

NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM
SECRETARIAT

**2014-2016
STRATEGIC
PLAN**



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DfID	Department for International Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDPs	International Development Partners
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministry, Department, Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEC	National Executive Council
NGF	Nigeria Governors' Forum
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PFM	Public Financial Management
SPARC	State Programme for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability
SPRM	State Peer Review Mechanism
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This new strategic plan is motivated by the desire to intensify the drive to achieve the Vision and Mission Statement of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF). It is a three year strategic plan, meant to enhance and sustain the organisation's leading edge in defining the development agenda for the various states of our country. We wish to thank our principals – the 36 Governors of the states of Nigeria - for their support and cooperation in the implementation of the 2010 – 2012 Strategic plan and in the activities which have led to another strategic plan for 2014 – 2016.

Our gratitude also goes to our stakeholders for identifying with us and supporting different aspects of the NGF agenda. Particularly worthy of mention is the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC), a programme of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) which has once again supported us in developing this strategic plan. The World Bank also deserves our thanks, as it has constantly supported the NGF whenever we have called upon it, particularly in the area of Public Financial Management (PFM), Development Policy Operations (DPO), and the State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM).

Our consultants and Policy Advisers have been very resourceful and supportive with their professional and technical contributions and insights in putting together this plan. To them, we are deeply grateful.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleagues on the Management team of the NGF Secretariat, as well as the other staff for their unrelenting effort in ensuring the success of the new strategic plan.



A.B. Okauru, Esq.
Director General

FOREWORD

The strategic plan (2014 – 2016) of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) articulates the goals, strategies and programmes for the three year period, 2014 to 2016. The plan builds upon the experience gained and lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2010-2012 plan, as well as identifying new areas of focus in the governance of the Forum. It is the result of a participatory strategic planning process, involving all the organisation's departments and stakeholders, and a critical examination of the risks in the implementation of the plan.

The NGF is a non-profit making organisation of all 36 democratically elected governors of the states of the Federation. Over the 15 years of its existence, the NGF has evolved in its unity of purpose, and its desire to always find common ground on issues of national relevance and to advance good governance and democratic values.

During the 2010 – 2012 Strategic plan period, the NGF recorded a number of significant achievements:

The Forum is more institutionalised and meetings have become more regular with a consistent increase in the attendance rate of members. Forum meetings have formed the basis for major policy contributions on important national issues, such as the debates on the Sovereign Wealth Fund, the Minimum Wage, and the removal of the fuel subsidy. More broadly, the National Executive Council (NEC) monthly meetings usually drive the scheduling of Forum meetings, and common positions adopted at these meetings form the crux of the Governors' priorities at the NEC.

The Forum has developed a collaborative arrangement for polio eradication involving the NGF, the Federal Ministry of Health and the Gates Foundation. In practical terms, the NGF has become a major link between government, development partners and private organisations as they seek to reach the 36 states.

The level of cooperation between states has increased significantly, as has the relation between states and the federal government; this is manifested during deliberations at the NEC meetings and interactions on many key national issues. The State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) has moved from its conceptual stage to a reality. This model has helped to build a platform where states share ideas and experiences regarding good governance and development based on defined performance indicators or benchmarks.

The Secretariat's capacity as the technical arm of NGF activities has evolved considerably and this has led to a deepening of the technical support provided to the Forum.

Building on these achievements and in furtherance of our goal of improving governance and socio-economic development in the States, the following are the four objectives set out for the Forum for the period 2014 – 2016:

1. To establish a respected setting where issues of national importance are discussed and consensus can be reached;
2. To become the main source for peer learning, reflections and sharing of experience on sub-national issues;
3. To enhance our communication with the Nigerian public and other Stakeholders;

4. To strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the NGF Secretariat as a policy hub and one-stop shop on matters of relevance to state governments.

The sectorial priorities during the plan period are:

- Agriculture;
- Corruption;
- Education; and,
- Security.

