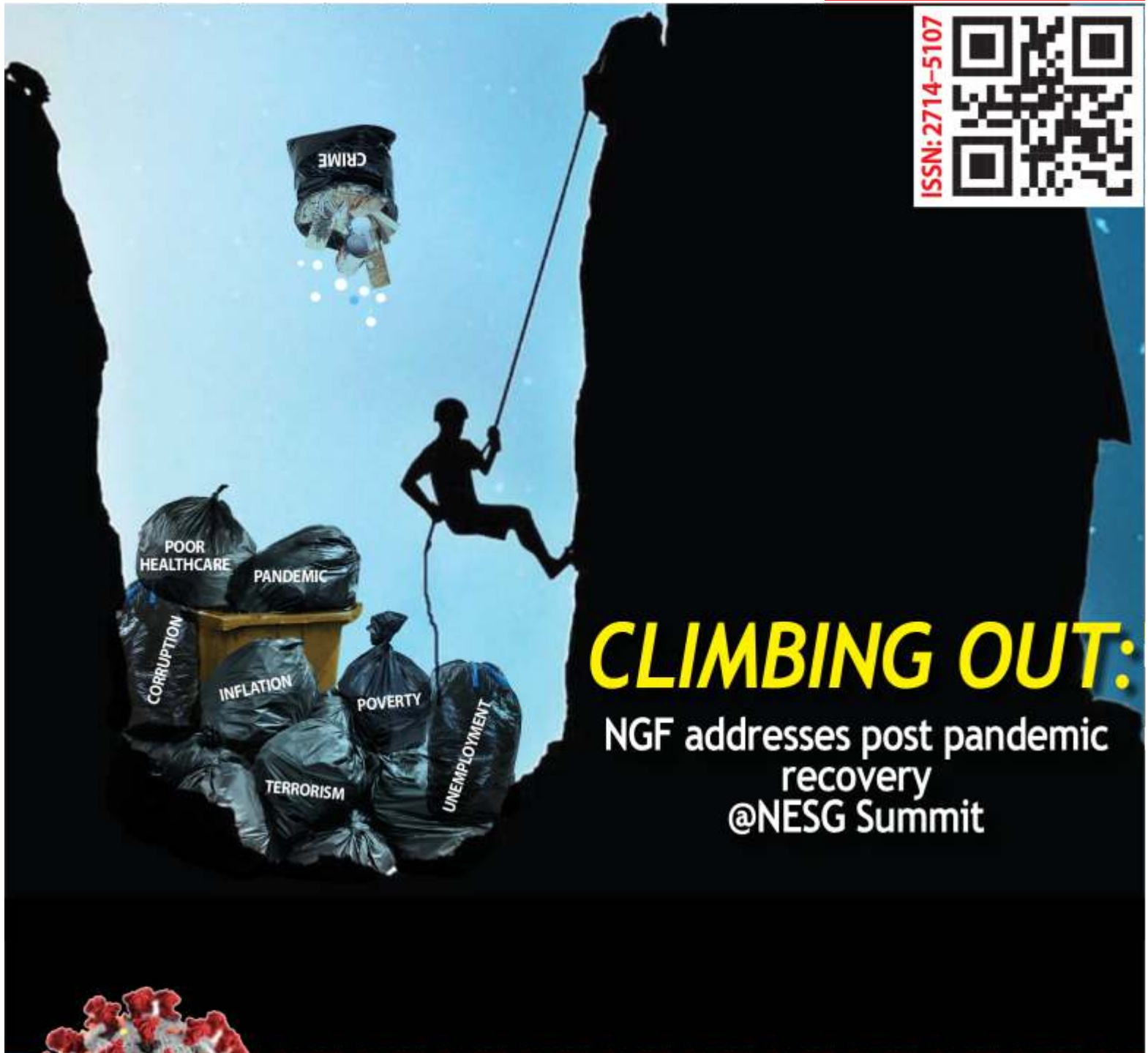


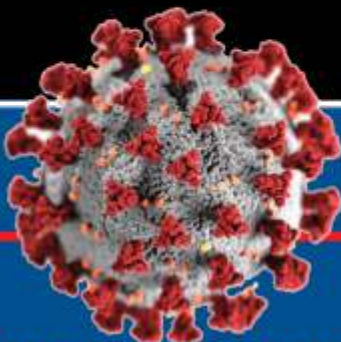


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CLIMBING OUT:

NGF addresses post pandemic recovery @NESG Summit



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17th Teleconference meeting of the Nigeria Governors' Forum held on Wednesday, 16th September 2020

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, deliberated on salient issues affecting the country especially the subnational economy following from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. The NGF Chairman provided the following updates: a. The Forum will be playing a strategic role in the forthcoming 26th Nigerian Economic Summit (NES #26) which, is designed to focus on the sub-nationals as the frontiers for economic growth and development in the country. It will bring together local and global policymakers, business leaders, development partners and scholars to lead and participate in sessions that will focus on building strategic partnerships and cooperation between governments, business enterprises and the civil society. At least 18 Governors will take part in physical and virtual high-level panel dialogues from 26th - 27th October 2020.

b. The Technical Committee of the NGF-NESG Economic Roundtable (NNER) was inaugurated on 14th September 2020. The Committee will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the NGF-NESG partnership based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed between both institutions in 2017 to facilitate joint program aimed at promoting sub-national competitiveness.

c. The 2019 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) program conducted by the Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation (OAuGF) will be completed this week. The exercise has already been completed in 32 States. States remain committed and will continue to work assiduously to meet the requirements and Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) of the program.

d. Updates were also provided on ongoing health-related interventions across States, including the Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement (RE-DISSE) COVID-19 Support Fund, the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF); and the Saving One Million Lives Performance for Results (SOML-PforR). On the SOML program, the Forum urges the World Bank to fast-track the review of the SMART Sur-



Fayemi

vey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). States are also called upon to finalize their baseline assessments and capacity building activities to fast-track access to the BHCPF.

The Forum received further updates and presentations:

i. The Governor of Lagos State, H.E Babajide Sanwo-Olu, provided updates on behalf of the NGF Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19. In his brief, the Governor highlighted the role of government in monitoring controls as the country welcomes international travellers. This includes the requirement for Travellers to present credible COVID-19 PCR Test results in order to safeguard the health of the populace;

ii. The Vice-Chairman of the National Food Security Council and Governor of Kebbi, Atiku Bagudu briefed the Forum on the activities of the National Food Security Council as it concerns agricultural development and food security in the country;

iii. The World Bank Country Director Mr. Shubham Chaudhuri in company of the

Bank's Lead Specialist on the Nigeria CARES Program, Prof. Foluso Okunmadewa provided an update on the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Program for Results.

The program objective is to fund investments at the State level aimed at protecting livelihoods and food security for vulnerable families and facilitating economic recovery for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the country;

iv. The Bank called for greater support for State Focal Persons and the institutions responsible for implementing the program, including the Social Safety Net, the Community and Social Development Agencies (CSDA), and the FADAMA and SME platforms. Governors were also called to establish a State CARES Coordination Unit in their Ministries of Budget and Planning to ensure proper coordination with other ministries, departments and agencies;

v. Mr. Bismark Rewane, member of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council made a presentation on managing state

economies: challenges, opportunities and policy solutions for State governments. The presentation highlighted the deteriorating economic condition in the country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and called for informed response from governments to steer the country to a V-shaped economic recovery in 2021.

vi. Lastly, the Honourable Minister of Water Resources, Engineer Suleiman Hussein Adamu briefed the Forum on the National Water Resources Bill 2020. The Minister emphasized that the basic philosophy behind the Bill is to integrate water resources management in the country by bringing all laws related to water resources management into one consolidated code. He noted that the new bill is consistent with the Land Use Act, and will promote equitable development, management, use and conservation of Nigeria's surface and groundwater resources.

Thereafter, Members of the Forum Resolved to:

1. Commend the World Bank for facilitating ongoing activities geared towards accelerating the uptake of the CARES program during the COVID-19 period and meet with the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning on the terms of the program.

2. Schedule a more intensive session on economic management with their Commissioners of Finance and Budget and Planning on the back of the presentation of Mr. Bismark Rewane member of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council;

3. Partner with KAINOS Edge Consulting in conducting a Household Survey designed to gather data, analyze, generate and publish insights on the household economy across the 36 States of Nigeria and the FCT.

This Survey will cover household demographics, decision-making and wellbeing characteristics;

4. Finally, Forum members while commending the Minister of Water Resources for taking an integrated approach on water resource management as a national good, Resolved that the proposed Bill and other relevant laws including the River Basins Development Authorities Act 2004; the Natural Water Resources Act 2004; and the Nigeria Hydrological Resources Act 2004 will be reviewed by their Attorneys General and Executive Councils of States after which a common position of States will be presented to Water Resources.

Governor Kayode Fayemi
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum



CLIMBING OUT:

NGF Addresses Post Pandemic Recovery @NESG Summit



Inaugural Technical Committee meeting of the NGF-NESG Economic Roundtable

The economic environment is dressed in unmistakable misery. 110.2 million Nigerians are living in multi-dimensional poverty; 82.9 are in abject poverty; income per capita is down to \$2.077 from \$2.395 in 2018; GDP growing at rates that are slower than the population, thus deepening the suffering of the already down-trodden poor, according to statistics thrown at the governors by the Chair of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council, Mr Bismark Rewane. The poverty and prosperity dynamics leave nothing to the imagination.

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group holds the same opinion. Last week, in its concept presentation, to the DG of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru, while inaugurating the Technical Committee of the 2020 Summit, it stated that Nigeria's vulnerabilities were worsened by the sharp drop in crude oil prices which has led to the tightening of government revenues.

The NESG also holds that the impact of the

pandemic has the potential of triggering an economic crisis with telling social consequences. It prescribes a need to create a balance between managing the pandemic and managing its economic fallout in the short term while planning for recovery and growth in the medium and long terms. If doomsday were to be identified, this would be it.

The NGF is therefore partnering with the NESG to chart a course out of the quagmire. The two institutions have identified the 2020 NESG Summit as the perfect platform to present to all the 36 Governors of the Federation with a template that could help ease the pressure, diminish their worries and provide solutions to both peculiar and common problems that states are grappling with. That is why the 2020 Summit due to take place on the 26-27th of October is directed at the subnational economy and derives its tag the NGF-NESG Summit 2020 from the prevailing circumstance.

