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THE STATE OF HEALTH





A Tweet Space Dialogue On Sustaining Climate Change Activities In Nigeria



Adenike Oladosu



Mrs. Solape Hammond



Joy Egbe

Climate change in Nigeria is significant and is evident in increases in temperature, rainfall; rise in sea level and flooding; drought, desertification, and land degradation.

The effects of climate change can be felt in a lack of fresh-water resources and a loss of biodiversity.

To celebrate International Women's Day and better inform the public on the role of the states in tackling climate change, as well as interventions from Climate Change Advocates, the NGF hosted a Tweet Space Dialogue on March 16th at 9am.

The speakers included Mrs. Solape Hammond, the Special Adviser on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Lagos, Adenike Oladosu, an Ecofeminist, Ecoreporter, founder of ILeadClimate Action initiative, Joy Egbe, a Climate Activist & Social Entrepreneur and from the NGF, Mr. Eghosa M. Omoigui who is the Head of Stakeholder Relationships.

Mr. Eghosa M. Omoigui stated that one of the strategic objectives is the mainstreaming of gender, youths into climate change interventions and the reduction of the impact of climate change in the environment.

He added that there are three policy measures to achieving the SDG goals.

For one, it would be to ensure that women participate equally and actively alongside men and are able to take up leadership positions throughout the climate change program management cycle.

The second would be to bridge data gap on gender and climate change.

Thirdly, he emphasized that we must invest in women, youth, and other vulnerable groups to participate actively and effectively in national climate change responses.

At the dialogue, Mrs. Solape Hammond stated that Lagos has a resilience office that is one of the 50 cities supported by Rockefeller to define a resilience plan that was developed in 2020 and it's been incorporated into the climate action plan by the Ministry of Environment.

She added that the resilience office has a plan to respond to changes. Therefore, ensuring that the impact of climate change is minimized.

"Our office, the sustainable and development office which has the responsibility of mainstreaming the SDGs across the state also works with the ministries and agencies and across the private sector and development partners to implement certain initiatives," stated Mrs. Hammond.

Mrs. Solape also stated that climate change does not only affect the environment. It has a foot in everything. That it also is a factor in poverty affecting women.

For example, women having to use firewood because they can't afford to buy a cylinder of gas and it affects their health.

"Women struggle from the problem, and they can also be part of the solution. We must give women more options when it comes to cooking."

The Special Adviser further stated that the office of the SDG is always ready to partner with private institutions to arrive at the solutions towards climate change.

Joining the discussion was also Adenike Oladosu who is an Ecofeminist, Ecoreporter and Founder of ILeadClimate Action Initiative.

She stated that what her organisation does is try to give women access to resources.

"Through the UNDP grant that we receive, we were able to give women access

to organic fertilizer to improve productivity."

Adenike added that land is a key aspect to tackling the climate change crises.

She said that if women have full rights to own their land, it could be a solution multiplier in tackling climate change crises in strengthening the girl child's right to education and improving their savings and bargaining power.

Adenike further elaborated that woman without rights become vulnerable to crises.

That when there is a spike in flood rates, that we often see a rise in child brides.

"Today's girls are tomorrow's women. When they become child brides, it deprives them of different rights. This all affects their progress," said Adenike.

To tackle this, Adenike said that we must look at gender bills and policies.

That it is necessary to have the right structures that would enable the policies to thrive.

Joy Egbe who is the Co-founder of Newdigit Technologies said that through her organisation, they endeavour to train young people, fresh graduates on green businesses and innovation.

She stated that their vision is to eradicate energy poverty in Nigeria.

Joy added that through advocacy, she learned that it was not enough to tell people that they should cut down trees and turn off the lights.

She stated that we must have solutions for vulnerable people who depend on this for survival. That what is needed is to empower more people to be part of the solution.

The dialogue ended with some questions from the listeners who wanted to know about alternative renewable sources of energy and how more young people can be part of the solution with climate change.



commEntary

State Of Health And Other Stories

There is a groundswell of attention going into the health sector in Nigeria in recent times. Addressing the meeting of Governors at the Nigeria Governors' Forum secretariat at the occasion of the NGF virtual meeting for March, the Minister for Health Dr Osagie Ehanire, who was seeking the cooperation of Governors to install oxygen chambers in hospitals around the country appealed for greater or preferential allocations to the sector to enhance the wellbeing of Nigerians and prolong their lives.

This call followed closely the meeting between the Nigeria Governors' Forum and GAVI at the Banquet Hall of the Aso Rock Villa where states gave accounts of their individual interventions at the subnational level. There were several commendable performances which even led to the signing of more memoranda of understanding between GAVI and several other states. The success of this omnibus meeting stemmed from the fact that the NGF runs an all-inclusive program structure that is encouraged by its flagship States Peer Review Mechanism where all states are encouraged to take a cue from one another.

Our edition for this month at the Executive Summary permeates health and underscores its importance in an environment where the adage health is wealth is fast losing its potency. But the precincts within which the health sector management operates in Nigeria are strong and capable with competent hands like Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab, the Senior Health Advisor at the Nigeria Governors' Forum and his team hold sway. His interview with the Executive Summary team displays a refreshing perspective on the sector and reveals the areas where more feet need to be put to fire.

Soludo is the Solution. Anambra State witnessed the inauguration of yet another Governor in the person of a former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Professor Chukwuma Soludo. His inaugural speech which began with deep patriotic zeal is reproduced in this edition and his first appearance at the 3rd virtual meeting of the Forum is also captured. Indeed, Governor Soludo stormed the meeting like

a breath of fresh air with keen economic perspectives, conjuring up the impression, not of a new kid on the block, but of an economic titan that comes with immense value addition.

This edition also carries the conference of Attorneys General of all the 36 states of the federation. A former Attorney General and legal practitioner of note Mr Kanu Agabi SAN was on hand to admonish the legal luminaries that we live in a society that needs justice because people seek wealth by all means, seek power by all means but do not get justice by any means. It was a lecture to be remembered by all. The occasion was chaired by another Lawyer and Governor of Plateau State, Rt Hon Simon Bako Lalong.

The justice commissioners ended the conference by pledging to constitute a strong group of legal minds to fight causes that militate against the smooth progress of the NGF and the states where legal conundrums rear their ugly heads. Earlier the NGF Legal unit had organised a peace conference where interesting perspectives on the peace and security of the country were propounded by highly knowledgeable experts. The report can be found in this copy.

Most things Nigerian usually forgot the elderly. But the National Senior Citizens Commission found it expedient to run through the Nigeria Governors Forum to brainstorm with its Director General Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru, in order to get a foot in to share their brief with Governors. The NSCC headed by Dr Osammor apparently left the NGF Secretariat impressed with the level of commitment to a national reawakening that the NGF represents and also acquired a listening ear from the DG who committed to ensuring that the NSCC enjoys a smooth conversation with Governors towards domesticating the commission in most states of the federation.

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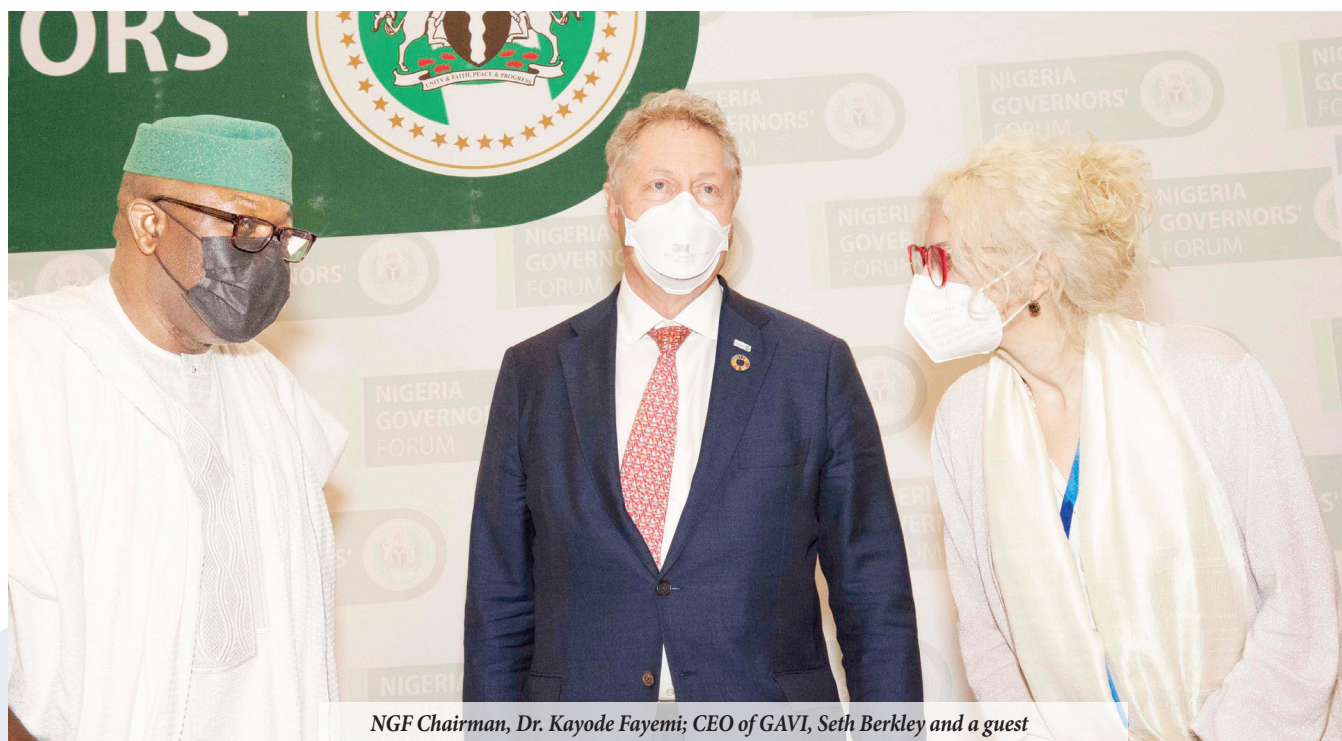
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NGF Chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi; CEO of GAVI, Seth Berkley and a guest

GOVERNORS ENGAGE WITH GAVI HIGH LEVEL MISSION TO NIGERIA IN AN INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE TO DISCUSS ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION, PHC COORDINATION AND COVID-19 RESPONSE IN NIGERIA

GAVI, (The Vaccine Alliance) led a High-Level Mission to Nigeria between Feb 23rd and 25th 2022. The delegation includes BMGF, CDC, USAID, EU, FCDO, GAC, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank and other partners.

The primary purpose of the mission is to monitor the accountability framework the country agreed with Gavi in 2018.

On the 24th of February, an interactive session held between the GAVI delegation and a select number of states at the Aso Villa Banquet Hall.

The Chairman of the NGF, His Excellency Governor Kayode Fayemi chaired the session, with a total of 15 State delegations led by the Executive Governors for seven of the States (Bayelsa, Gombe, Jigawa, Kebbi, Niger, Kwara, Sokoto), Two Deputy Governors (Edo and Taraba), One Head of Service (Zamfara), Four Commissioners of Health (Katsina, Delta, Anambra and Ekiti) and a Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health/Acting Commissioner of Health (Jigawa State).

Also in attendance were the Honourable Minister of Health, Executive Director of NPHCDA, State Commissioners of Health and Executive Secretaries SPHCDA of invited states.

The Chairman appreciated GAVI for its long-term support to Nigeria, in enhancing immunization Services, injec-

tion safety, management of new and under-utilized Vaccines, health systems strengthening, cold chain strengthening, and most recently, COVID-19 pandemic response.

He also acknowledged the extension of the GAVI support to Nigeria till 2028 as well as the direct sub-national level support and engagement with the eight MOU states to reduce zero dose children in the country.

He urged GAVI and other partners to deepen direct engagement with the sub-national level beyond this initial eight MOU States and expressed the readiness of the NGF to create the required conducive environment for GAVI and other development partners to operate optimally as well as making a commitment to mutual accountability for desired outcome.

The HLM delegation engaged the Governors on their commitment to Zero dose children, PHC strengthening, Health Financing and the COVID-19 response in their various states.

Highlights of the State responses are described below:

Bayelsa State: His Excellency Governor Douye Diri stated that primary health care and routine immunization are priorities of the State Government.

The State has a functional state health insurance scheme which is targeted towards providing healthcare services to both the formal and informal sector at no cost.



In addition to that, a new bill has been introduced to the State House of Assembly to consider about 1%-2% of the State's budgetary allocation to the primary health care sector.

Local government councils are also mandated under the JAC to allocate 2% of their earnings to the public health care delivery system.

Kebbi state: His Excellency Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu attributed the increased performance in routine immunization to prompt payments of stipends to TBAs, regular performance review meetings and effective monitoring and evaluation of RI programs.

