

The

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SUMMARY

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GOVERNORS'
FORUM



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NGF GOES

Continental

HOSTS AFRICAN SUB-SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENTS'
CONFERENCE 2022 IN COLLABORATION WITH AFREXIMBANK

**UNVEILED: INCOMING INTERIM
CHAIRMAN OF THE NGF** ▶





PROF. ABBA GAMBO

THE MALABO DECLARATION AND THE AGRICULTURAL BUDGET OF 2023

In 2014, African Heads of States and Government Converged on the city of Malabo, in Equatorial Guinea for the AU summit to discuss the lingering “Food Security Situation in Africa”.

At the end of the conference, the countries agreed to commit 10% of their annual budgets to Agriculture.

However, since the Malabo commitment unlike the other countries, Nigeria has never given more than 2% of her annual budget to Agriculture. As a matter of fact, this year Nigeria allotted to agriculture a mere 1.73% of her total budget. To Farmers, this is meagre. The sector was the highest contributor to the national GDP in the Q2 of 2022 with 23.2%, surpassing

Manufacturing, Telecommunication and even the oil and gas sectors.

Agricultural budget of 2023.

A national stakeholder’s consultative meeting on the 2023 budget was held to address the continental framework, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) targets and Government intentions within the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) in Nigeria and strengthening citizens’ participation towards making 2023 Agriculture budget responsive for food security and wealth creation.

For the NGF, it has a very important role of synergizing the National budget and the agricultural budget of the sub nationals.

The meeting provided stakeholders especially smallholder women farmers, opportunity to participate in agriculture policy and budget

making processes resulting in changes in priority budget line items that are pro-poor and even in the approach of government's implementation of programmes and projects. Here are the key recommendations:

1. We call on Federal and State Executives, National and State Houses of Assembly to Scale Up Public Investment in Agriculture, and ensure timely consideration, passage, and total budget releases as a strategic approach to increase food production, reduce hunger and poverty and achieve the Maputo/Malabo Commitments.
2. As approved by the 44th National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development (NCARD); the three tiers of government should commit 10% of their annual budget to the agriculture sector to meet the 10% Maputo/Malabo Declaration required to support at least 6% growth rate for the sector as postulated in the CAADP framework. There should be political will to allocate at least 10% of annual budgets and actuals of revenues to the agriculture sector with appropriate budget lines so that Nigeria will be on track in the next Biennial Reporting to the African Union Heads of States and Government in line with the Malabo Declaration and Commitments of 2014.
3. As approved by the 44th National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development (NCARD); the three tiers of government should commit 10% of their annual budget to the agriculture sector to meet the 10% Maputo/Malabo Declaration required to support at least 6% growth rate for the sector as postulated in the CAADP framework.
4. FMARD, State Ministries of Agriculture and other Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) should consistently create budget lines to ensure wider stakeholder consultation in the budget formulation, provide continued coordination and the implementation of the Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the Agriculture Budget annually at the Federal and State levels.
5. The 2023 and subsequent years agriculture budget should be gender sensitive and responsive by providing line items for the implementation of the National Gender Policy in Agriculture that address specific challenges that affect women farmers different from men as well as avoid lumping up budget for women farmers and other groups such as youths.
6. Federal and State governments should allocate more public investments in agriculture to address the strategic areas of investments that would increase the agricultural GDP to at least 6%. These strategic areas of investments include Extension Services, Access to Credit, Women in Agriculture, Youth in Agriculture, Appropriate Labour-Saving Technologies, Inputs, Post-Harvest Losses Reduction Supports (processing facilities, storage facilities, trainings, market access, etc.), Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA)/Agroecology, Research and Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as Coordination.
7. The agriculture sector requires a separate budget cycle to enable FMARD achieve its mandate. Buffer funds from sources such as Consolidated Oil Revenue, Oil Revenue Surplus, Natural Resource Funds, Climate Resource Funds, and the National Agricultural Development Fund (Establishment)

TOP 7 CONTRIBUTING SECTORS TO THE ECONOMY IN Q2 2022

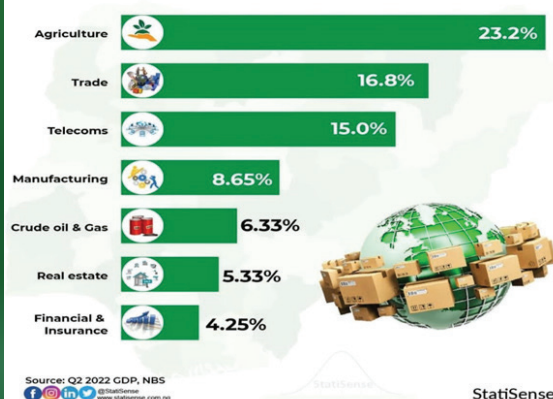
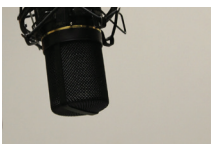


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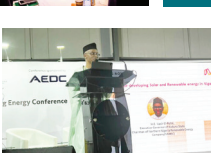
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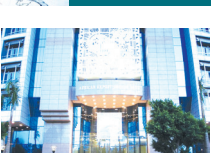
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Commentary

RAISING THE GAME

Kwesi Brews “the Mesh” easily comes to mind, as the parting of ways between the NGF Secretariat and its Chairman, Dr John Olukayode Fayemi takes place in this lonely autumn. Here is “The Mesh”

***We have come to the cross-roads
And I must either leave or come with you.
I lingered over the choice
But in the darkness of my doubts
You lifted the lamp of love
And I saw in your face
The road that I should take.***

– Kwesi Brew

For the NGF, it is dawn yet on creation day and an era worth celebrating has manifested itself. Dr John Kayode Fayemi has driven the Forum into centre-stage on the continent, in a thought-provoking journey, on paths strewn with hard work, laughter, strategy and organization. The activities of the Forum during the Covid 19 pandemic would have provided all the headlines for the Ekiti State Governor’s tenure, beginning from the early days when Governors; showed character in their understanding of the plague that was to haunt the entire universe. The Health Unit under Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab moved swiftly into gear to halt the Covid pandemonium. It was a great feat but that was trumped by the international interventions and the solid governance groups that the Nigeria Governors’ Forum has been driven to head in the last four years.

Dr Fayemi elevated the departments to a level where professionalism began to manifest in more practical than mere academic ways. There were inclusions in the Agric Unit where Professor Abba Gambo holds sway and the education desk saw Ebenezer Leo- the Great. The NGFS was also active with its interventions on inclusive security where

a former aide of the Director General Hajjiya Fatima Usman, who had previously left the forum for other assignments but returned to steer things.

The NGF Secretariat’s Economy desk was under this period able to initiate and unveil a Public Finance Database that provides Realtime assessments of states revenue situations. There are many more.

Apart from winning the presidency of FORAF, the Chairman of the NGF exhibited a remarkable grasp of the subnational arrangement, not just in Nigeria but around the world. It was like a premonition when he led a team of Governors to Washington on a mission to sharpen the NGFS’ learning curve. On that team was a formidable dose of the expertise that the NGF possesses. There were his amiable Vice Chairman, Rt Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, there was Edo State Governor and the Chief priest of the States’ Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Program SFTAS, Mr Godwin Obaseki and there was Rt Hon Simon Bako Lalong, Governor of Plateau State and Chairman of the Northern Governors’ Forum, whose remarkable achievement is admired even from far away Oromia in Ethiopia. It was at one of the fora with the Chairman in Washington DC that an important dignitary commended Dr Fayemi for leading a subnational delegation to the US to court the understanding of the global community or World Bank and to share the progress that subnational was experiencing.

Dr Fayemi also led the NGFS to the AIM Conference which takes place annually in Dubai. These and many other forays into cross-border engagements cuts Dr Fayemi far ahead and this victory has been crowned by his securing the presidency of FORAF.

The goal of the Forum of African Regions is to contribute to the emergence of a structurally reformed, socially united, economically strong, culturally radiant, environmentally sound, and globally respected Africa. And that is sure to push the African people forward under Dr John Olukayode Fayemi’s watch.

The amount of work he brought to the NGF cannot be quantified. He reenergised the Forum, opened its eyes to the world of continental opportunities and with a wide array of shades of opinion points at a new direction where the NGF should be headed.



THE TEAM

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STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEM: Gov Ganduje signs MoU with FG, Dangote, Bill Melinda Gates Foundations, UNICEF

— AS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS CONGRATULATE GOV GANDUJE FOR WINNING COVID-19 AWARDS

They all believed that governor Ganduje gives full support with the needed political will to make Kano greater on high pedestal in all areas of human endeavors, particularly healthcare delivery system

Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano state signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Addendum III on behalf of the state government, with Dangote, Bill Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF and the federal government, as part of the giant stride towards strengthening the health care delivery system in the state.

The signing took place at Africa House, Government House, Kano, Wednesday, with many healthcare professionals in attendance. While others like NPHCDA Boss, representative

of WHO, among others joined virtually.

Among the signatories to the MoU is the federal government through the Executive Director of National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) Dr Faisal Shuaib.

While the Emir of Kano, Aminu Ado Bayero and representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) signed as witnesses at the occasion.

Appreciating state commitment in improving health care system by the state government the MoU would play key and critical role in making Kano greater towards achieving improved healthcare delivery system in the state.

The debut of the MoU Addendum III came into being as the state performed well in the Addendum II of the entire process, particularly in the areas of fund sustainability for Routine Immunization (RI) programmes alongside increment of RI budget

ceiling by 22 percent in the last six consecutive years, among others.

Provision of qualitative technical assistance and stronger capacity building in the local communities are part of the major areas the MoU would look into critically. So that the process would remain result-oriented with effective implementation and transparent exercise.

While commending governor Ganduje's political will in driving the process, development partners also applauded the traditional institutions for their continued and tireless efforts in making the entire process a success story.

In all their remarks, the signatories to the MoU appreciated and congratulated the governor for driving the process which eventually brought an Award of Excellence for the state as the Most Improved State on COVID-19 vaccination during the 2022 African Vaccination Week and Award Ceremony, which took place few days back in Abuja.

They all believed that governor Ganduje gives full support with the needed political will to make Kano greater on high pedestal in all areas of human endeavors, particularly healthcare delivery system.

In his brief remarks the governor assured his continued commitment and support for improving tertiary, secondary and primary health care delivery systems in the state.

Adding that, "We are also committed to see to the successful implementation of this MoU from all its ramifications."

STATE HEALTH INSURANCE AGENCIES:

The Journey So Far

Health insurance is an important mechanism to prevent financial hardship in the process of accessing health care. The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was established in 1999 as a social tool towards attaining equity in health service delivery. Since the launch of Nigeria's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 2005, only about 5% of Nigerians have health insurance and a little above 70% still finance their healthcare through Out-Of-Pocket (OOP) expenditure. The enrollee population in the scheme is largely made up of Federal Government employees (formal sector) and their dependents. Understanding the contextualized perspectives of stakeholders involved in NHIS is critical to advancing and implementing necessary reforms for expanding health insurance coverage at national and sub-national levels in Nigeria.

In 2015, the NHIS in collaboration with representatives of the States, Development Partners and other stakeholders developed a framework, for the decentralization of health insurance implementation to the States. A memo on Decentralizing Health Insurance implementation in Nigeria to the States was presented to and approved by the 58th Emergency National Council on Health, which held in Abuja on the 17th of March 2015. This marked the commencement of State Social Health Insurance Schemes (SSHIS) as a mechanism to expand health insurance coverage for all Nigerians. Consequently, SSHIAs were enshrined in the 2016 National Health

Policy and the 2016 Nigerian National Health Financing Policy and Strategy. The establishment of State Social Health Insurance Scheme is a key requirement for States to access the Basic Health Care Provision Fund, as outlined in the guideline for the implementation of section 11 of the NHA 2014. There are several other landmark developments towards the National Goal of UHC by 2030.

On Thursday 19th of May 2022, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria signed the new Health Insurance Act 2022 which repeals the National Health Insurance Scheme of 2004. The Act makes it mandatory for every person resident in Nigeria to obtain health insurance. Residents include employers and employees in private and public sectors employing five or more staff, informal sector employees and all other residents of Nigeria. Among several functions, the new Authority is expected to;

- Enforce the Basic Minimum Care package of health services for all Nigerians across all health insurance schemes in the country, including private health insurance schemes.
- Work with State health insurance schemes to ensure that Nigerians have access to quality health care that meets national health regulatory standards.
- Ensure the implementation and utilisation of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund under the National Health Act 2014.
- Devise a mechanism in conjunction with States, to ensure that the basic health care needs of vulnerable persons are provided.
- Provide and maintain information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and capability for integration of all data on health schemes in Nigeria.