The Technical Committee of the NGF-NESG Economic Roundtable (NNER) was

inaugurated on 14th September 2020. The Committee is responsible for coordinating the activities of the NGF-NESG partnership based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between both institutions in 2017 to facilitate a joint program aimed at promoting a sub-national growth that is viable.

The NNER is a sub-national competitiveness delivery platform devoted to promoting strategic partnerships that drive Investments, Economic Growth, Productivity and Shared Economic Reform Agenda. The NGF and NESG, in line with their mandates have been in mutual collaboration in compatible areas, especially to facilitate dialogue and develop joint programmes aimed at promoting sub-national competitiveness as a national development strategy.

With the core objectives of promoting what looks like the NGF Secretariat's States Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) for regional development and building States capacities to develop unique sets of institutions, policies and factors for improved productivity, the Committee re-



cently met to discuss deteriorating effects of Covid-19 on the country.

In pursuit of that agenda, the NGF offered Mr Bismark Rewane, of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council its platform to make a presentation on managing state economies: challenges, opportunities and policy solutions for State governments. The presentation highlighted the deteriorating economic condition in the country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and called for informed response from governments to steer the country to a V-shaped economic recovery in 2021. All these efforts are expected to help states climb out of the hole and quickly be on the path to recovery in the post pandemic era.

The mutual NGF-NESG Focus Areas include: Develop strategy for national competitiveness; Organize for regional/sub-national competitiveness; The environment of business vis-à-vis ease of doing business; Human capital development; Research, data analysis and collation of development information; Monitoring and evaluation, and other relevant areas agreed upon by the parties.

In line with the foregoing, NGF and NESG have continued to engage on continuous dialogue to foster cooperative actions towards achieving the goals of positioning Nigeria along the path of competitiveness, with the sub-national governments as critical development agents and an enabler for regional devel-

opment actions.

Presenting an update on the activities of the Committee, the NGF Chairman, Dr Kayode Fayemi said the Forum will be playing a strategic role in the forthcoming 26th Nigerian Economic Summit (NES #26) which, is designed to focus on the sub-nationals as the frontiers for economic growth and development in the country. The event will bring together local and global policymakers, business leaders, development partners and scholars to lead and participate in sessions that will focus on building strategic partnerships and cooperation between governments, business enterprises and the civil society.

At least 18 Governors will take part in physical and virtual high-level panel dialogues on the platform (26th - 27th October 2020). The other 18 would be expected to also participate in the 26 segments of the Summit, even if inactively.

But what happens if the asks of this Summit are ignored? The simple answer is that there would be dire consequences that may be hard, for states to contend with. According to a document shared by the NESG, the impact scenario and risks outlook are far from comforting. For example, State governments will have challenges meeting budget obligations, especially in public services such as health, education, and physical infrastructure. There would be a significant decline in household income. Also, as inflation

rate rises, purchasing power of households will be pressured down leading to increased poverty.

At another level, foreign investment inflows would worsen as capital flight intensifies causing severe implications to access credit in the global financial market. There will be a shift to digital technology with higher risk of cyberattacks and data fraud.

Businesses will rescale downwards to have a better grip of their market condition, leading to lots of downscaling of operations, downsizing of staff and loan restructuring. Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will be more challenging, if not a mirage, supply chains will be disrupted as free movement across interstate and international borders are hampered or widely restricted.

If the situation worsens and gains on oil prices reversed, another round of devaluation and hike in interest rate could be imminent.

Admittedly, there is no silver bullet to making the frightening situation simply disappear, but there could be light at the end of the tunnel if certain deliberate steps are taken to assuage the suffering of the people. This means making the concept of 'leaving no one behind' a reality at all levels of government and bringing the poorest and most marginalised to participate fully in society, precisely, meaning that inclusiveness is the only panacea for societal growth and achieving sustainable development in the "New Normal".

North East Govs Forum gets new Scribe

The North East Governors' Forum has appointed Senator Muhammad Abba Aji as executive secretary in charge coordinating the forum's affairs and head of secretariat for an initial period of years.

Borno Governor, who is chairman of the forum, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum conveyed the appointment in a signed letter dated September 15, 2020.

"Following the unanimous decision of the Governors of the North East Forum, and in my capacity as the Chairman of the North East Governors Forum (NEGF), it is my honour and pleasure to offer you the position of the Executive Secretary of the North East Governors Forum from the date of this letter".

"Your academic background and wealth of experience in both public and the private sector, with particular mention to your legislative experience in the National Assembly and corporate



Senator Abba

decision of the Forum on your choice.

"Your skills and wealth of experience would

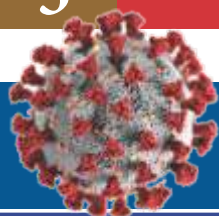
be valuable to the forum. You will provide administrative and policy assistance towards the attainment of the Forum's vision and objectives".

"The appointment will be for an initial period of two (2) years and renewal as appropriate. Your remuneration and other entitlements will be discussed and mutually agreed upon".

"We look forward to your positive response to this offer and the pleasure of working with you to build a positive working relationship that will benefit the people of the North East region" Zulum wrote in the letter.

Governor Zulum's spokesman, Malam Isa Gusau, communicated the appointment to journalists from Maiduguri.

The forum was formed in March 2020 when governors of the northeast first met in Gombe. In August, the governors met in Maiduguri for the second time during which Zulum was elected chairman for a period of two years.



COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

GANDUJE:

Forcing the virus out



Showing how it's done: Governor Umar Ganduje demonstrates hand-washing as a preventive measure against the coronavirus.

By Salihu Tanko Yakasai

Though the almost 15-minute interview a TVC News reporter, Ibrahim Isah conducted with some recuperating Covid-19 patients receiving treatment at some isolation centres in Kano State will go a long way in dispelling the rumours still making

the rounds in the minds of some doubting Thomases that the pandemic is a hoax, watching the patients narrating with extreme difficulties their near-death ordeals at the deadly jaws of the corona virus is an experience any sane person with an iota of compassion will not like to relive or go through again.

The graphic description of the patients at one of the isolation centres



by the TVC News reporter, who were breathing hard and speaking with difficulty with palpable fear in their eyes, should serve as a clear dispeller of any rumour that this pandemic is a scam.

To say that I was traumatized by the harrowing encounters of the patients is an understatement. However, many victims were not so lucky as to share their bitter experiences as the debilitating disease had wrenched their precious souls to the great beyond. May Allah pour His mercies upon the departed! Ameen.

In its efforts to contain the virus and care for the infected, Kano State government has established five isolation centres namely: 72-bed capacity Kwanar Dawaki Medical Centre equipped with 27 ventilators and 20 oxygen concentrators

tuous and healthy foods that will assist in their quick recovery. While the state government under Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje is spending huge resources on the treatment of the patients, it is also grappling with the problem of community transmission. This situation may likely be worsened with the current relaxing of the lockdown measures especially as some people are skeptical about the virus and are reluctant to observe the prescribed health protocols like wearing of mask in public places and social/physical distancing as part of measures to contain the spread of the virus.

Apart from these isolation centres, there are additional Covid-19 testing centres from the initial ones at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital

(AKTH) and the 180-capacity daily testing centre provided by Bayero University, Kano, the new testing centres are that of E-Health Africa with a testing capacity of 300 and that of AFAIN with a testing capacity of 90. In addition, the state government has begun to carry out house-to-house Covid-19 testing exercise all in an effort to eradicate the virus from the state.

Undoubtedly, the associated financial burden on the government in caring for the patients and implementing these containment measures is a serious drain the meager resources of the state with the current dwindling monthly federation allocation to the three tiers of government and the decreasing internally generated revenue following the imposition of the lockdown measures



Governor Ganduje supervises the dis-infection team during the distribution of hand-washing and sanitising equipment to private hospitals and other facilities in Kano.

for severe cases, 110-bed capacity Muhammad Buhari Specialist Hospital for mild or asymptomatic cases and 80-bed capacity Abubakar Imam Urology Centre renovated by the Dangote Foundation).

Others are 100-bed capacity Daula Hotel for female and healthcare workers and 300-bed Karfi Sports Institute which is yet to be activated while CACOVID-19 led by the Dangote Foundation established the Sani Abacha Stadium Isolation Centre with a revised capacity from 500 to 300 beds following an adjustment by the NCDC.

These centres have been equipped with medical and personal protective equipment for the treatment of the patients. The state government also ensures that the patients are served sump-

HOWEVER, THE MAIN CONCERN OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT IS COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION OF THE COVID-19 VIRUS NOW THAT THE CONTAINMENT MEASURES ARE BEING RELAXED

including restrictions on vehicular and human traffic which has crippled commercial and business activities for which Kano State is renowned for.

And the state government has embarked on several ambitious multi-billion Naira projects aimed at transforming Kano into a mega city most of which the present administration of Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje has vowed to complete before the expiration of his second term in office. To say that this is a challenge is to state the obvious.

However, the main concern of the state government is community transmission of the Covid-19 virus now that the containment measures are being relaxed. Many people have the



Gov Ganduje (left) during the distribution of sanitising equipment to private hospitals and other facilities in the state.

pendant of flouting the containment measures during the lockdown and now that gradual relaxation of the measures are now being in place, community transmission can become the greatest challenge toward the total eradication of the virus in the state and the country at large. More worrisome is that asymptomatic patients may continue to spread the virus to unsuspecting members of the public thereby turning the clock backward.

In an interview with the TVC News reporter, Dr. Abdullahi Anifowose, the Chief Medical Officer in charge of Kwanar Dawaki Isolation Center patriotically assured that “providing care for the infected remains a job they cannot resist.” In the course of discharging this patriotic duty, about 40 health workers in Kano State have contracted the virus but undeterred the health personnel remain.

According to Dr. Abdullahi Anifowose, “To date, 150 cases have been treated here and many have been discharged, but in this ancient city many seem to believe that Covid-19 is a hoax. This probably accounts for the high numbers and the frustration on the part of government as it puts in place measures to contain the pandemic which still has no vaccine.”

