



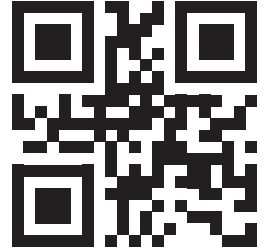
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Working in a **Pandemic**



Insecurity: A Brotherhood Of Truth



Seyi Makinde

By the end of January, the tribal wars were getting to a crescendo and had crept to the corridors of power. So as not to let the country think that Governors are insensitive or impervious to the yearnings of their people, a meeting was strategically convened. Its timing, just few days after the Northern States Governors' Forum had concluded its own, turned out to be perfect. Wednesday January 17th was chosen.

Wednesday came and it began as a normal day, like any other. Those who thought that voices would be raised, and tempers would rise were disappointed. The NGF Chairman and Governor of Ekiti State began his address with the Forum's conduct: "Governors showed absolute maturity and their love for the country as they sheathed their swords and sincerely addressed what was wrong with the country holistically, and resolved to do the needful", both in their domains and when they approached the Federal Government, Dr John Kayode Fayemi disclosed.

The NGF Chairman further disclosed that, "Governors are irrevocably committed to the protection of lives and property in our states



Bala Mohammed

and we are full of sympathy with those who have lost any.

The Governors Forum has gone ahead to provide some financial support to victims of the conflicts experienced in Oyo and Ogun states where our delegation visited over the last week.

Nigerian governors also are very clear that crime and criminality should be comprehensively prosecuted wherever they may occur without ethnic, religious or any other coloration.

Governors are totally opposed to ethnic profiling of crime and criminality. Knowing what has transpired in other parts of the world, whether we are talking of the way Jews were profiled in Germany leading to the world war or talking of the way Tutsis were profiled leading to the genocide experienced in Rwanda, we do not believe that crimes are associated with any particular ethnic group.

And to that extent, we unreservedly condemn any attempt to profile any ethnic group on account of a particular crime. This ethnic profiling of crimes is what cascades into other primordial and base actions like manufacturing your own news and sharing with the pub-

lic, otherwise called Fake News.

Dr Fayemi stated that Governors are also totally opposed to the proliferation of fake news, and the abuse of social media. Many of us have seen those fake videos that have almost led to reprisals in other parts of the country and we want to implore both our mainstream media organizations as well as individuals to apply restraint in the way and manner issues relating to security of lives and property is reported.

The meeting also reviewed the challenges of resources for our military institutions. We welcome the appointment of new services chiefs and we are supportive of the work they promised to do. We hope a new security architecture will emerge from these new leadership. On our part, we are prepared to support the dedication of portions of the Excess Crude Account and the Natural Resource Development Fund and the Economic Stabilization Fund to providing the necessary equipment for the military and other security institutions to address immediately the impunity associated with all of the crimes and criminality that we have highlighted in this briefing.

In this wise, we have also expressed our interest in strengthening our judicial system so that they can accelerate access to justice for victims of crime and criminality in the country.

Governors also reviewed the need to strengthen the National Livestock Transformation Plan because it the view of all the governors in Nigeria that the traditional way of grazing, open grazing, is no longer sustainable and that modern approach to livestock management need to be put in place and governors feel strongly that the strengthening of the National Livestock Transformation Plan would be a good place to start revisiting the livestock management arrangement.

Governors also highlighted that, in the course of our meeting, the importance of reviewing our forestry management and environmental law because we feel very strongly that our forests have become the den of these criminals and bandits simply because they have not been properly managed across board. And to this end, it is the considered view of governors that the forestry management arrangement needs to be immoderately reviewed in collaboration with the federal authority so that these would cease to be used as theatres of war and other crimes.

The meeting which was slated to start at 8pm at the banquet hall of the Aso Rock Villa did not take off until an hour late. This is because the All-Progressives' Congress, APC, had to be waited upon to round off its meeting. It was the first time since the outbreak of the Corona Virus that governors were holding an in-person meeting. The atmosphere turned out to be very convivial and brotherly as Governors exchanged pleasantries and joked about their reported statements. Sometimes, they say it is good to laugh at one's self. It was in short, a brotherhood of truth. Governor Makinde of Oyo State spoke frankly about telling each other the truth just as two brothers who disappear into a room to resolve a family feud. On his part, Governor Bala Mohammed Kaura of Bauchi went further to even offer to meet his brother governors of Benue and Ondo to resolve their differences saying that he might have been misconstrued and apologised to those who felt hurt by his utterances.

Only those who stayed away for one reason or the other, did not air their views. The meeting commended those who intervened proactively and averted the outbreak of conflicts in their domains and others who settled the riffs after the fact. Those decisions were mostly reiterated by the National Economic Council meeting the following day.



By Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi

Consequences (Noun): a result or effect, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant. The result or outcome of something occurring earlier.

I wonder what is going through Hilary Clinton's mind at the moment.

At a campaign event in San Diego, June 2016, Hilary Clinton painted a picture of what kind of President Donald Trump would be if he managed to win. She said, 'The person the Republicans have nominated for President cannot do the job. Donald Trump's ideas are not just different, they are dangerously incoherent. They are not even really ideas - just a series of bizarre rants, personal feuds and outright lies. He is not just unprepared he is temperamentally unfit to hold an office that requires knowledge, stability and immense responsibility.'

This is not someone who should ever have the nuclear codes, because it is not hard to imagine Donald Trump leading us into a war just because somebody got under his very thin skin.'

These were the words of a seasoned political player, a thick-skinned Presidential Candidate trying to present herself as a more knowledgeable, stable and responsible choice, someone temperamentally fit enough to lead a nation like the USA and ensure that all the institutions and values the country holds dear would be protected.

Late evening on November 8th 2016, when it had become obvious that she had lost the election to Donald Trump, with all her supporters gathered at the Javits Center in New York, a venue purposefully chosen because it has a literal glass ceiling, Hilary was not in the right frame of mind to make the traditional personal appearance.

She however called her political rival to concede the

CONSEQUENCES

election, then she worked on the delivery of a speech she never believed she would have to make the following day. In her formal concession speech, she said, 'Donald Trump is going to be our President. We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead.'

Our constitutional democracy enshrines the peaceful transfer of power. We don't just respect that. We cherish it. It also enshrines the rule of law; the principle we are all equal in rights and dignity; freedom of worship and expression. We respect and cherish these values too and we must defend them.'

And so, the Presidency of Donald Trump began, with a rallying call for the country to give him the benefit of doubt, and with him having the benefit of the traditional courtesies of a concession speech, an invitation to him and his wife Melania to visit President Obama and First Lady Michele at the White House, a hitch-free transition and an uneventful inauguration ceremony.

There were consequences for this choice. It was four years of high drama, with double impeachments along the line. Then the COVID19 pandemic struck and millions became infected, thousands and thousands died and millions were left destitute. Many blamed the poor leadership of the President and his incoherent positions. Full judgement on his policies and Presidency was however reserved till the appropriate time - the 2020 November elections.

On November 8th 2020, 81.2 million American voters got under President Trump's very thin skin. It all went downhill from there. It went on and on till finally, on January 6th, he and a supporting cast gave a series of highly incendiary speeches at a rally in Washington in which he and his cronies urged eager supporters to march on the Capitol where Congress was gathered to carry out a task that was a mere formality - the confirmation of President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice-President Elect Kamala Harris's win at the Electoral College.

I tuned in to watch the proceedings, because this exercise never warranted any close scrutiny in the past since it was meant to be a non-event. And then everything went to hell in a massive basket. I sat in front of the TV screen for hours, with my mouth wide open. The scenes of people scaling walls, carting away government property and posing for photographs in the offices of senior leaders were not from Lagos, Accra, Kampala, Delhi or Beijing. They were from the United States of America.

On January 6th 2021, the accuracy of Hilary Clinton's predictions in her 2016 San Diego speech hit home. Even though the part about the nuclear codes has not happened, Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House was worried enough to call service chiefs at the Pentagon and have them explain the process of activating the nuclear codes. Thankfully, there are safeguards in place to prevent the full activation of the codes by the Commander in Chief without due cause.

Even then, there was a curious statement issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their statement, which contained an outright condemnation of the insurrection that took place at the Capitol on January 6th, also emphasized, 'As Service

Members, we must embody the values and ideals of the Nation. We support and defend the constitution. Any act to disrupt the Constitutional process is not only against our traditions, values and oath, it is against the law'. In other words, this was the most powerful military leaders in the land telling the President, 'Don't even think about it'.

On January 13th 2021, President Trump made history as the first President of the US to be impeached twice. There have been arguments about the relevance of impeaching a President who has less than a week to go. The impeachment was actually a Plan C. Plan A was to force him to resign from office for the role he played in inciting the January 6th insurrection. Plan B was to get Vice-President Mike Pence to initiate the 25th Amendment which would allow the VP and Cabinet Members remove the President on the grounds of diminished capacity.

When the first two plans failed, they activated the third plan and it went through. Even though an impeachment trial was needed at the Senate, President Trump ended his Presidency in utter and total chaos.

Why go to all this trouble for someone who has less than a week in office left? Consequences.

There have to be consequences for the actions or inactions of those who are supposed to know better. Every position of responsibility comes with the requirement to be above board in all things. It comes with the expectation of truth-telling, integrity and a commitment to placing the lives and well-being of others above personal gain. An election was lost, and instead of congratulating the winner and thanking your supporters, you proceed to lie to them that you won an election that was lost with over 7 million votes. Rather than put your own ego aside and tend to the broader needs of a country in need of healing from political and ideological divides as well as literal healing from a rampaging pandemic, you double down on lies and propaganda. You then inspire an uprising that leaves five people dead, many injured and the standing of the country in the world grossly diminished.

Thankfully, previous enablers decided to move in and take away the toys - the social media accounts, humongous bank loans, business contracts, political funding, by the time they are finished, the Emperor will be well and truly naked.

Consequences. A word that applies to all in high and low places. To the man in Uganda who is hoping to be elected today as President of his country after serving in this role for 35 years. How many more years does he need to be President? Another 20? To the Commissioner who lured a 16-year-old to his house and proceeded to assault her and is now pressurizing her family into a 'settlement'. To the government official who smuggled in a teenager for sex and now she is dead from a suspected drug overdose.

To the Pastor who is telling his flock they should not wear face masks because it means they do not have faith. To all those who watched while a mad man raped a mad woman in broad daylight and all you could do was record the obscenity on your phones and laugh. To the man who was recently (thankfully) jailed for twenty years for raping his own daughter. Consequences. There will always be consequences.

**Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi is a Gender Specialist, Social Entrepreneur and Writer. She is the Founder of AboveWhispers.com, an online community for women. She is the First Lady of Ekiti State, and can be reached at BAF@abovewhispers.com.*



26TH NGF COMMUNIQUE

**ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 26TH MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM
(3RD IN 2021) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY 2021.**

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held on 17th February 2021 deliberated extensively on the issue of National Security and reached the following consensus as well as resolutions:

National security and peace are threatened by various forms of criminality including banditry, kidnapping, cultism, terrorism, insurgency, militancy. The Forum condemns the recent crimes across States perpetrated by criminal elements who wish to destabilize the polity under the guise of inter-ethnic or religious crisis. We specifically condemn in the strongest terms vigilante groups (or Yan Sakai) who take laws into their hands inflicting all sorts of pains and perpetuating all manner of injustices to ordinary citizens. We express our sincerest condolences and sympathy to the families of those who have lost their lives and property in these unfortunate incidences. We commit to containing any further threat to lives and property.

We urge citizens and the media to refrain from promoting fake news and misinformation which only aggravate the already tense situation in the country. We all must behave responsibly. Preliminary investigations have confirmed that most of the videos circulating in the media are fake and that most of the cases of violence started from simple disagreements between parties. In other cases, the perpetrators were confirmed to be alien intruders from outside the country. It is important as a people that we desist from ethnic profiling of crimes and the criminals responsible for these heinous acts. We should promote unity and live harmoniously to disallow these criminals the satisfaction of a divided Nigeria.

The Forum pledges to support and strengthen decisive and accelerated steps being taken by the government and security agencies to contain the worsening security



situation in the county. Available resources from the various national funds (excess crude account, natural resource fund, stabilization fund, etc.) will be leveraged to ensure that the security agencies are better equipped and prepared in their fight against crime.

We welcome the appointment of the new service chiefs with the expectation that their assuming office will usher in a new security architecture and strategy for maintaining peace and security in the country. It is important to ensure stronger collaboration between the military, paramilitary, national and local security outfits aimed at effectively addressing (the) security and safety of citizens. .

The Forum agrees that in light of climate change, urbanization, population growth and the reoccurring farmer-herder crisis, traditional methods of livestock production and management in the country are no longer sustainable and practical; a modern approach must be embraced. Consequently, members we aligned ourselves with the resolution of the Northern Governors' Forum that open grazing be outlawed and sustainable mechanisms such as ranching be promoted. We will work with the Federal Government to review and accelerate the implementation of the Nigeria Livestock Transformation Plan which we are

confident will put an end to the reoccurring farmer-herder crisis in the country.

We call for the review of our forest and environmental laws to give State governments better leverage in addressing security challenges especially in the forest corridors across States. The meeting also resolved that the management of our forests must be a top priority as these national reserves have been turned into theatres of operation by bandits in the country.

We will work with the Federal Government and the legislature to ensure the enactment and strengthening of relevant laws, treaties and agencies charged with border control, forest, livestock and environmental management. These (This) extends to immigration, customs, ministries of environment, agriculture, Nigeria National Park Service, security agencies, ECOWAS Protocols, Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AFCTA) agreement, etc.

We agree that the current efforts to address other underlying causal factors such as climate change, desertification, unemployment, and poverty be accelerated.

Governor Kayode Fayemi
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum
17th February 2021



NEWS FROM THE STATES

The Governor of Abia State, Okezie Ikpeazu has completed the construction and reconstruction of multiple road projects at Amuzukwu Ibeku community in Umuahia North Local Government Area of the State.

This is also coming barely a week after the governor commissioned the reconstructed Eziukwu road, Milverton Avenue and Ojike Lane in Aba South Local Government Area, LGA.

Governor Ikpeazu reiterated the determination and focus of his government to complete and commission road projects across the seventeen local government areas of the State before bowing out of office.

Meanwhile, a cross-section of journalists on Saturday embarked on an assessment tour on the state of infrastructures in Umuahia North local government area, housing the state capital city.

At the inspection visit to Amuzukwu Umuahia Ibeku, the road projects being constructed has been completed with some ongoing which is almost at 95 percent completion.

During the tour, residents of Amuzukwu community who spoke with newsmen, lauded the administration for keeping its electoral promises to bring democratic dividends to the doorsteps of the Abia people, adding that the constructed roads were of high quality.

A teacher, resident in Amuzukwu, Mr Kelechi Nduka lamented the difficulties faced by people plying the roads in the past, especially during the rainy season and commended the State Government for the laudable gestures as it has addressed their yearnings.

Mrs Chinatu Nathan, a resident and petty trader in Umuezeorota Amuzukwu, said before now that it was an uphill task to make her desired sales in a day because the road leading to her shop was so bad that even residents close to her would rather go the distance to buy their needs at the other side of the community whose roads were



One of the multiple road projects in Amuzukwu

Ikpeazu completes construction of Amuzukwu Road projects

also barely passable but better than the ones leading to her residence where she also runs her provision store.

