

A Governor, His Shoes

...and Other Stories



NGF Launches Peace Initiative To Tackle Insecurity, Conflicts, Violence

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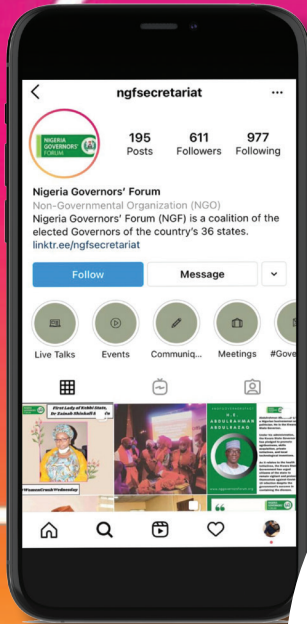


The August Visitor We Can Expect

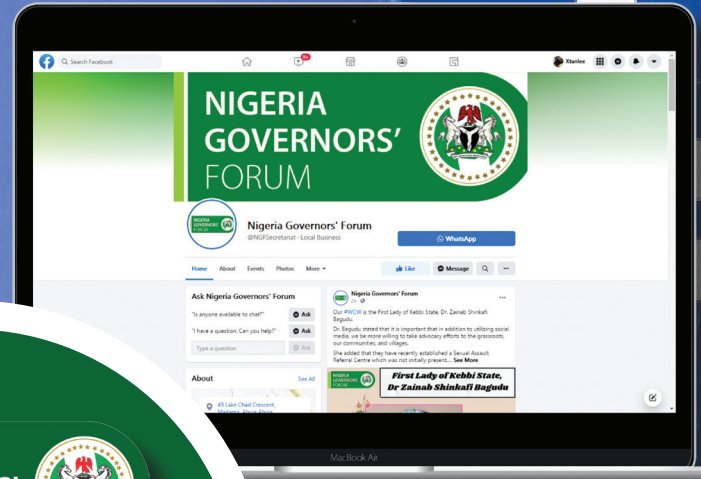
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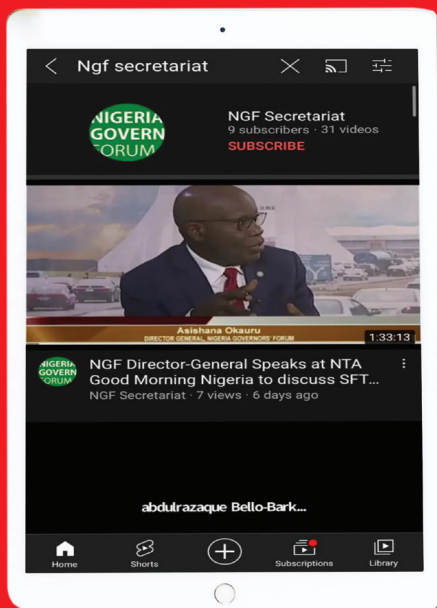


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COMMENTARY

According to the editorial committee of the Executive Summary, a number of things pushed the Governor of Abia State, Governor Victor Ikpeazu, to the cover of this month's edition. They are not exactly unprecedented, not with the current state of things, where governors are at the receiving end of several foul wraps, but they are nevertheless, ground-breaking.

Charity, they say, begins at home. The Abia state Governor resides in his personal three-bedroom house in Aba, Abia state, and he explained why this is so.

Ikpeazu said he chose to live in a 3-bedroom in Aba, away from the Government House in Umuahia, because he wants to live among his people and get used to life outside power.

He said: "I have spent time in my lodge in Aba. It is a three-bedroom apartment. I don't know how many governors can reside in this kind of place. But I stay here because I want to keep my eyes on the fact that I'm the Governor today, but I will not be the Governor tomorrow. I won't take myself too far away from how I live my life. I will work hard to the point that somebody coming after me will find it difficult to operate unless he is running on this same lane."

Governor Ikpeazu didn't reveal too that he made his own shoes. Okezie Ikpeazu's passion for locally produced goods came to the fore when he enrolled as a student at the Footwear Academy, Aba. After his enrolment, Gov. Ikpeazu urged Nigerians to take pride in patronizing made in Nigeria products as a way of boosting the domestic manufacturing and by implication the local economy

He said that except Nigerians endorse their own products and take pride in them they will be merely supporting the economic growth of other nations. While the top echelon Nigerian elite take pride in foreign manufactured apparel, Gov. Ikpeazu has only won locally made footwear and clothes since he came to power in 2015, stressing the need for the country to leverage on the strength of its population for ready market for Nigerian products.

Leading by example, he added that there was need for Nigerians to take the lead in con-

suming their products to enable others follow.

The Abia Governor also made the pack when the committee considered current governors who were once lecturers. Technically, Dr Victor Okezie Ikpeazu becomes a paragon as the only current governor that is a teacher, visionary and a shoemaker.

This edition also touches on several social impact subjects involving governors and their spouses all over the subnational environment. In Kano for example, 5,504 people were trained as police constabulary to aid community policing as the governor shows his determination to improve the security situation in his state. This is just as the Borno State Governor Prof Babagana Zulum ginged up the troops that are helping bring Borno State back to tranquility, atallah. This message was replicated by Tanbuwal, Bagudu, Uzodinma while all mulling their panacea for insecurity. In Lagos, Governor Sanwo-Olu himself effected a citizen's arrest at Ojota, sending a direct signal top criminals that they have no hiding place in Lagos.

In terms of accolades, the society is gradually appreciating the governance standards at the subnational level. Vanguard newspapers feted some governors in Lagos at a ceremony that was pushed forward to 2021 due to the global pandemic that halted activities in the year 2020.

History was made for Ebonyi people as King David University of Medical Sciences built by the administration of David Nweze Umahi (Akubaraoha) was approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The University is the 197th University in Nigeria and sources say it is the most beautiful University Complex in Africa. The vision of The University is to achieve the highest form of quality manpower development for healthcare and other service delivery for all persons irrespective of gender, race, religion, and socio-economic status.

In the same state, women are getting the type of mention they deserve as women empowerment and gender mainstreaming becomes a highpoint in the policy thrust of the administration of Governor David Nweze Umahi. There are Governors spouses who were teachers before they assumed the titles of First Lady and they are also featured in this edition.

The Peace and security Summit hosted by

the NGF Secretariat turned out to be a flagship event of the Legal Department. It was well-attended by eminent security experts and a Bishop who represented the Former Head of State, Gen. Abulsalami Abubakar. Our usual refreshing and very loud whispers are also served with new perspectives.

And there is death. Kaduna State lost its former Deputy Governor, Architect Bala Bantex after a protracted illness and this same edition contains the funeral announcement of the patriarch of the Abiodun family dynasty, Baba Teacher, father of the Governor of Ogun State who died at the age of 89.

All these and more are in this edition of The Executive Summary...

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Southern Governors' Communique

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNORS OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA AT THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT HOUSE, IKEJA, LAGOS STATE, ON MONDAY, 5TH JULY, 2021 NIGERIA.

The Southern Governors Forum at the end of the meeting held on Monday, 5th July, 2021 reviewed the situation in the Country and focused on the current security situation, constitutional amendment, Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB).

Rising from the meeting, the Forum agreed on the following:

1. Re-affirmed their commitment to the unity of Nigeria on the pillars of equity, fairness, justice, progress, and peaceful co-existence between and amongst its people.

2. The Forum reiterates its commitment to the politics of equity, fairness and unanimously agrees that the presidency of Nigeria be rotated between Southern and Northern Nigeria and resolved that the next president of Nigeria should emerge from the Southern Region.

3. Security

a. The Forum reviewed the security situation in the country and commends security operatives for their relentless efforts in restoring security and safety and commiserates with families and loved ones of those who have fallen in the line of duty;

b. Re-emphasised the need for State Police;
c. Resolved that if for any reason security institutions need to undertake an operation in any State, the Chief Security Officer of the State must be duly informed;

d. The forum frowns at selective criminal administration of Justice and resolved that arrests should be made within the ambit of the Law and fundamental human rights;

e. Set a timeline of Wednesday, 1st September, 2021 for the promulgation of the anti open grazing law in all member States; and

f. Resolved that Funds deducted from the Federation Account for the Nigeria Police Security Trust Fund should be distributed among the States and Federal Government to combat security challenges.

4. Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) Law:

i. The Forum commends the National Assembly for the progress made in the passage of the PIB;

ii. The Forum rejects the proposed 3% and support the 5% share of the oil revenue to the host community as recommended by the House of Representatives;

iii. The forum also rejects the proposed 30% share of profit for the exploration of oil and gas in the basins;

iv. However, the forum rejects the ownership structure of the proposed Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC). The Forum disagrees that the company be vested in the Federal Ministry of Finance but should be held in trust by Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) since all tiers of Government have stakes in that vehicle.

5. In order to consolidate our democracy and strengthen the Electoral process, the Southern Governors' Forum reject the removal of the Electronic transmission of the election result from the electoral act; and also rejects the confirmation of exclusive jurisdiction in pre-election matters on the Federal High Court.

6. The Forum unanimously chose Lagos State as its permanent secretariat and appreciated the Governor of Lagos State for the wonderful hosting of this meeting while commending him for his good work in the State.



NORTH EAST GOVS COMMUNIQUE

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF 5TH- MEETING OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE NORTH-EAST HELD IN JALINGO, TARABA STATE

The Executive Governors of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States, under the auspices of North East Governors' Forum, held its 5th meeting in Jalingo, Taraba State and discussed, among other things, the challenges facing the sub-region. Under the Chairmanship of the Governor of Borno State, Professor, Babagana Umara Zulum, the Forum resolved as follows:

1. The forum notes the general improvement of the Security situation in the region and calls for continuous collaboration of all the security agencies in the country to sustain the gains. The Forum, condoles Mr. President, the Nigerian Army and the families of the late Chief of Army Staff Major General Ibrahim Attahiru and the other officers who lost their lives while on duty. It also congratulates the newly appointed Chief of Army Staff, Major General Farouk Yahaya on his appointment.

2. The Forum calls on the diplomatic community, partners and donor agencies supporting the region to activate the process of transiting from humanitarian to stabilization and durable solution within the region. This will ensure sustainability and give people the opportunity to help themselves out of poverty. This will address socio-economic dimension of insecurity in the region.

3. The Forum also notes the negative impact of drug and narcotic substances in the region and the extent to which it fuels the insurgency and other forms of criminality in the region. It therefore calls for support in the area of stopping drug trafficking and enforcing narcotic control within the region and across the borders.

4. The Forum notes the good work of the Rural Electrification Agency of Nigeria (REAN) and resolved to support the agency to deliver on its mandate within



the region. It however, calls on the agency to intensify working with designated Focal Persons at the individual State level to ensure justifiable spread of projects across the region.

5. While noting the activities of the NEDC as an intervention agency in the region, the Forum expressed deep concern that the level of consultation between the Commission and the various State Governments within the region on project priorities and locations is low and the speed of work on those projects already in place within the region, is slow. The Forum therefore calls on the Commission to consult the various State Governments within the region on priorities for intervention, location of projects and the development of the North East Masterplan. It equally calls for expedited action to complete the existing projects in the region.

6. The Forum notes the technical support on potentials for growth and development of the region especially the Agribusiness Programme using innovative financing model of the Adamawa State Government by the Arewa Research and Development Project (ARDP), and agreed that the research be extended to all the States of the region. Forum therefore directed the management of ARDP to

immediately prepare and submit the project proposal to the NEGF Secretariat for onward transmission to the various States for implementation.

7. The Forum while interacting with the Commissioners of the Federal Character Commission, appreciated their effort at ensuring compliance with the Federal Character principle. It however, expressed dismay over the shortfall in the number of applicants from the region in the recent recruitment into some Federal Agencies. The forum therefore, resolved to follow up with all the concerned agencies to ensure that the region gets its fair share in the recruitments into the concerned agencies.

8. The Forum deliberated extensively on the presentation on the Mambilla Hydroelectric Power Project and noted with dismay, that the project as important as it is, to Nigeria and the North-East sub-region, is surrounded by a lot of contractual encumbrances which have stalled its take-off and realization. The Forum, therefore calls on the President to accord the project the desired seriousness by establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to address the encumbrances and bring the project to reality.

9. In its bid to reposition Education in the sub-region, the Forum has received report from the North East Council on Education. It has taken the Councils' advisory on the improvement of quality and performance of students and teachers screening and training in the region.

