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Pushing Bandits *Out*

WOONG THE FUTURE:

FAYEMI LAUNCHES 'UNFINISHED GREATNESS'



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Enugu is S/East's most Peaceful State, says AVM Daramola

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Isaka Oladayo Amao, has commended Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State for his administration's continued support to the Nigerian Air Force and other Military formations and units within the state.

The Chief of Air Staff's commendation was conveyed by the new Air Officer Commanding, Ground Training Command, Enugu, Air Vice Marshal I.O. Daramola, when he paid a courtesy visit to Gov. Ugwuanyi at the Government House, Enugu, recently.

Air Vice Marshal Daramola was at the Government House, Enugu, to formally inform Gov. Ugwuanyi of his assumption of office as the Air Officer Commanding, Ground Training Command, Enugu, and reassure the governor of "our commitment to the security and development of Enugu State".

Stressing the supportive role of Gov. Ugwuanyi in ensuring internal security in Enugu State and beyond, Air Vice Marshal Daramola appreciated the governor "for the support that you continue to provide to the Military in general, the Army, Police and to us the Nigerian Air Force".

He pointed out that "it is this support that has ensured that Enugu has remained the most peaceful state in the South East geo-political zone" adding: "That goes with the fact that the numerous legacy infrastructure projects you have put in place, especially the roads within Enugu and in the rural areas are part of those things that ensured the state remains secure".



Ugwuanyi

Gov. Ugwuanyi Reiterates Support For Security Agencies For Effective Discharge Of Duties



Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has reiterated that his administration will continue to support the Nigerian Army and other security agencies in the state to ensure that they effectively discharged their duties.

Gov. Ugwuanyi gave the assurance during the 82 Division Nigerian Army West African Social Activities (WASA) 2021, held recently at the 82 Division Garrison Parade Ground, Abakpa Cantonment, Enugu.

The governor noted the annual event was a platform for officers, soldiers, their families, friends and the host community to gather in a joyous and relaxed mood to appreciate God for the successful completion of training activities and operations for the past year while heralding the beginning of the New Year.

Gov. Ugwuanyi said that the occasion offered him the opportunity to celebrate the Nigerian soldiers for their gallantry in battling insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and terrorism in the past year.

"The events of the past year really put your cour-

age and patriotism to test but your successes were cheering and reassuring to Nigerians that we have a dependable, disciplined and committed Army", the governor said.

Acknowledging, with deep sense of patriotism, the anxiety and emotional challenges the soldiers' families and friends have to contend with as the officers and soldiers strove for the peace and unity of Nigeria, Gov. Ugwuanyi thanked them for "all your unsung sacrifices for our great nation, Nigeria".

The governor, who pointed out that the state government has a long tradition of mutual understanding and cooperation with the 82 Division Nigerian Army, paid respect to the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General F. Yahaya, the General Officer Commanding 82 Division Nigerian Army, Major General T.A. Lagbaja and all the officers and men of the Division for their continued support to his administration especially in the areas of security, civil-military cooperation and peace advocacy.

NCCSALW to Establish Zonal Headquarters in Enugu

National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) has notified Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State of its decision to establish Zonal Headquarters in Enugu.

The National Coordinator of NCCSALW, Major General Abba Dikko (Rtd), disclosed the decision when he led a delegation of the agency to the Government House, Enugu, on an official visit to Gov. Ugwuanyi.

The NCCSALW, which is domiciled in the Office of the National Security

Adviser, serves as the institutional mechanism for policy guidance, research and monitoring of all aspects of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria.

The agency, established in May, 2021, replaced the defunct Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons as part of the restructuring of Nigeria's security architecture to address emerging threats and strengthen the regional mechanism for the control, prevention and regulation of SALW in the country.



COMMENTARY

Again, the senate of the National Assembly objected to the idea of establishing the State Police, when in plenary more than sixty-eight constitutional questions were up for review. Two issues mainly dominated the minds of the nation's governors, prior. The electricity Bill which the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and Governor of Ekiti State Dr John Kayode Fayemi had written the National Assembly protesting because the Assembly was surreptitiously ceding the powers of states to the Federal Government and the state police.

Governors had objected to the electricity Bill and argued vehemently through several channels that it was dead on arrival. Fortunately, the senate saw reason and jettisoned the Bill.

But the establishment of State Police again, did not see the light of day. It has been almost a decade since Governors began agitating for the establishment of State Police. Some of the reasons adduced for their quest include, but are not exclusive to, respecting a federal structure of Government, putting all hands on deck, to fight the ills of insurgency, banditry and kidnapping and making the whole society safer. During the reign of Governor Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar of Zamfara State as Chairman of the NGF, a six-man committee was set up to fashion out modalities for the establishment of State police in the country and how it would be run. They comprised of a governor each from the nations geo-political regions. The six met with IGP Ibrahim Kpotun, discussed and left with the hope that their demands would be met but the president disagreed.

Many people continue to see the negative side of the coin, as far as the matter is concerned. The President, Muhammadu Buhari has consistently maintained that State Police is not an option. Others argue that allowing states to establish their own police force would imperil the populace and give governors the armour to punish their opponents, and thus threaten public peace.

However, that argument is neither here nor there. Evidence has shown that the federal police themselves have not been insulated from abuse and police brutality towards persons including Governors. In the eve of Anambra Governorship elections Governor Obiano of Anambra State had his entire retinue of policemen withdrawn and the encounter between Governor Sanwo-Olu and a middle cadre police officer in Lagos over the occupation of an estate are a few examples of the ugly spectre of maintaining federal police. This makes the position that governors would abuse

the police, if the state police option is taken and established, untenable. Anyone with power and command over the police can abuse it.

But conventional wisdom has taught us otherwise. At the moment, there are more than a dozen versions of State police in Nigeria all known by other names. Regional vigilantes have mushroomed all over the country from the shege ka fasa, to amotekun, to Ebubeagu and the like. These have emerged because the single-structure federal police has been overwhelmed and become utterly incapable of coping with the nation's hydra-headed monster including insurgency, kidnapping and banditry. It has also made the demand for state police more imperative. Moreover, despite the delinquent attitude of the Federal Police towards governors, the bulk of their bills are borne by the state governors. And whenever state police commissioners are in dire straits, it is to the governors they run and not to the president.

There are signs that if established, state police would help ease the security situation nationwide. For example, state governors have shown their determination to confront their local gangsters head-on. In Niger State, the bandits have seen a bloody nose from the efforts of Governor Abubakar Sani Bello. They have been pushed out of the main theatres of war to the fringes of the state, indeed to the River Kaduna areas where there is already a blockade. The Kaduna State Governor, Malam Nasiru el Rufai on his part has beaten the bandits and kidnapers in his state by words and guns. There are boots on the ground all over the state and the bandits are running helter-skelter. In fact, if left to El-Rufai, the bandits should only be summarily despatched to repent before their creator and not here on earth. In Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara States, Governors Tambuwal, Masari and Mutawalle have all bared their fangs and made life hell for bandits and their accomplices. The bottom line is that local security networks are more effective when it comes to combatting domestic hoodlums, and as they continue to rear their ugly heads, so would the agitation for local police continue to fester in the country.

It is time to reward the courage of these governors with their fervent prize of a state police to be established all over the country.

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Climate Change and SFTAS Budget Tagging

The State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Programme, a product of mutual agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the World Bank is designed to strengthen the fiscal transparency, accountability and sustainability in Nigerian states as a way of improving their revenue base, increasing fiscal efficiency in public expenditure and reducing debt overhang.

The SFTAS Programme aims to significantly improve outcomes of participating states in four key areas: Increase Fiscal Transparency and Accountability; Strengthen Domestic Revenue Mobilization; Increase Efficiency in Public Expenditure and Strengthen Debt Sustainability. It is envisaged to provide performance-based grants and technical assistance to states to implement the 22 point Fiscal Sustainability Plan (FSP) and the Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments from 2018 to 2022.

A fifth dimension of SFTAS program which is the core focus of this feature is the component called climate change budget tagging. Here, the SFTAS program in works with the World Bank team is looking at state budget and appropriations, aspects of the project that have been book-marked and are climate related so that states can look at whether they need climate financing to support what they are doing.

Budget allocations for climate change needs to be increased across majority of states. The advantage of this SFTAS programme is that more people are now beginning to realize that climate change cuts across a lot of ministries not just ministry of environment.

Climate change budget tagging has a cogent backdrop, looking at the big climate picture. Scientific

evidences are conclusive that the earth is warming and climates are changing with serious and potentially damaging consequences. Climate change is aggravating environmental issues such as deforestation and land degradation, freshwater shortage, food security and air and water pollution.

Projected increases in extreme climatic events as well as more changes in the weather patterns may further threaten the means of livelihoods in the face of inaction.

In Nigeria, the agriculture and food security, water resources, public health, and settlements sectors are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Most vulnerable regions are coastal regions and erosion and desertification-prone areas in the southern and northern parts of the country respectively. While everyone is vulnerable, the most vulnerable groups are farmers, herdsmen, fisherfolks, the elderly, women, children and poor people living in urban areas.

