

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA
GOVERNORS' FORUM**

HELD ON

8th November, 2009

AT THE

**BAYELSA STATE GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
YENAGOA, BAYELSA STATE**

ATTENDANCE

S/N	NAME	STATE	DESIGNATION
1	Dr. A.B. Saraki	Kwara	Governor/Chairman
2	Aliyu M. Wamakko	Sokoto	Governor
3	Godswill Akpabio	Akwa Ibom	Governor
4	Murtala H. Nyako	Adamawa	Governor
5	Gabriel Torwua Suswam	Benue	Governor
6	Ibrahim S. Shema	Katsina	Governor
7	Peter Obi	Anambra	Governor
8	Sule Lamido	Jigawa	Governor
9	Oshiomole, Adams Aliyu	Edo	Governor
10	Ibrahim Shekarau	Kano	Governor
11	Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi	Zamfara	Governor
12	Danbaba D. Suntai	Taraba	Governor
13	Sullivan I. Chime	Enugu	Governor
14	Martin N. Elechi	Ebonyi	Governor
15	Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, OON	Niger	Governor
16	Liyel Imoke	Cross River	Governor
17	Arc. M.N. Sambo	Kaduna	Governor
18	Timipre Sylva	Bayelsa	Governor
19	Dr. Emmanuel E. Uduaghan	Delta	Governor
20	Dr. Sikiru Tae Lawal	Ekiti	Deputy Governor
21	Dr. Phillips O. Salawu	Kogi	Deputy Governor
22	John Michael Abdul	Nasarawa	Deputy Governor
23	Erelu (Dr) Olusola Obada	Osun	Deputy Governor
24	Alhaji Taofeek Oladejo Arapaja	Oyo	Deputy Governor
25	Engr Tele Ikuru	Rivers	Deputy Governor

S/N	NOTES/OBSERVATIONS	ACTION BY
A	<p>COMMENCEMENT</p> <p>The meeting started at 4.40pm with opening prayers said by the Governor of Katsina State, His Excellency, Barrister Ibrahim Shema.</p>	
B	<p>CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The chairman reminded members of their decision at the last meeting of the Forum held on 5th October, 2009 to show solidarity with their Niger Delta colleagues by holding the next meeting in the region.</p> <p>He expressed gratitude to his colleagues who made out time to attend the meeting in spite of their heavy schedule. He further thanked their host, the Executive Governor of Bayelsa State for hosting the Forum and commended him for his developmental efforts which were evident all over the State.</p>	
C	<p>ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA</p> <p>The Agenda was unanimously adopted after the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Item 4 on the Agenda-<i>Presentation of Image Laundering Report</i> was expunged because of the absence of the chairman of the Sub-Committee on Image Laundering and Governor of Imo State who was supposed to present the committee's report. ii) Item 7 on the Agenda – <i>Briefing on Technology Incubation Programme by the DG National Board for Technology Incubation</i> was expunged. 	
D	<p>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 5th October, 2009 was read and the following amendments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) His Excellency, Godswill Akpabio, Governor of Akwa Ibom State was present at the meeting but his name was inadvertently omitted from the Attendance List. ii) On item Cii, Page 3, N2 billion should read \$2 billion. <p>In the absence of any further amendment or observation, the minutes were adopted by a motion moved by the Governor of Sokoto State and seconded by the Governor of Enugu State.</p>	
E	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:</p>	

i. Management of Excess Crude Account

The meeting was reminded that \$2 billion from the Excess Crude Account had since been distributed and members were further reminded of the memo titled, '**Application of Part of Excess Crude Special Reserve towards a developmental Revolving Loan Scheme for Execution of Capital Projects in the States**' that was presented by the chairman at the last National Economic Council (NEC) Meeting. That memo would be deliberated upon at the next NEC meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 10th November, 2009 and members were urged to throw their weight behind it in order to ensure its adoption by NEC.

ii. Update on the Permanent Secretariat

The Director General of the Secretariat presented the Permanent Secretariat Committee's Report. He reminded the Forum of the chairman's appeal at the previous meeting to members to update their contributions so that the project could kick off. Following the need for the project to reflect present economic realities, a decision had been reached to scale down its scope.