10. The next meeting of the Forum is to be held in Damaturu, Yobe State, on Saturday, 9th October, 2021.

Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, FNSE, mni Chairman, North East Governors' Forum (NEGF)/ Executive Governor of Borno State.



NGF advancing Budget and Financial Reporting Reforms to Support SFTAS

Prior to the commencement of the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Programme for Results (PforR), State-level response to advancing fiscal transparency and accountability was low, key budget documents and audited financial statements were mostly not published or at best, published late.

This was evident from the NGF's assessment

of States' performance on the implementation of the Fiscal Sustainability Plan (FSP) introduced in 2016 by the Federal Government, which covered 22 recommended actions aimed at improving fiscal behaviour and aligning both short and long-term sustainability objectives of the Federal and State governments.

However, recommended reforms (including the publication of budgets, financial reports and statements in line with global best practices such

as IPSAS) aimed at improving accountability and transparency recorded, unfortunately, the lowest level of implementation. It stood at 44 percent.

With the SFTAS programme's incentive of performance-based grants and the availability of free technical assistance from the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), all States now publish their budgets, financial reports and audited statements online, on-time and in line with respective standards such as the National Chart of Accounts (NCoA) and



the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). This feat was possible through several advocacy engagements, the development and provision of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) toolkits (containing guidance manuals, videos and reporting templates) to support the budget and financial reporting processes including meeting expected standards. The effort was supported by other capacity building activities as delivered by the NGF over the last 19 months, including virtual advisory bilateral consultative sessions and physical technical walk-through sessions with States' budget and accounting officers to ensure hands-on learning and knowledge transfer from accomplished financial experts.

By 31st July 2020, all States had been able to publish their FY2020 amended budgets online, which was also Covid-19 responsive with at least 10% dedicated to COVID-19 expenditures. Also, all States were able to publish their FY2019 audited



Participants preparing budgets using NGF Approved National chart of Accounts



financial statements by 31st August 2020 and in line with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

Working further with the States through its participatory capacity building process, the NGF was able to support all States to meet the SFTAS 2020 Eligibility Criteria (EC) Part 1, requiring States to prepare, pass and publish their FY 2021 budget online in line with the National Chart of Account (NCoA) by 31st January 2021. Although, the SFTAS programme required States to adopt the administrative/organisational, economic and function segments of the NCoA, NGF's technical assistance provided States with the competence to prepare their budgets according to all segments of the NCoA, hence, the result of comprehensive FY2021 budget published online by all the States.

The NGF reform of improving budget performance reporting and sustaining the preparation of the audited financial statement in line with IPSAS has apparently



become most useful, as results continue to show. All States, except of course, Anambra State, for budget performance report (BPR) Q1 FY 2021, were able to publish their BPR for FY 2021 Q1 and Q2 by the 28th day of the following month past each quarter. The 36 States also published their FY 2020 audited financial statement online by 31st July 2021 – however, this will now undergo intense scrutiny by the Independent Verification Agent (IVA) which is the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation (OAuGF), who will validate States compliance with the publication requirements set out by the SFTAS programme verification protocols.

In sustaining the milestones recorded thus far, the NGF continues to work with the Federal Government, State governments and partners to ensure no State falls off the reform pyramid. Partners include FCDO PERL, BMGF, DAI implemented USAID State-2-State, BudgetIT, the World Bank amongst others.

Currently, 12 States (Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Benue, Edo, Jigawa, Katsina, Kwara, Lagos, Ondo, Osun and Sokoto State) whose CoA required further adjustments are being engaged in a hands-on technical walkthrough workshop organised by the NGF from 26th June – 6th August 2021, to retrofit further their individual CoA towards their FY 2022 budget.

Speaking with the participants at the workshop, Dr Aondowase Nyam, a Director of Budget from Benue State said that the workshop was timely and has no doubt it will address prior existing gaps in their CoA. He expressed confidence that the retrofitted Benue State CoA will avail the State and its citizens a more comprehensive budget for FY 2022. Dr. Nyam applauded the NGF for providing himself and other budget officers an opportunity to learn, especially as the workshop was participatory.



Participants preparing budgets using NGF Approved National chart of Accounts





NGF Executive Director, Research and Strategy, Abdullateef Shittu (r) explaining a point to the SERVICOM CEO/National Coordinator, Mrs. Nnenna Akajemeli (l) and others during the meeting

NGF, SERVICOM partner on service delivery at subnational level

The Nigeria Governor's Forum (NGF) recently met with the Service Compact (SERVICOM), to discuss collaborations on service delivery at the subnational level.

The agency, led by their CEO/National Coordinator Mrs. Nnenna Akajemeli, stated that service delivery is significant, because its impact or lack of it is felt in every facet of life.

She posited that the role of service delivery can't be under-estimated as it is felt in the education system, the economy, business, and infrastructure.

SERVICOM is an initiative of the Federal Government of Nigeria conceived to promote effective and efficient service delivery in MDAs to ensure customer satisfaction and to manage the performance-expectation gap between Government and citizens as well as other members of the public, on issues of ser-

vice delivery.

Speaking at the occasion, she informed that the President has signed two commitments for service delivery. The core mandates are to have a bill passed into service delivery.

According to her, they are to take service delivery into seven states: Ekiti, Delta, Bauchi, Imo, Adamawa, Nasarawa and Katsina. They are also to have a national policy to guide the delivery process.

She further stated that there should be institutionalization of SERVICOM at the federal level.

The standardized levels rendered are for Aviation, Health, Transport, Agriculture, Education, Power, Works & Housing.

"The challenge in the adequate process of communicating service delivery has to do with the fact that some states are battling with insecurity challenges," said Akajemeli.

Speaking further, she mentioned that the SERVICOM team intends to ensure that the same service is rendered to everyone. The goal is that people will be able to come up with enough knowledge and be held accountable.

She explained that for SERVICOM to be properly set up and established in various states, there would need six key steps to establish service in each state.

She posited that they intend to heighten awareness in all states. One of the ways that they have carried this out is through Human Rights Radio, as well as engaged with providers and service stakeholders.

Akajemeli further stated that to facilitate engagement and connectedness with all people is the ultimate objective.

She added that, to achieve this, they would require a focal person for each state.

NGWF, USAID collaborate to end gender based violence

In a rural setting, there is a man dressed in traditional wear threatening to beat his wife.

Then, another gentleman dressed in a suit stops him and tells him that is not how to behave.

The wife of the gentleman comforts the rural woman that was about to be beaten. She states that she was in her position not too long ago. She accepted abuse and thought it was normal.

Time flashes back and the same young woman recalls a moment from a past relationship where she expressed anger towards her boyfriend for not beating her.

She told the boyfriend that because he did not beat her, then that must mean that he does not love her.

The boyfriend consoled his future wife by saying that he would never lay his hands on her. That he would be by her side, and they would work through the challenges by obtaining counselling. The play ended.

The above dramatization marked the start of the official launch of USAID's MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership,

Against this backdrop, the Nigeria Governor's Wives Forum (NGWF), together with the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) have called for an emergency solution to tackling gender-based violence in the country.

Speaking at the occasion, the Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline K. Tallen, informed she had a meeting with the Nigeria Governors' Forum, where it was agreed to call for an emergency against gender-based violence.

Mrs Tallen, also commended the Nigeria Governors Wives Against Gender Based Violence, for their commitment to ending gender-based violence.

The minister said this at the official launch of USAID's MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership, where she said, forming the coalition expedites discovering challenges relating to human rights violation against women and girls.

She further stated that the World Health Organization has said that 1/3 women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.

In her address, the MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership Project Director, Chioma Oduenyi, said the initiative is to strengthen the multi-sectoral mechanisms and address the contributors to consequences of violence against women and girls.

The primary aim of the initiative, which its expected implementation period starts from August 2021 to 2024, is expected to address intimate partner violence, sexual violence and early child and forced marriage.



AGRIBUSINESS ROUNDTABLE SERIES: Policy Reforms and Investment Priorities in Cashew Nuts Value Chain

In a virtual roundtable series held recently with the World Bank, the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat, the National Cashew Association of Nigeria, and the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria, discussed some policy reforms and investment priorities in the cashew nuts value chain.

Mr. Pier Mantovani, who is from the World Bank, said that the cashew roundtable is part of a series and that there will be other roundtables for cassava and rice. There would also be a roundtable discussion dedicated to the financial sector.

Dr. S.O. Ibiremo, Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria stated that they are into areas of processing and utilization of the crops for social issues especially cashew.

He stated that all research efforts have a high yielding material. They have been using seed because the material is stable.

They primarily deal with cashew husbandry. They use fertilizer to manage the soil. They stated that many fields are over-grown and thus need fertilization.

"Some farms are old and need to be replaced with

material that will help the environment."

Mr. Ibiremo further stated that there needs to be a collaboration. The issue of Biotechnology is also very important.

Mr. Sotonye Anga, from The National Cashew Association of Nigeria said that cashew is the only crop where policy reforms and investment matters.

He added that in Nigeria, cashew is a valuable crop. "There is great potential for cashew in poverty reduction, women empowerment and youth employment. These efforts are major. We need to face these challenges especially in the youth sector," said Mr. Anga.

Mr. Anga further stated that the goal is to obtain medium to long-term financing structure. Farmers need to have access to the credit.

Mr. Elliot Mghenyi from the World Bank also delivered a presentation for the virtual series.

He began with comparing Nigeria to Vietnam. He said that this comparison would prove beneficial because Vietnam has emerged as a global leader in agribusiness and a major exporter of cashew nuts and other commodities



in Nigeria's agribusiness sector.

Mr. Mghenyi provided information that in 2019, Vietnam generated export earnings of at least US \$3 billion from the following commodities – cashew nuts, rice, cassava, fish, coffee, tea, black pepper, and rubber.

The commodities generated a total agricultural export revenue of US \$40 billion.

The access to remunerative export markets has increased returns of investments for agribusiness and raised the incomes of farmers.

He also added that jobs have been created in many agriculture value chains. For example, cashew processing industry in Vietnam is a major employer with each facility employing about 2,000- 3,000 people on average and the largest facilities employing about 12,000 people.

The rise in agriculture wages and farmer incomes contributed to about 75 percent of the poverty reduction in rural areas between 2010 and 2018.

He stated that Nigeria was once leading as a cashew nuts provider, but they lost their position. Nigeria now ranks as the 13th in the world and 8th in Africa in terms of production volume.

Mr. Mghenyi further stated that there are lessons that can be learned from developing cashew nuts value chain.

One of the lessons is that increase farmers access to high yielding and drought resistant varieties.

The countries that actively replace old orchards with improved, high yielding and early maturing varieties have been able to steadily

increase cashew nuts production.

Another lesson learned is that an improved enabling environment can help to facilitate vertical coordination.

Currently, in Nigeria, there is no specific sector policy for cashew nuts to coordinate actions among the various stakeholders.

However, Vietnam has not only prepared a policy strategy, but they guide all aspects of development of the cashew nut industry and develop standards for trading of RCN.

He highlighted that Nigeria needs to strengthen the export promotion and rationalize the various fees and export subsidies. Nigeria also needs to strengthen the role of CRIN and improve farmer access to seedings across the states.

The last lesson learned is that removing barrier to RCN imports from neighboring countries to increase utilization of domestic processing capacity. Currently, RCN imports to Nigeria to attract import duties of 20 percent – same as imports of processed kernels.

Also, they need to move up the value chain and develop niche, branded, and differentiated cashew products for direct selling to final consumers.

During the virtual series, there was a roundtable discussion. Some of the questions around cashew nuts involved:

- Why has Nigeria not developed a cashew nuts policy?
- What are the most groundbreaking ideas that should be included in any new policy for cashew nuts sub-sector?
- What agencies are responsible for provision of technical support such as advisory and extension services to farmers?
- Was there any form of incentives or funds for cashew farmers at the States /Federal government level?

The representative for the Nigeria Commodity Exchange said that NCE is a wholesale market established for price discovery. This is the only way farmers can really get a good reward for their labour.