With the emergence of this Act, States have now been formally recognised through the SSHIAs to drive the process of Health Insurance at the sub-national level. Presently, almost all the states are at various stages of their implementation journey. These schemes typically involve the establishment of a governing agency to oversee the implementation and management of the scheme. They have also defined benefit packages to cater to the most common healthcare occurrences. Of significant note though, State Governments commit to dedicate a percentage of their consolidated revenue to the scheme to fund premiums for the poor and vulnerable in the state. These schemes, if successfully implemented and operated, could prove to be a significant tool in making affordable healthcare more accessible throughout the country especially to the poor and vulnerable in society. As with any large-scale endeavour of this nature, there are several key success factors which need to be in place to ensure the schemes are successful and sustainable. Some of these factors may include and are not limited to the following:

- Strengthening political will towards attaining UHC through Health Insurance.
- Enhancing State ownership of Health Insurance.
- Facilitating adequate budgetary allocation and prompt release of funds
- Developing a framework for partnership in health insurance.
- Mobilizing the population to key-in into the schemes.
- Building the general capacity of SSHIAs.



DR AHMAD

- Inter-agency collaboration with state health MDAs
- Strengthening health service providers through public-private partnerships.

Many studies demonstrate that a sustainable path to UHC through expanding social health insurance exists in Nigeria. Encouraging the states which are semi-autonomous federating units to setup and manage their own insurance schemes presents a unique opportunity for rapidly scaling up prepaid coverage for Nigerians. Nigeria's federal structure which prescribes a sharing of responsibilities for health care among the three tiers of government presents serious challenges for significantly extending social insurance to uncovered groups. Evidence based recommendations show that rather than allowing this governance structure to impair progress toward UHC, it should be leveraged to accelerate the process by supporting the states to establish and manage their own insurance funds while encouraging integration with the National Health Insurance Scheme.

The status of implementation across all the States of the Federation are described below:

<p>AVAILABILITY OF A GOVERNING BOARD: All states have governing board in place except Benue, Edo, Cross River, FCT, Imo, Kaduna, Kwara, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara</p>	<p>LAW EXISTS: All States have an existing law except the FCT.</p>
<p>PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS: All states have commenced payroll deductions except Abia, Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Ogun, Rivers, Sokoto and Taraba State as at June 2022.</p>	<p>MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE: The law is mandatory for all States except Taraba and Rivers State.</p>
	<p>FORMAL SECTOR ENROLLMENT: All States provide for formal sector enrolment except Enugu and Ogun States.</p>
	<p>MONTHLY GOVERNMENT PREMIUM CONTRIBUTIONS: All states except Adamawa, Bauchi, Cross River, Oyo, Kwara, Katsina, Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa and Borno State.</p>

With the emergence of this Act, States have now been formally recognised through the SSHIAs to drive the process of Health Insurance at the sub-national level.

Prior to the emergence of the new Health Insurance Act, the scheme was believed to have provided more coverage for the formal sector, its voluntary nature and lack of legal framework at the subnational levels were seen as the overarching policy challenge. However, the operationalization of the newly enacted act makes health insurance mandatory through an already established legal framework and also expanding coverage to over 83 million people through a Special Intervention Fund in the act to establish the Vulnerable Group Fund.

Some key challenges the state agencies have currently include Fiscal space challenges which affect fund releases, low demand for health insurance, and weak technical and operational capacity. Some key recommendations for the States include;

- Catalyse formal sector enrolment.
- Ensure prompt release of funds.

- Maintain a single basket of funds for the state health insurance sector.
 - Creating efficient platforms to get the informal sector enrolled
 - Establishing community-based health insurance schemes to enhance community mobilisation.
 - Promote targeted advocacy to accelerate the operationalization of the SSHIAs.
- Ultimately, if health insurance is done right at the sub-national level, Nigeria's goal of ensuring that all individuals and communities have access to quality health services without suffering financial hardship will be achieved, ultimately Universal Health Coverage by 2030 will be a dream come true.

The key highlights of the status of SSHIA's Implementation above shows a clear picture of where the states are currently in terms of key indicators required to drive the process.

New Law Will Transform Health Insurance Ecosystem - Dr. Oginni

Chairman, Forum of CEOs of the Social Health Insurance Agencies (SSHIA), Dr. Niyi Oginni, provides some insight into how the mint-new National Health Insurance Act would impact the critical national health arena. He encountered NGF's media team at the recent two-day strategic stakeholders meeting with State Social Health Insurance Agencies (SSHIA) convened by the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) in Abuja.



SO, I ALWAYS SAY THAT THE NGF IS A CRITICAL STAKEHOLDER THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED. ANYONE WHO WANTS TO SUCCEED WITH THE STATE SOCIAL HEALTH INSURANCE OPERATIONS MUST HAVE A GOOD ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING, MYSELF AS THE LEADER OF THE FORUM

Beyond the elation, how would the new National Health Insurance Act transform the rather challenged health sector?

The key positives of the new Act are that it makes health insurance mandatory for all Nigerians. The residents and even the legal immigrants into the country are now mandated to have health insurance. This itself has given the opportunity for an increase in the coverage of the citizens. That's number one.

If things are not mandated and followed with enforcement, people are not particularly interested, especially when it's a new thing - a new paradigm.

Number two which is very important is that it makes provision for coverage of 83 million Nigerians that are essentially vulnerable. If we have those numbers covered, you can imagine the effect it will have on our health indices. The indices related to our health system would improve.

Then, of course, the establishment of the vulnerable funds would expand the physical space for health. It would bring more opportunities for money to come into the health insurance ecosystem. When more money comes into the health insurance ecosystem, it doesn't just expand access to care by increasing the number of people coming in, but it also has a direct impact on the quality of care that is given.

Also, health insurance is strategic purchasing. After you have mobilised the fund, you are purchasing strategically. You are ensuring that the service providers are doing what they ought to do. They are following the standards.

So, the 83 million vulnerable people will impact the quality of services rendered under the scheme. Aside from that, with financial expenditures, it prevents people from

incurring out-of-pocket expenses. That is another positive that we see from the Act.

Also, for us at the social health insurance level, the previous law didn't recognize state health insurance agencies. Right now, it gives legitimacy to state social health insurance agencies under the law.

At the national level also, it is bringing us together. Health insurance is becoming one ecosystem. The initiative of primary health care under one roof is further strengthened by this law. It also emphasizes the role of health maintenance and social health insurance in Nigeria.

All of these are positives that are associated with the Act, and we look forward to running with it.

During this period, a lot of industries are contracting, especially the pharmaceutical sector. How should this crucial challenge be addressed?

The contraction is a result of economic depression. Funds, by virtue of this Act, are being mobilised into the health sector. We also know that a critical component of service delivery is the availability of medicines and consumables.

Now, the companies are either contracting because there is a reduction in demand, so their operational fund is reducing. However, now they are having a new life infused in them. From the sub-national level, we are going to aggregate requests from different service providers across all the states and geopolitical wards of the country.

So, you will see that by the time Osun State is aggregating, the quantity of drugs that are required by the states would be huge. This fund will be going to the pharmaceutical industry. They will have an opportunity to have more money and the money would come at once.

Some challenges that arise are that those who are aware of the scheme can be sceptical because it is coming from the government. We will then have to work to do a lot of sensitisations, and a lot of education and media engagement to get to the very grassroots with this good news.

I call it a gospel of social health insurance that promises to take care of the health of everyone.

How will you engage the Nigeria Governors' Forum as

a critical stakeholder?

The Nigeria Governors' Forum is a very critical stakeholder in the establishment and operationalisation of social health insurance in Nigeria, particularly at the state level. This is because every Governor will come to the Governors' Forum.

I keep saying that the NGF helped the acceleration and establishment of social health insurance in Osun State. My Governor was at one of the NGF meetings and when the scorecard was shown to him, he saw red all over.

He didn't wait till he got to Osun but called me while he was here in Abuja to ask why our scorecard had so many reds. I then told him the patterns that are responsible for the red. No equity. No board in place. No accreditation, etc.

Then, within a month, all the parameters were achieved. We came up with the establishment of our law in November 2018 but within a year, we have superseded many of the existing health insurance agencies because all our parameters were achieved within a month.

So, I always say that the NGF is a critical stakeholder that cannot be ignored. Anyone who wants to succeed with the state social health insurance operations must have a good engagement with the Nigeria Governors' Forum and that is what we are doing, myself as the leader of the Forum. Recently, I was discussing with the Senior Health Advisor, Dr Ahmad, that there is some data that I intend to share with him. We feel free to give him our data because we see it as an advocacy tool by which we can get our Governors to be positive-minded and to be more determined to implement health insurance in the state.

Do changes in governorship batons worry you – given the possibility of policy discontinuity?

I'm not worried because no one would want to change a winning team. Immediately after the elections, I went to my media expert. I asked him how do you advise that we go about our communications. There is the content of communication prior to the election and after the election and, based on how it goes, the communication must change.

However, changing communication does not remove the fact that the objectives and the benefits of social health insurance remain the same. For our Social Health Insurance in Osun, we are on the air every day of the week. We are on a radio program with either a drama skit or jingle. We have a program that showcases our performance.

Now, when we engage the people in the next program, we would ask them that now that there is a change of



DR. OGINNI

governance, what would be their fears? Then, it won't be us talking.

The people would say that the one thing they have enjoyed that people should not ever remove is the health insurance that has helped to reduce our out-of-pocket expenditure on health, and which has helped to keep many people who would have been dead - alive.

Then, the new incoming Governor would be hearing this on the radio and understand that this is what the citizens want, and he has to be committed to it. That is my own work as the CEO of the SSHIAs.

At the end of the day, it is the prerogative of the Governor to say that yes, he wants you to continue or not. I'm a Civil Servant and I will be sixty in one year and eleven months.

I have a four-year tenure which I just started in February. If someone says that no, they don't want to see this person, for me, it's not a problem. I'm also the Pioneer Executive Secretary. I established the scheme from scratch in just one room and today, we are very solid.

People are enjoying the scheme. We also have the approval to build our secretariat. By November, the secretariat should be almost completed.

What's your message to Nigerians?

My message is that health is a right and the citizens and electorate must know that it is their right to have access to health. Whether it is Party A, B or C that is in government, it is the citizen's right to demand good access to quality health services. They have a role in insisting that they must have access to good health facilities.

The law has created an opportunity for that. There is an impetus over this, and the momentum continues. My message to the people is that they demand their rights as far as health care is concerned.

Nigerians Must Exploit New Health, Law, Policies - Dr. Filani

At the recent two-day strategic stakeholders meeting with State Social Health Insurance Agencies (SSHIA) in Abuja, at the instance of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), DR. OYEBANJI FILANI, Chairman, Nigeria Health Commissioners' Forum who fielded questions from the NGF media team said the Act gives stakeholders a stronger legal framework to get going.



DR. FILANI

At the subnational level, how does your forum intend to key into the new Health Act?

I want to first thank everyone who has worked on the bill that has now become an Act. We as state commissioners and leaders of the health system at the subnational levels are very interested in working with the federal government.

That is why we are here to have this engagement to understand the key components of the Act. Also, there are responsibilities and roles of different players. We will support the states and the insurance agencies to move their mandate forward because this Act gives them a stronger legal framework to get going.

Most importantly, as leaders of the health system, we must think about this more comprehensively. On one hand, it matters to ensure that the facilities are available and ready to deliver services.

Then, on the other hand, we must ensure that the community and households understand the need to utilise services. A lot of health provisional activities will continue. We will ensure that facilities live up to their responsibilities. There are other conversations around mobilising resources to ensure that we cover the risks people would need care for.

As for us, at the state level, we will continue to engage with our Governors.

How would your forum interface with the NGF?

We consider ourselves an arm of the NGF. All commissioners report to their Governors. There is nothing that we do as commissioners that our Governors are not aware of.

The way the NGF is set

up is beautiful because they have an interactive health desk. We work with the desk and health team closely to articulate and clearly provide our position to state Governors.

Do you foresee any challenges that might arise in the implementation of the New law?

Before implementation, you need to put in place a strategic operational plan and that is what the NHIA is doing. In Ekiti State and several states, we have the Social Health Insurance Agencies (SSHIA) that have been set up. A good number of states have advanced significantly in terms of live coverage. Others are also on the way there.

We also work with NHIA to rapidly expand the number of people that are covered to meet our goals of having Universal Health Coverage.

In your role as the chairman of the Health Commissioners Forum, are there any hurdles in coordination?

We must recognise that Commissioners are leaders of a dynamic health system. We must know how to engage them. As commissions, we have our regular quarterly meetings. We also have platforms that allow us to exchange ideas and learn from one another and encourage one another in terms of what is going on.

Where there are issues that need to be addressed, we have a platform where we can bring them up. We do that regularly and have a robust engagement.

This is a period of disruption globally. How do you manage this because it inevitably trickles down to what you do?

There are global disruptions that affect the country and trickle down to the states. As commissioners, you must constantly zoom out and take that broad picture recognising the mitigations of the possible challenges

and putting in plans to mitigate them.