Hitherto, because Kebbi State shares borders with two countries, Benin Republic and Niger Republic, migration from these neighbouring countries have increased the burden on routine immunization in the state.

However, the state plans to leverage on this recent collaboration with GAVI to improve the states' capacity for immunization and strengthen the primary health care system.

Gombe State: His Excellency Governor Muhammed Inuwa Yahaya mentioned that the state has a law that compels the state and LGAs to commit 1% of their consolidated revenue fund towards PHC development.

He also mentioned how the NSIP program has helped the state to achieve 1

PHC centre in all 114 wards of the state.

The state has also established a contributory health care agency that caters to the basic health needs of its residents. These have contributed to an increased performance in RI through adequate vaccine delivery and deployment.

Niger State: His Excellency Governor Abubakar Sani Bello responded that the state's PHC system has been strengthened with community-based services, demand generation activities, and an effective referral system.

This has reduced the strain on the secondary health care system and provided easy access to health for people

in rural areas. The state will ensure harmonized processes between the existing BMGF MOU and that of Gavi by ensuring that the ministry and agencies come up with carefully drafted framework and implementation plans, in line with the priority areas of both MoU's.

Since the implementation of the PHCUOR in the state, it is easier for the state to coordinate the activities of the PHC centres especially in terms of acceptance by people in the rural areas. Mortality rates across the 274 wards of the state have dropped considerably.

The state also seeks support to strengthen vaccines and health commodity supply chain through innovation.

Zamfara State: The state head of service Alhaji Kabir Muhammed Gayari representing the governor responded by mentioning that the state plans to leverage on the new MOU with GAVI to recruit about 1000 staff who will be absorbed permanently by the state to improve human resources for health. He also promised that HR accountability framework will be developed and implemented to manage HR equity concerns.

Taraba State: The Deputy Governor Engr. Haruna Manu who represented the executive governor responded by mentioning that all SPHCDA staff that were posted to other MDAs should be

”
STATE PLANS TO LEVERAGE ON THIS RECENT COLLABORATION WITH GAVI TO IMPROVE THE STATES' CAPACITY FOR IMMUNIZATION AND STRENGTHEN THE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
”



DG NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru and Sokoto State Governor/Vice Chairman of NGF, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal



Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire; NGF Chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi; CEO of GAVI, Seth Berkley

transferred back to SPHCDA in line with PHCUOR implementation.

A task force on routine immunisation has also been put in place to improve RI across the state.

Kwara State: Kwara state is not a part of the current MOU, the governor His Excellency, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq acknowledged the importance of counter-part funding towards strengthening state health systems and that is why Kwara state has fulfilled all commitments to partners currently working in the state.

The state is also looking forward to future partnership with GAVI and any other development partner willing to aid the state in terms of health intervention.

Lagos State: The State Commissioner of Health, Professor Akin Abayomi, represented the Lagos State Governor where he lamented the burden of COVID-19 on Lagos state because it is the epicentre of the pandemic in Nigeria, due to its demography.

He stated that the challenge in Lagos State is that the cost of the vaccination is over what their budget can carry. "It's important that we all vaccinate at the same rate," said Mr. Abayomi.

Anambra State: The Honourable commissioner of health Dr Vincent Okpala, He stressed the need for partners to also consider supporting high performing States such as Anambra, Delta, and Ekiti States, who despite the pandemic have maintained their good performance on routine immunization and other services but are facing challenges with uptake of COVID-19 vaccines.

Katsina State: The Honorable commissioner of health Engr. Yakubu Nuhu

Danja who represented the state governor stated that HRH is one of the states' major challenge despite the state governments efforts over the years.

The state plans to commence an audit of the health work force in line with PHCUOR implementation and developed a template for reporting all BHC PF related activities to ensure effective utilization of the 15% of the approved admin charges to be used in temporary engagement of health care workers before the results of the state audit is being implemented.

Minister of Health: Nigeria's Federal Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Emmanuel Ehanire said that Nigeria must take healthcare to all people. He said that it starts at the grassroots.

"We want citizens to be familiar with the primary health care," he said. Dr. Ehanire emphasized that workers need to recruit locally and the greatest disease to be tackled is ignorance.

He also mentioned that a PHC summit is coming up soon which plans to address PHC issues and PHC strengthening.

Seth Berkley (GAVI) The CEO appreciated all State Governors for their continuous efforts to improve the primary health care system of the Country. However, he emphasized the need for states to focus on routine health services, PHC strengthening and resilient health services. He also reiterated the need to share experiences to enhance healthy competition between states and working together with development partners to drive innovation towards health systems strengthening.

Other partners including the regional director of WHO, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, MEAE, MFAN, UNICEF, USAID and

FCDO all encouraged governors to ensure timely release of funds for project implementation at the grassroots level.

In conclusion, the NGF Chairman concluded that the goal is a sustainable health system for our country in which all the facets come together and achieve this objective. It's not just about resource mobilisation. At the event, the Chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi said that "what we want to really achieve is total coverage. It is not selective coverage."

He also added that peer learning is very important to us in the Governors' Forum.

The Key Takeaways for the NGF includes:

There is increasing recognition by Donor Agencies on the need to engage directly with the sub-nationals as a strategy for effective delivery of programs/projects, and the central role of the NGF in achieving that.

There is need for NGF, without prejudice to the Federal level, to actively promote engagements with chief executives of Donor Agencies to reinforce the need for direct engagement with sub-nationals.

The MOU signed directly between Gavi and the 8 States of Bayelsa, Gombe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Taraba and Zamfara is a test case on the desirability of direct engagement of Donor Agencies with the sub-nationals; the NGF thus needs to ensure that the MOU succeeds.

NGF Secretariat needs to encourage the institutionalization of a system for regular updates on key health indices by the leadership of the health sector in each of the states, led by the HCH.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Ugwuanyi Urges Enhanced Synergy between Retired, Serving Security Personnel

...Lauds efforts of Nigerian Army, others in tackling challenges

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has urged serving and retired personnel of security agencies to continue to synergize and redouble their efforts towards ensuring that all contemporary adversaries are adequately put on check in the country.

Gov. Ugwuanyi who made the call when he declared open the Nigerian Army Headquarters Veterans Affairs Directorate First Quarter Seminar/Workshop, in Enugu, recently, commended the sterling contributions of the Nigerian Army led by Lieutenant General Faruk Yahaya and other security agencies in ensuring that citizens go about their daily activities seamlessly in the face of prevailing complex security challenges.

The governor stressed the need for all hands to be on the deck to bring lasting solution to the ugly situation in the country, adding that his administration will continue to provide the security agencies with the necessary support to boost their individual and collective efforts to produce positive and sustainable results.

The workshop was designed "to enhance synergy between the retired but not tired personnel of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and those still serving in addressing the multifarious security challenges confronting our dear Nation".

Appreciating the importance of the workshop, Gov. Ugwuanyi stated that the event "could not have come at a better time as the job of securing this country cannot be left in the hands of serving security personnel alone and we must all join hands to fight insecurity in all its ramifications".

The governor said that it was an honour that Enugu under his watch was selected to host the all-important seminar.

He pointed out that the Military particularly the Nigerian Army in Enugu State has been a great partner in the maintenance of peace and security, adding that the people of state have always enjoyed the services of the Nigerian Army "whose members have lived cordially among us for several decades".

Gov. Ugwuanyi Celebrates 58th Birthday with Orphans, the Sick, Handicapped, Others



Gov. Ugwuanyi Celebrates Birthday With Orphans, The Sick, Old Folks, Handicapped, Others

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State, in commemoration of his 58th birthday, on Sunday, paid unscheduled visits to the Nigerian Red Cross, Enugu branch, the Mother of Christ Hospital, Enugu, Cheshire Home, Uwani, Enugu and the Home for the Elderly, Awkunanaw, Enugu, to identify with the residents.

Gov. Ugwuanyi, during the visits, which were in keeping with his age-long tradition of celebrating his birthday, gave gift items and supports for the up keep of the residents, in appreciation and thanksgiving for God's mercies and kindness.

At the Nigerian Red Cross, Enugu, Gov. Ugwuanyi was received by the Assistant Matron, Mrs. Rita Okonkwo, who took him round the facility to identify and celebrate his birthday with the orphans. The governor also inspected the facilities at the centre for necessary intervention.

At the Mother of Christ Hospital, Ogui, Enugu, the governor who was received by the Reverend Sisters and excited patients, equally identified with them, donated gift items and made funds available to the management of the hospital.

Gov. Ugwuanyi thereafter proceeded to the Cheshire Home, Uwani, Enugu, where he equally identified and celebrated his birthday with visibly joyful physically challenged persons, who sang birthday songs for him, wishing him long life, peace and prosperity.

From the Cheshire Home, Gov. Ugwuanyi concluded the visits at the Home for the Elderly managed by the Little Sisters of the Poor, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, located at Ufuma Street, Awkunanaw, Enugu, where he received birthday presents from the elderly and joined them in the celebration of his birthday.

Ugwuanyi Inaugurates 34 Model Customary Court Buildings Across 17 LGAs

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State will, on Friday, March 4, 2022, inaugurate 34 model Customary Court buildings newly constructed by his administration across the 17 Local Government Areas of the state.

A statement by the President, Customary Court of Appeal, Enugu State, Hon. Justice George Chibueze Nnamani, explained that "the 34 model courts were erected two per local government area to give a new lease of life and relevance to the Customary Courts in line with international best practices".

Hon. Justice Nnamani stated that "this massive project is one of His Excellency's unprecedented infrastructural interventions in the State Judiciary".

Appreciating Gov. Ugwuanyi administration's interventions, the President of the State Customary Court of Appeal added that the 34 court projects in the 17 council areas will be inaugurated simultaneously on Friday, in keeping with the state govern-

ment's rural development policy and urgent efforts at repositioning the Customary Courts for efficient and effective dispensation of justice in the rural areas and beyond.



Ugwuanyi

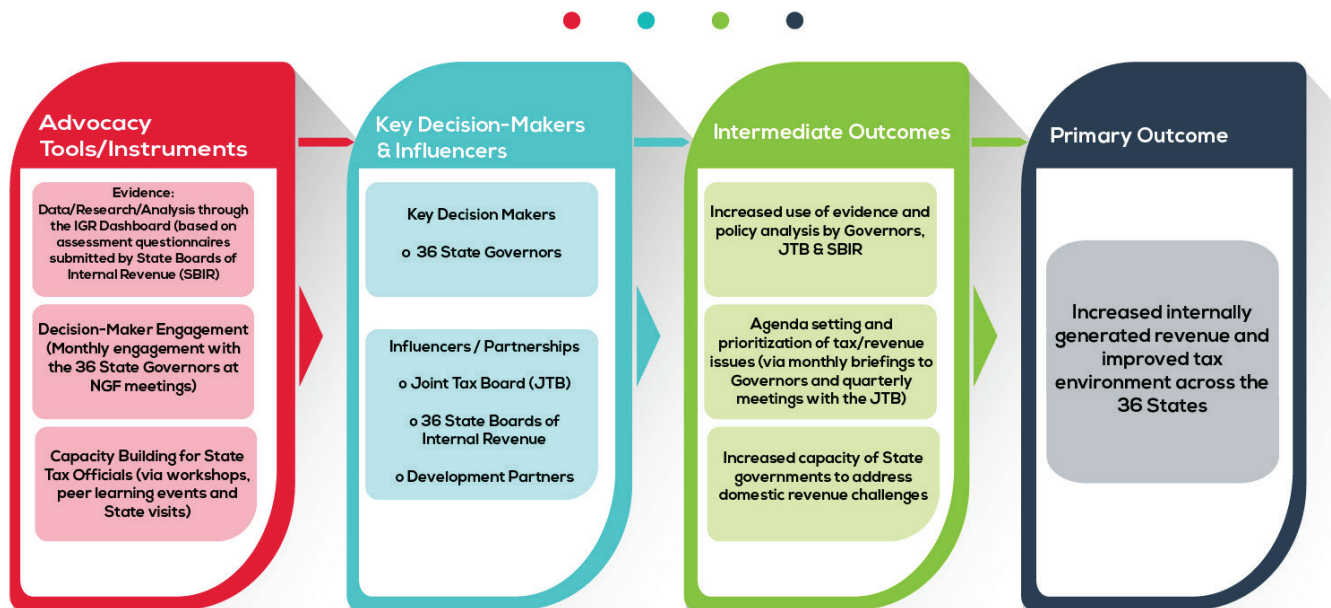


NGF's IGR-related Support To States, 2022

Since the twin economic and financial crises which occurred in Nigeria in 2016, the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat has maintained strategic IGR-related programmes, including its IGR Dashboard and HelpDesk programmes to provide targeted support to all States of the federation to improve their fiscal sustainability and social financing capabilities and outcomes. The following set of work programmes, already ongoing, have been designed for the year 2022 and in support of the reform agenda of new administrations that will emerge from the 2023 general elections:

1. The Tax Reform Journey – an assessment of the tax reform environment in all 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory

This research will further strengthen the current tax reform environment and will be distilled into a compact knowledge resource for incoming administrations after the 2023 general elections. The work programme will be conducted within the context of the NGF/JTB State Revenue Action Plan developed in 2019 and NGF's COVID Advisory for Tax Authorities issued in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will include the administration of an assessment questionnaire to all tax authorities in the country and a focus group discussion



to capture the thorny political economy challenges that have persisted.