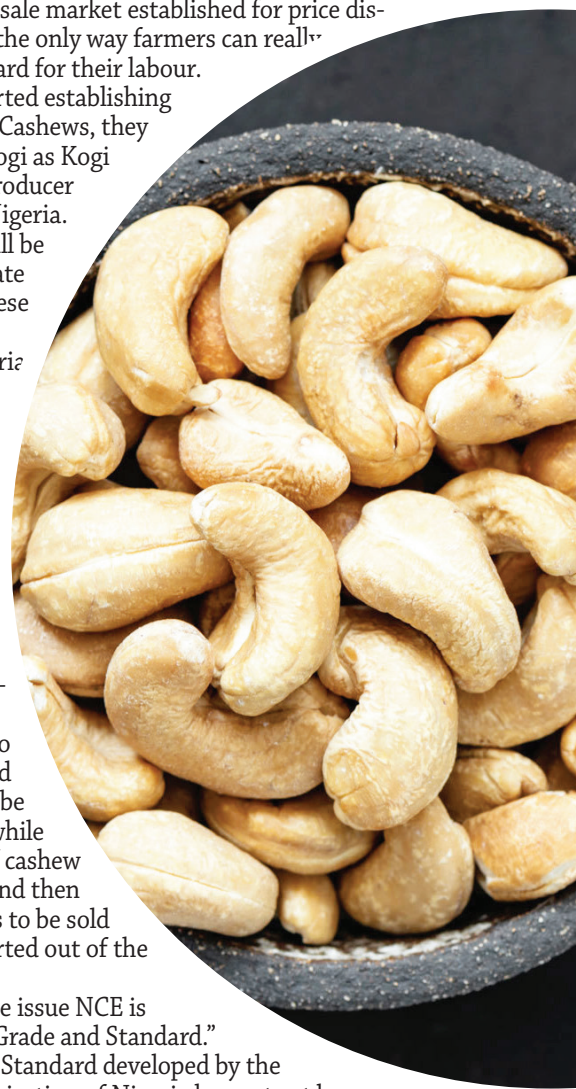
NCE has started establishing warehouse for Cashews, they started with Kogi as Kogi is the reding producer of Cashew in Nigeria. Warehouses will be built in Imo state and Enugu. These are also places known in Nigeria for Cashew production.

NCE aims to help farms bulk their cashew production and store in the warehouse. Once this is done, the warehouse receipt will be issued to the farmers and then, they will be able to wait a while for the price of cashew to appreciate and then sell it to buyers to be sold locally or exported out of the country.

Presently, the issue NCE is having is the "Grade and Standard." The Grade and Standard developed by the Standard organisation of Nigeria has not yet been exposed to the actors in the value ship – this is vital so all farmers can comply to the grade and standard.

It was also agreed that the Security and Exchange committee will work with the Standard Organisation of Nigeria and go round the country, especially in states where cashew is produced in large amounts to ensure everyone in the value ship will determine which cashews are acceptable in the international market.

Preliminary work is being done on how to expose the grade and standard already developed by SON (Standard Organisation of Nigeria). By third quarter of this year, Nigeria Commodity Exchange aims to have warehouses in Osun state, Imo, and Enugu State.



THE COUNTRIES THAT ACTIVELY REPLACE OLD ORCHARDS WITH IMPROVED, HIGH YIELDING AND EARLY MATURING VARIETIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STEADILY INCREASE CASHEW NUTS PRODUCTION



A Governor, His Shoes... *and other stories*



Ikpeazu displaying his shoes

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State is a man of many surprises. First, no one had expected him to carry out his announcement back in May 2021, that he was enrolling in a local footwear academy to learn how to make shoes.

But he did just that, to the surprise of many, and recently, displayed the first pair of sandals he made as a student of the Aba-based Footwear Academy.

In an interactive session with journalists, the governor presented the pair of sandals as he beamed with smiles.

Ikpeazu had announced his enrolment in the academy in May, 2021, urging Nigerians to patronise made in Nigeria products as a way of boosting the economy.

He also said that since he came into power in 2015, he has been wearing only locally made footwears and clothes.

In the same vein, Governor Ikpeazu reemphasized the need for Nigerians to take pride in and patronize locally made products as a way of boosting the local economy.

The Governor was speaking when he received a delegation from a local company engaged in the production of electrical cables, CUTIX Plc who visited him at Government Lodge, Aba. He said if Nigerians patronize locally made products, the local manufacturers would not meet the demands of the citizens not to talk of exporting them, and stressed the need for Nigerian manufacturers to begin to blow their own trumpets and challenge themselves by constantly improving on their products.

Governor Ikpeazu used the opportunity to inform his guests that the Enyimba Economic City when

fully realized would be the only Free Trade Zone in Nigeria with uninterrupted power supply. He added that the zone would provide a manufacturing platform for people of the South East zone. He told the delegation to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Enyimba Economic City.

He commended the entrepreneur for his contributions to the locally made products and congratulated him for blazing the trail in electricity cables. He assured them that his administration will partner with the company by patronizing them and giving them the opportunity to handle the electrical works in some ongoing projects.

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu made it clear that amongst the present crop of Nigerian Governors, he remains the champion of Locally Produced Goods

and assured that he will continue to canvass the use of locally produced goods.

Similarly, Ikpeazu also shocked many when he announced that he lives in a three-bedroom apartment in the city of Aba.

Giving reasons why he stays in a 3-bedroom apartment, away from the classy duplexes and mansions of the statehouse in the state capital, Aba, Ikpeazu said he wants to live among his people and get used to life when he leaves office.

"I have spent time in my lodge in Aba. It is a three-bedroom apartment. I don't know how many governors can reside in this kind of place.

"But I stay here because I want to keep my eyes on the fact that I'm the Governor today, but I will not be the Governor tomorrow.

"I won't take myself too far away from how I live my life. I will work hard to the point that somebody coming after me will find it difficult to operate unless he is running on this same lane," he said.

Ikpeazu also addressed the subject of who will succeed him in 2023. He said that can only be decided by God.

He explained that nobody believed he would become governor in 2015 but God had the final say.

Ikpeazu further reminded public office holders in the State that it is not only proper, but

mandatory to declare their assets before they begin to function in their official capacities, whilst also directing the Secretary to the State Government and relevant officers to ensure every public officer complies with the constitutional obligation for assets declaration.

The Governor was speaking while receiving in audience a delegation of the newly posted State Director, Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), Abia State, Mr. Abel Sunday who called on him at Government Lodge, Aba. He said, henceforth, no public office holder would be sworn-in unless there is evidence that such individual has declared his assets.

The Governor however implored the Code of Conduct Bureau to play the role of an enabler by find ways of encouraging individuals to willingly declare their assets through capacity building, seminars, etc.

He said that despite serving as a watchdog, the Code of Conduct Bureau should go about its duty with a friendly disposition in order not to scare people away, saying that he understands the important role of the Bureau in holding public officers accountable.

According to him, if public officers continue to see the Code of Conduct Bureau as a stumbling block, they would always device means of evading assets declaration.



Nigeria's Agric sector should be competing with oil, says Fayemi

Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Chairman, Dr John Kayode Fayemi has said that the country's agriculture sector is significant and should be just as competitive as the oil sector.

Dr Fayemi spoke at a virtual meeting between the Nigeria Governors' Forum and the World Bank on Policy Reforms and Investment Priorities in Agribusiness in Nigeria.

He stated that there should be programs to aid farmers, garner access to land, capital, market, and special agriculture zone program.

The Chairman added that farms need to grow 5% to 6% to achieve the goal of having 6 million jobs created for Nigerians by 2024.

He added that the National Economic Roundtable Summit Group would look forward to exploring the resolutions that are achieved from today's presentation and discussion.

"I applaud the World Bank for this initiative. We also applaud the willingness of the staff to participate," said Mr Fayemi.

The World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Mr Shubham Chaudhuri says that the engagement with the forum and the main partners at the state level plays a critical role to transforming the Agribusiness to be the pathway for diversification.

Mr Chaudhuri says that the government's role is to open space for private investments and firms to expand and grow.

He further stated that the government's role is to facilitate the process. They should focus on the follow-through process and implementation is key.

Mr Elliot Mghenyi, a Senior Economist at World Bank said that agriculture should be seen as an industry.

He added that the agricultural sector has proven to be resilient in all facets, especially as it relates to its impact on COVID.

"Agriculture features prominently in the diversification agenda, and it has proven to be resilient in that it protects the livelihoods of many people during tough economic times when policy dialogue on diversification tends to dominate," said Mr Mghenyi.

Research also shows that agriculture was the only sector without negative growth during the 2015-2016 and 2020 recessions.

People who have lost their jobs in more volatile sectors retreat to productive employment in agriculture, further reinforcing the sectors resilience.

The off-farm agri-business sector outperformed the overall economy in GDP

growth, jobs creation and labour productivity growth.

The GDP in the off-farm agri-business segments grew on average by 5.3% annually compared to 3.7% economic wide.

The jobs in the off-farm agri-business grew on average by 3.5% annually compared to 2.5% economy wide.

The labour productivity (GDP per worker) grew by 1.8% annually compared to 1.2% economy wide.

The value chains with the potential to create the jobs are traditional cash crops followed by cassava, rice, oilseeds, and pulses.

As part of the webinar presentation, Mr Bankole Allibay spoke about Land Reforms as the way to facilitate responsible agribusiness investments.

He states that without land, you can't have any agricultural activity. The quality of land in agriculture determines productivity.

He said that a majority that engages in land reform do it at a household level.

"When we lose land, we lose identity as a people. That is why we must make sure that land is being use productively," said Mr Allibay.

Land plays a unique role in human and economic development by providing the foundational natural resource base for agricultural production, industrial development, and physical infrastructure. However, land-based investments are often risky due to various social, environmental, and economic factors. Regulators and investors bear the responsibility to mitigate the risks and promote sustainable investments that generate widely shared benefits.

Land provides foundational natural resource base for agricultural production to provide food and non-food products.

- Industrial development
- Infrastructure provision (e.g. transport and power)

- Ecosystem services to humans and wildlife
- Household incomes and livelihoods
- Shelter and security

However, there are a few risks that are associated with land-based investments such as

- Development induced economic and physical displacement
- Land-based conflicts and social unrest
- Loss of ecosystem services and natural resources degradation
- Loss of livelihoods and local food security
- Disempowerment and loss of cultural heritage

As it relates to land intensive investments in agriculture, there are certain frameworks that guide the principle.

The overarching principles ensures that investments occur transparently, are consistent with and contribute to policy objectives such as poverty reduction, food security and jobs.

The principles on recognizing and protecting land rights: it includes rights rooted in statutory law, customary and traditional tenure systems.

The principles on state land acquisition and resettlement.

The principles related to ensuring environmental and social sustainability.

The FRILIA principles aim to achieve the following.

- Create an enabling environment for investments and improved investor confidence, thus mitigating conflicts arising from competing claims on land allocated to investors.

•Sustainable economic development and growth rooted in environmental and social stability. The FRILIA enables complementary investments on land in growth clusters.

- Protect the rights and economic opportunities of local communities to ensure they benefit optimally from large scale investments, thus enhancing shared prosperity and for broad-based welfare gains from land-based investments

•Enables participation of all stakeholders in decision making around land acquisition and utilisation. This approach facilitates capacity

building and transfer of technical knowhow to local communities and empowers the communities to participate in their own development

•Establishes mechanisms for accountability of government institutions by providing toolkits and checklists to formalize the decision process on land acquisition and allocation

•Effective mitigation of potential environmental and social risks associated with land intensive investments.

The Commissioner of Kaduna State, Hajiya Halima Lawal spoke about land reforms and how the FRILIA principles have benefited her in her state.

She said that Kaduna State has learned from the program. They have brought in multi-level stakeholders together. They also have a multi-agency platform to share knowledge.

Hajiya Lawal said that transparency is one of their binding issues. When they carry out their activities, they ensure to get feedback from the communities they engage in.

Through meetings, people can derive ideas from them.

"We look to investors to be confident to support them in their rights. We try to ensure that all principles are taken into consideration. We aim to transform agriculture in not just Kaduna State but Nigeria as a whole."

Hajiya Lawal added that as far as toolkits, we have implemented the first phase. This is a good platform for us to share ideas and take some key points.

She concluded that she hopes that other states would also take advantage of this platform.

At the virtual event, the Commissioner from Ogun State, Adeola Odedina also spoke about the developments in her state.

She said that there has been the signing of the Executive Order by the present sitting Governor of Agriculture Land Committee by the state.

She added that FRILIA is complimentary to what is being used in Ogun state.

"Ogun State has the highest concentration of agriculture in the state. Without FRILIA principles, it would have been difficult for us to deal with the issues in our state. We focus on getting social assurance," said Odedina.

Furthermore, Odedina added that FRILIA provided them with the right working documents to deal with issues. Through FRILIA, they have set a huge agenda for themselves. The Anchor Borrowers Program is also a testimony with over 1,000 people having contributed towards the program.