In Ekiti State, at the outset of COVID, the Governor had set up a committee; a rapid response committee to mobilise resources and to also act to prevent the impact of COVID on not just the health system but also, the economy of the state.

A good number of states did the same. That proactiveness is important to effectively addressing issues. Even for typical, primary health service delivery, the use of data is important. You have the service and administrative data and continuous review of this data in informing decision-making are critical.

Finally, it matters to be ahead of the news and predict trends. If we hear that there is something happening in a neighbouring country, we want to put in place strategies to address it if it comes to the states. Primary health care service delivery, the use of data and review of data to inform decision-making would help to address issues.

Being ahead of the news is also significant as we would need to put the strategies in place to ensure that we tackle the same challenges if it comes to Nigeria.

Let's take a message from you to Nigerians?

Our health system is moving in the right direction even if it is slow. There is a good number of policy-related initiatives that we have seen in the last several years. The National Health Insurance Act is being implemented. The Basic Health Provision law is being implemented.

Recently, His Excellency, the President of the country

Our health system is moving in the right direction even if it is slow. There is a good number of policy-related initiatives that we have seen in the last several years.

launched a fund for HIV to ensure that we further reduce the incidence and prevalence. Similarly, the National Assembly has worked on health policies around mental health for instance and set up documents to back this up.

What this means is that the legal framework is now in place. The role we have as a people is to take advantage of this. I encourage as many people as possible to register through their state health insurance agencies.

I also encourage people who have ailments not to wait but to quickly seek care to address the issues. Also, I encourage all to focus on health promotion activities such as exercise and watching what you eat.

Due to the possibility of policy discontinuity, do transitions/changes in governance batons worry you?

In Ekiti State, His Excellency, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi would be leaving government in October. We would therefore have a new Governor coming in. The new Governor-Elect was a member of the cabinet - the SSG. As a one-time Commissioner he understands the system. He also shares the same vision as His Excellency. As a result, we see that there will be continuity and we are not concerned about challenges.

Now, at the national level, we want to ensure that we institutionalise the different policy initiatives and programs. That helps to limit the impact of disruptions.

As I said, that means having a good legal framework in place. Also, to ensure that one carries the entire system along, whether that be the Permanent Secretaries or the leadership of the MDAs.

Once that is done and people buy into the policies, it will be harder to reverse them.



Our Strategy to Leverage New National Health Insurance Act – Prof. Sambo

A key arrowhead of the enervating project that birthed the National Health Insurance Act, unassuming PROF. NASIR MOHAMMED SAMBO, Director General, National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), tells the NGF media team that holistic, proactive implementation strategies will give meaning and teeth to the new health law.

Congratulations. You recently won “Semper Fidelis”, a novel award from the Health Care Providers Association of Nigeria (HCPAN) recognising your unrelenting efforts in actualising the new health law. What does this award mean to you?

It is the first award bestowed on a Nigerian. It is therefore a thing of joy and excitement for me. It is great to be recognised for what you do.

The Health Act was recently passed. What would be your game plan to achieve the objectives?

The law is significant and meant to change the health system in Nigeria. If you look at the building blocks of healthcare, health financing is central to it all. No matter how beautiful the programs are perceived, if there is no fund to drive them, they will remain on the shelves.

We know that laws and strategies do not implement themselves. The framework must be developed by people. All ingredients that have to do with implementation must come in. We must have a very appropriate organisational structure. We must have appropriate staffing and we must have effective leadership to be able to govern.

We must also have a system to control and ensure the delivery of the content of the law/policy/strategy.

When the law came out, we sat down at the level of management and we brainstormed on how this law can be implemented to the benefit of all Nigerians. During our conversation, we recognized so many domains to base our strategy for implementation. We looked at issues that have to do with the legal and regulatory dimensions. We looked at issues that have to do with technicality in the content of the law.

We looked at the administrative and financial requirements needed to implement the law. We looked at issues of advocacy and reaching out to people to ensure that the law is not only assimilated but there is necessary support provided.

We also looked at other cross-cutting issues. We said first and foremost, we need to get the critical stakeholders to understand and appreciate the law. Then we commenced with the top management of NHIA when we held a three-day retreat and went through the Act closely to discuss the implication of each segment of the law.

When we finished, we packaged a presentation that would go through the spectrum of the stakeholders to ensure that they have a deep understanding of the law.

Yesterday, we dedicated the whole day to go through the Act and figure out what are the critical challenges that have taken place in the law? Then, we tried to orient ourselves as to what are the things that we need to do to ensure effective implementation.

Also, we had to question what some of the committees are that we need to create, such as a technical committee to work on the operational guidelines. There is the need to have a technical committee to deconstruct the law so that it is applicable to everyone.

This would require all the stakeholders within the health insurance ecosystem to come together and look at each clause of the law in terms of implementation. There are other things we intend to do such as have a health insurance summit with the President and other Policymakers that have played a vital role.

From there, we would also unveil the various achievements that we have

recorded in terms of the digitalisation of health insurance; in terms of the development of health insurance under one roof. It brings the national and sub-national systems together and we would work together like brothers and sisters.

The NGF is an important resource platform and a critical stakeholder here. How do you plan to interface with it?

States have been given a critical role to play. We can't move an inch without having the buy-in of the Governors. We have spoken with your Senior Health Advisor, Dr Ahmad, because we intend to make a presentation before the Nigeria Governors' Forum to enable them understand their role and obligations with respect to the law.

This is very high on our agenda. When we plan, we have the bottom-up approach to sensitise the state commissioners. This matters because when we meet the Governors, they would become foot soldiers that are very conversant with the law.

Usually, when you make a presentation with the Governors, the next thing they do is seek clarification with the Commissioners so all must be well prepared so they are not

found wanting when seeking clarification.

Meeting the Governors is one of the critical issues. We want them to not only buy in but also to recognise their obligations and be able to meet up with their obligations.

Looking at the global big picture, are there any international organisations that relate to health you are interfacing with?

When this law came out, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Geneva asked us to make a presentation via zoom. Also, a WHO Mission is coming to Nigeria this Sunday (July 24) to study what we are doing in the health insurance ecosystem.

During the mission, we would pay a courtesy calls to many big policymakers that can support in driving the implementation. Our linkage with international agencies is far and wide.

Do you foresee any challenges ahead?

One challenge is to make sure that the vulnerable groups are properly funded. We take solace knowing that during the signing of the law by Mr. President, he promised that the 83 million vulnerable will be financed.

Governors would also need to make obligations to ensure that the vulnerable, the poor and the down-trodden are covered under this arrangement.

You are naturally upbeat after the Passage. What is Your Message to Nigerians?

Nigerians should be happy and smiling because this very important law will touch the lives of all Nigerians. This law belongs to Nigerians, and it is very progressive. I haven't seen any law that will directly touch the lives of all Nigerians quite like this law.

If people were to be out in the streets in jubilation over this law, then they would not be out of place. This is something that will improve their lives and status within society because of the critical effect on healthcare and poverty.



PROF. SAMBO



83

million vulnerable will be financed once its sign into law by Mr. President

At Chatham House: Gov. Inuwa unveils Gombe's Health Coverage Quest



L-R: THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNOR, BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU WITH THE NASARAWA STATE GOVERNOR, ENGINEER ABDULLAHI SULE, GOMBE STATE GOVERNOR, ALH. MOHAMMED INUWA YAHAYA, PROF KARA HANSON OF LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE, DR ALIKO AHMED AND COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH, DR. HABU DAHIRU

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, recently delivered a lecture at the Royal Institute of International Affairs popularly known as Chatham House in London, United Kingdom.

The governor who was in London alongside two other Nigerian Governors; Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos) and Abdullahi Sule (Nasarawa), participated at a high level event tagged: Accelerating Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria on the invitation of Public Health Africa Policy Forum in collaboration with Centre for Universal Health, Chatham House.

Governor Inuwa was specially invited and offered the platform to showcase his administration's achievements at the global stage in recognition of the genuine massive reforms taking place in Gombe under his leadership.

The governor who spoke on the topic 'Political Leadership and The Universal Health Coverage Quest: The Impact on People', noted that reforms in the health sector and beyond are critical political decisions that leaders must deliberately focus on and invest in, in order to strengthen the social contract between them and the people.

While sharing his perspectives on Gombe state's journey towards the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, Governor Inuwa said that over the last 3 years, his administration has taken measures to revamp the health system for better service delivery.

This, according to him, includes the complete upgrade of the specialist hospital Gombe, revitalization of primary

health care centres (PHCC) across all the 114 wards of the state, the ongoing upgrade of general hospitals, as well as the establishment of Gombe State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (GoHealth) to ensure financial risk protection for the people of the state.

Recall that Governor Inuwa, had while campaigning, promised to among others proactively implement strategies to achieve Universal Health Coverage in the state using Primary Health Care as the corner stone to increase efficient, qualitative and affordable healthcare facilities and services as well as ensure availability of essential drugs, vaccines and immunisation across the 11 Local Government Areas of the state.

To ensure the effective coordination of health personnel, facilities and service delivery, the government, for the first time in the history of the state, established the Hospital Services Management Board

Apparently worried by the decay and poor functional health system owing to years of neglect of this very important sector by past administrations, the Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya-led government upon assuming office declared a state of emergency in the sector and set up a comprehensive agenda for the holistic overhaul of the system starting with the building of additional healthcare institutions, provision of medical facilities, equipment, training and retraining of healthcare personnel for better service delivery.

To ensure the effective coordination of health personnel, facilities and service delivery, the government, for the first time in the history of the state, established the Hospital Services Management Board. Indeed, over the past three years, the present administration in Gombe State has recorded tremendous achievements across all areas of the health ecosystem.

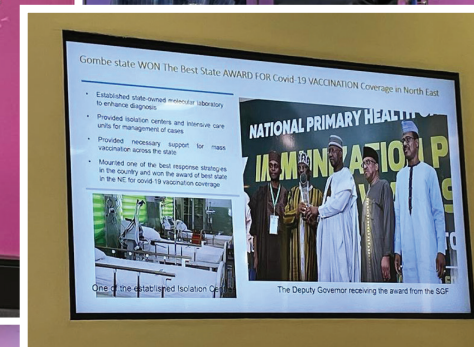
Other speakers at the event include the Director General



THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE AUTHORITY, PROF NASIRU M SAMBO, WITH PROF KARA HANSON OF LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE AND NASARAWA STATE GOVERNOR, ENGINEER ABDULLAHI SULE, THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNOR, BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU AND THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH, DR. HABU DAHIRU



GOVERNOR INUWA YAHAYA OF GOMBE STATE AND GOVERNOR, ENGINEER ABDULLAHI SULE OF NASARAWA STATE WITH A GUEST SPEAKER, DR ALIKO AHMED



CROSS SECTION OF THE PARTICIPANT AT THE EVENTS.



of National Health Insurance Authority, Prof Nasiru M. Sambo who spoke about the recent signing of the National Health Insurance Authority Law which offers the potential for rapidly expanding health insurance coverage in the country.

A highlight of the event at Chatham House was the commitment by the leaders to make a case for increasing public funding to the health system with a view to expanding coverage to the poor and vulnerable persons in the communities.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya was accompanied by the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Habu Dahiru.

Enugu gov't, NSIA sign agreement on take over of State Medical Diagnostic Centre

The administration of Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi in Enugu State has signed an agreement with the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) for the federal agency to take over the state-of-the-art Enugu State Medical Diagnostic Centre, Enugu.

The agreement is to pave the way for the NSIA to provide comprehensive medical, diagnostic and oncology (cancer) treatment services to the people of Enugu State and beyond.

Recall that Gov. Ugwuanyi's administration, sequel to the approval of the State Executive Council (EXCO), recently reached an agreement with the NSIA for the upgrade of the Medical Diagnostic Centre in Enugu, built by the state government.

The agreement to take over the health facility was reached after series of negotiations between the Enugu State Government and the NSIA.

Gov. Ugwuanyi, who was represented by his deputy, Hon. Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo, signed the agreement on behalf of the Enugu State Government while the Managing Director of the NSIA, Mr. Uche Orji, signed on behalf of the agency during the ceremony held at the Kano Hall, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

The signing of the agreement between



SIDE VIEW OF THE MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE

the Enugu State Government and the NSIA was witnessed by the State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Chief Miletus Eze, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Government House, Enugu, Prof. Malachy Okwueze and the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Emmanuel Ikechukwu Obi.

Consequently, the Enugu State Medical Diagnostic Centre, Enugu will now be known as Medical Diagnostic and Oncology (Cancer) Treatment Centre.

Speaking during the event, the Managing Director of the NSIA, Mr. Orji, disclosed that the agency signed lease and collaboration agreements for the expansion of diagnostic services with three state governments (Enugu, Kwara and Kaduna) and five federal establishments, including oncology (cancer) treatment services with Enugu State.