Consequently, specific measures tied to well-defined climate change response framework and implementation plan must incorporate critical elements of mitigation and adaptation which must be mainstreamed into development efforts.

This footing will enable both the country and sub-nationals adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change through the management of risk and the reduction of vulnerability, as well as make its contribution to the global mitigation efforts.

In effect, climate change budget tagging is a critical aspect of budget and appropriations. Climate financing is a World Bank tool fielded to aid countries and especially subnationals as in Nigeria to properly ground what they are doing.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Judicial Inquiry into Killings: Gov. Abubakar Bello Sets up a Four-Man White Paper Committee

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State has set up a four man white paper Committee to critically look into the report of the State Judicial Commission of inquiry into the killings, abduction and injury in Maza-Kuka, Adogon Mallam, Kulho and environs with the view to ensuring justice is done.

Governor Sani Bello who appreciated the Judicial Commission of Inquiry for diligently carrying out their duties without any biases, assured that justice would be done.

“Nobody has the right to take someone’s life for whatever reason. As long as there is no justice there will be no peace”, he said.

The Governor also directed the Secretary to the State Government Ahmed Ibrahim Matene and the Commissioner for Justice and Attorney General Nasara Dan-Mallam to ensure quick submission of the report for justice to be done.

The white paper committee is to be chaired by Dr Jonathan Wasa Permanent Secretary Youth, while Mohammed Wachiko, Permanent Secretary Investment and Ibrahim Bala Permanent Secretary Human Resources are to serve as members, Shafi’u Zakari Director, office of the Secretary to State Government is to be the secretary of the Committee.



Submitting the Judicial Commission of Inquiry’s report by its Chairman Justice Danladi Ahmed, said the Commission in the course of their assignment, received ten memoranda and that 50 witnesses testified before it while 137 exhibits were admitted as evidence.

Justice Ahmed highlighted some of the Commission’s recommendations to include a Peace and Reconciliation Committee in Mashegu Local Government Area to engage with the residents of the affected communities with a view to finding a lasting peace.

Others are a total overhauling and proper organisation of the Vigilante Corps at the local level, compensation for damages and losses be

paid to victims of the attack, those suspected and identified in the attacks be referred to the Commissioner of Police for further investigation and prosecution among others.

Justice Ahmed thanked the Governor and other relevant agencies for the tremendous support given to them to ensure the success of their assignment.

Recall that Governor Sani Bello had on the 3rd of November, 2021 set up a Judicial Panel following conflicting reports on banditry attacks in Mazakuka, Adogon Mallam, Kulho among other communities in Mashegu local government area where several lives and property were lost as well as many abducted.

NIGER

Niger State Government Signs MoU on Vaccination

The Niger State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Global Alliance on Vaccine Initiative GAVI, Federal Government and the United Nations Children’s Fund UNICEF with the aim of strengthening the Routine Immunization System.

The MoU which has thematic focus on Zero Dose Burden of children under the age of five especially Pentavalent first dose (combination of five different vaccines) given at six weeks of age, was signed at Aso Villa Abuja, the Nation’s Capital.

Addressing the high delegation from Gavi and other foreign missions, organizations as well as Governors of benefiting states, Governor Abubakar Sani Bello of Niger State explained that GAVI would help the state in streamlining its vaccination programmes to avoid duplication with oth-

er partners, as the State is currently implementing an MoU with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) with emphasis on revitalizing Primary Health Care (PHC) and strengthening community-based services among others.

“Harmonization of the GAVI and BMGF MOUs is essential to avoid duplication and ensure effective and efficient utilization of resources to achieve desired results.

“We will do that by ensuring that the Ministry and Agency come up with carefully drafted work and implementation plans in line with the priority areas of the MOUs”, he said.

The Governor said government will ensure that micro plans are clearly defined and integrated towards a synergistic implementation of all PHC programmes while the State various Technical Working Groups

(TWGs) led by the Ministry of Health will monitor and evaluate the processes, inputs and outputs of the implementations.

The Governor added that “as part of consolidating the gains and achievements of PHC via State processes and the MOU, we seek new support to strengthen the vaccine and health commodities supply chain by way of bringing in new innovations or technologies”.

He assured of the government’s readiness to meet up with its responsibilities as outlined in both MOUs.

Speakers and other participants at the event commended and appreciated Gavi for the support given to Nigerian health systems and promised to deepen the relationship, partnership and commitment for mutual benefit as well as accountability so as to achieve the desired result.



WOOING THE FUTURE: Gov. Fayemi Launches 'Unfinished Greatness'

According to Bill McCartney, former American football player and founder of the Promise Keepers men's ministry, "Big dreams create the magic that stir men's souls to greatness." No less a child of destiny, Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, by dint of uncommon focus and hard work is leveraging his big dreams to create the magic inspiring his journey to much higher heights.

Little wonder that at the launch of the book "Unfinished Greatness: Envisioning a New Nigeria," authored by Dr. Fayemi, he states that "greatness must be our permanent watchword in our global destiny. Nigeria will fulfil its destiny built on justice and freedom. This is the national agenda of our times."

His sixth tome, Dr. Fayemi launched "Unfinished Greatness: Envisioning a New Nigeria," at the Nigeria Air Force (NAF) Conference Centre & Suites, in Abuja. The launch featured many dignitaries such as former Head of State, H.E. Yakubu Gowon, H.E. Governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and members of the panel which included Ndi Kato, Hamzat B. Lawal, Yemi Adamolekun and Waziri Adio.

At the launch Gowon observed that "one thing I can safely say by way of an opener is that I find the title of the book quite interesting in addressing two issues that Nigerians are concerned about." The first notion is "Why hasn't Nigeria achieved greatness?"

Gowon stated that the notion of greatness is revolutionary, noting that Nigeria's greatness speaks to our determination to cultivate peace, unity, and justice.

According to the veteran nationalist who oversaw the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, the second notion of addressing a new Nigeria is about the leadership question. He said that "When we speak of leadership with dedication to terminate insecurity, we also

speak of leadership that is concerned with making democracy work."

On his part, Kano State Governor, H.E Abdullahi Ganduje observed the discussion brings together intellectuals. His words: "It's important for intellectuals to take a role in politics because they would analyse conflicting issues."

The book reviewer, Dr. Joe Abah, is a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales.

According to Dr. Abah, Fayemi's book offers a proposal for how Nigerians can come together to form a country that works for all Nigerians. He highlighted a few chapters such as Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 of



L-R: Edo State Deputy Governor, Philip Shaibu; Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Author/ Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu; at the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness Envisioning and New Nigeria" at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja

the book.

In Chapter 9, Dr. Abah said Fayemi discusses the pervading feeling of lack of safety, widespread kidnapping, rising wave of ritual killings in the quest to get rich noting the author offers ideas on how to tackle the issue.

Dr. Abah further stated that Fayemi's book offers a proposal for how Nigerians can come together to form a country that works for all Nigerians, observing that the book is unapologetically optimistic and a useful contribution to the debate about the future of Nigeria. He confessed he greatly enjoyed reading the book and recommend it to all.

At the event, there was also a panel discussion where the panellists tackled questions such as "how can Nigeria be great?" Ndi Kato a mid-career professional with 10 years of experience as a social and human rights activist said that "we can't write Nigeria's future if Nigerian women are not in the equation."

She drew attention to the imperative of looking to gender equality as a solution in achieving greatness.

On his part, Hamzat Lawal, a global citizen, humanitarian, community organiser and an award-winning advocate said, "Unfinished Greatness" is talking to people who don't look like us or speak the same language."

He added that our collective vision is to go back to our various communities and listen. To listen to what our grassroots people are saying. He also stated that the solutions to Nigeria's problems lie with the young people.

Lawal believes there needs to be an inter-generational conversation and dialogue and that all Nigerians should know that you don't need to occupy a political position to make change.

At the closing of the event, Governor Fayemi expressed gratitude towards all who attended the launch.

He said that: "It is not easy not to be overwhelmed by the outpouring of good will and encouragement that has been so generously extended to me at home and abroad on the occasion of the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness: Envisioning a New Nigeria."



NEWS FROM THE STATES

COVID-19 Impact: Enugu State Partners AUDA-NEPAD on Em- powerment of 2,000 Small Holder Farmers

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has taken measures to cushion the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people and the economy of the state.

Consequently, the Enugu State office of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for African Development (AUDA-NEPAD), recently, held interactive meeting with stakeholders in the state (Traditional Rulers of autonomous communities and Presidents General of town unions) on the agency's agricultural project aimed at empowering small holder farmers and boosting food production to cushion the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing the stakeholders, the Enugu State Commissioner for Special Duties and State Co-ordinator/Focal Person in charge of AUDA/NEPAD, Enugu Office, Hon. Mrs. Mabel Agbo, disclosed that AUDA-NEPAD Continental Office in collaboration with some International Agencies took bold measures to cushion the impact of COVID-19 on the citizens by initiating the project, titled "Innovative Strengthening of Small holder Farmers Capabilities Towards Productive Land Restoration Amid COVID-19 in Nigeria".

