

**NIGERIA
GOVERNORS'
FORUM**

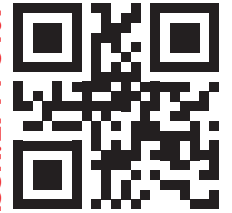


THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AN NGF MONTHLY PUBLICATION

Vol.1. No. 33, September, 2021

ISSN: 2714-5107



WOODROW WILSON

DECEMBER 28, 1856 - FEBRUARY 3, 1924



UNLOCKING SUBNATIONAL POTENTIAL

Bi-partisan governors' team speaks to the world



NEWS FROM THE STATES

UN commends Ugwuanyi's investment in peace, security, infrastructure, others

The United Nations (UN) Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, has commended Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State “for the ongoing investments in infrastructure and human capital development with notable progress in education, healthcare, and economic growth”.

The UN Resident Coordinator who spoke during a working visit to Enugu State, where he interacted with Ugwuanyi who was represented by his deputy, Hon. Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo and members of the State Executive Council (EXCO), also commended the governor's regional push for the South-East to work in unity to advance the peace and development of the region as well as his ongoing efforts at addressing insecurity.

“You (Ugwuanyi) are indeed a champion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in action and service to your people in Enugu State”, Mr. Kallon added, while applauding the state government “for the investments made in enhancing security in the State”.

He urged the governor to continue to strengthen his



Gov. Ugwuanyi

administration's investment in security institutions “to create an enabling environment for peace and security and nurture a whole of society approach in managing security in the state”.

The UN Resident Coordinator disclosed that the mission to Enugu State was “to reinforce the partnership between the UN and the Enugu State Government; to address the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic and accelerate implementation of the SDGs to build back better; and to continue to create durable solutions for economic transformation in the state”.

According to him, “I want

to commend Enugu State for the optimal COVID-19 response in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic is with us for a long time, until 70 percent of the population is vaccinated. The emergence of new variants in some parts of the world remains a major concern as the virus mutates.

“I encourage the Enugu State authorities to continue to own and lead by example in containing the virus and hold institutions and organizations accountable to ensure compliance with the non-pharmaceutical measures”.

Mr. Kallon equally lauded Gov. Ugwuanyi's adminis-

tration for domesticating the Child Rights Act, Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act.

On education and Child Rights, the UN Resident Coordinator revealed that Enugu State, according to MICS 2016/17, has achieved gender parity in access to both primary and secondary education, adding that “the State budget is one of the most effective and powerful policy instruments to fulfill children's rights and deliver results for children at scale”.

Mr. Kallon pointed out that several UN Agencies including UNICEF, WHO

and UNAIDS have ongoing programmes in Enugu State, stressing that “other UN Agencies are also supporting development efforts in Enugu State through the Federal Institutions”.

In his words: “UNICEF has helped to strengthen the National Health Management Information System (NHMIS) to improve data quality through capacity building, provision of data collection tools and support for data validation process. It has also contributed to progress towards elimination of PMTCT through partnership with communities to engage Voluntary Community Mobilizers (VCMs) who mobilise pregnant women to enter the PMTCT cascade.

“UNICEF has provided resources to strengthen routine immunisation and OBR both within the health system and communities, supported the Enugu State Government to develop a State Social Protection Policy which considers specific interventions that are targeted at improving access of children and young people to key social services and strengthening State systems for the WASH sector.

Enugu participates at the US-Nigeria Investment Summit in New York

The Enugu State government actively participated at the United States-Nigeria Investment Summit (USNIIS) 202, held in New York, United States of America (USA), during the 76th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The Enugu State Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure,

Engr. Greg Nnaji and the Special Adviser to Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) Development and Director General, Enugu SMEs Centre, Hon. Arinze Chilo-Offiah, represented the state at the summit.

The USNIIS 2021 summit, themed: “Nigeria, The Future of

Global Business” was organized by a consortium of Nigerian Diasporas in the United States (US) and US partners, as a premier public-private platform for effective bilateral and mutually beneficial economic engagements between Nigeria and the US.

Gov. Ugwuanyi's adminis-

tration, in consonance with its sound vision of investment promotion, the summit's noble objectives and inherent benefits towards the diversification of Nigeria's economy, as well as the economic development of Enugu State indicated interest and participated in the international event.



COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNORS OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA ON THURSDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER 2021



The Nigerian Southern Governors' Forum at its meeting of today, Thursday, 16th September 2021, held in the Government House, Enugu, Enugu State, reviewed the state of the nation and the progress of implementation of the decisions reached in her previous meetings and further resolved as follows:

1. Expressed satisfaction with the rate at which the States in the Southern Nigeria are enacting or amending the Anti- Open Grazing Laws which align with the uniform template and aspiration of Southern Governors and encouraged the States that are yet to enact this law to do so expeditiously.

2. Encouraged the full operationalization of already agreed regional security outfits; which would meet, share intelligence and collaborate, to ensure the security and safety of the region.

3. Reaffirmed its earlier commitment to fiscal federalism as resolved at the inaugural meeting of the Forum held on Tuesday, 11th May 2021 at Asaba, Delta State and emphasized the need for the Southern States to leverage the legislative competence of their respective State Houses of Assembly as well as representation in the National assembly to pursue its inclusion in the Nigerian Constitution through the ongoing constitutional amendment.

4. Following from paragraph "3" above, the meeting resolved to support the position that the collection of VAT falls within the powers of the States.

5. Expressed satisfaction with the handling of issues around the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and ownership of Nigerian National Petroleum

Corporation (NNPC) by the larger Nigerian Governors' Forum.

6. Reiterated their earlier position that the next President of Nigeria must come from the Southern part of Nigeria in line with politics of equity, justice and fairness.

7. The Forum thanked the host Governor, Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, and chose Rivers State as the next host for the Southern Governors' Forum meeting in November 2021.

His Excellency Arakunrin Oluwarotimi O. Akeredolu, SAN, Governor, Ondo State and Chairman, Southern Governors' Forum;

His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Uguwanyi, Governor, Enugu State;

His Excellency, Gboyega Oyetola, Governor, Osun State;

His Excellency, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, Governor, Delta State;

His Excellency, Babajide Sanwo-Olu Governor, Lagos State;

His Excellency, Sen. Douye Diri, Governor, Bayelsa State;

His Excellency, Udom Emmanuel Governor, Akwa

Ibom State;

His Excellency, Nyesom Wike, Governor, Rivers State;

His Excellency, Prince Dapo Abiodun, Governor, Ogun State;

His Excellency, Hon. Shaibu Philip, Dep. Governor, Edo State;

His Excellency, Prof. Placid Njoku, Dep. Governor, Imo State;

His Excellency, Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, Dep. Governor, Abia State;

His Excellency, Otunba Bisi Egbeyemi, Dep. Governor, Ekiti State;

His Excellency, Dr. Eric Kelechi Igwe, Dep. Governor, Ebonyi State;

His Excellency, Rauf Olaniyan, Dep. Governor, Oyo State;

His Excellency, Prof. Ivara Ejemot Esu, Dep. Governor, Cross River State.



UNLOCKING SUBNATIONAL POTENTIAL

...Bi-partisan governors' team speaks to the world

States in Nigeria have received remarkable appraisal by officials of the World Bank's States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability Program for results (SFTAS), because of the diligent work put in by the Help-Desk of the Nigeria Governors' Forum.

States have also been commended for their clinical approach to the Corona virus pandemic which shook the world to its very foundations last year, 2020. It has been on record that Governors were proactive at the outbreak of the pandemic to the extent that they asked the minister of Health who came to their meeting unprepared to talk about the pandemic to leave, if he wouldn't speak on the virus.

Earlier, the 36 states had been given a clean bill of health in polio eradication until the sporadic wars in the Northeast forced a pull-back of the certification, only to be reviewed and revalidated a year later. These concrete milestones paved way for the governors to believe that given more opportunities, they could add more value to the lives of the common people and stop the rapid drift into hunger, starvation and ultimately poverty.

It is for this reason that a team of bipartisan strategists comprising the Chairman of the Forum, Dr John Kayode Fayemi and Governor of Ekiti State, the Vice Chairman of the Forum, Rt Hon Aminu Waziri Tambuwal and Governor of Sokoto State, the Governor of Plateau State, Rt Hon Simon Bako Lalong and Chairman of the Northern Governors' Forum and Governor of Edo State and Chairman of the SFTAS committee Mr Godwin Obaseki headed to the United States last September to address the issue of direct assistance to the subnational from all well-meaning individuals and organisations wishing to pump developmental interventions to the country. At every point, the team brandished its performance sheet which served as a credential for coming into this conversation with the international donor agencies.

Their meetings spanned a variety of institutions, private and public. The State Department, The International Peace Institute, the Corporate Council on Africa, Search for Common Ground, and many others were convened to dialogue over the situation at the subnational in Nigeria and

designed together ways of ameliorating the suffering of the Nigerian people. Their approaches were embellished by their experiences and the narratives were penetrating.

The Chairman dwelt more on the performance of the Governors' collectively, citing the achievements of the Forum in its ability to bring politicians of diverse political inclinations to agree to develop their peoples once they were elected and sat together as a subnational leadership. The Vice Chairman hammered on the unity of the Forum and how its cohesion has led to this remarkable achievement that they were in the United States to showcase. He drew inspiration from his experiences as a former Speaker of the House of Representatives to buttress how unity even in diversity can lead to unprecedented welfare for a people.

Governor Lalong spoke mostly to the sectarian clashes around the north which to some extent dissuaded foreign direct investments into the subnational and harped on assuring the audiences that, things are not as bad as they were made to look.

Governor Obaseki spoke as the economic strategist. He explained the efforts put into getting all governors to redirect their energies into aligning their governance concepts with the demands of the SFTAS and OGP programs which to a large extent conformed with global best practices.

Overall, the trip was a resounding success although the key elements of the trip which included a visit to the National Governors' Association did not materialise. There are key takeaways which include the meeting with the International Peace Institute led by Lisa Grande, with Ambassador Johnnie Carson and Dr Joseph Sany in attendance, where it was concluded that the IPI wishes to deepen its engagement in Nigeria.

Furthermore, a meeting with the State Department, which set-off immediately after the one with the IPI, declared its intention to make Nigeria the centre piece of its engagement with Africa, going forward, even though its priority at the moment is Ethiopia where the crisis in Tigris has caught global attention.

The State Department officials lamented that this is happening because Nigeria's influence in Africa is dwindling, which is why the US is focusing in areas that have been neglected by the "Giant of Africa."

In this regard, the Vice President of the United States of America, Kamala Harris, is ostensibly put-

ting together a program for Africa in which Nigerian states would be integral.

A Dinner was also organised at the Four seasons Hotel with Ambassador Robin Sanders and Howard Jeter as part of the team's pathfinding mission in which the NGF was interested in finding what the President Biden administration would be basing its emphasis on and which of the top administration officials would help the subnational officials in Nigeria. The Strategy team's approach was deemed timely because the Biden presidency is just about constituting its policy framework and the subnational in Nigeria would feature prominently because of the message it left with the Americans.

The World Bank was persuaded to review its interventions in Nigeria to bring it up to the level that it gives to Brazil, for example.

And now this...we mourn Mr Sam Oluwalana, Senior Special Assistant (Media and Party Matters) to the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum Dr John Kayode Fayemi. The Late Oluwalana was an integral part of our production team and always supplied @Loud Wispers, from the desk of the First Lady of Ekiti State. We pray God to grant him eternal rest.

THE TEAM

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NGF Launches Tax for Service Policy Research

The payment of taxes can appear to be an unfair system in which money that belongs to you is being subtracted from your account.