He further informed the meeting that the amount collected so far was **N1, 161, 291, 667.00** leaving an outstanding balance of **N1, 898, 708, 333. 00**. The meeting was however informed of a discrepancy between the amount contributed so far and the amount in the Project Account.

The meeting agreed that there was a need to investigate this discrepancy and the Secretariat was directed to furnish the Forum with a full Report at the next meeting with details of contributions so far, the actual amount in the accounts and any discrepancies. Members while stating that this directive should in no way interfere with the decision to kick-off the project reiterated its earlier directive to proceed with the construction. The contractors should be assured that they would be paid their balance as the project progressed. Finally, the Forum directed that an alternative channel of funds be sourced from banks and other financial institutions and expressed the belief that more contributions would be realised once the project kicked off.

iii. UPDATE ON WELFARE FOR LATE SENATOR MAMMAN ALI, FORMER GOVERNOR OF YOBE STATE

The Chairman expressed dismay at the rate of response made by members on the Senator Mamman Ali's welfare. He read out the list of the fifteen (15) States that were yet to pay and it was resolved that the outstanding amount be paid up by Tuesday, 10th November, 2009 at the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting.

F UPDATE ON THE PAYMENT OF SUBEB COUNTER-PART FUNDING

The Forum noted the progress made so far in the payment of the SUBEB counter-part fund but urged the States that were yet to

<p>G</p>	<p>pay to do so. This would forestall the money being diverted to other usage.</p> <p>PRESENTATION BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT GROUP (NESG)</p> <p>The Director General (DG) of NESG made a presentation to the Forum on its upcoming 15th edition of the Nigerian Economic Summit. Prior to his presentation, he thanked the Forum for the opportunity given to NESG to address the meeting and congratulated them on the historic meeting.</p> <p>The NESG mission at the meeting was two-fold namely, i) To seek partnership with the NGF and ii) To seek the Forum's participation at its 15th Economic Summit (Summit 15). He outlined the advantages of a potential partnership in view of the opportunities provided by the NGF platform. He saw, in the relationship, a unique opportunity to transform the economic landscape of the country.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that the event which was scheduled to hold between the 15 and 17, December, 2009 would take place at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja. The theme of the Summit would aim at addressing the economic matters that needed to be looked into if Mr. President's Vision 20:20:20 was to succeed.</p> <p>Participants at the Summit would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Governors – There would be an aspect of the event tagged the Governors Forum. ▪ Journalists ▪ Nigerians in the Diaspora <p>While emphasising the importance of Summit 15 in view of its content, the DG informed the Forum that the Summit would highlight the economic opportunities that abound in the country and would emphasise Private sector encouragement. The event would feature an Exhibition that would showcase some of the opportunities and products that were available in the country.</p> <p>Finally, the DG-NESG expressed the hope that the relationship nurtured with the Forum and its Secretariat would go beyond the Summit and that ultimately, the ends of democracy would be served.</p> <p>Members expressed joy that the NESG had given a major role to Governors to play in this year's edition of the economic summit thus underscoring their continuing importance in the socio-economic development of the country. They however sought to know the extent to which recommendations and resolutions from previous summits had been implemented and what States hoped to gain from the summit? They stated that the Forum would not be involved in a mere academic exercise and would not wish to</p>	
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join a bandwagon for the sake of it.

In response, the DG-NESG informed the meeting that one area of difference between Summit 15 and the previous summits was that at the end of the former, a joint memorandum of recommendations by the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Honourable Minister of Finance (HMF) would be presented to the National Economic Commission for implementation. A similar model would be replicated at the State level. The Summit would look not only at what the issues were but what was being done about them and what challenges existed. Summit 15 was certainly not an exercise in speech making but about practical, relevant and implemental ideas.