Mrs. Agbo said that "this project, as the title connotes, is aimed at empowering small holder farmers in our different communities in all agriculture value chains and segments (crops and livestock) to boost their capacity for food production, especially in the aftermath of the devastating impact of COVID-19 on our economy".

She stressed that "to reduce the negative impact of this pandemic, we must step up efforts to enhance the capacity of our farmers to provide food for the well-being of our citizens".

Revealing that the African Union (AU) has set the ball rolling by providing the required money for the realization of the agricultural project, the AUDA-NEPAD State Coordinator pointed out that "our goal-oriented Governor of Enugu State, Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, was equally not found wanting as he readily approved the provision of the counterpart fund required for this project".

Gov. Ugwuanyi Receives 'Most Peaceful Governor In Nigeria' Award



Ugwuanyi

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State was recently conferred with a national award as the 'Most Peaceful Governor in Nigeria' by the Messengers of Peace Foundation.

Conferring the prestigious national award on the Governor at the Government House, Enugu, the National President of the Messengers of Peace Foundation, Dr. Sulaiman Adejoh, disclosed that the honour was in recognition of the governor's zeal, steadfastness and untiring efforts in ensuring that "there is calmness in Enugu State and Nigeria by extension".

In Dr. Adejoh words: "We have taken note of these efforts because it is not ordinary. It takes somebody that has something upstairs and a man of peace to be able to use all the connections including God to make sure there is peace in his state.

"And by the power given to you as the serving Governor of Enugu State, you have used your God-given ability to make sure that there is relative calmness".

The National President explained that the Messengers of Peace Foundation is the organizer of the prestigious National Peace Awards in Nigeria; the prominent Queen of Peace in the country and worldwide; and the African Peace Awards, revealing that "by June this year we will be going to London for first Global Messengers of Peace Awards in partnership with Her Royal Majesty, the Queen of England".

According to him, "We are the only Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the country now that has the responsibility of providing peace customized vehicle number plates to promote peace at the grass-roots.

"Your Excellency, we are here to identify with your success as the Most Peaceful Governor in the whole country. We have gone round, especially in the rural areas. We saw the good roads. We sampled opinions. We are going to send you video clips for you to see the positive things your people have said about you."

Responding, Gov. Ugwuanyi dedicated the award to God and stressed that God is the one behind all his successes and the unmerited favour he has gained in life.

His words: "If there is a commodity in the market called peace, nations are prepared to buy it at all cost. Because we entrusted Enugu State to the hands of God, we have seen God's hands in affairs of the state. I dedicate this award to the Almighty God. I also want to say a very big thank you to you all for this honour".

Other members of the delegation were Okokoro Ejiro (the Executive Strategist, Queen of Peace); Jennifer Jjeoma Ezenwa (Manager, Queen of Peace); Caroline Ezech (Member, Messengers of Peace Foundation); Charles Duhu (Member); Uche John Abonyi (Member); Martins Chinedu E (Member), Obiora Kene Akpanisi (Member) and His Royal Majesty (HRM) Eze Williams Ezugwu.

Anti-drug Abuse/Trafficking War: Gov. Ugwuanyi donates Operational Vehicles to NDLEA

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State, recently handed over four vehicles to the Enugu State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to aid its operations in furtherance of the focused efforts of his administration to eliminate all forms of drug abuse and trafficking in the state, in partnership with the agency.

Presenting the vehicles to the State Commander of NDLEA, Anietie Idim Bassey, Gov. Ugwuanyi, represented by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Simon Uchenna Ortuanya, said that the state government is determined more than ever before to ensure that the state in particular and the society in general get rid of all forms of drug abuse and trafficking.

The governor recounted the harm drug abuse causes young people who indulge in it, as well as the risk such illicit act poses to the future generations, stressing that the state government will remain

committed to the noble course of eliminating the cankerworm in the society.

Gov. Ugwuanyi added that it was in keeping with the realization of the mandate that he appointed a Special Assistant (SA) on Drugs and Narcotics, for the first time in the history of the state, in the person of Hon. Chidi Egbuogu.

Pointing out that the collaboration between the state government and NDLEA is yielding positive results, the governor stressed that "these vehicles represent the determination of this administration in this direction, and I can assure you that we are prepared to do more".

Receiving the vehicles, NDLEA State Commander, Bassey, commended Gov. Ugwuanyi for the donation, stating that the vehicles, which are unbranded, would aid their operations as "we can now go out without people really knowing where we go".



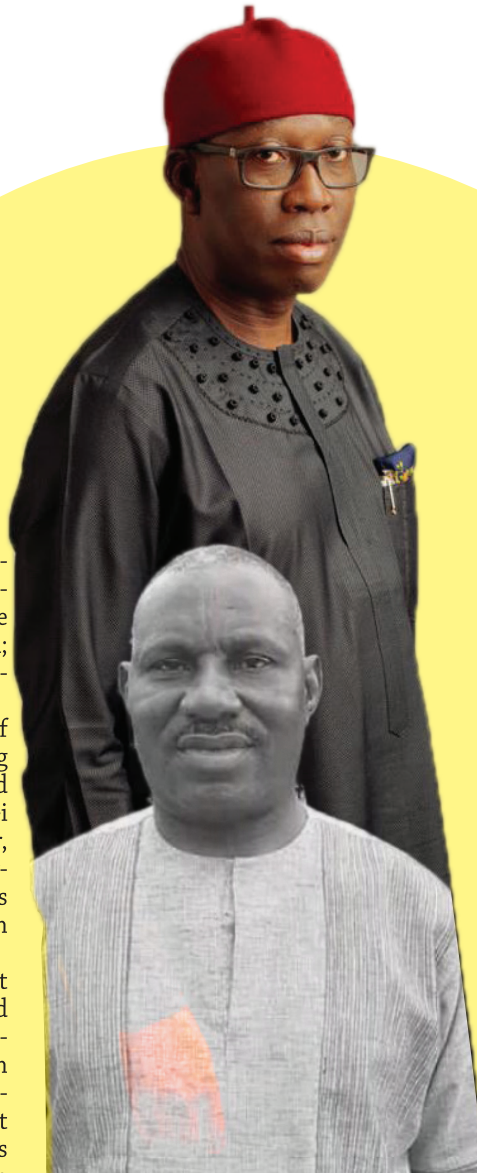
A Reflection on Okowa and His Chief Press Secretary

Back in the days, as an undergraduate interested in nation-building and enthronement of true political leadership in Nigeria; I cherished two leadership recruitment quotes.

The first is from the United States of America born Jim Collins, a very strong human resource development expert and the other, from Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli, an Italian diplomat, author, philosopher and historian who lived during the Renaissance and best known for his political treatise, "The Prince", written in about 1513 but not published until 1532.

While Jim Collins believes that the first responsibility of a great leader is to find the right people as the success of every administration depends, to a large extent, on the quality of the people in charge, Machiavelli, in a similar style, is of the view that the first opinion that is formed of a leader's intelligence is based on the quality of men he has around him. When they are competent and loyal he can always be considered wise, because he has been able to recognize their competence and to keep them loyal. But when they are otherwise, the ruler is always open to adverse criticism because his first mistake has been in the choice of his ministers.

This whole idea recently played out during an enriching conversation with Olisa Ifejika, the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to Governor Okowa, the Executive Governor



of Delta state.

The imperativeness of the conversation was predicated on the urgent need to separate facts from fictions and assumptions in ways that will assist douse, among Deltans, conflicting reactions and utter confusion occasioned by the public's asymmetrical interpretations, misunderstanding of some recent government policies in the state education sector.

Aside from being frank and factual, Olisa, demonstrates an understanding that

viable democracy has its locale in openness, reliability, appropriateness, responsiveness and the two-way nature of the communication environment.

First, he cleared the thick cloud that has enveloped the state in the wake of the government's new education policy.

Ifejika deftly cleared innuendos, insinuations and half-truths that heralded the rumoured hike in school fees in the state.

His flowery but in-depth dissection of the issues has gone a long way in restoring the healthy and friendly relationship between the government and Deltans.

Secondly, by his seamless clarification of critical issues, Ifejika, unlike most image-makers notorious for hoarding information, firmly presents Governor Okowa as a great, visionary and proactive leader who picks the right people and gives them the right positions. Professionally, Ifejika exudes confidence and competence.

It is evident that Okowa recognizes competence and quality for the overall good of Delta.

Essentially, aside from the age-long belief that proper information management is the life wire of good governance, by communicating to Deltans the work and policies of the government, the Chief Press Secretary leaves one with the exhilarating conviction that he is not a fifth columnist in the fourth estate of the realm or a propagandist masquerading as a journalist but a seasoned information manager, one at home with the 'art and science of analyzing trends and predicting consequences.