Areas covered under the assessment include measures to end and prevent double/multiple taxation, administrative actions to strengthen the institutional capacity of the IRS, tax compliance measures, initiatives to unlock revenue sources as well as revenue budgeting practices.

2. Advocacy Visit to States on the Implementation of NGF's Tax-for-Service Programme

NGF's Tfs programme remains a major priority in 2022. The programme is designed to guarantee access to free minimum healthcare service for taxpayers in the informal sector through a ring-fenced tax funding structure. It targets the state of health inequality in the country,

especially among the poor, by providing greater health access to those who have been disproportionately left out and in locations where services are not guaranteed.

The design phase of the Tfs programme was completed in 2021 with the development and public dissemination of a baseline country report which assessed the tax compliance behaviour of informal sector workers in Nigeria and their perceptions about healthcare services, as well as design elements and household choices for the programme. The second phase comprises a set of activities to engender the uptake of the programme by State governments, including advocacy mission to State Governors.

A smooth uptake of the programme will depend on a set of necessary conditions, including harmonizing informal sector taxes through the presumptive tax pol-



icy, an operational health insurance scheme, the availability of functional primary health centres, and ring-fenced financing for public health insurance services to guarantee availability and access to quality healthcare services for all eligible enrollees.

3. Technology transformation for Tax Authorities – The Intelligent Tax Authority (TITA)

Following lessons from its first Technology and Tax learning event organised in partnership with the World Bank and the International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD) in April last year, NGF is now designing a framework that will support the deployment of an end-to-end taxpayer management and revenue administration system for Nigerian States – a scalable model of an Intelligent Tax Authority that can accommodate the varying digital transformation maturity levels of tax authorities in the country.

Although Nigeria has leapfrogged in updating its tax policies in the last decade, technology integration has remained weak. The absence of technology integration was made bare with the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between the start of 2020 and April – May 2020 when lockdown measures were strictly in place, tax revenues across States in Nigeria declined by 40% from pre-pandemic levels.

Road taxes, taxes paid by self-employed persons and service charges from government ministries, departments and agencies fell even higher by up to 60%.

This TITA intervention will include an assessment of the tax maturity level of Nigeria's tax authorities, the development of a guidance document on technology transformation, study missions to selected tax authorities, provision of advisory on system procurement, business process integration, data management and security, change management and user experience support leveraging on a partner network of advanced tax authorities.

4. 8th IGR Peer Learning Event

NGF 8th annual peer learning event will hold in September 2022. This year's event will cover two main segments – lessons from the tax reform journey over the last five years, and discussions on a stylized strategy to engendering more intelligent tax authorities in the country. The 8th PLE will bring together Commissioners of Finance from the 36 States, the Executive Chairmen of the Internal Revenue Service of States and the Federal Capital Territory, development partners and Governors to share experiences of what has worked, and opportunities for more organised and accelerated support for States.

5. 3rd IGR Dashboard Peer Learning Event

Every year, the NGF Secretariat also brings together IGR Dashboard Officers from each State to discuss in detail all aspects of tax administration, processing, procedures, and enforcement across the 36 States. Dashboard Desk Officers represent their States as their primary reform knowledge holders, given their access to the online IGR Dashboard portal which gives real time access to all the Internal Revenue Service of States as they track data on tax administration, tax processing, tax procedures, tax enforcement and the intersection with IGR collected.

The IGR Dashboard assesses the tax/revenue environment of States, tracks the impact of tax reforms, and facilitates a learning environment for States. The portal was launched on February 17th, 2017, and it is managed by the NGF Secretariat.

6. HelpDesk Support

On-demand technical assistance from NGF's HelpDesk is recurring for all States, covering the activities such as just-in-time support, trainings, workshops, advisory, development of knowledge toolkits and the facilitation of exchange visits. All HelpDesk activities are at zero cost to States.



Inaugural Address of Charles Chukwuma Soludo (CFR) as Governor of Anambra State

Umunne m Ndi Anambra,

I applied for this job; my party, (the All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA) shortlisted me, and you—umunne m Ndi Anambra--- interviewed and employed me as your chief servant, with Dr. Onyekachukwu Gilbert Ibezim as my deputy. God ordained this moment and we are grateful to Him and to you all for the privilege to serve you. Dr. Ibezim and I will work hard every day to make you proud. I ask millions of Ndi Anambra all over the world who have prayed for today to simply say a one minute prayer to commit this journey and Anambra State unto the hands of the Almighty God. Anambra will win.

Before I go further, let's pay special tributes to hundreds of thousands of our friends and supporters who worked tirelessly to see us to this moment. It is not possible to list all of you here. I remember with deep sense of grief the three gallant police officers ----Inspector Murtala Saudi, Sgt Mudassir Ahmed, and Sgt Samuel Ishaya--- who lost their lives to the Unknown Gunmen who attacked us at a meeting with the youths in my village last year. We pledge to continue to take care of their families.

Let me particularly thank my friend and outgoing governor of Anambra, HE (Sir) Willie Maduaburochukwu Obiano, for being an honourable gentleman and leader. On Sunday, 20th November, 2016, I accepted your proposal for gentlemen's un-

derstanding and partnership. I kept my part in 2017 and even after five years, you still kept yours in 2021. I always emphasize this point because it is rare these days to find people who keep their word in politics, and we will never take your support for granted. You are indeed a great leader. Thanks for believing in me. We will work hard to make you and Ndi Anambra proud.

To our indefatigable national Chairman, Ozonkpu (Dr) Victor Ike Oye, your visit of 27th August 2016 and unwavering support remain historical. I will continue to thank all our party members especially the members of the Board of Trustees (BOT), National Executive Committee (NEC), State, LG and Ward ExcOs, Campaign Committees at all levels, etc, for the massive support.

I am grateful to all the stakeholders of the Anambra Project--the clergy and the church, traditional rulers, Association of Anambra Town Unions (ASATU), labour, market, trade and professional unions, youth and women organizations, non-indigenes associations, businessmen and captains of industry, the Diaspora community, persons with disabilities, etc. We thank especially the 41 self-funding support groups who propelled this movement. Our donors and the goodwill of other Nigerian stakeholders made a significant difference.

Thanks immensely to the 150 star-studded Transition Com-



mittee chaired by our own Dr (Mrs) Oby Ezekwesili. Let me once again put on record our debt of gratitude to the federal institutions—the judiciary, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and security agencies for insisting on a transparent and credible electoral system. Eternal gratitude goes to President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, and The Presidency for remaining democrats.

In particular, I thank my wife, Nonye Frances Soludo, and children: Ozonna, Ifeatu, Chinua, Ekene, Oduko and Zikora for their love and sacrifices. Despite your deep reservations, you still allowed and supported me to step out in the service of our people. As I repeatedly promised, I will work hard every day never to disappoint you. My 90-year old father is watching this live, while my late beloved mother, Mgbafor, is smiling in her grave.

Today is my first day at work. I just reported for duty and will work for at least eight hours. We had more than a month since the election to celebrate our historic victory. Now is the time to work, and there is no minute or kobo to waste in fanfare. In a few minutes, I will announce some of the principal officers of the administration, and commence with serious meetings of the Anambra State Security Council, followed by a meeting with the permanent secretaries, a meeting on Okpoko, and with my Strategy, Execution and Evaluation (SEE) team.

Within the next one week, the list of commissioners will be laid before the House of Assembly. Tomorrow, we will head to Okpoko in Ogbaru Local Government Area and parts of Onitsha and Idemili as we signpost our commitment to fundamental urban regeneration, beginning with the greater Onitsha metropolis.

As I stand here, I feel the weight of history. I stand on the foundation laid especially by our elected predecessors— Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe GCFR, PC, Dr Michael.I. Okpara, Chief Jim Nwobodo, Chief Christian C. Onoh, Dr Chukwuemeka Ezeife, Dr Chinwoke Mbadinuju, Dr Chris Ngige, OON, Mr Peter Obi, CON, and yes, our own Chief (Sir) Willie M. Obiano. You all did your best and well for our people, and I salute you all.

As I wear the APGA muffler on my neck, I feel the weight of Africa's historic progressives like the Great Zik of Africa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, GCFR, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Dr M.I. Okpara, Malam Aminu Kano, Chief Joseph Tarka, Malam Balarabe Musa, Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, etc. Not to talk of the millions of living African progressives, who still dream of Renascent Africa. We will never let them down.

The All Progressives Grand Alliance (initially set up as the United Progressives Grand Alliance UPGA) is a nostalgic rebirth of the grand alliance of progressives in the First Republic comprising Azikiwe's NCNC, Awolowo's AG, Joseph Tarka's United Middle Belt Congress, Aminu Kano's Northern Elements Progressive Union NEPU, etc. As the first true progressive party in Nigeria since 1999, our ideology is a combination of Zik's neo welfarism, Awolowo's scientific socialism, and Aminu Kano's democratic humanism, to form what we see as the Pan African market progressivism.

It is a Pan Africanist ideology that integrates the social democratic values with the principles of competitive markets. Anambra under our watch will mirror this ideology, and we believe that this should be Nigeria's compass to the future.

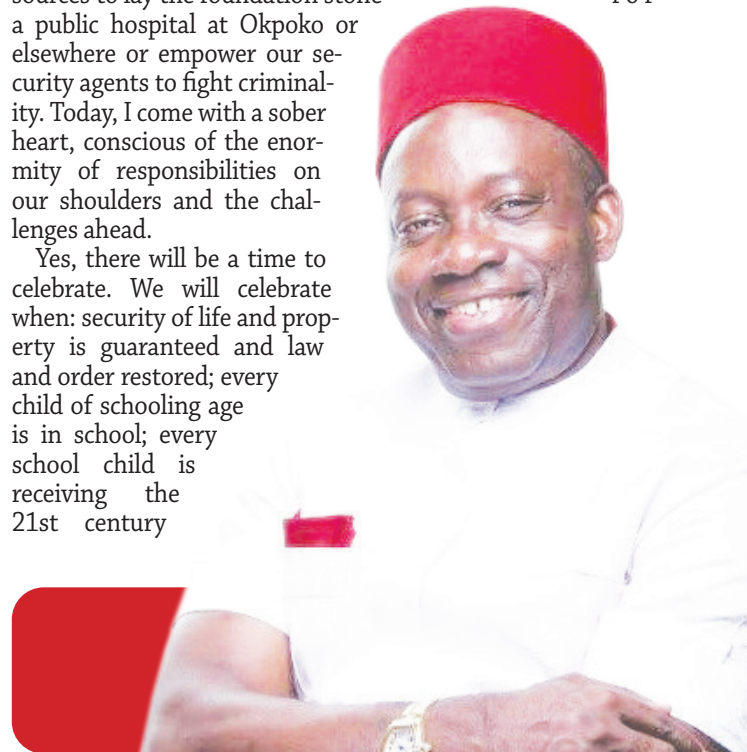
We will seek active collaboration and cooperation with the Federal Government, our neighbouring and other states as well as the international community to provide our state truly people-centred governance. We will consolidate the progress made under our predecessors to continue Anambra's upward trajectory.

Today, I stand up for the millions of Ndi Anambra for whom this mandate means everything. The hopes and expectations rise up to the heavens. Understandably, all of us wish that I could perform miracles - by waving my hands and all our problems will be solved. I hear you. I feel your pulse. For your sake I keep awake at night, sometimes having palpitations about not letting you down. Well, since God is the Miracle Worker, I will look up to Him in prayer and faith as we all start the work ahead of us. I see and feel all the humungous challenges. I know the lean financial base of the state. I know the limitations imposed upon a subnational state such as Anambra by the peculiar structure of our federation. But here's my promise: I will give it my all. I will work very hard every day, with you, to make Anambra proud. Every kobo of your tax money will be deployed to provide you maximum value.

People ask me why we are not celebrating today as it has become customary. My response is that we all—party members, supporters, family and friends-- celebrated in thanksgiving and prayers after you decided to employ me last November 6 and 9. But today, my first day at work, is not a day for celebration. First, there is no venue that can contain the tens of thousands of Ndi Anambra and friends all over the world who would wish to join us on this historic occasion. Second, the State cannot afford any such expensive ceremonies. Third, and as a matter of personal philosophy and as a true progressive, I do not subscribe to using the paltry tax collected from the women selling pepper on the roadside or the okada/keke drivers on a fleeting fanfare and banquet.

