**GOODWILL MESSAGE BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, FIRS AT THE**

**NIGERIA GOVERNORS’ FORUM 7TH IGR LEARNING EVENT ON THE 29TH**

**SEPTEMBER 2021, HOLDING AT THE TRANSCORP HILTON, ABUJA**

**Protocol**

Pleasure, indeed, it is for me to congratulate your excellences for the presence of minds to organise an event like this at this very crucial moment of our nationhood. Particularly, theme of the event, which is, **Setting the Social Minimum Through a 'fax-for-Service Programme;** this theme is not only apt for very timely.

Taxation remains the most veritable tool in addressing the imbalance between the "haves" and the "have nots" of the society. Beyond the use of taxation for balancing social-economic standing of citizens, it is contribution that members of the society make in order for their leaders to provide them with social amenities in appropriate quantity and quality. In short, it is the price paid in anticipation of decent living conditions.

Tax-compliant citizens can legitimately expect their leaders to provide necessary amenities for a "good life". This expectation is confirmed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) in section 16(b) where it provided that "the State shall, within the context of the ideals and objectives for which provisions are made in this Constitution, control the national economy in such manner **as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen** on the basis of social justice and equality of status and

opportunity".

Governments at various tiers must, in view of the constitutional provisions, imbibe the culture of "value-for-money" or, put in proper perspective, "value-for tax-money". The citizens should not just hear budget figures but must, within their immediate living quarters, feel, see and experience effects of tax revenue. At a time, " taxpayers" money in action' boards were dotting several development projects at different locations of one of the states. This, going forward, should be the norm and not an exception.

Your excellences, Nigeria, over the years, has been dependent on revenue from crude oil. This source of revenue is no longer sustainable as the market for fossil fuel continues to depletes due to complications arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift from fossil fuel to other cleaner sources of energy, rising cost of exploration, banditry and oil theft, etc. In plain truth, the future of crude oil as a major revenue earner is very bleak. Going forward, taxation remains the only sustainable source of revenue anywhere in the world – Nigeria is not an exception.

To this end, your excellences need to adopt right tax policies that will ensure adequate funding for the much needed social-economic infrastructures. Equally, it is important for governments, at all levels, to come together to fight tax evasion, touting, etc. which are negatively impacting tax revenue.

Your excellences and Honorable Ministers, 22years since Nigeria started this democratic dispensation, none of our legislative assemblies has a tax committee; it is surprising. We must see taxation in its proper context such that all arms of government (legislative, executive and judiciary) should accord it due attention.

Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to again congratulate the organisers of this event for their thoughtfulness as I wish all participants a very fruitful deliberation.

Thank you for listening.