Viewed broadly, why his openness is commendable is that it is coming at a time when most of the government spokespersons in Nigeria are capped with the attributes of Paul Joseph Goebbels, a German Nazi politician and Reich Minister of Propaganda of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945.

– Utomi Jerome-Mario is the Programme Coordinator (Media and Public Policy), Social and Economic Justice Advocacy (SEJA), A Lagos-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Plateau Gov. Assures Farmers of More Inputs and Training



Governor Lalong at the flagging off the nationwide first quarter 2022 roll-out of agricultural inputs distribution to farmers held in Jos Plateau State

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has assured farmers in the State of the determination of his administration to ensure that they get high quality farm inputs and training that will enable them produce optimally.

Governor Lalong said this while flagging off the nationwide first quarter 2022 roll-out of agricultural inputs distribution to farmers held in Jos Plateau State. He said the roll-out is coming at the right time as farmers continue to prepare for this year's wet season farming as well as carry on with the dry season farming exercise.

He said "amidst the numerous challenges facing our farmers in Plateau State which border on shortage of farm inputs, seedlings and requisite extension services, there are other extraneous security issues in many parts of the country such as kidnapping, banditry, herder-farmer conflicts and climate change.

"Apart from tackling these challenges we have in the recent years also recruited four hundred Extension Workers to promote best agricultural practices and to also carry out Climate Smart Agriculture that will adapt to, and also mitigate against climate change".

The Governor disclosed that his administration is determined to run the economy of Plateau State on agriculture because of the natural endowments that gives the State the leverage to cultivate several unique and exotic crops.

He said the State has made tremendous investments towards this direction by reacquiring BARC farms in Zallaki, seated on 4,000 hectares of land. Out of this, cultivation of 1500 hectares of rice by the State agriculture company, the Agriculture Services Training and Marketing Company (ASTC) in the 2021 farming season has been done.

Lalong praised the Federal Government and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for their collaboration saying that due to the high level of unemployment among youths which is causing many social problems, the State has developed a model to engage and empower 35,000 youths across 48 agricultural value chains. Another pilot phase for 10,000 youths will be rolled out soon for the 2022 cropping season.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Dr. Mahmood Mohammed Abubakar said the Agricultural sector has been a priority for the current Administration which became necessary to stimulate local production of food to achieve self-sufficiency, attract investments, create jobs and enhance the livelihood of farming families.

PLATEAU

Gov. Lalong Praises FG's Support to PLASU as New Structures Are Inaugurated

Governor Simon Bako Lalong has praised the Federal Government for its support to the Plateau State University Bokkos (PLASU) which has made the Institution one of the fastest growing in the country. Governor Lalong was speaking during the inauguration of the new Senate Building and Faculty of Health Science complex executed by the TETFund.

Governor Lalong said the inauguration of the new facilities reinforces the existing strong partnership between TETFUND and Plateau State Government in the development of tertiary education in the State.

He said the projects which are within the 2019 High Impact Intervention initiative where PLASU was selected as a beneficiary for the North Central Zone, will go a long



Gov. Lalong

way in boosting teaching and learning at the University.

He said "although many tertiary institutions across the country lobbied very hard to be considered for the projects, PLASU

was very fortunate to be given this privilege owing to our good relationship with the ES TETFund who is a son of Plateau; the Hon. Minister of Education who is a friend of Plateau and my personal friend; as well as President Muhammadu Buhari who has proved beyond reasonable doubt that Plateau has a special place in his heart".

He said what this gesture has shown that for education in Nigeria particularly at the tertiary level to be taken to a desirable level, the three tiers of Government must collaborate and work together. As a Government, we shall continue to play our part by funding education to develop manpower and infrastructure that will ensure a good learning environment.

He also spoke about the ongoing strike assuring that his administration is doing everything possible to fulfill its obligations to the staff.



Agricultural Transformation: NGF To Partner AGRA

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) seeks to partner the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), to evolve an inclusive transformational synergy that would leverage the nation's agricultural sector by increasing incomes and improving food security.

AGRA is a farmer-centered, African-led, and partnerships-driven institution transforming Africa's smallholder farming from a solitary struggle to survive, into thriving businesses.

The body undertakes demand-driven interventions that leverage donors, private sector, and government investments in agriculture. AGRA's areas of intervention include Seed Supply, fertiliser value chains, farmer awareness, markets, finance and capacity building. Potential grantees are identified through open and competitive processes.

AGRA also targets partnerships for strategic transformation. Its work on partnership development aims to create stronger alignment between different actors within the stakeholder landscape. This involves aligning government priorities and private sector interest and creating synergies among value chain actors in order to increase its impact.

Currently, AGRA is undertaking con-

sultation on its 2023-2030 strategy to build alignment, develop new partnerships to support scale-up and scale-out of food systems transformation programs. The body seeks for collaboration with the NGF in the light of the 2023-2030 strategy plans.

On its part, the different means through which NGF seeks to collaborate are varied. Some of this includes the provision of technical assistance to States in the areas of their Agribusiness Strategy plans. The NGF Secretariat will leverage its HelpDesk technical support programme architecture to deliver this mandate.

The following State capacity building activities have been outlined for implementation by the NGF Secretariat in this proposal:

- *Development of Knowledge Materials*
- *Facilitation of Exchange Visits*
- *Organisation of National Peer Learning Events*
- *The Secretariat's strategic role will be driven by high level advocacy to the Governors during the regular meetings of the NGF.*

The timeline for project execution would be determined on a later date.

However, the NGF looks forward to

the AGRA partnership because they align with the platform's core objectives which include the area of Investment Promotion, Enabling Environment, Productivity Enhancement and AGRA objective.

Furthermore, the potential partnership is significant because agriculture holds the key to broad-based economic growth, poverty reduction and food security in Nigeria. It is well documented that growth generated by agriculture is at least twice more effective in raising incomes among the poor compared to other sectors, especially in the rural areas.

Meeting the goals of eradicating hunger and poverty by 2030 and addressing the threat of climate change will require a profound transformation of agricultural production.

As part of economic diversification, moving forward, states would continue to prioritize agriculture through effective collaboration.

Some of NGF's overall goals towards agricultural transformation include intensifying collaboration with the Federal Government, facilitating the revival of agriculture in states across the entire value chain and restoration of agriculture in all states.



Book Review BY DR JOE ABAH

UNFINISHED GREATNESS

BY DR KAYODE FAYEMI

There is a depth of disillusionment and frustration with Nigeria's perennial inability to fulfil its true potential that has led many to a pessimistic and defeatist response to national issues.

New ideas and initiatives are often viewed with cynicism and the pre-emptive evaluative judgment of "It will never work" is passed on new initiatives before they even commence.

Unfortunately, the pessimist is often right, and it doesn't work. When an intention is announced to tackle a problem, many commentators say "Talk is cheap! I know it won't be implemented." When people start giving testimonies that things appear to be changing, the refrain is often "That is not enough! Is this what we should be celebrating now when others are sending probes to Mars? Anyway, I know it won't be sustained." And when eventually the optimist points out that the new initiative has actually been working successfully for a while now, the next statement is "That is not our problem now."

Even the greatest optimist cannot fault this pessimistic and defeatist view because it has been forged by very many examples, over very many years, of poorly designed initiatives, lack of intellectual rigour, poor preparation, poor implementation, endemic corruption, lack of ambition, policy somersaults and lack of sustainability. How then does an optimist offer a compelling and credible, solution-focused, alternative narrative without denying the challenges in the environment or the unenviable track record of failure? It is not often that a book review includes a review of the book's Foreword but, in discussing this tension between justified pessimism and informed optimism, the Foreword by Nigeria's former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, succinctly and intelligently sets the context for the whole book.

Although Dr Kayode Fayemi's book is a collection of essays, there is a coherent narrative thread running through the whole book. In the words of the author, "the book offers the perspectives of a firm believer in a Nigerian national agenda of unity, freedom, justice, and equity." Those perspectives are offered in the knowledge that national development is not necessarily a linear process or a one-off activity that if you just undertook you wouldn't need to make any other effort. My boss, Jim Boomgard, the President and CEO of DAI once said:

"There is no "silver bullet" in development, no single sector or region or discrete problem that if we just got right, everything else would fall into place. Development is a messy combination of systemic problems that play out in unique contexts all over the world. Failures typically outnumber successes (and often blur into one another) and the emphasis must always be on learning."

The first chapter, which shares the same title as the book, tackles the question as to whether we need strategic demolition to remake a nation. It recognises that there is a wide range of opinions as to how Nigeria can be remade, ranging from decentralisation to devolution and even to agitations for outright secession. Fayemi lists several challenges bedevilling Nigeria's nationhood, including overcentralisation of power, a revenue sharing formula skewed in favour of the Federal Government, and a predominantly youthful population that have only ever heard tales of a Nigeria that once lived up to its part of a social contract, but have never actually witnessed it. Several people blame our inability to fulfil our potential on what some term "the mistake of 1914" but Fayemi argues that calling Nigeria's amalgamation a mistake would itself be a mistake, because the peoples that now make up Nigeria have interacted and traded with each other before the map that we now have was drawn. The United States, the richest, most powerful nation in the world, is similarly an amalgamation of several peoples, some of which had their own flags and defined territories before that amalgamation.