I insisted that this event must not cost the government of Anambra one kobo. I would rather use such resources to lay the foundation stone for a public hospital at Okpoko or elsewhere or empower our security agents to fight criminality. Today, I come with a sober heart, conscious of the enormity of responsibilities on our shoulders and the challenges ahead.

Yes, there will be a time to celebrate. We will celebrate when: security of life and property is guaranteed and law and order restored; every child of schooling age is in school; every school child is receiving the 21st century





education for the digital age; everyone, especially children and women can access quality healthcare; the cost of doing business is down to near zero; our roads are tarred and we have an efficient transportation system with no one having to wait in traffic for more than a few minutes; we have access to 24 hour electricity; our streets are clean and green; our cities, communities and markets are planned and cleaned; the many millions of Charlie Nwambafors and the vulnerable persons are lifted up to realize their God given potential; all our pensioners receive their gratuities, workers are paid their leave allowances and contractors are paid; our youth can get jobs and business opportunities; the youth in Okpoko 'Zone 9' become global serial entrepreneurs; poverty is near zero and income levels rising...etc. Yes, I will not celebrate, and certainly not with the tax payers' money.

Umunne m Ndi Anambra!

I come to this job prepared to serve you. For 12 years since 2009 when I first indicated interest to serve you, I persevered through the turbulent politics and here we are. Once again, I present to you the Soludo Solution—our contract with the people which we intend to vigorously implement subject to resource availability.

Our contract with Anambra people derives from three seminal documents: (a) "Anambra Vision 2070—a 50-Year Development Plan" which I chaired the drafting; (b) "The Soludo Solution: A People's Manifesto for a Greater Anambra"; and (c) "The Transition Committee (Combined) Report"—which built upon the first two.

In sum, this is an agenda for an itinerant tribe in search of a livable and prosperous homeland. Driven by the philosophy of One Anambra, One People, One Agenda, our goal is to build Anambra into a livable and prosperous smart megacity. We aim to transit beyond petroleum into the digital world of the 4th Industrial Revolution, and envision Anambra as an industrial, technology, and leisure/entertainment hub of West Africa.

Our detailed Plan rests on five key pillars: law and order (homeland peace and security); economic transformation as Nigeria's next axis of industrial-tech and leisure; competitive and progressive social agenda (education, health, youth, women and vulnerable groups); Governance, rule of law and a rebirth of our value system; and aggressively tackling our existential threat posed by the environment—towards a clean, green, planned and sustainable cities, communities, and markets. For me, this agenda is also personal: I am here to build a society where I would be proud to live in after leaving office.

Ndi be anyi, what we propose is that we collectively build a new social and economic order that guarantees and defends economic freedom and reward of private enterprise to secure our future such that any child born in Anambra will have little incentive to rush elsewhere in search of opportunities and anyone persecuted anywhere in the world can return to a happy and prosperous homeland. Such a new order will, of necessity, entail a massive disruptive change and creative destruction, with short-term pains but guaranteed long-term benefits. As a humane and progressive government, we shall strive to deliver the difficult change with a human face.

As we transit into a non-oil economy, our strategy is a small open economy framework embedded in 21st Century imperative of Everything Technology: we seek to bring the world to Anambra and take Anambra to the world especially in the context of the African continental free trade area (AfCFTA). Our "Made in Anambra" and "Anambra Standards" agenda underpin this strategy. If you can produce it in Anambra, I will be your chief marketing officer, provided that your standard meets the "Anambra standard"—which is excellence. The Anambra State Government will only patronize Made in Anambra products and services unless such goods or services are not currently made in Anambra, then made in Nigeria, Africa, etc, in that sequence. When you see me in Innoson vehicles or in my Akwete dress with a pair of shoes made in Ogbunike/Nkwelle Ezunaka and Onitsha, we are making a statement.

Today, the light refreshment to be served after this brief event is abacha from Umunze, ukwa from Isuofia, Anambra rice with ofe akwu, nkwu enu from Awgbu, ngwo from Awa and Oba, and malt and bottled water from Onitsha.

As part of our "made in Anambra", cultural renaissance and healthy living agenda, when you come to the Governor's Lodge or attend any state government's function, be sure to be served only "Made in Anambra". We want to go back to where M.I. Okpara stopped with the palm revolution and plant millions of palm trees. In some years, we will seek not only to export palm produce but also fresh palm wine from Anambra State.

We will seek active collaboration with the federal government not only to export manufactured and agricultural products, but also services (especially tech, leisure/entertainment, and skills/talents as we seek an educational system whose products are productive at home and exportable). Anambra's greatest resource is our human capital, and we shall grow and mine this resource to its maximum, lever-





aging on technology.

We will soon inaugurate the Anambra Innovation and Technology Advisory Council to drive the emergence of the digital tribe and mainstreaming technology and innovation across all aspects of our lives, our International Investment Council, our Global Friends of Anambra in Development, as well as the Council on the Ease of Doing Business.

We will conduct local government elections. No doubt, the uniform local government system as the third federating unit is one of the contested features of our federalism. But we must make the best of a bad system, by unleashing the potential of governance at the lower levels. Over the next two years, we shall review/amend the relevant legislations, reform and strengthen the system for efficiency, restructure/strengthen the Anambra's Independent Electoral Commission, and conduct local government elections. We will collaborate and coordinate actively with LGAs to ensure synergy and complementarities. Let the revolution get to the grassroots.

We shall reinvigorate and mainstream the public-community-private partnership (PCPP) – as a veritable framework for service delivery and development. We will develop pragmatic frameworks for private sector and communities to: adopt schools, build roads/infrastructure, manage government assets, receive and manage development matching grants; participate in sanitation and securing law and order, etc. There is a subtle but powerful revolution underway, raising the bar on our age-old community development model.

Yes, every community embarks upon community development. Besides the well-known Nnewi model, some communities such as Neni and Adazi Ani are showing new examples. At Neni, an individual has tarred 18 kilometres of road (together with others at 24 kilometres in the community) and they are now refurbishing and empowering public schools in their community; an individual in Adazi Ani has done 13 kilometres and wants to surpass the Neni record. The Government will provide a framework to incentivize and unleash the momentum of this new phenomenon at the village/community levels.

Our government is committed to promoting the expeditious dispensation of justice especially the prompt resolution of commercial disputes. We shall collaborate with the Chief Judge and his colleagues to significantly improve the physical and technological infrastructure of the courts, and hopefully also implement some structural reforms to fast-track the path to justice and make Anambra the number one in the speedy dispensation of justice and ease of doing business.

Part of our future is in our past. We will mainstream our values of hard work, integrity, compassion, and sanctity of life. The fringe but destructive minority which embodies the “get rich quick by all means” philosophy, cultism, drug addiction, blood-letting criminality, kidnapping, etc do not represent us, and can-

not define us. As a new social order and “everything technology” philosophy take life, many unproductive systems will give way. There will be new and better ways of managing our parks and markets, different and better ways of collecting government revenue, managing waste, and general service delivery to citizens.

The land registry will be digitized; we shall leverage technology to ensure a responsive and accountable public service together with our initiative for an ID Card for every Anambra person wherever he/she may be; and a code of conduct for political appointees to mainstream servant leadership by example.

We must rid Onitsha and all our roads and markets of revenue touts and make shopping in Anambra a pleasurable experience. Today, I will sign an executive order to suspend all revenue contracts operating in the parks, markets and roads until we put in place a new system within the next four weeks. Consequently as from tomorrow, 18th March, 2022, if anyone asks you to pay CASH to him as revenue to the government in the parks, markets and roads, such a person must be a thief. Market unions must also stop harassing customers.

We shall embark upon massive training and social re-engineering to wean people off the old unproductive ways. As a humane government, we shall endeavor to offer alternative opportunities to the revenue touts. Over the next two years, many will complain that “it is not the way we do it”, but we can't repeat the same thing and expect a different result. During the coming months, we shall embark upon bold but difficult reforms and these reforms may be unpopular especially among those benefitting from the existing order. For sure, the revenue and park mafia that rake in billions of government revenue into their private pockets won't be happy. But we commit to doing the right things. And we plead for your understanding, patience and co-





operation. By His grace, Anambra will win!

But Anambra State is a subnational entity, within the context of Nigeria's unitary-federalism. The speed of its progress is in part dependent upon both the threats and opportunities inherent in such a system. The ongoing Constitutional amendment at the National Assembly is welcome, albeit that some of the proposals merely tinker at the margins and attempting to do more of the same. The subnational states need to be unleashed. For too long, Nigeria has tried a top-down strategy; now is the time to try the bottom-up approach, and that's part of my motivation. While we debate how far and how fast the devolution and reconfigurations will go, the world is not waiting. As the world transits away from oil into cleaner energy sources and a world of 4th Industrial Revolution, Nigeria needs a fundamentally different rule-book to survive and compete. We will seek to optimize the limited headroom allowed by the current peculiar structure to give our people a new life.

Umunne m Ndi Anambra,

Besides the environment, a fundamental existential threat to our state and indeed Igboland is that of peace building and law and order. We can't build this homeland by turning the sword against each other. Ndi Anambra love their homeland but the recent upsurge in criminality poses a great threat. My heart bleeds to see and hear about our youth dying in senseless circumstances. Every criminal gang—kidnappers, wicked murderers, arsonists, rapists, thieves— all now claim to be freedom fighters. Criminality cannot be sugarcoated. This must stop.

All the stakeholders must now review both the narrative



and the action plan. For starters, I endorse the recent statement (March 7, 2022) by the Joint Body of South East Council of Traditional Rulers and Bishops/Archbishops on Peace and Conflict Resolution, requesting for a tripartite discussion between them, The Presidency, and South East governors to deal with the conflicts in the South East especially in relation to Nnamdi Kanu and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Eastern Security Network (ESN). There is no conflict that dialogue, in good faith, cannot resolve. Our government is determined to urgently restore peace and security in Anambra, and we will seek the active cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders.

To IPOB/ESN, the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), as well as the disparate armed groups in the forests, it is time to interrogate both the purpose and means of your campaign. To the politicians playing politics with the insecurity, you are riding a tiger. The current trajectory is a road to desolation. Let us get around the table and talk. Let the elite in the closet come out, and let's debate our future and forge a consensus. The conspiracy of silence by the elite and some community leaders must end. If you see something, say or do something! Securing Igboland and Nigeria must be our collective responsibility. Let those in the forests come out, surrender their guns and let's work together to rehabilitate and empower you to contribute positively to the peace and prosperity of our homeland

A significant part of our state economy is powered by artisans, keke drivers, vulcanizers, hairdressers, cart pushers, petty traders, bricklayers, women frying akara, and all those who depend upon daily toil and sweat to feed their families. Every day, there is a "sit at home", these poor masses lose an estimated N19.6 billion in Anambra alone. Due to the protracted breakdown of law and order, businesses are relocating outside Igboland, with growing unemployment, and traders who used to come to shop in Onitsha, Aba etc are going elsewhere. Who is losing? By forcing our children—the future of Igboland—to stay at home instead of being in school, while even the critically sick people (including pregnant women) cannot go to hospital, we harm our future.

I hereby challenge any of the disparate groups that claims that it is not part of the senseless killings and kidnappings to step out and show leadership by joining hands with us to DO something about it. If you love our homeland, there is no place for bloodshed. Our Lord Jesus Christ admonished in Matthew 26: 52: "put your sword back in its sheath, for all who live by the sword will die by the sword". In the traditional religion, the land places a curse upon those who spill the blood of the innocent.

For me, this issue is personal and emotional. My mother died during the civil war; our last born, Chukwuemeka died during the war; my father bore a bullet inside him for years; my elder brother – at 16, was in the 'Boys Company'. At 8, I became the "man of the house", with all the men at the war front. My uncles, cousins, etc, died during the war. This is 2022, and there are certainly far better ways to protest than shedding the blood of the innocent or resorting to criminality.

That is why I call on all of us today to join hands with me to execute the real agenda—a livable and prosperous homeland of opportunities and jobs for our youth while maximizing the



benefits of a united Nigeria/Africa. With Ohanaeze's estimate that some 11.6 million Igbos live in the North and over 7 million in Lagos state and over 70% of our non-land assets scattered all over Nigeria and the world, we need Nigeria and Nigeria needs us. We need Africa and the world and they need us.