NEWS FROM THE STATES

Emmanuel Inaugurates Ikot Oku Ikono Flyover In Akwa Ibom

The Ikot Oku Ikono area of Uyo in Akwa Ibom State came alive, as joyous citizens trooped out for the inauguration of the new flyover by former President Olusegun Obasanjo at the behest of Gover Udom Emmanuel.

Inaugurating the flyover, Chief Obasanjo commended Governor Udom Emmanuel for the successes he had recorded so far in the state.

A statement by the State government said Obasanjo expressed joy that as one of the supporters of the governor during his second term bid, he was proud that Mr. Emmanuel had continued to bring his financial expertise to bear in the management of the resources of Akwa Ibom State, especially in the face of global challenges.

Obasanjo, who praised the developmental strides of Governor Emmanuel said "My performing governor, my active governor. I have been here on a number of occasions. When you were asking the people to give you a second term, you told me what you have done and



The new Oku Iboku flyover

what you had in mind to do. I am very happy that you have not let me down and you have not disappointed the good people of Akwa Ibom state. What you have here is worth celebrating anywhere in the world."

Speaking, Governor Udom Emmanuel who described former President Obasanjo as the father of Nigeria, declared the occasion

a celebration of God's wisdom, creativity, idea and of what God could use human mind to achieve in a period of economic recession and Covid-19.

Commending the host communities for their support to his administration, Governor Emmanuel, who assured the communities in the area that the design for rehabilitation of all the diver-

sions in the area will be completed by ending of August, promised to deliver three new transformers to the area within the next one month.

On his part, the State Commissioner for Works and Fire Service, Prof Eno Ibanga expressed satisfaction that the contract, which was awarded on July 15, 2019 and expected to be delivered in two years was commissioned

on July 16, 2021, Covid-19 interruptions notwithstanding.

"This project was initiated two years ago, and if you remove the COVID-19 year you will see that this work has been done within just a year.

"What we are doing is to commission the flyover to allow for free flow of traffic. We are giving Akwa Ibom people a quality flyover," he added.

According to the Commissioner, the one-kilometre flyover has a 15 metre dual carriage way, 2.4 kilometre sleek lane, 1.5 metre walk way and a 2.2 kilometre drain to take water to the outfall drain.

The the Regional Manager of Julius Berger, the Project Contractors, Mr Juergen Fischer, who commended Governor Udom Emmanuel for his commitment to the timely delivery of the project, said the management of the company was grateful for the confidence reposted in them and commended the people of the state for their patience and cooperation while the project lasted.

Akwa Ibom Records Another First In Sports

Governor Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom state recently led top government officials, including the Deputy Governor, Mr Moses Ekpo, the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Aniekan Basse and other state House of Assembly Members, the state executive council members and members of extra ministerial departments,

local government chairmen, as well as numerous other sports loving Akwa Ibomites to watch the historic emergence of Akwa United as Champions of the Nigeria Football Professional Football League (NPFL).

Akwa United spanked visiting MFM FC, Lagos by 5 goals to 2 to emerge champions of the 2020/2021 Profession-

al League Season, with a match to spare.

The champions' trophy and winners medals were immediately presented to the team by the Chairman of the Nigerian Football League Management Committee, Shehu Dikko.

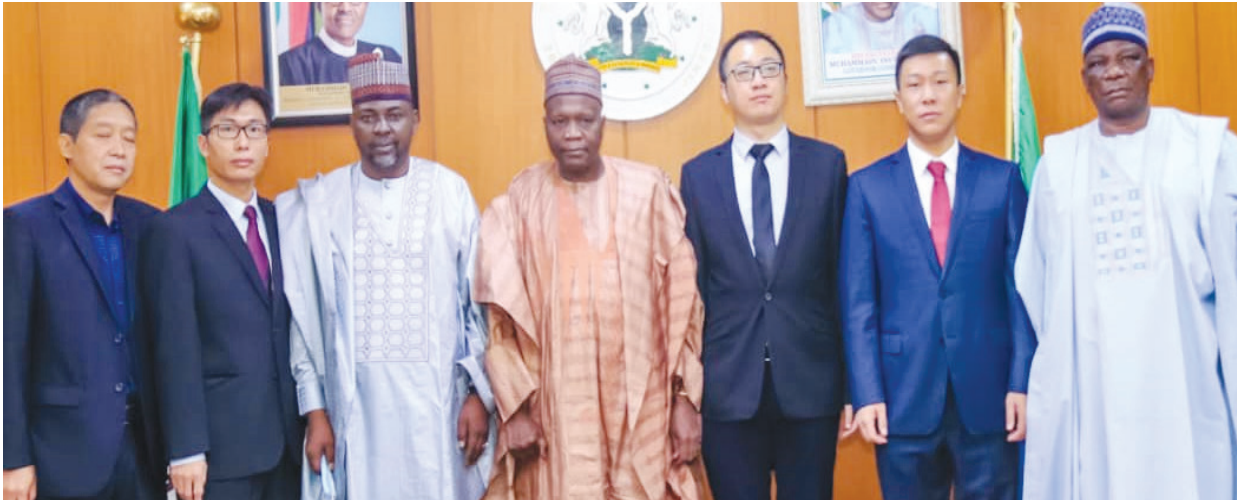
The team had earlier in the life of Governor Emmanuel's administration won the Federations Cup twice.



Gov Udom Emmanuel (R) receiving the NPFL trophy won by Akwa United for the 2020-2021 season at the Nest of Champions Stadium in Uyo, recently



NEWS FROM THE STATES



Governor Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State (middle), flanked by officials of Chinese conglomerate, Sinoma International Engineering Company Limited, and officials of an indigenous company, Madugu Cement during the meeting at Government House, Gombe, recently.

Inuwa parleys Chinese on 5 Million metric tonnes of cement

Gombe has started reaping the benefits of its new status as number one state in terms of ease of doing business with a Chinese conglomerate, Sinoma International Engineering Company Limited, in partnership with an indigenous company, Madugu Cement coming to establish a five million metric tonnes Cement Factory in Kembu and Kwali districts of Akko and Yalmatu Deba Local Government Areas of the State.

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya recently met with the investors at the Government House where he informed them that with the prevailing atmosphere of peace and tranquility in the State, coupled with the hospitality of its people, Gombe is equally endowed with human and natural resources suitable for investors to explore for and cause a social and economic change.

He explained that in order to put the State on the path of progressive development, his administration has revamped the health and other critical sectors and institutionalised policies and programmes that will enhance and boost economic activities in the State.

Governor Inuwa further explained that the location of Gombe at the centre of the North East makes it a hub for robust commercial activities in the sub-region which has a market population of about 25 million people.

"Your coming here is very apt and we welcome you most profoundly because we benefited from the existence of the one and only cement company in the sub-region, in fact in the whole of the North we have only 4 cement plants; those of Obajana, Sokoto, then Gboko and that of Ashaka; so any number on top of these ones will only improve on our economic activities, improve on our infrastructure to the people of the sub-region".

Gombe partners chemical coy on rice production, agro-allied ventures

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has assured investors that Gombe State is ready and willing to receive and partner any individual or group wishing to advance the economy of the state through legitimate business, that will at the long run guarantee job creation and enhance productivity.

The Governor who stated this when he granted audience to a delegation from Nomer Group, owners of Notore Company led by its chairman Mr. Jite Okoloko at the Government House, Gombe.

Governor Yahaya informed his guests that his administration has concluded arrangements and processes for the establishment of the Gombe Industrial Park that has provision for agro-allied industries with the compliment of the 40 megawatts Dadin kowa Hydro-electricity plant.

"So that will be an opportunity for you to expand more knowing fully well that you are equally interested in Agricultural production not

only in producing fertiliser and chemicals. Aside from the Dadin Kowa Dam we have two more Dams making it 3 all-together, Balanga Dam and Cham Dam and even along the coast of Gongola river basin that comes from Plateau state through Bauchi, through Gombe and ends at Kiri and Numan joining river Benue there is a lot of fertile land that needs the attention and the cooperation of people that have the knowledge, finances and the capacity to increase productivity. So, your idea of coming to see how you can produce rice is a very welcome development to us. We shall join hands with you to achieve that lofty objective".

He said the location of Gombe at the centre of the North East and being the most peaceful among the six states in the zone with number one status in ease of doing business, places it at a vantage position of production, marketing and distribution.

The Governor disclosed

that the North East has a market of about 22 million people and that being the most peaceful State, the people inter-relate not only with the remaining 5 states but with Kano, Kaduna and other parts of the north and Nigeria in general.

"Not only that, Cameroon which is at our southern end through Adamawa and Borno and Chad and even Niger Republic through Yobe and Borno States are all close to us and we have very good and peaceful business relationship with them but not for the issue of this insurgency which we have been able to overcome and which we are trying to make sure it doesn't extend to other parts of the north East".

The Governor urged the management of Notore Company Plc to feel free and explore more possibilities because the State is not only blessed with arable land and people but with solid minerals and human resources.

He noted that if such an

army of skilled and unskilled youths are left without some form of engagement, they can pose security threat not only in the State but the country as a whole.

"So, we will like you to assist and consolidate on business, agriculture and in financial activities and in any other circumstance that you can help us to grow the economy of Nigeria".

Governor Inuwa Yahaya assured the company that himself and those representing the State at the National Assembly and Federal Executive Council are ready to tie their services to the company so that its lofty objectives can be achieved.

Notore Chemicals Industries Plc is one of the leading fertiliser and agro-allied companies in Africa. The principal activities of the Company are to manufacture, treat, process, produce, supply and deal in nitrogenous fertilizer and all substances suited to improving the fertility of soil and water.



NGF Launches Peace Initiative To Tackle Insecurity, Conflicts, Violence

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he Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) recently launched a Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI) to tackle insecurity, conflicts

and violence in the country.

Chairman of the Forum, Dr Kayode Fayemi, while launching the initiative in Abuja, said there was urgent need for consensual action on security governance.

Fayemi, who is also the Governor of Ekiti, said the launch of PISI heralded an important milestone for NGF as it seeks to build a more inclusive and collaborative platform to drive an urgent country-wide response to the security challenge Nigeria was facing.

"One of the key areas where there is urgent need for consensual action today is security governance, given the escalation in the spate of violence and coordinated criminal activities that have undermined government authority and waned public trust in recent times.

"The level of insecurity across parts of the country is not only eroding citizens' safety and peoples means of livelihood, it is also threatening the expression of the rights of all Nigerians."

Fayemi said the security crisis had been attributed to several factors – including an oversized population and the proliferation of small arms and light

weapons in the country.

He also listed rising ethnic conflicts, with different ethnic groups subsumed in conflicts and pitched against one another and mass displacement of persons from their areas of residence.

"Although the Nigerian government has intensified efforts to tackle the security and near humanitarian crisis, serious underlying socio-economic issues mean that the solution to the problem requires more than a security action.

"Unexpectedly, the COVID-19 pan-



demic is also changing the security landscape. Existing risks have been intensified while new risks have emerged, including rising social tensions, as we saw from the ENDSARS protests.

"The new reality has seen the rise of non-state actors such as the Eastern Security Network (ESN) the Western Nigeria Security Network—also known as Amotekun—in the South West and several groups in the South-South region and other parts of the country.

"Ultimately, how well we respond to the security challenge depends on the level of collaboration between state and non-state actors.

"I believe this dialogue will help to significantly contribute to a country-wide response to the security challenges in the country among other developmental issues.

"To consolidate on the measures taken by individual state governments and regional bodies

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IT IS A POSITIVE INITIATIVE WHICH I AM CONFIDENT WILL STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT FOR SECURITY IN THE COUNTRY



of state governors, this PISI will help establish strategic dialogues and a mechanism to stimulate collaborative responses among stakeholders on conflict and security at the Federal, state and civil society level.

"It is a positive initiative which I am confident will strengthen the governance arrangement for security in the country."

Fayemi said state governments were committed to the ideals of the initiative, adding that many had already begun different levels of collaborative arrangements on these concerns.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said that peace and stability would be achieved when the causes of conflict in the society were managed through strong, fair and responsive governance mechanisms, whether at community, state or Federal level.

The Development Director of the Office, Chris Beecroft, in his remarks at the lunch said the use of the police and army would always be only part of the solution.

"Greater emphasis needs to be placed on reconciliation, mediation, arbitration and access to justice— all vital components of a vibrant, resilient and effective social contrast."

