

**THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS'  
FORUM**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**ON**

**22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2007**

**AT**

**Transcorp Hilton**

**ABUJA.**

**IN ATTENDANCE, Their Excellencies:**

<b>S/NO</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>DESINATION</b>
1	Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedion	Edo	Governor (Chairman)
2	Dr. Abubakar B. Saraki	Kwara	Governor
3	Adetope Ademuluyi	Ekiti	Ag-Governor
4	Otunba Gbenga Daniel	Ogun	Governor
5	George Akume	Benue	Governor
6	Ahmad Sani Yarima	Zamfara	Governor
7	Mohammed A. Aliero	Kebbi	Governor
8	Dr. Joshua Dariye	Plateau	Governor
9	Alh. Danjuma Goje	Gombe	Governor
10	Ahmadu A. Muazu	Bauchi	Governor
11	Sam. O. Egwu	Ebonyi	Governor

**IN ATTENDANCE, Their Excellencies:**

**Governors - Elect**

<b>S/NO</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>DESINATION</b>
1	Dr. Muazu Babangida Aliyu OON	Niger	Governor-elect
2	Mal. Isa Yuguda	Bauchi	Governor-elect
3	Jonah D. Jang	Plateau	Governor-elect
4	Mahmud A. Shinkafi	Zamfara	Governor-elect
5	Mohammed N. Sambo	Kaduna	Governor-elect
6	Sen. Mamman Ali	Yobe	Governor-elect
7	Godswill Akpabio	Akwa Ibom	Governor-elect
8	Timipre Sylva	Bayelsa	Governor-elect
9	Segun Oni	Ekiti	Governor-elect
10	Suswam Gabriel	Benue	Governor-elect

The meeting commenced at 10pm with an opening prayer by the outgoing governor of Kebbi State, His Excellency Alhaji Aliero Ahmed.

The Chairman welcomed both the outgoing governors as well as the incoming governors who were in attendance.

The Chairman pointed out that the meeting was intended to serve as the valedictory meeting of the Governors' Forum for the 2003 – 2007 dispensation, and hence, he said, it would be the last he would chair.

### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES.**

After carefully going through the minutes, the observations/corrections were made and the minutes adopted.

### **OUTCOME OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE SET UP TO LIASE WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.**

The Kebbi state outgoing Governor, Alhaji Muhammad Adamu Aliero, said there was need for the meeting to be briefed on the outcome of the efforts made by the committee set up to dialogue with the leadership of the National Assembly on the issue of the conduct of the 2007 general elections.

The Governor of Yobe State, His Excellency, Senator Mamman Ali responded by pointing out that, the meeting between the committee and leadership of the National Assembly was quite fruitful, adding that there was neither motion adopted nor even raised on the issue, particularly since the leadership of the senate stood its ground that such a motion was beyond the competence of the Upper chamber to deliberate upon.

### **INCORPORATION OF EX-GOVERNORS AS EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE FORUM.**

Governor of Yobe State, His Excellency, Senator Mamman Ali, suggested that ex-governors should, under no circumstances, upon the expiration of their tenure, be allowed to go into oblivion, meaning that they should continue to retain their membership of the Forum as ex-officio members, participating occasionally in meetings and making positive contributions particularly in view of the wealth of experience they gathered over the years while serving as chief executives of their various states.

The Chairman observed that, there was a relative ease that characterised the polity, despite threat by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), as well as some few Civil rights organisations to embark on a sit-at-home. He urged that the Forum should, at the end of its meeting, come up with a Communique condemning the call for the said sit-at-home and urged all those who felt disgruntled, for one the reason or the other, consequent upon the conduct of the elections, to seek redress in the election tribunals specifically and constitutionally established for such purposes.

In line with what the Yobe State governor had advocated, the Chairman said that the Forum could borrow a leaf from the National Council of State, by integrating the ex-governors who should participate in meetings of the Forum on bye annual basis.

### **THE FORUM AS BREEDING GROUND FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.**

The Kebbi State Governor, His Excellency Alhaji Mohammed Adamu Aliero advocated that in consonance with what the president-elect suggested, at the previous meeting, the Nigeria Governors' Forum should strive to constitute itself not just as breeding ground for the presidency but also for leadership of the Senate as well as House of Representatives.

Subsequently, the Kebbi State governor suggested that the next President of the Senate should emanate from amongst the ex-governors elected as Senators-elect. He, however, made reference to the standing rules of the Senate which, he said, laid emphasis on experience.

The Zamfara State governor, His Excellency, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, maintained that even though the standing rules of the Senate did lay emphasis on experience, as a criterion for election into the Senate leadership, there was no where in the rules to suggest that experience was mandatory.

The Chairman, Chief Lucky Nosakhare Igbiniedion, said even the leadership of the House of Representative should, henceforth, be drawn from amongst the ex-governors.

### **ENDORSEMENT OF GEORGE AKUME AS SENATE PRESIDENT**

The Chairman proposed that the Governor of Benue State, His Excellency, Dr. George Akume, should be endorsed and supported

by the Forum to emerge as the next President of the Senate. He urged that the Forum should strategise to ensure his emergence accordingly.

### **ZONING OF OFFICES IN THE SENATE**

The meeting observed that the office of the Senate President and that of the Speaker, House of Representatives, were zoned to the North Central and South West respectively.

In his contribution, the governor-elect of Plateau State, Mr. David Jonah Jang, suggested that the Forum should send a delegation to the president-elect on the matter.

