

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR A. B. OKAURU, DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING ON
THE STATE PEER REVIEW MECHANISM WITH THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL OF LAGOS STATE**

ALAUSA, IKEJA, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

28TH MAY 2012

Your Excellency Babatunde Raji Fasola (SAN), Governor of Lagos State.
Hon. Mrs Adegoke Orellope-Adefulire, Deputy Governor of Lagos State
Mrs Oluranti Adebule, Secretary to the State Government
Mr Adesegun Ogunlewa, Head of Service
Distinguished Commissioners
Permanent Secretaries
Other Senior Government Officials Present
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour and privilege to address Your Excellency on the State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM). Today's meeting with the Executive Council of Lagos State is the fifth in the history of this exercise. Our first outing was on Friday 22nd July, 2011 when we met with the Executive Council of Anambra State. That of Ekiti State took place on 7th September 2011 and Niger State followed suit on 22nd November 2011. Just last week, we met with the Executive Council of Rivers State on 22nd May 2012. These meetings paved the way for the Initiation/ Stakeholders' Workshop which formally commences the implementation of the SPRM process in States. The Initiation and Sensitization Workshop for Anambra State took place on 14th September 2011; that of Ekiti State held on Friday 11th November 2011 and the one for Niger State was conducted on 28th February 2012. **We look forward to conducting the Initiation/ Sensitization Workshop for Lagos State in the second week of July 2012.**

We are already moving to Stage 3 of the process (the Technical Review Phase) in some states that have completed the self-assessment process. His Excellency, Dr Donald Duke, former Governor of Cross River State and Professor Oladipupo Adamolekun, a renowned development expert,

both members of the Steering Committee led a team of distinguished Nigerians to conduct a very successful inaugural SPRM Technical Review Mission to Anambra State from 14th to 18th May 2012.

The SPRM was conceived by the NGF as an instrument to assist States in accelerating the pace of their development, through periodic reviews of progress in the implementation of their development policies, plans and programmes. This would be achieved through the sharing of experiences among States and reinforcement of commendable and innovative practices unveiled in the process.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the mandate for this task flows from a resolution of the National Economic Council (NEC) in 2007 imploring all thirty-six (36) States of the Federation to peer review themselves in a manner modelled after the African Union (AU) Peer Review Exercise. This NEC Resolution was subsequently endorsed by all 36 State Governors in the country under the NGF platform.

In unveiling the process, a lot of preparatory work has been undertaken. These include, the official launch of the SPRM on 7 May, 2011 in Abuja, as part of the 2011 Induction / Symposium for new and re-elected Governors; the finalisation of the Base Document for the SPRM in July 2011 and its circulation to all key stakeholders including the 36 State Governors; the inauguration of an 11- member Steering Committee on 2nd November 2011 in Abuja with the former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice M. L. Uwais as Chairman; the launch on 6 December 2011 of the Content Management System (CMS) of the SPRM and the training of Batch A of the 107 Consultants selected through a national competitive process that would be assisting the Steering Committee during the Technical Review Mission from 2 to 3 May 2012 in Abuja.

The NGF Secretariat also embarked on a peer review tour of all the 36 States in early 2009 and 2010. Although the reviews were not based on any benchmarking standards, they provided opportunity for the States to showcase their achievements as well as share their areas of challenges with the NGF review team.

The visit to Lagos State took place from Sunday, 5th December to Thursday 10th, December, 2010. The Peer Review Report was subsequently prepared and submitted to the State for comments in

August 2011. I am delighted that Lagos State was the first to formally react to its Report.

From our findings, it was obvious that Lagos State was doing several things well even better than the Federal level in some cases in the face of some challenges.

The identified commendable practices included the following:

- Lagos State is the only state where Internally Generated Revenue is more than Federal allocation. The State has improved its tax revenue collection system over the past 6 years, witnessing a growth from NGN 600 million per month to close to NGN 14 billion currently through a private sector led initiative. It is for this reason that the NGF want to partner with the State Government on its IGR Conference.
- Until recently, commuters on roads within the metropolitan Lagos State had often experienced traffic congestion for hours. The situation has been partially curtailed by the ingenuity of the state government through a new Bus Rapid Transport system [BRT] launched in 2008, 165 km of rehabilitated roads, clearing congested bottlenecks like Oshodi and the activities of sub-agencies of the Ministry of Transport such as LASTMA.
- The large developments projects along the eastern corridor of Lekki, including; Eko Atlantic City, a new town with a projected population of 250,000 located on reclaimed land, and the 16,000 hectare Lekki Free Trade Zone further along the corridor.
- The school health programme is being vigorously pursued with Eye and Ear tests conducted on over 20,000 pupils in the last 3 years. The state had also procured 2 mobile dental clinics for dental evaluation of the school pupils.

There were few challenges though including:

- Erosion and flooding which continues to be a menace; and,
- The rapid urbanisation of the city and the consequent growth of the grey economy, as well as proliferation of 'unplanned settlements' with 'vulnerable residents'.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, my Team is visiting Lagos to commence the process in your State. The overriding objective of today's exercise is to present the tools and methodology of the SPRM to the Executive Council of Lagos State, and agree on a roadmap for moving forward the review process in the State.

Your Excellency, I would like to conclude by observing that the State Peer Review Mechanism is already recreating the art of governance in States where it is being implemented. The first of its kind at the Sub national level in the World, the SPRM is not a scorecard or finger-pointing exercise but an instrument for advancing governance and development in States.

Your Excellency, I now call on Mr Joe Abah to present the Goodwill Message from DFID, and Professor Alex Gboyega to present synopsis of the SPRM Process thereafter.

I thank you for your attention