Beecroft said that conflict represented an existential threat to Nigeria's unity and its development, adding that Nigeria faced peace and security



challenges.

“The rise in conflict risks destabilising Nigeria’s democracy in the run-up to the 2023 elections.

“There is an active insurgency in the North East; farmer-herder conflicts are extending across the country; resource conflicts in the Delta; tension in the South-East; and banditry in the North West.

“Conflict destroys lives, destroys livelihoods, destroys hope and ambition for the future. Conflict represents an existential threat to Nigeria’s unity and its development,” Beecroft stated.

He blamed this on the injustice and impunity, as well as weak justice institutions in the country.

He called for job creation for young Nigerians for them to have a stake in a prosperous and peaceful Nigeria.

He added that “with the right commitment, dedications and support, there are solutions.”

Beecroft stated that the UK FCDO recognised the important role the NGF played in setting the peace and security agenda and in building state and community level structures and institutions to reduce violence and

respond to conflict and insecurity across Nigeria.

“The UK is pleased to have been able to support this initiative and is committed to continue working with the NGF in advancing its peace and security agenda,” he said.

Former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar (rtd) in his remarks, stressed the need for inter-agency collaboration among security agencies to tackle insecurity in Nigeria.

Abubakar, Chairman of National Peace Committee, who was represented by Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Bishop Matthew Kukah said without the collaboration, addressing the challenge would be difficult.

He said the committee was ready to work with any institution and organisation to achieve peace in Nigeria.

Hajia Sadiya Farouk, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development said job creation was key in addressing insecurity in Nigeria.

Farouk, who was represented by the Senior Special Adviser to the Minister, Dr Umar Bindu said the ministry was keen in job creation.

She stressed the need for Nigeria to also harness its potential in the space technology as well as verse education and research institutions to tackle insecurity.

Highlights of the occasion included the inauguration of PISI Technical Committee and panel discussion on “conflict trends and efficacy of current response to conflict and insecurity in Nigeria.”



Some scenes from the Peace Initiative To Tackle Insecurity, Conflicts, Violence



A NEW FACE AT NGF

Eghosa Michael Omoigui is Head, Stakeholder Relationship. In this capacity, he will be optimizing key relationships of the Secretariat. He will also be coordinating the SDG implementation efforts at the subnational level, supporting the implementation of climate change strategies and lastly, facilitating the implementation of the NGF-NESG Economic Roundtable (NNER) strategy towards subnational competitiveness.

He comes to the Nigeria Governors' Forum with 16 years private and public sector experience in:

- Project Management & Delivery
- Research, Strategy & Development
- Banking and Credit portfolio management
- Public and civil service Institutional reforms consulting
- Team Building, Capacity Development and Stakeholder management
- Big Data Presentation (with proficient use of Tableau and Microsoft Office suites).

A trained Project Management Professional (PMP) and a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI), his experiences span managing Innovative revenue generation and Institutional turnaround projects. Eghosa had previously been a consultant to the NGF secretariat in the capacity of developing multi-year Strategic Plans and co-authoring human resource capacity development guide for State Internal revenue Services.

Prior to joining the NGF, he worked as a consultant to various consulting firms such as Compliance Professionals Plc (CPP) and Greenfields Consulting and Allied Services Limited, where he developed and delivered institutional reforms in both Kaduna and Edo State governments in the capacity of Project Manager and Consultant, respectively. While consulting for CPP, he was also the Project manager for the World bank Taxpayer (Large and Medium firms) Perception Research which entailed a survey coordinated by the Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG) during the 2018 summit and delivered a research and policy note of the findings.

Between 2011 and 2015 he worked with Venture Garden Group (VGG) Nigeria in the Aviation technology (Avitech) division as a Project Manager with remarkable performance on the Aviation Revenue Automation Project (ARAP) for the Federal Ministry of Aviation. In 2007, he joined the First City Monument Bank (FCMB) and later came a Relationship Officer in the Energy group of the corporate banking division of the bank where he was a team member in downstream petroleum products and assets acquisition transactions for the industry.

He obtained a B.Sc. Economics in 2005 and a master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) in 2014 both from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.





Ebonyi's World Class Varsity of Medical Sciences as Umahi's Legacy

History was made today in Abuja, the Nigeria's capital city as King David University of Medical Sciences built by the administration of the Governor of Ebonyi State His Excellency Engr. Chief David Nweze Umahi FNSE FNATE (Akubaraoha) was approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The University is the 197th University in Nigeria and the most beautiful University Complex in Africa.

The King David University of Medical Sciences (KDUMS) Uburu, Ohaozara LGA, Ebonyi State is designed as an ultra-modern 21st century state-of-the-art International Medical University. The University's central goal is for specialized manpower development in the most conducive environment in all aspects of medical specialties with the highest form

of professionalism, ethics and excellence.

The University is established with the vision and mission that are consistent with the Nigerian National Health Policy (NHP) and Strategy which is targeted at achieving Health for All Nigerians. The University is programmed to provide the manpower needs to address the challenge of human resources for health in line with new global realities and trends that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and emerging health issues, particularly with respect to global health challenges (eg., Covid-19 pandemic).

Vision

The vision of The University is to achieve the highest form of quality manpower development for healthcare and other service delivery for all persons irrespec-

tive of gender, race, religion, and socio-economic status.

Mission

The mission of the University is to serve mankind with the highest form of professionalism, ethics and excellence by training highly qualified health professionals who will work to improve health conditions, alleviate sickness, suffering and pain through the provision of high quality, efficient, cost-effective and integrated healthcare with compassion and treatment.

Core values

The core values of the University include Excellence, Godliness, Ethics, Compassion, Respect, Delivery, Collaboration, Innovation, Accountability, Learning, Improvement and Sustainability

The Philosophy of the University

It shall be the object, philosophy and aspiration of the University to:

(i) Encourage the advancement of learning in Ebonyi State of Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general;

(ii) Hold out to all persons, without distinction of race, creed, political persuasion or sex, the opportunity of acquiring higher education.

(iii). For the purpose of realizing the object, philosophy and aspiration set out, the University shall, so far as its resources permit:

(iv) Provide such facilities for the pursuit of learning and acquisition of higher education as are appropriate for a University of the highest standing;

(v) Make those facilities available on proper terms to such persons as are equipped to benefit from the use of the facilities.



The Objectives of the University

(i) To build critical competencies and expertise in the health sciences under the most conducive learning environment with the highest form of professionalism, ethics and excellence.

(ii) To foster the spirit of creativity, inventiveness, resourcefulness and entrepreneurship;

(iii) To impact on her products and associates the spirit of patriotism, fairness, impartiality, incorruptibility and justice, and to propagate the ideal equality of all mankind;

(iv) To mobilize all resources both locally and internationally, and work collaboration with other institutions of learning and donor agencies within and outside Nigeria for the advancement of knowledge through research and training;

(v) To provide such facilities that will give training that has concrete relevance to the developmental need of our society; and

(vi) To undertake other activities and ventures that can conveniently be undertaken by the University for the overall benefit of mankind.

Courses offered in the University

- (1). Medicine & Surgery,
- (2). Nursing,
- (3). Medical Laboratory Science,
- (4). Pharmacy,
- (5). Physiotherapy,
- (6). Health Policy & Health Systems,
- (7). Hospital Administration,
- (8). Dentistry,
- (9). Optometry,
- (10). Human Anatomy,
- (11). Physiology,
- (12). Biochemistry,
- (13). Microbiology/Parasitology,
- (14). Biomedical Engineering,
- (15). Public Health,
- (16). Human Nutrition/Dietetics,
- (17). Radiography/Radiation Sciences,
- (18). Traditional, Com



- plementary and Integrative Medicine,
- (19). Industrial Physics/ Astronomy
 - (20). Industrial Mathematics/ Statistics
 - (21). Industrial Chemistry
 - (22). Applied Biology/Biotechnology
 - (23). Computer Science

MAJOR CENTRES/UNIT OF THE TEACHING HOSPITAL

- *Maternal & Child Care Centre:* To undertake all aspects of maternal and child health care including women health, pregnancy, nursing mothers, children healthcare etc.
- *Cancer Treatment/Oncology

- Centre* : To undertake all aspects of cancer/oncology treatment.
- *Eye Centre Centre:* To undertake all aspects of eye care in all specialties.
- *Dialysis Centre:* To undertake renal management and treatment including dialysis.
- *Laboratory Unit:* To cover the four key areas of laboratory services including medical microbiology, haematology/immunology, chemical pathology and histopathology.
- *Radiology Unit:* To undertake all radiology services.
- *Operating Theatres & Suits* : For all aspects of surgical services.
- *Kidney & Liver Transplantation Unit:* For kidney and liver

- transplantation and care.
- *Dialyzer Production Plant* : For the production of dialyzers and other consumables used for dialysis centre.
- *Oxygen Production Plant:* For the production of oxygen required for critical care and other related services.
- *Virology & Quarantine Unit:* For the quarantine and management of viral diseases and highly infectious diseases.
- *Dental Services Unit:* For all aspects of dental care and dentistry.
- *Pharmacy Unit* : For the management and administration of drugs and also for the formulation and compounding of drugs and other pharmaceutical services.
- *Accident & Emergency Unit* : For the prompt management and care for accident and emergency case.
- *Physiotherapy Unit:* For physiotherapy services.
- *Health Information Management Equipment & Systems Unit* : For the computerization of all records and other hospital information.
- *Mortuary Unit:* This is a 48-body capacity. Also incorporated is a chapel for funeral services.
- *Central Sterilizing Supply Department (CSSD):* For all kinds of sterilization services.
- *Laundry Unit* : For all aspects of laundry services.
- *Workshop/Maintenance Unit:* For the purpose of maintenance and servicing of equipment and hospital infrastructure and environment.
- *Catering/Kitchen Unit:* For all aspects of catering services.
- *Waste Management Unit:* For management of all forms of hospital wasters.
- *Administration* : For all administrative related services including personnel and finance matters.



El-Rufai: Knowing what he does best

By Nabilah Hassan Umar

Mallam Nasiru has been a household name in governance. And Undoubtedly, El-Rufai deserves all the accolades and much more for obvious reasons.

Significantly, his approach to governance is unique and result-oriented. In this regard, Kaduna state has been the better for it. For example, the World Bank rated it first in the Ease of Doing Business in Nigeria, amongst all subnationals, in the year 2020. Largely, this ranking was achieved by dint of hard work, due diligence and unwavering focus. In addition, Kaduna State Government was ranked as the subnational that attracted Direct Foreign Investment last year, ahead of Lagos state. In different spheres of Governance, the governor has shown commitment and great dedication to implementation of his policies,

not just leaving them on paper.

One area where the governor has cracked one of the hardest nuts is in the overhauling the Pension Scheme. In 2016, Governor El-Rufai commenced the Contributory Pension Scheme, to replace the Defined Pension Scheme System.

In the Contributory Pension Scheme, the employee contributes 7% monthly while the employer, in this case the state government, contributes 8%. Under this scheme, both the employer and the employee are in -

involved, unlike the Define Benefit Scheme. Every employee in the new scheme is expected to have a Retirement Savings Account (RSA), more like a bank account, into which those contributions are remitted. However, a retiree must have put in 35 years of service or attained the age of 50 years before accessing the pension.

Upon retirement, in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment, the retiree may withdraw a lump sum of money, of not more than 25% of the amount standing to the credit of his Retirement Saving Account (RSA), provided such withdrawals shall only be made after two months of such retirement, and the retiree has not secured another employment. In the old Defined Benefit Scheme, payment of pension was haphazardly done and in some cases, our senior citizens were not paid for several months. There have been traumatizing cases of old and sick people dying on queues just to get their pensions.

However, the El-Rufai administration, with this new policy, has turned the tide in pension payments in Kaduna state for the better. When the administration came on board, it inherited N15bn of pension arrears, and six years later, it has successfully paid N13bn out of that amount. In addition, the government has paid over N13 billion of the current Contributory Pension Scheme as well.

Indeed, there are a few glitches on the pension success story but the government is not to blame. Some public servants that have not registered with any Pension Fund Administrator (PFA). For this reason, the Kaduna Pension Bureau is unable to credit their accounts or transfer their contributions. But as soon as they register with a PFA, the Bureau will transfer the total amount deducted from their salaries into their Retirement Savings Accounts (RSAs).