According to her, such a trend had negative impacts on her business. She also recalled that tricycle operators always stopped passengers residing in their own part of the community some miles away while they trekked from there to their respective abodes because the road was so bad it was simply unpass-

able.

“But today, the story has changed. Since this road was done, businesses in the area have picked up; tricycle operators now happily come into the community to drop off their passengers”.

On his part Chief Charles Nmesirionye Amajor, an Indigene of Umuezeorota in Amuzukwu narrated how Keke operators before now had treated them like they “reside in a

forbidden area by dropping off their passengers who reside in the area some way off because of the very bad roads forcing them to trek some distance to their respective homes from the point of alighting. But now the story is different.

He thanked the government for ending the hardship being encountered by motorists and pedestrians as a result of the deplorable roads, by recon-

structing the bad roads.

Amajor described the government's gesture to the Amuzukwu community in the state capital city, as symbolic.

Speaking further, the President General of Amuzukwu Autonomous Community, Chief Sir P.I. Nweke said the gesture has addressed the infrastructural needs of the people residing in the area.

He said, “Before now, this Umuokoo Road (one of the dilapidated roads in the community) was impassible and the residents, therefore, had it very tough. But today, the story has changed! One can even drive his car or tricycle into his abode with no stress; my people are very happy and it's a thing of great joy for us.

While speaking about the project, the Executive Director of Pumeco Construction Company, an indigenous company handling the road projects in Amuzukwu Community, Engr. Emeka Ezeanyagu said the company has concluded the construction of Umuokoo and Umuwaya internal roads in Amuzukwu and was almost done with the reconstruction of Amuzukwu to Umuezeagwu road.

He also disclosed that the company would move its equipment to Umueze and Afaraukwu Umuahia Ibeku communities for more construction of roads as contracted.

Sanwo-Olu begins rechannelisation, realignment of Banana Island shoreline

The Lagos State Government today began the re-channelisation and re-alignment of Banana Island shoreline with the dredging and reopening of the illegally reclaimed portion of the Creek at 101 Close, First Avenue, Banana Island.

Speaking during inspection of the reopening of the Creek today, the Honourable Commissioner for Waterfront Infrastructure Development,

Arc. Kabiru Ahmed Abdullahi, said there is an urgent need to nip the land extension work in the bud, pointing out that it has narrowed the Creek and brought about distortion in the aesthetics of the shoreline as well as a high possibility of environmental degradation.

The Commissioner stated that perpetrators of the illegal reclamation into the Lagoon

violate the Physical Planning laws of the State, adding that they had been served with ‘Stop Work’ orders but persisted in the reclamation and construction.

While noting that the State Government will not fold its arms and watch the degradation of its environment and attendant risk to life and property of the citizenry, Abdullahi declared that the dem-

olition, as well as dredging and channelisation works on the illegally reclaimed lands, will continue at Banana Island and other shoreline areas of Lagos in order to restore sanity.

Recall that the State Government commenced the demolition of buildings that contravene the building laws and regulations in Banana Island on Monday.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Plateau Day of Reconciliation: We must forgive one another, says Lalong

Governor Simon Bako Lalong has said that unless Nigerians learn to forgive one another and avoid revenge and reprisals, the nation will continue to witness needless bloodshed and destruction of properties.

Governor Lalong was speaking at an inter-denominational church service to commemorate the 3rd Plateau Day of Forgiveness and Reconciliation at the St. Louis Catholic Church Jos.

Lalong said although acts of criminality must be swiftly investigated and punished by Government and its relevant organs, the long-term ambition of every Nigerian who desires peace is to tow the path of reconciliation and forgiveness.

He said "As a Government, we are very conscious of the fact that the process of restoring peace and confidence among the people cannot succeed without forgiveness and reconciliation. On this day therefore, we do not try to trivialize or gloss over the trauma, pain and agony that many people have undergone



Gov Lalong and wife at the Plateau day of reconciliation

on account of the various crises that took lives and property Others are still bearing physical scars of their experiences. What this day rather emphasizes is how to make the best of the past ugly experiences and chart the way forward. If truly we want to move forward, then there is every need to encourage healing that makes us do things differently."

Lalong said the Plateau Peace Agency has held over 87 multi-level dialogue sessions

with conflict parties across 17 Local Governments of the State in order to promote the culture of Peace through forgiveness and reconciliation.

This has led to the signing of several Peace Agreements and Commitments to the pursuit of Peace agreement with various fighting communities in the last five years.

He frowned at the exploitation of the social media by crises merchants who generate and circulate unfounded posts suggesting that there is

no peace in Plateau State and that this Government has not achieved anything.

In his homily, Catholic Archbishop Mathew Ishaya Audu said the failure of individuals and communities to forgive one another increases the burden of strife, bitterness, anger and violence which provides the ready flame for crises.

He said Christ has demonstrated forgiveness by not only laying down his life for humanity, but admonishing

his followers to do same and live in peace. He said Plateau State is experiencing gradual healing and peaceful coexistence because of the efforts of the Government to set the right examples and administer justice to all.

Chairman Christian Pilgrims Commission Rev. Yakubu Pam said the Day for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is a great initiative by Governor Simon Lalong that celebrates the good of humanity rather than the embers of hatred, bigotry and mediocrity.

Plateau State Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria Rev. Fr. Polycarb Lubo, Deputy Chief Imam of Jos Central Mosque Sheikh Ismail Adam and the representative of the Gbong Gwom Jos all called on the citizens of Plateau State and Nigerians in general to learn to embrace one another in spite of differences in religion, ethnicity or status.

Prayers were offered for the perpetuation of peace and reconciliation in Plateau State and Nigeria.

Niger @45: Sani Bello felicitates with state

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello has felicitated with Nigerites on the 45th year anniversary of the State's creation from the defunct North Western State during the regime of General Murtala Ramat Muhammad.

In a statement, Governor Sani Bello appreciated God for the appreciable growth and development recorded in the last forty-five years of

the State's existence.

Though he noted that the level of development in the State is not commensurate with its years of existence, he explained that a lot is being done to add value to the contributions of successive administrations towards building a virile State.

On the security challenges, Governor Sani Bello said his administration has done

a lot but will not relent until the issue of insecurity is addressed stressing that his administration is more than ever, determined to halt the insecurity challenges in the areas.

"The people in the affected parts of the State have suffered enormously due to the continued attacks by the bandits but I am not going to be deterred by that,

government will step up its plans to end the insecurity", he added

The Governor acknowledged the efforts of the traditional rulers and urged them to improve on the existing harmonious, peaceful coexistence in their domains as well as fish out enemies of the State who are serving as informants to the men of the underworld.



Gov Sani Bello



The 36 State Governors of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) unanimously resolved to increase budgetary allocation to the health sector with the collaboration of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and the World Bank through the \$700 million to support and incentivize infrastructure investments and strengthen government policies and institutions in the Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector.

The resolution was contained in the communiqué issued and signed by the NGF Chairman, Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State at the end of the 24th Teleconference meeting, where the Forum distanced itself from a statement credited to Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State, that COVID-19 was meant to kill Nigerians.

The communiqué read: "The NGF Chairman, Dr Kayode Fayemi, briefed State Governors on a meeting with Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Chair of the Board of Gavi, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, on the roll-out of the COVAX facility which is a global risk-sharing mechanism co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to facilitate pooled procurement and the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across developing countries. Nigeria is among 12 countries in Africa that have indicated the readiness of the 92 qualified countries for the facility and will by end of February 2021 receive its first shipment of vaccines.

"The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) has indicated that vaccines will be administered in 4-phases, based on vaccine type and availability, initially for



Governors pledge \$700m to support water supply, sanitation, hygiene

frontline health workers, then the aged (55 years and above), persons with underlying medical conditions and other target groups.

"The Forum received briefings from three medical experts including Professor Oyewale Tomori, leading Virologist and former Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University, Nigeria; Dr Faisal Shuaib, Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA); Dr Pamela Ajayi Founder/Managing Director Synlab Nigeria (formerly PathCare), President Healthcare Federation of Nigeria and Dr Egbe Dawodu, Founding Partner of the Anadach Group on the country's preparedness for the procurement and administration of COVID vaccines and the level of collaboration required from all stakeholders, including the federal, state governments and the private sector.

"Following the presentations, the Forum set up a team of experts led by Prof. Oyewale Tomori to advise State Governors on the pro-

urement and administration of coronavirus vaccines in the country.

"On the ill-fated pronouncement made by a member of the Forum regarding the COVID-19 vaccine in a national daily, the Forum totally and categorically dissociated itself from the statement, emphasising that the Forum will continue to be informed and guided by science and will ensure that every decision it takes retains public and professional trust and is not compromised by conflicts of interest.

"The Governor of Delta State, Dr Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, who is the Chairman of the NGF Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 reported with concern the rising positivity rate amongst those tested for the virus.

"He called on Governors to do more to reactivate their health systems, open-up treatment centres and increase partnerships with stakeholder groups in order to improve risk com-

munication and the public's adherence to COVID-19 guidelines.

"The Forum received a presentation from the Minister of Water Resources, Engineer Suleiman Hussein Adamu and the World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Shubham Chaudhuri, on the Sustainable Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SUWASH) results-based financing programme for States. The programme has become necessary given the state of the sector which has contributed to 73 per cent of Nigeria's total burden of enteric infections and over 255,000 preventable deaths in the country each year."

"A presentation was made by Dr Sarah Alade, Special Adviser to the President on Finance and Economy, on the development of the Nigeria Agenda 2050 and the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MT-NDP) which will succeed Vision 20:2020 and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017 - 2020.

"State Governors committed to supporting the

development of the national plan by providing technical inputs which will ensure that the plan is inclusive, comprehensive, and reflective of the component development plans of each State in the country. State submissions will be made by 10th February 2021 and will underpin the use of credible data, social development, and economic diversification.

"The Forum also received a presentation from Dimensions Information Technology LLC on a proposed harmonised Traffic Management System for States which is aimed at boosting their internal revenue generation.

"The plan was assigned to a Committee, peopled by the Governors of Lagos, Niger, Jigawa and Edo State for review and appropriate advice to the Forum.

"Finally, the Governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki updated State Governors on the Eligibility Criteria for the 2020 States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SF-TAS) Annual Performance Assessment (APA) which requires in part that all State governments prepare their FY2021 budgets in line with the National Chart of Accounts (minimum of administrative, economic and function classifications) and that the budgets are approved by their State Houses of Assembly, assented by Governors, and published online by 31st January 2021.

"The Governor stated that all States have already met the second part of the Eligibility Criteria by publishing an IPSAS-compliant 2019 Audited Financial Statement online by August last year.

"He encouraged States to take advantage of the Technical Assistance being provided by the NGF Secretariat on the domestication of the National Chart of Accounts," the communiqué stated.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MUHAMMADU INUWA YAHAYA, GOVERNOR OF GOMBE STATE AT THE UNVEILING OF THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR GOMBE STATE - DEVAGOM (2021-2030) ON TUESDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2021, AT THE BANQUET HALL, GOVERNMENT HOUSE GOMBE

It is with gratitude to Almighty God that I address you on this historic occasion of the unveiling of the 10-year Development Plan for Gombe State (2021 – 2030).

The plan, christened the Development Agenda for Gombe State (DEVAGOM) marks a significant milestone in our quest for the advancement of our dear State. Let me sincerely thank you all for honouring our invitation despite your very tight schedules and the challenges associated with long distance travels in these hard times.

2. DEVAGOM is an attempt to harness our immense potentials by taking advantage of emerging opportunities and tackling our challenges and threats in order to realize our developmental objectives. It is the road map for the transformation of Gombe State that is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as set by the United Nations.

3. As Benjamin Franklin said: 'if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.' The wheels of today's event were set in motion as far back as April 2019 when as Governor-Elect, I commissioned a Needs Assessment team to tour round the nooks and crannies of Gombe State covering over 420 communities across all the 114 wards in order to ascertain the developmental needs and priorities of our people. This was borne out of our commitment to plan and implement people-oriented policies and programs. The assessment was the beginning of a bottom-up stakeholder consultation process from the unit, ward, local government to State level. Thus, giving us the opportunity to define Gombe State's vision through the eyes of its people. That's why DEVAGOM is an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people.

4. You will all agree with me that in order to create the better future we desire for our people; we are



Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya (M), UN Deputy Secretary General, Hajjiya Amina Mohammed (L), Former President of Court of Appeal, Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa (2nd Left), Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami (2nd R) and Minister of State, Finance, Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba (R) during the unveiling of the Gombe State 10 year Development Plan (2021-2030) in Gombe.

making relentless efforts to stimulate and sustain economic growth and human development. However, for us to ensure that the choices we make, the steps we take, and the outcomes we envisage are technically desirable and consistent with our goals, it is necessary to have a robust plan for building durable institutions, mobilising resources and capabilities, as well as managing risks and shocks from unforeseen domestic and global events.

5. In line with international best practices, development planning in the 21st century requires collaboration between various stakeholders at subnational, national and international levels. In this regards, DEVAGOM is a product of synergy and collaboration with local and international development partners most of whom are here today to celebrate this historic achievement with us.

6. In order to ensure the success of DEVAGOM, we have put in place the necessary structures and institutional reforms that will drive its effective implementation. Since coming to office about 20 months ago, our administration has focused on improving internal revenue generation, ease of doing business, infrastructural development and civil service reforms amongst other

initiatives. These efforts will soon be complemented by a legislative bill to further strengthen DEVAGOMs institutional legitimacy and guarantee its long-term success and sustainability.

7. DEVAGOM projects Gombe to be a terminus that encapsulates "Growth, Development, Peace, and shared Prosperity for All". Considering our comparative advantage in agriculture, commerce and trade, our tremendous human and natural resources, and our strategic position at the centre of the Northeast subregion, I have the conviction that our vision is both realistic and achievable.

8. So far, our administration has placed high priority on human capital development as the catalyst of growth with special focus on education, health and youth development. Our agricultural transformation drive is aimed at harnessing our vast irrigation potentials along our major dams; rural infrastructure projects that connect and open up our rural communities; social and environmental policies that create jobs, protect our environment and promote peaceful coexistence amongst our people.

9. To put this into better perspectives, we have mopped up over 300,000 out-of-school

children through the World Bank-supported Better Education and Service Delivery for All (BESDA) project. We equally embarked on network 11-100 which aims to provide 100km of roads in each of our 11 LGAs. We also embarked on the revitalization of the health system by providing a functional health centre in each of the 114 wards of the state with the necessary basic equipment and manpower to provide 24-hour service to the people. We also upgraded and equipped the state specialist hospital and established the hospitals management board and the state contributory healthcare scheme to provide universal access to quality healthcare to the people at an affordable cost. We are also building the skills of our idle youth and ramping up support to our farmers. With the ongoing work on Wawa-Zange Grazing Reserve and the planned take-off of Dadin Kowa industrial park, Gombe State is on course to cement its status as the centre of agriculture, commerce and industry in the Northeast sub-region.

10. There's no doubt that implementing all these will require the mobilization of domestic and external resources and their

effective utilization. To accomplish this, we have embedded in the plan policies and strategies to enhance efficiency, build transparency and entrench accountability at all levels of government. It is our vision to guarantee better value for money in order to apply our scarce resources so as to foster rapid development of our dear State.

11. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to commend both the Steering and Technical Committees for doing a wonderful job by ensuring a fully participatory and all-inclusive consultative process.

12. Equally, I wish to acknowledge the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs) and the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) for supporting the preparation of this Plan. Let me also appreciate the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA) for their participation in the Steering and Technical Committees and other supports in the process of preparing this plan. The Consultants, led by Prof. Emmanuel Onwioduokit that worked tirelessly beyond their call of duties are most sincerely appreciated.

13. At this juncture, I wish to convey my gratitude to all and sundry that responded to our invitation to make input into the preparation of this Plan. Sharing their unique experiences, knowledge and expertise is really worthy of appreciation. You are indeed worthy sons and daughters of Gombe State.

14. Thank you and may Almighty God continue to bless our efforts and resolves, amen.

Long Live Gombe State!
Long Live the Federal
Republic of Nigeria!!



BRINGING THE YOUTH INTO GOVERNANCE IS MY PRIORITY – GOV FAYEMI

JOHN KAYODE FAYEMI IS THE GOVERNOR OF EKITI STATE AND THE CHAIRMAN, NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM. IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH THE NGF MEDIA TEAM, HE PROVIDES INSIGHTS ON DEVELOPING ISSUES FROM THE #ENDSARS MOVEMENT, YOUTH RESTIVENESS AND OTHER SUNDRY ISSUES. EXCERPTS:

Your Excellency, the NGF recently has served as an interventionist force in our socio-political life as a nation. The issues of petroleum pump price, electricity tariff hike, labour unrest and very significantly the ENDSARS protests. In the face of these challenges, the NGF rose to the occasion to the delight of Nigerians. How satisfied are you with this added reputation for the NGF?

Well, it's not so much of new roles. NGF its self is voluntary by part; it is, and I will say, a non-partisan coalition of state governors and it is driven by interest. The interest that we have are also driven by our values; we are committed to improving the human condition, committed to ensuring that the sub-nationals take their rightful place in the quest for democratic development in Nigeria and any issue that would enable the country to be put in a better light with its citizens. We really are the ones responsible for the larger population of Nigerians and anything that affects them because they elected us into office; we naturally should be interested whether it is ASUU strike, electricity tariff hike, or helping to resolve the Nigeria Labour Congress rift with the Federal Government or gender-based violence that affect the women folk. Even during the ENDSARS that our youths have had course to raise our objections about police brutality. These are issues that are germane to good governance in our states so we cannot play the ostrich. We cannot say it doesn't affect us because we are privileged 36 people who have all the influence and power. Leadership is not the office, it is not the title, it is really the influence we have to make a difference in the lives of our citizens. That, for me, is why we play the role we play.

Does it not feel frustrating when after negotiating with the various trade unions, you get a different feedback from the presidency?

Well, in fairness to representatives of the Presidency, they have their mandates and limitations. The Minister of Labour, Finance or the Attorney General have all been very responsive to the issues we have brought before them because we are really interlocutors between the Federal Government and interest groups. When we come in, we discuss issues; we are not



LEADERSHIP IS NOT THE OFFICE, IT IS NOT THE TITLE, IT IS REALLY THE INFLUENCE WE HAVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OUR CITIZENS

coming in to discuss personalities and they almost always try to explain their own side of the equation to us and we try to harmonize these positions. We have had cause to do that. In fact, only yesterday the Chief of Staff of the President was briefing me on how far they have gone since my last intervention with ASUU on behalf of the Governors and that they are making a headway following that intervention. For us, it is not about scoring points, it is about really improving the lot of our people and if we are able to play a role in such resolutions we are pleased.

Even though a five-point demand was made by the protesters, it is now obvious there are a plethora of issues bordering on injustice, poverty, bad governance and the likes. Does this protest imply a vote of no confidence on the present leadership of the country?

I don't think so, it is in the nature of younger people to agitate. I spent a great deal of my younger life at the barricades protesting against bad governance, military dictatorship, and support for democratic orientation in our country. I was also labelled a persona non grata. I even went on exile on the account of that. I will therefore not see anything that young people are doing as necessarily a personal indictment of the leadership, they were very specific in my view about what they wanted to change- Police Brutality. So, they wanted a particular wing of the police force to be disbanded, the president acceded to that the Inspector General of Police implemented that. They wanted the cells in which many Nigerians that have been held by that section of the police force be freed and again, it had been acceded to; they wanted better welfare for police personnel and that's commendable. Usually, when young people agitate, it is for themselves but this was a broader approach to agitation. Four, they wanted investigation into what had transpired and in 25 out of 36 states, we have set up judicial panels of inquiry that are currently sitting on these issues and examining them based on those who came forward to say 'we have been badly treated by SARS'. We want to put this before the panel that has been setup; we demand compensation, accountability and we want subsequent responsibility on the part of the police and the law enforcement authorities. Again, that has been accepted.



Fifth, they talked about medical evaluation, psychological evaluation of those who are going to go into such institutions in future, absolutely sensible but you cannot do medical evaluation at once, it would have to happen overtime. So, for me those were specific but one lesson that I expected that our young folks would have also drawn from this is that, every agitation or protest must have an exit strategy; once you do not have an exit strategy, you run the risk of losing the momentum in favour of your protest and the risk of having it hijacked by those who do not necessarily share in your idea. We also saw that in the END-SARS movement. It is ok, maybe sexy to have a leaderless movement but when it comes to brass tasks, somebody needs to speak for you in respect of those issues that are important to you. In my state, I went out to meet them, I told them what I am saying to you here that, look what you are doing I am hundred percent in support of but you made your point, the president has heard you, we as governors we went to the president and said to him 'Sir, it is time to talk to your children, and not a fellow Nigerian speech but a father to children speech'. I have heard you-- you have made your point and now it is time for you to return home so that we can attend to those issues that you have raised.

The issue of welfare for the police has remained a thing of concern and being one of the concerns of the protesters, why is it taking this long to fix?

No, it's not rocket science and I don't think government has said anything about it being rocket science, but the explanation is simple. What went into budget 2020 was prepared in 2019. No matter the changes we want to bring up for budget 2021, it has to be prepared in 2020; in terms of principle, it has been accepted; in terms of the implementation, the National Wages and Salaries Commission has already taken on board those issues and reflected it in the preparation for budget 2021. So, its actual impact is not going to be felt in the pockets of the policemen and women until budget 2020 becomes an Appropriation Act, it is a very simple and logical explanation.

Some of your colleagues have moved to scrap the bogus pension packages for former governors and their deputies. Is it something that we are likely to see across the 36 states of the federation? Is it something that the NGF is encouraging directly? For us sometimes we chase shadows instead of substance but symbols matter and as far as this issue is concerned, the NGF does not have a template for a post service pension, if you want to call it that. Beyond what the Revenue, Fiscal and Mobilisation Commission as recommended.

However, this is a federal structure and I look forward to the day where such matters would be in the concurrent and residual list matters of re-



muneration and things like that. If you come from Lagos or you are a governor in Rivers State, your responsibilities should also be determined by the resources available at your disposal. So, personally, and I have said this repeatedly, I do not see any reason why the governor of Lagos state and the governor of Ekiti state should earn the same pay package.

The Mayor of London does not earn the same thing as the Mayor of Nottingham; there is something called London weighting for anyone who works in London, because it is more expensive to live in London than to live in rural communities so this thing should be index linked. The pension package of a former governor of Lagos state should not necessarily be the same as the pension package as the governor of Ekiti state.

But should there be a pension?

There is no reason why there should not be a pension; these are people who have worked and there seems to be an impression that when people become governors, they are just on a joy ride they do not do anything and they are absolute air heads; they are charlatans and this is an impression that needs to be corrected.

Most governors that I know hardly ever even get four hours of sleep on a daily basis, so if they serve the state for 8 years, let's even say 4 years. Why should it be such a big deal that they have a pension, you may argue over the size of the pension and the nature of the package that states have given to their exiting or retired senior officials. We don't get into such discussions at the level of the NGF; it is absolutely the prerogative of the state and its citizens and if they feel like they do not want their governors to have pension packag-

es, so be it. You know that when you are going for the job that you are not going to get a pension at the end of it.

Being a proactive leader, there must be some things or programs you have put in place to ensure you connect better with the younger people in your state. Is there something you would want to share, especially ones you believe are not public?

Well, I do not know what you already know about my state. The youth in my state are very active and I engage them regularly, averagely on a monthly basis, I engage the leadership of the youth groups in the state.

My youth team are planning the annual Ekiti youth fiesta, for example, which is a usual engagement for our youth every December. Apart from these sorts of initiatives which are more attuned to the younger generation who are familiar with social media and all that, we have substantive initiatives on mentoring our younger people. We have what we call Ikogosi Graduate Summer School for example, which is our younger elements who want to go into leadership positions. Those who want to prepare themselves for responsibilities in future. We also have our youth volunteer scheme which attaches our young people who are on a voluntary scheme to various departments of government as a means of preparing themselves for the job market.

We regularly have a job centre, a borough of employment and labour and productivity in the state which also matches people's skills, qualifications with available jobs because part of the problem is driven by idleness, and unemployment. There must be a very coordinated way of address-



ing that problem, it cannot be overcome overnight but specific steps can be taken and that's how we have looked at it.

But what is important to me is to bring younger people into government, so I have also done quite a lot of that in my state.

Will the youth trust you going forward, especially with further leadership generally in other capacities too?

Well, there are some youth who may not trust me because I don't play to the gallery. I sit with them, engage them and I want to know how they want to improve their own lot and what they would like me to do in that process. You may have some young people that may feel I'm a bit too refined for the kind of street sense that they are looking for in a governor. I do not see leadership in that way. I don't see leadership as noisemaking. It is influence and whatever I can do to build a successful generation is by mentoring them to adhere to values that would ultimately put them at an advantage.

Fake news has been a major blight in our national image. How do we check it and do you support stiffer penalties for it?

Well freedom of expression is enshrined in our Constitution but freedom of expression is not freedom for irresponsibility. I clearly believe that there are existing laws that can address this problem, so when people are talking about harsher penalties, what have we done with the existing laws?

We have laws on cyber terrorism in this country; we have laws on libel and slander. We should stick to the laws that are in our statutes because there is no need for any new law. We should just try to enforce what we have in order to ensure that people become more responsible in the way they

propagate news that is unfounded.

Another unrest seems to be brewing in the South-South because of Zamfara states claiming ownership of gold mined there. As a former Minister of Mines and Steels Development, what is your take on this?

Again, this is one of such areas where propaganda trumps facts. Apart from being the former minister of mines in this country, I have taken the pains to actually investigate what happened in Zamfara and what happened is the product of the policy that I started, not what people are proclaiming it to be. States are not allowed to be involved in mineral development because it is on the exclusive list of our Constitution. However, state companies



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like fountain holdings (what we call our special purpose vehicle in Ekiti state); in Lagos state they call it "Ibile" holdings, in Ogun state I know they call it Gateway. These are companies registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission legitimately to run businesses and if you are a company you have a right to approach the Ministry of Mines for license to mine in whatever jurisdiction you can mine. The same applies to those. There are companies that exist belonging to states in the South-South in partnership with private sector organizations. What simply happened in Zamfara is that they applied to the Ministry of Mines under what we started which is what we call the Presidential Artisan Goldmining Initiative (PAGMI). I started that as the Minister of Mines to assist artisans who are cheated out of their mined gold by middlemen, mostly especially the Chinese. They were paid peanuts so we decided that we would approach the Central Bank of Nigeria to invest in gold reserve, give us a commitment that they will buy this gold if it is refined, so we agreed that two states will be the pilot- Kebbi state and Osun state. By the time I left other states had come on board this initiative, including Zamfara state. So, Zamfara has not broken any law to the best of my knowledge, it has approached this via a special purpose vehicle that it set up and the federal ministry of mines has also come out to explain this to the Nigerian public that we are aware of what happened in Zamfara and we gave the special purpose vehicle the license to conduct this business.

So, the issue has been resolved?

There was no issue to be resolved in the first place. Again, this was a media creation.

What's your advice to young people who are increasingly believing that violence will solve all their problems?

Clearly, there is no way violence can be a way of life. I have been in activism all my life, from student union to pro-democracy activism. I have never at any point resorted to violence in order to get what I was agitating for. And you may say okay, you were lucky your situation is exceptional. I do not think so, but I do think we need to find a way to mentor our young people to see the value in protests as a good thing but to know that you have to stop agonizing and organize in order to get the results that you want.

Frankly, all of us need to impress it on our young people that it is time to drop that sense of entitlement that "government has not done this for me, or my governor". Nobody owes you anything. You owe yourself the right to succeed because the determination to succeed and capacity to make a difference lies within you. God being on your side, He will make it happen but you must put in your very best to make things happen.



GOVERNMENT MUST LISTEN TO YOUTH, SAYS BELLO

OUTSPOKEN GOVERNOR OF KOGI STATE, ALHAJI YAHAYA BELLO HELD NOTHING BACK IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH THE MEDIA TEAM. EXCERPTS:

Like other major cities across Nigeria, Lokoja experienced a considerable degree of protests during the ENDSARS agitation. What were your major concerns?

The issue of ENDSARS as it affects Kogi state was not much of a challenge. Kogi did not boil, Lokoja did not boil per say. We as a government and as a people understood clearly ab initio the demands of the ENDSARS protesters and I am the first Governor that identified with them and supported their quest. But along the line, I cautioned that they should not allow unguided elements to hijack the exercise. In Kogi state what happened actually was as a result of imported hoodlums that tried to invade Lokoja, where some palliatives were being shared. The various relief materials from CACOVID, NEMA and our own SEMA and other donations came; Usually it is what we do periodically and every other local government out of 21 local governments, only one which is Lokoja local government decided that they will allow them to choose their pattern of distribution. Some will choose to be delivering home by home, some will choose to call on various wards or communities; So, in Lokoja when the ENDSARS protest started, it was hijacked. We were building world class hospitals across the state, some of the equipment that arrived were vandalized which is surely an act of criminality.

That must have been very devastating moment for the government. We also saw the Commissioner for Health weep on national TV.

The Honourable Commissioner for Health, Dr Saka Audu is a very passionate and committed young doctor. The incidence touched him very well because we know exactly how much we were able to put together to purchase that equipment.

In Kogi state, our youths were largely peaceful and they know exactly what we are doing and they were given the necessary support.

Even though a 5-point demand was made on the government by the protesters, it became obvious that the issues are legion; bordering on injustice, poverty, bad governance and the likes.

Do you see the #ENDSARS protests as a vote of no confidence in the present leadership in the country?

Allow me to speak frankly and sincerely. What I have come to realize is that there has been leadership failure over time. Our forefathers of blessed memory: when we talk of Sir Ahmadu Bello,

Tafawa Balewa, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Obafemi Awolowo. They were nationalists that meant well for this country. Until recently, we have been having leadership failure before the current dispensation. So, the anger of the youths is not just on the current administration or current leadership, it is accumulated anger over time and that is what they tried to vent out but I quickly saw the danger the agitation was turning into and came out to warn and caution. Thank God they heeded to my advice and they saw reasons why they should sheathe their swords and listen to government. But I sincerely would wish that we pay more attention to the demands of younger generations and even Nigerians generally.

