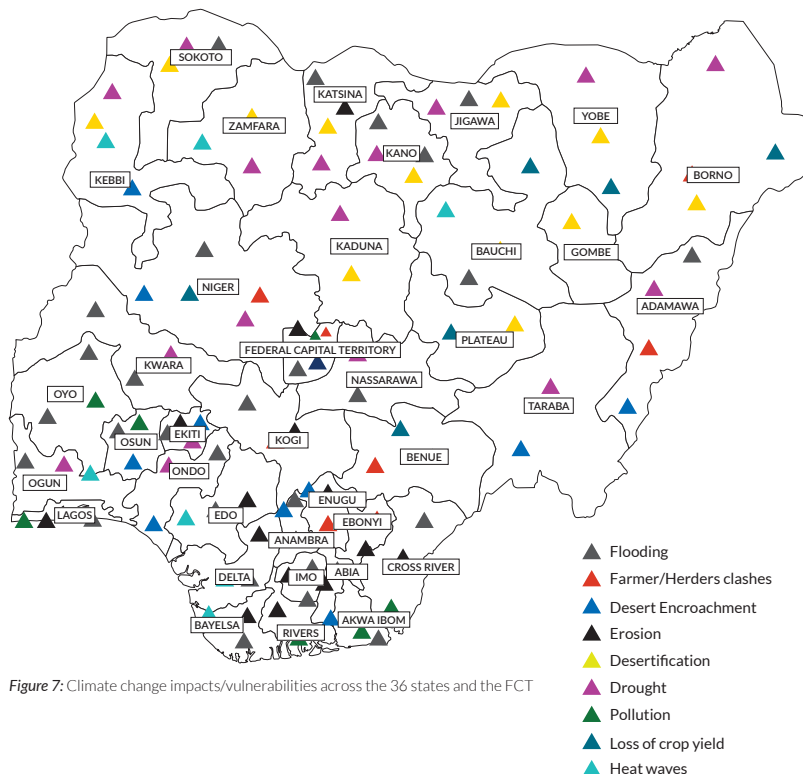


Figure 7: Climate change impacts/vulnerabilities across the 36 states and the FCT

3.3 Climate Policy

Only seven (7) states have climate policy documents that could be found online. These include Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Lagos, Osun, Rivers, and Yobe. Eight (8) states seem to have climate policy or some related documents that which are not fully finalised or adopted. These include Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Enugu, Kaduna, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Ondo.

See figure 8 below.

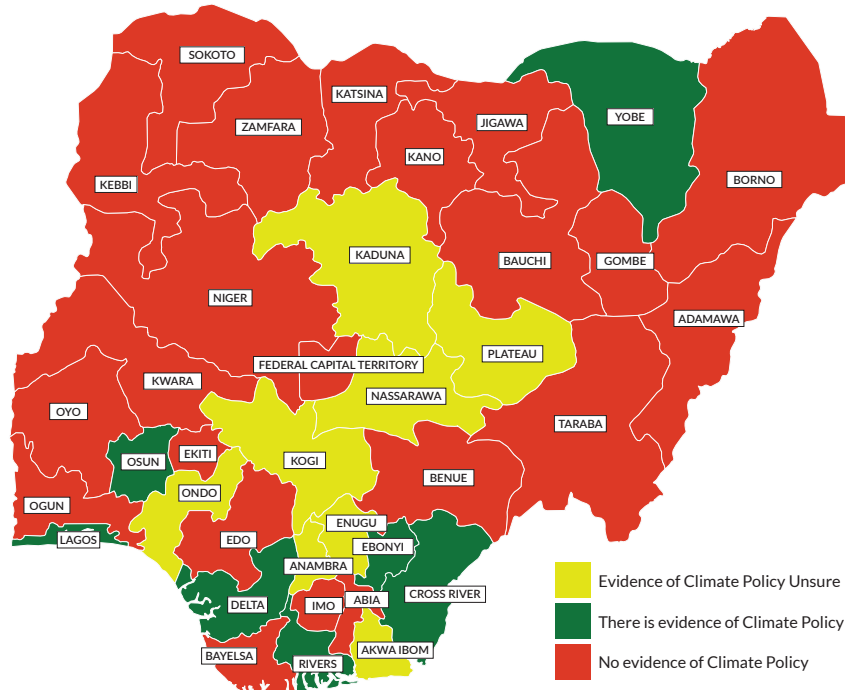


Figure 8: The presence and otherwise of climate policy in the states and FCT.

However, many states have some form of climate-related policies, such as policies on afforestation and waste management. Examples include Kogi State whose Ministry of Environment has an Environment Sector Policy, as captured in the Kogi State Medium Term Sector Strategy. Some of the goals include enhancing forestry projects, accelerating forestry mapping, sustaining environmental development, erosion management and flood control, and relocating community from water channels; amongst others. There are several other examples. Kwara State has an Afforestation Policy of “cut one tree and plant five”, and for new sites being developed, a number of trees must be planted. Enugu State has a Waste Management Policy.

Anambra State has the Anambra State Erosion, Watershed, and Climate Change Agency; Sokoto State has the Orchard Programme; Kaduna State has a range of policies including on the reclamation and rehabilitation of degraded lands, biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism, and waste management. Kano State has a pollution law and there are moves in recent years to enact a Forestry Law.

Delta State has mandated climate change considerations in every

project and economic planning and set up a climate change governance framework.

Bayelsa State has mandated the State’s Environmental and Sanitation Authority to recycle and manage effluent discharged from industrial and domestic wastes. Ondo State has an Environmental and Social Management Plan. Edo State has launched its Flood and Erosion Watershed Management Agency (FEWMA) to address the issue of flooding and reclaim lands degraded by erosion.

While what we highlighted above are state-specific policies (or lack of policies), it is necessary to flag that for the North, there is the Great Green Wall Initiative which covers eleven states viz: Adamawa, Borno, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Sokoto, Yobe, Zamfara, Bauchi, and Gombe. There is also the recently launched World Bank-supported ACReSAL project focused on the entire nineteen states of the north. The NEWMAP is aimed at rehabilitating degraded lands and reducing erosion and climate vulnerability in targeted areas. NEWMAP was originally implemented in seven States comprising Abia, Anambra, Cross Rivers, Ebonyi, Edo, Enugu and Imo. Following its success, the project was extended to several other states in the North.

3.4 Climate Action Plan

Twelve states and the FCT have climate change action plans. These include Nasarawa, Yobe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Anambra, Ebonyi, Bayelsa, Cross River, Rivers, Lagos, Osun and Ondo. Lagos State has the most ambitious Climate Action Plan (2020-2025) to transform “the State into emission-neutral city by 2050.”³ Rivers State on its own part is the first state in Nigeria to have a Climate Change Act. Ebonyi State also has a Climate Change Law and a Climate Change Action Plan which specifically targets climate smart agriculture. It recommends the development and implementation of new agronomical interventions, provision of technical assistance/support for investors through extension services; facilitation of the introduction of buy-back programme to smallholder/commercial farmers; and effort to scale up climate finance among several other actions.



