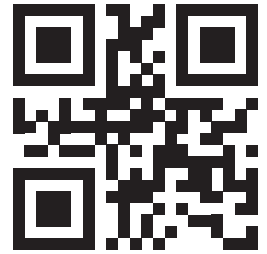




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THE NGF IN SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

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THE NGF IN THE CURRENT SUBNATIONAL CONTEXT

The lockdown in Nigeria was not lifted with the type of fanfare that heralded the lifting of lockdowns around the world. In Nigeria, SMEs and other small-scale operators that dominate the informal economy could not wait for government to administer the pandemic in an empirical and more regulated manner. The lockdowns, shutdowns and lifting of the lockdowns were all more-or-less, spontaneous.

Without much ado, business has returned to normal in Nigeria, except for a few instances where social distancing and other Covid19 protocols are in force. At the NGF, the return to work has opened a floodgate to a deluge of visitors, propositions, and development activities like never before. Reason being that the NGF has grown in stature in the scheme of things in the Nigerian context.

In the last quarter alone, different organisations, institutions and groups have approached the NGF with requests for mediation, solving aggravated cases of disputes between employers and employees, introduction of products, solutions and many others in that direction. These requests underscore the relevance of the NGF which has risen from a platform for governors to meet and discuss issues of mutual benefit that engender peer learning to a dependable ally in governance at the subnational level.

One unlikely group that sought the intervention of the NGF in its affairs is the Committee of Pro-Chancellors of State-owned

Universities. They had approached the NGF to intervene in their plight by ensuring that they enjoyed certain privileges that other universities in the country enjoyed. Labour which has consistently described the NGF as “not known to law”, has also in its time of need ran cap-in-hand to the NGF for solutions. The Nigeria Association of Resident Doctors, NARD, is another.

On the international front the likes of BMGF have been dependable allies, just as the united Nations through its Spotlight Initiative which has been pushing for the punitive measures for perpetrators of gender-based violence.

Last week the French Ambassador to Nigeria Jacques Pasqual met the NGF Chairman and Governor of Ekiti State to solicit for an opportunity for the Minister of Foreign Trade and Business Attractiveness, of his country Franc Reins to meet with governors in anticipation of new partnerships in Nigeria. His bullish overture gave birth to the hybrid meeting between the Minister and the governors which was chaired by the Governor of Plateau State Rt Hon Simon Lalong.

In the intervening period, the Food and Agriculture Organisation also visited the NGF with a proposal to pitch for the jettisoning of the 70 -year old methods of farming still in use in Nigeria and replace them with modern and more productive methods that are technologically driven. While the FAO was talking to the Chairman of the Forum, another group known as Feed the Future In-

itiative of the USAID, led by its Chief of Party, Prakash Kant Silwal was simultaneously seeking the Secretariats nod to intervene in Nigeria through the Director General of the Forum, Asishana B Okauru.

Also in the prevailing period, the NIPC launched its book of states in conjunction with the NGF committee and had a grand launching at an occasion where the DG Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru represented the Forum's Chairman. The launch opened the states to investors and displayed the potentials for investment in each of the states. At the Launch, the Executive Secretary of the NIPC paid glowing tribute to the NGF and the work it is putting into making the states the destination for investments in the country.

All of these solicitations for permission to sink their teeth in the subnational level signify a rise in the stature of the NGF in the context of governance at that level.

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

Social Media Officer

Isioma ONONYE

NGF Health Advisor

Dr. Ahmad ABDULWAHAB

Agric Economist

Bunmi AKANBI

Researchers

Abdulaziz OLORUNISHOLA

IT

Bassi HEMAN

Ubong ESSIEN

Senior Economist

David NABENA

Photography

Saeed SANUSI

Legal Advise: Chijioke CHUKU





Pet is Petty, Governors' Wives insist At First Lady's Book Launch



BY HALIMA AHMED

The First Lady, Hajiya Aisha Buhari and the Nigeria Governors' Spouses Forum have complained against the name Pet Projects which used to be the nomenclature attached to their work in the states and elsewhere.

The women, who gathered at the launch of a book on the First Lady titled "Aisha Buhari Being Different", insist that instead their projects should be called Legacy Projects.

This change of heart was started by the Wife of the Governor of Niger State, Dr Amina Bello who broke the ice on the Pet Name matter which she described as belittling of a First Lady's project and said it has been on their table to give the nomenclature a facelift to Legacy Projects which is a more befitting name for the hard work they are putting into providing a better life for women and a better tomorrow for children.

She was immediately supported by the Erelu and Chair of the Nigeria Governors' Spouses, Mrs Bisi Fayemi who attested to that viewpoint and said she always hammered on that name "Pet" as too petty and that time has come for them to change the Name.

The author of the book Dr Hajo Sani was so overwhelmed and short of words to describe her joy at accomplishing the task of putting the 46-page book together when she said she couldn't have done this without the love and support of her sister writer Mrs Bisi Fayemi whom she called upon at every juncture whenever she got stuck while writing the book throughout the six years she took in writing and she thanked all the 1st ladies for making the book launch a huge Success.

It was a day filled with passion for the woman to become all she deserved and desired to

become as the First Ladies celebrated "Being Different".

Indeed, the difference was clear, judging by the calibre of people in attendance. The Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbanjo was the Guest of Honour.

There was Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the 'Jagaban' as well as the Sultan of Sokoto and the Ooni of Ife, among the well represented male dignitaries present.

For the females, Mrs Yemi Osinbanjo, former 1st lady Dame Patience Jonathan and Mrs Namadi Sambo graced the occasion. Other dignitaries that made the occasion a hybrid was Dr Ngozi Okonjo Iweala DG of the World Trade Organisation who sent in a recorded goodwill message and Amina J Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, who also attended virtually by also sending a recorded goodwill message.

Former governors like the past NGF Chairman and former Governor of Zamfara State, Alh Abdul Aziz Yari, former Nasarawa State Governor Senator Tanko Al-Makura was also there to grace the occasion.

The sitting governors present included the NGF Chairman, Dr John Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State and some of his colleagues from Yobe, Osun, Kogi, Kebbi and Plateau states.

The First Ladies that were present include Mrs Fayemi of Ekiti State, who gave the key note address, Mrs Betsy Obaseki of Edo State, who gave the opening remark and also gave the title of the Book her own title "Aisha Buhari "The Unique FL, and Mrs Barrister Chioma Uzodinma of Imo State.

There were also Mrs Lalong of Plateau State, Mrs Hadiza El rufa 'i of Kaduna State, Mrs Kafayat Oyetola and former first lady of Nasarawa state, Dr Mairo Almakura who was honoured

with giving the Welcome Remarks. UN Women's Comfort Lamptey, NCWS' Laraba Shoda and Dr Uche Ibeh Of Women and National development WAND all gave goodwill messages.

Then came the Symposium which had Doctor Gloria Diri of Bayelsa State, Dr Amina Bello of Niger State, Dr Zainab Bagudu of Kebbi State, Ambassador Olufolake Abdul Razak of Kwara State who received all the accolades one could ever wish for in respect of her singular effort of making sure that women in Kwara State hold 60 percent of the positions in her husbands in government, something considered to be unprecedented as it beats the requirement of the affirmative action.

Mrs Betsy Obaseki, on her part, appealed to all present that they should endeavour to do more to ensure that women were not left out in politics, government, and governance of their states. She also said "it is not enough that a few First Ladies and few women from the audience are in this room today to listen to what they have to say about the plights of the Nigerian woman and that women craved to be heard globally so that the whole world knows that the women are now ready and willing to take what is rightfully theirs in the prevailing scheme of things".

The Minister for Women Affairs Mrs Pauline Tallen, thanked them all and told them to please do their best to encourage their husbands, the Governors to give women places that are well deserved in government, governance, and politics. She added that it was such a shame that countries such as Somalia can have many women doing well in political positions, whilst in Nigeria, only a few of them are involved actively in running the affairs of state.

She tasked the First Ladies to do more as they are the ones all Nigerian women look up to, "to make things happen through their husbands".



L-R: French Ambassador to Nigeria, Jacques Pascal, French Minister Franck Riester, NGF Chairman Dr. Kayode Fayemi and Plateau State Gov. Simon Lalong

NGF Meets With French Minister Of Foreign Trade And Business Attractiveness

The French Minister of Foreign Trade and Business Attractiveness, Mr Franck Riester paid a visit to the Nigeria Governors' Forum's secretariat to meet with all 36 governors.

The meeting was to discuss potential collaboration opportunities between the French and Nigerian Government.

"It is important that we have Nigerian companies invest in France. We have many sectors where we have expertise/ talent that could be the answer to your needs. We want to help deepen our friendship with your country," said Mr Riester.

The Governors expressed their contentment to be able to meet with the French Minister. They also discussed different avenues of collaboration with the French Government.

The Governor of Edo State, Mr Godwin Obaseki said that his main priority with the collaboration is that it must deal with human capacity.

"We are trying to pass on skills. These are technology skills for the young people. Due to COVID-19 and youth restiveness, our major focus is on how we can collaborate. We can

train our young minds here so that they do not migrate," Obaseki said.

Mr Obaseki added that there are a lot of Edo people in France. He said some already have businesses and he wants them to enjoy credit to invest in infrastructure back home.

In addition, he said that the Edo Museum of Arts is something that we are working on in Europe and we would want to have the French participation.

The Governor of Borno State: Mr Babagana Zulum, said that his main priority is to address the socio-economic challenges. He said that they have a large speaking French community in their Lake Chad region. However, they are not doing well. They are yet to feel the impact of the French Officials in their state.

"Our home-grown project in Borno State is called: Social Inclusion Recovery Project. We must explore the issue of supporting the French Speaking population. We must improve the livelihood of the people in the area especially through agriculture. It would also impact our security challenges."

Mr Riester also visited Akwa Ibom State where he commended the Chairman of BUA

Group, Rabi'u, for his commitment to the development of lasting relationships between French and Nigerian businesses through the building of the 200,000 barrels per day refinery in Akwa Ibom State by BUA Group and Axens of France.

The French Minister for Foreign Trade and Attractiveness, said his administration is ever ready to support people-oriented and developmental projects in Nigeria.

"I am very pleased to see how committed Abdul Samad Rabi'u is for the refinery and in the space of philanthropy," he said.

In his closing remarks, Mr Riester said that he is grateful for all the proposals to visit all the states, and that there are many sectors where the French and Nigerian government can do more together, especially in the area of mining, technology, infrastructure and more.

He added that, "when it comes to tourism, we know that the main concern is security. This is the main concern when I speak to others about Nigeria."

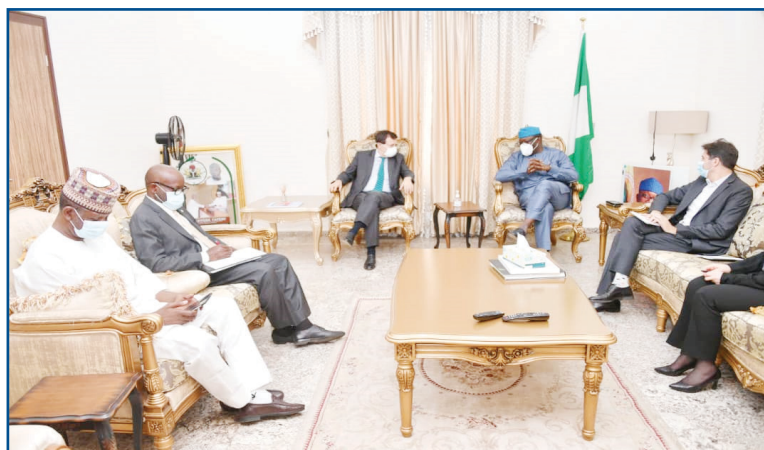
Lastly, he reiterated that Nigeria and France have to create a good dynamic relationship together as "we will do the best that we can so that we all build together."



NGF AND THE ORGANS THAT VISITED IN APRIL



NGF Chairman chats up French Officials as Plateau Gov Lalong looks on



The French Ambassador on a courtesy call at the Abuja residence of the NGF chairman



French Minister of Foreign Trade, Gov Lalong and Gov Ayande at NGF



FAO visit NGF



Govs at the meeting



Group picture of Govs and French Minister



Tourism in Akwa-Ibom

Efforts to reinvent tourism in Akwa Ibom state by Governor Udom Emmanuel's administration continue to win national admiration, with the state emerging Nigeria's Top Tourist State for 2020.