Mr. Orji stated that the three state governments that participated in the exercise (Enugu, Kwara and Kaduna) had expedited action on negotiations with the NSIA and reached the stage of signing agreements.

He revealed that funds will be deployed to build, equip, maintain and operate modern health facilities across the country, adding that "these investments are expected to build new

or upgrade institutions to modern medical diagnostic centres and provide access to advanced healthcare services for the benefit of lower income families with limited access to care and significantly enhance Nigeria's ability to treat life threatening Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)."

In her remarks, Gov. Ugwuanyi's representative, Hon. Mrs. Ezeilo, thanked the NSIA for the opportunity given to Enugu State to benefit from the healthcare expansion initiative.

She pointed out that the initiative is in tandem with the state government's



GOV. UGWUANYI



Gov. Ugwuanyi, who was represented by his deputy, Hon. Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo, signed the agreement on behalf of the Enugu State Government while the Managing Director of the NSIA, Mr. Uche Orji, signed on behalf of the agency during the ceremony held at the Kano Hall, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja

vision and commitment to quality healthcare service delivery for the people of Enugu State and beyond.

Hon. Mrs. Ezeilo commended Gov. Ugwuanyi for the landmark achievement as well as his dexterity, foresight and frantic efforts towards providing healthcare facilities for the people of the state, stressing that the governor has done so much in the health sector, likewise in other sectors, in spite of the state's lean resources and the nation's economic, security and public health challenges.

#EnuguStateIsInTheHandsOfGod
#amokelouis



**NIGERIA
GOVERNORS'
FORUM**



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHEN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

Following the endorsement of the Seattle Declaration by the 36 Executive Governors in November 2019, the Nigeria Governors' Forum, representing the thirty-six (36) states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, hereby affirm our commitment to strengthen the primary healthcare system in the country.

We therefore ADOPT and CONFIRM our COMMITMENT in line with the Seattle Declaration as outlined below:

1

Improve the GOVERNANCE of the primary healthcare system at the subnational level by fully implementing the Primary Health Care Under One Roof (PHCUOR) policy and providing active leadership for PHC through regular engagement with relevant PHC stakeholders and quarterly PHC performance review at the State Executive Council meetings.

2

Promote progressive increase in PHC FUNDING by ensuring efficient budgeting that is aligned to annual operational plans, promptly releasing approved budget to the state PHC Board and PHC facilities and ensuring that there is a mechanism in place for BHC PF implementation and oversight at the state and facility levels.

3

Recruit requisite health WORKFORCE to ensure that all PHC facilities have the minimum staffing requirement appropriate for their level in line with the state's minimum service package.

4

Institute a culture of use of EVIDENCE for decision making by ensuring that the data quality across all PHC facilities is progressively improved.

5

Develop a State-led and State-owned LGA level PHC Leadership Challenge for LGA Chairmen for SUSTAINABILITY and strengthening the commitment of the LGA Chairmen to PHC.

SIGNED

His Excellency, Kayode Fayemi
Executive Governor of Ekiti State
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum

His Excellency, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal
Executive Governor of Sokoto State Vice-
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum



UNVEILED

Incoming Interim Chairman of the NGF

The NGF Chairman, Dr. John Olukayode Fayemi announced at the September NEC meeting that as part of transition at the NGF, Governor Tambuwal who is currently the Vice Chairman of the Forum will take over the responsibility of leading the Forum with effect from mid October, 2022 when the tenure of the current Chairman as Governor of Ekiti State comes to an end.

The Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and Governor of Ekiti State Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, today at the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting, held at the Aso Rock Villa Abuja transferred power of the NGF to the Governor of Sokoto State, Rt Hon Aminu Waziri Tambuwal.

Tambuwal has served meritoriously and harmoniously as Vice Chairman of the Forum under Dr Fayemi in the last four years.

Dr John Kayode Fayemi who was only a few weeks ago elected as the President of the Forum of

Regional and State Governments in Saidia in the state of Casablanca in Morocco attended the NEC virtually from New York City, where he attended the United Nations General Assembly meeting.

The Sokoto State Governor will be holding fort until May next year when a proper election is conducted among the governors.

Before making the announcement, the Ekiti State Governor acknowledged the result driven output of the NEC and thanked his colleagues and other members of the council for their support, explaining that "yes, we may be occasionally troublesome, coming from the Forum of Governors, and we do test your patience but you have never really expressed any frustration with all our truculent questions and the insistence that the federation must be a true federation."

The new President of the FORAF also did not forget to thank the Secretariat of the NEC and through the NEC thanked the President Muhammadu Buhari for taking the resolutions of the NEC seriously by implementing them.

In his response the Vice President Professor Yemi Osinbajo said the NGF chairman had taken the wind out of their sail, because he was "meant to, on behalf of the NEC commend the Ekiti Governor and NGF Chairman's informed and patriotic services to the council in the last four years and that was enhanced by your chairmanship of the NGF, admitting that the NGF has ensured that we move to a true federation, not just in words but in deeds as well."

Professor Osinbajo prayed that Dr Fayemi's services both nationally and globally to development, and to all of the good which the nation deserves and the global community deserves will continue.

Dr Fayemi formally hands over the Chairmanship of the NGF to Rt Hon Amuinu Waziri Tambuwal on the October 16th.



On The Continental Stage

NGF'S DR. KAYODE FAYEMI EMERGES FORAF PRESIDENT

COVER STORY

In carefully chosen words, the outgoing Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr John Kayode Fayemi, outlined the objectives of the Forum of Regions of Africa, to include becoming the engine room for the development of African people and most importantly, as a unifying voice for the integration of the continent.

It was at the occasion of his swearing in as the President of the Forum, in Saidia a suburban coastal town in Morocco. As a change agent, the new President of FORAF saw a window of opportunity to assert the subnational level of government as the drivers of growth on the continent.

With the benefit of hindsight and the work that he has done to drive the NGF to the international scene, Dr Fayemi has carved for himself, a persona that is beyond the shores of Nigeria.

When Dr Jean .. invited him to a breakfast meeting with two other Governors Mr Godwin Obaseki of Edo State and AA Sule of Nasarawa State in attendance it looked like Dr Fayemi was oblivious of what the meeting was all about. But Jean did not waste time before hinting the Nigerian dignitaries that the future of the continent lies with them. There are Nigerians all over the place heading several institutions of note all over the world and

we at UCLGA have come to the firm conclusion that a Nigeria-driven Africa-wide association can improve the livelihoods of our people, he said. Jean who is the Secretary General of the UCLGA then offered with full confidence the position of President of the Forum to Nigeria. It is needless to mention that he was directly referring to Dr Fayemi to assume the position.

There was little politicking before the position was confirmed. A few ambassadors from South Africa were already lobbying people, even though it was not a glaring two-horse race. Each bloc was allowed to nominate nine people out of which Vice presidents and other officials would emerge. The entire process did not last more one glorious morning and the presidency had come home.

Although Nigeria's ascension to the presidency of FORAF was not premeditated, the President in his acceptance speech underscored the importance that Nigeria attaches to regional



President Muhammadu Buhari congratulates newly elected FORAF President, NGF Chairman and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi in Presidential Villa, Abuja



Governors of Saidia and Edo after signing their agreement



Governors of Saidia and Ekiti shake hands after signing a collaboration pact



Panelists including the chairman of the NGF FORAF president, Dr. Kayode Fayemi at the maiden FORAF summit in Saidia, Morocco

Sule and Kano State's Abdullahi Umar Ganduje. In fact, one more Governor had been slated for the meeting but was hindered by unavoidable circumstances.

Back home it was celebration even from the presidential quarters.

President Muhammadu Buhari lauded the Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi, for his election as President of the Forum of Regions of Africa (FORAF), in his capacity as Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF).

A statement by Femi Adesina, Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity confirmed the latest position to State House Correspondents on Monday.

While receiving a delegation made up of Fayemi, Gov Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State and Gov Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State at State House, the President said, "In spite of the security challenges we have, it is good to see that other countries still believe in

our potentialities. Congratulations on doing justice to Nigeria. We thank you."

President Buhari also thanked all other countries that queued behind Nigeria to emerge FORAF President, noting that it was a good show of brotherhood and solidarity.

Governor Sule said the conference was well attended by Governors and participants from about 22 African countries, where regional issues were discussed and memorandum of understanding (MOUs) signed on different areas like agriculture, mining, education, scholarships, and many others.

He added that while Nigeria, from West Africa, clinched the Presidency, Vice Presidents emerged from South Africa, for Southern Africa; Kenya, East Africa; Morocco, Northern Africa; and Cameroon for Central Africa.

With this feat, Dr John Kayode Fayemi has uploaded Nigeria and indeed the Nigeria Governors' Forum to the pinnacle of Africa's development table, just as he explained in an interview culled from the Guardian Newspapers and published here unabridged.

or continental integration with the number of Governors in attendance. Four Nigerian Governors were at the meeting. Dr Fayemi, Edo State's Godwin Obaseki, Nasarawa States Abdullahi A

In spite of the security challenges we have, it is good to see that other countries still believe in our potentialities

THE IDEA OF FORAF IS TO HAVE SUBNATIONAL ENTITIES AS DRIVERS OF GROWTH

Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi who was recently elected president, Forum of Regions/States of Africa, in this interview with MUYIWA ADEYEMI spoke on how to advance the cause of democracy in Nigeria, his achievements and regrets as he prepares to handover to his successor on October 16 and the positives FORAF will engender.

Congratulations on your election as President, Forum of Regions/States of Africa. What is the essence of this forum and what does Nigeria stand to gain from it because we are hearing of it for the first time?

You are hearing of the Forum for the first time because this is the first time sub-national entities that are between the local and central authorities are coming together as the engine room of the development of our people and as a unifying voice for the integration of the continent.

The idea behind the forum of regions is really to have sub-national entities as drivers of growth, as well as engines of development and policies.

In many African countries, policies are often developed at the central government level and then they get implemented at the sub-national level, either at the state, province or prefecture, depending on the country you are referring to and at the local level, I mean the council level, policies on economic development, on health care provisioning, on social security, on education at the primary and secondary level, all of these policies get implemented at the sub-national level even if they are regulated at the central level. So, in other words, the subnational entity is really where the rubber meets the road, that is

Central governments are often too distant and the engines of implementation are usually the sub-national entities

where people feel the impact of government in most cases.

Central governments are often too distant and the engines of implementation are usually the sub-national entities. So if sub-national entities work effectively, the pressure gets inevitably reduced on the central authority, but in a federal entity such as ours, sub-nationals are more critical to development because they are co-ordinated and interdependent rather than subordinate to and dependent on the central authority. They have executive authority, they have a parliament, they have a separate budget, they have institutions of states that are independent, and in some cases they have constitutions.

In other countries, they even have the basis to leave the union if they choose to. And this is the forum of sub-nationals across Africa, we held our meeting where I was elected in Morocco, there were at least 24 countries. The direct benefit of the course revolves around experience sharing, peer learning, exchange programmes and partnership for development. Just like we do now in Nigeria Governors' Forum.

Are you the first president of the forum?

Yes, I am the first President of the forum because this is the first time an election of this nature will take place. This process was inspired by the United Cities and Local Governments Forum of Africa. This is the Forum of mayors and council chairmen. Even at that, the forum identified a gap. While it is

good that we have a united cities forum, cities often exist within a larger sub-national entity, which is not necessarily the central authority. And that thinking coincided with our thinking too.

What will Nigerians gain from the forum?

First and foremost in the era of deepening decentralisation, Nigeria has made more significant progress than many African countries. Given the nature of our union, we are highly federalised. It was the Military that halted our innate federalising tendencies and principles but we are returning back to it, democracy is helping us to deepen and focus more on devolution.

So, this Forum will help our people in building capacity, will work with our own Governors' Forum, which already exists and we have similar fora in other African countries, it will also enable sub-nationals to engage in peer learning and exchange programmes and various, partnerships for development. In fact, we had four of our governors present in Morocco and four of us signed various memoranda of understanding with states from other countries.

It will help us to learn from one another. For instance, if you are doing urban planning much better than what we are doing here, we will learn from you, if it is ICT development that has gone a notch higher than all of us, we can send officials to understudy that. We shall be working with central authorities and African Union (AU) towards achieving AU Agenda 2063 and also working to advance the cause of SDG 2030. The ultimate goal is to ensure that sub-nationals contribute to the building of a socially united, globally respected, economically strong union.