It is time we have a complete change, a complete detour from the way and manner we govern this country. It is not going to be business as usual again because currently, every household and everybody on the street is socially conscious. Currently this is the period of information technology, whatever happens in one's house is known at once all over the world. We know what exactly is happening and I as a leader of the younger generation in government today, once I see something that is not going to go down well with the younger generation, I will speak out because that is more or less my constituency.

The ENDSARS protests revealed the structural deficiencies in our national lives, which are pointers to the inevitability of state police. Shouldn't this spur us into quickening its actualization?

Thank you! Like I said, the dysfunction in our security architecture was inherited; and let me tell you something, the current administration is doing a lot in ensuring that the army, the police see reforms. There are certain weapons that had not been purchased for the Army since the administration of

Alhaji Shehu Shagari until the coming of President Muhammadu Buhari. Several training courses were left undone until the coming of President Muhammadu Buhari. So, imagine the kind of long decay and the man power gap.

There have been several rots in the system. So, it will only take the current IGP to do a magic and quickly change it overnight but I think he is doing his best.

Let me tell you that the issue of community policing has been taken on by me long before the ENDSARS protests. It is a gradual process like I told some of the young ones who came to meet me, in our system there is bureaucracy so you cannot just immediately demand that there should be reforms and there and then there will be reforms. Reform has been on and that is why it was easy for the Federal Government to grant the initial 5 demands of the ENDSARS protests because there were already

programs in place within the security architecture, purchase of equipment and what have you; all these were things that were already in the pipeline. Remember Mr. President paid for certain helicopter gunships from the United States; this took place long before now. There is over one billion dollar that was approved by NEC to support the military; these are just to support or meet up the gaps that were met on ground and that one is ongoing; so, it was easy for the government to quickly grant the request of the ENDSARS protestors, only that when you are hungry or you are thirsty, you are agitated, you want things done quickly but I think the government is in the right direction in that regard.

However, I will implore the government generally that we should do more. In Kogi state, we discovered that there is this particular gap which exists almost everywhere and in other that we quickly meet up, we sort the approval of the authorities concerned to set up the local vigilante; we sort out approval to quickly incor-

porate the local hunters and other volunteers and we got their approval. And in line with the law that I inherited from my predecessor signed but never executed to establish our local vigilante.

I quickly started the execution. We recruited able bodied men across the state, who will be trained in information gathering and fighting insecurity. At the same time, we quickly ensured that our governance principle and practices are open, an open-door policy and the people got to understand the workings of government; they trusted and believed in us.

So, we ensured that we showed them the resources that we have- hundred naira for instance, this hundred naira can go into infrastructural development or empowering the people or we spend the whole hundred naira chasing criminals which at the end of the day there will be nothing left for development.

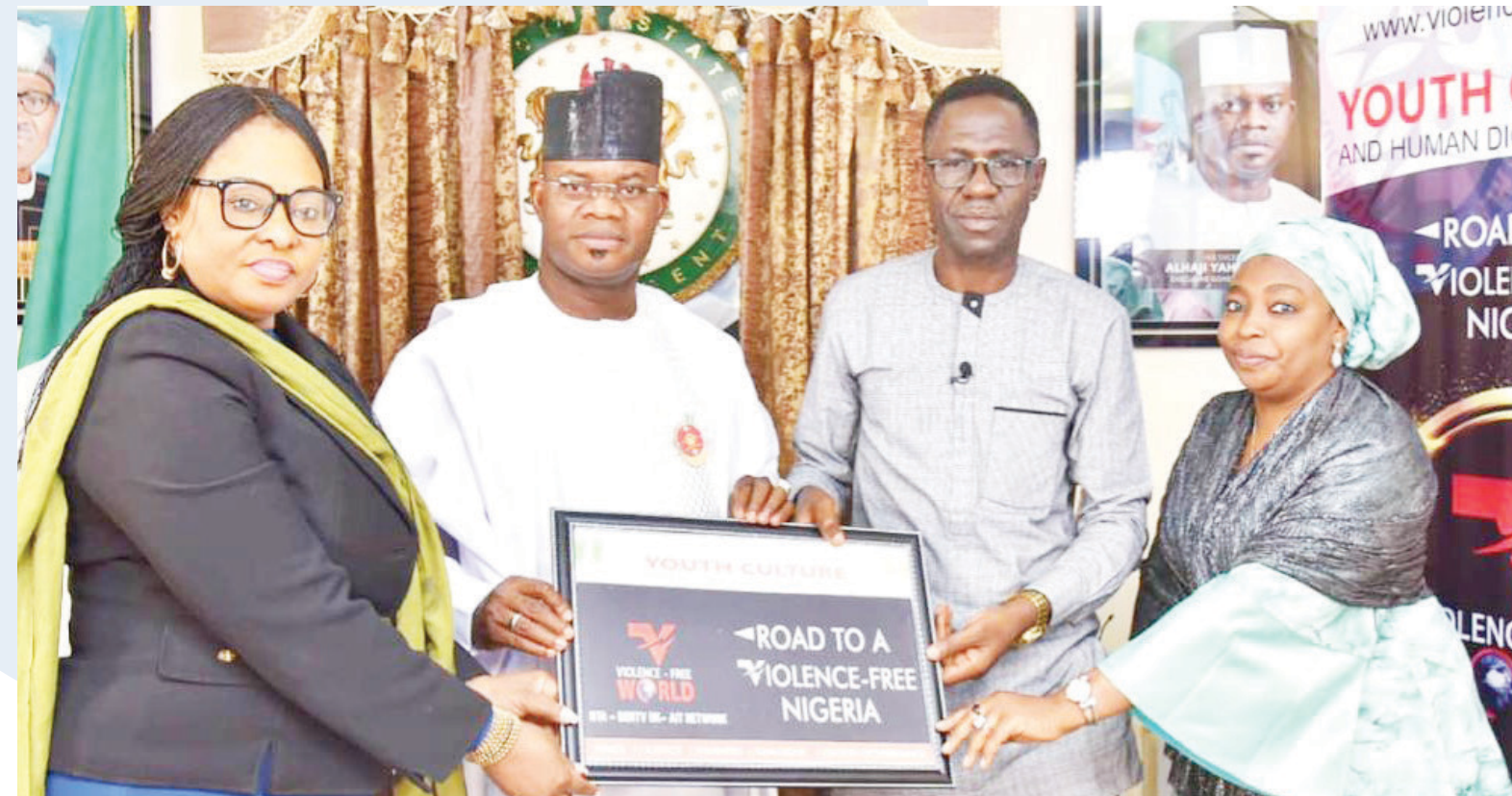
So, the people bought into it and they began to volunteer information because these criminals live amongst them; they know them and

if people were scared and afraid to come out and give information, we won't make much progress. So, having built confidence in them, they were able to come out and then point out those criminals amongst them and it was easy for the law enforcement agencies in collaboration with the local vigilante and hunters to quickly isolate them. That is why within six months of my administration, we were able to address insecurity in the state. So, it is a gradual process and I know that some states are trying to do same even though it is better to be late than never you are aware of the Amotekun of the South West and some other outfits in various other states or regions, but it is going to be a gradual process.

Let's talk about insecurity and abduction of over 300 students from Kankara in Katsina State; Many termed it an embarrassment on President Buhari as it occurred while he was visiting the area. How do you react to this?

First, Mr. President is my father- our father, a mentor and role model; clean and kindhearted. So, you can find a friend in a father and a friend in a son as well. The Kankara school-boys' incident was most unfortunate. I thank God that they have been brought back. It is quite embarrassing but I think all of that has a political undertone. You cannot come to any part of Kogi State and you are moving 300 people; even if you are packing 300 chicken from a poultry, come-on the chickens will make noise. If you are packing 300 cows, it will take you time to execute and there will be alarm. How did they pack 300 pupils? Through which road did they move? Where were the teachers? Where were the guardians? Where were the housemasters and workers in the school? I mean, there is more to that; You and I do not expect Mr. President to hold an AK 47 and be guarding schools. If we destroy ourselves because of Mr. President, that would be it. Mr. President has done his best and that is why I said it the other time that we can't paint the scenario that played out before 2015 where Chibok girls were kidnapped and the then government did not show any concern. If you are trying to recast the same scenario it wont work but let me summarize by urging the security agencies to unearth the mystery behind that; yes, the kidnapping and recovery of these children.

In Kogi State today, I am not saying that we are 100% secure but on a scale of one to ten, we have reduced insecurity to just 2 percent or let's just say 20%. You know what, in every unfortunate situation either kidnapping along the high way because you cannot kidnap within the cities any more. If there is any kidnapping in Kogi State right now we would have foiled over 10 of it and anyone we foil, we make sure we track the cell and liquidate them. Any kidnapping that takes place in Kogi state today, we will recover the person and we will always get those that perpetuate the crime because the people cooperate with us. I urge every citizen of this country to cooperate with this government because if we use our political interest to destroy the country, there will be no country to play politics or to govern any longer.



Gov Yahaya Bello with the Media Team who paid him a visit

BUT I SINCERELY WOULD WISH THAT WE PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE DEMANDS OF YOUNGER GENERATIONS AND EVEN NIGERIANS GENERALLY



NEWS FROM THE STATES

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has revealed plans to collaborate with the state judiciary on the establishment of a revenue court to boost Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) in the state.

Obaseki disclosed this after handing over the keys of the newly constructed High Court Complex to the Chief Judge of Edo State, Justice Esther Edigin.

He said: "We are transparent with finances and with your support, we are establishing revenue courts in re-tooling our revenue collecting system to expand and increase significantly our IGR in Edo State. This will enable us to invest more money into the judiciary and other sectors.

"Working with the judiciary, we have a marshal plan to reposition the magistracy in Edo State. I thank the Chief Judge who through her architect gave us a template design of how magistrate courts should look like in rural and urban areas. Based on these plans and other bigger strategies, we should be able to roll out these plans before mid-year."

The governor explained that he was there to undertake a simple handover ceremony for the use of the judiciary, adding that the Chief Justice of Nigeria would do the commissioning at a later date.

"I am here to handover the keys of this prop-

Obaseki unveils plans to establish revenue court to drive state's IGR

erty to the judiciary for use. This is an opportunity to unveil our rationale for what we are doing. Without the judiciary, we can't have democracy. We need the judiciary, which is important in sustaining our democracy.

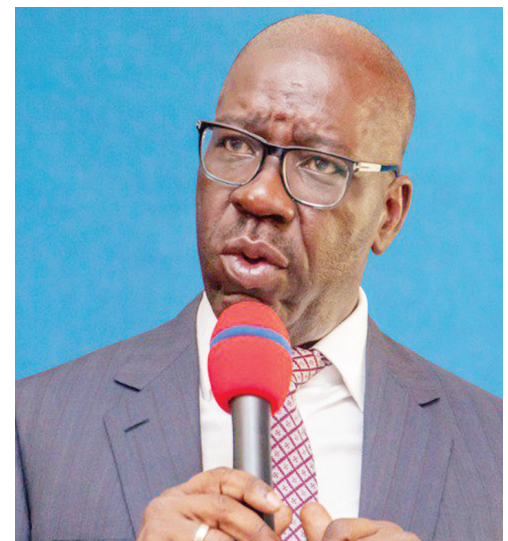
"We are hoping to build new courts in Auchi and Ekpoma. I felt sad during my electioneering after visiting 192 wards across the state and seeing what is called magistrate courts in some communities. They are not befitting of such names," he said.

In her welcome address, the Chief Judge of Edo State, Justice Esther Edigin, expressed appreciation to the governor for the infrastructural development carried out in the judiciary, reiterating that the judiciary is the bastion of Nigeria's democracy and the last hope of the proverbial common man.

"A strong and truly independent judiciary is in the best interest of all of us. It is indeed the best legacy we can all bequeath to our children and generation yet unborn," she said.

The Chief Judge also expressed apprecia-

tion to the governor for connecting the entire Edo State High Court complex to the Ossimo Independent Power Plant (IPP) grid for uninterrupted power supply.



Governor Obaseki

Oyo Govt donates 18-seater buses to TUC, NULGE

Oyo State Government has donated one 18-seater bus each to the State chapter of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE).

The Government stated that the buses would help to enhance the discharge of the duties by the Labour unions.

The Special Adviser to Governor Seyi Makinde on Labour Matters, Comrade Bayo Titilola-Sodo, who presented the keys to the representatives of each of the Labour Unions, said that donation was part of the Governor's promises to aid service delivery of workers in the State.

While stating that the gesture has further confirmed the love and compassion of the Governor for the workers, the robust relationship between the Government, labour

leaders and the workers, added that other unions will soon get such donations.

Comrade Sodo said: "Since the Government of GSM came on board in Oyo State, we have had industrial harmony and there has been a robust relationship between the Government, labour leaders and the workers of Oyo State. And it is in continuation of that relationship that the Governor decided to donate buses to the two labour unions. For other unions, it will get to their turn."

He said that the relationship between Oyo State workers and the Government has been cordial since assumption of the present administration in the State, urging workers to reciprocate the gesture by remaining loyal, diligent at their

different places of work.

"We expect a reciprocal posture from the leadership as well as the workers of Oyo State. The Governor has kept faith with the workers and we expect the workers to keep faith with the Government; to remain loyal and diligent at their duty posts so that, with our cooperation, we can move Oyo State forward and better.

"The relationship between the labour and Government has been cordial since May 29, 2019 and it has remained so. We know that some people were sceptical that the Governor will be able to continue with the prompt payment of salaries and other emoluments to the various categories of beneficiaries in Oyo State including the retired ones but here we are, 20 months after, he

has kept faith and continued not only to pay promptly but also the payment of 13th-month salary, despite the economic recession brought up by the covid-19 pandemic.

"I am speaking for the Governor and I am sure we heard him loudly at the inter-faith session we had two days ago. "Even when covid-19 came on board and everyone was afraid, we had a conversation and he assured me that he will continue to pay the workers of Oyo State. He is a man who keeps to his words."

In their separate remarks, the Chairman, Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), Oyo State Chapter, Comrade Rufus Babalola, and Trade Union Congress, Comrade Emmanuel Ogundiran expressed gratitude to Oyo State Governor, Engineer Seyi

Makinde for the gift of a bus to the Congress, as the Labour Union disclosed that such gesture was last extended to Labour last ten years back.

"On behalf of the entire Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees of Oyo State, we thank the Governor so much for this New Year gift. This is a reality as we can all see. Since inception, he has been friendly to the union, especially the Local Government workers. "We have seen all the backlog of leave bonus fully paid. On the promotion of workers, every process is in place and the salary he has been paying promptly. I want to believe that this is the beginning of a new thing in Oyo State for the union.

"The Governor is making this work so easy for us all by presenting this bus. So, we thank him.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State has commended his Niger State counterpart, Abubakar Sani Bello for sustaining close collaboration against banditry activities within the boundaries of the two states.

Governor El-Rufai, who was in Minna on a private visit to condole with the government and People of the state over the recent demise of some prominent citizens of the state, said the two states have been collaborating closely with each other and share common security platform where information and intelligence are exchanged to help in fighting the bandits.