He, also, rightly in my view, questions those that blame all our problems on colonialism and posits that "Though now operated by Nigerians, the post-colonial state has been as alien and as predatory as its colonial predecessor." Fayemi posits that leaders must take responsibility and move away from the interminable blame game that tries to shift responsibility to others, including colonialists. The Kenyan Nobel Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai supports this view when she said:





Book Review

BY DR JOE ABAH

“Fifty years down the road, we ought to be doing things differently. You cannot blame corruption in Africa on colonialism. You cannot blame colonialism for the excessive lifestyles that African leaders assume. You cannot blame it for the mismanagement of the economy or the fact that we have not invested in education. Yes, colonialism was terrible, but we out to be moving away from that by now.”

Fayemi asserts that whatever defects Nigeria currently has can be corrected without having to collapse the whole structure. He offers his perspective on why Nigeria has not fulfilled its undeniable potential when he says “It appears to me however that the fundamental challenge is that all along, we have been placing the cart before the proverbial horse. Before we can think of development, we must first solve the problems of nation-building, because you cannot develop what you do not have.” He argues that there is a need to recompose the Nigerian state and make it derive its legitimacy from the people. This theme of restructuring reverberates throughout the book. While many have taken the term ‘restructuring’ to mean different things, he simply describes it as a way to reimagine our country to make it work effectively for everyone.

As we go into the political season, the focus of many Nigerians will be on which persons or groups will gain power and control over the rest of us. As we focus, rightly, on extending the longest continuous period of democratic rule that our country has ever had, let us also be mindful of the Jean Jacques Rousseau quote that says:

“Before examining the act by which a nation elects a king, it would be proper to examine the act by which a nation becomes a nation; for this act, being necessarily anterior to the other, is the real foundation of the society.”

As Dr Fayemi said, we can correct the defects we have without having to collapse the whole structure. However, the need to reformulate our union will not go away and must be addressed if we are to move forward. Governance problems are unique, in that, left unattended, they only ever get worse, never better.

To examine the act by which Nigeria becomes a nation, it is my opinion that we need to set in motion a process that culminates in producing for us a totally new Constitution. That process must start with a patriotic dialogue about the kind of country we want. Although our current Constitution is said to have been modelled on the Constitution of the United States of America, the American Constitution has a certain endogenous legitimacy that the 1999 Constitution lacks: it was not handed to the American people by a military regime. The opening lines of the U.S. Constitution says: “We the people of the United State, in order to form a more perfect union... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” It is imperative that Nigerians have an honest dialogue that leads to a more perfect union. The fact that “We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria” did not actually “give to ourselves the Constitution” constitutes a fatal flaw that cannot be cured by constitutional amendment. We need a new Constitution.

The book’s second chapter continues with the theme of restructuring. It argues for a restructuring of the politico-administrative system to allow for a greater degree of decentralised and devolved power that births a more workable federal arrangement. It also proposes the adoption of certain justiciable rights, similar to the American Bill of Rights which formed the first 10 amendments to the Constitution of the United States. The chapter also highlights the need for a national dialogue as a precursor to restructuring.

The third chapter is on the fascinating topic of ‘Intellectuals in Politics.’ Fayemi lays the foundation to the chapter by making references to the concept of the philosopher-king espoused by ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. He takes the position that “You need the enlightenment of the intellectuals and the raw talent of the grassroots politicians to be able to coagulate a workable political practice that serves the nation.” Coming to this realisation must have been a chastening experience for Fayemi, given that he lost his first re-election bid as Governor to the now infamous “stomach infrastructure” phenomenon. After eventually winning his re-election in 2018, I had privately asked him to reflect on his experience. With characteristic intellectual honesty, he said “Our administration was said to be too bookish.” However, he saw his re-election as a rejection of the shorttermism and immediate gratification that came with ‘stomach infrastructure.’ While clearly not being a fan of ‘stomach infrastructure’, he did admit that every politician must acknowledge the place of populism and that “substance matters but symbols cannot be ignored.”

This is a realisation that any intellectual with political ambition will do well to bear in mind, particularly as the last decade has seen a global wave of populism and a disdain for intellectualism. The author makes clear that he is not suggesting that every intellectual goes into partisan politics but proposes that our politics requires “a new





Book Review BY DR JOE ABAH

breed of enlightened, thoughtful, knowledgeable politicians with integrity and character, who are courageous, broadminded, balanced and are capable of living beyond their close circle to set a new path to our national rediscovery.”

Fayemi's reflections on the issue of intellectuals in politics continues into the fourth chapter in the book where he tackles the recurring theme of restructuring and autonomy, drawing on lessons from the life of one of Nigeria's founding fathers, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. Here, Fayemi, reiterates the point that a nation's theory of development can only be derived from the consensus that has been forged on key national questions on issues such as identity, religion, participation, justice and the overall management of diversity.

Perhaps no intellectual in politics has been able to connect with the masses in the way that Mallam Aminu Kano did. His political philosophy was emancipatory politics, focused on the need to improve the lives of the 'Talakawa' (the ordinary citizen) through ideas, ideology and education, rather than through 'stomach infrastructure.' In framing the quest for national integration around the life of Mallam Aminu Kano in Chapter 5, Fayemi focuses on another theme on which there is a consistent thread throughout the book: the need for exemplary leadership. One is reminded of the Chinua Achebe quote from the book 'The Trouble with Nigeria' that "The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership." Leadership matters. Exemplary leadership matters more, as it is the connective tissue that binds the leader, including the intellectual-in-politics, to the ordinary citizen.

Chapter 6 emphasises the need for the media in Nigeria to continue to draw on its long tradition of promoting the imperatives of unity in diversity and democratic rule; and Chapter 7 tackles the thorny issue of the role of religion in elections.

Chapter 8 reflects on turning the adversity occasioned by Covid to opportunity. The lockdown in 2020 brought into very stark focus the fact that there are virtually no safety nets for artisans and people who can only earn their daily bread by setting forth each day. Fayemi saw the Covid crisis as an inflexion point that we must take advantage of to realign our country's longterm priorities and reset our development agenda.

Chapter 9 focuses on national security challenges and recognises that, apart from the physical insecurity occasioned by ethno-religious violence, militancy and insurgency, there is also a pervading feeling of a lack of safety in the populace. This has been compounded by widespread kidnapping, drug-fuelled crimes, internet fraud, child trafficking and the rising wave of ritual killings in the quest to get rich quick. Fayemi draws on his deep knowledge and experience of the security sector to offer ideas about tackling many of these issues.

In Chapter 10, Fayemi returns to the issue of restructuring, in reviewing 20 years of democratisation in Nigeria. As an activist that was at the forefront of the struggle for a return to democratic rule, his assessment of successes and failures makes very interesting reading. Without going as far as I did in calling for a totally new Constitution, he recognises that:

“If the United States, a nation forged out of common purpose and common consent, perpetually seeks to make a more perfect union, it is evident that the task of nation-building will be far more difficult in a state created without the consent of the people and imposed by colonial power.”

He reiterates the need for devolution and decentralisation, based on honest national conversations and resolutions. Fayemi alludes to the fact that his political party, the All Progressives Congress, included 'restructuring' in their manifestos for 2015 and 2019 and says that they have been working towards it. One cannot but wonder whether this "working towards it" is the same "working on it" phrase popularly used by Nigerians when they want to avoid any attempt to pin them down to specific timeframes about any topic.

The postscript to the book returns to the issue of envisioning a new Nigeria that was the subject of the first chapter. It emphasises Fayemi's support for Azikiwe's postulation that the political union of Nigeria is destined to be perpetual and indestructible. He offers a proposal about how Nigerians can come together across political biases to forge a country that works for all Nigerians.

Overall, the book makes a compelling argument for the need to restructure Nigeria, and for decentralisation and devolution predicated on an honest national dialogue. It also highlights the imperative of intelligent, people-focused leadership anchored on personal example. It is unapologetically optimistic about the future of Nigeria as a coherent entity founded on unity, freedom, justice and equity. The book is a useful contribution to the debate about the future of Nigeria at a time when many Nigerians and lovers of Nigeria are wondering whether and when Nigeria would ever fulfil its undoubted potential. Unlike many publications that focus only on setting out the problems, Fayemi's book goes further to outline practical suggestions for tackling some of the thorniest issues in our polity today. I have enjoyed reading the book 'Unfinished Greatness' and would recommend it to all.