At an event organised at the Abuja Jabamah by the Wonders of Nigeria Expo recently, Akwa Ibom State emerged winners from among selected states that have invested in tourism in the receding year.

Governor Emmanuel's investment in business and leisure development in the state has yielded impacts with the establishment of nationally celebrated Ibom Airline, the completion of the 22 Storey Dakkada Towers, the completion of the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, the restructuring of the Ibom Icon Hotels, and the revamp in secondary and quaternary health care delivery systems in the state.

It could also be noted that the institution of events such as the Christmas Village and other socio-cultural activities, as well as restoration of peace and security in the hitherto volatile state which have led to the establishment of several industries, have all boosted the tourism drive of Akwa Ibom state.

Today, most seminars and conferences across the nation are held in Uyo, the beautiful and serene Capital City of the State.

Receiving the award on behalf of the State Government, Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Mr Orman Esin thanked the organizers for the recognition, whilst stating the resolve of the Governor Emmanuel-led administration to partner with relevant stakeholders to ensure robust developments in the Tourism sector, to attract more investments in the sector.

He dedicated the Award to the State Governor for his painstaking efforts towards the development of Tourism in the State.

Abuja Jabamah is a leading annual tourism expo aimed at promoting tourism and empowering traveling in Nigeria.

Ibom Air set to fly into Gambia

The vision of Governor Udom Emmanuel to make the Akwa Ibom State-owned Airline, Ibom Air, become the West African Aviation power house, is nearing reality, following indications that Ibom Air would soon commence regional operations between Nigeria and The Gambia.

This was part of discussions recently when the Gambian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mohamadou Musa Njie met with the Akwa Ibom State Governor, Mr Udom Emmanuel at Government House, Uyo.

The Governor thanked the Gambian High Commissioner and the President of Gambia for indicating interest in bilateral relations with Akwa Ibom State in the area of commerce, industry and aviation development.

"We are actually planning a regional flight with Ibom Air, so we hope by next month we should take delivery of two brand new A220 300 series Airbuses that we



Akwa Ibom State Governor, His Excellency, Mr Udom Emmanuel, receiving the Gambia's High Commissioner to Nigeria, His Excellency Mohamadou Musa Njie on a courtesy visit at the Governor's Office, Uyo.

want to use for regional flights.

"I will get this to be discussed at the directors meeting of Ibom Air so that we can also consider Banjul", Governor Emmanuel assured.

Governor Emmanuel acknowledged the tourism potentials in Gambia and advised other West African countries to take advantage of the tourism potentials that

Ibom Air is offering.

The High Commissioner, Mohamadou Musa Njie had commended the Governor for the great achievements recorded by Ibom Air and expressed the willingness of his country to have Ibom Air commence operations into Banjul.

He presented a letter personally written by the

President of The Gambia requesting the Akwa Ibom State Government to extend the operations of Ibom Air to The Gambia.

The letter also conveyed the invitation by the President of The Gambia, Adama Barrow to Governor Emmanuel for a visit to The Gambia to strengthen industrial and trade relations.

Udom's 200,000 BPD refinery commences production in 2024

The industrialization policy of Governor Udom Emmanuel is gathering steam with more investments berthing Akwa Ibom state through the foreign direct investment programme of the Administration.

The latest is the signing of a progress acknowledgment statement between BUA Group and Axens of France for the former's proposed 200,000 barrels per day refinery in Akwa Ibom State.

With a target of between three to four years for construction, the BUA Group has noted that the refinery is expected to be operational by 2024, all things being equal.

Speaking at the ceremon

ny recently in Uyo, Chairman of BUA Group, Abdul Samad Rabi, stated that the refinery, when fully operational, would reduce the huge cost of transporting crude oil offshore, refining it and bringing it back into the country.

Rabi added that the



Governor Udom

decision to site the refinery in Akwa Ibom – Southern Nigeria was strategic due to the huge availability of raw materials and its proximity to export petroleum products to regional countries.

He added that the multi-billion-dollar integrated 200,000 bpd refinery and petrochemicals plant will be producing Euro-V fuels and Polypropylene for the domestic and regional markets.

BUA explained that Axens was selected, after a comprehensive process, for its advanced technology licenses, basic engineering, catalysts and adsorbents, proprietary equipment, training and technical services.

The French President,

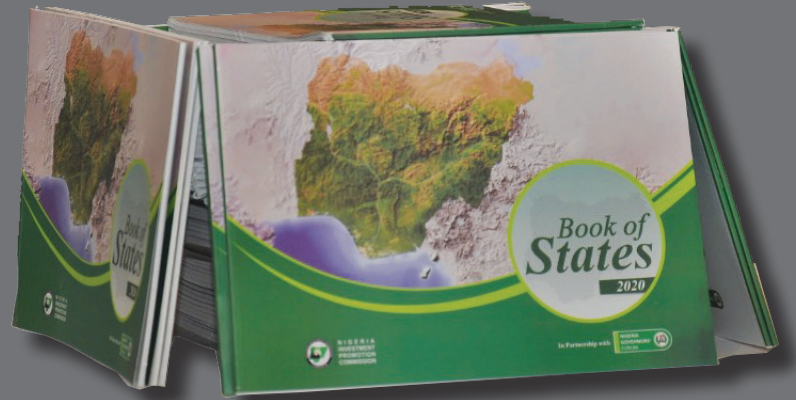
Emmanuel Macron commended the Chairman of BUA Group, Rabi, for his commitment to the development of lasting relationships between French and Nigerian businesses.

Represented by Franck Riester, the French Minister for Foreign Trade and Attractiveness, Marcon invited Abdul Samad to the "Choose France Summit" and said his administration is ever ready to support people-oriented and developmental projects in Nigeria.

"I am very pleased to see how committed Abdul Samad Rabi is for the refinery and in the space of philanthropy," Macron said.



OPENING REMARKS BY: DR. KAYODE FAYEMI, CHAIRMAN OF NGF AND GOVERNOR OF EKITI STATE AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE NIGERIAN INVESTMENT PROMOTION COMMISSION'S BOOK OF STATES



PROTOCOLS

It gives me great pleasure to attend the official launch of the Book of States, and make these remarks today. The Book of States is a compendium of the key investment activities and competitive advantages of each State.

Since NIPC was established to encourage, promote and coordinate investments in the Nigerian economy; and these investments happen in States, the partnership between NIPC and the NGF is the right way to go.

I would like to specially applaud the efforts of the NIPC and other critical stakeholders particularly the State Investment Promotion Agencies (State IPAs) and NGF Secretariat for putting this book together.

This initiative is timely as the States begin to chart a path out of the adverse socio-economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. For most Nigerians, the health risks accompanied by the pandemic ranks behind multiple, complex, and larger structural concerns such as economic uncertainty, an increasing desire for social safety nets and heightened insecurity as observed in recent times. Our poverty trend has also been worsened by rising unemployment.

I want to put on record that the visit of the Executive Secretary of NIPC, Ms. Yewande Sadiku to Ado-Ekiti in May, 2019 provided an opportunity for NIPC to share some very useful ideas with the leadership of our newly formed Ekiti State Development and Investment Promotion Agency (EKDI PA).

It is commendable that you and your team have since taken this gospel to many more

States. Please keep this up and constantly engage the states through the Nigeria Governors' Forum.

At the Forum, which I have the privilege of Chairing, we have identified investment promotion as a critical driver of economic development and job creation. We are not only ready to implement wholesale reforms required for our respective States to improve our individual and collective environments, but also ready to set up appropriate channels to lead investment promotion activities at the subnational level.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, capital importation fell by almost 60%, from US\$ 24 billion in 2019, to US\$ 10 billion in 2020. This drop, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting crash of commodity prices, must be reversed in 2021. We must work together as Federal and State Governments to in the first instance, take capital importation back to 2019 levels, and use it as a launchpad for future growth.

We also have to improve subnational development finance through an innovative mix of development finance mechanisms including the use of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in securing funds required for public infrastructural development.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have reasons to be optimistic. Despite the challenges of last year, Nigerian founded startups PayStack and FlutterWave have raised significant capital to support their regional expansion. Despite the challenges, the Burger King franchise for Nigeria is expected to launch

this year. In Ekiti State, our Public Private Partnership with Promasidor to revive the moribund Ikun Dairy Farm is developing, with a herd of over 150 cows in place. These examples show that Nigeria and Nigerian companies remain attractive to foreign investors, if we continue to improve the business environment.

However, to attract international capital, we must improve our coordination across various organs of Government. We need to ensure better coherence between fiscal and monetary policies; and have the agencies responsible for formulating and implementing such policies, all singing from the same hymn sheet.

At the subnational level, we all need to pay special attention to Investment Promotion and the Ease of Doing Business. At the Forum, we will continue to provide technical assistance and peer learning opportunities to States who are still on the journey of establishing Investment Promotion Agencies and Ease of Doing Business Steering Committees.

We call for synergy between national and subnational Investment Promotion Agencies to successfully attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and local investments. With the 36 States having diverse resources, comparative advantages, capacities and needs, coordination becomes critical to ensuring that the investment projects are properly suited to the different localities.

We have already started implementing some of these reforms. The Presidential



Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) has led the Ease of Doing Business reform project with commendable achievements.

Today, NIPC is launching the Book of States, a compendium that provides both domestic and foreign investors with critical information on the comparative advantages of States, and allows for a more effective matching of investors with states. We have a lot happening.

Apart from investment promotion, we must also embrace the commercialization of non-core state assets, and continue to find growth poles that will drive an influx of capital and jobs, especially in technology, agri-

culture, transport, construction, power and other core sectors of the economy. It is only when we achieve this that we can be confident of creating the millions of jobs required by our burgeoning young population.

In concluding my remarks, I must once

again thank the Board and Management of NIPC for being passionate drivers of investment promotion, and developing the Book of States. You can be assured that the NGF will continue to be a partner with you on this journey.

WE CALL FOR SYNERGY BETWEEN NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCIES TO SUCCESSFULLY ATTRACT FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS (FDIS) AND LOCAL INVESTMENTS



DG NGF Assishana B. Okaru representing NGF Chairman at the occasion



Otunba Niya Adebayo, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Yewande Sadiky, ES NIPC in black and Babangida Nguroje, chairman NPC Board



ES OF NIPC YEWANDE SADIKU, SHARES WITH THE PUBLIC THE BOND BETWEEN NIPC AND NGF



It has been said before that this project would not exist without the support of the Nigeria Governors' Forum. I do not know how else to thank and appreciate Mr Okauru and his team for the support that they provided from Day 1.

I would like to start by telling a story. I like to tell stories. Not that I tell stories that are not true, but I like using stories to paint pictures. After I became Executive Secretary, one of the first states that I visited was Borno State which was in February 2017.

There was a lot of talk about the insurgency and the likes before then and after then. In conversation with my colleagues at NIPC at that time, I was there for only about three months. I asked my colleagues if our investors asked us about Borno State, what do we say to the investor? It appeared that we hadn't gotten to the diligence of putting something together.

For me, to do justice not only to that state but to all of the 35 states in the FCT, I thought it was important to capture all the competitive advantages and investment opportunities of the state.

I need you to understand just how collaborative this effort has been. It must be a year and a half later sitting in a room in Kaduna State, I shared

with Governor El Rufai what was the nearest final draft that we had at the time for his own comments on the documents. We ran through it and he gave his comments. That we should include this and put this and that and the like.

Then, he put forward the things that he wanted for Kaduna State. Since then, I've attended a number of investor events with State Governors. I understand the importance even though we are a federal agency, that we are selling Nigeria not as Nigeria alone but as the elements that make up Nigeria.

So, selling the 36 states unique as they are. There are many countries that are very big that you know not just the country, but you know the states are as different from each other as can be. I thought that it was important in the context of investment promotion that we were to do justice to selling Nigeria and Nigeria's wealth to be able to talk through all the 36 states of Nigeria.

That's where this project was born. It was born out of a visit to Borno State. Even though Professor Zulum is not

here today, I would like to thank him because it was a visit to his state that prompted what we are formally launching today.

The Book of States shows the competitive advantages and the key investment opportunities promoted by each state. We thought it was important to get each of the governors to sign off on it. So, you can imagine the effort of getting 36 state governors to sign off.

Initially, I was not as familiar with each organs of the government. Initially, I was trying to do it state by state. Then, when I came upon the Nigeria Governors' Forum, it was like I found home. From that day on, the Nigeria Governors' Forum has taken on the task of putting this together as if it were a project that they initiated themselves.