“Fighting these bandits have remained a serious challenge to us. But I want to commend Governor Sani Bello and his team for the close collaboration enjoyed with Kaduna State. I think if we have similar collaboration with other states, may be things would have been better”, he stated.

The Governor, however, expressed confidence that these banditry and other high-level criminal tendencies will soon come to an end with the renewed, sustained efforts by the security agencies in the affected states.

He acknowledged that Informants have played a major role in the unsuccessful attempt to completely eliminate the bandits and enjoined



Governor El-Rufai of Kaduna State and his counterpart, Gov Sani Bello of Niger State during a visit to Minna Niger State

Fight against Banditry: El-Rufai, Bello synergize strategies

religious, traditional and community leaders to preach against their activities as well as the need for people to share intelligence discreetly with government about these informants so that the security agents can deal with them.

“I think this is where our National and State Legislators, Local Government Chairmen and Councillors, traditional and community leaders, who are closer to the people, can be of great help to the security architecture if they discreetly share intelli-

gence with the government”, he added.

Governor El-Rufai noted that the problem of insurgency and banditry have been around for a while, and that Governor Abubakar Sani Bello and himself have, for more than two years, presented what they felt was the solution to the problem of insurgency and banditry in their respective states.

He advised the newly appointed Service Chiefs to look at what has been recommended and what has been start-

ed by their predecessors and sustain them adding that, in the last few months, the Nigeria Army, Air force and other security agencies have been very proactive in fighting banditry.

“So, what the new Service Chiefs need to do is to build on the existing foundations and do better. Whenever you have new people, they come with renewed vigour and the focus to make a difference. So, we hope that things will be even better”, he said.

Governor El-Rufai explained that, although

many people may be quick to criticize the outgoing service Chiefs, “those of us that deal with them directly, those of us that have to call them at 1:00am to say that their are bandits in this area and a plane takes-off in fifteen minutes to go to that area, know that they also worked very hard and they were not sleeping”.

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello on his part assured that government will not rest on its oars at ensuring that the fight against banditry is brought an end.



SCENES FROM THE NGF 26TH MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 17TH, 2021 AT THE STATE HOUSE VILLA, ABUJA



Governor Babagana Zulum shares a moment with his colleagues



Sanwo-Olu, Abdullahi, Sule and Ogun State Gov, Dapo Abiodun



Cross-section of Governors at the meeting



Governor Kayode Fayemi (middle) Flanked by Rt. Hons Aminu Tambuwal (right) and Simon Lalong



Governor Tambuwal exchanging pleasantries with Deputy Gov of Anambra State while Gov Diri looks on



NGF DG, A. B. Okuru with some Secretariat Staff



Governors Tambuwal, Fintiri and Matawalle



Governors Obaseki, Tambuwal, Fayemi and Mohammed arriving the meeting



Governors Obaseki, Ishaku and Diri share a moment.



Governors Kayode fayemi, Mohammed Bala and Umar Fintiri entering for the meeting



NGF Chairman, Kayode Fayemi welcomes the World Bank during their visit to his home



Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Kayode Fayemi(R) discussing with the World Bank Country Director for Nigeria Mr. Shubham Chaudhuri when the latter paid him a courtesy visit in Abuja.



ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 25TH TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM (2ND IN 2021) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2021

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held on 10th February 2021 received extensive briefs on a number of issues, deliberated on various matters of national concern and reached some resolutions:

1. On the current conversation on the COVID-19 pandemic, which is focused on making vaccines available as soon as possible to Nigerians, the Chairman called on all relevant agencies and public-spirited organizations involved in the procurement of vaccines to work amicably to ensure that the vaccines arrive the country quickly. He announced that the NGF

will shortly inaugurate an advisory group of experts to provide high-level strategic guidance and support to the NGF on the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines in the short time and the local production of vaccines in the medium to long term.

2. The Forum is also engaging directly with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) to ensure that vaccines are administered equitably, first to workers who are on the frontlines of the pandemic.

3. The Forum deliberated on the underutilization of fiscal facilities in the country including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Fund, the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) and the Saving One Million

Lives programme for results (SOML) which are meant to expand the size and scope of resources spent on health and education across all States of the Federation. The Forum recognises that the timely implementation of these facilities in line with the financing plans of States is vital to ensure expenditure coherence and the sustainability for several projects on primary health care and basic education implemented at the State-level, especially during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic where the demand for government intervention has been heightened.

4. On the Saving One Million Lives (SOML) performance for results project, the Chairman announced that the Federal Ministry of

Health, the Commissioners for Health Forum and the World Bank have resolved to distribute the outstanding funds under the Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI 1,2) equally amongst all the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

5. On the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF), the Chairman expressed concern over the delay in the payment of funds to the three pilot BHCPF States of Abia, Niger and Osun. He urged the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and the World Bank (WB) to urgently disburse the funds to these States using the original BHCPF Guidelines for States.

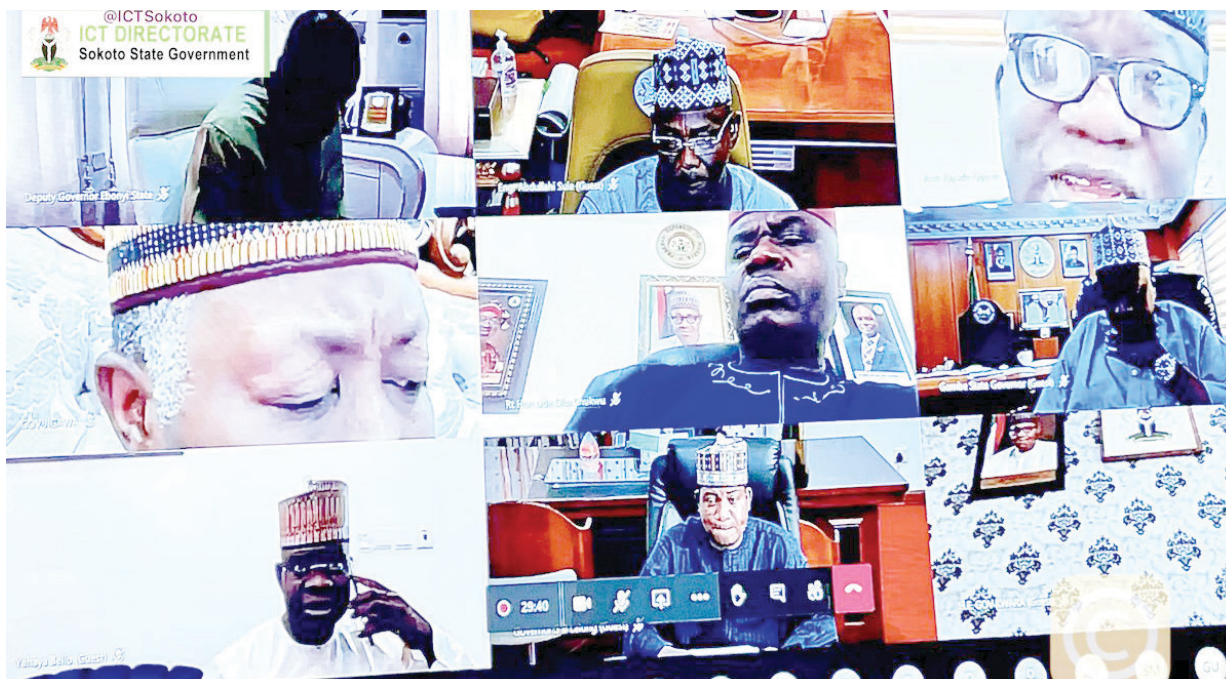
6. Following an update from Governors on the vari-

ous initiatives taken by State governments to address the rising insecurity in the country due to the activities of herdsmen, members reached a consensus on the need for the country to transition into modern systems of animal husbandry that will replace open, night and undergraze grazing in the country. State governments are encouraged to put in place systems to accelerate the grazing initiative of the National Livestock Transformation Plan and ranching in the country.

7. The Forum respects the right of abode of all Nigerians and strongly condemns criminality and the ethnic profiling of crime in the country in an effort to frame the widespread banditry and the herders- farmers crisis. In the light of the economic and security risks that have arisen from these circumstances, the Forum resolved to urgently convene an emergency meeting of all Governors.

8. The Chairman of the Northern States Governors' Forum (NSGF) and Governor of Plateau State, Rt Hon. Simon Bako Lalong provided an update on steps taken by the Governors of the nineteen (19) Northern States and cautioned against the tagging of ethnic groups based on the misbehavior of a few criminally minded individuals. He called on State governors to address this matter head-on in their various States.

9. Following an update by Governor Abubakar Bagudu





...ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 25TH TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM (2ND IN 2021) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2021

of Kebbi State, members resolved to immediately address the misinformation from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources that it has so far registered 4.5 million farmers nationwide under the Agriculture for Food and Jobs Plan (AFJP), a key component of the Nigeria Economic and Sustainability Plan (NESP) designed to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on farmers.

10. On the Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2020-2025 (NNBP), the Chairman briefed the Forum on the letter from the Broadband Implementation Steering Committee (BISC) requesting Governors to give effect to some of the Infrastructure, Policy and Demand Drivers Pillars of the Broadband Plan in order to achieve full implementation of the NNBP.

11. The Chairman drew the attention of members to the letter from the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) requesting States to submit details of work done at the subnational level on lifting people out of poverty. This information will help the Council in developing a poverty reduction strategy/plan at the national level. States are expected to submit these on or 26th February, 2021.

12. The Chairman announced that the Forum was in receipt of a letter from the Nigeria Governors' Wives Against Gender Based Violence (NGWA-GBV) thanking members particularly the Governors of Kogi, Ondo, Niger, Plateau and Ekiti who attended the High Level Policy Dialogue on December 2, 2020 for



their support in making the event a huge success. The NGWA-GBV implored Governors to maintain the momentum around the emergency declared on GBV on June 10th, 2020. While noting the concerns of the NGWA-GBV, Governors resolved to endorse all requests and proposals contained in its letter dated January 26th, 2021.

13. Following the Presentation that was made at the 24th NGF Teleconference meeting on enhancing States' IGR through harmonized Traffic Management System, the Secretariat was mandated to convene a meeting of the Committee headed by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, to further review and advise the Forum on the project.

14. On the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) performance for result programme, the Chairman briefed the Forum on emerging concerns with the Independent Verification Agent (IVA) following the nomination of a new

Auditor General for the Federation. He assured members that the Governor of Edo State who doubles as the Chairman of the NGF SFTAS Committee is working with relevant stakeholders to engender a final resolution that will sustain the momentum and quality service delivered by the IVA on the programme so far.

15. As part of the SFTAS update, Ajogbasile Olanrewaju, Senior Programme Manager (HelpDesk and SFTAS TA Programme) at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat provided the following:

a. All 36 States are set to meet the 2020 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) Eligibility Criteria having prepared and published online an IPSAS-compliant 2019 Audited Financial Statements by 31 August 2020 and their FY2021 State Budgets under the National Chart of Accounts (NCoA) by 31st January 2021.

b. Twenty Six (26) States including Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Ekiti,



Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba and Yobe State achieved the Disbursement Linked Indicator (DLI) 12.1 (strengthened procurement function for COVID-19 or emergency situation and facilitated participation of SMEs in public procurement in the resilient recovery phase).

c. Anambra State Annual Performance Assessment (APA) result for Disbursement Linked Indicator (DLI) 11.1 (announced and started implementation of a tax compliance relief program for individual taxpayers and businesses) has been revised following additional considerations that confirm that the State met the requirements of the DLI.

d. State Governors were encouraged to sustain high-level support for the SFTAS programme, promote an incentivised environment for participating Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as State officials. They were also advised to leverage existing technical assistance

on the programme and implement in full and not in part the SFTAS verification protocols for the annual eligibility criteria and Disbursement Linked Results (DLRs).

16. On the operations of SFTAS, the Governor of Edo State, H.E Godwin Obaseki called on members to further strengthen the institutional capacity of the NGF Secretariat to become a stronger resource and policy centre for the provision of technical assistance to States.

17. The Chairman formally informed members of the death of the father of their colleague, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa and prayed for the family and the people of Delta State. Members offered their sincere condolence and noted the decision of the Okowa family to opt for a quiet private burial this month, while a Celebration of Life event will be held on August 21, 2021.

– Governor Kayode Fayemi, Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum 10th February 2021.



BY JOHN FAYEMI KAYODE AT CHATHAM HOUSE EVENT, LONDON, UK ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY, 2, 2021

BACKGROUND

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the health and economy of nations, including Nigeria.
- As at today, Nigeria has tested 1.3m persons for COVID-19, with 10% (131,242) of these confirmed positive.
- Compared with the global and Africa's Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of 2.2% and 2.5% respectively, Nigeria has fared better with a CFR of 1.2%.
- Six States (Lagos, FCT, Plateau, Kaduna, Oyo and Rivers) have contributed 70% of confirmed cases, with Lagos the commercial nerve of the country contributing about 40% of total burden.
- Data indicates that men appear to be disproportionately affected accounting for 69% of the confirmed cases. Most cases occur in people aged 31-40 years.
- Although the impact of the pandemic was relatively mild in the first wave, the virulence and mortality seen in this second wave appears to have increased significantly. With increased demands for hospital bed space and oxygen requirements necessitating an increase in spending on health services both by federal and state governments.
- On the economic front, the country was only gradually recovering from the 2015-16 recession before the pandemic struck. So, it was unsurprising that our GDP contracted by

The Role Of Nigeria's State Governments In Recovery: Responses To Covid-19 Linked Challenges

3.5% in 2020. Given the impact of the second wave of the pandemic it is unlikely that we see GDP growth recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2021.

- These macro-economic challenges coupled with double digit inflation and falling per capita income have real life implications on lives and livelihoods and are of concern to us as a government.
- Our primary responsibility as a government now focuses on minimising the disruptions to population health and economic growth.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR

- Nigeria was very pro-active in handling the first wave and continues to remain so. Prior to the confirmation of the first case on the 27th of February 2020, the country actively monitored events around the world, with a public health advisory published by the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) a month before the first confirmed case in the country.
- A presidential task force was established to coordinate multi-sectoral response to the pandemic while a public health emergency operation centre was established under the NCDC.
- In March 2020, the country's airports were closed with the exception of essential flights and inter-state movements restricted in order to minimise the spread of the virus.
- On the health front, about \$20m was made available to support the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) at the outset to scale its capacity to adequately respond to emerging issues.
- The private sector in Nigeria harnessed their strengths to establish the Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID), which launched in March 2020 to support the Government's control efforts.
- Raising more than \$75m, CACOVID has provided medical supplies and equip-

ment, tests, isolation and treatment centres for individuals with COVID-19. In addition, under its food relief program, essential food materials were donated to vulnerable persons across all States to cushion the effect of the lockdown.

- States also followed suit, responding to the pandemic by addressing the health and economic impact. In Ekiti for instance, COVID-19 taskforce was established as early as March 2020 and prior to the detection of the first case in our State. Eminent citizens of the State under the Rapid Response Mobilisation Committee (RRMC) have helped raise about \$3m and deployed same to fund some of the critical infrastructural and social needs to support the State's fight against the pandemic.

- As a State government, recognising the impact of the shocks created by the pandemic on our revenues, in 2020, we revised our budget mid-year with capital expenditure for a number of budget lines re-prioritised to enable us channel resources to health and socio-welfare for the vulnerable. Renumerations for top government functionaries were also reduced by 50%.

- In my capacity as Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum, we quickly developed a communications and collaboration plan for all State Governors. We recognised early on that no state in Nigeria is safe, until every state is safe. We have met regularly with the NCDC since the beginning of the pandemic, we set up internal committees within the Forum to ensure engagement across various sectors of the response. Our voices as State Governors is very important, especially when thinking about social challenges like stigma and vaccine hesitancy. We have continued to participate in risk communications activities, to address these challenges and more. We have put out regular press statements, and in our states, funded grassroots risk communications and community mobilisation.



CURRENT RESPONSE

• Our strategy as a nation can be grouped into 3 thematic areas – Prevention, Treatment and Economic.

• On prevention, we continue to communicate and inform the public on the need to adhere to safety protocols and provide the necessary information to improve awareness about the disease. Both at Federal and State levels, messages to increase awareness about the pandemic, safety protocols to be taken and how/where to get treated are constantly published on print and electronic media.

• We recognise that as with many other countries, we are battling an infodemic alongside the pandemic. A critical component of risk communications activities has been the development of information education communication (IEC) materials based on the evolving situation and social media chatter. Materials were developed at the national level and adapted by states, to local needs and languages.

• We are also on the offensive with respect to ensuring people comply with the safety protocols in place. Only last week, Mr President signed the COVID-19 Health Protection Regulations, which provided guidance on gatherings, operations in public places, mandatory compliance with treatment protocols, penalties and enforcement.

• When Nigeria reported its first case in late February 2020, only four laboratories in the country could test for COVID-19. By October 2020, testing capacity had expanded to over 70 laboratories across the 36+1 States. The scale up of laboratory services was important given the size of the country and the need to rapidly obtain results for suspected cases.

• As at December 2020, more than 45,000 health workers have been trained across the country on infection prevention and control measures.

• These preventive actions are important given that a major priority in the country's response is to break the chain of transmission individually and collectively through adherence to public health and social measures.

• Our treatment approach includes adequate care and management of positive cases. For persons with asymptomatic or mild symptoms, self-isolation and home-based care is approved if such persons have completed a risk-assessment by the State Ministry of Health and meet all requirement.

• In the instance where hospital care is required, isolation centres across the country are now equipped to handle critical cases. Each State now has at least one isolation centre, with States like Ekiti, having up to three.

• Also, we are working with the Federal Government to ensure we have vaccines available in the country. Just last week, the NGF invited experts to brief Governors on vaccine procurement and administration. We had a National Economic Council (NEC) meeting, where the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) shared the plans around vaccines procurement. We expect



about 80m doses of vaccines would be available in 2021 to cover 40% of the population, while another 60m doses is being planned for 2022. Beyond government's procurement of vaccines, we at the NGF are also strong proponents of the utilisation of public-private partnerships in vaccines procurement as a means of closing the gap between what is available and what is necessary to achieve herd immunity.

• As we already know, vaccines themselves are not cost effective, but rather immunisation is. To ensure people are immunized, State Governments have a role to play in supporting the logistics and ensuring people get the vaccines.

• Using the Vaccines Readiness Assessment Tool (ViRAT), I have encouraged my colleagues to revisit and strengthen their vaccines cold chain and logistics, step up demand creation and communication and map out priority persons to receive vaccines amongst other things. Plans must also be comprehensive enough to address other areas that could create a logistical nightmare such as storing vaccines, reaching out and ensuring people come back to receive their second doses. We have considerable experience on this, having handled polio vaccination which actually led to the eradication wild polio virus in Nigeria.

• On the economic front, our major priority is to secure livelihoods. National monetary and fiscal policy reforms must align to support improvements in household income. Working with the Federal Government, a number of employment creation programs have been created and currently being implemented. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has played an important role here and we must commend them. Intervention funds have been made available with interest rates below inflation, in the hope that we can stimulate growth of small and me-

dium scale businesses. Similarly, institutions such as the Bank of Industry and Bank of Agriculture have also given moratoriums on existing loans to ease the burden of payment.

LOOKING FORWARD

• With discoveries of new strains of the virus, it's too early to predict the impact. However, we now have about a year's experience in fighting this.

• Crises have consequences, often unknown at the outset. In the aftermath of the second World War, the Bretton Woods institutions were created to help re-build a shattered economy and promote international economic cooperation. Like the second world war, the COVID-19 pandemic defines an era.

• As we look forward to recovery from the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, our approach must shift from emergency response to strengthening the resilience and sustainability of our health system. We must task ourselves and rethink existing assumptions and facts around financing and delivery of health care in a manner that guarantees we build back better.

• This requires adequate funding of the health sector. We have begun to advocate for increased investment in health security and public health emergencies by State Governments. In Ekiti State for example, our capital budget for health in 2021 increased by 250% above 2020 figures. Our new four-year strategy for the health sector has public health security as a major priority. At the NGF, we are recommending that states begin to think about establishing their own Centres for Disease Control.

• In the medium to long term, we must begin to think strategically about the future of public health security and therefore explore the potential of in-country manufacturing of approved vaccines, following technology transfer. The pandemic is a good reminder of the implications of public health outbreaks on national security. We must take the leap and gain a better level of independence, in the area of vaccine research and development but also science generally.

• Another key point to note is ownership. Public health is not for the health sector alone as is popularly practiced in countries including Nigeria. The COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps our biggest lesson around this, as the pandemic has affected all spheres of the economy. Nigeria now has a National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) that includes a multi-sectoral approach to prepare for and respond to disease outbreaks. Every sector must now contribute to ensuring health security and this is not limited to the provision of funds alone. Many of the determinants of health are outside the health sector, and so we must have multi-sectoral leadership and response to public health emergencies.

*– Dr. Kayode Fayemi, CON.
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum and Governor, Ekiti State*



NEWS FROM THE STATES



Governor Udom commissioning Norfin Offshore Shipyard

Emmanuel unveils Norfin Offshore Shipyard in Akwa Ibom

Governor Udom Emmanuel has officially commissioned the Norfin Offshore Shipyard in Oruk-Anam local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

The shipyard, a private investment of a Singapore-based Akwa Ibom-born ship manufacturer, Engr. Iniekong Charles Udonwa, is located along the Ikot Abasi-Port Harcourt expressway.

The historical grand opening ceremony featured the unveiling of 'MV Norfin Swift', a 9-meter security patrol vessel built by the company to be used by security

operatives in securing the nation's waterways.

Fielding questions from newsmen at the shipyard, the Chairman and CEO of Norfin Group, Engr. Iniekong Charles Udonwa explained that aside the security vessel, the company has the capacity for ship building, ferries, and all kinds of ship, adding that already, the company has received orders by clients to build other sea vessels.

"This is a private Investment. Akwa Ibom State government has provided a secured environment and

community support for the investment.

"We will soon embark on construction of other sea-going vessels, including, ferries, barges, fishing trawlers among others.

Worried by the seeming lack of interest by indigenes of the state in the maritime and oil and gas sector, Engr. Udonwa who urged Akwa Ibom people to pick interest in the maritime industry said; "Akwa Ibom produces 65% (percent) of crude oil in Nigeria and there is need for Akwa Ibom people to get involved in the maritime sector. This is a money-spinning investment, and Akwa Ibom is losing 5Million Dollars daily following the inability of our own people to get involved in ship owning business and investment in the maritime sector. All we are concerned is politics"

"For now, we are building a security patrol vessel. We will also build fishing trawler, boats, ship"

He made a case for a state-owned financial institution that would help the people access credit facilities to enable them acquire ships and invest in the nation's maritime industry.

"We need an Akwa Ibom bank that would support our people to buy ship and invest in the maritime and oil and gas sector"

Currently, the technical team were seen putting finishing touches on the security patrol vessel ahead of Saturday inauguration date.

... woos US on deep seaport project

Akwa Ibom State governor, Udom Emmanuel, has urged the United States of America (USA) and its investors to partner with the state in the development of the Ibo Deep Seaport.

He made the call when the Chief of Political and Economic Affairs of the

U.S. Consulate in Nigeria, Brandon Hudspeth visited him at Government House, Uyo.

Emmanuel, who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Moses Ekpo, said the Seaport was conceived and programmed to be the flagship of the shipping industry, adding

that it stemmed from its strategic location, which is endowed with natural draught and direct access to all parts of the world including the U.S.

He pointed out that the U.S. had enjoyed a robust bilateral relationship with Nigeria since the nation's independence, adding

that huge investment opportunities abound in the state for American investors to explore.

Speaking, Hudspeth said he visited the state as part of his tour of the Niger Delta region, saying it was a show of his country's interest in the oil-rich region.

He stressed that the visit was to strengthen the relationship between the states of the region and America, noting that to achieve the aim, he hoped to interact, discuss and have a better understanding that would create further mutual benefits for both countries.



Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum and Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi and his Kaduna State counterpart, Nasir El-Rufai have called for the immediate devolution of powers between the federal and state governments and to return the country to a true federation.

Governor El-Rufai staunchly advocated for a federal, state and community policing system, as according to him, one centralised Police for the country has not worked.

Dr Fayemi, on the other hand, is of the opinion that Nigeria needs a credible leadership structure in order to tackle insecurity.

The governors stated this at a virtual programme tagged: "The Fierce Urgency of Now – Tactics and Strategies to Pull Nigeria from the Brink"

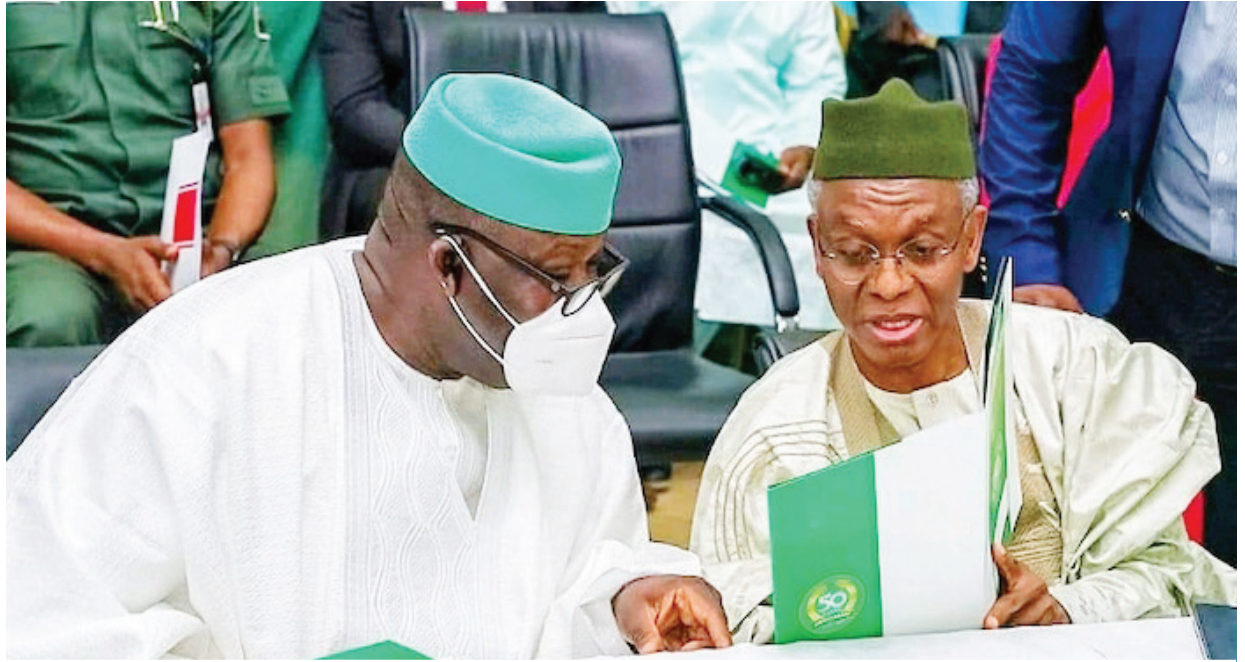
"The APC committee on true federalism proposed significant devolution of powers between the national government and the 36 states. We recommended that about ten items be transferred from the exclusive to the concurrent list and therefore fall under the control of both the state and the federal government," Governor El-Rufai stated at the programme.

"I will dwell on three of the issues that I believe are critical to the immediate needs of the country to pull back from the brink. The first is the imperative for federal, state and community policing. We do not have enough police and one centralised police for the country just has not worked.

"Secondly, we must amend the constitution and relevant laws to vest control of oil and gas, mines and minerals other than offshore in the continental shelf and extended economic zone in the states that already have control over land under the Land Use Act, with royalties and taxes payable to the federal government and the federation account.

"Number three, we must

The fiercest urgency of now: Fayemi, El-Rufai demand State Police



Governor Fayemi and El-Rufai of Kaduna State

rectify the anomaly of a federation that has a more or less unitary judiciary. I am firmly convinced that restructuring on the lines proposed by our committees is a nation-building opportunity that will allow states to exercise consequential powers, assume more responsibilities and control resources to enable them deliver better outcomes for those they govern.

The Kaduna State governor while re-emphasizing the need for the immediate devolution of powers stated that "my first recommendation is to implement the three key devolution proposals that I mentioned above. Give us state police now, vest all minerals in the state now, and decentralise our judiciary now, not tomorrow, not later."

The Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum noted that root causes of violence are major layers of deep-seated,

political, economic, social and environmental challenges plaguing the country. He is of the opinion that the country needs a credible leadership structure to tackle insecurity.

Governor Fayemi cautioned citizens against ethnic profiling as according to him, criminals are found all over our country.

"I concur with virtually everything that my brother (Governor El-rufai) has put forward," Mr Fayemi said.

"Conflict is part of human existence and Nigeria has experienced her own cycle of it since independence. However, the spate of it in the last two years should certainly be a major cause of concern for not just the government, citizens, stakeholders as well as external interests who desire the best for our country.

"The root causes of violence are major layers of deep-seated, political, eco-

nomical, social and environmental challenges that have been allowed to fester for so long to the extent that they are now able to disrupt livelihoods, cause unprecedented destruction of public and private property, and lead to unnecessary deaths.

"Given this worrisome state of insecurity in the country, from Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflict, youth restiveness that led to #EndSARS in October 2020, militancy, and piracy, the common trend is that we are now in a season of anomie in our country.

"We do not subscribe to ethnic profiling. We believe that criminals are found all over our country; they come from virtually almost every ethnic group.

"When you have lost somebody or you know someone who has lost someone,

it's no use telling the person to be rational about the ill that has befallen them and the bereavement they've suffered. The truth of the matter is that we also need compassionate leadership in order to help deal with these issues, in addition to all the substantive things we need to deal with.

"Our forests have now become a huge menace and a space for criminal elements to perpetuate their business. We need a forest management framework to ensure that those who don't have a business in the forests must leave the forests.

"Governors are very committed to the need to modernise grazing practices. There is a national livestock transformation plan, which should be implemented by now, so as to promote ranching and modernised livestock management practices," Mr Fayemi said.



ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 24th TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM (1st IN 2021) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH JANUARY 2021

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, deliberated on matters of national importance, particularly on the procurement and administration of COVID-19 vaccines in the country.