Security, Economic Emancipation, Unity of Purpose Top Agenda, As Gombe Governor Hosts 7th North East Governors' Forum Meeting

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya observes that some of the challenges that necessitated the formation of the North East Governors' Forum, NEGF still persist, calling for sustained synergy to tackle the lingering issues.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya who stated this while welcoming Governors of the zone to the 7th meeting of the North East Governors' Forum (NEGF) in Gombe listed some of the lingering issues to include "Boko Haram insurgency and the resultant humanitarian crisis; Evolving security threats posed by criminal activities like banditry and kidnapping; Climate change disasters especially the recent floods and their debilitating effects on the livelihoods of our people; Staggering infrastructure deficit as well as the sorry state of human capital development in our subregion. Other contemporary issues of common concern also make this meeting particularly important".

The Governor observed that over the past two years, the Forum has developed the understanding, conviction, steadfastness, and cooperation needed to address the common problems undermining the growth and development of our subregion.

"We have been able to collectively engage, mobilize and sensitize stakeholders at the highest level both nationally and internationally".

Governor Inuwa Yahaya described the formation of the NEGF as a tremendous success where for the first time in the history of the zone, Governors of the sub-region were able to forge a common front for the overall benefit of the people irrespective of ethnic, religious or political considerations.

He observed that the presence of Governors in the 7th edition of the North East Governors Forum meeting symbolises the growing strength of cooperation, collaboration and cordial relationship among the governors of the six states of the subregion.

"To borrow from Nigeria's first national anthem: 'though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand.' Our

strength lies in the sheer determination of each and everyone of us to set aside primordial differences in order to pursue a common vision aimed at improving the lives and wellbeing of our people".

"You may all recall that the NEGF was formed following our first meeting here in Gombe on the 5th of March 2020. Since then, we have had subsequent meetings in Maiduguri, Yola, Bauchi, Jalingo and Damaturu. During each of those meetings, we engaged relevant stakeholders and deployed great energy and resources to brainstorm on common issues facing the subregion with a view to finding effective solutions. At the end of each meetings we issued communiques with actionable items and plans that we are following up through the Forum's Director-General who heads the NEGF secretariat, in order to ensure timely implementation".

He said today's meeting, which is the first in the second round, is special one for a number of reasons as it offers the Forum an opportunity to take stock of its achievements since its first meeting in Gombe as well as to reflect on the challenges and obstacles confronting it since the inception of the Forum.

Governor

Inuwa Yahaya further remarked that the 7th edition of the North East Governors Forum is coming at a time when the region and the entire country continue to grapple with multiple challenges that require urgent solutions.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya used the occasion to appreciate President Muhammadu Buhari for his untiring commitment and strong leadership towards the security and stability of the North-East subregion and Nigeria at large.

Chairman of the North East Governors Forum and Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum said since the formation of the Forum, Governors of the sub-region have painstakingly discussed issues of common interest which has so far led to the decimation of Boko Haram insurgency and other crime and criminalities through shared intelligence.

He observed that the non-kinetic approach initiated and adopted by the Forum with support of the Federal Government to address the menace of Boko Haram insurgency has come a long way to opening up a corridor for many members of the sect to lay down their arms

The NEGF chair said it is a matter of necessity for Governors of the sub-region to maintain a strong and unwavering position towards addressing the menace of kidnapping that is fast becoming a new normal across the country.

Professor Zulum used the occasion to pay special tribute to President Muhammadu Buhari for his commitment and members of the Armed Forces for their relentless efforts towards ending insurgency in the North East and other crimes and criminalities across the country.

There will be a communique at the end of the ongoing closed door meeting.



Cross section of North East Governors and Traditional rulers



Communique

ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 7TH MEETING OF THE NORTH-EAST GOVERNORS' FORUM (NEGF) HELD IN GOMBE, GOMBE STATE. FRIDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2022.

Preamble

The Northeast Governors' Forum (NEGF), comprising of the Governors of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States, held its 7th meeting in Gombe, Gombe State. It expressed delight at the growing strength of the cooperation, collaboration and cordial relationship between the Governors of the 6 States of the region. It reiterated its commitment to foster a common ground and pursue collective course for the benefit of the region. After exhaustive deliberations, it resolved and presents the following Communique:

1. The Forum, lauded President Muhammadu Buhari and the security agencies for the effort in combating the Boko haram insurgency. It noted the improvement in the security situation in the region which had largely been achieved through kinetic and non-kinetic measures.
2. The Forum, noted the relative peace being experienced in the subregion, especially the reduced incidences of Farmer-herder clashes, as encouraging. However, there is increasing vulnerability of the region to insecurity due to the mass movement of the bandits who are gradually being pushed out of the Northwest by the security forces. On the influx of the bandits, there is an urgent need to launch a coordinated security road map in conjunction with the security agencies and the Federal Government.
3. The Forum, noted the link between mining activities and insecurity especially the abuse of the mining leases. It therefore resolved to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the Land Use Act.
4. The Forum, again expressed concern on the parlous state of power supply in the north-east region, which at present receives less than

5% of national allocation of grid energy while accounting for 14% of the population and 30% of landmass. While noting the direct correlation between energy security and high level of poverty and our GDP status, it called on the Federal Government to introduce innovative strategies by investing in the production of comparatively cheaper hydropower and renewable energy.

5. Related to this, the Federal Government is called upon to accelerate the execution of the Mambila hydroelectricity project.

6. The Forum, noted the need to harness the vast untapped resources of the subregion by fostering integration in commerce as well as holding trade fairs with a view to attracting foreign investments. Forum therefore, urged the North-east Council of Chambers of Commerce to revive the Northeast Joint Trade Fair and commodity markets to stimulate economic activities.

7. The Forum thanked the Federal Government for establishing the University of Health Sciences, in Azare to address the huge manpower deficit in the health sector and pledged to support the University to deliver on its mandate.

8. The Forum, expressed grave concern about the devastating effect of flooding which is destroying homes and livelihood including road infrastructures. The Forum therefore calls on the Federal Government to as a matter of urgency direct its relevant agencies to immediately deploy all necessary interventions to ameliorate the situation in the affected areas.

9. The Forum appreciates the Government and People of Gombe State for hosting the meeting. It resolved to hold the 8th Meeting in Maiduguri, Borno State on Friday, 25th November, 2022.

NGF Secretariat Hosts Ethiopia's Oromia Regional Parliamentary Team

Led by the Speaker of Caffee Regional Government of Oromia, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Rt. Hon. Ms. Habibe Seada Abdurehman, the team visited the Secretariat of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), Abuja, on August 30, 2022. Oromia is the largest regional state in Ethiopia and the homeland of the Oromo people, located in the Ethiopian Highlands.

NGF's Director of Media, Malam Abdulrazaque Bello Barkindo, invited the Forum's Director-General, Asishana B. Okauru, to formally welcome the visiting delegation.

The DG subsequently introduced the Chairman of NGF, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, the NGF Secretariat staff and spoke briefly on how the NGF is run and how active the chairman of the Forum is in various aspects of related engagements, security matters, et cetera.

Thereafter, Dr. Chris Agoha, Nigeria Country Manager, HD introduced the Oromia visitors.

When the DG sought to know if they had questions, they opted to make their own presentation which was the main reason for their visit. Their two main objectives were to bring up the obvious similarities of the two countries especially the economic potentials.

Secondly, they wanted to learn how communal differences are managed in Nigeria and intimated the NGF Chairman that they would also see the Plateau State governor and engage with the Plateau State Legislature.

They also stated they would be honoured to hear from the NGF Chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi about the roles of the governors.

The NGF Chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi said that despite the shortness of notice of their visit, he made it a point to be present, further stating that the Pan Africanist nature of Nigeria and Ethiopia is obvious and that he has been involved in their country in his engagements before now.

He said that in order to ensure free flow of governance, "We in Nigeria have such a constitution that ensures no one is left out. For example, the Federal Character Commission and the Revenue Allocation Commission, defence/security, healthcare, primary education, et cetera provide deliberate ballances.

Further elaborating, he stated that the committee of the Forum deals with the following: judicial reforms, energy decentralization and the relationship between the States and the federal in favour of the states.

On the challenges of the farmer-headers clashes the Chairman said it emphasised continued dialogue which all boils down to peace. According to him, some states are still grappling with the issues of ethnicity, land grabbing, et cetera. He identified that the main causes of these are rooted in climate change, and the desertification of the Northern region which makes herders relocate or move from place to place.

The Chairman recommended that they see his Plateau State counterpart and that of Kaduna whom he said unfortunately is out of the country at the moment.

Responding to the visitors' question, the NGF chairman said that "the history and struggle of Ethiopia and that of their constitution used to be the model in the late 80s and one of the most interesting Clause was withdrawal from a community if you don't want to be part of it.

"But what works here is the ties that bind us together no matter our differences in ethnic groups, for example the electoral constitution says you must have majority and spread when elected into an office; the President must be seen to be elected as widely and across all regions in the country to be able to win an election.

"Again, we negotiate mutually when it comes to issues which we table while sitting at NEC meetings to agree and disagree with the President himself. These are equilibrating factors which makes us conscious of it all."

The Chairman also said that for the Oromia region to be under attack, it could be as a result of the rest thinking they are being oppressed by them being the majority.

He cited the example of the three main languages in Nigeria being perceived as those oppressing the minorities. Stating that the federal character does not go all the way but surely it checks and balances the ethnicities to ensure all are happy adding that the revenue mobilisation or revenue formular is also there to help structure relationships.

The meeting ended with the Speaker of Caffee Region Ms Habibe Seada Abdurehman presenting a gift of a traditional robe to the Chairman. The NGF DG later confirmed their appointment to see the Plateau State governor and Speaker of the state parliament.



1. L-R: Director General of the NGF, Mr Asishana Okauru; Speaker of Caffee Regional Government of Oromia, Ms. Habibe Seada Abdurehman; Chairman of the NGF, Dr. Kayode Fayemi and Deputy Speaker of Caffee Regional Government of Oromia.



Kebbi is a secure state in an insecure region – British High Commissioner

British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing says Kebbi State is a secure state in an insecure region.

The envoy spoke recently when she paid a courtesy call on Gov. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu at Government House, Birnin Kebbi.

The state according her has a lot of opportunity and promising future.

She said that Bagudu has been very committed to inclusiveness and he has ensured wider reach to all the communities.

Laing said, "Kebbi is therefore a state that other states should emulate in this direction."

The Envoy said that the governor had bolstered the various agricultural value chains, while myriad opportunities now abound in the state.

Laing said that her visit to Kebbi state was to assess more ways to strengthen relationships between Kebbi and United Kingdom. She recalled that her deputy had in 2019 visited Kebbi state, adding, "this visit today is sequel to the previous one." On the demise of the British Monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, Laing said that it was really a very difficult time for UK and the commonwealth community.

The Envoy said the deceased successfully reigned for over 70 years, adding, "she lived an amazing life."

"Her life was a shining one and gratifying as one. She had fond memories of her visit to Nigeria in 1957 and 2003.

"We mourn her loss and we are celebrating her life," Laing, added.

The High Commissioner also said the new King holds Nigeria in high esteem and he also visited Nigeria in 1990, 1999, 2006 and 2018.

She also recalled that President Muhammadu Buhari had variously visited UK, adding that, several bonds exist between UK and Nigeria.

Responding, Bagudu again condoled the UK through the Envoy on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The Chairman of the APC Governors' Forum also felicitated the new King on his ascension to the exalted throne.

He recalled how he happily received the Deputy High Commissioner in 2019, saying that the visit was fruitful. Bagudu said that Kebbi was an expansive state, with a lot of socioeconomic activities and tremendous opportunities.

Bagudu also said that Kebbi boasts of security and high level of tolerance among its people.

The governor said that the state shares international borders with Niger and Benin

Kebbi is therefore a state that other states should emulate in this direction

republics, with a lot of socioeconomic activities. Bagudu also stated that the state had recorded a lot of achievements in the last seven years of his administration.

He said that several policies and programmes of the state and federal governments, including the Anchor Borrowers' Programme launched in the state by Buhari in 2015 on rice production has been successful.

Bagudu also disclosed that his administration had attracted a lot of local and foreign investments notable among them, Wacot rice mill in Argungu.

He added that subsequently, several small, medium and large scale rice mills now abound in the state.

The British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing was accompanied on the visit by Aneesah Islam Head, Political Section, Elizabeth Drew, Head of Governance and Stability, Ivie Ameh Visits Officer and Tope Aroso

Security Liaison Officer.

Kebbi State Government officials on attendance were the State Chief Judge, Justice Suleiman Muhammad Ambursa, Secretary to the State Government, SSG, Babale Umar Yauri, Acting Head of Service Alhaji Safiyanu Garba Bena, Hon Faruk Aliyu Nassarawa, House leader, Kebbi State House of Assembly.

The rest were Permanent Secretaries and Special Advisers.

Laing had later at a media parley attended by Governor Abubakar Atiku, reiterated UK's resolve to bolster relations with Nigeria and Kebbi State.

The British High Commissioner, Catriona Laing was also a guest at the Kanta Museum, Argungu to inspect ancient relics of the Kabawa people, before proceeding to WACOT Rice Mill and later made a stopover at a Ruga Fulani settlement during which she expressed satisfaction about the education progress of Nomadic children.



