

**MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER
RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT FROM MAY, 2007-
MAY, 2009**

PRESENTED BY

THE HON. COMMISSIONER, HON. JOHN NGBEDE

AT THE OCCASION OF

**THE INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH THE MANAGEMENT
OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM AT
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MAKURDI**

ON

FRIDAY JUNE 26, 2009.

Protocol:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 It is my honour, privilege and indeed pleasure to address you, on occasion of your visit to Benue State, to acquaint yourselves with the progress being made by the present Administration. I will limit myself to issues of water supply and environment, as these are my areas of direct concern.

1.2 Permit me ladies and gentlemen, to also inform you that the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment is fairly a young ministry. It was created in July, 1999, so that issues of water supply, sanitation and environment will get more focus and attention of government. I must say that attention given to these issues has been unprecedented.

1.3 The Ministry is structured into five departments, namely, Administration, Water Resources, Environment, Engineering Services and Forestry. There are also four parastatals to deliver services to the public. These are the Benue State Water Board (BSWB), Benue State Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (BERWASSA), Benue State Urban Development Board (BSUDB), and the Benue State Environmental Sanitation Authority (BENSESA).

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-SECTOR

2.1 The main focus of this sector is to manage both the human and industrial waste, protect and conserve environment as well as enforce laws on environment. The good news about this subsector is that achievements are visible and glaring. The improvement and cleanliness in Makurdi, the state capital is a visible case in point. This has been achieved by the creation of a Direct Town Cleaning Unit in the Ministry,

which works in close liaison with the Benue State Environmental Sanitation Authority, to rid the state capital of refuse.

2.2 To effectively carry out the task of keeping Makurdi and other urban centers clean, the State Government acquired over 27 No tractor-like vehicles for evacuation of refuse in the state. Also 6No self loading refuse vehicles, known as **IVECO ML 150 E24H EURO CARGO Rear loading Trucks**, have been ordered by the State Government, at the cost of **N208,524,999.94**. Over half of this contract sum has been released and two of these vehicles have arrived. These will be put to use for the purpose of refuse collection and disposal. Also, a Contract for the supply of 4No **Mercedes Benz 17ZK Skip** as well as towing vans valued at N139,375,000.00 has been awarded to Corporate Choice Nig. Ltd. So far, half of this amount has been paid, and the company has so far supplied all of these vehicles.

2.3 **Way Finding Infrastructure Within Makurdi Town-** In order to make destination location easier, street and directional signs have been conspicuously erected on all the major streets of Makurdi. This is to make the town user-friendly, particularly for visitors coming into town for the first time. This project cost the state Government the sum of **N39,272,500.00**. Over 40% of this contract sum has been paid, and the job is nearing completion. The next step is the numbering of the individual houses. The process of awarding this contract is also nearing completion.

2.4 BENUE STATE URBAN DEVELOPMENT BOARD (BSUDB) AND BENUE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION AUTHORITY (BERWASSA)

The BSUDB and the BENSESA are the two parastatals that have the statutory responsibilities of enforcing Environmental laws. While the Benue State Urban Development Board handles streamlining of haphazard urban growth in Makurdi and other urban centres, the Benue State Environmental Sanitation Authority, on the other hand, implements environmental health laws and sanitation policies.

2.5 A lot has been done by the agencies since the present administration came to power in 2007. The Benue State Urban Development Board, for instance, removed the temporary structures and shanties along Gboko road near Gyado Villa. Many access roads in Makurdi and other urban centers were opened. The rowdy haphazard road Corridor in North Bank Motor Park, noted for its filthy nature, has now been streamlined. BENSESA works vigorously, by continuous evacuation and disposal of refuse. Indeed, if not for the activities of these agencies, in monitoring urban development, destroying illegal structures and evacuating refuse, Makurdi town and other urban centers would have since evolved into bid urban slums.

2.6 **Ecological Remediation /Erosion Control:-** Makurdi town is located on the plains of River Benue, making it susceptible to perennial flooding and gully erosion. In order to control gully erosion and proffer solution to these environmental problems, the State Government has spent over **one Billion Naira** for the following projects, some of which are easily visible as you drive round town. These are:-

- a. Opening up and construction of 120No roads in Makurdi and other major towns in the state,
- b. Construction of 138km of roadside drainages and channelization of 4km length of some streams;
- c. Construction of 349 culverts of urban roads in the state and the construction of Ohimini Bridge in Ohimini LGA;
- d. Construction of 2000m **Lobi Stream Reinforcement Concrete Drainage Channel** as well as the **River Benue Beach Park** at the cost of **N597,491,087.20**. Work is in progress and has reached 42% execution.

3.0 WATER SUPPLY SECTOR:

The Water sector is the one area to which the present Administration has paid so much attention. The administration of Governor Gabriel Suswam has pursued the water supply issue with so much passion, in order to ensure that the perennial water scarcity in Makurdi and other major urban centers in the state is solved, once and for all.

3.1 On being sworn in on May 29, 2009, the Governor, Rt. Hon. Gabriel Suswam paid unscheduled visit to Makurdi Water Works, constructed in the early 60s . That visit resulted to the award of the contract, valued at **N318m** to **CGC Nig Ltd**, for the rehabilitation of the existing Makurdi Water Works. This was intended as a short term measure. The contract has been fully executed. The little improvement witnessed in water supply in Makurdi is due to the rehabilitation of the aged water works. Similar short term measures were taken for Katsina-ala and Otukpo

water works, where High lift Pumps were installed at a cost of **N47 Million naira** and generators of 1000KVA valued at **N88,466,500.00** also installed in Katsina-Ala and Otukpo Water works.