1. The NGF Chairman, H.E. Dr. Kayode Fayemi, briefed State governors on a meeting with Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Chair of the Board of Gavi, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, on the rollout of the COVAX facility which is a global risk-sharing mechanism co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to facilitate pooled procurement and the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across developing countries. Nigeria is among 12 countries in Africa that have indicated readiness of the 92 qualified countries for the facility and will by end of February 2021 receive its first shipment of vaccines.

2. The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) has indicated that vaccines will be administered in four (4) phases, based on vaccine type and availability, initially for frontline health workers, then the aged (55yrs and above), persons with underlying medical conditions and other target groups.

3. The Forum received briefings from three medical experts including Professor Oyewale Tomori, leading Virologist and former Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University, Nigeria; Dr. Faisal Shuaib, Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA); Dr. Pamela Ajayi Founder/Managing Director Synlab Nigeria (formerly PathCare), President Healthcare Federation of Nigeria and Dr. Egbe Dawodu, Founding Partner of the Anadach Group on the country's preparedness for the procurement and administration of COVID vaccines and the level of collaboration required from all stakeholders, including the federal, state governments and the private sector.

4. Following the presentations, the Forum set up a team of experts led by Professor Oyewale Tomori to advise State governors on the procurement and administration of coronavirus vaccines in the country.

5. On the ill-fated pronouncement made by a member of the Forum regarding the Covid-19 vaccine in a national daily, the Forum totally and categorically dissociated itself from the statement, emphasizing that the Forum will continue to be informed and guided by science and will ensure that every decision it takes retains public and professional trust and is not compromised by conflicts of interest.

6. The Governor of Delta State, Dr. Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, who is the Chairman of the NGF Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 reported with concern the rising positivity rate amongst those tested for the virus. He called on Governors to do more to reactivate their health systems, open-up treatment centres and increase partnerships with stakeholder groups in order to improve risk communication and the public's adherence to COVID-19

guidelines.

7. The Forum received a presentation from the Minister of Water Resources, Engineer Suleiman Hussein Adamu and the World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Shubham Chaudhuri, on the Sustainable Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SUWASH) results-based financing programme for States. The programme has become necessary given the state of the sector which has contributed to 73% of Nigeria's total burden of enteric infections and over 255,000 preventable deaths in the country each year.

8. State governors consequently committed to increasing budgetary allocation to the sector with the collaboration of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and the World Bank through the US\$640 million investment finance and US\$60 million technical assistance component which together will support and incentivize infrastructure investments and strengthen government policies and institutions in the WASH sector.

9. A presentation was made by Dr. Sarah Alade, Special Adviser to the President on Finance and Economy, on the development of the Nigeria Agenda 2050 and the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) which will succeed Vision 20:2020 and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017 - 2020. State Governors committed to supporting the development of the national plan by providing technical inputs which will ensure that the plan is inclusive, comprehensive, and reflective of the component development plans of each State in the country. State submissions will be made by 10th February 2021, and will underpin the use of credible data, social development, and economic diversification.

10. The Forum also received a presentation from Dimensions Information Technology LLC on a proposed harmonized Traffic Management System for States which is aimed at boosting their internal revenue generation. The plan was assigned to a Committee, peopled by the Governors of Lagos, Niger, Jigawa and Edo State for review and appropriate advice to the Forum.

11. Finally, the Governor of Edo State, H.E Godwin Obaseki updated State Governors on the Eligibility Criteria for the 2020 States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Annual Performance Assessment (APA) which requires in part that all State governments prepare their FY2021 budgets in line with the National Chart of Accounts (minimum of administrative, economic and function classifications) and that the budgets are approved by their State Houses of Assembly, assented by Governors, and published online by 31st January 2021. The Governor stated that all States have already met the second part of the Eligibility Criteria by publishing an IPSAS-compliant 2019 Audited Financial Statement online by August last year. He encouraged States to take advantage of the Technical Assistance being provided by the NGF Secretariat on the domestication of the National Chart of Accounts.

*- Governor Kayode Fayemi,
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum 20th January 2021*





How **Lalong** Is Subsidizing Education



Newly Completed Faculty of Social Sciences, Plateau State University Boko

BY MAKUT SIMON MACHAM

Recently when the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Plateau State University Boko Chapter, declared a strike just when students were preparing to resume after spending months at home due to the national ASUU strike, many parents, students and concerned citizens were taken aback by this unfortunate development.

Of course the lecturers had their grievances which informed their decision to embark on the strike action as enunciated by the Chairman of ASUU in the institution, Dr. Bentse Pamson who briefed newsmen in Jos.

The lecturers according to Pamson were unhappy over insecurity within the University environment which has resulted in threat to lives and properties of staff and students; delay in the reconstitution of the Governing Council for the University; lack of payment of earned academic allowances totaling over N215 million; underfunding of the institution with only a monthly subvention of about N90m which is grossly inadequate as against about N200 million it expects; inadequate manpower as well as lack of funds for training and capacity building.

Perhaps, one of the reasons given for the strike which has generated so many comments in the social media and elsewhere was when the ASUU

Chairman said "For instance, if you come to the University, you will not discover any capital project being funded by the State Government except the ones being undertaken under TetFund. This is totally strange and unacceptable".

For many, particularly those who are looking for reasons to crucify the Plateau State Government under the leadership of Governor Simon Lalong for non-performance, this accusation has been exploited to its limits.

However, for those who want to be objective, read in between the lines, and look beyond political sentiments or playing to the gallery, the assertion by ASUU was not only unfortunate, but disingenuous.

The Governor who was personally at the University to inspect ongoing and completed projects was equally surprised by the position of the lecturers and expressed his disappointment during an interaction with the Management of the institution.

Lalong who has always conceded to the right of labour unions to seek better welfare of their members, said some of the concerns raised by the ASUU such as the appointment of a Governing Council for the Institution and the need for more funding and enhanced security for the institution were not out of place and in fact already being addressed. What he could not come to terms with was why the lecturers will embark on strike simply because TetFund is carrying out many projects in the school.



Some of the projects inspected by the Governor during the visit include the new Senate Building, Faculties of Law, Environmental Sciences, Health Sciences, Social sciences, Advancement and Linkages building, Staff offices and classrooms complex, E-Library and assorted volumes of books in the central library building, 600- capacity Lecture theatre, School of postgraduate Studies building complex, University Health Centre building and medical equipment, Street light project, Wire fencing of female hostel and PLASU Security System/ CCTV cameras project, sports complex among others.

While interacting with the University management, the Governor said, "I am very happy with the tremendous transformation of the University which is as a result of the joint partnership between the State and Federal Governments

IT IS VERY UNFORTUNATE FOR PEOPLE TO PLAY POLITICS WITH EVERYTHING INCLUDING EDUCATION. I WAS PART OF THE FOUNDING OF THIS INSTITUTION WHEN I WAS SPEAKER

through TetFund. However, I am at a loss as to what the ASUU is imputing or wants to achieve by insinuating that the State Government has not done projects at the Plateau State University. This is preposterous and difficult to understand. How can you say the proprietor of a University does not have any capital projects in it? "

He said "it is very unfortunate for people to play politics with everything including education. I was part of the founding of this institution when I was Speaker. Everyone including members of PLASU-ASUU will remember that when I came into office as Governor, the University was shut down and they were not going to work. We did everything possible to reopen the school and today, it has blossomed and is fast growing. It has been described as a success by those who oversee tertiary education in the country considering that it started on a virgin site without inheriting any infrastructure like some of its counterparts in some States. It is therefore very sad and untrue for this insinuation to come from people who should know better. This is nothing but pure mischief. Are lecturers in PLASU unhappy that the school is getting Tetfund intervention? Which State will reject such assistance when the Governments at all levels including the Federal Government which directly oversees Tetfund are crying over lack of funds due to COVID-19 and the economic recession?"

He went down memory lane to remind the lecturers about the status of the Plateau State University before his coming into office in 2015. It is common knowledge that before the advent of the Lalong Rescue Administration, the University was in a state of coma having been neglected

for years by the immediate past administration of Governor David Jang for reasons many citizens of the State are yet to be fathom. Many have not forgotten how students who were already offered admission into the various courses of the university at different levels and had started lectures were stranded and had to start scampering all over the place to seek admissions into other Universities. Accreditation of courses was therefore not obtained as ongoing processes were aborted and abandoned while the lecturers and other staff were idle and redundant.

But with the coming of the Lalong administration, the vision of the founding fathers of PLASU was revived with full vigour and determination. Lalong who was Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly when the idea was conceived and did everything possible to pass the law establishing the University, vowed never to allow this dream suffocate again under his watch as Governor.

Apart from the fact that the Plateau State Government over time has invested huge sums of money to develop classroom infrastructure, offices, laboratories, hostels and staff housing in the University, the Lalong administration has since coming into office carried out various projects such as the construction of roads and street lights within the University campus to facilitate smooth academic activities. This is in addition to releasing about 300 million naira which facilitated the accreditation of 14 programmes in the University.

- Makut Simon Macham, Ph.D., is the Director of Press and Public Affairs.



Project inspection at Plateau State University Bokkos by Governor Lalong



23RD NGF COMMUNIQUE

ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 23RD EMERGENCY TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM HELD ON MONDAY, 14TH DECEMBER 2020

The Meeting was convened to deliberate on the prospects of dry-season farming as facilitated by the Anchor Borrowers Program of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The Forum received a presentation from the CBN Governor on the prospects of States regarding proposed 2021 dry season farming as facilitated by the Anchor Borrowers Program, this will increase food sufficiency in the country. The Governors pledged to work with CBN to deliver on the objectives of the program.

The Chairman noted that it was the position of the Forum to work closely with CBN on Infraco project and the Nigerian Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) to achieve infrastructure development in the country.

The Forum was briefed by the Governor of Edo Mr. Godwin Obaseki on the World Bank State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Program for Results stating that approval of the additional \$750 million SFTAS financing has been

secured.

The Forum commiserated with the Governor and the people of Katsina State on the recent kidnappings that have rocked the State. The Forum reiterated their full support in these trying times. 5. The Forum also commiserated with the Governor of Lagos State and wished him a speedy recovery.

The meeting held from 5:00pm – 6:00pm.

*Governor Kayode Fayemi Chairman,
Nigeria Governors' Forum
14th December 2020

Gov. Bello Matawalle of Zamfara, on Friday flagged off the construction of 10,000 housing units for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the state.

The project will be financed by Omni-Frontier International Investment LTD (OMFii), a Private Placement Lending Facilitator that specialised in raising capital for private companies, governments and banking institutions in emerging markets to facilitate Trade, Revolving Lines of Credits and Project Financing on a short-term basis.

Speaking at the official inauguration of the project in Maradun town, Maradun LGA, Gov. Matawalle, represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Bala Bello appreciated the effort of OMFii for providing fund for the project.

"This is a welcome development, this effort is going to add value to the state not only in addressing housing challenges but also in the provision of shelter to our vulnerable persons.

"This effort will help in providing shelter to IDPs and victims of flood and banditry activities in the state.

"This will indirectly assist in

Matawalle flags off construction of 10,000 housing units for IDPs in Zamfara

addressing security challenges, unemployment and poverty level in the state," Matawalle said.

He said the effort was in line with the state government's policy to partner with governments and NGOs for the development of the state.

The Coordinator of the Project, Dr Mahmud Alkali, said the project will be funded by the foreign donors for humanitarian services and the project is to be completed in 24 months.

"We will provide access roads, electrification, schools and market in the area.

"About 7,000 houses will be given free to the IDPs and other vulnerable groups, while over 3,000 will be given to junior civil servants and other categories of less privileged persons who will pay only 25 per cent of the total cost of the amount," Alkali said.

Sanwo-Olu signs MoU with German agency on skills devt for youths

The Lagos State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a German Development Agency, GIZ, on human capacity development with special focus on the youths for increased economic productivity.

The MoU, signed by the Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Mr. Samuel Egube and the Country Director, Nigeria & ECOWAS, GIZ, Ina Hommers, aims to provide a viable skill development programme that would empower the young people for employment opportunities and thereby enhance the sustainable economic growth of the state and the nation at large.

Speaking during the signing in Alausa, Ikeja, Mr Egube, said: "Beyond focusing on just the infrastructure development, we are focusing on training and developing human capacity as well as systems that make those things

sustainable and that is what the challenge is for Lagos and what we intend to pursue with all our hearts.

"There is a lot we are doing and focusing on human development because everything we do; we must revolve around that. What is the use in having great infrastructure, but your people are still poor. If you are doing infrastructure it must be sensible enough to support the development of your people and the development of their enterprise that is how we are broadly organised. In that frame, technical education is very crucial and that is because of the demography that we have; it is largely youth, young people.

"What we have decided to do in this administration is to pursue the THEMES agenda and the heart of that entire programme is what we call our partnerships. Lagos is not excluded at approached partnerships from the perspective of waiting to see what the donors

have to give but what we are trying to do in Lagos is to change that paradigm and is to say if we are your partners, let's co-create."

The Commissioner disclosed his elation at the new partnership, which will open up new ideas that would complement the quality and expand the capacity of government programmes to improve the livelihood of the people.

"I am happy that we are able to reach some kind of understanding to work together. As far as Lagos is concerned, we do not believe we have the knowledge in all to do it on our own. We believe that knowledge is complete depending on the quality of people sitting on the table so we see your coming to join us to sit on the table as something that expands the capacity of all of us together to make a difference," Egube said.

THE TEAM

Director-General

Asishana B OKAURU

Executive Director (Fin & Admin)

Abubakar JIBIA

Executive Director (Res & Str)

Abdullateef SHITTU

Head Media Public Affairs

Abdulrazaque BELLO-BARKINDO

Snr. Publications Officer

Halima S. AHMED

NGF Health Advisor

Dr. Ahmad ABDULWAHAB

Agric Advisor

Akintunde AKANBI

Researchers

Abdulaziz OLORUNISHOLA

IT

Bassi HEMAN

Ubong ESSIEN

Senior Economist

David NABENA

Photography

Saeed SANUSI

Legal Advise: Chijioke CHUKU



Badaru commissions N1.8bn 744 housing estate, roads

Governor Muhammad Badaru Abubakar has commissioned nine intra-city roads constructed by the Jigawa State Government at the cost of N1.8 billion.

On ground to perform the ceremony was the Governor of Sokoto State, Hon. Aminu Tambuwal, who described his host, Governor Muhammad Badaru Abubakar, as “prudent, transparent and accountable.”

He said the execution of the projects and so many others inherited and completed by Governor Badaru shows that good governance is at work in Jigawa State.

“I am here in Jigawa. I have seen your good work and I applaud it,” the Governor said, while commissioning the road in the presence of the Emir of Dutse, Alhaji Nuhu Muhammad Sanusi and other top government officials.

Emphasizing that Jigawa is a peaceful State, he said besides their political differences himself and Governor Badaru are not only friends but brothers whose cordial relationship has come a long way. Governor Badaru, he said “is my friend and Jigawa is my home.”

Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal urged the benefitting communi-

ties to take ownership of the projects through proper maintenance.

The Governor also urged the communities to “ensure regular clearance of all drains along the road to avoid flooding during rainy season.”