This indeed is a challenge facing the government and other stakeholders who have staked their resources, time, energy and even life to see an end to this global scourge in the state. The second wave of the outbreak of the disease in Beijing, China a few days ago is a stark reminder that a serious problem lies ahead in this country in view of our lackadaisical attitude to this pandemic. Though here in Kano, available data has

shown a decrease in the number of people being infected despite a significant increase in the number of tests conducted. For instance, from June 10th to June 17th, a total of 2,603 samples were collected but only 140 came out positive, which is about 5.3%. Prior to that, the average percentage of positive cases was about 30%. But all these success recorded might be wiped out if the state is to be hit with a second wave like in the case of China and other places around the world, which is why all efforts must be geared towards sustaining these efforts.

That was why the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19, Boss Mustapha sounded a chilling warning during the daily briefing of the taskforce on Monday 15,

THE

**GOVERNMENTS OF
SUB-NATIONAL WILL
TRY TO DO THEIR BEST,
BUT IT'S THE CHOICES
OF THE PEOPLE
THAT'LL DETERMINE
HOW EFFECTIVE
THAT'LL BE**

June in Abuja that the current pandemic “may overwhelm Nigeria’s health infrastructure” if Nigerians are not responsible, adding that the taskforce is no longer “Nigeria’s frontliners in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.”

According to Boss Mustapha as reported by the Daily Trust, “If you listen to me conscientiously in the past four weeks, I’ve spoken about personal responsibility. We’re not your front-liners anymore. The choice of whether you’ll get to the hospital is yours.”

“We’ve got to a stage where no amount of enforcement will cut this tool for us. It’s the choices we make that will determine what will happen. The governments of sub-national will try to do their best, but it’s the choices of the people that’ll determine how effective that’ll be.”

“We’re the only ones that can work assiduously to ensure we reduce the level of transmission now that it has been ceded in our own communities. Nobody should be deceived that Nigeria has reached the peak of the pandemic.”

On the other hand, a terrifying assertion by a female patient should also debunk any doubt some have entertained about the current pandemic. In her words: “I strongly believe coronavirus exists, I have been infected and I am now negative. I started my tests at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital and it turned out positive. I was brought to this facility unconscious. I spent a week under intensive care.”

Many of the other surviving patients interviewed are lucky to tell their horrifying tales of their near-death struggles with the deadly Corona virus. Not so lucky were those who had gone to the great beyond. As confirmed by the federal authorities, many of the recent deaths in Kano State were caused by the Covid-19 virus, but our people are still adamant and they refuse to observe some simple health protocols like social distancing, frequent washing of hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer and wearing of face mask especially in public places. According to Boss Mustapha, “If we decide to be careless because restrictions have been lifted, then we’ll have a peak because if we’re not careful it can overwhelm even our health infrastructure.” Kano State government, frontline health personnel, public-spirited individuals, non-governmental organizations, multi-lateral bodies and corporate bodies are doing their best to contain this serious global health challenge. What remains is for us to complement these efforts to bring the pandemic to an end and face other equally serious nation-building challenges.

– Salihu Tanko Yakasai is the Special Adviser on Media to the Governor of Kano State.



Bagudu Brings succour to flood ravaged areas of Kebbi

Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu recently visited flood ravaged areas in the state, to assess the situation and provide succour to the victims.

The Governor who was accompanied by officials of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), led by its Chairman, Alhaji Sani Dododo, visited Augie, Argungu and Arewa local government communities, to assess rice farmlands, roads and bridges affected by the flood.

Bagudu, who defied the difficult terrains of the hinterlands, took time to personally interact with the victims, commiserated with them, diligently and patiently listened to their needs, with a view to assisting them.

Speaking to Journalists at Bakin Gada, in Argungu local government shortly after inspecting rice farmlands submerged by the floods, Bagudu flanked by the National President of Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN), Alhaji Aminu Goronyo, expressed utmost shock over the incident, describing it as regrettable.

‘ Things like this happen, we are not unique in the world, it is regrettable. We have seen in the hurricane Laura and other hurricanes similar and other worst problems.’

The governor expressed optimism that Nigeria, which according to him, had witnessed similar disasters before, would surmount the problem.

He assured the farmers that, the federal government with its institutions like the CBN and other organisations, would respond to the problem effectively.

He averred: ‘ We are responding to disasters and supporting each other, and I believe the FGN, the CBN and other associations will respond to this effectively and timely too.’

While thanking the CBN and RIFAN for their concern over the flood situation in Kebbi, Bagudu equally appreciated President Muhammadu Buhari’s leadership derive to making Nigeria self sufficient in food production.

He announced that, the President would soon summon a meeting of the National Food Security Council and the problem of flood disasters, among others, would be discussed.

The National President of RIFAN, Alhaji Aminu Goronyo, while commenting on the situation, said he led the North West State Chapters to Kebbi State,



The flood ravaged area where the governor visited

to physically see for themselves the devastating effect of the flood to rice farms.

According to Goronyo, they will also pay a courtesy visit to the governor, as well as to declare the preceding dry season program, 2020 in the state.

Goronyo described the devastating effect of the flood to rice farms as beyond comment, saying, ‘ I can say that the devastating effect of the flood to farms is beyond comment.’

‘ I don’t think in the most recent time, this kind of flood has happened to this level, the only thing I can say is that, the Almighty God is in control.’

‘ Everything that we have seen is from God and we must thank Him and I know He can replace whatever we lost, with what we can even imagine.’

Goronyo assured the farmers that, the CBN had sent in its officials from the Development Finance Department, to come to Kebbi and assess the situation, for immediate action.

The CBN governor, according to him, had directed RIFAN to mobilise one million farmers that can quickly produce five million metric tonnes for the dry season commencing in November, 2020, for support.

Earlier, Governor Bagudu had visited Birnin Tudu, Tiggi, Shaharma and Agoda communities in Augie local government, while in Argungu local government also, the governor was at Matan Fada, Bakin Gada, Zanginawa and Yeldu.

At Sabon Gari community, Birnin Tudu, Magaji Amadu, the village Head of the area complained to the governor how the flood submerged their rice farmlands.

He said that, the flood was a culmination of both the continuous intensive rains being witnessed now, as well as the water released from the dam.

Continued on page 9



An elderly farmer, Alhaji Aliyu Soda, while appealing for assistance from the government, said that, for over 11 years, they have never seen a flood disaster as devastating as this one.

He made a passionate appeal to the government to assist them with farming inputs such as assorted seeds and fertilizers, among others.

The governor, while commiserating with the victims, assured them of his government's intention to assist them.

At Kwakkwashe village where the State Government through SEMA distributed relief materials to the displaced victims, the governor, while commiserating with the community said government was worried about their plight.

Bagudu further charged them to cooperate with the authorities, as they should temporarily relocate to a safe haven.

He urged them to continue to enrol their children to schools, maintain clean environment, use facemasks to guard against

Covid-19.

The governor also advised the community to organise their youths, to form vigilante services, to boost security in the area.

Alhaji Sani Dododo, the Chairman of SEMA, had earlier told the governor that, apart from the efforts of the agency in the relocation of the victims, relief materials were donated to them.

They included 20 bags of rice, 10 bags millet, 10 bags of guinea corn, 5 bags salt, 30 cartons of macaroni, 5 cartons of tomatoes, 50 bundles of Shadda, 50 bundles of atampa and 7 jerricans of groundnut oil.

Others were 5 cooking pots, 100 plastic kettles, 100 plastic buckets, 100 plastic cups, 100 plastic plates, 100 mosquito nets, 5 cartons of bathing soap, 100 plastic mats, 100 blankets and a truckload of firewood.

The District Head of the area, Alhaji Suleman Mera (Sarkin Gobir Lailaba), thanked the governor for the quick response of the government, while he described the government of Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu as people oriented government.

The governor and his entourage had also inspected various roads and bridges damaged by the floods in the local governments he visited.

At Jefeji community, in Kangiwa local government, where the community was cut off by the damaged bridge, the governor expressed readiness of his government to repair the bridge.

The governor was accompanied at the visit by SEMA officials, RIFAN officials, State House of Assembly member representing the area, the Chairmen of Augie, Argungu and Arewa among others.

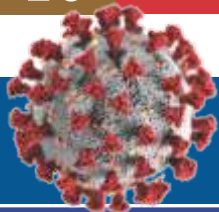
It will be recalled that the Nigerian Meteorological Agency had forecasted that Kebbi would be among the states to be hit by flood this year.



When the governor met with the victims of the flood



Flood victims receive relief materials during a visit by Governor Bagudu.



COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

UDOM: WE'RE STEPPING UP TESTING

Akwai Ibom State government says it has so far invested over N3 billion in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic and investing to step up testing facilities.

It said the money was spent on the provision of drugs, food and construction of isolation centres.

Governor Udom Emmanuel stat-

is ensuring that both suspected and confirmed cases are fed and treated free of charge throughout their stay at the isolation centres, saying all 43 cottage and general hospitals have been provided with basic Covid-19 training and kits to improve handling of cases before they are transferred to Isolation Centers.

In addition, a new PCR laboratory

lab and it is 100% ready. We are only awaiting NCDC certification. So be rest assured that we will soon step up the testings in the state. We won't wait for people to show symptoms," he said.

He said his target is that "we have 49 functional Intensive Care Units before we leave office. Recall that I said while revamping some of our



ed this during a media interaction, adding that three more containers of medicals equipment and supplies have arrived the state.

According to him, government

has been completed and was awaiting certification by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), he said.

"I am glad to inform you that the state has activated the second PCR

hospitals that 'there could be a condition where 30 minutes reach to a hospital matters', lo and behold coronavirus came!"

He disclosed that the State has en-



Gov Udom Emmanuel inspecting facilities at the COVID-19 centre in Uyo



Stacks of palliatives distributed by the Akwa-Ibom state govt



Some recipients of palliatives distributed by the Akwa-Ibom state govt

tered the stage of community spread, appealing to citizens to protect themselves and comply with government safety protocols at public places and social events.

“We are at a stage of community transmission, and what that means is that you must protect yourself. At this moment, everything is important. Don't ignore even a sore throat. Don't wait to realise that coronavirus is real when it is too late.” He said.