NEWS FROM THE STATES

NEWS BRIEF



Gov. Bagudu

Gov. Bagudu Assures Victims of Bandits' Attack in Shanga LGA of Assistance

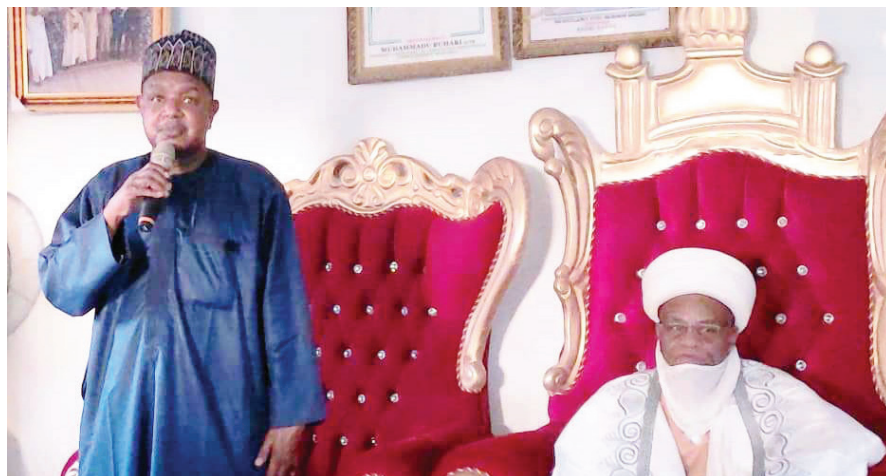
Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu says the state government will assist the victims of the recent bandits' attack in Shanga Local Government of the state. Bagudu said that assorted relief materials, including food items and other domestic needs will be distributed to all the victims.

Gov. Bagudu disclosed this when he visited Tungar Zarumai and Bakin Turu villages in Shanga local Government Area of Yauri Emirate to sympathise with them over the recent attack by bandits. According to the Chairman of the APC Governors' Forum, "all efforts will be geared towards alleviating the suffering of the victims.

"We are here to condole with you over the unfortunate deaths recorded as a result of the attack, while we are also commiserating with all those who were injured. All those who had also fled due to fears would soon be reunited with their various families."

The governor vowed that efforts would be sustained to restore peace and tranquillity to the affected areas, as well as other troubled parts of the state. The Kebbi state Governor further stated that efforts were also being intensified by the state government and the security agencies to recover the abducted persons, hale and hearty.

Kebbi Govt to Award Contract for Construction of Township roads, Jumuat Mosque



Kebbi State Governor, Abubakar Atiku Bagudu and Alhaji Hudu DanMalan, the traditional ruler of Fakai, at the Palace of the Chiefdom

Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu says the State Government will award contract for the construction of township roads in Fakai town, in a fortnight. The Chairman of the APC Governors' Forum stated this on Thursday, when he visited Fakai town and met the newly elected Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors of Fakai at the local Government Secretariat.

"Fakai is the only town we have not constructed township roads and let me assure you that this will be done in the next two weeks. This is to add to the structures of the town, as well as boost the socio-economic development of the people in the area," the governor added.

Bagudu stated that the visit was partly to felicitate with the elected local Government Council and congratulate them just as he did to Council members of Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area, as well as to renew the confidence of the people in the area.

He added, "so I am here to greet the people and congratulate the newly elected local governments chairmen, their deputies and councillors in this area. I also want to remind them to abide by their oaths of office that are sacrosanct. I am also again appealing to the people to assist them in abiding with these oaths of office.

"They are now leaders of all, those who elected them and otherwise. They should be fair to all." Bagudu further urged the local government leaders to fully under-

stand their budgeting processes and run an open government.

He also called on them to assess their comparative advantages and always work in line with the yearnings and aspirations of the people and hold regular meetings.

"Fakai is blessed with gold deposits and natural resources, I want you all particularly the councillors to take advantage of the resources for the benefit of people," he advised.

Bagudu also informed the gathering that he has directed the construction of the Jumuat Mosque in Fakai town.

Earlier, the Chairman of Fakai Local Government Area, Umaru Magaji Marafa and the State House of Assembly member representing the area, Hon. Lawal Haruna Gele all expressed their delight with the visit of the Governor.

Marafa particularly thanked the Governor for felicitating with them over their recent election.

The Fakai Chiefdom also thanked Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu for awarding contract for reconstruction of Fakai Jumuat Mosque. In his remarks, Governor Bagudu appreciated the unwavering loyalty and cooperation of Fakai Chiefdom.

Bagudu also lamented the lingering security challenge in the area promising not to relent in ensuring that peace returned to the area and appealed for more patience and cooperation from all, in order to support his administration in overcoming the insecurity bedeviling the area.

Scenes from the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness Envisioning and New Nigeria" at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja



Author/ Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi



Former Head of State/ Chairman of Occasion, General Yakubu Gowon (rtd); flanked by the Author/ Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi. (left) and wife, Erelu Bisi Fayemi; at the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness Envisioning and New Nigeria" at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja



Lagos State Gov, Babajide Sanwo-Olu and the DG, Nigeria's Gov Forum (NGF) Asishana Okauru at the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness Envisioning and New Nigeria" at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja



L-R: Edo State Deputy Governor, Philip Shaibu; Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun; Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Keynote Speaker, Prof Adebayo Olukoshi; Ekiti State First Lady, Erelu Bisi Fayemi; Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Festus Kayamu (SAN); Author/ Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu; and Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq; at the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness Envisioning and New Nigeria" at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja



I-R: Author/ Ekiti State Gov, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Kano State Gov; Former Head of State/ Chairman of Occasion, General Yakubu Gowon (rtd) shaking hands with the book reviewer Dr Joe Abah



L-R: Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola; former Osun State Governor, Chief Bisi Akande; Representative of President Muhammadu Buhari/ Chief of Staff to the President, Prof Ibrahim Gambari



L-R: Ogun State Gov, Dapo Abiodun; Lagos State Gov, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Author/ Ekiti State Gov, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Kano State Gov, Abdulahi Umar Ganduje; Edo State Deputy Gov, Philip Shaibu at the public presentation of "Unfinished Greatness Envisioning and New Nigeria" at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

BREAK THE

Every March 8th, communities around the world gather to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD). It is a time to reflect on the status of women and highlight the many areas in which their rights are still being undermined and assess progress made. It is a day for governmental and non-governmental actors, corporate bodies, development partners and social movements to make commitments to close gender gaps and address the many challenges women still confront in public and private.

The theme for IWD 2022 as established by the United Nations is 'Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow'. In order to achieve this, we are asked to 'Break the Bias'. The progress of women continues to meet with numerous obstacles because of prejudice and injustice, and the 2022 theme has been aptly chosen to address this. In Nigeria, women's rights activists, civil society organisations and women in politics and leadership have been drawing attention to the many ways in which Nigerian women are excluded from politics and decision making. Over the past three electoral cycles (2011, 2015, 2019) the number of women in the National Assembly has been in steady

decline. There are currently 109 Senators in Nigeria, with only 7 women. The House of Representatives has 360 members with only 13 women. There are at least 14 State Houses of Assembly with no women at all. There are no female Governors. These disturbing statistics show that there is a deep-rooted bias against women holding leadership positions, and if urgent steps are not taken, this picture will continue to go from bad to worse.

On March 1st 2022, Nigerian women received very disappointing news from the National Assembly. The ongoing Constitutional Amendment exercise currently has 68 amendments up for debate. There are 5 Bills that seek to ensure gender justice and fairness. The Bills are:

! A Bill to create additional seats for women to increase women's representation in the Senate and House of Representatives. This Bill will level the playing field and lead to a significant number of women in the National Assembly, which currently stands at 5%. The Bill was rejected.

! A Bill to enable Nigerian women transfer citizenship to foreign husbands, a right that every Nigerian man married to a foreign spouse enjoys. The Bill was rejected.

! A Bill to ensure Affirmative Action of at least 35% in political party administration and appointive positions across Federal and State levels. The Bill was rejected.

! A Bill to ensure a minimum of 20% Ministerial or Commissioner nominees are women. The Bill was rejected.

! A Bill to allow a woman become an indigene of her husband's State after five years of marriage. The Bill was rejected.

Our interpretation of what transpired with this pattern of voting at the National Assembly on March 1st 2022, is that the progress of Nigerian women has been rejected. All the proposed constitutional amendments were meant to end bias against women and ensure the minimization, if not total removal, of barriers millions of women face on the basis of their gender. We hereby condemn in no uncertain terms this brazen discrimination against Nigerian women. As half of the population of the country, our voices and our lives matter. There can be no development without the full and equal participation of women in all spheres, and any country that continues to deliberately undermine the advancement of women, is simply stifling its own advancement.