Yes, we have heard every genuine agitation for fairness, justice, equity and



equality in the Nigerian Federation. No, we refuse to turn our homeland into a crime scene and all manners of criminality. No group has ever succeeded in any struggle in history by turning the sword against themselves. I promise to work hard with other governors and leaders in the South East and others to take your agitations to the table of all Nigeria, and we hope to bargain for a win-win solution for all Nigeria. I will engage all parties to the breakdown of peace and order in Anambra from a point of determination to solve problems and resolve disagreements with openness, integrity, equity and justice. I will absolutely invest my political capital within our State, our South East and with the Presidency, Federal Government and its establishments as a matter of topmost pri-

ority. With good faith and hard work by all parties, I am convinced that justice, peace and order will return to Anambra and the South East within the shortest possible horizon.

Umunne m Ndi Anambra, this agenda is premised upon your irrepressible and communal spirit. It is you—the people—that will make it happen. We all love our homeland to death, and we can turn it into whatever we will that it should be. A new servant leadership and a new homeland consciousness by the people will get us there despite the huge challenges. For example, to effectively implement our ambitious agenda, we need annual investment levels of 25- 30% of state gross domestic product (GDP), that is about \$ 2 . 5 8 – \$ 3.09 billion. At current levels, public sector investment is less than \$100 million per annum. The gap seems daunting, but we are undaunted. The internally generated revenue is barely 0.5% of state GDP.

This presents immense opportunity as well as threat in the context of a rentier culture where the social contract/trust between the citizen and the government is broken, and the people do not believe that they can get value for their taxes. We are determined to change this.

I pledge here again to devote every kobo of your tax money to work for you. This is your government. I am only your employee. I commit to a transparent, accountable, judicious, and impactful use of your tax money. My litmus test for every expenditure will be to ask two questions: a) if this is my hard earned money from work and profit, can I spend it this way? b) Is this the best way to spend the taxes and levies collected from the poor traders and okada riders? If I cannot answer Yes to both questions, then I will hesitate to do so.

On your part, we need a new chapter of active and responsive citizenship, imbued with civic responsibilities and participation. Pay your fair share of tax and sanitation and other levies and try us. I paid my 2021 tax to Anambra (over N10 million). The keke drivers pay over N90,000 per annum; the women selling pepper and hawkers who pay N200 per day average at least N50,000 per annum; etc. What about you—the shop owner/trader, lawyer, doctor, consultant, journalist, professionals, business owner, landlord, etc? You want security, good transport network without traffic, good schools and hospitals, water, clean, green and planned environment, etc. How much do you pay per month/year? Ndi Anambra outside Anambra must creatively pay their taxes in their primary residence—Anambra. With a new homeland consciousness, the estimated over 10 million Ndi Anambra outside the State can collectively turn their homeland into the new axis of prosperity.

In addition to our civic duties as responsible citizens, I call on all of us to go the extra mile in volunteering our time and treasure to create the homeland of our dream. Everybody is important in this journey and I need your help to succeed. We must all strive to die empty—to give our all, in aid of God's creation. Each day, every Onye Anambra must ask himself or /herself: "what have I done today to make my home state livable and prosperous?" It should be part of our daily devotion. There must be a purpose why God in His infinite wisdom decided to make you Onye Anambra—and that must be to leave it better than you met it. No one is too poor to give or do something for Anambra. If not you, then who; if not now, then when?

As I close my eyes and visualize our future, I can see millions of Ndi Anambra holding hands and working hard for a glorious future; I see the skyscrapers along the banks of River Niger in Onitsha, Nnewi, Awka, Ekwulobia, etc. I see a smart megacity with millions of happy and prosperous people. I see us exporting massively to the world and the world coming to Anambra as a preferred destination to live, work, invest, learn, relax and enjoy. History beckons. Seize this moment Ndi Anambra, and together, let us make it count. Anambra: the Light of the Nation shines....! God bless you all!

REDEFINING PEACE, INCLUSIVE SECURITY IN NIGERIA

With the Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbating threats of conflict and insecurity, a multi-stakeholder Summit organised by the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and Centre for Democracy Development (CDD) between March 10 and 11 2022 x-ray related challenges and critical imperatives

With the Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbating threats of conflict and insecurity, a multi-stakeholder Summit organised by the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and Centre for Democracy Development (CDD) between March 10 and 11 2022 x-ray related challenges and critical imperatives

The security challenges in the country are diverse. The Covid 19 pandemic has further exacerbated the threats of conflict and insecurity. Citizens at all levels face a common challenge of not being actively involved in the decisions that affect their own safety and security. In this regard, a multi-stakeholder meeting was organized by the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), and the Centre for Democracy Development (CDD) to create a forum to share experiences on government - civil society initiatives and test practicable ideas and incubate innovative solutions to conflict and insecurity.

The meeting aligns with the mandate of the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI), which is to advocate for peace and inclusive security and to focus the attention of stakeholders on issues of insecurity and violence in the country. It conceives several responses to the rising conflicts and insecurity across the country, including identifying the drivers of insecurity and stimulating collaboration across all levels of government, agenda setting on peace and stability especially at the subnational, and ensuring the uptake of actionable policy recommendations.

This year's event is a follow up to the launch of the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI), where stakeholders engaged in panel discussions on the security situation across the States, the security challenges and the role of security



agencies, civil society, and traditional institutions in conflict management. Also, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) launched the "Multiple Nodes, Common Causes" report, which argues that the common causes of conflict intersect with local drivers at nodes in each geopolitical zone, erupting into conflicts of varying intensities and trajectories.

Some recommendations from the two-day event include:

1. The need to develop a multi-level policing framework in Nigeria to combat the threat of insecurity and conflict.
2. The creation of a permanent working group on peace and security.
3. The need to create early warning

and early response systems to aid in the fight against conflict and insecurity.

The event highlighted other important issues, including the role of civil society and traditional institutions in managing conflict and peace in Nigeria, the need to address the attendant socio-economic issues like poverty and unemployment that serves as a rallying point for conflict, the design and operationalize State Action Plans (SAPs), Peace and Security committees where peace building agencies do not exist and in the medium and long-term, the creation of peace building agencies in all states.

**2.0 Day 1
2.1 Summary of Welcome Remarks, Opening Remarks & Keynote Ad-**

**dress
2.1.1 Asishana B. Okauru, Director-General Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF)**

He expressed his delight at the opportunity to partner with the Centre for Democracy & Development (CDD) to facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices on selected topics relevant to advancing the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI).

He added that the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative is a consequence of

they do not directly control the formal security structures in the country. He stressed that Nigeria had never had it so bad. He conceded that currently every region in the country was plagued with some form of insecurity or the other.

Prof Jibrin described the CDD as one of the leading organizations involved in research and advocacy on the contemporary security dynamics in the country. Specifically, he noted that CDD has conducted several research to identify key actors, evolving trends, and the nature of different conflicts in Nigeria. Beyond just the conduct of research, the organization is interested in influencing policy actions. It was therefore in the desire to disseminate research findings and to forge a policy path that the CDD have partnered with the Nigerian Governors to hold this strategic national multi-stakeholder meeting. He concluded by thanking the British High Commission for their efforts, stating that the NGF partnership was critical to achieving CDD's goals and looking forward to continued partnership with the NGF.

2.1.3 Mr. Jonathan Beacon - British High Commission

He began by explaining the importance of the partnership based on the ties and the history that the UK shares with Nigeria. Adding that, the British High Commission continued to work with different Civil Service Organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria in different sectors to bring about multi-dimensional development.

He stated that the topic being discussed was a complicated set of challenges, and addressing those issues were critical to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He pledged the Commission's commitment to work with Nigerian partners to address various challenges besieging Nigeria. He explained that these commitments were in line with the recent high-level dialogue between the Nigerian government and the United Kingdom, which signalled the strength of the relationship and the desire of both countries to address the security challenges that affect both countries.

**2.1.2 Prof. Jibrin Ibrahim, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
2.1.4 Fr. Attah Barkindo representing Chairman National Peace Committee**

He stated that the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was pleased to be part of the joint initiative with the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), adding that CDD was curious that a lot of the insecurity fell on the State even though

very cordial working relationship with stakeholders to ameliorate the challenges of insecurity and conflict across the country.

He expressed the committee's appreciation to the Forum and the stakeholders present and the willingness to continue to partner with the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF). He highlighted the continued absence of local policing, noting this had a negative outlook on the ability of the government to provide security for its citizens. In conclusion, he urged participants to come up with viable recommendations towards implementing a framework that will yield the expected positive results of community-level policing.

2.1.5 Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, Chairman Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF)

H.E welcomed participants on behalf of the thirty-six State Governors to the multi-stakeholder Summit organized in partnership with the Centre for Democracy & Development (CDD) to spark conversations towards finding innovative solutions to the security challenges in Nigeria. Noting that following the launch of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI) in July 2021, the NGF continues to make efforts to create a forum to share ideas on how every stakeholder can contribute to the work of restoring peace and security to the nation. He added that the level of insecurity across the country jeopardized citizens' safety, means of livelihood, and impeded the exercise of the rights of Nigerians, particularly the right to life and the right to movement, and ultimately the country's socio-economic development.

In his view, how well we respond to the security challenges will be determined by the level of collaboration between state and non-state actors, and it was in recognition of this that the Security Agencies, Civil Rights Organisations, faith-based, and traditional institutions were represented at the summit. He urged participants to use this platform to express their views and make policy recommendations that will transform the summit from a mere gathering of like minds to a movement that will produce competent and informed stakeholders who will then use this knowledge to adequately address the security challenges faced in the different geopolitical zones of this country.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Governor Lalong Pledges To Enforce Urban Planning Code, Meets Town Planning President, Olutoye Ayinde

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has expressed his determination to continue to implement town planning policies that will improve the living conditions of citizens in the cities and towns of the State.

Governor Lalong who received President of the Nigeria Institute of Town Planners (NITP) Olutoye Ayinde and his delegation on a courtesy visit to Government House in Jos said the Rescue Administration has placed so much emphasis on planning in development of infrastructure in the State.

He said this has been enshrined in developing new infrastructure and upgrading existing ones particularly in the major towns and cities of Plateau State.

Lalong who acknowledged the level of unplanned development in the State as well as abuse of various plans by citizens, said the Government will continue to enforce all town planning policies and regulations to ensure that public safety, orderliness and aesthetics is achieved for the good of the people.

The Governor said Plateau State is naturally endowed with good weather and aesthetics that cannot be enjoyed in a chaotic situation where people build indiscriminately and without adherence to laid down regulations.

He disclosed that the Government is set to flag off the construction of a new interchange at the British America Junction as part of its urban renewal and plan to deal with high traffic along that corridor.



Lalong

Gov Lalong Warns New Perm Secs Against Politicisation of Civil Service

... Swears in President of Customary Court



Plateau Governor swears in new Permanent Secretaries, President Customary Court

Governor Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State has warned civil servants against politicising the civil service as those who are found sabotaging Government activities due to political reasons will be shown the way out.

Governor Lalong gave the warning while swearing in the substantive President of the Plateau State Customary Court of Appeal Hon. Justice Blessing Lyop Dalyop and 11 new Permanent Secretaries.

While congratulating them over their appointments, the Governor said the machinery of Government needs not only competent, but honest and loyal staff who will support Government to implement its vision and programmes.

According to the Governor, "Let me use this opportunity to again remind civil servants of the need to be loyal to Government and avoid all acts that are inimical to the smooth running of the affairs of the State.

"The civil service rules are very clear on responsibilities, privileges and expectations from all civil servants. Because we are in a political period, you should

endeavour to conduct yourselves within the norms of the service and avoid being used by politicians to disrupt the smooth running of government business. We will not spare those who run contrary to the rules."

Governor Lalong said he expects the new Permanent Secretaries to show leadership that is driven by excellence, capacity, discipline, fairness and honesty. He said because they are coming into these sensitive positions at a challenging time, they will be required to demonstrate innovation, creativity and resource management in the governance architecture of the State. The time for laxity, bureaucratic bottlenecks and sabotage are over.

He reminded them that the positions they hold are very important because the Rescue Administration is gradually winding down and there is a lot to be done between now and next year. According to him, this is the time for action and performance as he is determined to complete on-going projects and programmes.

Lalong Congratulates Echono, New Executive Sec. Tetfund, Lauds Outgoing Bogoro

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has congratulated the immediate past Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education, Architect Sunny Echono on his appointment as the Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETfund) by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Governor Lalong in a congratulatory message described the appointment of Architect Echono as well deserved considering his performance as the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, where he provided the administrative expertise to actualise the mandate of President Muhammadu Buhari in reviving education in the country.

Lalong said during his tenure as Permanent Secretary, a lot was achieved by the Ministry under the leadership of the Hon. Minister Mallam Adamu because of his ability to mobilise, motivate and give the right direction to the agencies and staff on implementing policies and programmes of the administration in education.

The Governor also recalled that more tertiary institutions were created throughout the country both in public and private sectors while early and secondary education also received a boost because of the efforts of the Architect Echono who as Permanent Secretary ensured that all policies and directives of Government were carried out without delay.