They could not have been more supportive. They could not have been more involved. So, I really would like to thank the Nigeria Governors' Forum under the leadership of Mr Okauru and his team.

Also, all the Governors under the leadership of the Chairman. I was invited to



the induction of the Governors before they took office and the first meeting that the Nigeria Governors' Forum had after the Governors took office, NIPC was invited to speak to them about our plans, initiatives, and the collaboration that we had been working on for investment promotion.

It is without a doubt as the Chairman of the NGF mentioned in his speech that to sell the states appropriately, to commercialize all the assets of the states that require investment, that all our hands must be on deck. They say that to eat an elephant, the only way to eat it is piece by piece. So, this is one of the pieces in the puzzle. But this is an elephant that we plan to eat and eat we must.

I would also like to thank all our partners. The state investment promotion agencies, our colleagues at the state level with whom we have worked to put together the content before we then got the sign off from the governors.

I will put on the screen the actual document itself. The essence of it is 37 pages long. It runs through the states one after the other. For each state, it shows the competitive advantages and the investment opportunities. Thank you.

In the interest of time, I will not run through all of them, page by page. I will start with Bauchi and then go to Borno. Bauchi State spans two ecological zones and has a rainfall of 1,300 millilitres annually. Many would not know about the deposits of solid minerals of gold, titanium, limestone, and Caroline. The tourism potentials many are aware off, the Yankari Game Reserve, Sumu Wildlife Park, and other sites. It is also a strategic location and a gateway as it borders seven states across the region.

It is also possible that people do not know that Bauchi is deliberately tagged as the imperial of tourism and the home of peace and hospitality.

Now, Borno State is the second to the largest state in Nigeria covering about 10% of Nigeria's landmass. It also borders many, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and four Nigerian States. Groundnuts, Cattle, sesame, rice, maize, wheat, and cowpeas are things that are produced in the states. It has a dedicated Gum Arabic belt.

It has 1 million hectares reserved for livestock production.

We have the Deputy Governor of Enugu State online so I will go next to Enugu state.

Before I get to Enugu, I will stop at Ekiti State. I am taking you across Nigeria today.

Ekiti State, the Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum and my honourable minister was the first Executive Governor of the State. I want to make sure that when I leave here, I still have the job. I am in partnership with Nigeria Governors' Forum.

Ekiti State has a dedicated IPA, and they are very aggressive. They are dedicated to supporting the state governor in investment. They have a special agriculture processing zone with arable land and irrigation facilities. Ekiti State is also blessed with tourist attractions. The Arinta Waterfalls, Ikogosi Warm Springs, Olosunta Hills and several more.

Then, it has a special economic zone that is focused on knowledge.

They say that Ekiti State is one the knowledge capital of Nigeria, in fact the knowledge capital of Nigeria because it has a history of producing a high number of professors and academics.

Enugu State has an international airport, the only one in the



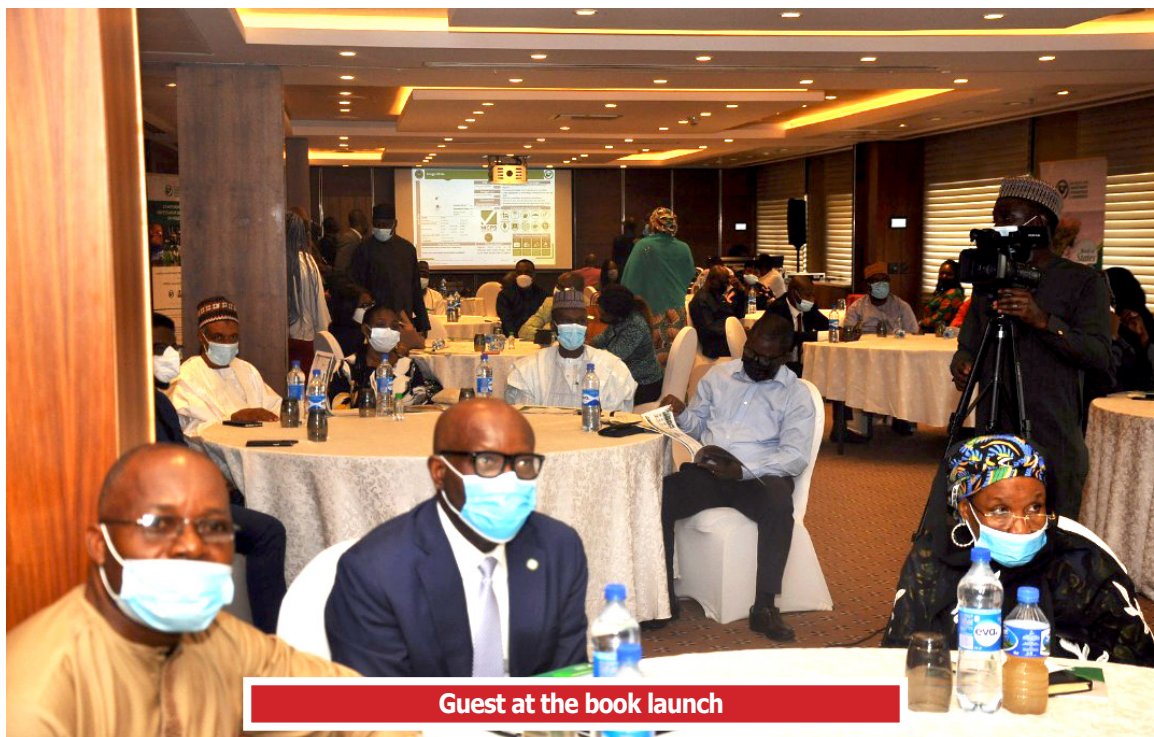
Cross section of guest at the book launch

Southeast. Multiple frigid zones and a large aggregation of technology, innovation, and start-up hubs. It has over 16 universities and tertiary institutions.

I will now move quickly to Kano State. About 50 percent of the population is young and available as a labour force. It is a major commercial and manufacturing centre not only in Nigeria but in West Africa. It has a rich culture and heritage values. It is a major entry point for San Sahara entry units.

It is interesting to note that the first aircraft that landed in Nigeria landed in Kano on the 1st of November, 1925. Thank you.

We have online the Deputy Governor of Kwara State. Kwara State is a gateway to north and south of Nigeria, and a key agriculture-based research institute. High deposits of mineral resources such as clay, Caroline, tantalite, sulphur, granite. Several tourist attractions, Owu



Guest at the book launch

Waterfalls is one of the highest in West Africa.

Kwara State has produced many high-flying lawyers. Its capital-Ilorin is known to be the city of lawyers.

Now, we fly to Lagos. The seven fastest growing city they believe in the world. The largest GDP and IGR in Nigeria. The largest concentration of young, skilled, and educated workforce. A large tourism and entertainment industry. The best city. It is a hub for start-ups in Nigeria and Africa.

Lagos State is a major business hub in Africa and Africa's entertainment retail and fashion capital. It is also regarded as a cultural melting pot of Nigeria.

Now, moving on quickly, I would like to go to Taraba State. On our way to Taraba, we will stop in Sokoto State.

Taraba has a rich fertile soil for the cultivation of many crops. The largest limestone reserve in Africa. The largest phosphate deposit in Nigeria. It's endowed with gold, nickel, copper and zinc. The second in

livestock production in Nigeria. It has a hydro dam, solar wind, biomass and gas potential. It is a major producer of rice, onion, garlic and sesame.

Now, Sokoto was founded as a strategic headquarters of Islamic Scholarship intellectualism, commerce, industry and agriculture in 1809 by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. It is a fact that the state is very proud off.

Then, to Taraba State. Because we have put together the Book of States, those who don't know will now know because it's in writing that Taraba state has the largest tea firm in Nigeria.

It is endowed with mineral resources. It has four million hectares of land. It's endowed with diverse and rich topography for tourism and in particular, the highest point in Nigeria: Chapal Waddi is in Taraba state.

Taraba's state weather is particularly favourable. The word that comes to mind is exotic, from 15-39.4 degrees.

While putting this book of states together, I began to appreciate myself. When we talk

about the wealth and richness of Nigeria, it is not as real when you say it without having nuggets to point at.

In putting this document together, it really opened my eyes to the wealth of Nigeria. It showed me that it is completely possible that we develop every state in Nigeria to the extent that the picture we see in our dreams of what Nigeria is capable of is possible for not just one part of Nigeria, not just one region. We are truly blessed from North to South to East to West.

In terms of the next steps, as I mentioned that to eat an elephant is bite by bite. The Book of States is the first step. This is what we started with but that's not where we meant to end.

The first step is to widely circulate the document. We deliberately sent the document to all ministries, all colleagues at the state level. We sent it to all the 36 state governors, we sent it to the FCT minister, foreign missions, ministry of foreign affairs is well aware of it. The docu-

ment is available for download. We carry it in our newsletter every day. We started running a series, state by state to have a week to celebrate each state.

While investments come to Nigeria, it is at state level. A win for any one state is a win for all of Nigeria. We have dedicated our own efforts in NIPC to supporting states at better showcasing themselves. This is but one of the efforts. One of the next things we plan is a dedicated profiling of investment opportunities in each of the states. So, when we talk about opportunities in agriculture, opportunities in solid minerals, we profile the best opportunities that investors can access.

We are also working on what we call an investment passport. We find that investment promotion is two elements. One is the content and the other is the way we package it. Both of them are equally important. If you take pure water and put it in a sachet, you'd be lucky to get more than what the street would pay for it.

If you take that same water and put it in a glass bottle, you can charge a different price. The manner in which you package the content is important. The manner in which we package all the opportunities that we identified is as important as the content.

The investment passport is another document that would be useful in promoting the opportunities in the states. That's the next thing we are working on.

Again, I'd like to thank all the various partners that we worked with without whom this document would not exist.

I'd like to thank my colleagues at NIPC for bearing the pain of draft after draft. I appreciate the support from the team. I appreciate the work that has gone to producing this work today.



NEWS FROM THE STATES



Gov Inuwa Yahaya (in blue) leading the heads of security agencies to Nyuwar, Jessu and Yolde communities in Balanga LAG where crisis took place

Waja-Lunguda Communal Clash: Inuwa visits affected communities

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has led heads of security agencies and top functionaries of his administration on a visit to Nyuwar, Jessu and Yolde communities of Balanga Local Government area of the state where lives were lost and property worth millions of Naira destroyed as a result of communal clash involving Waja and Lunguda ethnic groups.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya, upon arrival to the most affected communities of Nyuwar and Jessu, interacted with the community leaders and youths on the genesis of the crisis, where he sympathized with them and assured them of safety, saying his administration will not fold its arm to allow such callous act being unleashed on innocent citizens.

“As you can see I am leading all heads of security agencies in Gombe state to your community just to show you how committed the government is in ensuring that this crisis is brought to an end”.

“I want to inform you that one of the measures we have taken was to impose a curfew to check movements of everyone

Vows to Bring Perpetrators to Book

and we have deployed security personnel to protect you and your property until normalcy is restored”.

“Let me extend my heartfelt condolences to you over the loss of precious lives and property as a result of this senseless act. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and as a responsible Government we are conscious of our responsibilities of safeguarding the lives and property of our people”.

The Governor built confidence on the residents of the affected communities that secu-

rity personnel from the Nigerian Police, Army, Civil Defence Corps and DSS will work closely with them to identify all actors involved in the heinous act for arrest and prosecution.

While appealing to the affected communities to cooperate with the government and security agencies, Governor Yahaya said the state government will immediately provide relief materials to the victims to cushion their sufferings.

Governor Yahaya defied the difficult terrain in the mountainous Balanga south to see things

for himself for fair assessment of damages recorded in the crisis to enable him take decisive measures in forestalling recurrence of the mayhem.

At Nyuwar, the representative of the district head, Mr. Yohana Istifanus narrated to the Governor how his community was stormed by attackers in the late hours of the night.

He said, “We were asleep with our families in our homes only to have seen an armed militia with various kinds of dangerous weapons setting our houses and food storage facilities ablaze and asking us to vacate from the land else they will wipe the entire Lunguda tribal communities”.



Nyuwar/Jessu attack: Inuwa presents relief materials to affected communities

In line with Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya's directive, the two communities of Nyuwar and Jessu in Balanga Local Government area have received delivery of relief materials to cushion their suffering following the recent attacks on them which claimed many lives and left many properties incinerated.