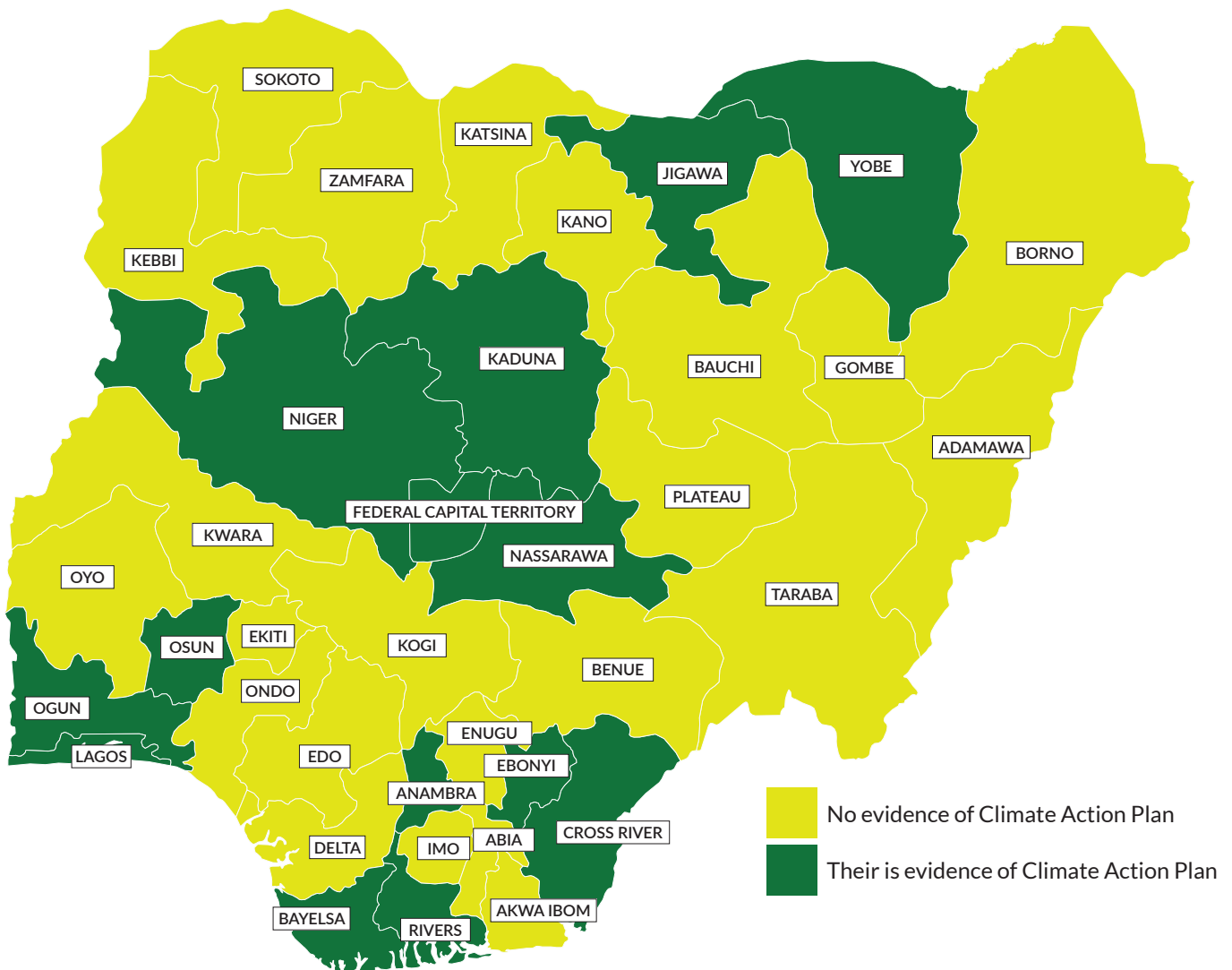


Figure 9: Presence or otherwise of Climate Change Action Plan in the 36 States and FCT

3.5 Climate Change Appropriation

The 2023 budget of the 36 states were reviewed to see the extent to which specific provision is made for climate action in these states. We found that a large number of States make provisions for climate-related activities and procurements. These provisions range from erosion and flood control provisions, through tree planting and provision of solar-powered water sources and electricity, improved agricultural systems, pollution control to waste management; including Agro - Climate Resilience in Semi - Arid Landscapes (ACRESAL) Projects in the Northern States. In the longer version of this report, we provide a breakdown of the budgetary allocations of State Governments for climate-related projects, in their 2023 budgets. However, most states do not make a particular appropriation specified for climate change; the states found to have a clearly labelled Climate Change Budget Allocation for climate project programme and activities includes Nasarawa, Plateau, Yobe, Jigawa, Anambra, Ebonyi, Ondo, and Ogun.

Governor Bago is determined to end insecurity

On the topmost concerns of the Governor, His Excellency Mohammed Umaru Bago is the safety of the live/property of Nigerlites and creating a peaceful environment where businesses can thrive.

Since inauguration on May 29, 2023, some of the giant strides of Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago in his determination to end insecurity in Niger State could be categorized into Kinetic and Non-kinetic.

KINETIC APPROACH

The kinetic approach includes the following;

- Establishing and sustaining a robust synergy with Top Hierarchy of Military and other Security Agencies at the National and State level
- Involving Traditional Institutions in the peace process aimed at curbing insecurity as they are closer to the people
- Ensuring effective collaboration among Security Agencies
- Enhanced Intelligence procurement and swift response to security threats
- Robust Air raids/bombardments of terrorist hideouts
- Sustained offensive operations to neutralize and clear bandit enclaves
- Regular logistics support from the Governor to all the Security Agencies
- Supporting Security Agencies with donation of Operational Vehicles and Motorcycles to enable them navigate through difficult terrains as well as fixing damaged security vehicles
- Creation of "Operation Flush" to curb youth restiveness, carry out patrols in all flash points and maintain peace

- and tranquility in neighborhoods
- Remodeling and commissioning of Police Divisional Headquarter in Minna
- Efforts are ongoing to curb the activities of illegal mining

NON KINETIC APPROACH

The non-kinetic approach and measures emplaced by the Niger State Government under Governor BAGO, to curb insecurity involved;

- Creation of Ministry of Homeland Security to coordinate the fight against insecurity
- Creation of Ministry of Nomadic and Pastoral Affairs, a robust platform towards fostering harmony and building the confidence of Fulani in Government peace efforts. Scores of bandits are repenting and laying down their arms

Insecurity threatens us all; it threatens our existence and development, we are all in it together. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to support Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago as he continues to put more efforts to minimize all security threats until we see to the end.

Taraba Gov Moves To End Water Crisis In Jalingo

Governor Agbu Kefas has inaugurated a committee to look into the water crisis crippling socio-economic activities in Jalingo, the state capital and environs following a last week report by Arewa PUNCH.

The state government obtained a N7.9bn loan from the African Development Bank to tackle the water challenge but which had shown no results.

Following reports on the water scarcity in Jalingo and the suffering the residents of the state are going through to source for potable drinking water, the government acted swiftly by inaugurating the committee on water resources.

In a statement released in Jalingo and signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Yusuf Sanda, Governor Kefas mandated the committee to study and appraise the activities of Taraba Water and Sewerage Company to determine its ability to provide water in Jalingo and other areas.

The Committee, which is headed by Mr Yakubu Maikasawa (SAN) who incidentally is the Attorney General and

Commissioner for Justice as Chairman, has Engr. Naomi Tanko Agbu, Commissioner for Energy and Economic Development, and Comrade Julius Peter, Commissioner for Rural and Urban Development as members.

Other members of the committee include: Mr. Daniel Ishaku, Commissioner for Water Management and Aquatic Affairs, and Dr Sarah Enoch Adi, Commissioner for Finance, while Mrs Patricia Danna, Permanent Secretary, Career Management is to serve as Secretary.

The Governor in the statement mandated the committee to look at the revenue inflow of the agency and consider the self-sustainability of the agency or advice on full or partial commercialisation.

The committee, which has two weeks to submit its report, is also mandated to proffer any suggestion that will ensure seamless provision of potable water in the state capital and its environs.

Reacting to the constitution of the committee, Mr. Wole Ayodele, a public affairs analyst, commended Kefas for his prompt response to the challenge of water scarcity in Jalingo after the Arewa PUNCH report.