He however cleared the air on recent update by NCDC, saying since the pandemic hit the country, the State has recorded just seven deaths of those who tested positive to the virus. He admitted that there has been additional 4 deaths recorded since the last interview, but not on a single day.

“It is not as if they all died in one day, but it is just because that is the time that NCDC decided to update its records. All those cases were brought in to our facilities when their conditions were very bad”.

Speaking further on the new PCR laboratory, he said it will boost testing.

“I am glad to inform you that the State has activated the second PCR lab and it is 100% ready. We are only awaiting NCDC certification. So be rest assured that we will soon step up the testing in the State. Now that we have a second laboratory, we will have more testing carried out”. He promised.

On the strategic repositioning of state post Covid-19 economy, Governor Emmanuel harped on agriculture, saying this would ensure food security, create job opportunities, enhance growth and boost establishment of agro-allied cottage industries.

While answering questions from viewers, the Governor reiterated that he does not have an anointed successor.

“I am not that kind of Governor that will seek a third term through a surrogate. I am also not that kind of Governor who wants to rule for 24 years. Trust me to know that your Governor can only support someone who genuinely has the interest of the state at heart”.

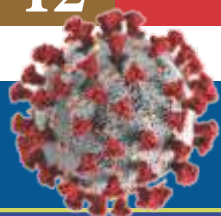
He expressed disappointment with the poor handling of development of oil-bearing states especially Akwa Ibom State by federal government and international oil companies.

“Our State produces the oil and contributes significantly to the economy of the country. But I'm yet to see any meaningful development brought to our State. I have not seen any significant presence of those who explore our oil.

“Even ExxonMobil feels too reluctant to pay tax. so what we can do to help ourselves, is to encourage those who are willing to partner with us to develop our State.”

The Governor admitted that although announcing tax relief will affect the State's internally generated revenue, it was a necessary measure to support small and medium enterprises to recover from Covid-19 economic shock.

On the fate of capital projects, Governor Emmanuel appealed to citizens to bear with government as it focuses on ensuring the State survives the scourge. He reassured citizens that all projects will be looked into once the situation improves and the rain subsides.



COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

OVER 20,000 HOMES GET PALLIATIVES IN YOBE

The Private Sector Coalition Against Covid-19 (CACOVID) has donated food items to over 20,000 vulnerable households in Yobe State.

While handing over the items on behalf of CACOVID in Damaturu, the Business Manager, First Bank, Damaturu Branch, Mr Marcus Dibel, stated that the palliatives were to cushion the effects on vulnerable people affected by the pandemic. According to him, the donations were in the third phase of CACOVID interventions in Nigeria, in Yobe State in particular.

“It may interest you to know that the coalition, in collaboration with the state governments, has commissioned 38 isolation centres in all the 36 states and the FCT, in addition to improving the testing capacity of the NCDC with donations of 100,000 testing kits and various PPEs.”

He advised people to continue to comply with the COVID-19 safety protocols as the virus was not yet over.

Receiving the items on behalf of the state government, Governor Mai Mala Buni, represented by his deputy, Idi



Gov. Mai Mala Buni

Barde Gubana, directed the State Emergency Management Agency to ensure immediate delivery of the items to the targeted people across the 17 local government areas of state.

Buni appreciated CACOVID for its swift response and intent of collaborating with government at all levels to minimise the effect of the coronavirus pandemic across the country. Items donated included 56,454 cartons of noodles, 28,277 cartons of pasta, 28,227 bags of 5kg rice, sugar and maize flour.





Bauchi: As Bala changes the narrative

BY UMAR USMAN DUGURI

Protests, votes and absolute yearnings for change brought Governor Bala Muhammad of Bauchi State to power in 2019.

The people were disenchanted and disillusioned about bad governance so when Governor Bala Mohammed presented himself as an alternative, the good people of Bauchi State readily accepted to go for him.

It is now one year and some months when Governor Bala Mohammed took over, and a lot of good, potable and clean water continue to flow to all nook and crannies of the state and the people are drinking it to their full satisfaction.

One remarkable trait that distinguishes Governor Bala Mohammed from his predecessors is that he has a listening ear and is not arrogant as not to accept advice or counsel from those he leads be it young or old. As a demonstration of his readiness to carry the people along, the first thing the governor did shortly after assumption of office was visits to traditional rulers and religious scholars.

The visit to the traditional rulers was considered to be very important in view of the fact that in the past, they were degraded and their wise counsels were disregarded. Therefore, the visit by the governor was form of re-assurance and respect, honor and reverence.

This is no doubt the reason why all traditional palaces are undergoing massive renovation while some have been fully erected from the ebb position to the peak of completion.

Religious leaders played the leading role in mobilizing the people that brought Governor Bala Mohammed to power. Governor Bala was not unmindful of the fact. That explains why he visited the worshiping places and residences of scholars in order to thank them for their support. He also used the occasion of his visits to assure the religious leaders of his administration's decision to always seek the advice and religious counsels of the imams and pastors in running the affairs of governance.

There was no doubt that the visits were successful as it helps in stabilizing what could be described as tense atmosphere of mistrust and lack of faith between government and religious organizations in the Past. As a demonstration of governor Bala's sincerity and readiness to carry religious leaders along recognition, the governor personally undertook the building and reconstruction of mosques, schools and churches.

Only recently the governor was the special guest of honour at the occasion of the grand opening of a multi-millionaire Jumat mosque he built for the IZALA group in Bauchi, while CAN secretariat construction is ongoing.

That is not all; there are constructions of primary and secondary schools state-wide, apart from the ultra-model UBEC north-eastern schools. No wonder the number of out of school children has drastically reduced by 40% from the previous rating in 2014 and 2019 respectively. The few existing tertiary intuitions in the state have also been upgraded to the international standard, the state poly-

technic now offers HND, Degree courses; state university Gadau has been expanded to accommodate more citizens and its beneficial catchment area.

At the time of writing this piece, the governor hosted his counterpart, Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers, Senators, Publisher of the famous investigative newspaper Desert Herald Tukur Mamu, who were invited to specifically commission various roads projects constructed by Governor Bala in Bauchi metropolis and the local government areas of the state that have been neglected in spite of its economic significance.

Earlier, historical roads in Bauchi municipal that included the Sabon Kaura road, Ibrahim Bako road and others have been completed, and the people are the happier lot. New roads are being planned and already foundations have been laid and work will soon commence.

The Muda Lawal road has been completed and electrified, courtesy of Gover-



Bala Mohammed

nor Bala's mission of making a difference by embarking on meaningful projects that will accelerate the rapid development of the state and giving it a new face-lift.

Roads constructions are not limited to Bauchi metropolis alone. There is also Construction of Raji Quarters to Nitel road, construction of Gombe- Maiduguri bye-pass, design and construction of Yalwan Duguri- Badaran Dutse- Birim-Bajama- Kumbala - Kundak- Wurno- Burga road (58.4km) awarded to Triacta Nigeria limited. There is also the rehabilitation of Alkaleri- Gwaram- Gokaru road awarded to Shafa grade construction and engineering limited, design and construction of Sade- Akuyam Road awarded.

Others are Alkaleri-Burga currently under construction, while the Dambam-Sade road has been completely. Various roads construction and renovations have been undertaken in Azare Township and other local government areas across the state.

In the health sector, immediately on assumption power as Governor, Bala Mohammed declare state of emergency on the sector as a means of reforming the critical decay and rationalization. Within no time, Governor Bala Mohammed has renovated the newly-established College of Nursing and Midwifery by giving it a beautifying outlook and equipping it with all the necessary materials to make it conducive for academic learning. Hospitals statewide are running effectively and doctors' salaries and entitlements maintained their monthly prompt payment. Modern mechanisms have been put in place for a serene atmosphere.

Immediately Governor Bala Mohammed assumed the mantle of leadership, he visited Abuja the nation's capital, where he solicited and got intervention in the educational sector through UBEC, TETFUND and other relevant bodies in the educational sector.

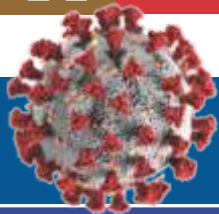
All said and done, Governor Bala Mohammed's coming as governor of Bauchi state is no doubt a great blessing.

The leadership style hitherto characterized by ineptitude and cluelessness, has been changed for good and replaced by a responsive, development-orientated and humane approach.

The people are now fully satisfied that a new dawn has finally arrived, and that Bauchi State will soon take its rightful place among other states in the federation.

Indeed, after darkness comes the glorious dawn.

**Umar Duguri is the Bauchi Bureau Chief of DESERT HERALD*



COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

The Niger State experience

With the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Wuhan Province of China, Nigeria like other countries started taking measures to safeguard against its outbreak in the country, but being a global village, the first case was detected in Lagos through a foreigner (an Italian nationality) on the 27th of February 2020.

Aware of the strategic position of Niger State as the gateway to Northern and Southern Nigeria and with its close proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Governor Abubakar Sani Bello quickly swung into action by taking decisive steps to curtail the spreading and contraction of the virus.

The early measures taken, was setting up of a 28-man committee headed by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Alhaji Ahmed Ibrahim Matane with other relevant stakeholders to embark on massive sensitization campaign using the various medium of disseminating information to the people in the major communication languages spoken in the State as well as manage any eventual outbreak.

Governor Sani Bello ordered for the establishment of emergency centres across the state and strengthen surveillance of anyone exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19, as well as the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worth millions of naira for the health workers.

Sensing that the ravaging virus was closer to the state the Governor directed for the setting up of quarantine, isolation and treatment centres so that the state would not be caught unprepared. The committee raised up to the occasion and carried out the directives of the Governor.

To further safeguard lives, since the virus has no known cure or vaccine, the state government closed



Gov. Sani Bello

down all schools in the state, (tertiary, secondary and primary schools) for both public and private sector.

To curtail the spread of the virus in the state, Governor Sani Bello in a state-wide broadcast, declared an executive order by Imposing restriction of movement for two weeks in the month of March from. 8:00 am - 8:00 pm, after two weeks it was reviewed to 10:00 am - 12: 00 am.

However, with the index case of COVID-19 in Limawa, Minna the State capital on April 11, 2020, the Governor was compelled to impose a total lockdown on the 13 April on the grounds that people violated the partial lockdown that was earlier pronounced.