MAKING POLITICS WORK FOR CITIZENS, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT: THE EDO STATE EXPERIENCE

GOVERNOR GODWIN OBASEKI

I want to thank the Director General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Prof. Eghosa Osaghae, and management of the Institute for inviting me to deliver this lecture at the Distinguished Lecture Series of the Institute.

Since it was established in 1961, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs has led the charge in shaping Nigeria's international relations and has been the vanguard in developing a robust and pragmatic foreign policy milieu in the country. Today, with the developments in the global community, particularly the realignment of interests among global powers resulting from the Russia-Ukrainian war, the importance and relevance of this great Institute has been brought to the fore.

Therefore, it is quite an auspicious moment for me to be asked to deliver this lecture and I am immensely grateful for the honour and opportunity.

Our country is faced with existential challenges as it tries to cope with several transitions, from political transition in a few months, to the demographic transition and economic transition occurring locally and globally.

As we reflect on these transitions, it is important to remind ourselves of our journey over the last 60 years.

Having gone through over three decades of traumatic political experiences from the mid-1960s, there were high expectations after we replaced the military dictatorships with democratic rule in 1999. Nigerians expected to reap great benefits and advantages, particularly good governance and the associated growth and development.

Democracy was expected to give the populace the opportunity to participate in decision making within the political process.

The expectation was based on the fact that Democracy, be it liberal, African or modern must include equal opportunity for all; there must be the fundamental recognition of popular sovereignty, representativeness, majority rule, protection of minority rights, popular consultation, the right of choice between alternative programmes and consensus on fundamental issues as well as periodic elections (Oke, 2005).

The expectation of democracy is that it will create "a climate of true political and civil freedom which will enable the country achieve the fundamental conditions for development. That it will produce responsible government that is committed to the advancement of the public goods rather than private interest of the politi-



cal actors and their own families and cronies (Diamond, 2005).

As we commence another political transition in our democratic journey, we must reflect on the challenges faced in this Republic, so that we can better understand why our democratic experience to date has not provided good governance and why our economic and socio-political development have remained stunted.

We should also reflect on why we the political actors particularly those of us who are the political elite who have the responsibility not only to institutionalize the democratic process but also to develop a political culture which should foster and enhance development have so far failed to do so.

The Nigerian people, having subscribed to the ideals of democracy, expect that at the very least those in position of authority will organize the socio-political, ge-

It is only when citizens can hold government accountable that the state would improve on its ability to get things done accountably to citizens and be responsive to citizens' rights and needs. Good governance reduces poverty by empowering citizens to realize their rights and address the issue of gender equality, discrimination and social inclusion.

However, in Nigeria, these have not been adequately provided. The people have had to contend with a poverty rate of 47.3 percent representing 98 million Nigerians; 38 percent unemployment rate among the working population and a struggling national economy.

THE STATE OF NIGERIA'S POLITICS

Osiki, Omon Merry (2010) in an article "Gold, Guns & Goons" aptly describes Nigeria's political setting as follows:

Bribery, use of thugs and physical weapons continued to be part of the political development of Nigeria and the country's electoral politics... Elements of money politics, use of thugs and dangerous weapons were effectively used by the political class to alienate the electorate and have a firm grip on the machinery of government. The trend helped to sustain the phenomenon of "godfatherism", which assumed a potent force in Nigeria during the period. The fact that the Nigerian electoral system thrived on patronages made the illegal use of money, weapons and goons the surest option available to the political elite.

Our political system is not designed to attract selfless service. Rather, it mostly caters for actors with resources, most of which was not legally earned, to invest in the political system and expect huge personal returns.

Some of the defects in Nigeria's political system include:

- Entry barriers to the political system such as age restriction and high cost of nomination and expression of interest;
- Negative perception of politics and the attendant skirmishes including mudslinging, deliberate character assassination, blackmail which make it unattractive to accomplished professionals to participate in.
- Prohibitive cost of the electioneering process
- Proliferation of political parties with no clear ideology;
- Electoral malpractices which have instigated voter apathy.

The hyper-commercialization of the political process makes the system inaccessible to people with honest intentions and with capacity to deliver value.

The jury is out on who is most culpable in Nigeria's political conundrum: the electorate or the political class. The political class is believed to have a stranglehold on the electorate because it deploys its resources to exploit the deprivation faced by the majority of the people, riding on their back to political office and turning around to plunder public resources which could

and geographic economic environment in such a way that it guarantees to a significant extent, the security of lives and property.

But unfortunately, this has not been the experience in our country, as the people have continuously had to grapple with the ever-evolving problems of insecurity, specifically terrorism, banditry, militancy and communal clashes.

A properly functioning Democracy should not only provide basic social and economic goods, such as roads, portable water, and improved education, in addition, democracy should provide the right of groups and individuals to hold their governments accountable.





have been used to extricate the mass of our people from poverty.

Conversely, there is also the argument that the avarice of the electorate is to blame. It is believed that the majority of voters only support people from whom they can get personal benefits.

Whatever the case, the political class bears immense responsibility for the failures of leadership in Nigeria for various reasons:

a) Institutions vs individuals

Nigeria, over the years, has hinged the possibility of its emergence from political and governance doldrums on the rise of powerful individuals, who would supposedly use their strong personalities and charisma to redirect our development trajectory and stir the nation back on course in pursuit of progress.

But drawing from the insight provided by former President of the United States of America, Barrack Obama, that Africa needs strong institutions and not strong men, it is clear that Nigeria has benefited almost nothing from enthroning people with perceived strong character.

Rather, it has resulted in the dysfunctional traits where hero-worship and eye-service have produced "Godfathers" whose antics have hindered the growth and development of our institutions, thus, continually limiting our output and productivity.

b) Challenges with managing diversity

Politics in Nigeria has not been able to prioritize nationalism over primordial ethnic, religious and regional sentiments.

The political class has continually preyed on the divisions that appear to exist due to the very diverse nature of the Nigerian society. For example, Nigeria has over 300 languages spoken across the various geopolitical zones of the country, which can be tuned one way or the other by political actors to derive one form of political benefit or the other.

In many cases, rather than emphasize important issues of our common national patrimony that should underpin the discourse during the process of assessing and selecting leaders in the country, many of the actors within the political class try to throw up dichotomies based on language, religious leaning, state of origin, geopolitical zone of origin, tribe and so on, thereby cunning the unsuspecting electorates into giving them their support without rationally evaluating the developmental benefits accruable.

c) Flaws of unitary federalism

With the concentration of resources and

power with the Federal Government, the federating states become almost absolutely dependent on the center, thereby losing creativity and drive to generate internal resources as well as chart the path for progress as economically viable sub-nationals.

This defective structure also creates the impression among political actors who aspire to lead as heads of the federating units i.e. state governments and local governments, that no rigorous effort is required to lead at these levels, as all that is required is to rely on the monthly Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) for funds with which to run their governments. This provides clear explanation why majority of the sub-national, particularly local governments in Nigeria are not economically viable.

Juxtaposing Nigeria's democratic experience with the theories propounded by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson in their book, 'Why Nations Fail,' it becomes evident that the Nigerian reality today confirms their theories.

The authors had argued that it is man-made political and economic institutions that underlie economic success, which is sustained when government becomes accountable and responsive to citizens and the majority.

THE EDO EXPERIENCE

Although politics and democracy have not dealt favourably with us in Nigeria, that does not deny the existence of the potential for democracy to be the vehicle for delivery of development to the people.

In Edo, we had to take deliberate and intentional steps to retool our politics to engender development. This has led to the introduction of people-centric policies and programmes which have won our administration significant public trust.

We inherited a state that was essentially under the control of various non-state actors who served as enforcers for the old political order in the state. In exchange for their loyalty and service, their pay off was the collection of revenue that should have accrued to the public purse.

Following this, we were able to open up the political space to a broad range of players to the chagrin of the godfathers. These patrons of the old order thrived in the exclusion of the majority from participating in the political process. For them, the fewer the actors in the system, the more relevant they were and the more they were able to take the process hostage.

With the opening up of the political sys-



tem, we embarked on institutional reforms to enhance the capacity of government to deliver public services. This was done by enhancing the work environment, ensuring regular payment of salaries and pensions, improving compensation packages, and creating better condition of service for workers.

We also revamped the public service to cut back on waste and with this, we were able to deliver more projects with less resources than would have been required.

Having built public trust, we had to open up the business environment which led to robust partnership with the private sector and international development organisations. With their support, we have been able to substantially curb the menace of human trafficking and irregular migration, which once pillaged our most valuable resources – our young people. We rolled out infrastructure projects in a fair and equitable manner that engenders a sense of inclusion among the people across the various sections of the state.

We were able to win the trust of the electorate in Edo State because we had focused on ideals that have come to define our politics and through which we have made the most impact in their lives.

We placed the people at the center of our politics, which led to huge investment in human capital development, particularly across all tiers of the state's education system, starting with the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) programme, which has transformed the lives of over 400,000 pupils across the state and improved learning outcomes.

There has been a deliberate emphasis on strengthening partnership with the private sector, from which we have reaped immense benefit. We signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Ossiomo Power Company to provide stable power to government institutions and to also drive the state's industrial sector. Today, the company generates 95MW out of 550MW it has set out to provide, supported with a distribution infrastructure that has been developed

to supply government offices, streetlights and the state's growing industrial sector with constant electricity.

This close links with the private sector has also led to the establishment of the 6000bpd Edo Refinery and Petrochemical Company Limited (which is 100 percent complete) a landmark project that shows what is possible with well- intentioned Private Public Partnerships (PPP). The model that birthed the refinery project is being deployed for similar high-impact development and industrial projects in the state.

We have also midwived extensive agricultural development programmes such as the Edo State Oil Palm Programme (ESOPP), among others, which have opened up the space for large scale commercial farming in the state, impacting the lives of thousands of farmers.

There is no better illustration of the expanding private sector space than the increased air traffic and high occupancy rate of hotels in the state. When we came into office, there were only two airlines flying into the state, today, there are five of them. The state has generally become more attractive to investment with the influx of investors in real estate, hospitality, oil and gas, industries, technology, agriculture, and manufacturing, among others.

The security situation in the state has improved significantly with the linkage of the Edo State Security Network with the federal security structure. The local actors have leveraged this partnership in terms of training, intelligence gathering and surveillance. This has ensured synergy that has helped in curbing urban crime, banditry and other forms of criminality. We have also upskilled our youths and placed them on a pedestal to actively participate in the 4th industrial revolution through capacity building and skills development initiatives, chief among which is the Edo Tech Park programme developed in partnership with leading technology company, Decagon, through which we are training not less than 15,000 software engineers in the state in the next five years. The Edo Innovation Hub, Edo Production Centre, the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub and Sound





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THE WAY FORWARD

Edo State with all its features is very representative of the larger Nigerian nation. We have demonstrated in Edo State that the political firmament can be altered for the benefit of majority of its citizens.

Edo State reversed the political norm in Nigeria. Voter consciousness and voter turnout reached an enviable level. Citizen participation (including Edos in the diaspora) in the elections shocked bookmakers. The issues for campaign were clear and reduced to few key overarching subjects affecting our people.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) stood its ground and insisted on free and fair elections. Voters results were transmitted directly from the polling units to a central portal and the results matched those we were collating in our situation room. It is possible to scale this template to a national level.

Insistence on good governance has helped us in building public trust with citizens. By rebuilding the culture of transparency and accountability, we have reduced the level of resistance to our reform agenda.

For instance, because we were able to secure the trust and confidence of teachers, in five years we have been able to transform our basic education system on a scale and with speed that is exemplary on in the African continent. Today, in Edo State, a six-year-old child in any of our public schools reads fluently at about 70% of his or her peer in Europe and Asia.

Even though security still remains a major chal-

lenge, we have demonstrated in Edo State, that with citizen participation, a bottom-top approach, intelligence-driven security system and effective cooperation with federal agencies, the country can address issues of terrorism, banditry, and small-arms proliferation, among others.

At the base of the Edo template for growing its economy, is the restructuring of the governance architecture to support business and production. Our vision is to make Edo state the choice for businesses by creating an enabling environment that supports business. We have succeeded in removing bottlenecks that hinder business and continue to emphasize a level playing field. Today Edo state is the haven for investment in the building, hospitality, agriculture, power, oil and gas, and industrial sectors, etc.

For instance, in Edo State, one can find all the materials required for completing building and construction projects, from cement, tiles, aluminum sheets, iron rods, glass, ceramics, roofing sheets to paving stones, among others. These have been made possible by the conducive business environment and government incentives as well as an existing local real estate market.

Edo presents a very striking example of how Nigeria can fix its intractable electricity problem, which has plagued the country since independence. With robust partnership with the private sector, the state government has succeeded in encouraging generation by attracting firms like Azura (450Mw), Ossiomo Power (95MW) is now proceeding to create its own electricity markets to encourage investments in distribution of power within the state. Currently, there is stable electricity to power public institutions and infrastructure in metropolitan Benin City.