Presenting the food items and other essential materials to the representative of the district head of Nyuwar, the Commissioner of Internal Security and Ethical Orientation, Adamu Dishi Kupto said having visited Jessu and Nyuwar communities to assess the level of damage, the Governor of Gombe state expressly approved the delivery of relief materials to alleviate the sufferings of those affected.

Flanked by the Commissioner of Special Duties, Christopher Abdu Buba Maisheru, Adamu Kupto said the food items provided were meant to address the immediate needs of the people as government mobilises resources for yet another intervention.

He assured the people of Nyuwar and Jessu communities that the administration of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya will continue to work with security agencies to ensure that perpetrators of the carnage are brought to justice.

While condemning the senseless killings and destruction of property in their entirety, the Commissioner of Internal Security and Ethical Orientation called for maximum restraint from both communities in order to de-escalate the tension.

The representative of the district head of Nyuwar, Mr. Yohana Galmaka Pisagih who received the items on behalf of the community, thanked Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya for responding in record time to the plight of the people.

The Commissioner of Internal Security and his Special Duties counterpart were also in Jessu to present relief materials to the victims. The Galadiman Jessu, Mr. Goma Jesimel who stood in for the district head, received the items on behalf of the community.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Kebbi, NNPC Renew Commitment On Production Of Biofuel

The Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu recently paid a courtesy visit to the Group Managing Director, GMD, Malam Mele Kyari at the NNPC Towers in Abuja.

The visit was to renew efforts to strengthen collaboration on the production of biofuel and renewable energy.

In a remark, Mele Kyari reaffirmed the commitment of the NNPC to its MOU with Kebbi State on ethanol production.

The GMD also informed the governor of exploratory drilling in the Sokoto Basin Area, that is set to begin a large part of which is in Kebbi State.

He commended Kebbi State Government for its determination to the actualisation of the program.

The discussion revolved around the Kebbi State-NNPC Biofuel Program where His Excellency, Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu told the NNPC of the state's Cas-



Kebbi Governor, Atiku Bagudu (left) with NNPC GMD Mele Kyari, when the latter paid the NNPC boss a courtesy visit in Abuja, recently

sava Cultivation that has steadily been increasing annually preparatory to the kick-off of the program.

He also discussed hydrogen production program for which a feasibility study in conjunction with German experts will soon commence in the state.

The State Standing Committee on Bio fuels Chairman' professor Muhammad Kaoje Abubakar, Hon. Commissioner for

Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Abba Sani Kalgo, Alhaji Kallamu Aliero and Nasiru Hassan accompanied the governor during the visit.

It will be recalled that in November, 2017 the Kebbi State Government and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up a company that will produce bio fuel (ethanol) in Kebbi state.

Bagudu Approves Purchase Of 50 Truckloads Of Millet For Ramadan

Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has approved the purchase of fifty truckload of millet, for distribution free to the twenty-one local Government Councils in the State.

This was announced in Birnin Kebbi, on Mon-

day, April 12, 2021, by the Hon. Commissioner for local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Alhaji Hassan Shalla.

According to the Commissioner, the laudable gesture of the Governor was in line with his usual tradition and mag-

nanimity in assisting all categories of people at the period of Ramadan, to observe their fasting with ease.

He thanked the Governor for reaching out to people and his unwavering support to the Ministry, at all times.

Kebbi To Begin Training Of 10,000 AGSMEIS Loan Applicants

Kebbi State Government has finalised arrangement to commence training of Ten Thousand indigenes of the state who will benefit from an agricultural loan under the Nigerian Incentive Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural lending, NIRSAL Microfinance Bank.

The training program took off Wednesday 14th April 2021 in Six centers namely Mallpai Foundation, Birnin Kebbi, Adamu Augie College of Education, Argungu and College of Health Sciences and Technology, Jega.

The rest are Kebbi State Polytechnic, Dakingari, College of Basic and Advance

Studies, Yauri and University of Agriculture Zuru.

The Secretary to the State Government, Babale Umar Yauri announced this in his office while hosting consultants that would conduct the training program.

Babale Umar Yauri said Governor Atiku Bagudu gave an approval for partnership between Kebbi State Government and Moure Consult Limited as well as Mallpai Foundation to train Ten Thousand beneficiaries of the loan scheme in furtherance of effort by his administration to attaining economic prosperity and wealth creation.

Bagudu Secures \$70m World Bank Grant For Girl-child Education

Governor Atiku Bagudu says his administration has secured a 70-million-dollar World Bank grant to strengthen Adolescent Girl-Child Education.

Bagudu disclosed this at the 5th Kebbi State Women Ramadan Lecture Series held in Birnin Kebbi, the state capital, with the theme: "The Fundamental Role of Women in Islam."

Bagudu said with the grant, women in the state, especially adolescent girls, would be taught more skills, coupled with both formal and non-formal education.

The governor also stated that such skills would enable the girls to be more productive and self reliant, even in

their matrimonial homes.

Bagudu said: "The good news is that, the more we invest in women, the more prosperous our society will be.

"The grant will complement the various programmes and policies aimed at making life better for the girl-child, women and other vulnerable groups in the state."

Bagudu stressed the need to legislate and appropriate more money for Girl-Child Education and other related welfare schemes.

The governor noted that women must be supported to play their societal roles, just as it has been ordained by the Almighty Allah.



Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture

Feed the Future Nigeria paid a courtesy call on the Director General of the Nigeria Governors' Forum NGF Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru at his office in the Secretariat of the NGF in Abuja.

The team which was led by its Chief of Party Prakash Kant Silwal spent time with the DG and his select staff to familiarise on the activities of the two organisations. In the discussion that ensued, Prakash Kant Silwal solicited an opportunity for collaboration between the two teams with a view to advancing the agricultural prowess of the country at the subnational level.

The US Government's Global Food Security Act, aims to advance the objectives of inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth, strengthened resilience among peoples and systems, and a well-nourished population, especially among women and youth in targeted locations in Adamawa and Borno States.

The initiative is funded by USAID. USAID provides IITA with \$10.8 million over 3.5 years to re-establish farming and agriculture-led economic growth in Adamawa and Borno States.

The Activity is focused on 3 Components:

1. Facilitating improved agro-input and agricultural extension and advisory services to serve vulnerable populations.

2. Strengthened market linkages along agricultural value chains that serve small-holder farmers disenfranchised by conflict.

3. Increased engagement among youth, women and the most vulnerable in economic and entrepreneurial activities.

Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal, the Chief of Party/Principal specialist of the Integrated Agriculture Activity for the USAID assisted IITA Feed the Future Nigeria program said that the organization has the capacity to replicate the program in all the 36 States.

The NGF is willingly partnering with IITA on Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity and has agreed to do so with a view to fostering the peer learning initiative of the NGF.



L-R NGF, Mr Asishana Okauru in suits with Prakash, his staff ED Research and strategy and two NGF women, Bunmi and Juliet



DG Okauru standing to clear a point



Dr Shittu of NGF clarifying a point at the meeting



the meeting



DG Okauru and Prakash



Agriculture Central To All States In The Country, NGF Tells FAO

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Chairman and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr John Kayode Fayemi has declared that Agriculture is a central matter for all states.

The Ekiti State Governor said this when he met with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative in Nigeria and ECOWAS, Fred Kafeero at the NGF Secretariat in Abuja.

Mr Kafeero, who had paid a courtesy call on the NGF Chairman on Friday, April 9th 2021 to solicit areas of cooperation between the FAO and the Governors with a view to solidifying the impact of agriculture and working at improving its value-chain addition to both the farmers and the consumers of farm produce in the country.

Kafeero described the meeting as a game-changer because the FAO is seeking to institute a proactive approach to farming instead of the 70 years-old method that are still in existence today.

The FAO representative declared that his organisa-



FAO Rep being shown around the NGF Digital library by the NGF leadership

tion is hoping to bring the experts together to a table so that they all agree on how best to mover agriculture in Africa forward. He said that Nigeria is richly endowed with agriculture and expressed his joy that the country is already diversifying into the area, in full force.

He said FAO provides technical assistance to respond to agriculture issues. He said that to actualise this objective, they have

a hand-in-hand initiative that will be used to build on data because technical experts in different areas will be able to come together regardless of where they are in the country to work at formulating solutions in agriculture.

These experts also intend to bring partners to come to the table and bring their varied resources to bear on the initiative. Mr Kafeero added that the initiative just started last

year and now they have their presence in over 20 countries.

Mr Kafeero added that their work in the country is big and they therefore want to make sure that agriculture makes sense for the country.

He noted that food insecurity is due to a lack of income to access the food. FAO therefore looks at production and processing even though he emphasised that another

challenge that can cripple all initiatives if not immediately addressed has to do with infrastructure.

In addition, Mr Kafeero emphasized that at FAO, they provide technical assistance and facilitate discussions and they would like to work with the states in order to ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to food security.

"I know that it is with the states that the real action takes place." Mr Kafeero stressed.

Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr Kayode Fayemi said that the forum is an enabler.

"We work in a broad spectrum to empower our members and link them with the right contacts. We have worked with African Development Bank and the World Bank. We recognize the critical part of improving infrastructure. We want to work on initiatives that will help small-owner farmers" said Fayemi, "to solve rural poverty and assist states in addressing issues that hamper development"; promising finally that "we will continue to work with you as a forum."

Govs Not Opposed To Financial Autonomy For Legislature, Judiciary

Governors of the 36 states of the federation under the platform of Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) have appealed to striking Judicial Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) to call off their strike in the interest of the nation.

The union had on April 6 embarked on a nationwide strike to protest

non-implementation of financial autonomy for the judiciary. It directed its members across the federation to shut down all courts after the expiration of the 21-day ultimatum it issued to government to implement the financial autonomy of the judiciary.

The governors were accused of frustrating the

implementation of financial autonomy for the judiciary, starving the judiciary of funds and treating judges as their staff.

However, Deputy Chairman of the Governors' Forum and Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, said governors were fully in support of financial au-

tonomy for the legislature and judiciary at the state level, but would want its implementation to follow the provisions of the constitution.

The governor in an interview with the State House Correspondents after leading members of the technical committee on the implementation

of the autonomy for state legislature and judiciary to a meeting with the Chief of Staff to the President, Ibrahim Gambari, appealed to members of JUSUN to call off their strike.

"We're appealing to them in the interest of this country, they should call off the strike," he said.



SOME SCENES FROM THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM'S MEETING AT THE ASO ROCK VILLA ON WEDNESDAY 14TH APRIL 2021



Govs coming at the meeting venue led by NGF Chairman, J. K. Fayemi



NGF DG Okauru, NGF Chairman J. K. Fayemi



Chairman of NGF J. K. Fayemi in consultation with Vice Chairman Aminu Waziri Tambuwal



Gov Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom



Meeting in session



A cross section of Deputy Governors, Jigawa, Enugu, River and Benue



Meeting in session



Gov listing to SIFTAS Prof Manager Lanre Ajogbasin



Governors at the meeting



Gov Bagudu of Kebbi reading the Executive Summary



Gov of Plateau Along explaining issues at the meeting



L-R: Sain Bello of Niger, Simion Lalong of plateau & Dr Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti at the meeting



Our goal is to facilitate modern, taxpayer-friendly, and tech-driven revenue administrations – NGF DG

The DG's Welcome Message at NGF's Technology & Tax Event holding at Wells Carlton Hotel Abuja, 19th April 2021

Protocol

I am pleased to welcome you all to our first Technology & Tax Event. This would be the first technology-focused event organised among our portfolio of events aimed at supporting a learning ecosystem for tax administrations in Nigeria.

Today's event is organised in partnership with the World Bank and the International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD), both partners we consider very strategic in bringing an international perspective to the work we do.

The goal for us is to help facilitate the scale up of modern, taxpayer-friendly, and technology-driven revenue administrations in all States of the federation that will be capable of providing world-class services; characterized by efficient, paperless operations, and equipped with ICT-enabled risk-based enforcement capable of optimising their revenue mobilization strategies.

Lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic have pointed to one direction – that all revenue administrations need to move to a digital future. The last year has been described as the year of digital transformation on steroids, with many enterprises accelerating their digital transformation and cloud strategy.

On the earnings call with Wall Street analysts in October last year, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella acknowledged that “the next decade of economic performance for every business will be defined by the speed of their digital transformation.”

Even in the African continent, there have been several innovations which have been forced by the pandemic – including the provision of social assistance through mobile phone on a larger scale than ever before, as well as increased technology-based learning.

2020 did for technology services what the 1930s did for financial services – with the growth in the regulation of commercial, investment banks, stock and commodity exchanges. We



NGF DG, Mr A. B. Okuru giving a speech to welcome guests at the event

believe tax administration should be no different.

We have taken this step to bring together technology providers, service providers and researchers in the tax space into one network to take advantage of the innovation that is taking place.

We will continue to do our best to bring such collaborations together to provide opportunities for States to benefit from a global perspective and to ensure no state is left behind. Overall, digitization does not only bring about efficiency, but it provides opportunities for more people to be involved.

Specifically for tax authorities, one big lesson that we have learnt is the criticality of internet-based business support systems and payment platforms for the automation of all back-end operational processes and payments across all revenue streams.

From our research last year, we already know that most contact-intensive taxes are at risk, given the lessons we learnt during the period of the lockdown where taxes collected from contact-intensive taxes fell by an aver-

age of 40% across all States in Nigeria.

Coupled with a weak environment for tax policy and tax legitimacy, low technological integration in tax administration has undermined efforts to mobilise domestic revenues in the country.

This has undermined the capacity of tax authorities to collect taxes efficiently and the ability of taxpayers to meet their tax responsibilities conveniently.

Historically, many governments have taken the path of least resistance, maintaining tax systems that allow them to maximise whatever limited options are available rather than expanding into digital and more efficient tax systems.

Amidst this transformation, we also recognise risks of data ownership, data protection and cyber security. This each government must envisage. It would require a strong in-house IT team and an experienced legal department that will help protect the interest of all parties, including taxpayers.

The pathways to achieving tax digitalisation may vary from State to State but the conditions remain the same, including providing broadband access

and supporting the growth of digital skills in the wider economy.

Luckily, payment providers and governments in regions that have lagged in digitization, in many cases, possess greater potential for revenue increase in the digital future.

We believe this event is a start of this learning curve which we commit to support. Technical presentations today will take on both homegrown and international experiences, with presentations to be delivered from colleagues across Africa, including the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Blantyre City Council, Malawi.

We will also benefit from the presentations of SAP, Crown Interactive and TechnoBrain who have operated in this space across multiple jurisdictions.

Our team will be on ground to document these lessons and conclusions to engage with State Governors. Our HelpDesk is also always available to provide any technical assistance that may be needed.

I wish you a successful event and look forward to the final outcome of the day.



Protocols

It is my privileged honour to be invited to this very important national dialogue tagged "Nigeria Governor's Forum Technology and Tax Event".

I congratulate the Chairman of the Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF), His Excellency, Dr Kayode Fayemi, the Director-General of the NGF, Mr Asishana Okauru Esq and the entire members and staff of the forum for coming up with this thought-provoking initiative.

I also appreciate the partners- the World Bank and the International Centre for Tax and Development- for supporting this noble project of the NGF.

There is no better time for a national programme of this nature than now when there is a very pertinent need to shore up our revenue in order to meet the budgetary gaps facing the Federal and State Governments. There is also the need to look inwards on how to improve the revenue of the states to augment the shortfall of allocations from the Federation Account.

Over time, taxation all over the world has always been the most reliable and sustainable source of government revenue if well harnessed and effectively administered.

For us as a mono-product economy, the reliance on oil revenue in the previous years has exposed our dear country to huge revenue challenges and resulted in poor budget implementation across the three tiers.

Therefore, proffering solution to these nagging revenue challenges requires a deliberate strategic action plan hence the need and justification for today's event.

Taxation, in most advanced jurisdictions, has gone beyond the bricks-and-mortar model but relies more on data and intelligence which are driven by technology. The adoption of technology in revenue administration processes is crucial and a major enabler for enhanced and sustainable revenue generation in a globalized and knowledge-driven world. Therefore, revenue authorities at all levels must adopt automated processes and embrace e-solutions both in their internal operations and in dealing with the taxpayers within their respective jurisdictions.

The need to embrace technology in tax administration was the basis for the choice of our theme, "Leveraging on Technology Solution for Enhanced Administration of Indirect Taxes", at the 145th Joint Tax Board Meeting. The JTB meeting harped on the need to further broaden and increase revenue generation at all levels by leveraging on ICT and that the adoption of technology will optimize and harness the various taxes and plug revenue leakages.

No better time to discuss tax matters than now – FIRS Boss

Being Speech delivered the NGF's Technology & Tax Event



Rep of the World Bank, DG NGF Okauru and NLABubakar representing Ex. Chairman of FIRS

The FIRS as the country's leading tax institution has taken some steps at automating its processes from e-registration, e-filing, e-payment, e-receipt, e-collection and e-TCC, to ensure that we improve on collections.

We have recently launched our proprietary e-solution platform – TaxPro Max- a solution developed by the FIRS for effective and integrated e-tax administration. There is also the ongoing automation and real-time VAT collection and reporting system in addition to our leveraging on technology in enhancing the exchange of information with taxpayers as provided in the Finance Act 2020.

Your Excellencies and distinguished participants, today's event provides a good opportunity for cross-fertilization of ideas, exchange of information, peer review and collaboration among the various states on the most effective application of technology in enhancing tax revenue collection, especially for the states. There is also the need to consider e-solutions that would enhance the effective taxation of the informal sector which has remained a huge source of untapped revenue, the harmonization of taxpayer database and exchange of information with other stakeholders.

With the backing and support of your Excellencies through the NGF, I am hopeful that the presentation from today's programme will enrich the knowledge of respective tax administrators on the current evolution in the use of e-solutions and other forms of ICT innovation in enhancing

effective and efficient tax collection and optimal revenue generation at the respective states of the federation.

I wish you a very successful deliberation and look forward to a robust discussion and implementable actionable points.

Thank you.

SNIPPETS FROM THE EVENT

Mr Shubham Chaudhuri

The road to technology adoption by tax administration is critical. What COVID-19 has shown us is that the compliance of digital systems is important.

A tax administration in the 21st century should use the new wave of technology to radically transform the tax services.

The e-Services have to be expanded. There needs to be a widespread use of the e-platform. This means that digital by default, nothing but digital compliance. This means a high-quality experience for taxpayers with e-assessment, algorithm based and user-centric design.

Mr Tijjani Mohammed

There is a need to respond to tax payers and the government. We are pleased to have worked with the NGF and support them as they have grown. It has not been easy to

make progress during COVID-19 but the expertise in this room makes it possible to create new approaches, engage in peer learning as we learn from each other.

Mr Fabrizio Santoro from International Centre for Tax and Development

Tech solutions won't work until we get the basics right.

This means that we have multiple systems running in parallel, operating in silos and producing multiple data sets.

We believe that peace metal technologies like e-Filing can help to improve tax compliance.

Tech solutions can increase compliance costs for taxpayers but taxpayers can make mistakes if they don't use the technology properly. Mistakes are easy to make and hard to rectify.



SOUTH EAST GOVS FORUM COMMUNIQUE

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY SOUTH EAST GOVERNORS AND HEADS OF SECURITY AGENCIES AT THE END OF THE FIRST SOUTH EAST SECURITY SUMMIT HELD IN OWERRI ON SUNDAY APRIL 11TH 2021

After exhaustive discussions on the current security challenges in the South East and with valuable contributions from participants at the first South East security summit in Owerri on this day Sunday April 11th 2021, it was resolved as follows:

1

To strongly and unequivocally condemn terrorism and banditry in any part of Nigeria, particularly in the South East. The meeting strongly condemns the burning of police stations, violent attacks on custodial centres with the unlawful release of inmates, and the killings including security personnel, natives/ farmers and headsmen.

2

That the five South East states are on the same page with the federal government on the issue of security challenges in the country. To this end, the meeting makes it absolutely clear that the South east will stand resolutely with the federal government to fight terrorists and bandits to a finish

3

That the political leadership in the South East has resolved to bring together all the arsenals at their command, as one united zone, to fight and flush out criminals and terrorist from the zone.

4

That the summit resolved that to achieve this, there is a need to galvanise all the relevant stakeholders in the south east, the political class, the business community, the bureaucrats and the intelligentsia to provide all necessary support to security operatives in the five south east states to ensure total success in the fight against criminality in the zone.

5

That the heads of all the security agencies in the south east have resolved to exchange intelligence in a seamless, effective new order that will help to checkmate crime in the zone.

6

That to fast-track crime-busting in the south east, the heads of security agencies have been mandated to draw up a comprehensive list of their logistics and material needs for sustainable success in the fight against criminality, for the immediate provision by the leadership of the South East.

7

That a committee made up of security personnel, government officials and relevant stakeholders be



set up to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the south east joint security platform.

8

To applaud the initiative of the South east security summit and to make it a statutory summit that will convene every quarter while its hosting shall rotate among the five south east states.

9

The meeting resolved to maintain a joint security vigilante for the South East otherwise known as Ebube Agu.

10

The meeting appreciated the formation of South East joint security outfit co. Named Ebubeagu. Headquarters in Enugu to coordinate our vigilante in the South East.

11

South East Governors requested the Acting IGP to stop the influx of IGP monitory units but to allow cps and state and Zonal commands to handle their cases.

12

Meeting approve that the acting IGP and other security chiefs do invite the leadership of Ohan-eze Ndigbo and CAN to find out the reason for increasing insecurity of the South East.

Meeting agreed that military policing in the South East should be adequately funded and become effective.

15

Meeting agreed that open grazing has been banned and security agency should implement the ban.

14

The meeting encouraged a peaceful coexistence of farmers and headers to allow Governors to succeed in the fight against criminality.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Governor of Abia State, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu has called for adequate support for the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to form the fulcrum that would drive government policies and programs in Nigeria.

The Governor made the call when he received in audience, the Abia State Director of the National Orientation Agency, Dr. Ngozi Okechukwu and her Management Team to Government House, Umuahia. He stressed the need for government at all levels to begin to mainstream the importance of national orientation in the people's daily living.

Governor Ikpeazu was of the view that we need to galvanize the requisite support required to drive government policies, noting that despite various micro and macro policy interventions by the government, the citizenry was not even aware and thus, unappreciative of such policies due to lack of national orienta-

National orientation, crucial to national development, says Ikpeazu

tion.

According to the Governor, the greatest impact of the National Orientation Agency would be to help shape the direction of the nation.

He said that on his part, his administration would do its best to support the Na-

tional Orientation Agency in the State and pledged to rise to the demands of the office of the Grand Patron of the agency bestowed on him and help confront the challenge of indiscipline in the State.

He stressed the need for all to get back to the

era of discipline and ensure all forms of indiscipline by the citizenry are brought to an end.

Earlier, the State Director of the National Orientation Agency, Abia State, Dr. Ngozi Okechukwu disclosed that the agency is set to reposition

the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) in the State.

The Director, who said that one of the aims of their visit was to decorate the Governor as the Grand Patron of National Orientation Agency in the State revealed that the revamping of the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) Brigade aims to support the fight against indiscipline and corruption.

She noted that the ills which bedeviled the nation during the Buhari /Idiagbon Military era are even worsening, adding that repositioning of the War Against Indiscipline Brigade will revamp vigilance in the LGAs and boost security. She commended the Governor for the great insight about the need to empower youths, noting that youths' inclusiveness in government is imperative.

Highlights of the event was decoration of the Governor as the Grand Patron of National Orientation Agency in the State.



Abia Gov Victor Ikpeazu in action

Ikpeazu tasks Nigerian Navy on 21st Century security challenges

The Abia State Governor, Dr Okezie Ikpeazu has charged the leadership of the Nigerian Navy to tailor their trainings to be in line with the 21st Century challenges.

Governor Ikpeazu who was a Special Guest at the commissioning of the Central Bank of Nigeria Intervention Projects at Nigerian Navy Finance and Logistics College, Owerri, Isialangwa South LGA, said Nigeria is beset with myriad of security challenges, especially, insurgency which requires urgent attention.

According to him, the

trend places new burden on the shoulders of the Navy and other security outfits in the country.

Dr. Ikpeazu said that time has come to put aspect of Finance Intelligence on the curriculum of the Armed Forces of the country to ascertain movement of funds outside Nigeria, especially by insurgents.

He commended the vision and depth of the Nigeria Navy in thinking towards training as what is required to enhance the confidence of the officers and men of the force and expressed happiness with

the track record of the Nigerian Navy.

While noting that the Nigerian Navy has remained a flagship force that every other security arm in Nigeria tries to emulate, he appreciated the contributions of the Nigerian Navy in sustaining law and order. He pledged the support of the Abia State government towards the operations, development and growth of the Nigerian Navy Finance and Logistics College, Owerri.

Governor Ikpeazu, who urged the students of the College to make good use

of the conducive environment provided for their learning assured that Nigeria would rise from the ashes of its challenges to be the pride of Africa.

In his goodwill message, the Imo State Governor, Senator Hope Uzodinma lauded the officers and men of the Navy for their efforts in protecting lives and property in Abia and Imo States.

He thanked the management of the CBN for the intervention in the College and commended the citizens of Abia and Imo States for their sustained support to the

Nigerian Navy in doing their job and urged them to sustain the support to the officers and men of the Navy.

Speaking, the Chief of Army Staff, Vice Admiral Awwal Gambo said the event was a testimony of the good relationship existing among the Nigerian Navy, CBN, Abia and Imo States. He saluted the collective efforts of the stakeholders and CBN in realizing the projects and expressed gratitude that the college has introduced OND and other practical courses.



Technology Transfer: The Umahi example

By Francis Nweze

Technology transfer, also called transfer of technology, is the process of transferring technology from the person or organization that owns or holds it to another person or organization.

Often, it occurs by concerted effort to share skills, knowledge, technologies, manufacturing methods, samples, and facilities among the participants.

In advanced Nations of the World, there is an ardent practice of technology transfer between the benefitting nation and the Country that is originating the technology which ensures that they both share their ideas for the good of all.

In an ideal democracy like Nigeria, purposeful leaders periodically travel outside the shores of the Country either for conferences or vacations.

During such travels, the travelers cum leaders come back home to translate whatever good ideas, services and

skills they come across in the course of the travel into concrete reality.

But regrettably, most Nigerian leaders embark on such travels just for fun with no hope of bringing home any goodies.

Governor David Nweze Umahi of Ebonyi State is certainly one in a million Nigerian leaders whose travel mission outside Nigeria is most times to invent trending skills, services and ideas for rapid development of Ebonyi State and the wellbeing of citizens.

For instance, the most edifying shopping mall in Ni-

geria being the Ebonyi State International Shopping mall is one of such inventions of Governor David Nweze Umahi modeled after the Dubai mall in United Arab Emirate which is billed to provide thousands of jobs for Ebonyi Youth and stimulate the State's economy when fully completed.

The Ebonyi International Airport situated along Abakaliki-Afikpo Highway is another landmark invention designed to bring the world to Ebonyi State on completion. The sophistry of the runway, the tarmac and the entire structures in the airport are

simply the best in Africa, an indication that Governor David Nweze Umahi has an eye for quality.

The Ebonyi flyovers are verily glamorous and distinct from the kind of flyovers normally seen in various places in Nigeria and beyond, they are simply European standard with every touch of immaculate finishing.

The "Umahi rigid" Governor Umahi's standard road construction technology on 8 inches rigid pavement with a lifespan of over 50 years is yet another groundbreaking invention that has continued to

cut cost in road construction and attract National admiration and as well durable.

The mother of Technology transfer in Ebonyi State is the state-of-the-art Ebonyi State University Teaching Hospital Uburu with all the design and provision for kidney transplant, cancer treatment, eye treatment and other groundbreaking Medical interventions meant to curb Medical tourism among Nigerians.

The ultra-modern Centre would no doubt provide unending employment opportunities to Ebonyi Youths and contribute significantly to the growth of the State's Gross Domestic Product.

The Muhammadu Buhari Glass tunnel is also an avant-garde invention of His Excellency which illuminates the Akanu Ibiam flyover area and environs at night thereby further enhancing the beauty of the Abakaliki Capital City and promoting nightlife within the vicinity.

Overall, the contributions of technology transfer to societal development cannot be overemphasized.

First, technology transfer has improved the aesthetics of the city of Ebonyi, making it rank among the cleanest and most serene in contemporary States in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Technology transfer has brought immeasurable job opportunities to Ebonyi Youths and contributed immensely to the State's economy through industrialization.

Governor Umahi has no doubt become a reliable example of the efficacy of technology transfer in societal development and as such should be copied and replicated to ensure holistic transformation.

*Francis Nwaze is the Special Assistant to the Governor on Media and Publicity





NEWS FROM THE STATES

Insecurity: Bello Receives GOC, Niger Div; Re-strategizes To Combat Challenges

Governor Sani Bello of Niger State recently received the newly appointed General Officer Commanding (GOC) One Division of the Nigerian Army, Kaduna, Maj. Gen. Danjuma Hamisu Ali who paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House, Minna.

Governor Sani Bello, who doubles as the Chairman North Central Governors Forum (NCGF), Niger State Governor and Chairman NCGF, expressed optimism that the new leadership in the Nigerian Army would tackle insecurity in the country.

"The GOC has been fully informed about the security challenges we are facing, and his response gives us hope that insecurity will soon be taken care of because I can



Governor Sani Bello receiving a plaque from the GOC, one division, Major Gen. Danjuma Hamisu Ali during a courtesy visit

see that with the new leadership in the military, they are really determined to address this security issues," he said.

The Chairman NCGF

added that he is confident the new leadership would come up with technical operational ideas that would help bring an end to the se-

curity challenges confronting Niger State in particular, and the Nation in general.

Earlier, the new GOC explained that he was in the

state as part of his tour of military formations under his command, with a view to understudying the security situation in the State, and also get first-hand information about security developments and challenges in the area.

He however, noted that the major challenges faced by the state is lack of manpower and that having additional battalion in the state would help in addressing the insecurity.

Maj. Gen. Ali also stated that one of the immediate plans is to establish a special force in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State and in Chikun Local Government in Kaduna State, pointing out that those are areas where insecurity is high.

We'll Attract More International Partners To Niger State, Says Bello

Niger State Government has reiterated its continued commitment to putting strategies and policies in place to attract more national and international partners towards building a viable, secured environment for businesses and investment to thrive in the State.

The State Governor and Chairman, North Central Governors Forum, Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello disclosed this while declaring open the Annual Retreat of the UN Country Team Nigeria held at the Royal Institute for Training and Human Capital Development, Zuma Rock Resort, Suleja.

The Governor who was

represented by Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Ahmed Ibrahim Matane further explained that from the very beginning of the present administration's pact with the people of the State, "we were conscious that if we are to make a significant impact in the lives of the people, then we must deliberately address poverty in its very many facets by increasing food security through agriculture, poverty alleviation through youths and women empowerment, improved healthcare services, qualitative education, adequate water and sanitation, social justice and infrastructural development to spur eco-

nomic growth in the State".

Alhaji Sani Bello revealed that the present administration is determined to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by modestly implementing projects and programmes in almost all the vulnerable communities of the State, thereby improving the quality of life of the populace.

According to the Governor, the State Government has over the years focused on developing an effective healthcare system that will ensure a comprehensive primary healthcare centre in each of the 274 wards across the State.

However, through the support of SDGs, Gov-

ernment has been able to complete 15 Comprehensive Primary Healthcare Centres completed and equipped across the State, the Governor stressed.

Alhaji Sani Bello told the participants that at the height of COVID-19 pandemic, the SDGs supported the Government in the areas of advocacy and sensitization, Procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), non-contact thermometers, drugs, face masks, and other sanitary items, adding that the State Government, in addition, had since taken the opportunity of the COVID-19 to construct Molecular Laboratory at General Hospital

Minna for testing COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

He further said that all of these modest achievements did not come without some challenges, chiefly among them is the COVID 19 pandemic which tested our resilience as a people and adversely affected our inflow of funds, resulting in certain drawbacks in the attainment of our set targets, the recent increased cases of insecurity in some parts of the State has further taken a toll on our finances. The situation has also led to the dislocation of many communities, thereby posing a looming challenge of food security.



Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has said his administration will continue to champion policies that give citizens in the State the opportunity to have access to good governance through the provision of life supporting interventions especially in times of need.

He stated this at the flag-off ceremony of phase two of the Statewide distribution of palliatives to poor and vulnerable households in Dukku Local Government Area of the State.

The Governor said the distribution of the relief materials is a tradition of his administration aimed at addressing the hardships faced by the people during the current covid-19 Pandemic and also individuals affected by flood disaster and the over 2000 victims of the recent Billiri crisis.

He said the State Government under his leadership had before the flag-off of the phase II of the Statewide distribution of palliatives, expended the sum of 775 million on the procurement and distribution of palliatives to the people of the State to cushion their sufferings.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya who reiterated his administration's commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of the people, said his Government will continue to work within available resources to address the needs and concerns of the people to which he swore to serve irrespective of social, religious or political affiliations.

He said to ensure justice and fairness in the distribution of the palliatives, his administration has put machinery in motion so that the materials get to the intended beneficiaries at the local, ward and polling unit levels.

The Governor revealed that in the year 2020, his administration was able to reach out to over 65 thousand poor and vulnerable households across the State with not less than 6 persons in each of the targeted households, adding that the phase II of the distribution exercise also targets same number.

He said his administration will always insist on meeting the yearnings and aspirations of the

Inuwa flags-off statewide distribution of palliatives to indigent families



Trucks of palliatives being offloaded in Gombe

people and not stay aloof and watch materials meant for the citizens being siphoned by the privileged in the society.

"My administration is for the masses and we are here to work and better their lives. We shall also come up with realistic plans that can boost their economic status so that they can in turn help the government and those still struggling at the rungs of the ladder".

On some of the request made by the Chairman of Dukku Local Government Area, the Governor said his administration is not unmindful of water scarcity in the area hence his collaboration with the Federal Government's PWSH programme and the resuscitation of RUWASSA by his government

to address the challenges of water in Dukku, Kwami, Furnakaye and Balanga Local Governments of the State which he observed are the worst hit areas.

He expressed the hope that with these interventions by his administration, the challenges of water scarcity will in no distant time be a thing of the past in the worst hit Local Government Areas of the State.

The Governor equally assured the people of Dukku Local Government Area of his administration's commitment to ensure that the Wawa-Zange grazing reserve is pursued to its logical conclusion for the benefit of the people of the State, saying a road to link Gombe Abba to Alkaleri in Bauchi State will also be constructed to create easy access.



Gov Inuwa Yahaya distributing palliative to indigent families

"Let me assure the people of Gombe that the State Government under my leadership will ensure that every locality gets road network, schools, water and health care facilities. All we seek is the cooperation and understanding of the people".

Earlier speaking the chairman, Gombe State Palliative Distribution Committee, Dr. Manassah Daniel Jatau said to ensure equity, justice and fairness in the exercise, the State Government under the leadership of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya constituted his committee which subsequently birthed the local, ward and polling unit committees.

These committees as explained by Dr. Daniel Jatau, who is also the State Deputy

Governor of the state, were so constituted to ensure that the relief materials get to the intended beneficiaries without any form of diversion.

He said each of the beneficiaries will go home with 10kg of rice, 2kg of sugar and one carton of either noodles or spaghetti, saying this same package is to be given to beneficiaries across the State.

The Chairman, Dukku Local Government Council, Jamilu Ahmed Shabewa appreciated Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya for not only choosing Dukku for the symbolic exercise, but his compassion for the poor and vulnerable in the society as well as passion towards repositioning the State to be a beacon in the north East.

Emir of Dukku, Alhaji Haruna Abdulkadir Rashid II said the flag-off of the phase II of the Statewide distribution of palliatives to the poor and vulnerable households in the State is not only timely, but an indication that Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya is a leader that has the people at heart.

He called on the people not to relent in supporting the policies and programmes of the Inuwa Yahaya- led administration for the good of the Dukku Local Government Area and by extension the entire state.





NEWS FROM THE STATES

Sanwo-Olu Flags Off Red Line Rail Project; Compensates Property Owners

The Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has flagged off the construction of the 37-km Rail Mass Transit Red Line, which will traverse from Agbado to Marina, moving over 1 million commuters daily.

This is as the state started the compensation of identified project-affected persons of the Lagos Rail Mass Transit Red Line project with the Governor handing over cheques to displaced property owners who were affected by the right-of-way.

The groundbreaking ceremony, which took place at the Ikeja Train Station on

Thursday was witnessed by the Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, who was represented by the Director-General of the Nigerian Maritime and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr Bashir Jamoh, and the Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr Obafemi Hamzat.