With the first outbreak of the virus in the State capital, the government placed the entire Limawa Community on two weeks isolation, for observation and contacts tracing. The entire community was fumigated. While on isolation, palliatives



especially grains and other food stuffs were provided to them to cushion the effects of the isolation on them.

The government went ahead to fumigate major public places that attract large gathering of people in the major cities of the state. They include schools, markets, supermarkets, Churches, Mosques among others.

To further safeguard people from contracting and spreading the dreaded disease the state government banned all forms of congregational worship.

Stringent measures were taken to check the influx of people into the state, joint security agents were mobilized to arrest violators while special mobile courts were set up to try and execute those arrested.

As a sensitive government, it entered an agreement with the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) for daily power supply of 12 hours to ease the effect of the total lockdown.

However, the numbers of those contracting the virus kept increasing and in mid May, 2020, the first COVID-19 related death was recorded in Suleja.

The government also had to review and downsize its 2020 budget from N155bn to N98b in tandem with the reality of economic dynamics caused as a result of the pandemic.

The government also implemented the

agreement reached by the Northern Governors Forum as regards to the repatriation of Almajirai to their states of origin. The state government treated them with humane by adequately catering for them during their profiling before sending them back to their home State.

Even almajirai of Niger State origin were returned from other states, they were quarantined for two weeks, tested and those whose results returned negative were reunited with their families and those positive were treated and subsequently returned to their homes.

As part of measures to cushion the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic in the state, the State Government also approved the reduction of Tax payments in the state.

The Tax reduction with varying percentage, took effect from 24th of June, 2020 to 31st March, 2021.

Recently the State Governor in a State-wide broadcast, re-strategised on managing the pandemic as well as re-iterated the State guidelines in line with the established safety protocols of COVID-19 following the disregard to the measures by the people despite the astronomical growth of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related death in the State.

Some of the new guidelines added to the known protocols are; all deaths should be reported and recorded at the closest health facility for burial protocol from the Ministry of

health.

Others are, proscription of all forms of mass gathering occasioned by the ease of lock down, access to Government House and offices are only allowed for those on essential services.

He also directed that Ministries of Information, Health and other relevant MDAs should redouble efforts on massive sensitization of the public on the need to curtail the spread of the virus especially in markets, motor parks, places of worships among others.

Government has made lots of efforts and improvement in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in the State, the situation has equally gulp huge resources for it control.

However, as at 30th July, 2020, Niger State has recorded 223 confirmed cases with most of them treated, discharged and reunited with their families with nine (9).

As at the time of filing this report, the opening of one of the critical sectors has just been approved by the federal government, and Niger state is working towards opening schools for exit pupils and students on 10th August 2020, in line with the COVID-19 set Protocol.

The state has continued to receive support in form of palliatives from corporate and individual bodies both in cash and in kind.

- Mary Noel is the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Niger state.

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | NESG

A NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM MONTHLY PUBLICATION



Summit Focus



Positioning Sub-Nationals as Frontiers of Development



Ushering in our Decade of Action to meet the SDGs

Summit Sub-themes



Mapping the Future



Building Resilience



Summit Objectives

The 26th Nigerian Economic Summit will be the **'Big Conversation for Action'** that combines **in-person and virtual dialogues**. NES #26 will convene top national and global policy makers, business leaders, development partners, scholars, and all Nigerians to:

-  Reflect on the state of the economy, rethink our economic fundamentals, and deliberate on the impact of the global pandemic.
-  Highlight the role of Nigeria's subnationals as frontiers for national development.
-  Explore emerging trends in the horizon that will enable Nigeria to capitalize on the new opportunities.
-  Agree on a **'2020 Compact'** with clear and decisive actions that commits stakeholders to collaborate and build resilience for Nigeria's households, businesses and economy and meet the SDGs by 2030.




Agenda

Time	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2
7:00 PM			
8:30 PM			
9:00 PM			
10:00 PM			
11:00 PM			
12:00 NOON			
1:00 PM			
2:00 PM			
3:00 PM			
4:00 PM			
5:00 PM			
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10:00 PM			

The Postscript

The 26th Nigerian Economic Summit offers a unique opportunity to mobilize all Nigerians to take ownership of the social and economic future of the country to create a future in which subnational development will drive Nigeria's economic growth and competitiveness with the private sector.

NES #26 will also usher Nigeria into a new era of **Action** towards meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This **'2020 Summit'** is particularly important for Nigeria because all stakeholders will take ownership of the social and economic future of the country ahead for Nigeria in a time of crisis to build a more prosperous and resilient nation.



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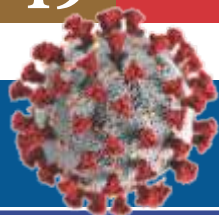
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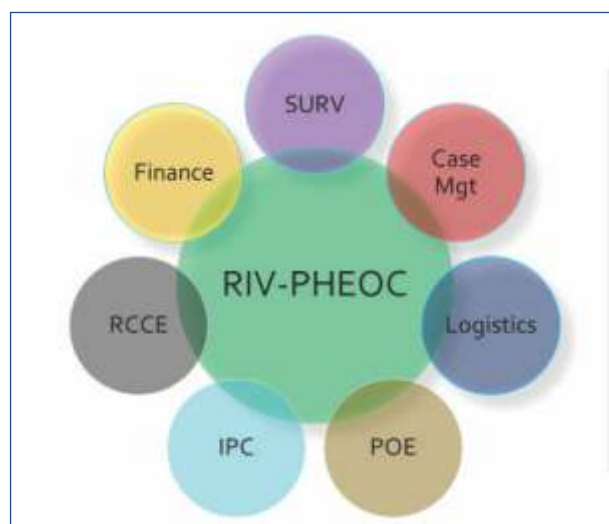
COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

Cases And Containment In Rivers State

ADVENT OF COVID AND SUBSEQUENT CASES IN THE STATE

The State began early efforts at COVID containment in January, 2020 with the formation of a State Technical Working Group on COVID-19. The operations mode was moved from ALERT to RESPONSE on the 27th of February, 2020 as the first case was identified in Lagos. The first case in the State was diagnosed on the 25th of March, 2020.

In addition His excellency, the Governor of Rivers State Chief, (Barr) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike CON, GSSRS, POS – Africa appointed a special inter-ministerial committee on sensitization to support the PHEOC in ensuring better public knowledge of the pandemic and ways of keeping safe. The committee embarked on massive sensitization campaign with several organizations, groups and communities including Road transport workers, journalists, health care workers, market women, chairman of community development committees, religious leaders, armed forces and police etc.



As at yesterday, we have collected 12168 nasal-pharyngeal samples, tested 11594 in the State and we have diagnosed 2049 (confirmed) cases of COVID-19 by rt-PCR. There are 66 patients currently on admission, 1887 cases have been discharged and 57 deaths (from the teaching hospitals, private facilities and post mor-

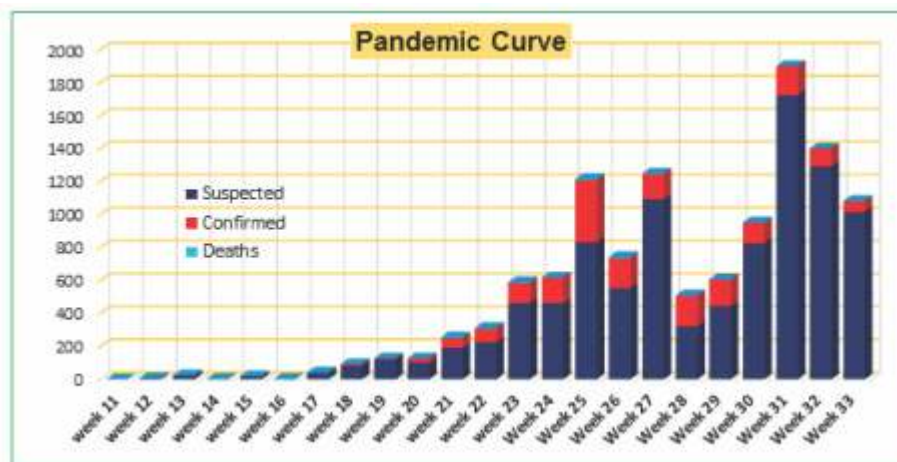
tem diagnoses) recorded.



Epi-Curve:

THE CURVE SEEMS TO HAVE FLATTENED.

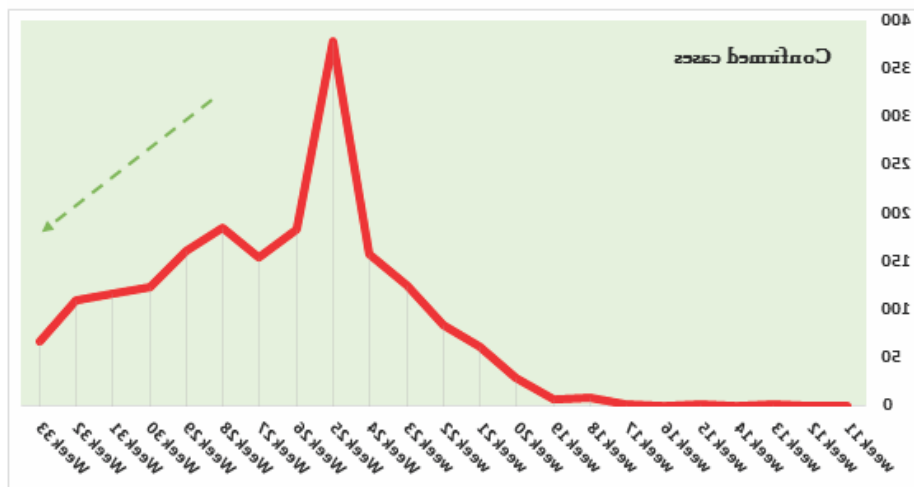
There has been a drop in the number of positive cases. This may be due to a range of factors not excluding the reduced demand for testing or simply because the State containment effort has been largely effective. However, it is quite early to conclude that the curve is indeed flattening as we are obviously still in the early phase of a pandemic without pharmaceutical options. As schools, markets and borders reopen the impact will be reviewed accordingly with an appropriate interpretation.