In order to achieve the set strategic objectives, the plan adopts four instruments for implementation:

1. NGF Retreats;
2. The Strategic Plan Committee/Implementation Working Group;
3. Knowledge Management and Communications; and
4. Monitoring and Evaluation.

The instruments have been identified as cross-cutting and will be applied across all activities of the organisation.

The strategic plan also articulates the assumptions for the implementation of the plan, as well as a risk and mitigation strategy. It highlights the importance of the Forum functioning as a single united entity, knowledge-sharing among States, and adequate funding for the Secretariat as a major risk mitigation strategy to ensure the retention and expansion of its pool of skilled and competent staff.

In its 15 year existence, NGF has established itself as a credible platform for the advancement of good governance, and as a policy hub. Members are therefore enjoined to accept this document as our collective plan, as we shall use it to measure our success in attaining the objectives and goals set herein.

Finally, I commend the Secretariat for its relentless effort in producing this document.



Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi,
Governor, Rivers State, and
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

This is a strategic plan for the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), a consortium of all 36 democratically elected governors of the states of the Federation.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to build upon the experience gained from the implementation of the 2010 – 2012 plan; a plan that was motivated by the need to give direction and focus to the NGF, and to enable our partners, stakeholders and other interested parties to have a better understanding of why we exist and how we fulfil our purpose. This plan, therefore, draws from our evaluation of our existing structure, governance, staff, programmes, collaborations and resources (financial, human, technical and material) and, more importantly, guides us towards effectively defining our Vision and Mission.

This strategic plan will cover a three year period and will be reviewed annually, at which time the activities undertaken by the NGF will be evaluated and the priorities reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted to enable the fulfilment of our goals.

1.2 Background

The NGF, which was inspired by the American National Governor's Association, was established after a multi-party conference of all elected state governors held in Abuja between 26th and 29th April, 1999. The NGF was formed as an 'Association' under the leadership of the then Governor of Nassarawa State, Dr Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu. In 2009, the new Chairman, Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki, spearheaded a major restructuring and redefining of the NGF. His tenure ended in 2011 and he handed over to the incumbent Chairman of the Forum, the Governor of Rivers State, the Rt Hon. Rotimi Amaechi. With the new structure, the office of Vice Chairman was created, with Mr Peter Obi, Governor of Anambra State, emerging as the first ever Vice Chairman.

A number of achievements were recorded during the 2010 – 2012 strategic plan. The Forum is more institutionalised; meetings have become more regular with a consistent increase in the attendance rate of members. Forum meetings have formed the basis for major policy contributions on important national issues such as the debates on the Sovereign Wealth Fund, the Minimum Wage, and the removal of the fuel subsidy. In addition to regular meetings, various working committees (e.g., on Constitutional Review, Revenue Allocation, Security, etc.) are functional. More broadly, the National Executive Council (NEC) monthly meetings usually drive the scheduling of Forum meetings, and common positions adopted at these meetings form the crux of the Governors' priorities at the NEC.

There is an emerging unity of purpose and a desire to find common ground on issues impacting on the wider polity. For instance, the Forum has developed a collaborative arrangement on polio eradication involving the NGF, the Federal Ministry of Health and the Gates Foundation, whereby states that meet all the threshold criteria that have been laid down are awarded a 500,000 USD grant by the Gates Foundation to support their most important health priorities. In practical terms, the NGF has become a major link between government, development partners and private organisations as they seek to reach the 36 states.

The level of cooperation between states has increased significantly, as has the relation between states and the federal government; this is manifested during deliberations at the

NEC meetings and interactions on many key national issues. Zonal groupings, which mirror the Forum, are increasingly effective as they discuss ways of overcoming their commonly shared developmental challenges. In dealing with common problems, the Forum has become a respected platform of collaboration, irrespective of party differences and varying economic strengths.

The NGF was instrumental in the peaceful transfer of power to the Vice-President following the demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua. It initiated and supported the adoption of the *Doctrine of Necessity* by the National Assembly which provided the basis for the assumption of office of President Goodluck Jonathan.

More recently, the Forum has been pivotal in arriving at a common ground over a number of disputes. The NGF played a lead role in the dispute between the federal government and organised labour over contentions arising from the introduction of a new minimum wage and also the challenges resulting from the fuel subsidy removal, thereby engendering close collaboration.

The State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) has moved from its conceptual stage to a reality. Fashioned after the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), this model has helped build a platform where states share ideas and experiences regarding good governance and development based on defined performance indicators or benchmarks.

The Secretariat's capacity as the technical support engine and vehicle of NGF activities has evolved considerably. We have witnessed a significant increase in the capacity of the professional staff that have joined the team and this has led to a deepening of the technical support provided to the Forum. A lot of emphasis has also been placed on job-specific training for all key staff.

Despite these achievements, there were some setbacks. The Forum was fractured as a result of disagreements over the April 2013 elections. We also recognise that we are yet to realise our full potential. We fully understand that gaps exist between where we, as an organisation, need to be in order to achieve our goals and objectives and where we are now, and that all stakeholders need to be on board to bring the process to fruition. It will require effective strategising and forging strategic relations with key entities including the Presidency, the National Assembly and State Assemblies, for whom the NGF represents an avenue for communicating with all the state governors. In the same context, many Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as the media, are key to our efforts to improve service delivery to the citizens of Nigeria and we are committed to working together to achieve our lofty ambitions by harmonising our efforts. The Forum needs to remain a strong, united entity.

1.3 Situation Analysis

A number of key evolving issues in the country will need to be taken into account as we define our strategic direction for the next three years. Whilst we have reasonable control over the resultant outcomes, we hope that by performing to a high standard and by producing the results we are aiming for, we will be able to influence others working in the same or complementary areas to produce positive developmental 'outcomes', such as sustained improvements in the standards of governance and service delivery.

The outcomes which we hope the achievement of our objectives will contribute to are:

- Governors managing their states more effectively, exhibiting improved governance, and thereby improving their own image and that of the Governorship institution;
- Well informed policy inputs that lead to greater understanding, coherence and improvements in governance at all levels;
- Enhanced inter-governmental relations and greater collaboration between the arms of government;
- Quick, effective and amicable dispute resolution;
- Efficient and effective secretariat, providing high quality professional support services to the NGF;
- Improved policy implementation at all levels, backed up by high quality research documents and institutionalisation of evidence-based policy-making; and
- NGF playing an important role in hosting and promoting events on national issues which result in the formulation and implementation of policies that improve governance.

Also, as we consolidate the SPRM, we will need to draw inspiration from the lessons learnt so far, such as the importance of transparency and accountability in the governance process and the need to build the capacity of state officials. The competition amongst states that has emerged from this process is a healthy and positive development. This plan will continue to provide opportunities for states to share best practices amongst themselves, with a view to increasing their positive contribution to the wellbeing of the citizenry.

2. OUR VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

2.1 Our Vision

Our Vision describes where the NGF should be by 2016 and beyond. We are aware that it should be dynamic and achievable as it will form the basis of our commitments and covenants with ourselves, with the people of our member states, and with the country at large. The Vision provides the context for designing and managing the changes that we will need to make to address contemporary issues, attain the goals we have set for ourselves and realise our strategic objectives. Our Vision will help us clarify the tactics we should adopt, the activities we should implement, and the benchmarks and milestones we should aim for to tell us whether or not we are meeting our goals and strategic objectives.

During the planning process, the consensus that emerged from the interviews, consultations and workshop was that the Forum should remain non-partisan and should contribute to good governance, promote democratic values and achieve sustainable development throughout the country. There was also a general agreement that the NGF can become a model for other African countries by becoming a hub which provides knowledge and information for policy development; a credible organ for mediation and conflict resolution which also serves as a platform for dissemination of best practice, peer-based learning, and experience-sharing.