Sanwo-Olu said the Red Line project, which is to be fully operational in the last quarter of 2022 with 8 train stations from Agbado to Oyingbo, is another initiative of his administration to deliver enduring infrastructure for the transport system and make Lagos a competitive

megacity.

The Governor said: "Today's flag-off of the construction of infrastructure for the standard gauge Red Line is another promise kept and it demonstrates, in practical terms, our commitment to achieve the objectives of traffic management and transportation pillar in our development agenda.

"This is because we recognise the role which an efficient transportation system plays in enhancing people's quality of life and as a major driver of socio-economic development.

The State's Strategic Trans-

port Master Plan, which encompasses a number of projects that are germane to achieving our vision for a Greater Lagos, is founded on imperatives that seek to increase transport choices for all users and make the transit system integrated, attractive, convenient, affordable and accessible.

Since efficient transportation is the backbone of any economy, we are happy to be committing this investment in our transport infrastructure, so that our people can meet their daily targets and aspirations. This all-important transport project we are

all gathered to witness today represents a major step in this direction."

Sanwo-Olu added that in order to facilitate smooth operations of the Red Line, the State Government would be constructing ancillary infrastructure, including 6 overpasses at strategic level crossing points along the rail corridor to eliminate interactions between the rail system, vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The overpasses will provide grade-separated crossings that will enhance safety for the rail system and road users.

Sanwo-Olu Unveils Body-Worn Cameras For Security Personnel

Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu has unveiled body-worn cameras for security agencies in an effort to enhance security and safety in the state.

Sanwo-Olu said during the unveiling ceremony, at Lagos House, Ikeja, that the use of the cameras would improve transparency and accountability in the activities of law enforcement agencies.

He said that the devices would help to put the state government in a better position to respond to security challenges in real-time.

The governor also approved a mass training for the state's law enforcement personnel on the use of body-worn cameras, ahead of the deployment of digital tools for security operations across the state.

The three-day training, to begin in May, will be facilitated by the Lagos State Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI), headed by Prince Falade Oyekan.

After the training, all state-funded law enforcement officers would be inaugurated to wear body cameras for their operations.

According to Sanwo-Olu, provision of adequate security is a key pillar of the administration's T.H.E.M.E.S. agenda, and the initiative reflects government's resolution to ensure Lagos remains secure for residents and investors.

"I am pleased to inaugurate the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement officers in Lagos and this is a groundbreaking move to enhance safety in



Lagos state governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu with representatives of different security agency putting on body cam

the state, as well as increase transparency and accountability in the activities of our law enforcement agencies.

"Lagos State has strategically set the pace among other states in Nigeria to launch the use of body-

worn cameras by law enforcement officers.

"The security challenges in different parts of the country are worrisome, but with proactive action, the use of modern technological tools, and a mix of well-trained and intelligent

officers, we will successfully combat many of these challenges.

"With body-worn cameras, our law enforcement officers are better equipped to protect lives and properties, thereby, making Lagos safer for us all," he said.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State has inaugurated the state security outfit, the Amotekun Corps.

Speaking during the inauguration in Abeokuta, the state capital, the governor noted that the operatives of the Amotekun security outfit had been carefully chosen and trained to secure lives and property.

He added that the state government had provided the outfit with vehicles, motorcycles, communication gadgets, technical back-ups and the political will for an effective take-off and efficient operation.

He hinted that the provision of equipment and recruitment of personnel would be a continuous exercise, saying the government expected a superlative performance from the operatives.

Mr Abiodun urged them to diligently add value to strengthen the security of lives and property in

Insecurity: Abiodun Instates Amotekun in Ogun

the state, advising that they must carry out their duties within the ambit of the provisions of the law establishing them.

“Your role is primarily to prevent crime. You are to do this through systematic intelligence gathering and

collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, especially the security network agencies of other states,” he said.

He called on the people to support and cooperate with the Amotekun operatives, to strengthen the

state security machinery.

He also called on other security agencies to cooperate and collaborate with the Amotekun to form a synergy of purpose towards ensuring stronger security of lives and property in the state.



Governor Dapo Abiodun (middle) leads a procession during the inauguration of security outfit, Amotekun in the state

Abiodun Inaugurates Ogun Digital Economy Infrastructure Project

The Ogun government has inaugurated the Digital Economy Infrastructure Project to make broadband connectivity available to homes and businesses across the state.



The programme, organised by the Ogun Bureau of Information Technology in collaboration with the 21st Century Technologies, was held at the state Tech Hub in Abeokuta.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, who joined the programme virtually, commended Gov. Dapo Abiodun for opening up the state to modern technology.

Osinbajo noted that the Ogun government had, through the project, taken hold of the future and set to define it in its own terms.

“Digital Economy Tech-

nology is the future of all aspects of human existence including business, education, health care, governance and security.

“The practice of practically every profession is either already digitally based or will become so in the coming months or years

“Someone said digital economy is to develop today what electricity is to development in the 19th and 20th centuries.

“So, making it available to all citizens and businesses is the most farsighted action that any govern-

ment can take today,” he said.

Osinbajo said that, indeed, access to broadband and modern technology tools have become compulsory for any community seeking meaningful growth, security and prosperity for its people,

“So, I will like to commend our futuristic, dynamic, innovative and digitally compliant Gov. Dapo Abiodun for credible and relevant initiative in bringing broadband to homes, businesses and offices in Ogun,” he said.

We'll deliver first phase of Cargo Airport in 2022 – Gov Abiodun

Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun as again assured the people of the State that the first phase of the Agro-Cargo Airport at Illisan-Remo in Ikenne local government area of the State would be ready by May, 2022.

The governor, who gave the assurance while inspecting the project site, said the project conceived in 2007 had all necessary approvals, including the Environmental Impact Assessment, from Aviation regulatory body, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA).

He said, “this project had been conceived since 2007 and all necessary approvals were gotten in 2008. All the Environment Impact Assessment, all other regulatory assessment has been met 100 per cent.

“All we have to do was to brush them up to ensure they meet current realities. This was not the decision that was taken for any other reason except that which is objective,” he explained.

Giving insights on why his administration decided to execute the project, Governor Abiodun said, it was based on the economic development agenda of his administration to have a Cargo Airport that would fully compliment the agro value chain investments and activities in the State.

“When the Senate Committee on Aviation came to visit us, we shared with them the business case for this airport. We reminded them that the two airports' proposals were not initiated by this administration. I told them that the Committee we set up to look into the two airports concluded unequivocally that this location remained the best and most viable location for the airport.”

According to the governor, “the entire cargo value chain is on this corridor. We have Oil Palm, Cashew plantations and Green House in Sagamu and multinational companies around here.

“This is the centre where items for export are evaluated and approved for export. So, with a Cargo Airport here, it is very convenient to move them.”



NEWS FROM THE STATES

His Excellency, the Zamfara State Executive Governor, Hon. Dr. Bello Mohammed Matawalle MON (Shattiman Sakkwato) has today launched the distribution of 182,000 bags of assorted food items to members of the public in Zamfara as part of his administration's traditional annual gesture in the month of Ramadan.

The governor who congratulated the Muslim faithful in the state and the entire Muslim ummah for the fortune of being alive to witness another month of the Holy Ramadan, urged them to use the time for spiritual reawakening, charity, continuous recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and other spiritual acts that will bring us closer to Almighty Allah as well as renew their commitment in doing what is good throughout the period and beyond.

He said, as is cus-



Gov Matawalle interfacing the people

Matawalle launches the distribution of over 180,000 bags of assorted grains, clothing

tomary during the Holy Month of Ramadan, the government has purchased a variety of food items for distribution to the people and has doubled the number of items distributed last year for Ramadan 1442. This is to ensure that people

have enough food for the month of Ramadan and beyond.

The items include 60,000 bags of rice, 30,000 bags of sugar, 50,000 bags of millet, 30,000 bags of maize, 10,000 bags of beans and 2,000 cartons of milk.

Similarly, 40,000 pieces of shadda and atamfa clothing materials were purchased for distribution to the less fortunate in order for them to celebrate Idul-Fitri with a feeling of sense of belonging and ease.

The Shattiman

Sakkwato announced that Ramadan feeding would be conducted across all the 2,516 polling units of the State and directed the Ministry for Local Government and Community Development to collaborate with the 14 Local Government Councils to establish additional feeding centres in each of the Councils.

He said in the case of civil servants, the Head of Service office has been directed to implement the procedures for distributing the packages to civil servants in an efficient and equitable manner.

For ease of distribution, the state government agencies that typically handle the process of targeting relevant beneficiaries have been delegated to carryout the exercise through the

Ministry for Religious Affairs, Zakat Distribution and Endowment Board and the Directorate of Protocol Matters.

Banditry: Matawalle suspends Badarawa District Head

His Excellency, the Zamfara State Executive Governor Hon. Dr. Bello Mohammed Matawalle MON (Shattiman Sakkwato) has suspended the District Head of Badarawa in Shinkafi Emirate Council, Sarkin Kudun Badarawa, Alhaji Surajo Namakkah Ibrahim for conferring the traditional title of 'Durumbu' on a Military officer who was arrested for selling live ammunition to bandits in Shinkafi local government area of the state.

The Governor said he was sad to receive a report that

the affected military officer attached to Shinkafi general area was arrested selling live ammunition to bandits operating in the area and was even bestowed with a title by the District Head.

He reiterated that his administration will not tolerate anything capable of destroying the hard-earned peace and reputation of the state and will ensure that anybody found wanting in anyway will be dealt with accordingly.

Matawalle said the suspension of the District Head is indefinite because

the traditional title was for no reason of significant contribution to the development of the area.

He also warned that henceforth, all traditional rulers must seek for approval before conferring a traditional title on people who have contributed to the development of their respective Districts or Emirates.

Matawalle said the action became pertinent in order to avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the state government and its traditional institutions.

The military officer was

recently arrested in possession of 20 rounds of 62mm of live ammunition at the point of handing over to his usual buyer, one Kabiru Bashiru of Maniya Village of Shinkafi Emirate after he had collected an advanced payment of N100,000 from the recalcitrant bandits in the area.

The Governor also commended the security agencies in the state for making another significant arrest of one Dr. Kamarawa with four full sets of military camouflage uniforms and

one army identification card.

Kamarawa specialises in the supply of army uniforms and other medications to bandits when luck ran out on him on his way from Sokoto to deliver the items to his bandit customers in the state.

Governor Matawalle who was furious with the criminal said as a leader, he cannot sit and fold his arms while his people are being killed with the connivance of those saddled with the responsibility of protecting them.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Plateau State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has assured the leadership of the Conference of Speakers of State Houses of Assembly of the commitment of all Governors towards achieving autonomy for the legislative and judicial arms of government.

Governor Lalong who received a delegation led by the Chairman, Conference of Speakers, Rt. Hon. Abubakar Suleiman said the issue of autonomy will soon be put to rest with the final engagements between all stakeholders holding soon.

He used the opportunity to clarify that autonomy is not just for financial independence, but also for strengthening the legislature and enhancing democratic values. According to him, the implementation of autonomy will require each State to establish the House of Assembly Service Commission



Gov Lalong of Plateau State hosting the conference of speakers

Conference of Speakers meet Lalong over Legislative, Judiciary autonomy

which will handle all administrative functions of the legislature and provide proper accountability just as there are civil service commissions and others.

He advised the Speakers to engage other parties as well as educate the public on what autonomy is all about because a lot of misconception is creating an

impression that members of the legislature stand to gain financially rather than be better supported to serve the people.

On tackling insecurity,

Lalong said the implementation of community Policing is the way to go which will gradually lead to state police when fully implemented.

Chairman, Conference of Speakers Abubakar Suleiman said they were on an advocacy visit to discuss the issue of autonomy and other national matters such as curbing insecurity.

He said the Conference recognises the strategic position of Governor Lalong as former Speaker and Chairman of the body, Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum and a strong member of the Nigerian Governors Forum who has been at the centre of discussions towards autonomy.

He assured the Governor that the speakers would continue to work in synergy with the Executive in order to provide good governance and better living standards for the people.

The new acting GOC of the 3rd Armoured Division, Jos, Brig. Gen. Bello Abdullahi Mohammed has assured Governor Simon Bako Lalong that the officers and men of the division will do everything within their power to sustain the security and peace of Plateau State.

The new GOC gave the assurance when he visited Governor Simon Lalong at the Government House Rayfield Jos.