In terms of positivity, have we really flattened the pandemic curve and built our

capacity? The data says so. The control infrastructure has significantly expanded to accommodate further surge in numbers.

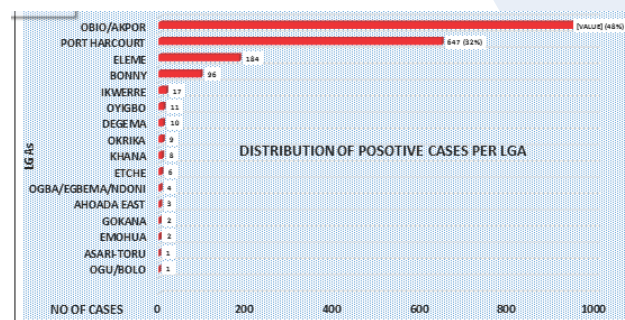
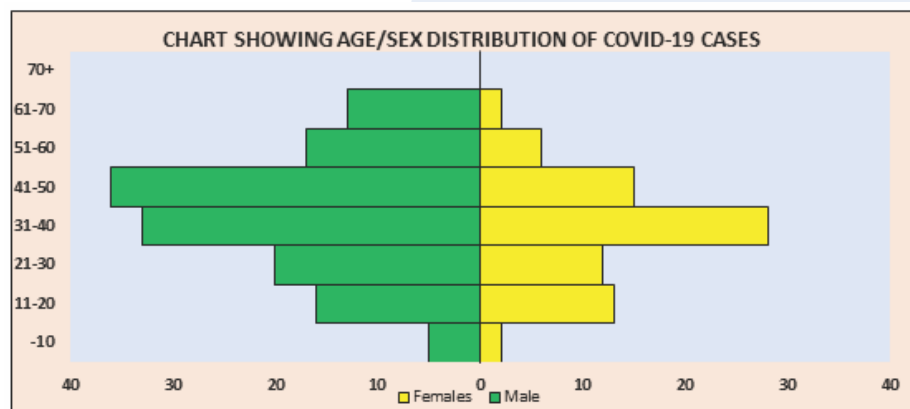
At a testing positivity rate of 18%, the patient outcome is improving daily with about 86% recoveries and mortality below 3%.



The control infrastructure has significantly expanded to accommodate further surge in numbers and the curve 'seems' to have been flattened.

Age sex disaggregation of confirmed cases in the State:

The COVID 19 disease is commoner amongst the age of 41-50 years and is commoner in males than females in Rivers State. This is a common trend around the globe. However the disease is more severe in extreme of cases and persons with co morbidities like diabetics and hypertensives.

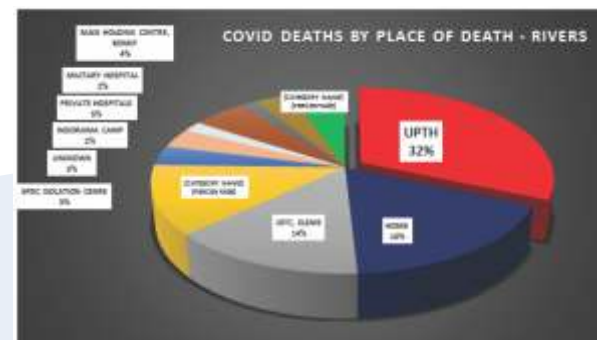


Distribution of cases below by LGA:

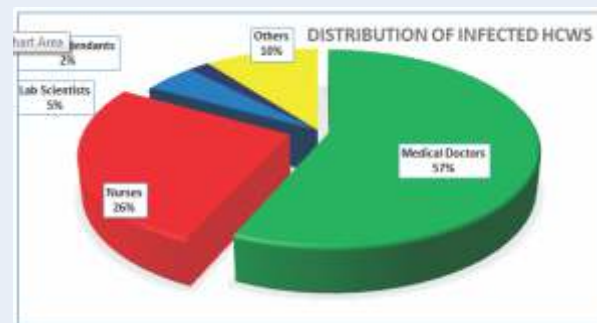
16 (70%) of the 23 LGAs in the State have confirmed cases: Ahoada-East, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema, Eleme, Emohua, Etche, Gokana, Ikwerre, Khana, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Obio/Akpor(47% of to-

tal positive cases), Okrika, Ogu-Bolo, Oyigbo and Port Harcourt (29% total positive cases) LGA.

Case Fatality Rate: 2.8% (n=57), including three health care workers.



About 107 health care workers have been diagnosed with the infection in the State since the advent of the disease. Predominantly males and more in doctors.



Several trainings have been conducted for health care workers, PPEs and consummates have been provided for the private and public care facilities across the tiers of care. Protocols of triage and engagements have also been distributed (with the call lines to be conspicuously displayed and advertised while the IPC supervisory team continue regular capacity building visits to support facilities

Rivers State Government Response:

The Pandemic curve in the State appears to be flattening. In the scenario, the State now has runs the following containment infrastructure:

- I. **Three treatment centers**
 - A. 250 bed tent at Yakubu Gowon Stadium
 - B. 50 bed critical care (high dependency) center at General Hospital Eleme
 - C. 22 bed Satellite treatment center at General Hospital Bonny
- II. **Two Holding centers (triage clinics for suspected cases)**
 - A. 5 bed critical care space at Rivers State University Teaching Hospital

- B. 40 bed triage center at the Mini Health Centre, Nkpolu Oroworukwo

III. Two walk-in COVID testing centers

- A. High turn-over testing point at Yakubu Gowon Stadium
- B. Testing for suspected cases at the Mini Health Centre Nkpolu

IV. One Quarantine Station

- A. Delta Hotels, Port Harcourt

V. One PCR COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory
Rivers State University of Port Harcourt (4 PCR machines)

Collaboration with Private Sector:

I. Treatment center

- A. Shell Petroleum Development Company isolation center, PH
- B. Indorama Company Limited isolation center
- C. The Lebanese Community clinic isolation center
- D. Total E&P isolation center

II. PCR Molecular laboratory

- A. Shell Petroleum Company Molecular Laboratory (Activated)
- B. Indorama Molecular laboratory (Activated)
- C. Total E&P Molecular laboratory (ready but yet to be activated by the NDDC).

- We have received a number of applications from private laboratories requesting your approval for

testing services in the State. This may commence soon.

- Several organizations have made donations to support the control of the pandemic including SPDC, Total and NLNG.

The State Government has also strategically lifted the lockdown as the numbers dropped. Markets have been reopened, churches are to operate at 50% capacity while the Local Governments Councils are to enforce social distancing and mandatory use of face masks in public. All burials, weddings and social gathering require permission and compliance is supervised by the relevant ministries.

Some more highlights:

- School opening: We are working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to ensure compliance with best standards which will include routine supportive supervision and adequate sensitization of schools. The Joint Supervisory team mentor schools on the establishment of screening points, accessibility of hand wash stations/hand sanitizer, restriction of visitors, physical distancing and use of face mask as well as capacity for early identification of cases by on-site school medic especially with the on-going examinations.

- Following the lifting of interstate travel ban by the federal Govern-

ment of Nigeria, on the 1st of July, 2020, Local flight operations resumed on the 8th of February at the local wing of the Port Harcourt Airport. The new travel guidelines reinforces hand hygiene with access to hand wash stations and use of hand sanitizers, strategic crowd control (only passengers allowed entry) and social distancing with marked queue spaces as well as mandatory use of face masks. Luggage disinfection and temperature checks at triage station are now the new normal. I was on ground with the public health team to make on site assessment of the implementation of these strategies.

- International flights are tentatively scheduled to commence on 29th August, 2020. The new guideline stipulates that pre-departure, passengers arriving Nigeria must have tested NEGATIVE for COVID-19 by PCR and the test MUST be within 2 weeks of departure date, preferably no less than 5 days pre-boarding. The State team is working with the Federal Ports Health team at the airports and seaport to ensure safety of travelers and mitigate disease importation. So far there has been no significant issues.

- In the early onset of the pandemic, (May 2020), analysis of disease burden by sector revealed that the oil companies continue to lead in terms of incidence of disease and their increasing requests for disinfection of platforms and medivac of suspected cases on offshore platforms.

- Incidentally, some of these corporate organizations (SPDC, Total, NLNG and Indorama) now have small bed capacity testing and treatment centers approved for their staff. However, their technical capacity for the full containment architecture as compared with the State formation is still developing in terms of evacuation, contact tracing and risk communication teams but hopefully, this will improve over time.

Treatment of patients and management of out-of town cases

Patients are categorized either for home management or facility isolation in line with the adapted NCDC protocol for treatment of COVID-19 cases. The patients received standard care services for fluid replacement, oxygen therapy



Aerial view of the 250 bed tent at Yakubu Gowon Stadium Elekahia



RCE team after Engagement and sensitization of leaders of The King Holy Sabbath Mission



Supervisory team at Models Girls Secondary School Rumueme and Comprehensive Secondary School Mgbuoshimini

and management of co-morbidity as the case may be. The use of anti-virals is restricted for purposes of research. The State has recently enrolled into the WHO Solidarity trials and has a number of academic manuscripts lined up for publishing and experience sharing.

Cases within the State are either batched for medicvac to the isolation center or home management depending on their eligibility. Patients diagnosed from another State are treated similarly. But patients diagnosed in the State who had travelled against the advice of self-isolation are reported to the counterpart State epidemiologist for further intervention.

Further contingency plan:

1. Procure boat ambulance and a PCR testing platform are next steps being considered for Bonny. State to take up the responsibility of risk communication and contact tracing at Bonny Island.
2. Decentralize testing services. Open more walk-in testing centers around the State and enable private sector participation.
3. Open private sector participation in testing for COVID using the want and need model to reduce resource burden on the State.
4. Stock pile Commodities especially consumables and provide more vehicles
5. Renovate quarantine station for Persons of Interest

6. Build of custom standard isolation containment facility
7. Continue to engage Oil companies to improve surveillance activity
8. Collaborate with Ministry of education to strengthen IPC standards as schools prepare to resume.
9. Replenish fast depleting consumables and medical commodities necessary in the containment exercise.
10. Sustain the ongoing containment effort especially disease surveillance for COVID-19 containment.

