

Welcome Address

Nigeria Governors Forum Revenue Exchange Study Tour

PROTOCOLS.

Distinguished Representatives of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), Directors & Heads of Units of various Internal Revenue Services here present, Director of LIRS, Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the Management and Staff of Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS), I warmly welcome you to Lagos State (The City of Excellence) and to LIRS.

It is indeed an honor to be the first agency to launch this exchange visit, but I will like to start by quickly thanking the Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF), on behalf of my colleagues in other States, for this laudable initiative, and for its continuous efforts in the development of taxation in Nigeria.

NGF is perhaps the most important group in our nation today, it is a well-established body of eminent Nigerians, occupying the driver's seat in our various States. They are critical to the socio-economic development of our country, especially at enhancing the efficiency of the organs of Government responsible for Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), of which IRSs like LIRS is one. It is very gratifying to note that as our principal's, they do not only have an understanding of the need for a sustainable economic development, but also a thorough appreciation that taxation is the only sustainable means of achieving it. This is evident in the various programs, such as this peer exchange visit, championed by the forum. It is therefore appropriate for me to once again express our profound gratitude for the visit.

Lagos State Internal Revenue Service is the largest revenue generating agency of the State Government, responsible for tax collection and administration, as well as the enforcement of all Federal and State tax laws.

The Board of Internal Revenue, like all others in Nigeria was under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, until the Lagos State Government under the visionary leadership of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu presented a bill to the Lagos State House of Assembly in 2005. The Revenue Administration Law was passed in January 2006, making Lagos State Board of Internal Revenue the first revenue board to become autonomous in Nigeria. The Law pronounced the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) as the operating arm of the board and gave the Board Financial and Administrative autonomy.

With a staff strength of approximately 2500 employees, LIRS operations are centralized, but carried out through 40 tax stations, 35 mini tax stations while the Headquarters is located in the Ikeja Central Business District of the State. Sitting at the head of the Agency is an Executive Chairman, supported by Executive Management team comprising 8 Directors who head respective Directorates, with several other sub-units to ensure seamless day-to-day operations.

With the mandate to optimize IGR to fund the provision of infrastructure and qualitative social services in the State, our Mission is to build trust while serving the taxable residents, business community and Government Agencies within our State. This is closely aligned with our Vision, which is to be a trusted, respected and effective revenue agency, facilitating tax compliance through our various enlightenment programmes and tax processes.

Our values are centered around professionalism, fairness and competence and these are reflected in the daily discharge of our duties as listed below:

- To assess, collect and account for all revenues in accordance with the tax laws
- To advise the State Government on matters relating to tax administration and collection of revenue as specified in the provisions of the tax laws.
- To perform other functions in relation to revenue as may be directed by the State Government.

Our journey on service delivery and compliance has improved over time, through the use of technology, which has not only improved the way we collect taxes, but also how we relate with taxpayers. We continuously strive to enhance service delivery, promote tax compliance and continue to implement technology-based programs. We have also introduced various tax reforms to simplify our operations. Some of these reforms include;

- **eTax:** A digital tax administration solution launched for end to end capturing of all aspects of revenue collection. It is a multi-channel tax and levies payment solution that enables payment of all forms of taxes via the web and mobile. It allows taxpayers opportunity to Register/update their tax registration details, file tax returns, process assessments, make payments, print out receipts, upload schedules and facilitates real time updates.
- **IBILE Hub:** an all-encompassing framework for managing IGR collection in the informal sector through standard operating practices and a central technology-enhanced platform. It is designed to streamline processes as well as automate manual operations of the Informal Sector.
- Upgrade of our payment channels and expansion of partnerships with network service providers
- Expansion of service outlets for Stamp Duty, for taxpayers convenience.

Revenue generation in Lagos State has improved tremendously since the introduction of these reforms. Challenges often encountered in revenue collection and management have been greatly eased by these developments. The eTax was particularly instrumental to us meeting our revenue target for year 2020, despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. We leveraged on technology and conducted most of our tax processes electronically.

At LIRS, we strongly believe in human capital development. We continuously train our staff to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. We also constantly look for ways to strengthen collaborations with various stakeholder groups to optimize our operations. We constantly carry out reforms on processes to minimize gaps and are proactive enough to anticipate possible leakages in the system and mitigate against various risks.

Going by the timetable, this 3day study tour may seem a little demanding, given the numerous areas to cover, but I have no iota of doubt that it will also be very rewarding, and that our various States and indeed Nigeria would be better for it. I will encourage all participants to take active part in discussions and engage the various directorates as much as possible.

On our part, we pledge our unflinching commitment to improving tax administration within our State and to continuously collaborate with the NGF and our colleagues in other States. There is already a history of collaboration amongst all members of JTB, our umbrella body and the determined and focused programs of the NGF complements the further development of taxation as a useful fiscal tool in the development of our Nation.

Once again, on behalf of the management and staff of LIRS, I welcome you to the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service; I hope you all enjoy your time in Lagos, the very hospitable coastal State and the Centre of Excellence.

Thank You.