He said his visit was to formally present himself to the Governor having taken over from his predecessor after the recent change of leadership in the army which resulted in some postings including his deployment to the Maxwell Khobe Cantonment as

GOC.

He said "I want to assure you and the people of Plateau State that we shall continue to operate professionally for sustainable peace and security in the State. We will work with other security agencies and loyal citizens to ensure that the peaceful environment in the State is improved upon. We cannot do it alone. We work with all to get the best".

Governor Lalong while welcoming the new acting GOC said he was delighted to have Gen. Mohammed in Plateau State which has enjoyed cordial relationship with the army and other security agencies.

He said "Peace and security is our cardinal priority in Plateau State and the security forces particularly officers and men of the 3rd Armoured division have been of great assistance. As a Government, we will give you all the needed support to succeed even more than your predecessors".

Lalong said it has been his policy to work with and open mind with every security head posted to the State for the general good of the people.

He challenged the new GOC to do his best in bringing his experience to bear so as to sustain the peace prevailing in Plateau State and also deal with criminality.

GOC 3rd Armoured Division visits Lalong



Rt Hon Lalong and the New GOC



Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde has explained that the state government's determination to encourage healthy living among the teeming civil/public servants and visitors to the Secretariat, Agodi, Ibadan, led to its partnership with AwaBikeNG, a bike-sharing and lifestyle start-up platform.

'Awa Bike' initiative to promote healthy living, green environment, says Makinde

The governor, who stated this on Thursday, shortly after taking a ride on one of the bicycles nicknamed 'Keke Seyi' from the Governor's Office to the Water

Corporation Building inside the Secretariat, said that the initiative would also help to promote a green environment.

According to the gover-

nor, if explored by those within the Secretariat, the initiative would promote healthy living and fitness and also reduce the carbon footprint of the state, as emissions from vehicles

would be reduced in the long run.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Taiwo Adisa, indicated that the initiative involves AwaBikeNG bringing in 60 bicycles to the Secretariat in a pilot scheme in which individuals willing and capable of riding bicycles, could use them as a voluntary means of transportation within the Secretariat.

The statement maintained that contrary to insinuations that the governor is distributing bicycles to civil servants or that the state government is procuring bicycles, the partnership only involves AwaBikeNG bringing in its bicycles while the state only paid a sum of N750,000 as service charge.

While speaking, shortly after riding the bicycle, the governor explained the benefits of exercises such as bicycle-riding, stating that he wanted people to be fit and to also reduce the carbon footprint.

He added that bicycle-riding has immense benefits.

He said: "First, we are trying to promote a green environment. I rode this bike from my office to the Water Corporation Building and I burnt some calories. You have your fitness being tested.

"Also, it is a zero-carbon footprint and that is what we want to encourage here. We want people to be fit and we also want to reduce our carbon footprint."

He explained that the state government has only spent N750,000 as service charge for the 60 bicycles involved in the pilot scheme.



Governor Makinde test-riding one of the bikes

Makinde pledges to deliver Ibadan circular road before May 2023

Oyo State Governor, 'Seyi Makinde, has said that his administration will complete the 32-kilometre stretch, First Phase of Ibadan Circular Road, before the end of his tenure on May 28, 2023.

The governor, who stated this during a tour of the project, said that his administration had to sack the contractor inherited from the previous administration due to unsatisfactory slow pace of work.

According to him, the contractor would be unable to deliver the road in another 20 years if allowed to

continue at the slow pace.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Taiwo Adisa, stated that the governor, however, promised to pay the sacked contractor for evaluated work done.

As at the time of the governor made the on-the-spot assessment, only two kilometres of the 32-kilometre road had been tarred at the level of wearing cost by ENL Consortium Construction company.

He said: "We have terminated the initial arrangement. This is the road that we think will change the

economy of Oyo State substantially but the previous contractor, if we had continue with their pace, maybe they may finish in another 20 years."

Makinde noted that the government has been asking the contractor to do joint valuation because his administration does not want to destroy anyone's business, adding that the government will ensure that the contractor is reimbursed when the evaluation is completed.

He added: "Now, we are asking them to do joint valuation because we are

not here to destroy anyone's business. Of course, money has been spent and we have to ensure that whatever has been put into to this, we will reimburse the previous contractor.





GANDUJE'S ANTI-CORRUPTION FIGHT IN KANO STATE

It is often said that a gold fish has no hiding place; even dip down an ocean. The recent visit by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu to Kano State brought with it the Asiwaju's phenomenon that knows no boundary in all facets of human endeavour in Nigeria and beyond. Asiwaju's visit also brought his famed political colour and acumen. His bridge-building skills were also on display as his colloquium held in the ancient city. It is a well-known fact that Tinubu's political influence is pervasive, as he has mentored hundreds of political leaders across the country. Many political actors, especially those holding very exalted offices today owe their success to the generosity and support of Asiwaju, whose abiding interest is to build leaders and a prosperous nation.

That could explain why Tinubu, who is also the National Leader of the governing All Progressives Congress (APC) is being celebrated annually through an internationally recognized colloquium. The colloquium has earned its plaudits as a platform for dissecting national issues.

The colloquium's 12th edition coincided with Asiwaju's 69th birthday. And being hosted in Kano State, it unveiled a

unique dimension to the promotion of Nigeria's unity in diversity. It was also the first time it would hold outside Lagos and Abuja, 12 years after its inception.

In recognition of his political sagacity and true progressive bent, Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje thrilled the celebrant with a special golden gift, when he named the new administrative edifice of the state Anti-Corruption Commission after Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The unveiling of the new Bola Ahmed Tinubu Anti-corruption building held a day before the colloquium. Tinubu was earlier conducted round some legacy projects being undertaken by Governor Ganduje within the Kano metropolis.

Some of the facilities shown to the august visitor include, Dangote Entrepreneurial and Skill Acquisition Centre, multi-billion-naira Cancer treatment Centre and ongoing construction of Flyovers. Asiwaju was thereafter led to commission the Anti-Corruption edifice.

The new anti-corruption building was structurally upgraded with modern aesthetic design and to reflect international standards. The newly crafted magnificent edifice situated along the state road in the heart of the metropolis, is integrated with the state-of-the-art technology and information communication facility.

According to the governor, the upgraded facility can now accommodate a comprehensive operations department with designated rooms for investigation and interrogation, as well as, a detention lodge for both male and female suspects. The detention rooms are well ventilated with water, electricity, toilets and bathrooms for the comfort of the suspects, a clear departure from the previous system.

For effective communication and media engagement, the PR department of the commission is enabled with a well-equipped and soundproof live studio, alongside sophisticated gadgets designed for live and recorded programmes. The new studio will further enhance the commission's media production and programme packaging regularly aired on conventional media outfits to reduce the huge cost the commission spends on radio programmes.

Besides, the new structure is fully wired with a communication broadband network that strengthens interconnectivity between the anti-corruption headquarters and its area offices across the 44 local councils of the state. With the local networking, it was explained that operatives can effectively carry out investigation and interrogation in any part of the state and relay directives back to the headquarters. The comprehensive installation of the CCT Cameras mounted at every strategic location is expected to further enhance security surveillance.

Sensitive to peculiar physical conditions, especially people living with





Chief of Staff to Governor Ganduje, Alh. Ali Makoda (left); Deputy Governor, Kano State, Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna; Governor Abdullah Umar Ganduje; APC National Leader, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu; former Governor of Osun State, Chief Bisi Akande and others, during the commissioning of the anti-corruption commission edifice in Kano, recently.

disability, special passage points are provided for people who may find it difficult to use the regular facility. As it stands, suspects, notwithstanding state of physical ability, would freely access the anti-corruption edifice with or without aid. Similarly, all departments, operational units and other sub-units at the administrative offices are consciously fitted with fire safety equipment, a precautionary measure against emergency.

Newly expanded conference room interjecting the office of the executive chairman is upgraded and well-furnished with air conditioners for executive comfort. Staff and visitors can access meal while in the premises, because the new in-house kitchen/restaurant is well positioned with constant standby electricity generator to serve all kinds of food.

A glimpse at all the departments, including the office of the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Commission, Citizens Rights, Public Complaints and Operations wear modern glossy impressions with furniture, appliance, foot tiles and interlock spread across the length of the premises for conducive and easy movement. It is worthy to note that rehabilitation projects from conceptual level to the interiors designs down to finishing touch were executed by direct labour under close supervision of Kano state Ministry of Works and Infrastructure.

Prior to the renovation funded by the state government, the commission had not witnessed such a tremendous structural and operational transformation since its establishment about fifteen years ago. Essentially, the commission had significantly strived better in execution of core mandates of ensuring a relative society filter of corrupt practices as statutorily empowered and so doing without internal or external interference.

Governor Ganduje's determination to rid the state of the scourge of corrupt practices and other societal ills motivated the resuscitation of the anti-graft agency under the executive chairman, Barrister Muhuyi Magaji Rimin-Gado, to check the prevalence of graft in the system.

The commission under Barrister Muhuyi had manifested many success stories and momentous achievement especially with investigation and prosecution of high profile cases of misappropriation of public funds. The 'New Sheriff in town' has instilled discipline and sanctity in

the process and conduct of public and government businesses; hence the popular saying goes the presence of Muhuyi is now the beginning of wisdom.

After untaping the anti-corruption building, Tinubu who was conducted round the operations unit, administrative and other areas of the retooled structure commissioned, applauded the Governor Ganduje's commitment to purge Kano of corrupt practice and other related ills in the society.

Tinubu who emphasized the hope for prosperous, corruption-free and accountability in Nigeria and Africa, maintained that, precedence for the new Nigeria is already being put to test by the Kano state government.

"With the giant stride taking place in Kano, Nigeria will soon become a member of a committed international community and greatly well deserving nation, that will soon be free from the burden of corruption. We are certain this edifice will play an important role in Kano. This is a welcome development indeed and we must salute the governor for this encouraging effort.

On his part, Governor Ganduje disclosed that when he assumed office, the anti-corruption institution had barely accounted for any tangible success, until he overhauled the entire system with appointment of a vibrant human rights activist, whose pedigree for human rights and freedom was enough reason for his achievements, to oversee the activities of the agency.

Referring to Barrister Muhuyi Magaji Rimingado, the Executive Chairman of the Commission, Ganduje noted that, "When he was appointed as the Chairman, we made it very clear that there would be no interference in the activities of the Agency. And up till now we have not interfered in any of their activities and our administration has continued to support the anti-graft body for effective and efficient operations.

The governor applauded the efforts of Rimingado with further assurance that the commission will remain an independent outlet, operating within its statutory powers as entrenched in provisions of the laws that established it.

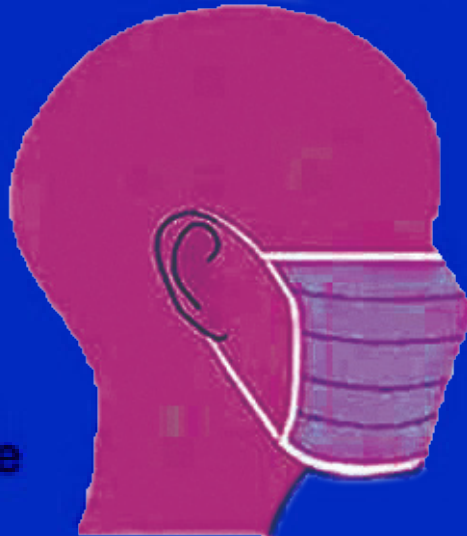
– First Published in *The Guardian*

Stop the Spread!



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

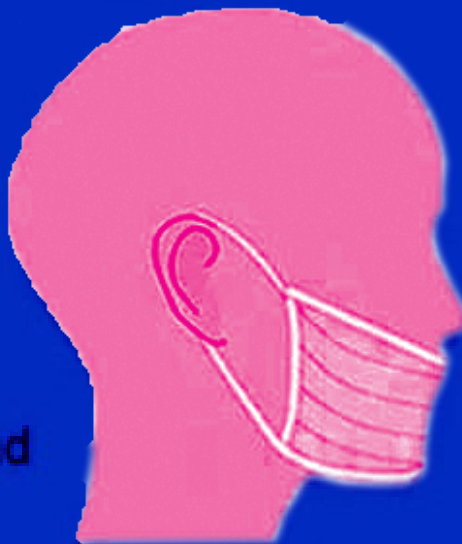
Believes
in science



Denies
science



Doesn't
understand
science



Believes in
magic



Let's not make it easy for the virus