Conclusion:

The State team is doing all that is humanly possible to ensure public health safety through detection, isolation and treatment. While no region or State is immune from COVID-19; the best practice lies in prevention and preparedness for any scenario. We thank His Excellency the Governor of Rivers State, Chief (Barr) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, GSSRS, PoS - Africa for his spirited commitment to the containment effort and all stakeholders who have stood up in the fight against this pandemic. The effort is making good progress.

*- Prof Princewill Chike
(Hon. Commissioner for Health).*



Sani Bello donates 50 hectares to NSCDC

As part of efforts to strengthen security in Niger State and taming the increasing activities of bandits as well as train Agro-rangers, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has been allocated 50 hectares of land for the establishment of a training institution in Kontagora, Niger State.

The Commandant General of the NSCDC, Abdullahi Gana Muhammadu disclosed this when he was handed over 50 hectares of land and a temporary site for immediate take off of the school by the Niger State Government in Kontagora.

The NSCDC boss explained that the agency will intensify efforts to meet a target of training 100,000 Agro-rangers that will be deployed to various States so as to give physical support to farmers, pointing out that similar training was done in Katsina State and it resulted to a drop in cases of kidnapping of farmers following the deployment of the trainees to different States.

He appreciated the support by the present administration in the State to the security agency, assuring that the desired objective for the establishment of the institution will

be achieved.

Niger State Governor and Chairman North Central Governors Forum Abubakar Sani Bello while handing over the land to the management of NSCDC in Kontagora stressed that it is the resolve of his administration to provide security for its citizens.

Governor Sani Bello explained that in the interim, the State government has signed a leasing agreement with the Bako Ranch Limited to ensure a smooth take off of the NSCDC training institution in the State, adding that some facilities have been made available by the State government at the temporary site to enable the running of the training school.

The Governor assured that the permanent site will come to fruition with the support of government at all levels.





Niger State Governor, Abubakar Sani Bello (R) with the Commandant-General, NSCDC, Abdullahi Gana Muhammadu, during the ceremony.



He called on the Management and personnel of the NSCDC to make good use of the facility while thanking the Commandant General, NSCDC, Abdullahi Gana Muhammadu for the choice of Kontagora as the training centre, saying that the location is strategic at improving security in the region.

According to him, the State government is exploring all avenues to curtail the surge in banditry and terrorist attacks in some parts of the State, hence

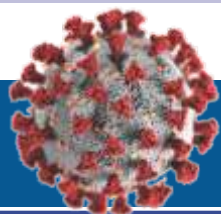
the need for such partnerships with security agencies.

He reaffirmed the commitment of his government to bring to an end the nefarious activities of bandits and terrorists while also expressing his sympathy and condolences to the affected parts of the State especially Rafi, Shiroro, Munya, and Borgu local government areas.

The facilities provided by the State government for the take off of the NSCDC training centre include, nine units three bedroom bungalows, one (1) White House consisting of 5-bedrooms, block of six boys quarters, one accountable Hall, Parade Ground, and a gateman.

While assuring that the committee will continue to work towards the full take off-of the program, Chairman of NSCDC committee Yusuf Shehu Galadima, and the committee Secretary, Abdullahi Baba Arah, noted that the 5man committee worked in accordance with the mandate given and applauded the initiative of the Governor, pointing out that proper consultation was carried out with relevant stakeholders leading to the success of establishing the centre.

– Mary Noel-Berje is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State.



COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS



Private Sector, key in fight against pandemic, says Abdulrazaq

Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq has said that the organised private sector is crucial in Nigeria's campaign against the COVID-19 pandemic.

AbdulRazaq commended their efforts which he said included the setting up of isolation centres, medical supports to various states, and the recent donation of food palliatives to vulnerable households across the country.

The Governor spoke in Ilorin, the state capital, at the flag off of the distribution of the food palliatives donated by the private sector-led Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to the state.

"We are very appreciative of the efforts by CACOVID in the fight against COVID-19. This is not the first. They were with us at the isolation centre where they made donations

of medical supplies and other things. The food palliative is another move. We are really grateful for their interventions to governments across the country," AbdulRazaq said.

The CACOVID food palliatives to Kwara were 27,360 bags of semolina; 27,360 bags of sugar; 27,360 cartons of pasta; 27,360 bags of salt; 27,360 (10kg) bags of rice; and 54,720 cartons of noodles.

AbdulRazaq said the government would



work with CACOVID team to ensure that the palliatives get to the intended beneficiaries — again commending the government's committee led by Emir of Shonga Dr Haliru Yahya and the civil society organisations for the great job done in the distribution of government's palliatives.

"I must mention Alhaji Aliko Dangote and others for this feat. They have spent billions of naira to distribute food to all the states. But they understand that they cannot give foods to all Nigerians and that is why it is targeted at the vulnerable families. We are working with them to ensure that it goes to the ward level," he said.

"Unlike what we distributed earlier, this is for (specific) households and I want to appeal to our people to understand that. This is not the time to say what I got is too small. Whatever you get, please say Alhamdulillah.

"CACOVID has a template and we will allow them to make use of their template for the distribution. We will follow their template. I sincerely thank the Emir of Shonga, Dr Yahya Haliru, other members of the state committee, and the civil society organisations for the way they handled the distribution of the state's palliatives. I also thank all the traditional rulers for the way they handled COVID-19 issue."

CACOVID Representative and Zonal Head of Access Bank Muhammed Adelabu said the coalition came together to rally support for the Nigerian governments in the fight against the pandemic, adding that the coalition has so far commissioned 38 isolation centres and donated over 100,000 test kits and various personal protective equipment across the 36 states of the country.

"Today, we have commenced the third phase of our intervention plan in the fight to combat and eradicate



AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq



An old man in Kwara State receives palliatives during the flag-off ceremony of the CACOVID Food Relief Programme in the state.

COVID-19 in Nigeria; the CACOVID National Food Relief Programme which will see the distribution of various food items to over 1.6m families i.e over 10 million Nigerians across the country," Adelabu said.

"We are doing this to help the most vulnerable households that have been affected by the coronavirus."

Isa Ibrahim, whose household received from the CACOVID pallia-

tives, commended the private sector-led initiative for their support and the state government for its laudable efforts to combat the virus as well as spread development to every corner of the state.

Tunde Mohammed, another beneficiary, also lauded the initiative and praised the Governor for his "developmental strides, especially in the areas of water, road, and healthcare where we can see things for ourselves."



16TH NGF COMMUNIQUE

ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 16TH TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER 2020.

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, deliberated on issues affecting the country especially the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. The NGF Chairman provided the following updates: a. Disbursement of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHC PF) facility to eligible States has been approved by the Ministry of Health to safeguard government interventions in primary health care service delivery during the pandemic. b. The Forum received a Rotary International Polio Certification Award for its role in eradicating polio in Nigeria. The Forum had made polio a permanent item on its agenda for at least 18 months and was instrumental in maintaining high political commitment and coordination for routine immunization in all parts of the country.

c. Governors received updates on the status of pending COVID-19 interventions for States. Governors were concerned by the delay in the release of the results of the SMART survey conducted for the Saving One Million Lives Performance for Results (SOML-PforR) Project.

2. The Forum also received the following updates and presentations: a. The NGF Legal Committee led by the Vice Chairman of the Forum, Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal of Sokoto State, updated members on consultations with the Attorney General of the Federation to resolve concerns on the implementation of the Executive Order #10.

A Technical Committee comprising members from all parties has been working to finalize an acceptable framework for the implementation of the Order.

b. The Governor of Delta State, Dr. Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, Chairman of the NGF Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 in his update highlighted the importance of continued and increased testing in all States as the economy opens. He called on States to take ownership of the COVID-19 response, especially with the expected winding of the PTF by the end of September 2020.



Low testing rates at any time will make it difficult to track the correct status of the pandemic in the country thus making it difficult to make important decisions like opening of schools, NYSC camps, holding elections etc.

c. The Task Team Leader for the World Bank States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability (SFTAS) Programme, Yue Man Lee provided an update of the SFTAS programme and near-term action for State governments.

The presentation also introduced a new technical assistance programme by the World Bank to support States in updating the property records of at least 50% of properties that have electricity connections in Urban Areas by June 30, 2021. Thereafter, members of the Forum resolved as follows:

1. In the light of Rotary's recognition of the Forum's role in ending the polio pandemic in the country, governors are called to maintain vigilance to ensure that the structures put in place for routine immunization are not jeopardized by the COVID-19 pandemic.

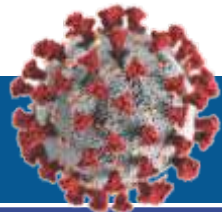
2. The Forum commended the World Bank for the new initiative to support States in updating their property records. Some States are already in advanced stages of developing a geographic information system (GIS) that will help them gather, manage and analyze geospatial data both for the purpose of spacial planning

and property taxation.

3. All State governments through their Internal Revenue Services will ensure the seamless implementation of tax relief programmes for businesses and taxpayers. These programmes which were released in some States since March 2020 are designed to reduce the financial burden of taxpayers in the country up till 2021 in some cases. 4. The Forum through its Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 will address concerns raised by States on the reception of new inmates amidst measures taken to curtail the spread of COVID-19 across correctional facilities in the country.

5. The Forum resolved to provide leadership to the COVID 19 response in their respective States by ramping up risk communication activities and community testing for COVID-19. 6. Finally, State governments were called to nominate focal persons that will interface with the Ministry of Petroleum Resources on the actualization of the National Gas Expansion Programme (NGEP).

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva had addressed the Forum in July 2020 on the NGEP which is designed as a catalyst for Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves. The plan will spur revitalization across gas-based industries in fertilizer, methanol, textiles and feedstock for industries among others.



COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

Inuwa: Taming the pandemic



Gov Muhammdu Inuwa (middle) commissioning one of the COVID-19 Isolation Centres

By Ismaila Uba Misilli

Whenever the history of the COVID-19 pandemic is chronicled in Nigeria, many chapters would be devoted to heralding the state of preparedness, pro-activeness, decisiveness and adroit administrative organization and operational sagacity and efficiency of His Excellency, Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, Executive Governor of Gombe State who directed a range

of preventive, restrictive and regulatory measures that went a long way towards protecting and saving thousands of lives in the state as well as other neighbouring states.