However, the Governor of Gombe State, His Excellency, Alhaji Muhammadu Danjuma Goje, cautioned that such an approach could be misinterpreted and rather advocated for a more subtle and politically enclined strategy.

The Governor-elect of Yobe State, His Excellency, Senator Mamman Ali, while throwing more light on the Senate standing rules, particularly as it related to the election of the Senate President, pointed out that the rules emphasised, among other things, on precedence, ranking and experience and that the only option that seemed to be opened, if the Forum must have its way, was to cause the standing rules to be amended.

The Gombe State Governor, His Excellency, Alhaji Muhammadu Danjuma Goje suggested that, since the new Senators constituted more than two third (2/3) of the Senate membership, the best strategy would be to lye low and allow the next president emerge, based on the existing rules, and immediately after move to impeach him, thus paving way for the Forum's endorsed candidate.

However, the governor-elect of Yobe State, His Excellency Senator Mamman Ali, pinpointed the flaws in this line of strategy, by making reference to the normal practice, over the years, whereby proceedings were suspended immediately Senate Presidents were elected.

### **EXCESS CRUDE**

The Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Danjuma Goje, requested explanation on the issue of excess crude account.

The Chairman responded by revealing that Mr. President had promised to release the sum of Three Hundred Billion Naira

(N300bn) Only, but that only the incoming governors would benefit from the package.

The Kebbi State out-going governor stated that, even though the outgoing governors would not benefit, yet they were expected to reflect it in their handover notes.

The Chairman pointed out that states that were not owing the Paris club but short-changed through deductions, over the years, would be refunded accordingly.

The Chairman advised members to employ the services of financial experts in comprehending and resolving the complex issues related to excess crude account.

The Gombe State Governor mentioned that the Chairman, Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission, had gone to court in relation to the legal status of Excess Crude Account in the context of Nigerian Federal Constitution, maintaining that the constitution provided no room whatsoever for accommodation of excess crude account. He urged members to identify with and support the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission in its crusade against the Excess Crude Account.

### **ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN**

Kaduna State Governor-elect, His Excellency, Arc. Mohammed Namadi Sambo enquired as to whether there were specific guidelines and procedures governing the election of the Forum' s Chairman.

Bauchi State out-going governor, His Excellency, Alhaji Adamu Muazu Ahmad responded by saying that there were no established rules and procedure governing the election of the Forum's Chairman, but that in view of the nature of challenges lying before the Forum, the emphasis should be primarily on courage and vision, since the nature of his functions, he maintained, were such that, more often than not, placed him on a direct confrontational course with the presidency.

The Chairman stated that, consequent upon a wide consultation, members had resolved that the Executive Governor of Kwara State, His Excellency Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki should succeed him as the Chairman of the Forum.

Subsequently, the Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki, was endorsed by the Forum as its new Chairman.

immediately after his election, the new Chairman pledged to work tirelessly and indefatigably in a bid to move the Forum forward.

### **CLOSING PRAYERS**

Having exhausted the items on the agenda and in the absence of any other issue for discussion, a motion to end the meeting was raised and seconded and the Executive Governor of Benue State, His Excellency, Dr. George Akume closed the meeting with a prayer.





## **NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM**

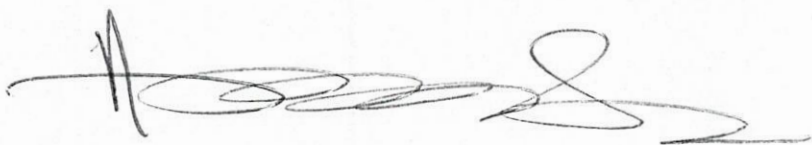
TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

### **COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM AT THE END OF ITS' MEETING OF 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2007.**

The Nigeria Governors' Forum met on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2007, being its last session within the current dispensation and accordingly resolved as follows:

1. We observe the relative peace that currently characterises the polity and express satisfaction with the rate at which efforts are being made at various levels, particularly against the backdrop of the recently concluded general elections and the tension generated by them, not only to restore normalcy but to also ensure a smooth civilian to civilian transition being the first of its kind ever to be experienced by the nation.
2. We condemn in its totality, the call by the Nigeria Labour Congress and some few other Civil Rights Movements for a mass protest action against the alleged flawed conduct of the general elections and hereby, once again, reiterate our consistent stance that all those who feel aggrieved for whatever reasons, as a result of the conduct of the elections, should seek redress in the election tribunals constitutionally established for that purpose.
3. We adequately appreciate the critical role played by the outgoing Governors in the establishment of, we well as in debates on the floor of the Forum which, no doubt, has contributed immensely toward consolidating democracy and good governance.
4. Against the backdrop of their positive contributions, and the wealth of experience they accumulated over the years in the process of governance; we, hereby, as a matter of policy, resolve that the outgoing Governors, should continue to play active role in the affairs of the Forum by participating, on at least, bi-annual basis, in its meetings.

5. On the issue of excess crude, we appreciate the role of Mr. President in stirring the economy and in particular his concern for macro-economy stability. However, we wish to reiterate our stance that not only that excess crude account has no place whatsoever in the context of the Nigerian Federal Constitution but that it tends to deprive the states of additional funds for the development and progress of their peoples.
6. Taking into account the fact that the 2003 – 2007 dispensation has come to a virtual end, and bearing in mind the need for continuity and leadership sustainability, we have resolve, based on experience and after due consultations, to mandate the Executive Governor of Kwara State, His Excellency, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki to steer the affairs of the Forum as its new Chairman.



Aminu Mustapha Ibrahim  
Executive Director/CEO

**For: Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum.**