In respect of an assessment of the previous summits over the years, the Forum learnt that a Presentation of Stewardship over the last 15 years was currently in progress. The ideas for the Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Public Procurement Initiatives had all emanated from some of the past recommendations of the NESG. Although developments on some of the recommendations have been slow, they were definitely a work-in progress.

Finally, they enlisted support of the NGF as follows:

- i) Financial;
- ii) Governors to act as chairmen of some sessions;
- iii) Deputy Governor, Sokoto State to join the discussions on the Civil Service

The Forum deliberated on the merits of the summit and resolved to partner with the NESG on their Summit 15 scheduled for December 15-17, 2009.

H PRESENTATION BY DR. A.W. OBIANIME, PRESIDENT, IJAW NATIONAL CONGRESS AND 'BOYLOAF', EX-MILITANT LEADER

The Governor of Bayelsa State and host of the meeting in his introduction of the President, INC informed the meeting that he felt the need for members to hear directly from some of the authentic voices of the Niger Delta, hence his invitation of the President of the INC, the umbrella body of all the Ijaws in the country.

The President, INC expressed delight at the decision of the Forum to visit the Region to have a feel of their plight and was particularly happy over their choice of the heartland of the region, Bayelsa State.

He commended the Forum at the freshness and insight it had brought to the Niger Delta Dialogue and traced the history of the Niger Delta troubles to 1914. In Bayelsa State, the Ijaws have

only 8 Local Government Areas and 3 Senatorial Districts and these are by no means enough.

He informed the Forum that one way of ensuring lasting peace in the Niger Delta was by granting the creating of the two (2) States that they were canvassing. Another way was by involving key Niger Delta leaders to the post-amnesty discussions so as to ensure holistic peace. He appealed to the Forum to help the Ijaws by addressing these wrongs against them.

Members commended the President, INC for the maturity exhibited in his presentation and thanked him for the well-thought out paper. They thanked him and assured him that they would look into the issues raised.

The Forum invited Mr. Victor Ben (a.k.a. Boyloaf), a retired militant from Bayelsa State to make the next presentation and noted that he was the first militant leader that came out of the creeks to surrender. This singular act by 'Boyloaf' and the resultant reception in Abuja triggered off the response received from the militants culminating in the success of the first phase of the amnesty programme.

He thanked the Forum for the opportunity given to him to plead his case before them and also expressed gratitude to Mr. President and the Forum for their efforts in seeing that peace returned to the region. He bemoaned the destruction of their farm lands, the pollution of the Niger Delta waters resulting in the death of fishes and the dearth of educational infrastructures.

He called on Governors in the region to put aside their political differences as a first step towards a lasting peace and a sustainable development in the region.

The Forum thanked 'Boyloaf' for coming to see them at the meeting and assured him of the Governors' good intentions towards the amnesty process. They however urged him to assure his fellows that the amnesty programme was on course and that even though it may not always move at the desired pace, it was none the less progressing. The seeming slowness could be fund-related and the Forum appealed to them for their patience and understanding.

After extensive deliberations on the two presentations and the situation in the Niger Delta generally, the Forum resolved as follows:

- i) To recognise and appreciate the efforts of Mr. President, the Governors and leaders of the Niger Delta on the milestones achieved and urge them on the need to do more to ensure lasting peace in the region;
- ii) To fast track Federal Government commitment on capital projects;

- iii) To be actively involved in the post amnesty process;
- iv) To engage other Youth leaders;
- v) To establish specialised institutions to train and rehabilitate the ex-militants;
- vi) To hold wider consultations and dialogue with leaders of the Region;
- vii) That there was need for more stringent laws against oil illegal bunkering;
- viii) To commend those who have downed their arms while at the same time condemn those who were still engaging in criminal acts like kidnapping.
- ix) To visit Mr. President and discuss these issues;

Finally, to underscore the seriousness with which the Forum viewed the rehabilitation of the erstwhile militants, members expressed the need to engage them in skills acquisition programmes and the Governor of Zamfara State expressed his readiness to engage fifty (50) Niger Delta youths in the Skills Acquisition Centres in his State.