There is no doubt that the Gombe State government under the leadership of Governor Inuwa Yahaya is on top of the situation as far as tackling COVID-19 pandemic in the state is concerned.

Even before other states had come to grips with the extent and severity of the crisis, the governor true to form, had already taken decisive measures to curtail

the spread of the virus. Indeed Gombe State government was one of the first states, outside the federal government to set up a COVID-19 Task Force under the chairmanship of Prof. Idris Mohammed, a renowned immunologist and public health expert. The Task force was given terms of reference ranging from ensuring strict adherence to the widely publicized public health measures put in place to coming up with innovative interventions that would further strengthen the battle against the pandemic, without unnecessarily im-



posing hardship on the general populace through total lockdown of the state.

Major preventive interventions employed include the imposition of a dusk to dawn curfew, the prohibition of movement of persons across inter- and intra-state borders except those embarking on essential services, the closure of schools, a stay at home order for civil servants on level 1-12, and an additional ban on social and festive gatherings of more than 20 people. The restrictions also applied to religious prayers except calls to notify faithful of prayer times and not for them to congregate. Markets and business activities that involve the interaction of more than two people was also suspended while dealers in food and pharmaceutical products were the only ones exempted from the restrictions even though there were provisions for the specified time and period of their operation. True to form, the action governor also galvanized traditional rulers, community leaders, market unions, socio-cultural organizations, indeed the entire gamut of Gombe society in the multi-prolonged war against the COVID-19 health emergency. The Gombe helmsman apart from reaching out personally and directly to the various traditional, religious and community leaders, also detailed key members of the cabinet on sensitization missions across the state in order to adequately brief them on the severity of the pandemic as well as the measures and restrictions taken by the government to curb its spread.

The Gombe State government had already ramped up the health education and mass sensitization of the populace on sanitation practices such as hand-washing, proper and safe waste disposal, wearing of face masks and safe social and physical distancing in order to curb community transmission.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya true to his compassionate and people-oriented disposition acknowledged the socio-economic toll these restrictions would have on the populace and urged them to consider them necessary and expedient if the state was to overcome the scourge of the dreaded virus. According to him: "there is no doubt that the special measures taken to tame the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has put our people in severe economic difficulties. We are fully aware of the hardship being experienced particularly by the daily earn-

ers whose living depends on their ability to go out and mingle with others. These are sacrifices that we must make to save lives".

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19 in the state, Governor Inuwa Yahaya foresighted the potential influx of patients into healthcare facilities due to the pandemic, and immediately embarked on installation of state of the art facilities and top of the line equipment on ground to take

care of those that would need admission for testing, isolation and treatment. Up to six isolation centres were strategically established at Kwadon, Bajoga, Kaltungo, Asakaka, Gombe Specialist Hospital and Federal Teaching Hospital Gombe. The isolation centre in the State Specialist Hospital, Gombe is equipped with ventilators, multi-purpose monitor, oxygen concentrator and other high caliber equipment



Gov Inuwa inspecting and Commissioning the COVID-19 Isolation Centre in Gombe



An Isolation Centre at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Gombe



A final year student of Government Science Secondary School, writing his WAEC examination from an Isolation Centre in Gombe

that facilitate treatment and sustenance of life. The similarly equipped isolation centre at Kwadon Infectious Diseases Hospital has over 150 – bed capacity to handle any influx of patients. The state government further established a state-of-the-art molecular diagnostic laboratory, that has since been accredited by the NCDC for the diagnosis of COVID-19, and at the same time having the capacity for further upgrade to test other highly infectious diseases such as Lassa fever, Measles and Yellow fever.

Even before the establishment of the state owned Laboratory, the state government gave all the required support to ensure the rapid response teams take samples of all identified suspected cases and transport them daily to the reference laboratories. Samples are also being collected from all identified contacts of cases. That to a large extent ensured early identification of cases before onset of symptoms. Hence, up to 91% of the reported cases in the state are

either asymptomatic or only mildly symptomatic. Such proactive measures put in place by the state governor combined with the active search, testing and treatment of patients has ensured that so far, despite the high number of confirmed cases, about 23 deaths arising from COVID-19 has occurred in Gombe state compared with other states like Lagos, Ogun, Kano, Borno, Katsina, Sokoto where there has been considerable number of deaths. Many of the patients undergoing isolation, testing and treatment are being adequately taken care of by the doctors, nurses and other health and facility workers providing them with the required medication and nutrition free of charge as the case may be.

The state government has also produced and distributed over one million face masks to the people of the state, the first of such throughout the federation with particular emphasis on the underprivileged, infirm, handicapped and other vulnerable

members of society who cannot afford the costs of the face masks.

Apart from the setting up of the State COVID-19 Task Force headed by Prof. Idris Mohammed, the state governor also constituted a Committee on Reliefs and Palliatives chaired by the highly revered Emir of Gombe, Alhaji Abubakar Shehu Abubakar III with a mandate to ensure the distribution of reliefs and palliatives provided by the state government to the 114 wards of the eleven local governments of the state. The palliatives include bags of rice, sugar, maize, cartons of pasta, vegetable oil etc to cushion the harsh socio-economic effects of the lockdown and the associated restrictions.

The Committee also received donations from private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, philanthropists and the general public and distributed same to the vulnerables to support the laudable objectives of the state government.

THE TEAM

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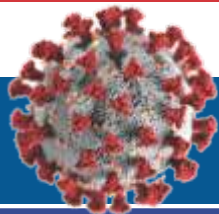
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COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS

SAS Foundation: Dedicated to changing lives in Nasarawa



Beneficiaries of food items provided by SAS Foundation



Gov Abdullahi Sule



Mrs Silifa Abdullahi

The Silifa Abdullahi Sule Hope (SAS) Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of the less privileged through empowerment, medical outreach, scholarships, and financial assistance to assuage the sufferings of the citizens of Nasarawa State.

The Foundation has created an avenue for the most ordinary citizens of Nasarawa State to feel the direct impact of governance and have a sense of belonging through its many interactive engagements where it serves as a medium of direct connection for the good people of Nasarawa State and His Excellency, Engr. Abdullahi A. Sule, the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State.

The SAS Hope Foundation has before the Corona Virus pandemic held several empowerment programs where overall, about 12,000 people have benefitted through skills acquisition, grants, soft loans etc. The outbreak has slowed down immensely the pace of these activities and even diverted most of our attention to:

1. Sensitization on Covid-19 where we have travelled to all the 13 Local Government areas including the rural areas and met with groups while observing the prevention protocols after training our staff and volunteers at the State Ministry of Health.
2. Distribution of palliatives and basic medical supplies to the poorest of the poor in our communities
3. Continuous awareness jingles and programs on Television, Radio and Media (Print and Social) to constantly remind the people of the Covid-19 virus and its preventive measures.
4. Tirelessly tending to cases of domestic and gender-based-violence that unfortunately has been on the rise during the lock-down.
5. Interactive session with stakeholders to develop a post Covid-19 economic recovery plan for women and youth with small businesses.
6. Supply of customized hand washing equipment to all the secondary schools in Nasarawa State so that the students that have resumed schools can be encouraged to practice hand washing thereby preventing them from getting infected.

We at SAS Hope Foundation are challenged due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the following ways:

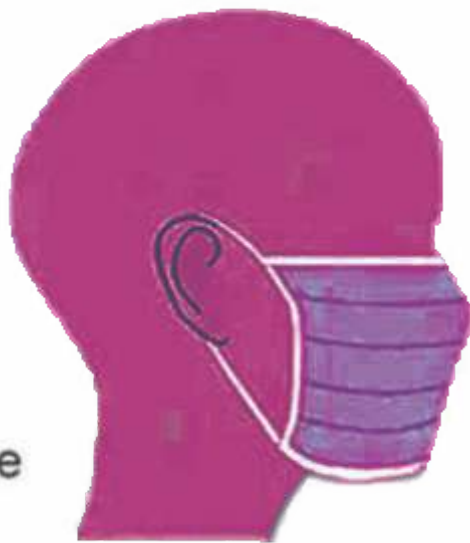
1. Our pace has greatly reduced thereby reducing our reach.
2. Resources initially meant for empowerment programs were redirected to Covid-19 prevention agenda.
3. General lack of funds to carry out activities at a high-level/wider range.

The SAS Hope Foundation has enjoyed tremendous support from the Government of Nasarawa State, its good people, friends and well wishers from around Nigeria.

Stop the Spread!

The Four COVID Personality Types *(spotted at the local grocery store)*

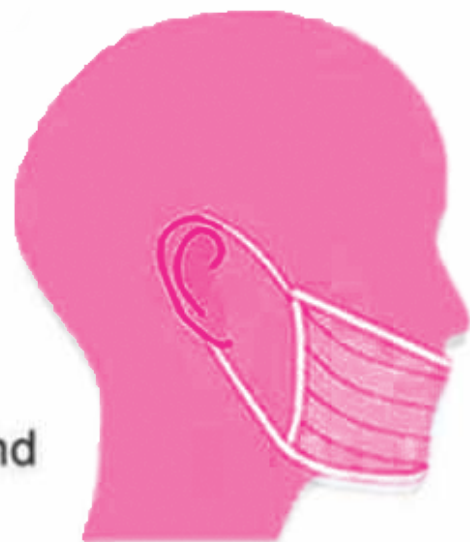
Believes
in science



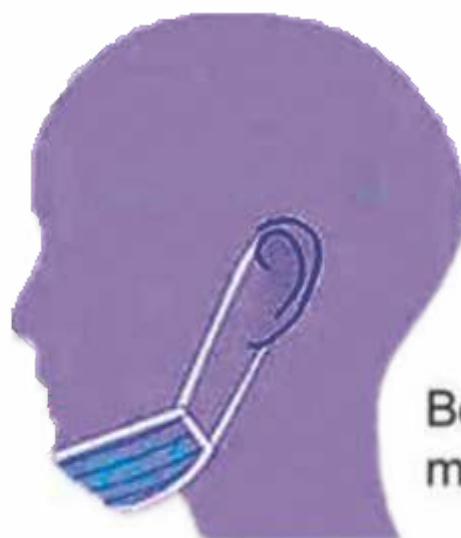
Denies
science



Doesn't
understand
science



Believes in
magic



Let's not make it easy for the virus