In agriculture, we have attracted almost \$500 million investment into Palm Oil cultivation having allocated the first phase of 60,000 hectares of land under the Edo State Oil Palm Production Program (ESOPP). Nigeria has not witnessed this scale of oil palm cultivation since independence.

Following the effort to change the paradigm in Edo State and the result it yielded, which high-point was victory at the election, in which the people freely exercised their franchise and elected a leader of their choice, there is need to scale this political achievement to the entire country. If what happened in Edo can be replicated in the forthcoming Presidential and National Assembly elections, Nigeria would have taken a critical step to democratic consolidation.

It is time to set sentiments aside. The country is adrift. It is time to take the tough decisions to rescue the country from the brink. We must now adopt proven methods and innovations in retooling our politics and democracy and make them work for the delivery of good governance and development of our people.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Kano Dry Port: Presidents of Cameroon, Tchad, Niger, Central Africa to Patronize Us, Says Ganduje

As Kano Dry Port is about to be commissioned, Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State has hinted that the Presidents of Niger Republic, Cameroon, Tchad and Central Africa, have indicated interest to come and fully patronize the multi-billion Naira signature project when it takes-off.

He made the revelation when he paid an assessment tour to the facility, recently, when he was taken round by the Chairman of Dala Inland Dry Port, Sahabo Abubakar Bawuro and the Managing Director, Ahmed Ra'iu.

"All the Presidents of Niger Republic, Tchad, Cameroon and Central Africa have indicated their interest and readiness to be using Kano Dry Port for their imports and exports," he said.

He further explained that they all accepted to get across to Kano and send their officials to come and discuss with authorities over modus operandi of the new Dry Port before it takes off which, he described as "the biggest in the country."

After expressing his gratitude over President Muhammadu Buhari's commitment in creating the enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the state, he acknowledged that, his (Buhari's) commitment and seriousness signify his love for the state to bounce back economically, "...as a commercial hub for Northern Nigeria and some neighbouring African countries."



Ganduje

Insecurity: Gov. Ganduje Urges Govs to Collaborate with Security Agencies

In search of a lasting solution to the lingering security challenges in the country, Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State has urged fellow governors, to fully and effectively collaborate with security agencies in their respective states.

Ganduje expressed this position in his presentation of a paper, titled "Challenges of Insecurity and Nation Building," at the 2020 Alumni Lecture of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association, Worldwide, held at Dame Edith Okowa Auditorium of the University, recently.

"Let me emphasise that state governments need to cooperate and work together with security agencies in dealing with the situation at hand," he stated adding that "Through it, we were able to identify and destroy the central command of the dreaded terrorist group and dealt a blow to their operations in Kano."

He further explained that, "They were provided with logistics and equipment and

setting-up of a Police Anti-Cattle Rustling Squad, Ambush Squad and Tactical Observation points along the Falgore Forest, which was hitherto the den of rustling."

Appreciating President Muhammadu Buhari, whom he said made it possible for the existence of permanent camp for military training ground where the Nigerian Army holds regular military exercises that was also established in the only major forest in the Kano.

Encouraging others, he revealed that, "The state government has invested over N1billion on procurement of gadgets and operational vehicles for security operatives in the state.

"The government has also re-organised Vigilante Groups across the state to enhance community policing and complement efforts of conventional security operatives."

His postulation of other strategies explains that, through the establishment of the Ruga settlement, his administration was able to solve the problem of Fulani/herder clashes.



Rural Devt.: Ganduje Flags-off N2.5b Link Roads in Garo, Neighbouring Communities

To facilitate and strengthen the movement of citizens and farm produce in rural towns and communities, as part of good service delivery, Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State flagged-off roads network in Garo town and neighbouring communities of Kabo Local Government Area.

Representing the governor, Commissioner for Local Governments and Chieftaincy Affairs, Murtala Sule Garo, who was supported by the Commissioner of Works and Infrastructure Development, Eng. Idris Wada, at the ground breaking ceremony recently, assured that the Ganduje administration would work round the clock to improve rural infrastructural development.

Providing relevant insight, Murtala Sule Garo revealed there is an 18-km long road from Kanye-Kabo-Dugabau, which crosses eight Wards out of the ten Wards of Kabo Local Government Area. The

project started by 2018 was abandoned half way.

His words: "But the contract was revoked when a 9km stretch was constructed and re-awarded, for the completion of the remaining 9km. The total cost of the contract is N1.6b.

"There is also another road construction within Kabo town, which cumulatively stands at 3.9km, at the total cost of over N800m. Experts believe that the project when completed would immensely assist movement of farm produce among the communities, apart from easing movement of individuals without any hitches.

"This project, like similar projects across so many rural communities in the state, faults unsubstantiated claims by some people that, rural communities are abandoned in the infrastructural development of this administration. Similar projects could also be sighted elsewhere.



DG NSCC, Emem Omokro receiving an NGF publication from the DG NGF Mr Asishana B. Okauru

NSCC Woos The NGF For Senior Citizen Integration

Having grey hair and sagging skin might seem like indicators that would cause one to lament and bemoan but ageing is a luxury and a blessing. Not all humans attain the ripe old age. But for others, it is guaranteed. From the way old people talk, there is obviously pride in aging..

Now, the question that we all must ask after is, what happens next, after we grow old? What happens after retirement? Does one simply sit at their humble abode and consider the years that have flown by?

The National Senior Citizens Centre in Abuja believes there is still life after senior citizenship.

The Director of the National Senior Citizens Centre, Emem Omokaro said that the centre was established

to accelerate the inclusion of all older persons in development agendas and extend the benefits of improved quality of life through the programs and services by NSCC.

One of their aims of the NSCC is to continue to develop data on the aged. They would like to work with data to identify the ageing population.

Their goal is to build capacity with all MDAs that have excluded retirees. The NSCC fights not to isolate older individuals but integrate them into the society by building re-recreational centres for them, so as to have interactive programs where senior citizens can reconnect with others.

As of date, the NSCC is partnering with the state governments to facilitate capacity building and ageing mainstreaming in relevant state ministries, departments, and agencies to

We need to understand the importance of mental health in the community because people with dementia are being stoned, like street urchins or the mentally ill



enhance multi-sector collaborations and setting up of Ageing desks with focal persons. In addition, the centre seeks to have mainstreaming of Geriatric Assessment and Social Care in Primary Health Care systems.

It also offers capacity building for community health workers and generates jobs. The NSCC wants to ensure inclusion and participation of states representatives in the development of National Certification and Regulatory framework for Domiciliary Social Care Agencies and care givers.

To impact and bring flagship programs, the centre seeks to have partnerships with the states and local governments. "Our mandate is to identify the needs of older persons and cater to them," said Omokaro, Director General of the National Senior Citizens Centre who also adds that there are two strategies that come to play in this.

One would be to mainstream old persons into existing programs and build capacity by partnering with states and identifying stereotypes on ageism. The other strategy would be to mainstream older persons into programs. To develop new initiatives and entrepreneurship programs.

The DG added that health is also crucial when catering to senior citizens. "We need to understand the importance of mental health in the community because people with dementia are being stoned, like street urchins or the mentally ill," she said.

She emphasized that it would be important to develop a manual for health promotion. Omokaro further stated that the NSCC has worked with the National Human Rights Commission, the Legal Aid Council, and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. Through these partnerships, they aim to develop call centres and mechanisms to take to communities. The Director General of the NSCC, Emem Omokaro concluded that through a potential partnership with the NGF, NSCC hopes to continue to develop even more constructively.

After considering their asks, the Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru said he is enthusiastic about the potential partnership with the National Senior



NGF Team at the meeting



NSCC Team making a presentation



Group photograph

Citizens Centre. "We need to care for our senior citizens, but regrettably, houses are built without provision for the elderly," he said.

Mr Ohauru stressed that the next

steps of this conversation would be to explore the possibility of NSCC having an audience with the Governors for them to take ownership of the initiative in their respective states.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Sani Bello Visits IDP Camp in Gwada, Orders More Facilities, Assures Quick Return to their Homes

Niger State Governor Abubakar Sani Bello says the government will fast-track return of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Munya and Shiroro local government areas return to their homes.

Governor Sani Bello disclosed this at the Central Primary School, Gwada, Shiroro local government, when he visited and interacted with the about 4,000 people displaced by terrorists and those displaced as a result of over flow of water from Zungeru Dam under construction.

He said that it was necessary to ensure that the people return to their ancestral homes as there continuous stay there could result to outbreak of disease and food shortage in the society noting that the people are predominantly farmers and rains are fast approaching.

"The rains are fast approaching and almost all of them are farmers. If they don't go back to their farms it won't be a problem for Niger alone but a problem for Nigeria as it leads to food insecurity," he said.

The Governor however said the people can only go back when their communities are safe, adding that the state government and the security agencies are not taking anything to chance to ensure that normalcy returns to



the areas.

He commended efforts of the security agencies for the successes recorded in recent times assuring that with the new tactics adopted by the heads of security agencies in the state, IDPs will soon return to their homes.

The Governor disclosed that some Improvised Explosives were planted around Galadiman Kogo but assured that security agents are already making efforts to detonate the IEDs.

"I am happy that with the new crop of heads of security agencies in the state there is synergy among them. They are all working together and that is why we are recording successes," he said.

The Governor urged those with information on informants not to hesitate to disclose to the security agencies assuring them of their safety and reward. He also warned the informants to terrorists to desist as their end will come soon.

NIGER

Insecurity: Niger State Evolves Fresh Strategies to Neutralise Criminals

Terrorists who invaded some communities in Wushishi, Mashegun and Lavun Local Government Areas of Niger State have been surrounded by security operatives around the flanks of River Kaduna.

This development was disclosed by the Niger State Commissioner for Local Government, Community Development, Chieftaincy Affairs and Internal Security, Mr Emmanuel Umar, shortly after a recent emergency security meeting chaired Governor, Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State, at the Government House, Minna.

The Commissioner explained that eight of the gunmen were killed and others rounded up after the heavy security presence along Wushishi routes forced them

to move through Lavun and Mashegu Local Government Areas, attacking some communities.

According to the Commissioner, "The conventional and non-conventional security operatives engaged the bandits during which eight were killed. The criminals were believed to have moved over to Wushishi Local Government Area where they attacked communities like Akere and others and then moved over knowing that there are security measures put in place in the routes.

"They moved to Lavun Local Government Area. From there, they touched part of Kutigi the headquarters of the local council operating within the flanks of River Kaduna axis."

Loss of Officers: Gov. Sani Bello Condoles with Police, Vigilante Corps

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State has expressed his heartfelt condolences to the Nigerian Police Force and members of the Vigilante Corps over the loss of their personnel in a gun battle with terrorists in Nasko, Magama Local Government Area of the State.

The Governor in a statement, described as painful and unfortunate losing such personnel in action all in a bid to ensure safety of lives and property.

He said while some levels of successes were recorded recently following the onslaught by the joint security operatives which led to the killing of so many terrorists, the unrepentant criminals

are bent on making some parts of the state unsafe to the residents.

Sani Bello also commiserated with the people of Munya local government area over the killing, kidnapping and injury of many people in Chibani, Fuka, Dandaudu and other adjoining communities, saying the situation is quite disturbing.

While encouraging the Police, Vigilante Corps and residents of the affected communities not to lose faith in God no matter the situation as there would be light at the end of the tunnel, the Governor assured them of government's continuous support in ensuring insecurity is curtailed in the state.



The State Of Health With NGF Health Advisor Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab

The state of health is significant and the emergence of the pandemic in 2020 brought all nations scrambling to take a better look at their health systems. However, when there is a crisis, there comes an opportunity to rise and do better and that is where the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat exhibited its organisational competence.

The NGF has recorded many significant achievements in various sectors such as the COVID-19 response, polio eradication and many more.

To elaborate more on the health response, The Executive Summary sat down with Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab.

Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab is a public health expert with several years of national and international experience in public health programs. He is the Senior Health Advisor at the NGF Secretariat. He also leads the Subnational coordination pillar of the PTF COVID19 pandemic response.

Please elaborate on the evolution of the Health Sector of the NGF?

If you want to talk about the health sector, it started with polio eradication where Governors were called upon to champion this which led to the vaccination efforts.

The participation of the NGF was the game changer that led to the certification of Nigeria being polio free. That was where we started. After polio, the NGF recognized the importance of strengthening its health team.

Gradually from polio, we moved to supporting Primary

Healthcare under one roof.

The NGF facilitated the establishment of structures in each of the states that align with primary health care under one roof concepts.

All 36 states included FCT have started Primary Health Care Board which is in line with the principle of primary health care under one roof.

The challenge that we are now having is in the level of functionality from state to state.