Earlier, Governor Badaru, who described his visitor as a “good man,” explained that the 744 Housing Estate, Sabuwar Takur and Yalwawa roads network, were part of the new roads projects he initiated apart from N53 billion road projects he took over from his predecessor at the inception of his administration.

According to him, all the projects, including those in other sectors, whose cost are put at over N39 billion, have been completed within the span of six years.

Governor Badaru said the road project was awarded to Messrs. Retrercha Nigeria Limited in December 2018, at N1.8 billion and completed in December 2019.

“This project could not be commissioned then due to Covid-19. The 744 Housing Estate/Sabuwar Takur/Yalwawa road is one of the numerous township roads constructed by our administration. We will continue to initiate projects for

the good people of Jigawa,” the Governor said.

While commenting on the speculations in the State that he was planning to defect from the ruling party to PDP, Alhaji Muhammad Badaru Abubakar described such claims as most unfounded and malicious, stressing that the invitation of Tambuwal to commission the projects was unconnected with politics, rather based on mutual friendship and respect.

He explained that “above all, we, in Jigawa, don’t honour politics with bitterness.”

Ugwuanyi rehabilitates 9th Mile with solar boreholes



Enugu Solar powered Boreholes

Determined to ensure an adequate supply of potable water from Oji River, Ajali and Iva water schemes to Enugu metropolis, the administration of Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi has awarded the contract for comprehensive rehabilitation of the 9th Mile Crash Programme Water Supply Scheme to FordMarx Nigeria Limited, at the cost of N600million.

In a statement by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Water Resources, Hon. Anthony Dubem Onyia, the contract which has a six-month duration will boost the volume of water being reticulated from the 9th Mile Crash Programme Water

Supply Scheme to Enugu metropolis and environs.

Hon Onyia, who disclosed that the 9th Mile Crash Programme Water Supply Scheme will be solar-powered to address the peculiar challenges of power supply added that the project has a two-year warranty and maintenance period by the company, FordMarx Nigeria Limited.

He explained that the project is a network of 12 boreholes connected to a massive pumping station and a mini treatment plant that will reticulate water to Enugu metropolis through transmission pipelines.

Reiterating Gov Ugwuanyi administration’s

commitment towards adequate potable water supply in the state, the Special Adviser revealed that the state government has commenced the bid opening and evaluation meeting for new Okwojo Ngwo boreholes augmentation to Enugu metropolis. Onyia further explained that the Okwojo Ngwo boreholes augmentation to Enugu metropolis, which is a network of ten (10) solar-powered boreholes, is a newly conceived design which will help boost water production and distribution to Enugu metropolis and environs. He added that it will equally augment the existing water schemes in order to effectively manage and meet the demands of the growing population of Enugu metropolis.

Stressing that Gov Ugwuanyi’s administration is not relenting in its bid to increase the sources of potable water supply, and to continue to maintain existing facilities, Onyia reassured residents of Enugu that they will soon enjoy adequate water supply.

In a related development, the Enugu state government in its commitment to solving the water problem in Nsukka and environs has engaged a consultant to prepare engineering designs for the transmission and distribution pipelines, reservoirs and booster stations for the Nsukka Water Supply Project from Adada River Dam that will eventually deliver water to people of the area. The construction of the Dam and Water Treatment Plant is part of the project being done by Federal Ministry of Water Resources while the Enugu State Government is doing the pipelines right from the Dam site to the booster stations and reservoir which will be located at elevated points and distribution pipelines in Nsukka.

The part to be done by the state government to guarantee the speedy actualization of the project is estimated to be at a cost of over N3 billion and Gov. Ugwuanyi’s administration has already started committing funds to the project with a view to delivering quality water to Nsukka and environs within the next 24 months.



Makinde inspects on-going Akesan Market, 5.25km road project in Oyo

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, has inspected two on-going infrastructure projects in Oyo town – the Akesan Market and the Gedu-Oroki-Sabo-Asipa Road, where he expressed satisfaction with the quality of the works being done by the contractors.

The Governor and his team took time to inspect the completed phase one of the Akesan Market, while he also led some Government officials to inspect the on-going rehabilitation of the 5.25 kilometres Gedu-Oroki-Sabo-Asipa Road.

While speaking shortly after inspecting the two projects, the Governor told newsmen that the quality of the works done showed that there is a new approach to execution of public projects in the State, adding that residents of the town were, indeed, excited.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Taiwo Adisa, indicated that the first phase of the market which consists of two buildings with 556 lock-up shops, an Administrative Block, a security office, a clinic, 12 units of toilets, has been completed.

It also stated that the perimeter fencing and a good road network have been completed.

The statement further quoted Governor Makinde as saying that he was happy that his Government could add to the joy of the people through the projects.

He equally gave the go-ahead for the commencement of the second phase of the Akesan Market project, noting that the second phase would be commissioned by the second year of the administration.

He said: "Today, I am giving the go-ahead for Phase 2 [of the Akesan Market Project] to start in earnest. The developer mentioned that we can attain completion for both phases within another three or three and a half months.



An Oyo State Government water drilling truck

Makinde commissions drilling rig, promises adequate water supply

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has commissioned a newly-purchased water drilling rig at the State Secretariat in Ibadan. The drilling rig with compressor, mounted on a Lealand Trailer did a test drilling of a borehole close to the old House of Assembly Complex in the State Secretariat.

Speaking on behalf of the Governor, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Hon. Olawale Mogbonjubola said issues relating to water sufficiency would be a paramount area of interest to the present administration, which led to the overhauling of the Oyo State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (OYRUWASSA).

He hinted that the rig was the first to be purchased by any Government in Oyo State and would be put to maximum use

by the agency.

"The Governor is happy for the history we are making today, as this is the first drilling rig with compressor to be purchased by any administration in Oyo State.

"It signifies the fact that water sufficiency will be our target, especially at the grass-root, our people will no more suffer lack of portable water and health consequences."

In his welcome address, the Chairman OYRUWASSA, Engr. Najeem Omirinde said he was happy for the gesture of the State Government in procuring the drilling rig.

Omirinde hinted that the agency already started drilling of boreholes at strategic places like schools, markets, parks and other areas which would take care of basic water needs

of the people.

He enjoined the people of the State to continue giving their support to the State Government so as to enjoy more dividends of democracy.

Dignitaries at the event include the member, House of Assembly Committee on Water, Hon. Alabanla Adekunle,

Commissioner for Health and Water Resources, Barr. Idowu Oyeleke, Chairman, Oyo State House of Assembly Commission, Hon. Musah AbdulWasi.

Others are members of the OYORUWASSA board among who are Engr. Abu Salam, Hon. Olayiwola and Evangelist Ayobami Sunday.

CORRIGENDUM

Our attention has been drawn to two errors in our last edition of the Executive Summary of December 2020. On pages 3 and 23.

On Page 3, ZABARMARI was spelt as ZAMBARI whilst on Page 23, the abbreviation for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was used as GVB.

It would have been easier to simply pass it up as the printer's devil but we take full responsibility for the errors and sincerely apologize for the misdeed. We promise not to let it happen again.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

For staying in Monguno despite terrorists' threats, Zulum splashes N13.9m, SUV on Doctor

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum has approved the payment of N13.9 million and a car gift to a 65-year-old medical doctor from Ogun State.

It is reported that the medical doctor had lived

within the General Hospital in Monguno and continued to offer healthcare services to patients even when the town was faced with the most severe threats posed by Boko Haram in recent years.

Dr Isa Akinbode, an in-

digene of Ogun State, graduated from the University of Maiduguri and joined the Borno State Civil Service where he served for 22 years before he retired in 2016 at Monguno General Hospital.

It was gathered that after

his retirement, the Doctor, despite reports that he was once abducted and released by Boko Haram in Monguno, remained at the General hospital in Monguno to offer voluntary medical services.

Former Governor

Kashim Shettima, during one of his visits to Monguno, directed officials of the state's ministry of health to engage Akinbode as a contract staff.

Arising from bureaucratic procedures, officials at the state ministry of health in Maiduguri delayed formalizing the doctor's contract, even though he continued to serve.

Five years later, Governor Zulum recently directed that Dr Akinbode be paid arrears of N13.9m which accrued based on the terms of the contract directed by the former governor in 2016.

Zulum also directed that going forward, his contract should be formalized for monthly entitlements. The Governor also presented a Toyota Highlander as a gift to Dr Akinbode for his services to the host people of Borno.

He also approved the employment of Akinbode's daughter, who studied Public Administration at the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), into the state's civil service.



Governor Zulum giving the check of N13.9m to Dr Isa Akinbode

Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, has said no governor should use COVID-19 as an excuse not to invest in infrastructural development that can foster economic development and prosperity.

Mr Wike stated this during a facility tour of the ultramodern Government House hospital and Administrative building in Port Harcourt by the Senate Chief Whip and former Governor of Abia State, Orji Uzor-Kalu.

He said: "COVID-19 cannot be an excuse to any government. COVID -19 is a bad thing, but it has come. It will go whether we like it or not. But people will also be alive. "Infrastructure must be provided, so you can't

say because of the pandemic nothing will be done. At the time COVID-19 ends, what will the people be facing? Lack of basic infrastructure. So, because of COVID19, I am not going to be doing anything? I am not a party to that. I will continue to work whether there is COVID-19 or not."

Mr Wike explained his administration had conscientiously been investing in high quality infrastructure that had positive economic value to stimulate job creation, boost foreign direct investment in the State.

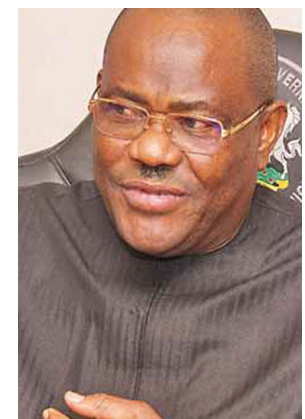
He said in the midst of the prevailing pandemic, the state government recently approved two additional flyovers at the cost of N 12.4bn to Julius Berger.

According to him, investments in these projects have been made possible because of the government's judicious application of State resources to meet the pressing needs of the people. He said: "You manage whatever you have for the interest of the people. Infrastructure brings investments.

"Part of the problem we have in this country today is

the decay of infrastructure. We don't have it and that also affects investment inflow. "So, when these roads are there, you will see people will come in. You don't expect private investors to begin to do road for you. It is not possible. You want to do agriculture, there is no road. How can we do agriculture when there is no road?"

"How will the product be brought to the city, to the market? So, you must provide these basic infrastructures for investment inflow and that is what we are doing," Wike said.



Governor Wike



Fayemi attracts N19bn (\$50m) Agriculture Investments

The Ekiti State Government's drive to attract investment to the State has started to yield results, especially in agriculture, where various investors have finalized plans to site their production facilities in the State.

The State recently issued a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) to Stallion Group for a \$10 million rice mill in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital, while Dangote Group is also finalizing plans to locate a \$5 million mill within the same location, which is now being seen as the rice processing hub of the State.

In the cassava value chain, FMS Farms is finalizing plans to set up a \$10 million starch processing plant and farm in Ikole LGA, and has already commenced farming activities. In addition, Promise Point has also invested \$15 million in its starch processing facility, within the same area, which has also been designated as part of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone.

This is coming after the \$5 million investment by Promasidor to renovate and operate the moribund Ikun Dairy Farm, and another \$5 million investment by JMK Foods to build a rice mill in Ekiti State.

According to the Special Adviser to the Governor on Investment, Trade, and Innovations, Mr. Akintunde Oyebo, the investments attracted to Ekiti are early results of the Government's focus on building an enabling environment for business to thrive.

Oyebo said many of these investors only have to deal with the Ekiti State Development and Investment Promotion Agency (EKDIPA) to process their land titles and other requests. "By being responsive to their needs, and carrying out constant aftercare services even when they're fully established, we are showing other investors that Ekiti is the place to be."

He stated that the State is developing two special economic zones for Agro-Industrial activities and the knowledge economy, adding, "apart from those investors who have already chosen Ekiti as a location to do business, we are seeing a lot of interest in the state."

Oyebo said: "The recent reduction in

Right of Way charges for telecommunication infrastructure was done to complement the planned Knowledge Zone, and to demonstrate a commitment to the digital economy.

"The Knowledge Zone will be anchored around talent produced by universities in Ekiti and its neighbouring states; a well-

planned mini-city with residential housing and offices; and reliable infrastructure, especially power and broadband.

Oil Exploration Drive: Again, Yahaya visits NNPC GMD



Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya (left) and the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mele Kolo Kyari display a partnership document.

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has paid a visit to the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Mele Kolo Kyari at the NNPC corporate headquarters in Abuja.

The meeting was a follow-up to the earlier one held by the two leaders late last year.

Top on the agenda were the issues of the frontier oil exploration activities in Kolmani, the commencement of work at the 200-bed capacity hospital and diagnostics centre in Gombe by the NNPC and the automotive biofuels project in Gombe state being anchored by the corporation's Renewable Energy Division.

Recall that Governor Inuwa Yahaya has

been in the forefront in mounting pressure on the NNPC and the DPR to show deep zeal on the exploitation of oil and gas deposit that is available in Gombe and the wider Gongola basin in order to trigger more economic activities and also ensure that Gombe joins the league of oil producing states in the country after the discovery of hydrocarbon deposits in commercial quantity.

It may be recalled also that a team from the NNPC, led by the Group General Manager, Renewable Energy Division, Dr. Bala David Ture had visited the designated areas for sugarcane fuel ethanol project at Malleri and Kupto in Kwami and funakaye local government areas respectively.

Stop the Spread!



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

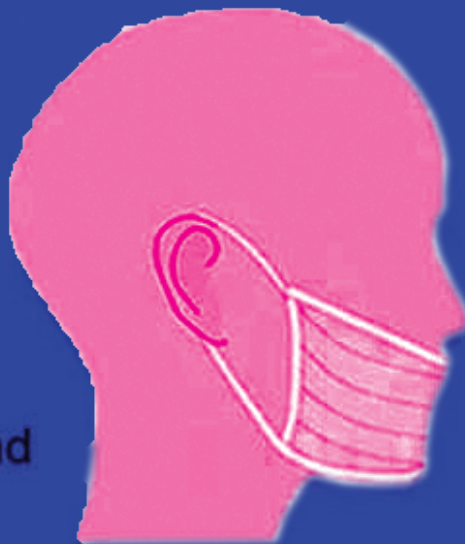
Believes
in science



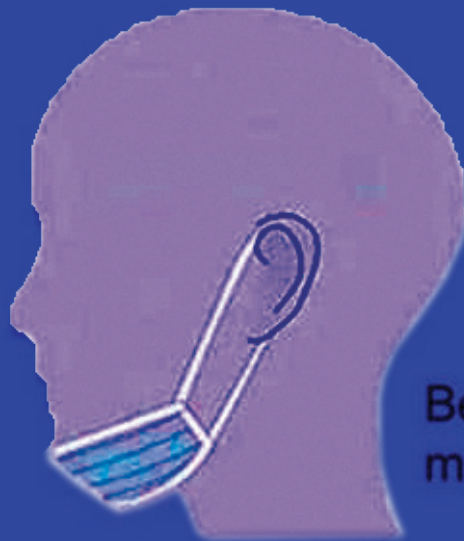
Denies
science



Doesn't
understand
science



Believes in
magic



Let's not make it easy for the virus