Bravery, resilience will defeat evil – Bagudu

Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu of Kebbi State says the bravery and resilience of people will always triumph over evil.

Bagudu averred that if people were bound together by unity on a genuine cause, even in spite of pockets of insecurity, evil would be defeated.

The governor stated these at the just-concluded 7th edition of Argungu Polo Tournament and Cultural Festival which took place at the ancient town of Argungu recently. He said: "Today, this is a manifestation of bravery and resilience.

"That we are here thinking this is a small event underlies or misrepresents the bravery and resilience of our people.

"Because, in a country or a world where turbulence is being witnessed everywhere, for us once more to show resilience that we are able to organize events like this which bring people together from all parts of the country and even outside the country to celebrate our bravery.

"Shows that we are not intimidated or afraid even in spite of pockets of insecurity, we will defeat the evil," he emphasized.

The governor counseled people not to be intimidated or afraid of perpetrators of evil.

"The organisers of this event, the Emir of Argungu, people of Argungu, I am saying that we can defeat evil.

"We will go to our farms, we will go out to our fishing grounds, we will graze our animals and enjoy our festivals," he said.

He thanked and congratulated people of Kebbi State, particularly Argungu Emirate for what he described as "a blossoming and creative sports event bringing people to Kebbi State."

The APC Progressives Governors' Forum Chairman, extolled the Emir of Argungu, Alhaji Samaila Muhammad Mera for his leadership role and also commended Alhaji Nura Kangiwa, whom according to him was instrumental to the success of the polo event in Argungu.

The Governor was optimistic that the Polo event in Argungu

would in the next few years rival or even surpass other Polo events in the country.

He thanked the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Saad Abubakar, the distinguished personalities who attended the event from within and outside the country.

The final match of the Polo tournament was played between NSK Farms Polo team and H. Hago Polo team where NSK Farms Polo team emerged victorious.

Highlights of the event were horse race, cultural festival, presentation of trophies and awards to outstanding players and teams as well as the presentation of special award to Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu by the Emir of Argungu, Alhaji Samaila Muhammad Mera.



Why Gombe Investment Summit Will Be An Unparalleled Success Story

By *Ismaila Uba Misilli*

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya recently inaugurated the Gombe Investment Summit (GoInvest2022) Steering Committee tasked with the responsibility of planning and staging the upcoming 1st Gombe State Investment Summit proposed for October this year under the theme: 'Industrialisation, the Pathway to Innovation, Transformation and Development of Gombe State.

The Committee, which is under the chairmanship of the Deputy Governor, Dr Manassah Daniel Jatau has as members: Malam MK Ahmad, Professor Ibrahim Abubakar Njodi- the Secretary to the Gombe State Government, Dr Umaru Kwairanga – Chairman, Gombe State Investment and Property Development Company Ltd, Haruna Jalo Waziri – Managing Director/CEO, Central Securities Clearing Systems Plc, Muhammad K Ahmed, Muhammed Gambo Magaji, Commissioner of Finance and Economic Development, Nasiru Muhammad Aliyu, Commissioner of Trade, Investment and Tourism, the representative of Onyx Consultants and Dr Ishiyaku Mohammed Special Adviser on Budget Planning and Development Partners Coordination who will serve as the secretary.

The steering committee has four terms of reference, which include providing strategic guidance in the actualisation and successful hosting of Gombe Investment Summit.

Others are to liaise with government and private sector operators to ensure participation in the summit and to drive pre-summit engagements and post-summit follow-ups.

The GoInvest 2022 summit, aims to find, engage, and attract new investment leads, market



Gombe as a top investment location, and facilitate interactions between potential investors and the state.

Business to Business and Business to Government meetings, Ready to Offer Investment Projects, Premium Land, Public Private Partnership (PPP) Projects, and other opportunities are all open to investors, financiers, investment facilitation agents, and companies interested in doing business with the Gombe State.

On the fringes of COP27, the Summit also hopes to facilitate agreements that would promote growth in key industries and demonstrate Gombe State's leadership in the fight against climate change.

With the calibre, connection and pedigree of individual members of the committee, one has no doubt on their capability and wherewithal to deliver on the mandate of staging a successful event that will meet international standards.

Even though Governor Inuwa Yahaya urged them to take cogent steps to ensure the success of of GoInvest2022, it is manifestly clear that the proactive policies, projects, programmes and initiatives adopted by the Dan Majen Gombe since assuming office on May 29, 2019 will no doubt ensure the success of the investment summit moving forward.

It will not be far-fetched to acclaim Governor Inuwa Yahaya as 'Mr Direct Investment' given that he has midwived an escalating scale of foreign and local direct investment to Gombe State by enabling a conducive environment for the incubation of businesses, firms and companies with low corporate taxes, availability of premium land, a one -stop business permit process, opportunities for public private partnership, ready to offer investment projects amongst other business-friendly policies meant to encourage corporate investment in the state. Thus it comes as scant surprise that Gombe has been rated as the number one in the Ease of Doing Business Ranking in Nigeria by the esteemed National Economic Council under the distinguished chairmanship of the Vice President, Prof Yemi Osinbanjo.





**GOMBE STATE
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Transformation and Development of Gombe State





Also Governor Inuwa Yahaya's zest for trade and investment is well known as he was about the only known state chief to have attended the prestigious Dubai Expo 2020 (Oct 1 2021 -March 2022) in the United Arab Emirates where he visited the Nigerian Pavilion and met with prospective investors briefing them copiously on Gombe State's potentials in agro-entrepreneurship, agro-allied, agro-processing and agro-marketing. Many a foreign businessman, investor, trade facilitator and even diplomats have been enthralled by the huge investment opportunities that Gombe State heralds mainly due to the infrastructural transformation, bureaucratic dynamism and the peace and stability ethos enabled by the progressive policies of the Governor. For instance, the United Kingdom. High Commissioner

to Nigeria, Baroness Catriona Laing has commended Governor Inuwa Yahaya for his 'visionary leadership and his commitment to the delivery of democratic dividends to his people and said "I think this is an area where the UK and Gombe State can collaborate'. Baroness Laing further said: 'I understand there is a plan for an investment summit in Gombe State, so I think that will be the next stage where we will encourage some participation from our Department of International Trade to get there and start looking at particular areas around the Industrial Park in order to work together and share ideas'.

Indeed, the construction of the gigantic 1000-hectares Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park that is billed to accommodate hundreds of firms, companies and industries and employ

I understand there is a plan for an investment summit in Gombe State, so I think that will be the next stage where we will encourage some participation from our Department of International Trade to get there and start looking at particular areas around the Industrial Park in order to work together and share ideas

thousands of Gombe youths is a cornerstone of the industrial revolution engendered by the Inuwa Yahaya administration.

The Industrial Park will harness needed power supply from the previously moribund Dadinkowa Hydro-Electric Power Station which has been rehabilitated to perfect working condition with 40 Megawatts of electricity.

Another strategic project that will definitely boost the investment potentials of the Jewel in the Savannah is the Network Eleven Hundred Roads Project that is constructing at

least 100kms of roads in each of the eleven local government areas of the state thus ensuring that a seamless road network is available for all investors for the movement of their personnel, goods and machinery.

The ranking of Gombe State as the most peaceful, secure and stable in Nigeria by Eons Intelligence and Staticense, reputable security data analysis firms given the near total absence of violent crimes, kidnappings, banditry and terrorism and the relative calm and serenity pervading all parts of this lovely state will ensure that not only will GoInvest2022 be a resoundingly successful investment forum but Gombe State will remain the most favoured destination for local and foreign direct investment in Nigeria for decades and generations to come. Thanks to Governor Inuwa Yahaya's visionary disposition.



LANDMARK EVENTS IN THE LEGAL UNIT UNDER GOVERNOR KAYODE FAYEMI'S CHAIRMANSHIP

1. RIOK NIGERIA LIMITED

Following the judgment in LINAS INTERNACIONAL & 235 Ors V. The Federal Government & Ors, (FHC/ABJ/CS/130/13) now known in legal circles as CS/130 (having acquired a certain level of notoriety), the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) proceeded to award a number of contracts, the payment of which was to derive from the proceeds of the LINAS Judgment.

RIOK Nigeria Limited claimed to have been awarded a contract by ALGON to construct boreholes in all the Local Government Councils in the country. Riok approached the Federal High Court Abuja in RIOK NIGERIA LIMITED & 3 ORS. v. INCORPORATED TRUSTEES OF ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA (Suit No.: FCT/HC/CV/2129/2014) and obtained judgment in the sum of \$318,000,000.00.

In 2017, RIOK again approached the Federal High Court presided over by Hon. Justice A.R Mohammed. in Suit No.: FHC/ABJ/CS/2017 for the enforcement of the Judgment sum of the said \$318,000,000 which it earlier obtained from the High Court of FCT in Suit No.: FCT/HC/CV/2129/2014; against the Nigeria Governors' Forum who was neither a party to the contract giving rise to the suit or to the Suit.

Following series of litigations culminating at the Apex Court in the country, the Supreme Court on the 3rd of June 2022 ruled in favor of the Forum having affirmed the decision of the Court of Appeal that the funds belonging to a State or Local Government must be kept in an account belonging to the State or Local Government and be disbursed or

expended by the State strictly in the manner and for the purposes prescribed in the Constitution.

2. THE PANIC ALERT SECURITY SYSTEM CASE

The Plaintiff, Panic Alert Security System claims to have done some work, specifically reviewing the Linas Judgement (the originator of the Paris Club claims) and therefore entitled to \$47.7m

He draws the impetus for his claim from an appointment purportedly given to him by the Jang faction of the NGF during the NGF crisis of 2013. Panic Alert sued the NGF in 2018 and a Consent Judgment was entered between the parties. Following further review, the Forum resolved to challenge the said Consent Judgment. Paul Harris Ogbole, SAN representing the NGF filed a Motion on notice seeking to set aside the Consent Judgement and the Court in a judgment on the 20th of September set aside the said Consent Judgment upon which PASS relied to lay claims to \$47.8m. This is significant given that a whopping sum of \$47.8 million has been saved the Federal Government and the States.

3. LAUNCH OF THE PEACE AND

INCLUSIVE SECURITY INITIATIVE

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Initiative for Peace and Inclusive Security is an initiative designed to address the issues of insecurity and violence in the country. The initiative conceives several responses to the rising conflicts and insecurity across the country, including a monthly/quarterly platform. This idea is based on the conviction that durable peace and inclusive security can only be achieved through inter-agency cooperation among key actors in diverse sectors. Creating sustainable peace requires complementarity of effort between Government and the citizen groups.

This Initiative was launched on the 8th of July 2022. One of the highlights of the event was the inauguration of the Technical Steering Committee for the Initiative. This Initiative has been endorsed by International Agencies who have committed to supporting the Forum in this noble endeavor.

4. BROKERING THE ESTABLISHING OF THE BODY OF THE ATTORNEYS GENERAL (AGs) OF THE 36 STATES

In view of the imperative to have the buy-in of the 36 States in prosecuting matters with potential impact on them, the NGF mid-wifed the convening of the Body of AGs as a means of bridging the gap between the activities of the Governors under the aegis of the NGF and the work that the AGs that carry out within their States. It was discovered that many of the cases instituted by the Forum had little or no input from the AGs and this created a huge gap between the work of the NGF and the AGs in their States. There now exists better synergy between the NGF Secretariat and the 36 AGs of the States of Nigeria.

Chairman of the NGF, Dr. Kayode Fayemi shares a laughter with the NGF Director Legal, Barr. Chijioko Chukwu as the ED Research and Strategy, Alh. Abdullateef Shittu laughs along



Paris Club Refund Tango: NGF Flips Panic Alert Ltd

The consent judgment which Panic Alert Security Systems Limited had relied on to claim \$47, 821, 920 professional fees against the Trustees of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) was recently set aside by a Federal High Court in Abuja.



Apanic mode probably reigns in the arena of Panic Alert Security Systems Ltd presently. Not without good reason. A Federal High Court in Abuja last week set aside a consent judgment entered in favour of the company against the Trustees of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) for the payment of money to some individuals and organisations for the roles they allegedly played in the Paris Club refund received by the Nigerian Government.

Panic Alert Security Systems Limited had relied on the consent judgment to lay claim to a princely professional fees of \$47, 821, 920. But the court thought otherwise and told the wily entrepreneur in clear terms it was overreaching itself because the consent judgement lacked requisite jurisdiction..

Before the judgment delivered by the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN, had also equally relied on the judgment and since recommended that the money be paid to the

company.

However, dissatisfied with the recommendation of the AGF on the basis of the consent judgment, the 36 state governors, through their forum, NGF, instructed their counsel, Mr. Paul Harris Ogbole, SAN, to challenge the said consent judgment upon which the AGF relied on in court.