As Governors' Wives, we hereby commit to the following:

! Ongoing engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to support the proposed Constitutional Amend-



ments that will give us a gender-friendly constitution in Nigeria

! Pressure on Federal and State lawmakers for them to do the right thing and be true representatives of the people, with women constituting at least 50%

! Advice to our husbands the Governors for them to increase opportunities for women in politics and decision-making

! Advocacy with political party leaders to ensure that women in political parties can enjoy a level playing field

! Support for women's rights organisations who are at the forefront of demands, particularly the WOMANIFESTO platform that has been leading these activities

! Solidarity with the handful of women at the National Assembly, who bravely continue to push for these reforms against all odds ! Partnerships with local and international development partners who are

supportive of all the strides Nigerian women are making to ensure an end to gender bias As individual State First Ladies and as a collective, we will continue to promote and protect the rights of women and girls in all that we do, from policy interventions to grassroots community action.

We thank and commend our Matron, HE Dr Aisha Buhari, First Lady of Nigeria, for her leadership on these issues and for taking the time to go to the National Assembly in support of these Bills. We also thank HE Mrs Dolapo Osinbajo, Wife of the Vice-President for also attending the National Assembly hearings. We acknowledge the commitment and hard work of the Minister for Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen and we thank her for all her efforts.

As another March 8th comes upon us, we charge Nigerian women to rise and demand that all the political, economic, social and cultural biases that keep eroding our dreams and that of our daughters be brought to an end. Our beloved country Nigeria belongs to all of us, men and women, boys and girls.

To commemorate IWD 2022, some members of NGWF will participate in the Abuja and Lagos #Occupy National Assembly rallies. Other NGWF members will take part in similar activities in their States.

Happy International Women's Day
HE Erelu Bisi Fayemi, First Lady Ekiti State
Chair, Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum





COMMUNIQUE

ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY 2022

We, the members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum at our second meeting of the year 2022, deliberated on several matters of national importance and concluded as follows:

1. Members received a presentation from the Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Service (FIRS) and Chairman of the Joint Tax Board (JTB), Mr. Muhammad M. Nami, on the national Data for Tax Initiative. The Data for Tax (D4T) initiative envisages an ecosystem where financial and non-financial data on all individuals and economic transactions will be collated into a central National Tax Data Bank with the National Identification Number (NIN) as the primary unifying code. Members pledged their support for the project which is aimed at expanding the country's tax net to at least 90% of all eligible taxable persons and committed to collaborating with the JTB to increase the country's aggregate tax revenue by up to 200% as envisaged.

2. The National Convenor of the UN Food Systems and Permanent Secretary of Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Olusola Idowu, delivered a presentation on the National Pathway to Food Systems Transformation. The role of Governors in the plan is to prioritize the establishment of farm settlement estates for groups of smallholder producers, including women and youths, to increase the supply of farm inputs, the use of machinery, access to extension services, and market access. The Forum affirmed its commitment to the ideals of the programme which many states are already pursuing and committed to working with the federal government to expand the development of these settlements across the country.

3. Mr Alex Okoh, Director General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE),

briefed the State governors on the proposed sale of five (5) power plants under the Niger Delta Power

Holding Company (NDPHC). The presentation was part of the consultative process with State governments who are shareholders of the plants.

4. The Forum also received a presentation on the status of the country's digital identification programme from Engr. Aliyu A. Aziz, Director General/Chief Executive Officer of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC). To strengthen the national enrollment exercise which has so far seen the issuance of over 74 million national identification numbers (NIN) to Nigerians across the country, Governors pledged to support the programme through a string of measures, including support for sensitization activities, integration of NIN in state services and collaboration with telecoms providers to improve network infrastructure for sustained identity registration and authentication. Governors re-echoed the need to complete the harmonization and integration of databases, to reduce the carriage of multiple 2 Communiqué identifications (IDs) by citizens noting that being able to uniquely identify persons is extremely important for social security and cross state border management. NIMC is to liaise with State Governments through its various State Coordinators in addition to working with the NGF Secretariat.

5. A programme update on NG-CARES was delivered by the NGF Secretariat's Programme Manager, Mrs. Firo Elhassan Kaka, on the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) programme. All 36 States of the federation have already received letters of eligibility for the programme, and an evaluation cycle set at June 2020 for the verification

of States' performances in meeting the programme's disbursement linked indicators (DLIs).

6. The NGF Secretariat's Health Adviser, Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab also delivered an update on the country's health security interventions, particularly on the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Project (COPREP) and the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHPP). Members also discussed the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lassa fever outbreak, the need to improve the quality of Polio campaigns, as well as the set-up of State Emergency Medical Services and Ambulance Services (SEMSA) with accredited health facilities and requisite personnel.

7. From the 23rd – 25th February 2022, State governors will be joined by a delegation from Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, with the aim of deepening the government's engagement on routine immunization, health system strengthening and COVID19 vaccination in the country.

8. Finally, the Forum congratulated the outgoing Governor of Anambra State Mr. Willie Obiano who joined the NGF meeting for the last time before he hands over to his successor Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo on 17th March 2022. Governor Obiano was applauded by his colleagues for his impressive performance in Anambra State and his contributions to the growth of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, and particularly for significantly enhancing governance outcomes for the people of Anambra State and for overseeing a smooth transition to the incoming governor

Governor Kayode Fayemi
Chairman, Nigeria Governors'
Forum
16th February 2022



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Gov. Lalong, ABU Law Class of 1990 Condole Family of Late Prof. Ayua

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has described former Solicitor-General of the Federation, Prof. Ignatius Akaayar Ayua, SAN, OFR, as a scholar of repute and a man of integrity who combined academic prowess with administrative excellence and political sagacity.

Governor Lalong who visited the family of the one-time Dean, Faculty of Law and Deputy Vice Chancellor Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, in company of some of his classmates of ABU Law Class of 1990, said the late Prof. Ayua impacted a lot of people particularly the students he taught, mentored, and inspired throughout his teaching and public service career.

He recalled how the late legal luminary insisted on excellence, honesty, the rule of law, justice and fairness in all his dealings in and out of the classroom, which motivated his students to be passionate in replicating his legacies many years after graduation.

Lalong said Prof. Ayua was in particular a source of pride for people of the old Benue-Plateau State and the Northern Region having distinguished himself in the legal profession and served as the Director General of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies among other responsibilities.

He urged his widow, Hon. Justice Phoebe Ayua, of the FCT High Court and the children to take solace in the fact that their father lived a resourceful life and impacted many people across the nation which constitutes a good legacy that will continue to speak for him even in death.



Lalong

Enhanced Eye Health Program: Plateau State to Partner Sightsavers



Governor Simon Bako Lalong and the Country Director of Sightsavers Nigeria and Ghana, Dr. Sunday Isiyaku at the Government House Jos

Plateau State Government is to partner Sightsavers, an international organisation in establishing a comprehensive eye health program throughout the State.

Governor Simon Bako Lalong stated this while receiving the Country Director of Sightsavers Nigeria and Ghana, Dr. Sunday Isiyaku, late last month, at the Government House, Jos.

He said the partnership is based on his earlier visit to the United Kingdom where he interacted with the global leaders of the organisation and a subsequent request for the partnership aimed at addressing the challenges of eye health in Plateau State, particularly in the rural areas.

Lalong said one of his passions is to see that people who are living with disabilities in any form get assistance and reprieve through deliberate steps such as the one being taken in the partnership with Sightsavers.

He thanked the team for the visit and assured them that the Plateau State Government was ready

to play its part in the partnership by paying its counterpart funding and also making facilities and personnel available for training and actual operation.

Earlier, Country Director Sightsavers Nigeria and Ghana Dr. Isiyaku said they were in Plateau on the directive of the global office which responded to the communication sent to it by the Governor for partnership.

He said a three-year partnership is being proposed and will support the establishment of a State-owned comprehensive eye health program that is well coordinated, accessible, affordable and sustainable, based on national policies and guidelines for the over 4 million people of Plateau State.

Dr. Isiyaku said in 2021, a survey was carried out which showed that there was a significant gap in eye health in Plateau State which needs to be addressed immediately to save many citizens from going blind. This he said will involve manpower training, improvement of infrastructure and advocacy.

Gov. Lalong Lauds Senate Green Light for Law School Campus in Plateau State

Governor Simon Bako Lalong has welcomed the decision of the Nigerian Senate to create a Campus of the Nigerian Law School in Plateau State as it passed the Bill amending the Legal Education Act to create 6 new campuses across the country.

Lalong said the decision by the Senate is highly commendable as it will further strengthen the training of Nigerian legal professionals and reduce the challenges faced by law graduates in attending the Law School which is a prerequisite for call to the Bar.

He said "I strongly commend the Senate for this decision and the choice of Plateau State as a host of one of the new campuses. This is a right choice considering the fact that Plateau has been

a leading producer of lawyers in Nigeria with the University of Jos churning out many graduates who have gone ahead to make the nation proud in the Bench, the Bar and other sectors. Only recently, we finalised plans to establish a new Law Faculty at the Plateau State University Bokoos to expand the training of lawyers in the State and nation at large."

While expressing optimism that President Muhammadu Buhari will not hesitate to give his assent to the amended law, the Governor assured that Plateau State is ready to host the new Law School Campus as it is a home of learning supported by good weather, hospitable people and enough infrastructure to support the Institution.