In addition, some retirees have not started enjoying their pensions. The reason is simple: government inherited a huge backlog from the previous administration and it is adopting the "First-to retire, first-to-be-paid" method to clear the arrears. So, recent retirees are in the queue and as the line inches forward, it will eventually get to their turn. Kaduna state's Putting People

First ideology is committed to putting smiles on its 10 million residents, including senior citizens—that is why Governor Nasir El-Rufai is garnering accolades and awards.



Governor El-Rufai



NEWS FROM THE STATES

New Ebonyi varsity to address human resource challenges

King David University of Medical Sciences (KDUMS), Uburu, Ebonyi State, is set to provide manpower needs to address challenge of human resources in the health sector in line with new global realities.

The institution, built by Ebonyi State governor, Chief David Nweze Uma-



Umahi

hi, is the 197th university in the country. The school, recently given approval by the National Universities Commission (NUC) is designed to cater for specialised manpower development.

The school is to provide manpower needs to address emerging health issues, particularly COVID-19 pandemic. The institution is expected to advance learning and provide facilities for the pursuit of qualitative education.

"The objectives of the university are to build critical competencies and expertise in the health sciences, under the most conducive learning environment with the highest form of professionalism,

ethics and excellence; foster the spirit of creativity, resourcefulness and entrepreneurship; and to propagate the equality of mankind."

The institution offers 23 courses, which include, medicine and surgery, nursing, medical laboratory science, pharmacy, physiotherapy, health policy and health systems, hospital administration, dentistry, and Optometry, among others.

According to the institution's management, the school will operate maternal and child care as well as cancer treatment/oncology, eye and dialysis centres, laboratory, radiology, kidney and liver transplantation units.

Bagudu approves renovation of 36 PHCs in Kebbi

As part of efforts of Kebbi State Government to improve healthcare delivery at grassroots level, Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has approved the renovation of 36 Primary Healthcare Centres across the state.

This was announced by the Honourable Commissioner for Health, Jafar Muhammad in Birnin Kebbi.

He said the renovation of the thirty-six PHCs was under the auspices of Saving One Million Lives Program in the state towards achieving Universal Healthcare coverage for all in the 225 wards of the 21 local government areas of the state.

According to him, already 134 PHCs have been revitalised towards improving quality of healthcare service at the grassroots level.

He averred "The renovation of the 36 PHCs is going to improve healthcare services at the grassroots level in order to revitalize all Primary Healthcare Centres of 225 wards in the state.

"So far in his quest to improve the lives of people especially at the grassroots level, his excellency has revitalised and improved the quality of service in 134 PHCs.

"There will be additional 36 PHCs in the drive to be renovated and revitalised under the auspices of 'Saving One Million Lives' program".

Muhammad added that the renovation of the PHCs would bring about quality service so as to have PHCs with functional pharmacy, water system and laboratory among others at the grassroots level.

The Health Commissioner thanked the Governor for his invaluable support to the ministry of Health in its mandate to deliver quality healthcare services to the people of the state.

The Primary Healthcare Centres to be renovated are Giga Kamarori and Dangaladima PHC, Aliero LGA, Gorun Dikko, Arewa LGA, Lailaba and Wali, Argungu LGA, Bagaye, Jabaka, Augie LGA, Lolo and Gwamba, Bagudo LGA, Randali, Birnin Kebbi LGA, Sabon Birni, Bunza LGA, Buma and Tugan Maizuma, Dandi LGA, Wadako, Danko/Wasagu, Kangi, Gulbin Kuka, Fakai LGA, Tari, Gora Kocido, Gwandu LGA and MCH Jega in Jega LGA.



Ugwuanyi

of PDP in the 17 Local Government Areas; State Chairman of the Traditional Rulers' Council and Local Government Chairmen of the Traditional Rulers' Council.

Ugwuanyi meets Enugu-born aircraft inventor

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has received the young aircraft inventor, Master Emmanuel Maduabuchi Chukwu, an indigene of the state and student of Government Technical College (GTC), Nsukka.

Governor Ugwuanyi also swore in all the 68 Development Centre Administrators whose nominations were recently confirmed by the Enugu State House of Assembly.

A statement by the Commissioner for Information, Nnanyelugo Chidi

Aroh, said the governor's decision to meet with the young aircraft inventor was "in pursuit of his administration's commitment to encouraging scientific and technological innovation in Enugu State".

Aroh disclosed that the parents of the student, the principal of GTC, Nsukka, the Commissioner for Education, and the Chairman of the Science, Technical and Vocational Education Management Board (ST-VEMB) are all invited at the Executive Council.

Those invited for the

swearing-in ceremony, according to the statement, are the 68 Administrators of the Development Centres; the Speaker and members of Enugu State House of Assembly; members of the State Executive Council (EXCO); Chairmen of the 17 Local Government Areas; and Special Advisers to the Governor.

Others are Chairman and Members of the State Working Committee of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Chairmen



Governors Who Were Lecturers

Do you know that some current state governors were university lecturers before? Just like all others who were picked to serve while on the grind, some of the governors were also doing their bits in national development. Meet them:

BEN AYADE

He is an accomplished scholar and a politician. He graduated with B.Sc. (Honours) from the University of Ibadan in Ibadan, Nigeria (1984–1988).

He bagged his M.Sc. in microbiology (1989–1990) and Ph.D in environmental microbiology from the same University of Ibadan (1990–1994). He proceeded to earn a LLB law degree (2006–2010) from Delta State University, Abraka.

Ayade went on to work as a lecturer at Delta State University, Abraka, where he was also appointed Professor.

He was a member of the 7th Senate of Nigeria before becoming the Governor of Cross River State in 2015.

He was re-elected as the governor of Cross River State in the 2019 gubernatorial elections.



OKEZIE IKPEAZU

He is a renowned biochemist and politician.

He graduated with Bachelor of Science in Clinical Biochemistry from the University of Maiduguri in 1984.

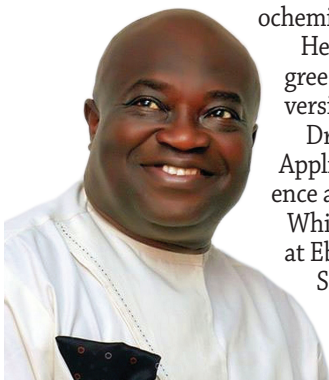
He also earned his Masters in Bi-chemical Toxicology in 1990.

He proceeded to bag a Doctorate Degree in Biochemical Pharmacology from the University of Calabar in 1994.

Dr Ikpeazu became a lecturer I in the department of Applied Biochemistry at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT).

While at ESUT, he was also lecturing on part-time basis at Ebonyi state University in the college of Basic Medical Science.

He is currently the Governor of Abia State. He was elected in April 2015, sworn in constitutionally on May 29 2015.



KAYODE FAYEMI

He is an erudite scholar and teacher whose passion for impacting knowledge at every opportunity is legendary.

He has degrees in History, Politics and International Relations from the University of Lagos and University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). From 1989 to 1992, he earned a Doctorate in War Studies from King's College London, specializing in civil-military relations.

Kayode Fayemi has taught in Africa, Europe, the Americas and Asia.

In October 2014, he returned to the classroom at the state-owned

University of Ekiti. According to him, his decision was borne out of passion to mentor young people, as well as provide the right type of leadership.



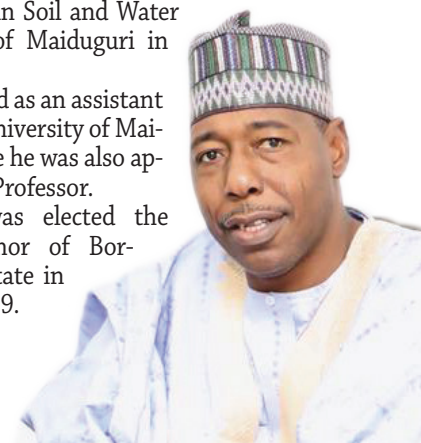
BABAGANA ZULUM

Zulum is an accomplished scholar and a politician who obtained a degree in Agriculture Engineering at the University of Maiduguri.

He proceeded to the University of Ibadan from 1997 to 1998, where he earned a Master's degree in Agriculture Engineering. He also obtained a PhD in Soil and Water Engineering at the University of Maiduguri in 2009.

In 2000, he worked as an assistant lecturer at the University of Maiduguri, where he was also appointed a Professor.

He was elected the Governor of Borno state in 2019.



ABDULLAHI GANDUJE

He is an erudite scholar and a politician in Nigeria.

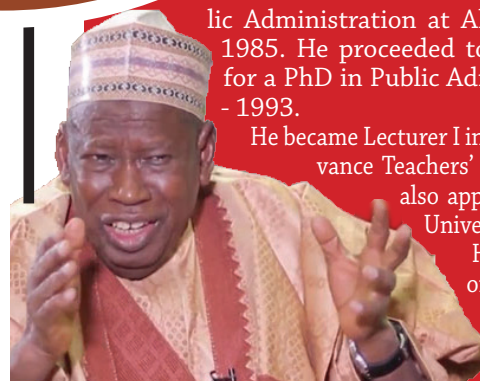
He attended Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for a Bachelor's Degree in Science Education from 1972-1975.

He obtained his Master's Degree in Applied Educational Psychology from Bayero University, Kano in 1979.

He earned another Master's Degree in Public Administration at Ahmadu Bello University in 1985. He proceeded to the University of Ibadan for a PhD in Public Administration between 1989 - 1993.

He became Lecturer I in Educational Psychology at Advance Teachers' College (ATC), Gumel. He was also appointed as Lecture II at Bayero University, Kano UK in 1978.

He was elected the Governor of Kano State in 2015 and was re-elected in the 2019 governorship election.





Governors' Wives who were teachers

Though the office of First Ladies is an informal one, Nigerian Governors' Wives

have continued to change the narrative by complementing on the development strides of their husbands.

But most of them didn't just appear out of the blue, but were successful in their chosen careers.

Amongst them are First Ladies who were teachers before assuming the office of Governors' Wives.



Hasfat Ganduje

She is the wife of Kano State Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje. An astute educationist, born in 1960 in Kano State.

She obtained a Bachelor of Science in Education at the famous Bayero University in 1981 and proceeded to earning a Master of Business Administration in 2004, as well as a Doctor of Philosophy in Administration and Planning in 2015.

She began her career as a teacher at the Faculty of Education of Bayero University and was in 2019 promoted to Associate Professor in Maryam Abacha American University of Niger.



Hadiza Isma El-Rufai

She is the wife of Kaduna state governor, Nasir el-Rufai. She was born on June 21, 1960.

She has a BSc and MSc in Architecture (1983) and an MBA (1992) from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. She worked as a lecturer at the Department of Architecture at Kaduna Polytechnic.

Recently, she became the Chairperson Northern Governors' Wives Forum. As First Lady of Kaduna State, she has donated drugs to sickle cell patients and carried out sundry humanitarian services to alleviate poverty in the state.



Nkechi Caroline Ikpeazu

Born in 1960, she is the wife of the current Governor of Abia State, Okezie Ikpeazu.

She is also an alumnus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and the Enugu State University of Technology (ESUT), and has a Master's degree in Management. She has completed a PhD programme at Abia State University, Uturu.

Nkechi worked as a teacher before becoming an account executive with Camway Ventures in Lagos State.

As First Lady of Abia state, she is involved in providing better healthcare for mothers and children, battling cancer, diabetes, and sickle cell diseases.



Oyo is making remarkable progress under my watch - Makinde

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State recently hosted the media in Ibadan as part of activities marking the second anniversary of his administration.

He spoke on how his government has fared in two years. Excerpts:

How have you executed the mandate given to you by the people of Oyo and what have been the challenges?

I really appreciate you for coming to be with us. From day one, even during the electioneering, we brought out a document, which is our Roadmap for the Accelerated Development of Oyo State, 2019 to 2023. We focused on four major areas: Education, Health, Expansion of our economy through where we think we have the comparative advantage. These are agriculture, agribusiness, agro-processing; and the fourth pillar is Security.

Last week, I visited the Ikere Gorge Dam, because I wanted the focus to shift to what we are trying to do with tourism and solid mineral development.

I can tell you boldly that we are stabilising with some of our programmes. Before I came, Oyo State was already doing well with Cassava, for instance. We had a retreat and I learnt that Oyo State was the second largest producer of Cassava in Nigeria, at that point. So, I asked how many tonnes of Cassava are we producing per annum? And the next question was, how did we get to this point; was it just happenstance or through deliberate action? I asked for an explanation on those actions that we took that got us to that point but I was told the farmers were just cultivating on their own.