Sustainable Devt: Niger State Govt signs \$65m MoU with Alternative Bank



The Niger State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alternative Bank on sustainable development of the State.

The MOU, which is expected to cover Education, Health, Agriculture, Transportation, Energy, and infrastructure among others was signed in Abuja recently.

Governor Mohammed Umar Bago who signed on behalf of the State Government, expressed delight with the financial institution for its readiness to partner the State Government, emphasizing that the move would allow the state harness its agricultural potential.

Governor Umaru Bago observed that the state has not been able to cultivate up to 1% of its arable land stressing that the State government intends to procure some earth moving equipment like Caterpillar,

bulldozers, payloaders on a long lease to prepare land for the cultivation of about 4.5m hectares in the next ten years.

He further announced that the State was discussing with Almarai; a Saudi multinational dairy company for the production of Alfalfa plant due to the economic value of the plant.

The Executive Director of the Alternative Bank, Garba Mohammed who signed on behalf of the financial institution, explained that an international partner had already expressed willingness to invest 65 million dollars to set up a sugarcane plantation on five hectares of land in Niger State, with an estimated output of 50,000 tonnes of sugar annually.

He said when established the sugarcane plantation would create over 4,700 job opportunities, production of methanol, and provision of 40,000 tonnes of animal feeds and generation of 11mgwt of electricity.

Governor Soludo inks infrastructure deals with Afreximbank

Nigeria's Anambra State Investment Promotion & Protection Agency (ANSIPPA) signed various project agreements with African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in November.

The deals were signed at the 2023 Intra-Africa Trade Fair (IATF) in Egypt in early November.

The biggest agreement involved ANSIPPA and the states of Ogun, Oyo and Ekiti signing a framework agreement with Afreximbank and Nigeria's Access Bank for the establishment of a Naira 500 billion (US\$640 million) global concessionary infrastructure financing facility.

The fund will support investments targeted at transforming the states into manufacturing and logistics hubs and growing the export of finished and semi-finished products.

"Ultimately, our objective is to export finished and semi-finished products to various countries across the African continent," said Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun, commenting on the agreement.

In addition, ANSIPPA signed an agreement with Afreximbank for the provision of capital raising advisory services amounting to US\$200 million for the development of critical projects such as the Anambra mixed-use industrial city, Anambra export emporium and the intra-city rail masterplan.

Afreximbank signed a further agreement to provide the Anambra government with financial advisory services for the development of an operational and governance framework for the US\$250 million Anambra Diaspora Fund.

Meanwhile, ANSIPPA inked an agreement with ARISE Integrated Industrial Platform

Ultimately, our objective is to export finished and semi-finished products to various countries across the African continent



Gov. Soludo

(ARISE IIP) to advance discussions on becoming a potential joint venture partner for the planning, design, promotion, development and management of the Anambra Industrial City project. ARISE IIP agreed in principle to jointly develop the industrial park within the city.

Also known as Ikenga Industrial City, Anambra Industrial City is a mixed-use development planned to feature an industrial zone, commercial and retail spaces, research and development institutions, residential areas and recreation centres. It will have special economic zone (SEZ) status and will also promote the use of alternative energy sources. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with India's Mahendra Consulting Engineering in early September at the Anambra Investment Summit 2023 to design the project.

At the same summit, Canada-based CPCS signed a MoU for the delivery of the intra-city rail masterplan. The railway is intended to connect the cities of Awka, Ekwulobia, Nnewi and Onitsha.

Afreximbank recently signed another memorandum of agreement (MOA) in Nigeria with King's College London for a scoping study to determine the feasibility of jointly establishing a medical and nursing school alongside the African Medical Centre of Excellence (AMCE) in Abuja.

Afreximbank is developing the AMCE, which is at an advanced stage of development and set to open in early 2025. The 500-bed quaternary medical facility will provide a full range of medical services including diagnostics, nuclear medicine, surgery, and post-surgical care. The AMCE will operate in collaboration with the King's College Hospital in London.



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