3.3 As a long term measure, and to comprehensively tackle the water supply problems of the state, the following projects are being undertaken by the present Administration:-

- i. Contract of **N4, 988,600,000.00 (Four Billion, Nine hundred and eighty-Eight Million, Six hundred Thousand naira)** only has been awarded to **Gilmor Engineering (Nig) Ltd** for the construction of **Greater Makurdi Water Works**. When completed, Makurdi town and its environs will be served with 100,000m³ of water a day. So far, over **2 Billion Naira** or over 50% of the contract sum has been paid. The level of work is about 46% executed.
- ii. From May 2007 to date, also, contracts have been awarded to **CGC (Nig) Ltd** at the cost of **N4,131,734,137.22 (Four Billion, One Hundred and Thirty-One Million, Seven Hundred and Thirty-Four Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty- Seven Naira, twenty-two Kobo)**, for the construction of the new Water Works at Otobi-Otukpo and Katsina-Ala to a design capacity of 15,000m³/day each. About **One Billion Naira** has so far been released for the two projects. The level of work done is about 42%.
- iii. **Dams:** - Two earth dams located at Wannnue and Adum East in Tarka and Obi Local Government Areas, respectively, are nearing completion, while feasibility studies have been carried out for the construction of more Earth Dams at Akpagher, Otukpa, Zaki Biam, Agatu, Otukpo- Icho, Adoka and Oju. It is expected that the dams,

when completed, will provide potable water as well as water upstream for dry season farming.

- iv. **Water supply and Sanitation in Small urban Centres:-** The sum of **N20m** has also been released by the present administration as counterpart funding for Water Supply and Sanitation activities in pilot small towns located at Naka, Lessel and Ugbokpo. Rehabilitation is at about 90% completion. The State Water Supply and Sanitation Policy document has also been submitted to the state EXCO for approval. The policy, when finally approved, will pave way for a more strategic planning, implementation and execution of water supply and sanitation activities / programmes in the state.
- v. There are also plans to carry out secondary distribution of pipe line networks for Gboko and its environs with the provision of extension to the communities along the pumping main line in order to reduce the incidence of vandalism of the main supply pipe line. We are approaching the Federal Government for assistance since the project was executed by the Federal Government.
- vi. Similarly, contracts to the tune of **N465,691,703.25 (Four Hundred And Sixty-Five Million, Six Hundred And Ninety –One Thousand, Seven Hundred And Three Naira Twenty-Five Kobo) only** have also been awarded to WASTE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTION LIMITED for the construction of water supply schemes at Anyin, Logo LGA and Otukpa, Ogbadibo LGA. The contractor is yet to be mobilized to commence work. Plans are also on the way for the

award of contract for seven other small towns located at Gbajimba, Akpagher, Ihugh, Obagaji, Idekpa, Otukpo-Upu and Adoka.

3.4 BENUE STATE WATER BOARD AND THE BENUE STATE RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION AGENCY

These are the two parastatals saddled with the management of water supply in the state. The Benue State Water Board handles water supply in urban and semi urban areas, while Benue State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (BERWASSA) has as its primary function the provision of water and sanitation in rural communities of the State. The main objective of BERWASSA is to improve on people's sanitation and poor hygiene-related behaviour as well as aim at total eradication of guinea worms from endemic areas.

3.5 RURAL AREAS- BOREHOLE AND HYGIENE

From 2007 to date; the Benue State Government through, BERWASSA has provided the following Boreholes in the rural areas:-

- A 200no hand pump boreholes have been rehabilitated including the 42No done by the **Tulsi Chanrai Foundation;**
- b. The Agency has equally provided 97No boreholes and 15No hand dug wells in guinea worm endemic communities as well as additional 7No boreholes in communities in Makurdi LGA where there was cholera outbreak.
- c. To encourage sanitation in the rural areas, BERWASSA established Environmental Health clubs in 5 schools in target communities and trained stakeholders to promote hygiene activities in and outside the

schools. To provide hygiene and better health practices, private managed sanitation centres have been established and are providing services in 30 project communities. Also 327 community artisans have been trained in different latrine construction in 27 communities in 8 LGAs; 16 No 3- compartment VIP latrines (486 compartments in all) were constructed in 83 schools as well as hand washing and water facilities. It is also worthy of note to mention that Benue State came 4th in a National competition organized to mark Global Hand Washing Day.

4.0 STAFF MOTIVATION

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you cannot achieve this much, without a dedicated workforce. In order to keep our staff motivated, we have ensured that promotions of eligible staff is released as and when due. So far over 40 senior staff and 150 junior staff were promoted in the last two years. Promotion of other staff who passed the qualifying examinations for 2008 have been processed. They will be released very soon.

5.00 CHALLENGES:

The major challenge facing the Ministry is finance. The global decline in revenue has affected our Ministry, like any other. But despite this, government does not intend to abandon any project. We have so far kept faith with our contractors in payment obligations to them. We therefore call on our various contractors to reciprocate this good gesture by keeping to agreed schedule of work.

5.2 Another major challenge facing us is the area of office accommodation. Senior officers are being paired in one room. To worsen

the matter, there is no space to accommodate any new structure in the premises. I therefore call on understanding of our staff as we face this challenge.

6.00 Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention and may God bless you.