However, imagine a scenario where you are eager to pay taxes because of a benefit that will add to your wellbeing?

This is what Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat seeks to achieve with its Tax-for-Service Initiative.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat (NGF) held its 7th Internally Generated Revenue Peer Learning Event and launched the Tax for Service Policy Research.

The event which took place on Wednesday, the 29th of September at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, consisted of three learning sessions such as Trust & Legitimacy, Management, Measurement and Alignment and Sustainability.

Speaking at the occasion, the Chairman of the NGF, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, said that this learning event and the Tax-for-Service (TfS) initiative is timely and strategic to our desire to achieve universal health coverage for all Nigerians.

Dr. Fayemu reiterated the importance of tax-for-service is, to bring about additional funding for healthcare, improve service delivery, promote trust in government and strengthen the legiti-

macy for taxes collected.

At the session, the Senior Economist at NGF, Mr. David Nabena, informed that the survey revealed that not many had even heard of health insurance before.

"We found out that people were willing to pay taxes especially when it relates to healthcare and education. 47% were willing to pay taxes before the services and 93% were willing to pay taxes after the service," he said.

Mr. Nabena also mentioned the challenges that the survey showed such as a lack of trust between the government and the citizens.

Concluding, he submitted that the NGF seeks to improve tax morale, increase IGR and improve service delivery in healthcare.

One of the ways that NGF seeks to do this is by providing technical and evidence to engage with the government.

On his part, the Senior Health Adviser, Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab, said that everyone should have access to the health they need, and health should be equitably distributed.

He added that over 70% of health expenditures come out of pocket but there should be some reforms.

"We are taxing health and when you have access to better healthcare, then people are will-

ing to pay tax."

Further in his speech, Dr. Ahmad said that, for the tax-for service initiative to be a success, there needs to be a political buy-in to make sure that political forces are aware.

There also needs to be a community buy-in because not a lot of people have heard about health insurance.

Dr. Ahmad also emphasized that the quality-of-service matters because that is what will enable people to come back.

Speaking during the session on Trust and Legitimacy, the Commissioner of Health for Kaduna, Hajiya, Amina Mohammed Baloni said that 255 health-care services have been upgraded in Kaduna.

Hajiya Baloni said that what is needed is to get the confidence back in the health sector.

This would require the political will to employ people and the prioritization of the package with care.

It would also consist of leveraging funding that exists.

"We need a strategy that mobilises people to go to communities," she said.

Speaking at the same session on Trust and Legitimacy was Dr. Gafar Alawode, a Health professional.

He said that it is critical to mobilise the civil space.

He emphasized two concepts that must be tackled within health institutions such as putting the agenda on the political front burner.

The second being the accountability mechanism and getting the best possible health funds to the people that need it the most.

On the Management, Measurement and Alignment session, Mr. Ben Nkechika from Delta State Health Insurance Agency said that in addition to having political will, advocacy is necessary for paying tax.

"We have to make contribution easy for them. They must get actual access to the care and make sure they are satisfied with it.

Technology also matters. Let the process be simple and create continuity," he said.

On the session on Sustainability, the Commissioner of Health for Enugu State, Mr. Emmanuel Obi said that for different states, there are different peculiarities, and therefore each state needs to know what they stand to gain.

He advised that when a steering committee is established, it shouldn't be more than six months.

The Commissioner of Finance for Gombe State, Mr. Malam Muhammad Gambo Magaji said that it matters to get the buy-in of the people.

He stated that this is through evidence.

"We provide billboards and show people that the road built was from their tax," he said.

NGF next steps as reiterated in the session is to improve tax morale and provide evidence to engage with the Governors.

PHOTOS FROM THE TAX FOR SERVICE INITIATIVE LAUNCH





NEWS FROM THE STATES

We're committed to eradicating HIV/AIDS in Abia, says Ikpeazu

The Governor of Abia State, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu has promised to pull resources together with the US Mission in Nigeria and National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) towards mounting aggressive advocacy for the eradication of HIV/AIDS in the State.

Governor Ikpeazu made the commitment when he received in Government House Umuahia, a delegation of the US Deputy Chief of Mission, Mrs Kathleen Fitzgibbon and the Director General, National Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS (NACA), Dr. Aliyu Gambo. He promised to deploy the same zeal used for the COVID-19 pandemic and other health issues in the State to battle HIV/AIDS headlong.

To that end, the Governor assured that the State must ramp up HIV testing as well as other curative interventions that would lead to eradication of the scourge. He further said that the State would mobilize all the necessary platforms in other to beat the 18 months deadline



Gov. Ikpeazu

given by the team as target to bring HIV/AIDS under control in the State. He called on the US Deputy Chief of Mission to continue to support Abia in its quest to win the war against HIV/AIDS, and thanked the US Mission for returning to the State in the area of health after some years of inactivity.

The Governor highlighted the interventions of his administration in health sector in the State including the tele-health initiative, geriatric out reach and mother

& child hospital which he said would be commissioned soon among other interventions. He assured the delegation that he will personally lead the advocacy campaign to support both the curative and behavioral change components of the fight.

Earlier, the US Deputy Chief of Mission, Mrs Kathleen Fitzgibbon said that they are in Nigeria, partnering the Federal and State Governments in pulling resources together towards reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS

in the county as HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence.

She urged the State Government to mount strong advocacy aimed at eliminating stigma against carriers, increase HIV coverage and to encourage people with HIV/AIDS to willingly come out to access treatment. She thanked the Governor for quickly approving the provision of accommodation for staff of the Center for Disease Control, adding that this will strengthen synergy and collaboration between the US

Mission and the State Government.

Also, speaking, the Director General NACA, Dr. Aliyu Gambo said that Abia has remained one of the strategic partners of the Federal Government in the fight against HIV/AIDS as it has been active in the payment of its counterpart funding.

He thanked the Governor for sustaining support for the program including providing office space for NACA and assured that joining hands with the US Mission and Abia State Government, they would achieve epidemic control in the State.

The Governor and the US Envoy later exchanged gifts.

Deputy Governor Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, Secretary to Government, Barrister Chris Ezem, Honorable Commissioner for Health, Dr Joe Osuji, Head of Service, Sir Onyi Onyii Wamah, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Prof-acb Agbazuere, other members of the State Executive Council, Permanent Secretaries and other top officials of the State Government witnessed the event.

Mother and Child Specialist Hospital ready soon, Ikpeazu assures

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has assured that the Mother and Child Hospital which is at its final stage of completion will be commissioned and ready for service to Abians soon.

Speaking after inspecting the facility located opposite Central Police Station, Bende Road Umuahia,

Governor Ikpeazu expressed satisfaction at the progress of work done so far.

The Governor said he was pleased with the design of the hospital and announced that equipment will soon arrive at the facility.

According to him, the

State has already taken delivery of two full containers of medical equipment for the hospital which came as a donation from Dr Jackson in Denver Colorado, USA as an offshoot of the collaboration between the State Government and Abians in the diaspora. The Governor said that the

State Government was also procuring more medical equipment for the hospital. The Governor said that Government was committed to providing State of the Art facilities at the hospital including Laboratory facilities, Radiography, Pharmacy and functional Theatre facilities and indeed all that

is required to take care of specialist issues concerning children and mothers.

The Governor was accompanied on the inspection by his Wife, Mrs Nkechi Ikpeazu, the Secretary to Government, Barrister Chris Ezem and the Honorable Commissioner for Health, Dr Joe Osuji.



NEWS FROM THE STATES



Emmanuel inaugurates road, 300m Twin Bridges in Obot Akara, awards more projects

Governor Udom Emmanuel has inaugurated the Second Phase of the Nto Edino / Ekwereazu Road that comes with twin bridges to link some Obot Akara communities and also ease movement from Akwa Ibom State to Abia State.

The exercise which was part of activities to mark the 2021 Akwa Ibom State anniversary, was witnessed by the Wife of the Governor, Mrs Martha Udom Emmanuel, Deputy Governor, Mr Moses Ekpo, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Rt.Hon. Aniekan Bassey and other top government officials.

Speaking during the Commissioning, the Governor accompanied by other Government functionaries, said that the best way to appreciate citizens for their votes is through construction of quality projects, investments opportunities and peace of mind.

'I'm not just coming back here for the bridges but to

say thank you for everything you have done. Road projects and investments are better ways to say thank you.

"Once you drive into Akwa Ibom State from other parts of the country, you'll see dividends of good governance.

"I want to assure Obot Akara people that I have also noted the other Mbiase and Ikot Ambang roads and the bridge you've mentioned today, I have already directed Seyang to commence work on that other bridge and road and I am sure with his level of competence, we should come back to commission it 15 months from now.

He expressed satisfaction over the quality of work done by the indigenous contractor Engr. Samuel Inyang on the Nto Edino/Ekwereazu Road.

"I knew that immediately we commissioned the first phase of this road, there would be a surge of traffic, so, I asked them to complete

the twin bridge and fortify it to carry any form of load.

"Seyang has made us so proud as an indigenous contractor, this is excellent engineering. It's good to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills in what you set to study. I am impressed by Engr. Samuel Inyang.

"I'm not an engineer but if you check the bridge and strength it can carry, you will understand what I'm saying," he said.

The governor once again displayed his soft nature, when he directed immediate empowerment of an elderly man whose house overlooks the new bridges, and further mandated the Permanent Secretary to ensure the re-modelling the man's house.

Earlier in his speech, the Commissioner for works, Prof Eno Ibanga explained that the twin bridges measures about 350meters with 1.2km pitch stone to control erosion and 4 drains, to control storm drains.

Akwa Ibom institutes State Coconut Day with 300,000 seedlings

Governor Udom Emmanuel has flagged off the planting of 300,000 special breed of coconut seedlings in Akwa Ibom, announcing September 18 as the annual state coconut day in the state.

This follows the government's target of cultivating two million coconut seedlings in the State to serve as raw materials for the just completed St. Gabriel's Coconut Oil Factory at Mkpát-Enin.

Performing the flag off, Governor Emmanuel, who led other top government officials by example himself, planted 50 seedlings at the Government Coconut Plantation, Ekeya, Okobo, saying coconut which is of high yielding value in the international market, has the potentials to replace crude oil.

He said the coconut planting exercise was being performed simultaneously across all the local government areas in the state, adding that planting coconuts in schools were also being targeted in the scheme to ensure that the state coconut oil refinery was fully supplied with coconut fruits.

He called on the federal government and Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN to partner the State in coconut investment.

"Today is a very special day. It is the day that is borne out of vision.

The St Gabriel's Coconut Oil Virgin Refinery we have in the state is first in Africa. We want to create

a future for our young ones. Coconut has 365 uses which means that every single day that God created has a use for coconut"

The Coconut refinery has been completed. What is next is a test run and knowledge transfer.

Coconut is of high value and can possibly serve as alternative to crude oil. This is a great investment for CBN and the Federal government"

We have a much bigger plantation in Mkpát-Enin, Eastern Obolo and Ikot Abasi.

We are embarking on a campaign to cut down trees without economic values in schools, to replace them with coconut. Each student in public schools will be given a coconut seedling to plant.

In one day, one million students of secondary school would have planted one million coconut seedlings.

This will create competition among the youngsters. These are high breed seedlings we've been able to acquire across the world. The refinery is going to be a master economic breakthrough", said the Governor.

He appealed to the host communities to ensure the coconut plantation is nurtured and protected.

This is the resource of 7.2 million people. We believe that you will nurture, protect and sustain it"





How Matawalle's foreign trips will benefit the people of Zamfara

By Yusuf Idris Gusau

Governor Bello Mohammed Matawalle has always been described as a man sent by God to ameliorate the embattled people of Zamfara, having unexpectedly being declared Governor of the state by the nation's apex court after the 2019 governorship election where the opposition party was initially declared to have won all the contestable seats in the state.