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S PROGRESS

I The Director General (DG) presented the Secretariat's Progress Report to the Forum.

Concerning the Secretariat's appeal for vehicles to facilitate its operations, the DG informed the Forum that the Secretariat needed about seven (7) vehicles to aid its work and would not make any demand for vehicles beyond this. He further informed the Forum that the Delta State Governor had donated two vehicles (a Toyota Camry and a Toyota Hilux) to the Secretariat and the chairman had donated an 18-seater bus. Members agreed that provision for vehicles should be made in the Secretariat's budget and the Secretariat was directed to present its budget for 2010 at the next meeting.

On the issue of the intrusive, disruptive and distracting activities of Law Enforcement Agencies in the States, the Forum attributed the development to the antics of political rivals and noted that the trend could increase as the elections drew near and that the time had come to stop the trend.

- **N200 BILLION AGRICULTURE LOAN**

The chairman updated the Forum on the N200 billion FG Agriculture loan and informed members that following a meeting he had with the Ogun State Governor, the Minister of Agriculture and a representative of the Central Bank Governor, it was agreed to return the money to the Central Bank and there was a proposal before NEC that banks that did not return the interest accrued from these deposits would be compelled to return it at commercial rates.

• **POLIO**

The chairman also briefed the meeting on developments on the polio eradication efforts. While commending the Forum on the successes achieved so far, he informed them that there had been no case of paralysis (resulting from polio) in the three weeks preceding that meeting. The Forum resolved to continue in its efforts to completely eradicate polio in the country.

AOB

▪ **Deregulation**

J Members discussed the issue of deregulation of the downstream sector and examined related issues. They agreed on the benefits of deregulation and resolved:

- i) To show support for the process at the next meeting of NEC scheduled for Tuesday, 10th November, 2009, where the mechanisms of deregulation and other details would be discussed;
- ii) That there was a need for more enlightenment of the advantages of deregulation to stem the tide of misinformation making the rounds;

▪ **First Lady's Cancer Centre**

Members were reminded of their collective commitment to donate twenty million Naira (N20, 000, 000.00) each to the First Lady's Cancer Centre and it was agreed that the cheques for the amount would be collected at the NEC meeting on Tuesday, 11th November.

▪ **Inciting Comments in National Dailies**

The Forum frowned at the inciting comments made by well placed Nigerians on the pages of newspapers. A case in point was a publication by Buba Galadima in the This Day of October 31, 2009, essentially calling for military incursion, which the Forum viewed as not only irresponsible but treasonable. Members condemned the publication in very strong terms and agreed it was a situation that required the attention of the authorities.

▪ **Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Allocation Committee (RMAFC)**

The attention of the Forum was drawn to the situation where resources meant for the Federation Account did not get there as well as the illegality of some first line charges.

▪ **Presidential Golf Tournament**

Members were informed of the Presidential Golf tournament coming up in Akwa Ibom State. They were urged to donate towards the event and generally support it.

▪ **Islamic Development Bank**

It was agreed that the Managing Director of the Islamic Development Bank would be invited to address the Forum on the activities of the bank. The Secretariat was directed to get the details from the Governor of Kaduna State to facilitate the invitation to address members at the next meeting.

VOTE OF THANKS

The host of the meeting and the Executive Governor of Bayelsa State thanked members for the honour of holding the month's meeting in his State and expressed the hope that they would come to the State again in future.

On his part, the Chairman on behalf of the Forum expressed their profound appreciation to the Bayelsa State Governor for a very warm hosting. He also commended the Governor for all his achievements in the State which were very obvious as one went round.

CONCLUSION

The Governor of Benue State moved the motion for adjournment and the motion was seconded by the Sokoto State Governor.

The meeting came to an end at 9.35 pm with closing prayers said by the Governor of Sokoto State.

Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki
Executive Governor, Kwara State
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum