

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR A. B. OKAURU, DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING ON
THE STATE PEER REVIEW MECHANISM WITH THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL OF EKITI STATE**

ADO EKITI, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

7th SEPTEMBER 2011

Your Excellency, Dr Kayode Fayemi, Governor of Ekiti State
Your Excellency, Mrs Funmilayo Olayinka, Deputy Governor of Ekiti State
Distinguished Commissioners
Permanent Secretaries
Other Senior Government Officials Present
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour and privilege to address Your Excellencies on the State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) in Ekiti State. I would like at this juncture to commend His Excellency, the Governor and the good people of Ekiti State for their steadfast commitment to good governance and the peer review mechanism. This is manifest in today's meeting, which is the second of such visit in the history of this exercise. Our first outing was on Friday 22nd July, 2011 when we met with the Executive Council of Anambra State. The Initiation/ Stakeholders' Workshop for Anambra State, which would formally commence the SPRM process in the State, would take place on 14th September 2011.

The SPRM was conceived by the NGF as an instrument to assist States in accelerating the pace of their development, through periodic reviews of progress in the implementation of their development policies, plans and programmes. This would be achieved through the sharing of experiences among States and reinforcement of commendable and innovative practices unveiled in the process. It is our hope that through participation in the peer review process, State Governors will be able to learn from their peers about innovative and good practices that they could adapt and adopt in their respective states.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the mandate for this task flows from a resolution of the National Economic Council (NEC), imploring all thirty-six (36) States of the Federation to peer review themselves in a manner modelled after the African Union (AU) Peer Review Exercise. This NEC Resolution was subsequently endorsed by all 36 State Governors in the country under the NGF platform.

As a follow-up to the NEC decision, NGF mandated its Secretariat to develop the SPRM tools. As a first step, the NGF Secretariat embarked on a peer review tour of all the 36 States in early 2009 and 2010. Although the reviews were not based on any benchmarking standards, they provided opportunity for the States to showcase their achievements as well as share their areas of challenges with the NGF review team. We have transmitted the Draft Reports of the Peer Review Tours to all the Governors for comments.

The visit to Ekiti State took place between 28th February and 4th March 2010. The Peer Review Report was subsequently prepared and submitted to the State for comments in August 2011. We received positive feedback from the State in August 2011. From the Report, it was obvious that the State was doing a number of things well in the face of some challenges, even if some of our findings have been overtaken by events.

For example, the Report noted among others that:

- Ekiti State was the first state in Nigeria to publish the audited accounts of Local Governments in 2009.
- Ekiti State saved N8.2 billion from June 2007 to December 2009 through the implementation of Due Process.
- The (GIS) mapping for all health facilities in the State is a model that should be replicated in all the states. It carries information on location, personnel, medical equipment, facility furnishings, along with pictures and other vital information about each health facility. This makes for ease of planning, inventory control and procurement management in the health sector of the State.

Your Excellency, we are aware that there has been a regime change in Ekiti State, with implication for the dynamics of governance in the State. The current endeavour would thus capture these changes, while noting that governance is a continuous endeavour.

The NGF, also in 2009, in collaboration with DFID articulated and adopted a systematic and robust Peer Review process that was launched at Transcorp Hotel, Abuja on 18th

May, 2011 by the Forum as part of the 2011 induction programme and an integral part of the NGF's Strategic Plan (2010-2012).

Distinguished participants, Edo and Anambra States were initially selected as the pioneering States that would undertake the exercise, which is unprecedented at the Sub-national level in the world. I am delighted to inform you that Ekiti State is working very hard to be a pioneer State as there is no particular order. It is, in this regard, that my Team is visiting Ado Ekiti today to commence the process.

The overriding objective of today's exercise is to present the tools and methodology for the SPRM to the Executives of Ekiti State, and agree on a roadmap for moving forward the review process in the State.

Your Excellency, I now call on Mr Joe Abah to present the Goodwill Message from DFID, and Professor Alex Gboyega to present synopsis of the SPRM Process and expectations from Ekiti State thereafter.

I thank you for your attention.