He had lost hope and moved on when the pendulum eventually swung to his direction. When he assumed office after all the drama, the governor braced up and resolved not to disappoint the good people of the state who were then living in fear, grief and apprehension under regular bandits' attacks who would invade a single village, kill the innocent in tens, twenties and hundreds in a day.

The governor's major immediate concerns then became to address the issue of insecurity, improve the decaying education sector and work to provide employment to the teeming youth while other sectors were also being looked at the secondary level.

There is no doubt that the governor and his administration have so far made significant impacts in all sectors of the state's socio-economic wellbeing, as the status of the state soared to enviable heights.

When President Muhammadu Buhari was to attend the 76th Session of the high-level General Debate of the UN General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York on September 24, recently, he selected the Zamfara Governor along a few of his colleagues on his entourage.

This was quickly translated by the people's governor as an opportunity to look for high class foreign investors, partners and security experts who will assist the state in their respective areas of expertise.

On his return to the country and while inaugurating new appointees including the Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Kabiru Balarabe, the new Head of Service, Alhaji Kabiru Gayari, 19 Commissioners, Special Advisers and Permanent Secretaries, the governor





announced that many good things including employment opportunities, improved education and agriculture would very soon come to the state following discussions and agreements during his recent foreign trip.

The foreign trips, which took him to the USA, Turkey and Cuba, was highly fruitful and will be to the benefit of the good people of Zamfara.

He stated that the trip which opened up more opportunities to explore more investment windows towards rebuilding the state's economic potentials will be all inclusive to provide well grounded future for the state and the citizens.

Issues bordering on security and well articulated positive discussions were roundly carried out with relevant stakeholders and partners which will ensure an unquantifiable benefit in health care, farming and agro-business, information and communication technology, and skills acquisition.

The Shattiman Hausa was also able to secure study opportunities to indigenes of the state during his talks with the Cuban leader where beneficiaries will go and study in the fields of health, sciences and technology through a bilateral relations agreement.

While at a meeting with the Board of Directors of MAP Internation-



Governor Matawalle

al, discussions were held on medical health supplies, particularly for IDP camps, and the upgrade of medical equipment in the state's public hospitals leading to the donation of five containers of hospital supplies to supplement the five that had already been donated to the State and in addition to other stakeholders who offered hospital beds and other medical health-related equipment to the state.

The trip also exposed the governor to meetings with Turkish Nigerian Business Congress along with some Nigerian Governors, where business discussions were held with over 20 companies willing to invest in the states while a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Zamfara State Government and one of the investors to establish mineral resources and gold buying centre in the State, as well as the signing of other MoUs to establish Tomato paste company, Yoghurt and bottling company and an animal feeds company.

Similarly, on security, the state is going to witness significant changes that will culminate into achieving long lasting peace, as an agreement was reached with a security company to provide first class drones to help access hideouts of bandits and gather intelligence and other tactics that will help in combating the menace in the State.

The employment indices will also receive a boost following an understanding and agreement with a company that specialises in fibre as alternative reimbursement material, aimed at substituting steel rods with rubber reinforcement, which is a more modern technology.

The Matawallen Maradun was able to secure the deployment of Wireless Internet Cloud for the Federal University, Gusau, and Abdu Gusau Polytechnic, Talata Mafara. The internet system is deployed as an intervention project to make communication network infrastructure and services more accessible.

All these were successfully achieved within the governor's short visit for which he has been criticized by detractors.

It is common knowledge that the president officially picks some state governors to accompany him on his visits outside the shores of Nigeria but some noisemakers who had failed the state, especially the youth throughout their long stay in office, are ignorantly using this to attack His Excellency, albeit ignorantly.

As I said earlier, Matawalle is a man sent by God and he has his hands on the plough of development. He has set his face like a flint and is set to continually deliver the dividends of democracy to Zamfarans.

In no distant time, the effect of these visits will be felt and the state would be taken to enviable heights of peace and development.

Zamfara State is indeed in good hands.

**Yusuf Idris Gusau is the Director General, Media, Public Enlightenment and Communications, Government House, Gusau.*



Celebrations

During the course of the years 2020 and 2021, several governors were awarded garlands for their performance in service delivery. Some awards were deferred from the year before due to the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic. The awards were however given at a very elaborate occasion in 2021. Governors have continued to impress and have been honoured by different groups nationwide which is a testimony to their hard work and dedication to service in the country. This month we are celebrating a few that we have been able to lay a finger on and in subsequent editions we shall feature more awardees and others that have milestones to publicise. Congratulations Your Excellencies



Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman Abdul-Razaq was honoured with the Leadership Newspaper Governor of the Year Award for his investments in basic education, health, safety nets for the poor, general basic amenities and prudent management of resources. Date: September 10, 2021



Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has received the Leadership's prize for Governor of the Year. He received Leadership's prize for Governor of the Year for successfully

managing and turning around what could have been a tragic episode for the nation, following the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the country last year. Date: September 10, 2021



Dr Fayemi received the Governor of the Year Award (2019) at an impressive ceremony in Lagos. The Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi has dedicated his Vanguard Newspaper's Governor of the Year Award to the entire Ekiti people, stressing that their cooperation with his administration remains a major reason for the successful implementation of his five pillars development agenda in the state. Date: July 18, 2021



Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo state has been selected as the 'Governor of the Year' by the Vanguard Media Group, publishers of the Vanguard Newspapers. The Award will be conferred on the governor at the Convention Centre, Eko Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos, on Saturday, July 17, 2021.



Governor of Abia State, Dr Okezie Ikpeazu has been nominated Governor of the Year 2021 (SME Development) by the New Telegraph Newspaper. This was made known in a letter dated August 9 and conveyed to the Governor by the media outfit. Date: August 11, 2021

2021 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL-CHILD



Gombe state First Lady, Dr. Asma'u Inuwa Yahaya celebrates with our girls, as the world marks this year's international day of the girl-child, calling on families to put more attention on good parenting to guarantee a dignified future for our children.

The governor's wife stated this in a message to commemorate this auspicious day of the girl-child, internationally, lamented the increased social vices and gender-based violence that engulfed the girls, in today's contemporary world.

She however, encouraged women not to relent in their bid to come up with bolder solutions to gender inequality, adding that, this year's theme: DIGITAL GENERATION, OUR GENERATION which is meant to make girls an active part of the world's progress is apt due to its relevancy with the digital global economy.

Therefore, Gombe State first lady, Dr. Asma'u Inuwa Yahaya strongly believed that girls and by extension women, are great assets of the world's economic development that should be celebrated and provided with necessary tools to secure a better and brighter future.





COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 34TH TELECONFERENCE MEETING (11TH IN 2021) OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 7TH OCTOBER, 2021

W e members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, deliberated on issues of national importance, and resolved as follows:

1. On the suspended strike by the National Association of Resident Doctors of Nigeria (NARD), the Forum noted that there were still unresolved issues in five states: Abia, Imo, Ondo, Kaduna and Ekiti, and advised that State Governors appoint either the Deputy Governor or another high-ranking official such as the Commissioner of Health to take up the discussion with the Association at the State level.

2. Following a presentation by Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN, Chairman of the Board of Trustees to the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research Foundation, on a national fundraising initiative that seeks to mobilize resources for the establishment of an Endowment for medical research in the country, the Forum resolved to make a collective pledge to support research in priority medical fields in the country, and called on all State



governments to individually advance support for this initiative at the State level.

3. Members also received a presentation from Mark Giambrone, MPP the Country Coordinator for PEPFAR in Nigeria, on the

status of state engagement that is paving the way towards HIV epidemic control in the country. With the country on the verge of reaching control status by the end of 2022, Governors pledged to continue to facilitate access to HIV testing and treatment for more

Nigerians and committed to supporting campaigns and initiatives that will reduce stigmatization among people living with HIV/AIDS.

4. Following a briefing from the representative of the Nigeria-Arabian Gulf

Chamber of Commerce on a memorandum signed with the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment to attract foreign direct investment into the country via the ongoing Dubai Expo 2020, the Forum consented to the representation of state governments and the presentation of a set of bankable projects selected from 12 participating states, 2 per geopolitical zone in the country in areas such as energy, technology, fintech, transportation, manufacturing and agriculture.

– *Governor Kayode Fayemi, Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum.*

COMMUNIQUE OF SOUTH EAST GOVERNORS, SOUTH EAST LEADERS, TRADITIONAL RULERS, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERS AND THE CLERGY, HELD ON 5TH OCTOBER, 2021 IN ENUGU

1. The Governors and leaders of the South East condemned the killings in the region and have agreed to join hands with security agencies to stop the killings;

2. The meeting condemned the sit-at-home orders, which are mostly issued by our people in the Diaspora who do not feel the pains. The meeting resolved that Governors and all people of the South East do everything within the law to ensure that there is no further sit-at-home in the South East and that people are allowed to freely move about in the Zone;

3. The meeting agreed that the

South East Ebubeagu security outfit be launched in all the South East States and laws passed in various South East States before the end of 2021;

4. The meeting received the Committee report from Ohaneze on various matters affecting the South East, especially on the issue of security and marginalization of the South East people, and resolved to study the reports from Ohaneze Worldwide for immediate implementation, and engagement with the Federal Government for amicable settlement of all issues agitating the minds of our people, especially the youth;

5. The meeting agreed to support security agencies to restore peace in the South East;

6. The meeting resolved to support election in Anambra State and directed security agencies to ensure a peaceful election in Anambra State come November 6th, 2021.

7. The meeting commended all groups and the clergy for their efforts at interfacing with our youths;

8. The meeting mandated our clergy men, Bishops, CAN, Ohaneze and Traditional Rulers to continue to dialogue with our youths.



**NIGERIA
GOVERNORS'
FORUM**



60 GARLANDS to a GREAT PATRIOT



**HIS EXCELLENCY
ALHAJI MUHAMMAD INUWA YAHAYA
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, GOMBE STATE**

We join family, friends and associates of His Excellency, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya (Dan Majen Gombe), Executive Governor of Gombe State as he celebrates his 60th Birthday.

As you attain this milestone, we celebrate God's grace upon your life because you have made tremendous impact in the journey to this diamond age and equally demonstrated passion to serve with excellence just as you continue to show high degree of determination and character to achieve your set goals in the Jewel State.

It is our prayer that God Almighty will continue to uphold you as you serve the good people of Gombe State and Nigeria at large with honesty, determination and integrity.

Signed:

**ASISHANA BAYO OKAURU
DIRECTOR GENERAL,
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM**



Tribute: A Shared Journey With Inuwa Yahaya @ 60

The 9th of October marked the 60th birthday of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya. It is plausible if we interrogate the life of the amiable Governor with the enviable view of Laura Catherine Schlessinger on the essential quality of integrity. In her noble words, "people with integrity do what they say they are going to do. Others give excuses". In this course of introspection, we particularly follow His Excellency from the private sector to politics and public service and as he clocks 60 years today, he has remained so attached to the basic principle of excellence wherein his leadership and vision have come to define his tenure as Governor of Gombe State in the last couple of years.

Both in private and public life, we have also seen a marked distinction of a man of honour, dignity and civility, who believes in our common humanity in spite of his privileged background. And from his days at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria to his civil service era and till date, he has devoted more time to the cause of the people, exemplifying the core idea about 'ubuntu', an African philosophy which simply means an expression of our common humanity.

Of course, these are important issues especially in the political arena where the consuming idea about interest holds sway. Governor Inuwa has definitely been above board so far, contextualizing what "interest" should be as our essential humanity derived from government's service to the people and premised on his manifesto. The integrity question!

Thus, it is this element of service as a public figure that will necessarily make this tribute to lean more on his stewardship as Governor of Gombe State and we can hardly fault such narrative as we celebrate with him on this auspicious occasion.

Needless to say, that expectations were very high when he was elected governor in 2019, primarily on the strength of his antecedents as a tested leader and performer, dating back most prominently when he served as Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development during the Goje administration. Today, major indicators suggest that the optimism which heralded his administration into office has continued to blossom on account of his exemplary stewardship.

The remarkable successes recorded by the government obviously reflect a determination

to create a new Gombe with limitless opportunities, thereby remaking the socio-economic and in fact the political fabric of the people towards a shared journey of good governance, prosperity and possibilities.

Everything has worked as planned even when we have to factor in the very hard economic situation, required work and sacrifices.

Yes, I think the political will is also important without which nothing much could have been achieved even as we relate with the challenge from some entrenched interests especially on the other side of the political divide in the state. I acknowledge that change is never easy anywhere but with openness and sincerity of purpose the people themselves have come to realize that governor Inuwa Yahaya means well for the basic public interest and as exemplified in his "Gombe First" philosophy.

Today, on account of his dexterity, Gombe is now the best state in the ease of doing business in Nigeria and adjudged the safest and most peaceful state in the North East sub-region.

Moving forward in the years ahead, Governor Inuwa Yahaya and his team are working hard to broaden the scope of development across the state as government intensifies its strategic development goals and consolidates on previous achievements in infrastructure, education, health, agriculture and security of lives and property in line with his NEEDS assessment document.

This distinguished man of history wants to see a new Gombe that is competitive, fair, just and share greater partnerships at home and abroad, truly functional and devoid of inherited systemic failure. At the centre of this consciousness are the people, who as beneficiaries



would have their welfare as a priority. It's obviously about the governor's compassionate disposition to governance, a pro-people inclination and enthusiastic response to ensure deprivation is very reduced as basis for a new lease of life. Of course, power goes beyond the title, it resides in the substance. The governor's sterling leadership and stewardship have changed our collective story, even in so short a time, making what may have been deemed impossible in the past now possible.

The pervading optimism is now giving our people a shared hope for a brighter tomorrow. The power of leadership and vision have reshaped our collective being, now dwelling more on the big picture of what Gombe State can be if we believe in ourselves and do the right things in a focused manner as we follow resolutely the development trajectory carefully drawn and being executed to fully harness our potentials.

In the true spirit of our renaissance, therefore, I am sure everyone who has followed the enviable turnaround in education, healthcare delivery, infrastructural development, agriculture and empowerment in the state will agree with the realities of a new era of excellence.

I think we can better relate with our developmental strides and rejoice with the governor in this wise when we reckon with the import of the huge investment in the key sectors on the future socio-economic growth in Gombe State. From all indications, the next foreseeable years will come with so much improvement in the quality of life for the people. This is a major point of considerable effect on why government exists and what should really matter in our evaluation of leadership as harbinger of change. From this standpoint, it is clear that the

Inuwa Yahaya administration is strategically building a new Gombe State that is innovative, competitive and prosperous.

Our people are already appreciating the true meaning of the mopping up of children from the streets and the dropouts to continue their education just as the importance attached to the girl child education, all free of charge. They are equally appreciating the massive building of schools, upgrade of boarding schools and equipping them, enhanced investment in constructing many roads through his flagship project, the network 11-100 and economic sense of boosting agriculture, building and equipping various hospitals, revitalization of health-care centres statewide, providing water for all, solid empowerment to unleash the creative energy of our people in business and such ground breaking idea of establishing the Gombe industrial park which ultimately will attract a cluster of multiple industries that will create thousands of good jobs. The future of Gombe State is very positive and one is inclined to believe convincingly that the Inuwa Yahaya-led administration is doing a good job in the state.

Gombe State is truly being reformed to its pride of place as the heart of the North East and a beacon of hope for the entire country looking at its strategic position in galvanizing a strong economic revival and greater prosperity for the people of the region and Nigeria as a whole. In all of this, we have our indomitable governor to thank for his leadership and vision. Rather than giving excuses, he's a promise keeper. He has led by example. He has also made a distinct success of his mission in government and there is more to come. Without doubt, Governor Inuwa Yahaya has made us all proud of the new era of possibilities. And we cannot but also notice the way and manner through which he's achieving his quiet revolution in the state. It is a lesson in effective leadership: liberal, focused, very determined and responsible. His leadership style and understanding of governance have helped to facilitate this trend of success after success and I believe he deserves accolades from all of us especially on this propitious occasion which indeed reflects our shared journey to greatness. Happy Birthday to the renaissance leader, the Dan Majen Gombe!

— Misilli is the Director-General (Press Affairs) Government House, Gombe

GOVERNORS AT WILSON CENTRE AND SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND



NGF Chairman, Kayode Fayemi, addressing officials of the Wilson Centre



Dr. Monde Muyangwa responding to the NGF address



Question and Answer session



Question and Answer session at the Wilson Centre



L-R: Govs Godwin Obaseki, Aminu Tambwal, Dr. Monde Muyangwa, Kayode Fayemi and Simon Lalong at Wilson Center



Group photograph at Wilson Centre



Gov Godwin Obaseki and John Kayode Fayemi departing from Wilson Centre



Gov Aminu Tambuwal arrives at the Dulles airport in Washington DC



Govs answer questions from the interventionist at Search For Common Ground



Question and answer at Search For Common Ground



Question and answer at Search For Common Ground



Group Photograph at Search For Common Ground



R-L: Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State and his Commissioner for Health, Professor Akin Abayomi inspect a health facility in the state.

Sanwo-Olu And The Renaissance Of Public Health Facilities In Lagos

There is a saying that, “a healthy nation is a wealthy nation”. This assertion is anchored on the belief that a healthy population contributes immensely to the socio-economic growth of any society.

This is why the Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu administration in Lagos State has made Health and Environment one of the cardinal programmes of its administration as captured in the administration’s T.H.E.M.E.S (an acronym for his administration’s strategic development agenda namely; Traffic Management and Transportation, Health and Environment, Education and Technology, Making Lagos a 21st Century Economy, Entertainment and Tourism and Security and Governance) developmental Agenda.

In the last two years, the administration has immensely invested in the upgrade of public health facilities to enhance access to quality healthcare. At the center of the state’s public health policy is the provision of unhindered access to healthcare delivery without financial constraint to the residents. The commissioning of four Mother and Child Centers (MCCs) at Eti-Osa, Igando, Badagry and Epe amply demonstrates the administration’s resolve to enhance residents’ access to healthcare.

Similarly, the roadmap for the comprehensive upgrade of infrastructure in the State-owned health facilities began last year, following the approval of the plan by the Executive Council. The infrastructure roadmap is being executed in phases with the primary goal of revamping health facilities across the state’s primary, secondary and tertiary health-care system. The overhaul is part of the strategy to build resilient healthcare in Lagos and increase residents’ access to quality universal health coverage.

The renewal effort, which is being carried out in short, medium-and long-term bases, would bring about fit-for-purpose healthcare facilities that would raise the capacity of the government to respond to contemporary and future health challenges.

The state’s ongoing public health facilities renewal drive also includes improved efficiency for physical maintenance, ease of movement, low carbon footprint, low energy consumption, infection prevention and control as well as staff and patient comfort. The restoration programme is also designed to address issues of design errors, drainage, patient flow, staff flow, water collection, infection prevention, energy and ventilations.

The government has renovated and remodelled the Mainland Hospital in Yaba with future plans of making it an Institute of Research for Infectious Disease. It has also completed the remodelling and upgrading of Apapa General Hospital, just as the Harvey Road Health Centre, Ebute Metta Health Centre, Isolo General Hospital and the General Hospital, Odan Lagos are all undergoing different phases of renovation. All of these are part of the efforts to make health accessible to Lagosians.



Similarly, the construction of the New Massey Children's Hospital in Adeniji Adele, Lagos, has begun. When completed, the 7-Storey, 150-bed hospital is expected to be the largest in West Africa.

At the flag-off ceremony of its reconstruction, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu described the project as part of his administration's 'Greater Lagos' vision.

The construction of the New Massey Children Hospital reflects the Sanwo-Olu administration's unwavering determination to bridge noticeable gaps in the health sector. It is necessitated by the inadequacy of the current facility to meet the rising medical needs of the residents, particularly children. The facility is, thus, being rebuilt, remodelled and repositioned into an ultra-modern 150-bed and fit-for-purpose Paediatrics and Emergency General Hospital.

Approval has also been given for the construction and equipping of 1,500-bed Psychiatric Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre at Majidun in Ketu Ejinrin.

The prototype of the new, remodeled and upgraded healthcare infrastructure in the state were planned to conform with key elements of global standards health facility designs such as natural light/ventilation, sustainable energy, patient flow, infection prevention, noise prevention, flood prevention, identifiable standout visual features as well as scalability and modular design for expansion.

Earlier, the construction of a four-storey Faculty of Basic Medical and Clinical Sciences Office Block at the Lagos State University College of Medicine (LASUCOM) was completed, while plans have also been concluded for the renovation and upgrade of some facilities at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH). This is in line with the government's medical infrastructure blueprint strategy for the tertiary health facilities.

Also, in partnership with the private sector, the government has completed and handed over an oxygen plant at the Mainland and Gbagada General Hospitals. The Triage and Oxygen Centres in 10 locations across Lagos have also been delivered. In order to enhance staff welfare, the construction of a 24-unit Doctors' and Staff Quarters in Gbagada General Hospital has commenced.

Work has also begun on the blueprint designs for Comprehensive Health Centre, Primary Health Centre and Health Posts as part of the move to rejig their operations and service delivery. This will, no doubt, significantly help in adding bed capacity to Lagos State's healthcare infrastructure.

As earlier affirmed, the promotion and protection of the health of Lagos residents undoubtedly has a positive impact on social de-



velopment and quality of life of citizens. This explains the government's investment in the greenfield medical infrastructure projects to prevent issues noticed in health infrastructure in the State. It is expected that all issues bedeviling medical health infrastructure across the state will disappear when the medical infrastructure blueprint strategy is fully implemented.

The continuous improvement in quality of health service in the state is a core mandate of the Sanwo-Olu administration and the government is uniquely positioned to utilize available resources to actualize this goal. With the ongoing refurbishment and roll out of a new infrastructure blueprint, the medical infrastructure landscape of Lagos would look completely different, thus moving the state a step closer to achieving universal health coverage.

Perhaps, more importantly, the medical infrastructure blueprint agenda will help address the issue of brain drain, medical tourism and patient welfare.

It is also essential to draw attention to the state's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), which has been commended

locally and globally, as it helped to prevent the pandemic from spreading more rapidly across the state and also from wreaking havoc on the entire country.

The response strategy put in place by the government efficiently curtailed the pandemic and limited fatalities. EKO TELEMED, a tech-driven platform through which the government managed the spread of the virus, yielded efficient results in breaking the cycle of community infection.

In order to prevent the resurgence of the pandemic, the government has begun the deployment of EKO TELEMED in the management of in-bound international travellers from high burden countries. The tech-driven platform would be used to monitor movement and treat infected travellers.

The Sanwo-Olu administration has, no doubt, demonstrated that the restoration of public health facilities remains vital in its 'Greater Lagos' Agenda. It recognizes, and rightly so, that health is wealth and this explains its numerous innovative and people-centred schemes that are carefully designed to change the face of public health in the state.

On the whole, it is heart-warming to note that the current administration in Lagos State is working tirelessly towards attaining a sustainable health care delivery system for the residents.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL ISSUES BEDEVILING MEDICAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS THE STATE WILL DISAPPEAR WHEN THE MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE BLUEPRINT STRATEGY IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED

- Culled from lagosstate.gov.ng



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Cross River cocoa processing factory begins chocolate production

Cross River state governor, Sir Ben Ayade has expressed his excitement following the commencement of production of chocolate bars at the Ikom Cocoa Processing Factory.

The cocoa processing factory is one of the several agro-allied factories established by the Ayade-led administration as part of its agricultural revolution.

Speaking shortly after being conducted round the various production chains of the factory, Ayade said the time had come for Africa to begin to reap the full benefit of its cocoa value chain.

He regretted the fact that although Africa "accounts for eighty six percent of world cocoa production, it unfortunately, in terms of the economy, gains only six percent which means that Africa produces 86% of cocoa, export the cocoa beans and in turn goes back and import chocolate into Af-



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rica. This process has come to an end. So what you find here is a full cocoa processing plant from the tree to chocolate for final consumption."

Disclosing that the beneficiation process has so much value, he said "the process is very clear. It starts with separation and then cleansing until you get clean beans. The clean beans go through a complete conveyor system and goes through the process of fermentation, maturation

and drying until you get to a point where you get the product you want."

Ayade said the chocolate from the Ikom cocoa processing factory is special in the sense that "it has a slightly bitter taste, which is what is now desirable as opposed to the very sugary, very sweet and fattening products that are very unhealthy.

"For our own chocolate brand, we try to use the best of the ingredients which con-

tain that slight bitter taste, which is an antioxidant that is particularly good for the body."

Urging Nigerians to take advantage of the uniqueness of the chocolate from the Ikom cocoa processing factory, he said "it is very important for you to know that as we debut with Ikom chocolate, know that it is African chocolate, 100% organic, grown in African soil, processed in Africa and made

available to the world."

The governor who expressed excitement at the commencement of the production of the wholly made in Nigeria chocolate, said: "I feel very very gratified that today we are about to start the commercial production of chocolate in Ikom, Cross River state of Nigeria."

Justifying his venture into agro-industrialization, Ayade explained that "the process we have in place is a necessary requirement to actually create jobs for the teeming youths. If 65% of our 4.5 million population are young people under the age of 35, and if we cannot create jobs, it means that you are going to have more and more #endsars like protests.

"So my inspiration was to actually create jobs and the best way to create jobs is through agro-industrial revolution and that is what this cocoa processing factory stands for."

FG, Cross River partner to build 1000 Social Housing Units

Disclosing the flag of the project during a presentation to the state governor, Sir Ben Ayade in Calabar, Managing Director of Family Homes Funds Limited, Femi Adewole, said "the scheme is a new program that was instituted in October 2020 as one of the economic sustainability plans of the federal government in response to the effects of Covid-19." By its nature, this program is targeted at Nigerians on very low

income with the directive from the committee that the houses should cost no more than two million naira and that is basically to ensure that it is affordable to civil servants who are earning the minimum wage."

The program will be funded under a two hundred-billion-naira debenture deed between the Family Homes Funds and the Central Bank of Nigeria with the beneficiaries expected to pay for their houses over a

15-year period as a minimum. And if you work that out for the two million naira house, it will give you just under nine thousand naira monthly repayment schedule and that meets the affordability criteria."

Governor Ayade promised that "for us as a government, I will want to do something a little better than what you have offered and this will be at no extra cost to the beneficiaries but to the state because we

want Cross River to be your extraordinary shining example. I know that a two million naira house will not be fitted, given the kind of rain fall pattern we have. And the reality is that for this house to last upto 15 years, you will definitely need state government support so you will see some certain modifications which will also help in facilitating repayments because the beneficiaries will be too happy with the quality."



RESOLUTIONS OF THE NORTHERN STATES GOVERNORS' FORUM MEETING WITH NORTHERN STATES EMIRS AND CHIEFS HELD ON MONDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

The Northern States Governors' Forum, in its continuous efforts to address the challenges bedeviling the Northern States convened an Emergency Meeting today Monday 27th September, 2021 at the Council Chamber Sir, Kashim Ibrahim House, Kaduna. The meeting was also attended by Chairmen of Northern States Traditional Council led by His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto.

The Forum discussed issues of Peace, Progress, Development and well-being of the Northern States. The Forum took stock of progress made in handling challenges of Banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery and insurgency.

After extensive deliberations, the following resolutions were arrived at:-

1. The Forum reviewed security updates from the Region and observed the need for a sustained synergy and coordinated efforts between the Federal and Northern States Governments while noting success of recent measures. The meeting also noted with concern the constraint of the security services and urged the Armed Forces to embark on simultaneous operations and resolved to share the plans of the Frontline States come up with common with other Region; and



assured of its readiness to work in synergy with the Federal Government of Nigeria in finding lasting solution to the current security challenges.

2. The Forum appreciated the ongoing onslaught against banditry, kidnapping and Boko Haram especially in the North East and parts of North West and North Central States and encouraged the Armed forces and other security agencies to sustain the tempo to enable the security challenges be permanently addressed in the shortest time.

3. The Forum received updates on the Renewable / Solar Energy Project and NOTED that request for land for the project had been submitted and are being processed by the Northern States. The Committee had commenced negotiations in a public private arrangement and sovereign guarantees to ensure bankability of the

project by multilateral financial organizations. The Forum called on States yet to process the request for allocation of land for the project to expedite action.

4. The meeting received updates on activities of some Committees constituted by the Northern States Governors' Forum and NOTED that recommendations contained therein are being considered with a view to coming up with implementation strategies.

5. The Forum observed that some Northern States Governors had earlier expressed views for a power-shift to three Geo-Political Zone in the South with a view to promoting unity and peace in the Nation. Notwithstanding their comments, the Forum unanimously condemn the statement by the Southern Governors Forum that the Presidency must go to the South. The statement is quite contradictory with the

provision of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as amended that the elected President shall:-

(a) score the majority votes;

(b) score at least 25% of the votes cast in 2/3 States of the Federation.

(c) In the case of run-up simple majority win the election.

6. The Northern State Governors Forum considered the on-going National debate on the collection of Value Added Tax (VAT). As responsible leaders while we are constraint by the fact that the matter is sub judice we however for the purposes of educating the public make the following observations:

(a) the judgement of the Federal high Court calls to question the constitutionality of VAT, withholding tax, education tax, Niger Delta Development Commission, National Information Technology Development Agency, 13%

derivation, National Economic Development Council and many other currently levied and collected by the Federal Government of Nigeria, Federal Inlands Revenue Service.

(b) Rivers and Lagos State Government had enacted their own VAT laws and the Southern Governors Forum have expressed support for this course of action;

(c) VAT is being confused by these State Government as a sales tax. If every State enacted its own VAT Law, multiple taxation will result in increases of prices of goods and services and collapsed in interstate trade. VAT is not a production tax like excise, but terminal tax which is paid by the ultimate consumer;

(d) Another confusion is ignoring observation above and its "overall effect". The reason Lagos account for our 50% Vat collection is because most of the telecommunication companies, Banks, manufacturing and other trading activities have their headquarters in Lagos with the resultant and wrongful attribution of VAT

(e) Until and unless the Supreme Court pronounces judgement on the substantive matter between Rivers State and Federal Government, the matter is sub judice and Northern States Governors Forum would respect this.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Obaseki secures opportunities for youths through Edojobs



The ability to obtain employment to fend for yourself and support your family is a major concern for most Nigerians.

Unemployment appears to plague Nigeria as many flee outside the country in search of job opportunities and greener pastures.

In response to the challenge of unemployment faced by teeming youths in the state, Governor Godwin Obaseki has founded Edojobs.

Edojobs is an initiative of the Edo State government in Nigeria under the administration of Governor God-

win Obaseki.

The initiative is aimed at tackling the high rate of unemployment in Edo State through skills acquisition and empowerment programs, in collaboration with various private and public organizations in Edo State.

Edojobs Initiative is focused on providing job and business development opportunities for young Edo residents through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and many other sectors.

There are a variety of programmes that Edo Innovation Hub offers such

as: Training/internship and job placement in Edo south; Edo Production Centre: A cluster for small and medium enterprise in Edo state; EdoFood and Agriculture Cluster (Ehor, Uhumwonde local government area; Soap making training in Edo central; Entrepreneurship training in Edo south; Career kickstart program in Edo south and EdoCreative Hub.

In the early stages of the initiative, the platform has involved registration of over 200,000 job seekers in all local government areas in the state.



Governor Godwin Obaseki

Edojobs Initiative has proven to be successful in that the National Bureau of Statistics in 2020 released a report that showed Edo State has the lowest unemployment rate in the South of Nigeria.

In addition, while there was a rise in unemployment in Nigeria, Edo State witnessed a drop in unemployment.

Governor Godwin Obaseki has said: "if the state must move on after the COVID-19 pandemic, we must improve capacity, knowledge and skills of our people. Our focus is on creating

an agriculture-based post COVID-19 economy."

To ensure that they reach and fulfil the needs of Edo State residents as it pertains to employment, the government partners with many organizations.

These organizations include GIZ SKYE, GIZ SEDIN GenuisHub, Amazon Web Services

Poise Nigeria, Gidijobs, Sabihub Nigeria, Genius Hub, Law Autos, Mamamomi, SLOT Academy, Inter-switch, FirstBank Nigeria and Levantar Soap Factory.

Governor Obaseki has said that his government will continue to emphasize on youth and women empowerment, and he sees no reason why they can't continue to ensure the security of jobs for youth.

He seeks to join stakeholders to deliberate on their collaborative role in the career advancement of youths and how to better leverage government's entrepreneurship initiatives.

One of the entrepreneurship initiatives of the Edojobs Initiative is on agriculture.

E-commerce: Edo, GIZ offer free websites to 30 local businesses

The Edo State Government has rolled out a programme to offer 30 local businesses in Edo State free websites in a renewed e-commerce drive, in partnership with a German development agency, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The two government agencies spearheading the

collaboration in the state are the Edo State Skills Development Agency (EdoJobs) and the Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO).

The Managing Director of EdoJobs, Ukinebo Dare, in a chat with journalists, said that the package was to offer the businesses opportunities to have digital presence and drive e-commerce pen-

etration and adoption in the state.

According to her, "The programme provides these businesses with the right tools to take their businesses online. EdoJobs and ESIPO have partnered with GIZ's Pro-Poor Growth and Promotion of Employment Programme (SEDIN) to offer these 30 websites.

"The package includes the purchase of domain names, hosting and content creation for a period of time, in which we would train personnel in the firms on how to navigate the website and maintain it for optimal business visibility and also to drive sales.

"We are excited that this offering will bring more businesses online and pro-

vide credible platforms for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to go digital in the state. We believe that this opportunity will ensure that people who may have developed cold feet on account of the cost of setting up and maintaining the website will have a rethink with this solution, which we are offering."



NEWS FROM THE STATES



Lagos-Ota Road to be ready in December, says Abiodun

The people of Sango-Ota and its environs would soon heave a sigh of relief as Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has revealed that palliative work will soon commence on the bad portions of the Lagos-Ota and Ota-Idi-Iroko Roads, and to be concluded by December. Governor Abiodun who stated this recently when he led the Minister of Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola on an inspection of the ongoing construction of toll plaza at Lotto, along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, stated that the palliative, which would be done by December, is to reduce the hardship being experienced by commuters along the roads.

The governor also said the failed portions, which would be reconstructed by the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) would cost N13.4bn and would be part of the N56bn revived contract sum.

"In the meantime, the Minister has graciously instructed that FER-

MA fixes those places and immediately begin to carry out palliative works on that road.

"We have given the commitment that we will relocate traders; we will control and manage traffic, whatever that it is we need to do, we will ensure that we begin to bring succour and needed relief to our people.

"The state of that road today is pitiable. I went on that road myself and I felt bad for our citizens, however like the Minister has explained, we have decided to find a fast-track solution and I must thank the minister. He has graciously decided to extract those failed portions, those very terrible portions, not just at the old toll gate, but about two kilometers of all the failed portions along the length of that road up to Abeokuta.

"They've identified those portions, they are costing them right now, they are extracting them from the main contract, they have costed them to be about N13.4 billion. He is going to find money using SUKUK

bond to pay the contractors so they can focus on those places, not just rehabilitating them, but actually reconstructing them so that when the rest of the road construction commences, they will just commence and compliment those ones, so that is what is being planned," Abiodun explained.

On the Ota-Idi-Iroko Road, the governor said talks are ongoing to get Mike Adenuga to handle the reconstruction of the road, subject to approval by the Federal Executive Council, as done by Dangote, who handled to the Ilaro-Papalanto Road.

"On the Ota-Idi-Iroko Road, like the minister has shared with us, that road is not under contract, but graciously, we spoke to Otunba Mike Adenuga, in the partnership that this state has built with the likes of Dangote who also is using his tax credit to build the interchange to Papalanto Road; this has never happened before this government came on board.

Ogun introduces additional Polio vaccine into routine immunisation

The Ogun State Primary Health Care Development Board (OGPH-CDB) in collaboration with development partners in the health sector has introduced Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV2), as additional vaccination in the Routine Immunisation (RI) schedule, to be received by children at six weeks.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony at Iberekodo Primary Healthcare Centre in Abeokuta North Local Government Area, Commissioner for Health, Dr. Tomi Coker stated that the vaccine would protect children against Polio Virus and further boost their immunity.

Dr. Coker said the introduction of the vaccine into the RI schedule was in fulfilment of the four major objectives of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), which mandated all countries that were using Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), to add

at least one more dose of IPV into their schedules by the end of 2015.

"The need for the introduction of second dose of IPV into our Routine Immunisation schedule throughout the 20 local government areas in the state becomes expedient. The effort is aimed at maintaining the polio free status that Nigeria and indeed Ogun State achieved this on August 25, 2020 she noted.

Contributing, the Senior Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr. Omotayo Omojole, urged mothers and caregivers in attendance to serve as advocates in their respective communities for government to realise its goal.

Also speaking, the Executive Secretary, OGPH-CDB, Dr. Elijah Ogunsola assured that the vaccine is safe and effective, adding that the board has put necessary machinery in place to maintain potency of the vaccine.

In their separate

goodwill messages, the State Coordinator, World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr. Sunday Abidoye, his counterpart from the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPH-CDA), Mrs. Victoria Adebisi and representatives of United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Nigeria Polio Plus Committee, Pharm. Florence Molokwu and Dr. Festus Adetomiwa respectively, said the introduction of the vaccine was another giant stride at improving the health and wellbeing of children in the state, promising the continued technical support of their various organisations.

Speaking on behalf of mothers and caregivers at the occasion, Mrs. Abiodun Adenuga and Aderonke Ogunba appreciated the state government for the initiative, promising to take their children to health facilities to receive the vaccine.





NEWS FROM THE STATES

Kano ratifies N3.9b road contracts in three emirates

With a view to improve the road networks in the rural areas, Kano State Executive Council has approved contracts for the construction of township roads in Rano, Gaya and Karaye Emirate councils at N3,942,564,267.77.

This was contained in a statement released by the Commissioner for Information, Muhammad Garba.

Addressing newsmen on the outcome of the council meeting, held at the Africa House, Government House, Kano, he noted that the projects were aimed at bringing about meaningful development, boosting the general economic status of the state and further endearing government to the populace.

He said the council also granted approval for the augmentation of the N42,350,998.31 as an additional cost for the construction of Dala Inland Dry Port internal and access roads at Zawachili in Kumbotso Local Council.

Garba further explained



Kano aerial view

that the increase in the contract sum followed the unearthing of additional work, which were not captured in the initial Bill of Engineering Measurement and Evaluation (BEME).

According to him, the additional work, discovered after the contractor handling the project has achieved 37 per cent progress, upon advance payment of N250 million includes removal of unsuitable materials, provision of fill material, construction of culverts as well as provi-

sion of vehicular slabs.

“The new contract sum now stands at N1,600,917,357.68 as against the initial N1,558,556,359.37 awarded in July 2020. The council has approved the release of N1 billion for the implementation of some special intervention projects in some local councils in the state,” the statement added.

Some areas to be covered by the intervention include education, healthcare, road infrastructure, environment, electrification and water sup-

ply at various locations of the 17 local councils spread across the five emirates in the state, the commissioner noted.

He added that approval had also been granted for the supply/installation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment to Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) in Kano Cancer Treatment Centre at Muhammadu Buhari Specialist Hospital, Giginyu, at the reviewed cost of N307,257,323.02.

Kano to establish anti-street begging agency

Kano State Government has concluded arrangements to effectively checkmate street begging in the state. It will soon establish Anti-Street Begging Agency, with strong tie with civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

Governor Abdullahi Ganduje disclosed this while receiving the leadership of amalgamation of civil society organisations in the state, during the State Executive Council meeting at Government House, Kano.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Abbas Anwar, said the agency would checkmate street begging and other social vices.

“An agency will be put in place with full staff to look into this issue of street begging. We just cannot fold our arms and see the life of innocent kids being wasted through this menace of street begging,” he stated.

He reiterated that street begging is an abuse of children, which, he observes “prevents them from learning the religion and modern education system.”

While appreciating the concern shown by civil society groups, he assured that the state government would carry them along for the successful implementation of the policy against street begging.

Ganduje increases student scholarship by 50%

Governor Abdullahi Ganduje-led government of Kano State has reviewed and increased the state's students' scholarship allowance by 50 per cent.

The scholarship widening according to the governor was in line with his administration's policy on free and compulsory education for residents in the state.

Governor Ganduje announced the new development on Wednesday at the pre-61st Independence An-

niversary lecture held at the Coronation Hall, Government House, Kano.

Represented at the occasion by the state Commissioner of Information, Malam Muhammad Garba, Governor Ganduje said payment of the new scholarship allowance would commence soon.

He admonished beneficiaries of the scholarship to make the best use of the opportunity so as to pursue their educational career. Commenting on the ongoing

voter registration, the governor urged those eligibles to go and obtain their voter card before the expiration of the deadline.

Ganduje said there was a need for eligible students and other people in the state to register in view of the fact that Kano had been left behind in the online voter registration.

The statement reads: “We are always monitoring in other states from the beginning when it was online as we were

left behind in the exercise.

“During the online registration when Osun state registered 400,000 persons, Kano registered only 100,000 people. So people should come out and register because we have the highest population,” Ganduje said.

The Governor stressed the need for people to be alive to their responsibilities adding that the independent anniversary is meant to reawaken the consciousness of Nigerians.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

FG, Kaduna move to develop water, tourism resources

The Federal Government has expressed determination to collaborate with the Kaduna State Government to improve the economic performance of the state.

Minister of Water Resources, Suleiman Adamu, Adamu gave the indication, yesterday, during the Kaduna State Economic and Investment Summit held in the state capital.

The Director, Press and Public Relations of the ministry, Offie Kenechukwu, said the minister mentioned the areas of cooperation on stream between the ministry and the state government. They include a master plan being put together to develop the tourism potential of Gurara Dam into a full tourist resort of international standard to promote domestic tourism and a huge tourism economy around the state, intended to be wholly private-sector-driven.

Others include the development of Itisi Dam project, which is on course.

Adamu said arrangements had been finalised on its engineering design and that six major companies had expressed interest in constructing the dam along with 40MW hydropower stations on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis.

He announced that the Kaduna government would finance the water supply and irrigation components of the project based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ministry and the state.

Kaduna Govt announces new measures to tackle insecurity

The Kaduna State Government has announced new measures in a bid to tackle insecurity in the state.

Samuel Aruwan, Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security of Home Affairs, Kaduna State, disclosed the measures in a press briefing in the state.

According to him, the new measures are meant to tackle the bedeviling security challenges in the state.

"I am here to inform you of, and to formally announce the implementation of certain measures to assist the security agencies in parts of the state.

You will recall that Governor Nasir El-Rufai announced in a media chat, 28th September, 2021 that the state government has formally requested the Federal Government to enforce the shutdown of telecom services in parts of the state identified by security agencies as requiring such measures.

"The relevant federal agen-



Governor Nasir El-Rufai

cies have today informed the Kaduna State Government that the processes for telecoms shutdown in parts of the state have commenced. As part of the steps to address the current security situation in Kaduna State and neighbouring states in the North-West and North-Central regions, KDSG has held several meetings with security agencies to adopt critical measures towards crushing bandits in their identified hideouts," he

said.

Aruwan said further that the military had been assaulting the bandits and the measures being announced are part of efforts to consolidate on the gains so far.

"The military and other security forces have been carrying out assaults on the identified locations. The state government is advised that certain measures are now necessary to assist the spirited efforts of these security agen-

cies.

The following measures become effective from Thursday, 30 September 2021. The complete ban on the use of motorcycles (Okada), for commercial or personal purposes, for three months in the first instance; Ban on possession of or wielding of dangerous weapons; Tricycles are allowed to operate only from 6am to 7pm. All tricycles must remove all curtains. Movement of all tricycles are restricted from dusk till dawn (7PM to 6AM); All vehicles used for commercial transport must be painted in yellow and black within 30 days. Vehicles that are part of ride hailing services are to carry yellow and black stripes; Ban on the sale of petrol in jerry-cans or other containers in Birnin Gwari, Giwa, Chikun, Igabi, Kachia, Kagarko and Kajuru LGAs.

According to the state government, other containment measures previously communicated remain in place.

El-Rufai appoints 28-year-old Khalil as head of Kaduna Investment Agency

Khalil Nur Khalil, a 28-year-old, has been appointed as Executive Secretary of Kaduna Investment Promotion Agency (KADIPA) by Nasir el-Rufai, the state governor.

Khalil is a graduate of the faculty of business and economics, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Cyprus.

Prior to his appointment, Khalil was the investment intelligence director at KADIPA — the youngest person to assume the role in the history of Kaduna.

In a statement issued recently, Muyiwa Adekeye, special

adviser to el-Rufai on media, announced other changes in the governor's cabinet.

Adekeye said Muhammad Sani Abdullahi, chief of staff, was redeployed to the planning and budget commission.

Jaafaru Sani, Thomas Gyang, Halima Lawal, Ibrahim Hus-saini, Shehu Usman Muhammad, Muhammad Sani Abdullahi, Kabir Mato and Idris Nyam were assigned to the ministries of environment, works, education, agriculture, local government, business, innovation and sports respectively.

Balaraba Aliyu-Inuwa was appointed administrator, Zaria Metropolitan Authority; Muhammad Hafiz Bayero as administrator, Kaduna Capital Territory; and Phoebe Sukai Yayi as administrator, Kafanchan Municipal Authority.

Umma Aboki was appointed as permanent secretary, planning and budget commission; Murtala Dabo as executive chairman, Fiscal Responsibility Commission; and Abubakar Hassan as DG, Kaduna State Contributory Health Management Authority (KADCHMA).

Tamar Nandul was appoint-



Khalil

ed MD, Kaduna Markets Development and Management Company; and Maimunatu Abubakar, GM, Kaduna Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA).



NGF, UN Women to Collaborate with Govs against GBV



The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) met with the representatives of the United Nations Women to Nigeria and ECOWAS, to discuss collaboration with Nigerian Governors against gender-based violence in the country.

The virtual meeting had in attendance, representative of UN Women to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms Comfort Lamptey, Professor Ayodele Aatsenuwa from University of Lagos, Lagos African Cluster Centre, Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Lawyer, Feminist and Activist, and Chundung Ashley Dauda, Senior Gender and Social Inclusion Expert.

Speaking at the meeting, the Chairman of NGF, Dr. Kayode Fayemi said that the forum has been in the trenches fighting for gender issues in the last 18 months.

"In the wake of COVID, we have made some progress towards GBV. When we declared a state of emergency, 14 states had enacted the VAPP act. Now, it's almost 30 states that have enacted the VAPP act."

He credited this to his colleagues and the Nigerian Governors' Wives Forum.

The Chairman added that if people sign the Gender and Equalities Bill, it would make a difference and an impact.

"When it comes to gender, there have been religious and cultural challenges," he said.

He proposed that the next steps would be to set up a meeting to engage with all the governors.

UN Women to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, expressed her gratitude to NGF for their leadership and the declaration of a state of emergency towards gender-based violence in Nigeria, as she looks forward to ongoing work on the legislative front.

On her part, Professor Ayodele Aatsenuwa, stated that gender equality is an area of priority. That women are not adequately represented, especially in the political realm. That women's political participation is around 30%.

They seek to engage with the NGF to strengthen the efforts already being made and create awareness towards what is meant to be achieved.

Also speaking is Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, who said that Nigeria has seen a retrogression with women's involvement in political participation.

She believes that the Gender Equality Bill would lead to equal opportunities that would address issues of equity and inheritance.

"It makes economic sense to invest in women," said Prof. Ezeilo.

OBITUARY

Fayemi, NGF Executive Summary Team mourn Sam Oluwalana

Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, has expressed his condolences on the death of the Senior Special Assistant (Media) on Party Matters, Elder Sam Oluwalana.

The Governor in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Yinka Oyebo, said the death of Elder Oluwalana was not only painful but very shocking and devastating.

He described Elder Oluwalana's demise as a huge loss to the state government, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and his native Omuo Ekiti which he served conscientiously and diligently in his lifetime.

Dr. Fayemi also described the deceased as a thoroughbred journalist who achieved fame in his chosen profession by dint of hard work before he continued his service to his state of origin through politics.

The Governor recalled memorable engagements he had with the late Elder Oluwalana during his journalism days in prominent media organisations like the now rested NEXT Newspapers, The Guardian and National Mirror newspaper where the deceased demonstrated deep knowledge of the job.

He further described the Oluwalana as a resourceful member of his administration's Communications Team whose contributions would continue to linger in the memories of his colleagues, admirers and the entire people of the state.

Similarly, the Nigeria Governors' Forum Executive Summary media team have mourned the shock passing of Elder Sam Oluwalana.

The Editor of the Magazine and Head, Media and Publicity of the NGF, Mr. Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkindo, who described the late Sam as a personal friend and long-time colleague in journalism, said that his contributions to the monthly magazine would be sorely missed.

"I was shocked to learn of the sudden passing of my dear friend, Sam Oluwalana. He was a seasoned journalist who knew his onions.

"We will particularly miss his contributions to the Executive Summary. He was always excited about contributing to the

magazine and was always prompt in delivering articles about the development strides in Ekiti State under the watch of Governor Kayode Fayemi.

"We pray that the Almighty God will strengthen his family and give them the fortitude to bear this great loss. May his soul rest in peace, amen," Barkindo said.

In his memory, THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY magazine has decided to stay publishing **LOUD WHISPER** for this month.

Sam Oluwalana passed on in Ado-Ekiti after a brief illness.





Text of the remarks by His Excellency Dr. Kayode Fayemi (CON), Chairman, Nigeria Governor's Forum, on the visit of the Nigeria Governors' Forum Delegation (NGF) to the Wilson Center, Washington DC | Thursday, September 16, 2021



PROTOCOLS

◆ Your excellencies, distinguished ladies, and gentlemen, let me start by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the Wilson Centre for hosting this delegation from the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), and for giving us this great platform to say a few words. Wilsonianism as the bequest of the 28th President of the United States is a foreign policy ideology which preached and practiced American engagement in place of sterile neutrality and isolationism, and this contributed greatly to President Wilson's leadership in the founding of the League of Nations after he led America into World War 1 in order to "make the world safe for democracy".

◆ One could therefore not have chosen a more appropriate place to speak in the wake of developments in Afghanistan and the increasingly low appetite for American engagement in the world than here. I must especially thank Ambassador Mark Green, President, Director, & CEO, of the Wilson Centre, and Dr. Monde Muyangwa, Director, of the Africa Programme - my sister and great friend from our African Centre for Strategic Studies days two decades ago, and the rest of the team for the warm reception they have accorded us.

◆ The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) is a non-partisan body for all the thirty six democratically elected state governors in Nigeria, which I am privileged to currently chair. Just like the National Governors Association here in the United States, our primary role is to promote, defend and protect the interest of the sub-national in Nigeria's quest towards a more perfect union. With me on this delegation are my brother-Governors, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal of Sokoto State, and Vice

Chairman, NGF, Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State, and Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State and Chairman of the Northern Governors' Forum.

◆ The NGF has been in existence since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, and is a platform for networking, building consensus and synergy, and promoting coordinated action on key priorities being addressed at the subnational level of governance in Nigeria.

◆ We cooperate and collaborate with the central government, particularly through the National Economic Council (NEC) which is the country's apex statutory economic policy making body as well as through other nonstatutory, ad-hoc bodies in the country. The Forum has also achieved considerable success engaging multilateral institutions and global think tanks on issues bordering on sustainable development, particularly focusing on security, economy, health reforms, education, and the environment, etc.

◆ Our mission in Washington DC is to deepen engagements with the international community - as a prelude to the UNGA - to share our vision on how sub-national governments are driving change and advancing development collectively and in our respective states, and to get crucial feedback on areas we can improve to attract greater support and partnerships.

◆ I am quite pleased that we have had very productive engagements with government and non-governmental institutions and fascinated at the amount of interest and commitment to Nigeria that we have seen so far, despite some of the challenges we are currently contending with as a country.

◆ We have also noted the varied perceptions about the prospects of



Nigeria which range from the extremes of effusive optimism (Nic Cheese and Fola Aina) and gloomy pessimism (Robert Rotberg and John Campbell), and everything in between, against the backdrop of our internal security challenges, economic difficulties, current dynamics in the global system and the emerging order brought on by COVID 19.

- ◆ Our job here is not to refute the bleak tales you hear about Nigeria, nor to tell you everything is perfect back home. The task is to acknowledge the challenges we are contending with, and to tell you what we as sub-national governments are doing in collaboration with the federal government to address them.

- ◆ More importantly, we are here to convey the position of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, that Nigeria needs her friends now more than ever before, as we continue the path to consolidating our democracy, and positioning Nigeria to remain relevant and attractive, not only as the most populous black country in the world, but also as a regional security and economic powerhouse.

- ◆ Nigeria cannot be ignored. As a country with the largest GDP on the continent and an economy that has grown by an average of 5% annually since 2000, notwithstanding the slow growth that has been recorded in nearly all countries recently, Nigeria has often been a force for good in the African and global space. The country's demographic transition shows that our greatest asset is our people.

- ◆ By 2030, Nigeria's labour force will reach 151 million people - roughly 16% of Africa's working age population. Currently, about 70% of Nigeria's population is under 35 years of age. The country's population is

also estimated to be among the top-5 in the world, estimated as nearly 400 million people in 2050.

As we approach another general election, the narratives about Nigeria being on the precipice of collapse has become characteristically heightened – as it was during the build up to preceding elections.

This has been compounded by increased security challenges associated with the insurgency in the North-east, farmer-pastoralists conflicts exacerbated by climate change challenges such as desertification, drought and flooding, ultranationalist agitations, and economic challenges partly caused by the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on lives and livelihood.

- ◆ On the democratic score, it is important to note that Nigeria is still a nation in transition and a fledgling democracy. As we all know, there is no final democratic destination in the life of a nation – rather each generation defines its democratic priorities and pursues its actualisation. As an evolving society with a vast population of young people, many of whom are post-millennial, the democratic space continues to open in consonance with the democratic appetite of the young people who are the main drivers of cultural production that shape the worldview of the majority.

- ◆ Today, Nigeria's cultural agenda is being set by young people who dominate the cultural space through access to modern technology that integrates international cultural behaviour into local cultural expression in an increasingly globalised cultural environment.

- ◆ Our elections has witnessed tremendous improvements that has occasioned major milestones, including the seamless alternation of power between rival political parties, signalling a new degree of maturity.

- ◆ Nigeria continues to respond evolutionarily to issues about rights and freedoms in accordance with the yearnings of the majority. Nigeria is a transitioning society, or what one can call a democratising society. Our politics, economy, culture, demography, and worldview are undergoing frenetic changes with such resilience and promise that continues to confound many observers.

- ◆ The temptation however remains for some cursory observers who do not understand the many contradictions inherent in a transitioning society to be carried away by single narrative reports about the situation in Nigeria. Yet, amid many negative highlights that many critics continue to feast on, in terms of the security challenges, health and educational infrastructure and widespread poverty, Nigeria clearly has a long way to go, but has also covered a lot of grounds and has indeed made tremendous progress.

- ◆ For example, the most topical of the problems being faced by the country is the challenge of insecurity. Nigeria has been courageously fighting sectarian terrorism in the north-eastern part for about a decade. Whereas the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group in the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa and many other states across the northern part of Nigeria has been successfully minimised, a new frontier of terrorism now faces the country.





◆ Thus, while the threat of Boko Haram terrorists is now receding, another vicious and deadly gang of bandits are attacking rural dwellers in their hundreds in most parts of the north-west and north-central states. There have been increased cases of mass abduction, kidnapping, killings and maiming by the armed criminals in these places in the last two years. This relentless challenge of insecurity has stretched our security institutions to capacity and effectively portraying Nigeria as a no go area for foreign direct investment. Yet this is a nation that needs desperate investments in human development.

◆ In this regard, to address the situation and lend the voice of the sub-national actors to the fight against insecurity, the Forum launched an Initiative for Peace and Inclusive Security (IPIS) designed to address insecurity and violence in the country.

◆ IPIS has conceived several responses to insecurity across the country and works to promote synergy amongst state and non-state actors in enhancing peace and inclusive security. The NGF actively engages with security experts (local and international) in seeking ways to address the security situation in the country.

◆ An outcome of our efforts at complimenting the hard work of the Federal Government, recently led to the procurement of 12 units of A-29 Super Tucano fighter jets to support our military. We are also aggressively working on a transformation of security sector governance by insisting on a human security model that is not just tough on insecurity, but also tough on its causes in poverty, immiseration and youth frustrations and disillusionment.

◆ These are many other brighter sides which critics often wilfully ignore.

Nigeria is also witnessing unprecedented investments in infrastructure, with the government at the national and state levels investing heavily in rail lines,

road, and information technology as catalysts for the rapid economic development of the country.

◆ At the sub-national level, in line with the healthy competition and peer learning promoted amongst states in the NGF, different states are undertaking massive infrastructure projects that are aimed at jumpstarting the socioeconomic development of the country. There are many industrial parks, large scale agriculture projects, special economic zones, e.t.c., springing up across the states. This is in addition to many social investment programmes that are targeted at lifting many out of poverty.

◆ As I bring my remarks to a close, I must reiterate that this is the time for our true friends to support us in addressing the immediate and remote causes of our challenges. Yes, given the mixed record of democratization in Nigeria, development experts and democracy watchers have reached different conclusions about the democratization process in Nigeria and its wider implications for development.

◆ Given the challenges identified in our reflections above, I think we need an approach that further interrogates the broad categories away from unhelpful focus on binaries - effusive optimism and hopeless pessimism, success and failure, sub-optimal performance and unprecedented progress.

This is necessary because of its practical implications for policy choices by our citizens, friendly governments and development partners.

◆ Second, our friends must move away from a focus on single narrative or on judgments pegged on macro-reforms - democratization, privatization, anticorruption, insecurity - that are often measured by large, dramatic shifts. It is important to understand change in a longer term perspective and not through the typical binaries of success and failure. In this way, it would become clear that societal transformation in post military Nigeria in the past two decades has led to the emergence of new social forces, changed the importance of others and consequently altered the relationships among various social and political actors whilst fostering new violations for change.

◆ Third, linked to the immediate challenge of insecurity, international response to democratization and development in Nigeria has become

reluctant, inconsistent, confusing and contradictory. Nearly all multilateral and bilateral friends seem to be at a loss about the most appropriate ways of intervening in areas deemed to be the internal affairs of Nigeria and where they might be set against elected authorities that assumed to be reluctant to embrace inclusive, human rights agenda. The resonance gained by reports from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and ICG on Nigeria's military response to insurgents seem to underscore this point graphically.

◆ Nigeria is a natural ally to the United State of





America in many ways and the United States should develop a more nuanced understanding of the Nigerian predicament. This is because we have a lot of similarity in our history, political system, democratic practice, and economic system. In addition, we have a huge number of diaspora Nigerian-Americans who are about the most educated migrants in the United States.

◆ It is therefore my belief that for strategic mutual benefits, America should remain one of our leading supporters and partners at this critical juncture in our journey. Indeed, the West often expresses concerns about the continued influence of China on the continent of Africa. The truth is that there is a lot to learn about the ideological construct upon which Sino-African relations is erected. China does more practical development in Africa than fault-finding and postulating about problems and their causes. America and most western countries spend too much energy in discussing causes and sponsoring workshops on how to tackle development but do very little in investing in the critical needs of African people.

◆ We need America and Americans to move beyond the tokenist commercial investments and development funding, to large scale interventions that would significantly move the needle. We need new inflows on the scale that demonstrates faith in Nigeria, and camaraderie as longstanding allies.

◆ We would like to see our multilateral partners expand their portfolio of financing options to support non-sovereign operations (NSOs) that will help accelerate sub-national development through various financial support mechanisms and products including loans, lines of credit, guarantees, blended finance, equity investments and trade finance.

◆ The outcome of this means that institutional capacities must be strengthened to ensure that government officials are better positioned to negotiate, assess and manage available opportunities. For example, the eligibility criteria for some of these facilities may need to be discussed and negotiated with State Governors at the development stage of the projects.

◆ A sustainability strategy or transition plan should also accompany each development project in the country. State governments have already resolved to raise domestic revenues to improve financing for development.

◆ At the NGF, sustainable development is recognized as a sub-national agenda – whether in terms of human capital development, security, governance, infrastructure provision or service delivery. We experience first-hand the rising inequality, declining livelihoods and rising poverty, state fragility, forced displacement and the climate change crises.

◆ We are also convinced that the developmental responsibilities of governments are closely linked with the activities of other stakeholders in the political system. Through stronger partnership with our multilateral partners in areas such as human capital development, we can do more to strengthen the use of evidence to influence government policies.

◆ In like manner, special agro-processing zones (SAPZs) can be a flagship for Nigeria's transformation and the future for a post-oil economy. By integrating production, transformation, and trade, SAPZs will bring positive impact on farmers who lose up to 50% of their produce to waste and will create opportunities for women.

◆ The Forum is pushing for renewed partnerships, technical support, and access to relevant knowledge for sub-national governments. Nigerian Governors today recognize their role in the implementation of the SDGs and have taken it upon themselves to do more to facilitate all the resources they need to achieve growth.

◆ The Nigeria Governors' Forum will see that their collective action is therefore founded upon broad-based partnerships and shared responsibility.

◆ I would therefore like to end my short remarks by calling on our friends - governments, multilateral agencies, large scale corporations, e.t.c., to join and support our aggressive push for rapid socioeconomic development. This is the time for the United States to prove herself a friend indeed by supporting some of our developmental efforts at sub-national and national levels.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Teachers' Day: Jubilation as Fayemi presents cars, cash to best teachers

The Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi has presented cars, computers, cash and other gift items to teachers adjudged the best in primary, secondary and technical schools in the state.

The gesture was in commemoration of the 2021 edition of World Teachers' Day and in fulfilment of the Governor's pledge to continuously motivate teachers in the state to enhance excellence.

Governor Fayemi while making the presentation, said his administration would continue to improve on the condition of service of the teachers in order to ensure that all schools in the State have qualified and highly motivated teachers.

The Governor stated this just as the Ekiti Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Mr Emmanuel Oke and Ekiti Chairman of the Academic Staff of Union of Secondary Schools, Mr Sola Adigun in their different presentations, lauded the Fayemi administration for its huge investment in the education sector.

They commended the Governor for regular payment of salaries of teachers; introduction of compulsory, free and quality education for primary and secondary school students; distribution of furniture to schools; car and housing loans



for teachers, a hundred percent increase into the budgetary allocation for the payment of gratuities for retired teachers; provision of instructional materials and establishment of four new model schools to address overcrowding in some schools.

Dr Fayemi, clad in one of the ankara uniforms, reiterated the commitment of his administration to the provision of needed technological tools to enhance digital literacy, which would allow teachers cope with the alternative platform anchored on technology.

He maintained that despite the need for technology to support teaching and learning, there was

need for more human and student-centred approaches to the use of technology and artificial intelligence in education.

"The theme of the World Teachers' Day 2021 "Teachers at the Heart of Education Recovery" is very apt especially for us in Ekiti State where education is experiencing unprecedented recovery. Even though the last 18 months have been challenging in all sectors of the economy with our schools shut down for more than six months, our teachers have been unrelenting in ensuring that we make up for lost times.

"We promptly swung into action to safeguard our education

sector from total collapse during the peak of the 2020 lockdown, by organizing "School on Air" for the pupils, a clear lesson from the pandemic is the need for alternative pedagogical platform anchored on technology.

"This administration is committed to providing technology enhanced teaching and learning because we believe that technologically aided teaching and learning is essential to effective teaching" he added.

At the event where teachers in their hundreds gathered, were the Wife of the Governor, Erelu Bisi Fayemi; Speaker of the Ekiti State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Fun-

miniye Afuye; Head of Service, Peju Babafemi, the Chief of Staff, Hon Biodun Omoleye; National President of Asuss, Comrade Samuel Omaji, National President of NUT, Dr Nasir Idris represented by Mr Aderemi Adeniyi.

The Governor, who applauded the dedication and steadfastness of the entire teachers in the state, both in the public and private schools, charged them to continue to sustain industrial harmony, promote diligence in the performance of their tasks and display utmost dedication to the discharge of their responsibilities.

Dr Fayemi said priority would continue to be accorded teachers' welfare, entitlement, improved service conditions, promotions and efforts in payment of backlog salaries owed by last administration.

As a demonstration of his efforts to open up Ekiti teachers to wider opportunities within and outside the country, the Governor disclosed that Mr Asubiojo who won the star prize of the last edition of the President's Teachers and Schools Excellence Award has been nominated to represent Nigeria in the African Teachers' Award Competition.

Ekiti Govt to build more Model Colleges to replace schools released to Missions

The Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi has said that machinery has been put in place by his administration to build additional three model schools to accommodate pupils in view of the recent return of some mission schools to their original owners.

The Governor disclosed this during the inauguration of the Deji Fasuan Model College, Ado Ekiti as part of activities marking his third anniversary in Office, 25th anniversary of the creation of Ekiti State and commemoration of the 90th birthday of Chief

Deji Fasuan who was chairman of the committee that coordinated campaign for the creation of the state.

Chief Fasuan, a retired Permanent Secretary, clocked 90 years old on Friday same day the state marked its 25th anniversary.

The inauguration, which was witnessed by the Wife of the Governor, Erelu Bisi Fayemi; the deputy Governor, Otunba Bisi Egbeyemi; Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Funminiye Afuye; Chairman traditional

Council and Onisan of Isan Ekiti, Oba Gabriel Adejuwon; Ewi of Ado Ekiti, Oba Rufus Adejuyigbe, and top government functionaries, was the fourth model schools to be commissioned by the Fayemi within the last one year.

"The inauguration of this project today is yet another clear manifestation that our administration is fully committed to the ongoing transformation of the Education sector in Ekiti State and also completing all ongoing projects as we promised zero tol-

erance for abandoned projects.

"The project we are commissioning today is a one-storey 18 classrooms edifice with 42 toilets, chemistry, biology and physics laboratory, as well as ICT and Home Economics laboratories. Other facilities provided in the one-storey edifice include: a large examination hall, staffrooms, administrative offices, perimeter fencing, football pitch, basketball court, parking space and water treatment plant amongst others." He added.

Governor Fayemi disclosed

that the intended three model colleges would be located in Ikere, Odo-Oro and Ado Ekiti to provide access to Junior Secondary School (JSS) education to primary school pupils who hitherto would have attended the mission schools recently returned to their original owners in Ado Ekiti by the State Government.

He said government would still hand over more mission schools to their original once they meet the conditions set out by the government.

Stop the Spread!



The Four COVID Personality Types *(spotted at the local grocery store)*

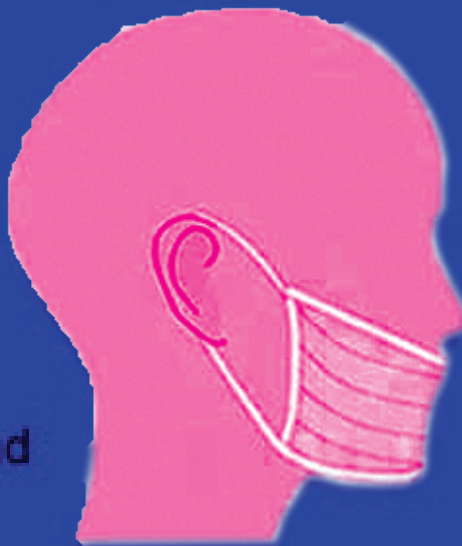
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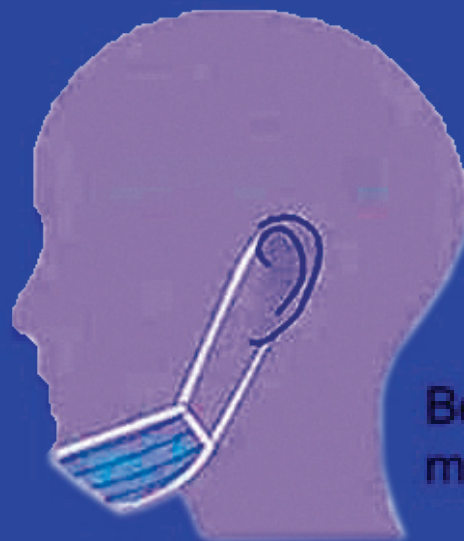
Denies
science



Doesn't
understand
science



Believes in
magic



Let's not make it easy for the virus