So, I said I was not sure the government did anything deliberately to encourage the farmers. I said, now, we have to be deliberate on how we approach things. Now, I feel we have stabilised with some of the deliberate actions that we took after coming into government. We have the best agribusiness practitioner on this continent to come into this government and engaged with all the research institutes around here. In Ibadan, we have the FRIN, CRIN, IITA, and all others. We have people

doing research here and what have we done with their research outcomes to lift our agricultural output? We started approaching them one after the other and we got IITA to sign an MoU with us and it gave us one of its best brains in agribusiness and, from that point, we started the STEP for the young ones out there. We reorganized what they used to call OYSADEP, which was just a drain pipe. We established the Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency (OYSADA) and moved the headquarters to Saki. We did the commissioning of the OYSADA Complex as part of the activities marking the second anniversary of the government. The Rural Community Development Centre at Awe was turned into an incubation centre for agribusiness. Of course, not up to six months in office, COVID-19 hit everywhere and we were faced with different kinds of issues. What we tried to do was to turn this into opportunities. We gave inputs and fertilisers to farmers and assisted them with a lot of other things. So, we believe we have stabilized in that area too. What is next? We have to keep expanding our economy and the next thing for us is solid mineral development, because we are blessed with solid mineral deposits all over the place.

You recently commissioned the 65-kilometre Moniya-Iseyin Road with pomp and fanfare, with a lot of people commending the administration for such a laudable project. How are you replicating this to other areas?

What you saw during the trip between Moniya to Iseyin is almost very similar to most of the things we are doing in every zone of the state. If you move further up, there is Saki Township Road, which we are almost done with. We will commission it shortly. We also flagged off, a few

days ago, the Saki-Igboho-Ogboro road. It is about 45 kilometres. In Oyo, we have also commissioned Akesan Market, which got burnt about 10 months ago, and it is fully reconstructed now. We have inspected the Township Road we are fixing it and we have also gone to Fashola to launch the farm estate. Once you get to the Iseyin Junction and make the next turn, that is the road that will take you to Oyo. We have got approval from the Federal Government to repair it. They said we won't get any refund. But I believe it is the people of Oyo State that are passing through the road, and it is of economic benefit to us all. Once Fashola is fixed on the right, on the left side, you see an expanse of land that goes all the way to Ikere-Gorge Dam. Those are places where we can do irrigation and have production. That axis is extremely important to us and I said that our infrastructure will target our economy. We would not just

that we won't see economic benefits coming out of it. So, that is where we are. In Ibadan, we have the Ajia-Airport Road with a spur to Amuloko ongoing; that is about 21 kilometres and it also sits well with our focus to build infrastructure that targets the economy. There is the Apete-Awotan Road, which we are constructing with concrete. We also have the Akobo-Ojurin Road, which we have

re-awarded, as well as, many others. On a general level, we have the second phase of the Light-Up Oyo State project going on, covering 70 roads and 223.42kms across the state. We are installing LED-technology





streetlights and the focus is to enhance the security of the state and to also enable owners of businesses and services in the state to operate freely without fear of night-time or darkness. That project was initiated when we took over in 2019 and the first phase has been delivered. The second phase has also been progressing and all these are part of our deliberate efforts to address the infrastructure challenge of the state.

What have been the challenges or the constraints, so far?

In terms of the challenges, we are two years on, but we should be celebrating six months, because we came in May 2019 and by January 2020, COVID-19 came up, which is still with us till now and throughout the world. That basically triggered an economic meltdown. But the smart countries are managing themselves. At the national level, we have not been able to manage things well and that has impacted negatively on the states.

A big challenge for us has been the kind of federalism that we are operating. I signed an anti-open grazing law in November 2019 and we could not implement it because when you talk to the Police, they are not willing. They are watching the body language of their folks in Abuja; the IGP and the rest. So, that has been a very big challenge to us. Then, when Amotekun came, we were in total control of their operation and that was why when I operationalized them, I said I should be held accountable for their conduct. But when they tried to implement the anti-open grazing law they were being arrested. I went to the then Commissioner of Police and asked why Amotekun operatives were being arrested even when the Police were supposed to collaborate with them to make the state safer for us. He said people write petitions against them that they killed someone or carried illegal firearms, the Police were the only organisation authorised in Nigeria to investigate those cases. So, if you look through, they are telling us it is almost like the voice of Jacob and the hand of Esau. They didn't want Amotekun to succeed in the first instance. So, we had to pull back and re-engage to let them know that we are actually pushing towards the same objective, which is to make this place safe. You have inter and intra-agency rivalry.

How have you been able to source for the funds to finance these pro-



Ikere Gorge Dam in seyin

jects? Are you borrowing?

Well, you definitely must have seen the release from the Debt Management Office. At this stage, I think Oyo state is probably owing about N90 Billion and about USD200 Million, and since we came in, we took N24 Billion for contract financing and we have not accessed everything. We are probably still around N18 Billion. The USD200 Million was taken by the previous administration for the Ibadan Urban Flood Management Project (IUFMP). Before I came in, they already spent about USD54 Million of that money and they had committed about USD100 Million, as well. For the award packages, they have done the evaluation, selected contractors and it was remaining the final sign-off. I was going to cancel it when I came in because I did not see any need for that but the World Bank came and said it will affect the relationship with Oyo State. So, I said they should go ahead with the commitment and I am the one spending the over USD40 Million remaining right now.

There was a report that you recently reduced the tuition fee for students of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso by 25%. What are your achievements in the area of education?

In the area of education; from the primary up to the junior secondary, they are under SUBEB. When we came in, we discovered that the challenges they were faced with were two or three at most. One is inadequate infrastructure. We saw some of them learning on the bare floor and the buildings were nothing to write home about. The teachers were not motivated

and the education levy for some of them also was burdensome to the extent that Oyo State had the highest out-of-school children in the entire South-west. Students were not just going to school because their parents could not afford the education levy. After I was sworn in, that particular moment, I scrapped the education levy and it has paid off. We have been able to take over 50,000 students off the streets back into the classrooms. We also procured notebooks and textbooks for all public secondary school students. For the ones in Senior Secondary School, we arranged special coaching for them, especially in English and Mathematics and we saw the results with our WAEC and NECO.

Many states have been banning the activities of commercial motorcycle riders because of their nefarious activities. When is Oyo State going to take action?

I have been asked this question many times and my standard response is, for you to have a supply, there must be demand. If no one is boarding okada, they will be out of business. So, if they are filling a gap, it is a different kind of discussion that you need to have. Though we have security issues, unruliness in the behaviour of some okada riders, and all of that, what we need to do is to regulate them. For us to regulate them one thing that is foundational for us is identity management. We want to know who are those riding? They must get a permit. We must know who they are, where they are and the areas they are operating in. We are in the process of doing that. I don't think we should just ban okada

or restrict them to certain areas. I took people to Ojoo to see how many people were boarding okada. From Ojoo to Iwo Road, go and check the number of people that take okadas on that Express road; the number is few and I have tried it more than three times just to convince myself. So, why are people not taking okada on that axis? It is because you have enough Micra cars out there and the road is such that people are moving at a fast pace, and the road is not that great. We went to the old Toll Gate and I asked them to tell me how many people they see boarding okada from there to, say Ogunmakin, the border community between Oyo State and Ogun states. Why are they not doing that? We should create superhighways. How come when I go to my estate at Kolapo Ishola, we don't have okadas in there? If you go inside the IITA, you don't have okadas in there, and few estates like that. Yes, you can see them in some general areas where people going short distances use them. I liken the ban on okada to a Police officer chasing after prostitutes. Yes, it is fine to see them stand by the roadside and you go and arrest them. But that is the supply side, what about the demand side? What have you done to the people demanding the services of those prostitutes? So, the okada is like that. If the transportation system is such that they are filling a gap, it is okay. And for many of them, that is the only legitimate thing they are doing for a living.

Having talked about how far you have gone in just two years, what are your goals for the next two years?

Yes, we will continue to look at those four pillars. On education, we have to consolidate. On health, we said we must have in every ward in Oyo State, a functional primary health centre that will have solid buildings, equipment and be well-staffed. I went to NYSC Orientation Camp at Iseyin, because I wanted to know the number of medical doctors and other health workers that they have as corps members. And just like we signed an MoU with IITA on Agriculture, we signed an MoU with UCH on the consultants and health care personnel. I want to sign an MoU with NYSC. We have 33 local governments in Oyo State and 351 wards. For each of those local governments, some have 10 wards, some 11, some 12 and the highest being 14. To start with, the Primary Health Care Board only has



17 doctors for the entire state. So, I said I want one doctor in every local government, which should be 33. Then, let us use NYSC doctors to back them up. So, if we sign the MoU with NYSC, they know that they must get 33 doctors for us in every batch, and we also have to make the atmosphere conducive for them. At Igbo-Ora General Hospital Annex, which we recently renovated, you see the Doctor's quarters. So, in every local government, they must have Doctors' quarters. Those people are there and they manage the PHCs at the ward level. We have had to be deliberate about what we do and we are coming from inside a hole that the state was dug into by past administrators. Now, I believe we have stopped digging in Oyo State but we are yet to climb out. So, over the next two years, we need to climb out, we need to continue to expand our economy. Like I said, we have stabilised as far as agribusiness is concerned. We believe we have made our position known to the entire world. In terms of infrastructure, targeting our economy, we are also making progress out there. So, what are the next quick wins for us? Tourism, internal tourism to attract people, which is already happening. Two weeks ago, I had folks from Lagos that came to Ibadan to play golf with us. Every Friday, Ibadan is always locked up because a lot of people are coming from Lagos and Abeokuta to come to Ibadan and enjoy themselves. We have the Dry Port, which I believe we can achieve within a year. We have the rail corridor to develop and a new business district is coming up there. So, in the next two years, we are also going to be as exciting as these previous two years. We have quite a bit still to do. We have the expansion of our airport. We want to bring more airlines in here. We want all our people, rather than go to NAHCO Shed in Lagos to clear their goods, we want them to do that here in Ibadan and just turn back and go wherever they want to go. For cargoes meant for Lagos, NAHCO Shed is meant for them but if it is going to Ogun State, maybe Abeokuta, Ijebu ode, Benin to the South-east or Ilorin, Osun, Ondo, Ibadan is far better than Lagos, because you have 120 kilometres that you don't need to drive through if you clear your goods in Ibadan and turn back.

What are your thoughts on restructuring and true federalism and what are your thoughts on the current constitution review exercise?

On the issue of restructuring, before now, if you want to apply to a university, you apply to that university, you do their

exam. If they think you are a good student, they admit you. Then some people were not getting into the university that way. So, they created JAMB, and then with JAMB, we started hearing of educationally disadvantaged states and all that. What that has done is to drag everybody down to the same level and that is what some of us are fighting against, asking for true federalism and restructuring. What we are saying is, look, don't level down everything for everybody. Some of us may want to develop at our own pace. We set the standard for ourselves in Oyo State. For instance, we have set the standard of the road from Moniya to Iseyin as the state's standard. If that is the state's standard, I don't want you to go to Ologuneru and Eruwa and see something different or go to Saki-Ogbooro-Igboho Road and see something of a lower standard. Anywhere we are fixing state roads, that is the standard. So, restructuring, fiscal federalism go beyond state police or federal allocations and all of that. I mean it is striking at the fundamentals of how do we progress as a people? The country must allow the state or people to develop at their own pace. We shouldn't say because some people are backward, then everybody should be brought to the same starting line.

How best do you think we can fix the country?

What I can tell you is, what is wrong with Nigeria is known to all of us. First, the majority of us want to reap where we have not sowed. People come to me and say since I am the governor, I own the purse of the state and I am supposed to be doing this and that. That should not be.

