



## Letter from the Chairman, NGF

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Your Excellencies

Governors of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and  
Members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum

Dear Colleagues,

Let me start by thanking all of you for supporting and cooperating with me throughout my tenure as Chairman of the Forum. It has been such a great honour to serve in this capacity.

I officially assumed office as Chairman of the NGF in May, 2015 taking over from my predecessor, H.E. Rt. Hon Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, Governor of Rivers State who spent four years as Chair and was exiting the membership of the NGF.

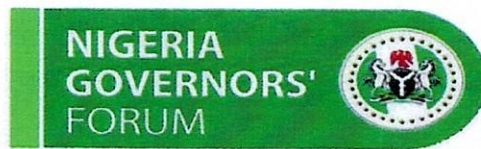
I became the Chairman of the NGF at a very trying time for our nation and the States. It was the peak of the economic recession that befell the country as a result of the plunge in oil revenues as well as security challenges in various States, which left States struggling with fiscal challenges and an inability to meet their financial obligations. To address the challenges that we met, we identified revenue mobilization, economic diversification and increased focus on other sources of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) as the primary focus of my tenure and these have continued to be crucial to the welfare of States and the agenda of the Forum.



In addition to the foregoing, my agenda as Chairman of the Forum included improving the relationship between the Forum and the Presidency, harnessing fiscal support for the States and promoting collaborative opportunities aimed at helping States better manage their economies.

This cordial relationship with the Presidency yielded so many benefits among which are:

1. The refund of the sum of **\$6,136,229,597.00 (Six Billion, One Hundred and Thirty Six Million, Two Hundred and Twenty Nine Thousand, Five Hundred and Ninety Seven Dollars only)** being over deduction on Paris and London Club Loans on the accounts of States and Local Governments (1995-2002). All States have accessed their refunds which contributed to the reflation of the economy and enabled States to meet their financial obligations to a large extent.
2. Issuance of Federal Government Promissory Notes worth **N487,852,988,574.74 ( Four Hundred and Eighty Seven Billion, Eight Hundred and Fifty Two Million, Nine Hundred and Eighty Eight Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy Four Naira, Seventy Four Kobo only)** to 23 States of the Federation as refunds for infrastructural project carried out on behalf of the Federal Government.
3. Release of three (3) bailout facilities to 31 States
4. Development of the Fiscal Sustainability Plan
5. One-year budget support facility of N14.16 billion per State to 35 State governments



### **Number and Percentage Attendance at Meetings**

I am pleased to announce that we recorded an increase in the number of meetings and percentage of attendance. Forum meetings increased from 5 in 2015 to 8 in 2016, to 12 in 2017, and 11 in 2018. Our record shows an average yearly attendance of 70.4%, 76.1%, 80.2% and 66% respectively. For every meeting held, at least 18 State Governors were in attendance. This is an encouraging record of increased participation by members.

### **Administrative/Governance Changes**

We also set up set up Fourteen (14) Committees during my tenure, some of which are:

- NGF Permanent Secretariat Committee
- NGF Constitution Review Committee
- Hajj Agreement Review Committee
- Legal Committee
- NGF Representatives on the Tripartite National Minimum Wage Committee etc.

I must commend the Secretariat for its strong commitment to supporting the Forum and engaging with key stakeholders on our behalf. From 2015 till date, the Secretariat has expanded its engagement with development partners such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), World Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID) UK etc. It has also built strong working relationships with key Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).



These engagements have further positioned the NGF as a key stakeholder in national issues leading to the inclusion of the NGF as a member of important Presidential Committees some of which are listed below:

1. Implementation Committee on Autonomy of the State Legislature and State Judiciary
2. Revenue Monitoring and Reconciliation Committee
3. National Addressing System Council Committee
4. Tripartite Committee of the New National Minimum Wage
5. Reconstituted Revenue Monitoring and Reconciliation Committee, etc.

### **Other Achievements Since 2015**

1. The Forum organised an Induction programme for newly-elected and re-elected Governors of the 36 States from April 28-May 30, 2019. This induction programme also featured the Governors' Spouses' Summit, an innovation designed to equip the First Ladies in the supportive role they play in ensuring the success of the Governors.

2. We acquired this property to serve as permanent secretariat of the Forum. This has been a goal of the Forum since 2006. The Secretariat relocated to the Permanent Secretariat located at 49/51 Lake in January, 2018 and Forum meetings now hold in the



Secretariat Complex. Work on the Secretariat building is still on-going.

3. In collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Secretariat is currently implementing a 3-year grant worth near \$2.1m to support States in improving their development outcomes through the NGF HelpDesk, Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) Dashboard and Primary Health Care Under One Roof (PHCOUR) programmes. Many States have benefited from these programmes and will continue to do so.

### **Future Prospects**

A lot has been achieved in the past four years but a lot more work remains to be done, especially in supporting our Secretariat financially and otherwise to perform optimally. Membership dues ought to be a major source of funding the operations of the Secretariat but the compliance by members has been very low. I believe that the Secretariat can do more for this Forum if members were responsive to their financial obligations.

As at 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019, the total outstanding payments due from members stood at **N1,992,000,000.00 (One Billion, Nine Hundred and Ninety Two Million Naira only).**

I call on members to support the Secretariat in this regard.

Other specific recommendations to strengthen the Forum and further consolidate our achievements till date include:

1. Activation of the Organs/Committees in the NGF Constitution



2. Narrow the Chairman's agenda into a few achievable objectives
3. Sustain the relationship with the Federal Government
4. Deepen the relationship with the National Governors' Association, USA
5. Resuscitate and fund the execution of the State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM)
6. Leverage the NGF State of the States Investment Conference and Exhibition to build partnerships and attract investments.

### **Conclusion**

It has been a privilege to serve this great Forum as its Chairman from 2015 to date.

I am grateful for the support you showed me as brothers and colleagues. These contributed immensely to the success of my stewardship.

We have to continue with the culture of inclusiveness and unity in diversity. The Forum must not relent in showing leadership to the country and we must always remember that the strength of the Nigeria Governors' Forum lies in our unity. Let us therefore work harder to build a credible institution that will enhance the wellbeing of this great country.

Thank you,

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**Hon. Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar**  
**Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum**  
**May, 2019**