In his ruling last Tuesday, the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho held that the said consent judgment in its entirety was entered without jurisdiction.

The court agreed with the counsel for the governors, Mr. Ogbole that the reliefs claimed by Panic Alert Systems Ltd. against NGF in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/123/2018, were premised on a simple contract which by Section 251 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) strips the court ab initio of the required jurisdiction to entertain such matters.

Accordingly, the court set aside the consent judgment in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/123/2018. By the ruling, all approvals by the AGE, the President, Minister of Finance, Accountant-General of the Federation,

Debt Management Office arising from, related to or concerning Panic Alert's claims have been voided.

Additionally, all Promissory Notes, cheques or any financial instrument issued by the Federal Government in favour of Panic Alert were nullified and cancelled and of no effect whatsoever.

The decision followed a motion filed by the Incorporated Trustees of the Nigeria Governors' Forum on June 30, 2021, for the setting aside of the purported consent judgment in suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/123/2018.

The motion which was filed and argued by counsel for the NGF, Mr Ogbole against Panic Alert Security Systems Ltd and Dr. George Uboh and others, was rooted on the grounds that the Federal High Court by virtue of Section 251 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), lacks jurisdiction to have entertained a matter that was founded on a simple contract.

In the suit, Panic Alert Security Systems Limited,

purporting to have been contracted by the NGF to review a 16-page judgment in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/130/2013, between Linas International LTD & 235 Ors. V. Federal Government of Nigeria & 3 Ors.

The company had claimed that it was entitled to \$47,821,920, being consultancy fees, which were never agreed or specified in any contract with the NGF. It thereafter filed an action for breach of contract against the NGF at the Federal High Court, Abuja on April 8, 2021.

But in a motion for the setting aside of the consent judgment, the NGF through its counsel, Ogbole, argued that the consent judgment arising from the suit did not award the sum of \$47,821,920 or any other sum to Panic Alert.

He submitted that on the contrary, the judgment merely stated that Panic Alert will be referred to the Attorney General of the Federation for verification and settlement.



Northern Governors, Monarchs Endorse State Police

Under severe security threat to their jurisdictions Northern governors and monarchs seek urgent inception of state police to change the narrative

On Monday night, September 12, 2022, the 19 northern governors and all the region's conservative monarchs crossed a crucial line in the unfolding ferment for a new Nigeria.

They called for the amendment of the 1999 Constitution to give legal backing for the immediate establishment of state police. They correctly held this was the only way to confront the continued insecurity challenges in the region and country at large with kidnapping, massive killing and wanton destruction of property spiralling.

This position was contained in the communiqué issued at the end of the meeting of the Northern Governors Forum (NGF) and the Northern Traditional Rulers Council (NTRC) held in Abuja. Significantly, it was the first time the northern governors sat together with traditional leaders in the region to address the searing insecurity.

Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum and Governor of Plateau State Simon Bako Lalong reading the communiqué explained that the meeting reviewed the security situation in the North and other matters relating to its development and resolved to support the amendment of the Constitution to accommodate

the establishment of State police. According to him, this would effectively and efficiently address the security challenges of the region.

This crucial position adopted by the Northern governors aligns with that of their Southern peers and the emerging consensus is that the powerful synergy therefrom would become an important driver of the needed constitutional change to move policing from the exclusive to the concurrent list.

Against the backdrop of mounting bloody insecurity, the inception of state police to more effectively check diverse criminality was initially the sing-song of Southern governors with their Northern peers perceived to be aloof. But all that has changed with their new bold, progressive footing.

Against the backdrop of extreme insecurity haunting the nation and stunting socio-economic development, many believe it's really about time to constitutionally unchain the governors to change the narrative. The 'chief security officer' moniker daintily hung on the necks of the nation's governors has clearly gone stale and needs to be fundamentally reconceptualised.

These days, every state in Nigeria is under the siege of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping-for-ransom, and ritual

killings. Openly, state institutions are under attack from non-state actors.

Worse, this unnerving scenario not only jeopardises citizens' safety and means of livelihood, but also impedes the exercise of the rights of Nigerians. Relevant human development metrics mirror significant socio-economic and political regression on this account.

But cut to the bone, the principal claim of the governors is that they are handicapped by the 1999 Constitution that ties security to the federal government. This is a fundamental issue and cannot be glossed over. Now that the Northern governors and monarchs have aligned with their Southern peers, fundamental changes are then indeed afoot.

NGF Chairman and Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, fittingly captured this new, urgent thinking when he recently observed that, "As Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, I am happy to report that the Forum supports any effort to create a more inclusive and collaborative platform to mobilise an immediate national response to our country's security challenges."

With the new momentum, the National parliament is not expected to become cogs in the wheel of restructuring starting from the security arena.



Northern Traditional Rulers at the Governors' meeting



Deputy Governors of Nasarawa, Jigawa and Benue



Chairlady of NGWF, Mrs Bisi Fayemi and Governor Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom State at the retreat

The rising cases of gender-based violence are of major concern to wives of state governors in Nigeria. As a result, the states' first ladies held their 2022 retreat in Uyo, the capital of Akwa-Ibom State.

Through its Chairperson, the Nigeria Governors Wives Forum, Mrs. Bisi Adeleye Fayemi, the forum condemned the menace and stressed the need to stamp it out, particularly through the domestication of the Violence Against Persons (VAPP) law in the country.

Mrs. Fayemi said that since the governors wives started working on the issue of gender-based violence together, there has been an increase in the number of states, from thirteen states that had domesticated the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, two years ago.

As of June 2022, there are at least 32 states across Nigeria that have domesticated this law and considerable credit for this important achievement goes to the focussed advocacy of governors' wives working in partnership with civil society organisations, governmental institutions, and development partners.

"We've also been able to work collectively on issues of drug abuse as well as to address access to treatment and support around cancer issues," she said. Mrs. Fayemi added that to have a smooth transition for the incoming governor's wives, the NGWF has set machinery in motion to mentor them. "We hope to be able to formally present our handbook which we have developed that is the first in the country."

The handbook would guide the first ladies in

Uyo Retreat: NGWF Confront Gender-based Violence

capacity building, learning, and mentoring for those who are in transition and who need to handover to others. "We believe this handbook would go a long way in ensuring that state first ladies are provided with guidance and support that they need to address issues such as image management, protocol, and etiquette. It has a code of conduct as well as the constitution of the

Nigeria Governors Wives Forum," she further said.

The Chairperson, Mrs. Bisi Fayemi later extended her thanks to the First Lady of the Akwa Ibom State, Mrs. Martha Udom Emmanuel, for her hospitality in hosting the retreat.

This was the first time that the retreat was held in Akwa-Ibom State and seventeen wives of the governors attended the opening ceremony while others were expected to join up.



El-Rufai speaks on Nigeria's power sector challenges, prospects

Nigeria requires for its growth and development the delivery of affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for homes and businesses. This country has lost about many years of efforts and investment in its energy sector. The clear roadmap of sectoral reforms set out by the Obasanjo government in electric power and the oil and gas sectors were either unduly protracted or abandoned by its immediate successor.

As examples, the investments in power generation and transmission infrastructure that were initiated by the Obasanjo government were either put on hold between 2007 and 2010, or were largely jettisoned by its immediate successor. The first version of the Petroleum Industry Bill, which the BPE had led in drafting, was ready by 2003, but was not presented to the National Assembly until 2008. The rest of the story of the reforms of these two sectors is well known to everyone here.

I will focus my brief remarks on the electricity sector as it is where I believe that the subnational governments have a key role to play. The Nigerian Governors' Forum believes that the solution to our enduring electricity supply deficits lie in a three-way collaboration between the Federal Government, the State Governments and the private sector in the expansion of generation, transmission and distribution capacity in the

country, in a soundly regulated environment that is market-driven.

The dismal state of the power sector betrays the hopes that informed the Electric Power Sector Reform Act that was passed in 2005. The Act provided for the creation of competitive electricity markets with a strong regulatory oversight role for the Federal Government. There is no better evidence of the distortion of the electric power sector reform process than the untidy manner in which electricity assets were privatised, with many of the distribution companies not showing the expected technical capability and entrepreneurial passion to deliver a compelling service for their customers.

The contour of failure in the power sector stands in painful contrast to the outstanding success we have made of the reforms in the telecommunications sector, initiated by the same Obasanjo government. The Federal

This conference should be part of a national discussion on why the noble goals of the Electric Power Sector Reform Act were not realised



Government earned about USD1.5bn from the auction of telecoms licenses alone, not to mention the tax revenues that have since accrued. Nigeria has leapfrogged the hurdles an inefficient NITEL had placed and can now boast of decent levels of phone access and internet penetration.

The privatized electric power sector remains a drain on government resources absorbing as much as N1.6 trillion in support by the CBN and the Federal Ministry of Finance by the end of 2021. There are interventions proposed by the World Bank to provide another \$750m to the sector in a performance-for-results programme. In contrast, the telecoms sector has never needed any intervention of this nature since deregulation in 2001!

This conference should be part of a national discussion on why the noble goals of the Electric Power Sector Reform Act were not realised. It is a significant issue because that failure continues to stymie our prospects for national development, industrialization and employment generation.

One thing that is immediately apparent is that the telecoms

licenses were bought by established players who knew the industry, had a long-term view of the market, and were prepared to add value. The same cannot be said of the companies that cornered the electricity distribution companies. The situation in the power sector suggests that while there are significant roles for the state and federal governments, the private sector has to be the largest source of investments, management and knowhow for sustainable and affordable electricity provision.

If these structural bottlenecks are not addressed within a public policy perspective that gives primacy to serious private sector leadership in the sector, even the most determined Minister of Power can only engage in heroic, but largely futile, labour.

The same trajectory of experiences, disappointments and financial bleeding apply almost exactly to the oil and gas sector. Deregulation has been slow, and clearly indefensible fuel subsidy burdens persist, making the NNPC, even after its notional conversion to a limited liability company, one of the biggest threats to the fiscal health of the Federal, State and Local Governments!

We welcome the National Assembly's decision to expand the powers the Constitution vests in the states regarding electricity. While it is not often acknowledged, the 1999 Constitution actually allowed involvement of the subnationals in the electric power sector, but unfortunately limited it to areas not served by the national grid. Giving the States power to establish individual electricity markets will

open up opportunities and create more competitive sub-national electricity markets. Accordingly, we are drafting legislation for a state electricity regulator. Lagos and Edo States are also on the same policy, legal and legislative track.

Let me talk a bit about what our subnationals are doing to be part of the solution to power sector challenges. Many governors understand that the states of the Northwest and Northeast zone have comparative advantage in electricity production using renewables, in particular solar, wind and hydro. In addition to renewables, the Northcentral zone is also well positioned to generate power from coal. The southern states are closer to the main gas supply sources and are thus in a position to generate more from thermal sources like coal and gas, in addition to, a lesser extent renewables like solar and wind.

In recognition of this, the Northern States Governors' Forum has incorporated a special purpose vehicle to build 100MW solar plants across the 19 states and the FCT, with initial total capacity of 2,000MW, that may be expanded to 4,000MW. Kaduna State has already provided the land for its own 100MW solar farm to be developed under this initiative, in addition to 10 other Northern States. These 2,000MW are expected to be mostly off-grid to avoid over-burdening our perennially national weak transmission network. All these projects are approaching financial closure, and we appreciate the roles played by the Federal Ministry of Finance, NBET, NERC, NSIA, Africa Finance Corporation, and our partner Skipper in getting to this point within a short period.

In addition, Kaduna State is building two 100MW and one 50MW grid-connected solar power plants with private sector partners. We have also

conducted preliminary surveys and mapped out over 8,000 off-grid communities who are ready to partner with private solar developers to provide smart and reliable minigrids to energize their livelihoods.

The Kaduna State Government has also acquired two gas-powered turbines for an 84MW thermal power plant, and they are expected to be shipped into the country shortly. This will add to the existing capacity for power generation in the state, through the 215MW plant in Kudenda and the 30MW from the Gurara dam, both owned by the Federal Government. We are in discussions with the Federal Government to concession these two power plants to our Kaduna Power Supply Company.

We are fully committed to deploying more sustainable and environmentally-friendly road furniture. All the streetlights and the traffic lights deployed under the Urban Renewal Programme are solar-powered, and they use Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) instead of the traditional high-energy lamps. Some of our primary health care facilities are enjoying the 2.3MW of solar systems deployed by the Kaduna State Power Supply Company (KAPSCO) which is adding another 1.3MW for these centres. Our schools are also being supplied with electricity using mini-grids under a programme financed by a line of credit from the Government of India.

Kaduna State is also investing in transmission and distribution assets to expand capacity. Examples of this include the 2x60MVA transmission substation built to serve our Green Economic Zone, located off the Kaduna-Zaria expressway, and over 100 distribution transformers being deployed in partnership with Kaduna Electric Distribution Company.