We have different pillars such as governance, human resource, financing, and legislation. In terms of how they have been able to fulfil the pillars, it varies from state to state.

Some states are struggling with offices. Some are struggling with having a minimum service package. Some are yet to move their staff from the ministry to the board.

We have succeeded to a certain degree in having PHC under one roof. We have moved to broader universal health coverage.

In the NGF, we now have four priority areas. The first is Polio, being that the remnants of polio are there. The non-wild ones is what we call the circulating mutant polio virus. We will continue to enforce polio

eradication initiatives with routine immunisation.

The second principle is that of the Universal Health Coverage. The third is Nutrition and the fourth is Health Security which encompasses on all the emergencies that we are having such as COVID, Lassa and Meningitis.

Those are the board priority areas that the NGF is pursuing.

Explain the success recorded with polio eradication, where are we today?

To add to polio, where we are today is that Nigeria has been certified polio free. However, we are having an upsurge in the number of cases of circulating mutant polio virus.

This is different from the wild polio because with this one, we have had an increase in the past few months. This year alone, the numbers have increased but the last I know, we had over 600 increases between January last year and this year.

When we had a meeting with Dangote and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the key things was to discuss what Governors are doing in the issue of circulating mutant virus. Everyone is trying to do their best to ensure the increase of quality routine immunisation.

The follow-up for that meeting is that we will continue to track but the key thing is that we urge Governors to make commitments and strengthen routine immunisation and increase the quality of polio campaigns.

Various programs have been introduced by different organisations through the NGF, what has been the Governors response in your estimation?

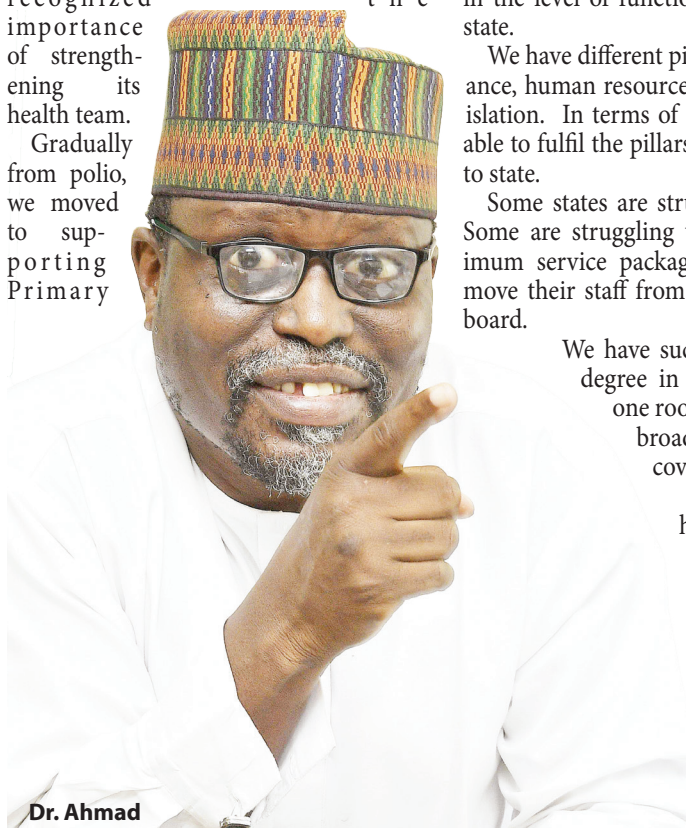
The programs are by NGF, and we are supported by our partners. One of the projects that we are working on now is the use of data for prioritisation, decision making and accountability.

This means trying to use evidence to obtain all the information. What the NGF has been doing is presenting the state of the current affairs in each of the states so the Governors are on top of it.

Then, of course, we also work on the nutrition scorecard. That is part of the work that we do to hold Governors accountable. To keep them informed.

In all the programs, we have different partners that support us. For example, we work with Bill and Melinda Gates, UNICEF, Data-Dent, Alive and Thrive, World Bank, FCDO which was former (DFID) and Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth office.

Of recent, we are exploring our other partners to deepen our relationship with USAID and WHO.



Dr. Ahmad



What would you say is the success or otherwise of the handling of the pandemic by the NGF?

The good thing is to look at the overall result. The number of cases has reduced significantly. It won't be fair to say that it is the work of only the NGF. It's a collective effort with the Presidential Task Force.

NGF was part of the technical team of the then Presidential Task Force which was now changed to the Presidential Sterling Committee.

NGF is a member of the technical team of the PSC, specifically we oversee subnational coordination of the response. Through that, we try to ensure that all that is happening at the Federal is in line with that of the states. This is needed to have one single national response.

We have been able to achieve this with all the contributions. We have seen how the Governors have been able to discuss positively and mobilise their citizens to come out to vaccinate their people.

There is also a committee with the PSC and the NGF that is chaired by Delta State Governor, His Excellency, Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa. They meet regularly to enforce the alignment with the federal and the states.

The NGF is chairing that committee which has six Governors as its members. It's a joint committee of the NGF and the Presidential Steering Committee.

At that point, we try to take some high-level decisions and ensure we have a coordinated national response.

As for the taking of the booster shot, it is based on the value that people attach to it. If people don't feel as though something will happen to them, then they won't take it.

Since the pandemic has started going down, people are getting more relaxed and not wearing masks. However, it is good to continue to encourage people to take the vaccines. It is better to be safe than sorry.

What would your assessment of the meeting of commissioners for health be and what are your expectations going forward?

One of the successes I see that the secretariat has been able to achieve is the bringing of the commissioners together.

We now have a strengthened commissioners forum that meets regularly and reviews progress and shares experiences on best practices. I believe that has been fantastic.

We now have increased cohesion and collaboration between states and amongst the forum. Increasingly, we have more experience being shared and I think things are getting better and better with the states.

That platform is important, and we will continue to support them. For the health team, we serve as the secretariat for them. They meet quarterly.

Earlier in this year, we met with the Governors to discuss the PHC Challenge fund. That is one intervention that we are doing.

We are introducing a challenge fund that would have states compete. There would be an award given to the most improved and best performing in terms of primary health care.

We hope to launch it possibly next month. The award would be monetary, but the amount is not yet certain.

The best performing would be in each of the zones, that is the six geopolitical zones.

Explain the role of state primary health

care operators that you have interfaced with and how would you have preferred they operated?

When it comes to Primary health care, we have a Primary Health Care Board. They are responsible for coordinating PHC activities across the states. So far, so good.

As far as how they operate, there is the component of the PHC under one roof, we want all of them to be able to achieve all key pillars.

For instance, we want that in all the states, all the PHC staff should be under that one board. Not all states have been able to achieve that yet.

In addition, there is what we call the minimum service package. This would mean that states would be able to identify the minimum care. For example, if you have a primary health care facility, you will say that this is the staff and equipment needed to have in that facility.

When they have defined it, each state will have to do a gap analysis based on those criteria and standard they have set.

Define the standard, do a gap assessment, and then do what is called an investment plan in terms of how you are going to finish the plan over about a five-year period.

The second area is that of the health insurance that has been taken in 2/3 of states, the coverage could still be better. The coverage is still relatively low. However, compared to what

the federal has done, the states can do better but we still a long way to go.

Are there any areas where you think Governors should step up in meeting the health needs of Nigerians in their states?

All the areas that we discuss, when it comes



to the Universal Health Coverage, we need to prioritise the issue of trying to obtain Universal health coverage that was set for 2030. If every administration does its part, then eventually, we would be able to achieve our goals.

We need to focus on human resource funds. That is the big challenge. The second challenge would be the availability of drugs.

Then, the other area after drugs would be the use of data as evidence.

You would notice that I did not mention money, finance because money is not the major problem.

The whole capital funds going to health is relatively low, but we need to be able to optimise the little that we are getting.

I would quote our Secretary to the Government of the Federation of Nigeria, Mr. Boss Mustapha when he said that "if money was going to solve the health problem of people, the U.S wouldn't have lost more than one million of its people to the pandemic. What we need to invest more is to invest in our people. We need to invest in science and strategy plan."

That is why I said human resources is significant. We need to invest in our people and the right system. We need to also have evidence planning and getting quality people. That is what we should prioritise.



COMMUNIQUE

Issued At The End Of The Teleconference Meeting (3rd In 2021) Of The Nigeria Governors' Forum Held On Wednesday, 23rd March 2022

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, March 23 2022 deliberated on several issues of national importance, and resolved as follows:

1. The Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of the Forum, His Excellency Kayode Fayemi briefed members on the Resolutions of the two-day Multi-stakeholder Summit of the NGF Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative which held on the 10th of March 2022. The Forum remains concerned about the impact of the state of insecurity on citizens' safety, means of livelihood and the exercise of the rights of Nigerians, particularly the right to life, right to movement, and ultimately the country's socio-economic development. The Forum will consequently see that all States design and operationalize an action plan to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination on peace and security, including the establishment of peace building agencies and a multi-level policing framework to combat the threat of insecurity in the country.

2. The Forum received an update on the implementation of the World Bank Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) programme – an emergency programme to support state-level response to and recovery from the COVID-induced socioeconomic crisis – from the Task Team Leader for the World Bank programme, Prof. Foluso Okunmadewa, in the company of the World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Shubham Chaudhuri. Governors in response conveyed their commitment to secure and increase budget provisions that target the economic and social shocks in their states including social transfers, basic services, and livelihood support to poor and vulnerable households; food security and safe functioning of food supply chains; and the recovery of micro and small business enterprises.

3. Following a briefing by Hon. Dr Osagie Emmanuel Ehanire, Minister of Health, on the federal government's plan to develop 100 oxygen generation plants and rehabilitate general hospitals in order to guarantee access to oxygen in all primary healthcare centres (PHCs) in the country, members of the Forum resolved to interface with the Federal Ministry of Health to ensure oxygen sufficiency for all PHCs in the country.

4. On the implementation of the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) programme a presentation by Mr. Olanrewaju Ajogbasile, Senior Programme Manager of the NGF HelpDesk, dwelt specifically on the progress made by State governments on the deployment of e-procurement and contract award publication using the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) format, the Forum resolved to deepen its current collaboration with Ernst & Young (EY) and the World Bank to strengthen the procurement plans and transaction implementation strategies of State governments. 32 States are already transitioning or implementing e-procurement systems in at least four (4) ministries (including the State ministries of health, education, and public works).

5. Members received a briefing on the Nigerian Economy: New Perspectives, from Dr. Doyin Salami, Chief Economic Adviser to Mr. President, after which a consensus was reached to intensify economic diversification and food security initiatives including support for large scale all-season commercial farming; strengthening fiscal sustainability by crowding in private investment; promoting the development of regional corridors and infrastructure plans; as well as curtailing the uncertainty associated with the oil and gas industry.

6. Following a briefing by the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Mr. Mele Kyari, which highlighted the impact of the heightened spate of crude oil theft and losses in the Niger Delta, State Governors commended the role played by one of their own, the Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency Nyesom Wike in tackling the spate of oil bunkering in the Niger Delta and pledged to the NNPC in the region as well as security agencies in the country to protect the country's oil infrastructure and investments as well as the ecosystem of the Niger Delta.

7. Finally, the Forum resolved to take part in the two-day Primary Health Care Summit 2022 holding from the 24th – 25th of March 2022 in Abuja. The event which is organised by the Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, is expected to launch a new programme to transform primary health care delivery in Nigeria.

*Governor Kayode Fayemi, Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum
3rd March 2022*



Happy 58th Birthday



20
MARCH

LAWRENCE IFEANYI UGWUANYI

Enugu State Governor

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, I Dr John Kayode Fayemi, Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of the Forum, wish to congratulate you, Your Excellency, Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, as you celebrate your fifty-eight birthday which came up last Monday, March 20th.

All the 36 Governors felicitate with you and are happy to say that during your tenure, as the Enugu State Governor you have shown great leadership and commitment to the development of your state.

You have exhibited pioneer momentum, Your Excellency, and done commendable things towards the betterment of your state. For example, your government participated in the first Nsukka Trade Fair/ Sales Exhibition organized by the Nsukka Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NSCIMMA) to promote business and economic development in Enugu state.

As your colleagues at the NGF we also commend your dedication to education. One of your interventions in the sector especially comes to mind, when you commissioned ICT equipment procured by the state government for public secondary schools.

What is perhaps most respectable about you, Your Excellency, is your compassion towards the underprivileged. You celebrated your birthday by paying a visit to the Nigerian Red Cross, the Enugu branch of Cheshire Home, Uwani, Enugu and the Mother of Christ Hospital, Ogui and donated gift items as well as made funds available to the management of the hospital. This seems to be in line with your slogan, Enugu is in the hands of God.

We pray that God Almighty will continue to preserve your life and that all your projects for the betterment of Enugu State become actualised.

SIGNED

Dr John Kayode Fayemi

Executive Governor of Ekiti State & Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum

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