Our expectation is to see the NGF become an important influencer of decisions and policies that the governments make, both at the federal and the state levels. In this Vision, no distinction is made between the Forum and the Secretariat of the Forum, although the Secretariat is expected to be run in a professional way by a small but effective team of clear-minded and articulate experts with a resolute drive to realise the Vision of the Forum. Our aspiration is for the Secretariat to evolve from being just an administrative centre where governors meet, to a policy think-tank, a mediation centre, and a home for reflection, peer-based learning and information-sharing for good governance.

Informed by the issues raised above, and based on the desires and commitments of the key stakeholders, we have arrived at the following Vision.

Our Vision

‘A strong, non-partisan institution which actively and effectively promotes inclusiveness, democratic values, good governance and sustainable development.’

2.2 Our Mission

In support of our Vision we will strive to become a credible one-stop resource centre for good governance – a place where all data and materials relating to good governance at the sub-national level can be found. The most important items to be provided in this one-stop centre are a comprehensive set of resources for: strengthening relationships and connectivity between and among the states; generating strong common purposes and coordinated and collaborative positions on issues of common interest; serving as a mediating voice; and providing a learning platform for governors where new ideas are reviewed, reflected upon, researched and presented from a common front.

The aim is to tailor the activities of the Forum towards service delivery, not only by tackling the challenges of the day but also anticipating the challenges of the future and taking proactive action. We will strive to turn the Forum into a knowledge-based organisation, and we are aware that the key to accessing and harnessing that knowledge lies in our ability to learn from each other, especially with regards to how we relate to one another. Just as important is our ability to provide evidence-based support, enhanced coordination between and among the different tiers of government, and a unified platform for achieving national development.

Our Mission Statement below sets out the purpose of the NGF within the period of this plan. It defines what we have set out to achieve, captures the essence of our Vision and reflects how we expect to support its attainment. It gives meaning to our Vision in the sense that it lays out the constituent elements, the realisation of which will help us meet our expectations.

Our Mission

‘To strengthen the Forum as a non-partisan institution that is actively promoting federalism and nationhood, facilitating cooperation, learning and sharing amongst states and delivering real dividends of democracy to the citizenry.’

Our strategy for achieving this Mission is to identify and address the quick-wins that have potential for immediate results and to complement these with longer-term activities that have potential for high impact such as finding solutions to the revenue issues facing states which are of immediate concern to most governors.

2.3 Our Higher Level Goal

During the SWOT and Stakeholder analyses it was agreed that the long-term goal for this strategic plan period is for the NGF to strongly influence the development and implementation of policies directed at alleviating poverty by creating employment through investment in education and agriculture; programmes and projects that will bring about sustained development and enhance security in states. It was obvious that the stakeholders wanted to see accelerated development take place in all the states during the next three years. It is however, clear that our concept of development should be much more people centred and inclusive than just growth in GDP per capita. Some states are already on this trajectory by committing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs targets allow several indicators to be aggregated together to give a more general measure of poverty and living standards. It is this understanding that has informed the Higher Level Goal of our strategic thrusts during the next three years.

Our Higher Level Goal

‘Consolidating democracy and improving service delivery, leading to sustainable growth and structural transformation.’

2.4 Core Values

The implementation of the strategic objectives contained in this plan will be guided by the following values:

Consensus Building

Every activity undertaken will be done so in a manner that is non-partisan and focused on establishing understanding through equal representation of the collective interests of all stakeholders.

Focus on Knowledge Delivery

All objectives in this strategic plan are geared towards the production of knowledge that will empower members to develop and implement sound policies that are evidence-based.

Professionalism

The Forum, as well as the Secretariat, will ensure that all activities are carried out in a manner that is objective and of the highest quality in terms of technical input, service delivery, skills and competencies.