NGF's Annual Internally Generated Revenue Peer Learning Event

The Nigeria Governors' Forum is held its 8th Annual IGR Peer Learning Event in September 2022 at the Wells Carlton Hotel, Asokoro, Abuja.

The NGF annual flagship meeting brings together State Commissioners of Finance and the Executive Chairmen of the State Internal Revenue Services to a platform for peer learning, and the dissemination of key findings/learnings from annual research studies conducted by the NGF Secretariat on state-level tax reforms.

The 2022 meeting featured the Launch of the NGF's public finance database – the country's first open-source database of the fiscal data of the 36 state governments. The portal also hosts comparable annual data on government spending, revenues, and financing; and features hundreds of performance indicators that measure the quality of public spending and the intersection of public financial management and service delivery in the country.

Revenue trends leading to 2021 and the 'State' of Tax Reforms in Nigeria – findings from a 2022 study.

In the last decade, Nigeria has experienced an unprecedented level of tax reform. Unlike at the federal level, the trigger at the state-level was not from a business community call for a better business environment, but from the impact of failing oil revenues which had destabilised the budgets of state governments during the mid-2014 – 2016 fiscal crisis. Where tax authorities have been fully supported by their state governors, administrative changes have led to increased digitalisation, taxpayer compliance, and tax revenues.

There were (3) technical discussions on the implementation of State-level Consolidated Revenue Codes (CRCs), Autonomy for Tax Authorities and Tax-for-Service programmes and their impact on tax revenues, organizational management, the number of taxpayers and the quality of taxpayer services.



PHOTO CAPTION

1. L-R: Senior Programme Manager/HelpDesk and SFTAS, Ajogbasile Olanrewaju; NGF Chief Economist, David Nabena and NGF Director of Media and Public Affairs, Abdulrazaque Bello Barkindo,

2. NGF Chief Economist David Nabena; Commissioner of Finance, Osun State, Oyebamiji Bola; Commissioner of Finance, Ebonyi State, Orlando Okechukwu Nweze and to the far right, the Executive Director of the Joint Tax Board, Mrs. Obomeghie Nana- Aisha, next to Director General of the Budget Office, Ben Akabueze and the Director General of the NGF, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru

3. Director General of the NGF, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru and World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Shubham Chaudhuri sitting

4. Kano IRS Chairman, Abdurrazak Datti Salihi in cap speaking with a participant at the PLE event

5. Audy Anthony, the Bayelsa IRS Chairman

6. State IRS Officials with the Executive Chairman of the FIRS, Mr Muhammad Nami (middle in suit)



2 < Bill, 2019 being proposed by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development should be considered given the strategic importance of the sector. Additionally, given the time bound nature of farming activities, agricultural budgets must be released on time and fully to enable farmers plant in season.

8. FMARD has committed to this. State Ministries of Agriculture should create a yearly Strengthening Access to Credit budget line: This funding should focus on getting consultants or consultancy firms to support women, youths and farmers living with disability cooperatives to be able to navigate the too cumbersome access to credit in Nigeria.

The team or consultancy firm will handhold the cooperatives to access existing CBN agricultural credit facilities through preparing their business proposals, interfacing, and negotiating with BOA, Bank of Industry, NIRSAL, commercial and microfinance banks. The team or consultancy firm will ensure that the cooperatives access such facilities and other services like extension, insurance, etc.

9. The GES should be re-introduced, and the budget should be increased to address the inputs gaps experienced by smallholder farmers, especially women.

10. FMARD and State Ministries of Agriculture should create a yearly budget line for Support for smallholder women

farmers.

11. National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) that is established for the purpose of adaptive research leading to design and development of efficient agricultural machines and technologies to reduce drudgery and improve the quality of agricultural production is not adequately funded; should be adequately funded and strengthened

12. Small modular processing and storage facilities in communities based on different commodities should be a good approach to reducing our post-harvest losses in the 2023 agriculture budget and subsequent years, as the larger Staple Crops Processing Zones (SCPZ) are most likely not to reach remote areas.

13. Federal and subnational governments should promote the enrolment of agricultural insurance policies for smallholder farmers, while challenging the poor security issues that threaten farms.

14. States should develop their own Agricultural Investment Plan. This will enable them to be recognized in the overall determination of the country's commitment to the CAADP and enable accurate data for the Biennial Review (BR) Reporting.

15. FMARD should begin to develop pesticide policies and legislation that ensure that the most toxic pesticides are prohibited, and phased out in

Nigeria, and a significant shift made towards sustainable farm systems like agroecology. To achieve this, the government needs to develop a safe sustainable food strategy that reduces the use of highly toxic synthetic chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030; 25% by 2040, a maximum of 5% by 2050 and strong support to be given to farmers in their transition towards agroecology.

16. FMARD, CBN and NIRSAL need to engage and educate all farmers groups, listed vendors, manufacturers, and importers of agrochemicals about the negative impact of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) on Nigeria's public health, environment, and foreign revenue. FMARD, CBN, Bank of Agriculture (BOA), Bank of Industry (BOI) and FMARD should mandate agrochemical dealers in their anchor-borrower programmes to remove all HHPs from their programmes and encourage them to supply more organic inputs such as biopesticides, organic fertilizers etc.

17. FMARD and State Ministries of Agriculture should increase budget allocation for organic inputs, bio-pesticides, and agroecology.

18. There is need to strengthen the monitoring of implementation of Agricultural projects in the budget by all relevant stakeholders.



Stakeholders in the agricultural sector

“African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network Championing Africa’s Development”

The African Export-Import Bank (the “Bank” or “Afreximbank”) in collaboration with the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) and the Kwazulu Natal Province (KZN) will be organising an African Sub-Sovereign Governments Conference in Abuja, Nigeria on 30 November 2022 under the theme: “African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network Championing Africa’s development”. This will be the second edition of the Conference which will ultimately develop the institutional framework for the establishment of an African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network (AfSNET).

The inaugural AfSNET conference was held on the sidelines of the Intra African Trade and Investment Fair (IATIF) in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa on 18 November 2021 under the theme: ‘African Sub-Sovereigns Governments Network as a Vehicle for Promoting Intra-African Trade and Investment.’ The resolutions from this conference were

to establish the AfSNET, participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), hold annual meetings, enhance the role of export trading companies, promote industrial development and use the platform for learning and exchange among others.

The AfSNET is an initiative of the Afreximbank to promote intra-African trade and investment. The Bank defines an African Sub-Sovereign Government as a subordinate authority to a sovereign authority designated a region/state/province/or local authority with delineated governance and powers within which they operate. Typically, a subsovereign government will have its own legislature and its mandate includes collection of revenue, expenditure, economic development and promoting trade and investment in the area under its jurisdiction. From an economic perspective, this provides sub-sovereign governments with an opportunity to effectively participate and benefit from intra-African trade and investment.

African sub-sovereign authorities and economies have a critical role to play in expanding, growing, and deepening intra-African trade, thus contributing to the overall economic development and integration of the continent. Promoting intra-African trade will enable Africa to reduce over-reliance on export of primary commodities and the risks of reliance on global value chains. It would also help increase economic integration and build the resilience of African economies against the vagaries of a global economy subject to fluctuations. The AfSNET will therefore promote strengthening sub-sovereign governance across the continent as a sound basis for economic development including intra-African economic trade and investment.

The Bank believes that there is need to support and encourage the establishment of an African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network to promote trade and investment. The

Network would consolidate the efforts of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) towards improved trade on the

continent, more specifically it would create a platform for public-private sector collaboration, deepen regional integration and peer learning, and serve as a conduit for Afreximbank to deepen its intervention in the member countries.

It is in this context that Afreximbank is organizing the second African Sub-Sovereign Governments Conference in collaboration with the Nigeria Governors’ Forum as a platform to drive the establishment of the African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network.

Objectives of the Conference

The main goal of the conference is to create a platform that promotes peer learning, cooperation, and collaboration among sub-sovereign governments to boost intra-African trade, investment, industrialization and development. The specific conference objectives include:

1. The establishment of Sub-Sovereign Governments network
 - a. To establish the institutional framework, define membership and recruit additional members.
 - b. To develop a 2022/2023 work program
 - c. To identify trends and emerging challenges which are currently or will in the future impact the Network
 - d. To showcase and promote the factor endowment investment priorities in the sub-sovereign governments
 - e. To mobilise and facilitate AfSNET participation in the IATF2023 to be held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast from 21-27 November 2022.

2. To intimate the sub-sovereign governments on financing instruments, initiatives, products and programmes that can facilitate trade and investment.

These 2 primary objectives will be distilled through 2-High-level panel sessions as described in the program.

Conference Format

To effectively achieve the objectives outlined above, the Conference is designed for physical participation, and will consist of panel discussions with high level speakers from Afreximbank, African Sub-Sovereign Governments, NAC representative on AfCFTA (in participating countries) and thought leaders on the subject constituted to meet the outlined objectives. It will also include speeches and presentations

Expected Participants

There are nine (9) African countries that have federal government systems/sub-sovereign governments. Invitations will be sent to all the federal government systems in Africa, these include South Africa (9 provinces), Nigeria (36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT)), Kenya (47 counties), Comoros (3 Islands), Egypt (27 Governorates), Ethiopia (11 States), Madagascar (6 provinces), Sudan (18 states), Tanzania (2 regions) and Zanzibar, a total of 165 Sub-divisions.

Programme

Second African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network (AfsNET) Conference

THEME:

“African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network – Championing Africa’s Development”

DAY 1
29 September 2022 | NGF Secretariat | Abuja, Nigeria

18:30 **WELCOME COCKTAIL**

DAY 2
30 September 2022 | State House, Banquet Hall | Abuja, Nigeria

08:30 – 09:00 **Arrival & Registration**

OPENING CEREMONY

09:00 – 09:05 **Welcome by Moderator**
TBC

09:05 – 09:20 a. **Welcome Remarks** *H.E. John Olukayode Fayemi, Executive Governor, Ekiti State & Chairman, Nigeria Governors’ Forum*

09:20 – 09:50 b. **Goodwill Messages:**

- *Mr. Djamel Ghib, Director for Economic Development, Integration and Trade, African Union Commission*
- *Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa*
- *Mr. David Makhura, Premier of Gauteng Province, South Africa (TBC)*

09:50 – 10:05 c. **Message of Support**
H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, AfCFTA Secretariat

10:05 – 10:20 d. **Opening Statement** *Prof. Benedict Oramah, President & Chairman of the Board of Directors, Afreximbank*

10:20 – 10:40 e. **Keynote Address** *H.E. Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

10:40 – 11:00 **Tea Break and Photo Session**

AfCFTA Secretariat

11:30 – 12:00 **Presentation 2: Afreximbank Presentation on Key Products and Initiatives to support AfsNET**
Dr. Gainmore Zanamwe, Head, Trade Facilitation & IATF, Intra-African Trade Bank, Afreximbank

12:00 – 13:30 **Roundtable 1: Leveraging AfsNET in Promoting and Facilitating Intra-African Investments – Challenges and Opportunities**

- *Ms. Farouata Mhoudine, Governor of Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Union of Comoros*
- *Mr. Khaled Abdel-Aal Abdel-Hafez, Governor of Cairo Governorate, Egypt*
- *H.E. Mary Mwitii, Chief Executive Officer, Council of Governors, Kenya*
- *H.E. Charles Soludo, Governor of Anambra State, Nigeria*
- *Mr. Ayman Khalid Nimer, Governor of Khartoum, Sudan*
- *H.E. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar*

13:30 – 13:50 **Tea Break**

13:50 – 14:50 **Roundtable 2: Unlocking Infrastructure and Industrialisation in African Regions**

- *Dr. Laouali Moussa, President of the Region of Maradi, Republic of Niger*
- *Ms. NOMENJANAHARY ANDRÉ Tafita Sareine, Governor of Ihorombe Region, Madagascar*
- *Mr. Robert BEUGRE MAMBE, Governor of the District of Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire*
- *Mr. Oumarou Ousmanou, Governor of the Northern Region of Cameroon*

14:50 – 15:00 **IATF2023 Activation & the Third AfsNET Conference**
Mr. Eric Intong, Regional Chief Operating Officer, Anglophone West Africa

WORKING SESSION

15:00 – 15:30 **Presentation 3: The African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network (AfsNET) Governance and Institutional Framework and Adoption of AfsNET 2022/2023 Work Programme**

Dr. Ogechi Adeola, Associate Professor of Marketing, Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria

CLOSING CEREMONY

15:30 – 15:45 • **Presentation & Adoption of Communiqué**
Moderator

15:45 – 15:50 • **Closing Remarks**
Mr. Asishana Bayo Okauru, Esq. Director General, Nigeria Governors’ Forum

15:50 – 17:00 **Lunch**

**Programme is subject to change*