Even when we are talking about restructuring, it is not a magic bullet; it will throw up its own set of challenges. But the question is how come we have tried a system in the past where you still have a little bit of corruption but things are really known to the people. So, the problem with Nigeria is us. An arrangement that guarantees fairness, equity and justice, then I think can lead to greatness for this country. How come our people in the diaspora are working well, contributing to the world but when they come in here, they cannot function? It is because people like you, people like me would see white and call it grey. Yes, we may think this is not affecting anybody but, in reality, it is, because people are losing confidence in it. For me, I say to people that look, I understand how you are feeling. Before now, there has been a trust deficit between the government and the people but we are trying to be open. It is like you telling



people you are taking them from Ibadan to Lagos and then they get inside the bus, we headed towards the Toll Gate and having gone past Ogunmakin, they are still asking if you are really taking them to Lagos. And you ask why they are doubting if we are still going to Lagos and then they say, they believe you may get to Ogere and still turn back and not take them to Lagos. Yes, that has been their experience for so long. So, you cannot blame them. That is why we have to earn back that trust and bridge that trust deficit gap. And once we are able to do that, people will start having confidence in their people. I was tired, honestly tired this night and wanted to sleep but they came to me and reminded me of the promise I made that I would have this interview session by 10 p.m. So, I had to fulfill it and I said, please tell everybody I will be there at 10 p.m. Yes, it is not easy to build a nation or a state, a lot will have to be committed to it. Even the things that you do; driving against traffic rules; bribing people when you want to get your C of O out, and you are being arm-twisted to do all of these. All of those things fuel the process. Again, after I was sworn in, I said I was going to declare my assets publicly. You don't need freedom of information, I listed where my houses are, so you can go there and check. You

can get the address, the owner, and the estimated value of that property. That is how far the world has progressed. Some people said I should not do that but I insisted I was going to do it. So, you have to help us, especially as the custodian of how information is disseminated to the people. As the opinion molders, you have to hold us accountable. What will be your own sacrifice to ensure that we have a decent society. So, we all have roles to play really.

In order to address the insecurity in the region, Southern governors placed a ban on open grazing. What are you doing to enforce that ban?

It is a law here. I made a comment a few days ago that in eight weeks, there will be a Task Force against open grazing. But first, we would sensitise the people. I am going to install in every entry and exit points to Oyo State; that look, this is the law. I will give them some time to assimilate this but, in the meantime, we will set up a mechanism to deal with it. It has taken two years but we did not repeal the law and we will implement it. It is going to cause a lot of issues but we have to do what we have to do.

Culled from Thisday Newspapers



The August Visitor We Can Expect



By Sadik Oluwagbenga

Every year, the first week of August is set aside for the annual celebration of the World Breastfeeding Week – an important opportunity to raise awareness on the benefits of breastfeeding as a crucial strategy to combat malnutrition.

Since 1992, more than 120 countries, including Nigeria have joined the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to commemorate this important annual celebration whose goal is to “re-establish a global breastfeeding culture and provide support for breastfeeding everywhere.”

Optimal breastfeeding culture is an indispensable pillar in Nigeria's battle to reduce malnutrition. With the second-highest burden of malnutrition in the world, UNICEF estimates that about 2 million children in Nigeria suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM).

Breastmilk is sufficient for the growth and development of a child in the first six months, and breastfeeding is beneficial to both infants and their mothers - it is natural, cheaper, and safer.

Breastmilk provides all the necessary nutrients and fluid for the child's sustenance and protects the child against diseases.

However, despite these immense benefits of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding rates have not improved significantly in the last decade.

The Federal Ministry of Health's estimates puts Exclusive Breastfeeding rates in Nigeria at 29%, showing very little progress from the 2014 rates of 24%.

At this rate, it will be impossible for Nigeria to meet the World Health Assembly's target of at least 50% by 2025.

Evidence shows that the implementation of certain policies can boost and encourage breastfeeding in the country.

Two key strategies in achieving this are the implementation of a six-month fully paid maternity leave for breastfeeding

mothers and providing support in the workplace and public facilities for on-demand breastfeeding with the setting up of crèches and breastfeeding corners.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat, through its Health Desk, has been working to improve the commitments of the State Governors to these two strategies to improve breastfeeding in Nigeria using the NGF Nutrition Scorecard.

The scorecard tracks two indicators – implementation of a six-month fully paid maternity leave for civil servants and the establishment of functional crèches (with breastfeeding corners) in Government offices.

This way, policymakers are held accountable at the highest levels to implement actions that would encourage optimal infant and young child feeding practices in their States.

It is encouraging to know that significant progress has been made across the thirty-six states, although the states are at different stages of implementing these policies.

The NGF secretariat is currently reviewing the progress made as at the second quarter of 2021 which will be published by the end of August.

It is expected that nutrition stakeholders, policymakers, and Government officials will use this scorecard to advocate for improved action.

The annual breastfeeding week is another opportunity to raise awareness on the importance of breastfeeding, and to advocate for increased action.

Breastfeeding gives children the healthiest head-start in life and with that comes increased

productivity for the Nation. August is here again, but unlike the popular August visitors who are usually unexpected, we can expect the glorious outcome of an effective breastfeeding culture – a healthy future for all children.

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Loud Whispers

Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi

THE STRANGER

Dapo should have seen it coming. He should have known, the moment she walked into a church for a wedding ceremony ten years ago, that a time like this would come. He had gone to attend the wedding of the daughter of one of his older friends. Just before the sermon was about to begin, a tall, very well-dressed lady walked by, with two young girls behind her. Kate, his wife, caught him staring at the woman as she took her seat and asked him who the woman was. Dapo did not respond. After the wedding service, Dapo was standing outside with Kate when she walked up to where they were standing. 'Good afternoon Gbemi', he said. 'Good afternoon Dapo', she responded politely. The two girls with her stared at him as if to ask, 'Who is this?' Dapo turned to the two girls and said hello to them, and they curtsied in response. Dapo's wife waited for

an introduction. It did not happen. Gbemi greeted Dapo's wife and moved away with the girls. Dapo stood transfixed for a minute, staring at them as they made their way through the crowd. When they got into the car, Dapo's wife asked again, 'Who was that woman?'. 'Why do you want to know?' he countered. 'You seemed rather nervous when she entered the church, and you obviously know each other'. After a pause, Dapo said, 'That was Gbemi. My ex-wife'. 'Oh! And the two girls, are they your daughters?' Again, Dapo was silent. He did not know how to respond. If he had seen the two girls alone on the street, he would have had no idea who they were.

Gbemi got into the car with Teni and Tope. She appeared normal and composed, but she felt like she was about to have a panic attack. She had known that there was a possibility that one day she would run into Dapo, but had hoped it would





not be for a very long time. She had not seen him in thirteen years. Teni was three and Tope was one year old. She felt like kicking herself for insisting that the girls accompany her from London for the summer break to visit their maternal grandmother who was ailing. Gbemi wanted Mama to see the girls one last time just in case. It was thanks to Mama that she did not go crazy when her marriage fell apart. She and Dapo got married because she was pregnant at nineteen, and in her second year in University. Dapo did not want to get married, and neither did his mother want him to. Gbemi's parents insisted that their daughter was not to be disgraced. The families moved in the same social circles, so Dapo's parents reluctantly agreed to a shotgun wedding. Their story was so clichéd. Married too young. Feelings of entrapment. Money problems. Cheating. Physical and emotional abuse. When Gbemi rolled down the stairs of their duplex trying to avoid Dapo's blows, ending up with broken ribs and a concussion, even their parents agreed that enough was enough. She took her little girls and left. On one of the many occasions when their parents tried to resolve their problems and they were asked to consider the children, Dapo's mother would say, 'Please don't threaten us with that. When the children are old enough, they will ask for their father'.

'Who was that?' Tope asked her mother. Gbemi was silent. 'It was our father, wasn't it?' said Teni. All of a sudden, Gbemi felt so weary. 'Do you want to see him before you go back?' She asked. 'Why?' asked Tope, wrinkling her face in confusion. 'Mum, have you not taught us never to talk to strangers?' All three of them burst into laughter.

As Gbemi got dressed, she thought of Mama. How she wished Mama was here. Mama had passed away ten years ago, a few months after she and the girls had been home to visit her. She missed Papa not being there too but Mama's absence hurt more. She could hear Mama's voice, 'Work hard my dear. Do not be distracted. The world is a cruel place for women who have nothing of their own'. Those were the words that pulled her out of despair and strengthened her resolve to fight for the future of her daughters. She hummed the popular Yoruba song to herself, 'Eni lojo ayo re', 'This is your day of joy'. It was indeed her day of joy. Teni was getting married and today was the traditional engagement. During the wedding preparations, the sensitive topic of 'Father' had come up. Gbemi told Teni and Bode her fiancée to go and seek Dapo out. The meeting took place but it was quite unsatisfactory. Dapo told the two of them to go away and come back with Gbemi who needed to explain to him why she had kept his children away from him for

so many years. Teni felt a fury she never knew she was capable of feeling. Years of repressed anger, insecurity and disappointment bubbled to the surface. Dapo needed to explain to his children why he had abandoned them since they were toddlers and had not provided one cent towards their upbringing. Teni and Tope had grown up seeing their mother work her fingers to the bone, denying herself so many things just to see them through school. She never complained, never badmouthed whoever their father was. Gbemi was willing to compromise but the girls were having none of it. They had been waiting for a time like this, when their 'Father' would eventually show up. With no remorse or humility, he had walked right into a trap by pushing his luck. He was a stranger, and no tradition or culture was going to change that. Gbemi's older brother was going to be the father of the day. Left to Teni, she wanted only her mother to walk her down the aisle, she had earned the right, but Uncle Paul was a good compromise. Bode and his family had no choice but to stay out of the drama. Bode just wanted to get the wedding done and return to the United States where he and Teni both worked as Doctors.

It was around 4pm in the evening. Dapo got a text from a guest at the traditional engagement which read, 'Where are you? The Alaga, (traditional engagement facilitator) just asked us to stand and observe a minute's silence in your memory. People had to quickly speak up that you are still alive. Where are you?'. Gbemi and her daughters were caught off guard by the Alaga's gaffe. However, they could also hear the murmurs from the crowd, 'Okay, he is not dead, but where is he?'

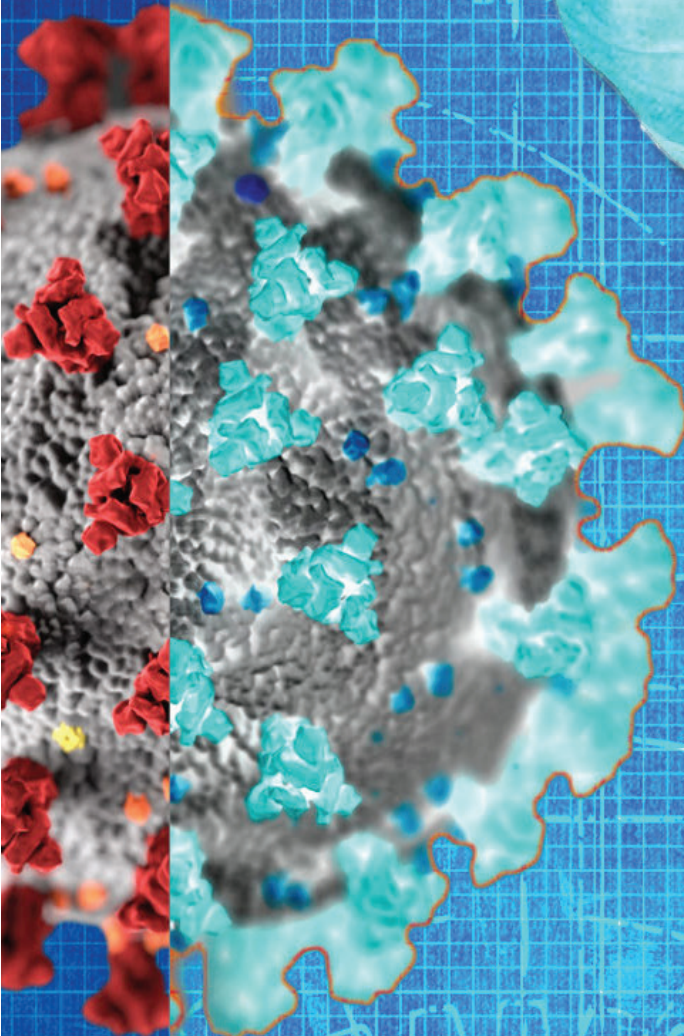
The following morning, Dapo watched Uncle Paul walk Teni down the aisle. He could not see her face from where he was sitting at the back of the church. He felt terribly hot under the heavy Agbada he was wearing. His older sister's words from long ago rang in his ears, 'Ti o ko ba sora, eni leni ma gbise e se', 'If you are not careful, someone else will take over your responsibilities'. During the thanksgiving, the choir sang the popular song, 'This is your day of joy'. Dayo bowed his head and wept.

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DELTA VARIANT B.1.617.2



YET TIME TO MASK UP

DON'T LET YOUR GUARDS DOWN