Gombe Science & Tech. Varsity Upgrade:

Historic PPP Agreement Signed with Malaysia's Lincoln University

While the nation's tertiary education sector maybe taking a hit, Gombe State is apparently showing the way forward. Like a streak of light in darkness, the Gombe State Government has signed a Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement with the Lincoln University College of Malaysia to upscale academic activities at the Gombe State University of Science and Technology Kumo.

The specialized Gombe State University was established but abandoned by the immediate past administration in the State. Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya witnessed the ceremony where the Secretary to the State Government, Professor Ibrahim Abubakar Njodi signed on behalf of the Gombe State Government while the Founder and President of the Lincoln University College of Malaysia, Professor Amiya Bhaumik signed on behalf of his Institution.

In his address at the ceremony, Governor Yahaya described the signing of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement with Lincoln University College of Malaysia and Gombe State Government as historic.

The governor explained that the Gombe State University of Science and Technology, Kumo was established on 21st August, 2017 through the issuance of licence by the National Universities Commission (NUC) but that due to obvious reasons, full academic activities in the university could not commence.

He said, "This administration thought it wise to engage a reputable, experienced and capable private educational investor to participate in the management and development of learning and research activities at this institution in accordance with current global science and technological innovations for competitive and competence skills acquisition for our graduates.

"We engaged Lincoln University College on this and they accepted our pro-

posal to run the institution on Public Private Partnership arrangement for 30 years at the first instance," the governor said.

Governor Inuwa said the agreement will see the strengthening of the curriculum and curricular activities of the institution to international standard and best practices as demonstrated by the Lincoln University College in Malaysia for students' excellent knowledge and skills development for self-reliance and nation building.

"It will also ensure the provision of adequate funding, continuous infrastructural maintenance, development of facilities and services within the institute.

"This is part of our vision to provide sound education to our teeming youths for productive and capital development," he said.

He revealed that within the plan, Lincoln University College will establish six new faculties including Medical Sciences to provide Dentistry, Nursing, Medi-





cine and Surgery programmes.

The faculties will offer 21 First Degree, 18 Masters Degree, six Ph.D and two other certificate courses totaling 47 programmes to be run by the University.

“Our engagement resolved that profits accrued from the partnership entitled to Gombe State Government will be 10%, 20% and 30% corresponding to the first, second and third 10 years of operation respectively. The rest will extensively be used for the earmarked developments and running of the school affairs,” Governor Inuwa further clarified

On staffing, the governor remarked that Gombe State indigenes will be offered 25% of all academic staff positions. For the non-academic cadre, 70% ratio will be for state indigenes, while on admission of students, Gombe State indigenes will be offered 20 percent quota for all intakes.

“In respect of school fees payment, our students are to enjoy up to 50% cost reduction. This is to encourage them partake in this would-be state of the art learning centre,” he added.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya expressed gratitude to Her Excellency, Hajiya Hajarah Ibrahim Salim, Nigeria's High Commissioner to Malaysia for her efforts in achieving the partnership. “Our sincere and profound gratitude also goes to Malaysian High Commissioner to Nigeria, the President and Management of Lincoln University for seeing

this PPP coming to reality,” he said.

President and Founder of Lincoln University College of Malaysia Professor Amiya Bhaumik said the setting up of Lincoln University in Kumo was to bring the ideals and professional mindfulness of the College to the people of Nigeria.

He said the University will start with medical science courses because of the irrefutable fact that health is wealth, expressing the hope that the citizens of Gombe can take advantage of the opportunity provided to place Nigeria on the global map.

The President of the Lincoln University College of Malaysia said September 2022 has been slated to kick start academic activities, calling for support from all and sundry to actualize the dream.

“I am here not for profit or loss but to seek for your prayers and support. Lincoln University will deliver quality education to bridge the inflow of Nigerian students going to Malaysia and other countries to study,” the President said.

The Deputy Executive Director, Administration of the National Universities Commission (NUC) Chris Maiyaki said the commission will support every move to make the take-off of the University a huge success.

The speaker, Gombe State House of Assembly, Abubakar Mohammed Lugerewo assured that the House will support the University with enabling legislation that will guarantee its

smooth take-off and eventual operation in the State.

The Nigerian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Hajara Salim said the signing of the Public Private Partnership to scale up academic activities at the University of Science and Technology Kumo is a clear testament of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya's political sagacity in ensuring lasting and meaningful legacy.

Earlier in his address of welcome, the Gombe State commissioner of Higher Education, Meshack Audu Lauco assured the Malaysian academics of safety and security in Gombe State. He said the feat for the PPP agreement would not have been possible without the sound leadership qualities of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya.

Former Minister of Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar who moved the vote of thanks on behalf of Akko Community, appreciated Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya for bringing life to the hitherto abandoned institution, assuring him of the unflinching support of the people of Akko Local Government Area towards the actualization of the project.

Highlight of the event was conferment of traditional title of Magajin Birnin Akko on the President of Lincoln University College of Malaysia, Professor Amiya Bhaumik by the Emir of Akko, His Royal Highness, Muhammad Umar Atiku.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Gov. Bagudu Lays Foundation Stone of Sarki Muhammadu Bello Mosque

Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu of Kebbi State has laid the foundation stone for construction of Sarki Muhammadu Bello Mosque in Koko, Koko Besse Local Government Area of Kebbi State.

At the foundation laying ceremony on Saturday, January 29, Governor Bagudu announced that the state government had paid the contractor N220 million for the project.

His words: "We are here today Saturday, 29th of January, standing to lay foundation for construction of a new mosque in Koko, the Sarki Muhammadu Bello Mosque. Government gave approval for the construction of the mosque as well as released N220 mil-

lion for the project from start to completion."

The APC Progressives Governors' Forum Chairman also happily told hundreds of people who came to witness the historic ceremony that Kebbi State Government has approved the construction of a new market opposite the mosque to boost trade and commerce in the area.

Bagudu explained that N314 million was approved for the construction of the market adding that the citing of the market to another location was in order to decongest the area and pave way for the smooth vehicular movement. He prayed for the successful completion of the projects in time for the

benefit of humanity.

In a another development, Governor Bagudu was earlier in Besse where he attended the wedding fatiha of Mubarak Nasiru and Fauziya Abubakar Imam, the daughter of Hon. Abubakar Imam, member representing Koko Besse Constituency of Kebbi State House of Assembly.

A dowry of Fifty thousand naira was paid by the family of the groom before the marriage solemnization. The wedding was attended by top Government functionaries, members of the State House of Assembly, Alhaji Ibrahim Bagudu, Alhaji Faruk Musa Yaro (Enabo) PA to the Governor as well as politicians.

On his way back, the governor, alongside the immediate past Governor of the State, Alhaji Saidu Nasamu Dakingari, made a stop-over at Rara Market in Rara, along Jega/ Maiyama/ Koko road to interact with vegetable farmers who specialise in the production of hot pepper and encouraged them not to relent in their effort.

He said both Kebbi and Sokoto States were proud of what they were doing to boost the economy of the two states. Also addressing the farmers, Alhaji Saidu Nasamu Dakingari, former governor of the State advised them to continue to strive for productivity.

Gov. Bagudu Swears in 21 LGAs Chairmen, Calls For Hard Work, Fairness

History was again recorded in Kebbi State recently as the state Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu swore in 21 elected Local Government Areas Chairmen and their deputies, amidst pomp and pageantry.

Bagudu also charged them to be dedicated, hard-working, honest and fair to all, even as he reminded the new officials to take their entire local governments as their constituencies.

According to the Governor, "You should also know that your elections were Divinely Ordained and not because of your individual triumphs. The oaths of office have just elevated you from the realm of your respective political parties to the realm of leadership.

" You should also study your oaths of office and seek the support of all your loved ones.



Bagudu Approves Upscaling of Free Cervical Cancer Screening to 35,000 Women

Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu of Kebbi State has approved the scaling up of cervical cancer screening from 5000 to 35,000 women in Kebbi State.

This was announced on Tuesday in Birnin Kebbi by the Hon. Commissioner of Health, Jafar Muhammad .

According to him, the governor gave the approval in order to enable more eligible women across the state have access to the ongoing screening exercise. He said, "the devastating nature of cervical cancer requires prompt, deliberate and decisive action, in order to prevent and control cervical cancer in women.

"His Excellency believes that cancer is preventable and its early detection makes it easier to treat."

The Commissioner further stated that the governor has approved the engagement of a competent Consultant to ensure the success of the program.

The commissioner disclosed that, already, 100 health workers across the state had been trained to facilitate the smooth running of the program. Jafar appealed to all women in the state to take advantage of the program with a view to knowing their status.

He also enjoined traditional and religious leaders to sensitize the citizens particularly women towards leveraging on the free screening and treatment provided by the program.

It will be recalled that in July, 2021, the Kebbi State Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Medicaid Cancer Foundation (MCF) ,the World Health Organization, WHO and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to conduct cervical cancer screening targeting 5000 eligible women in the state.



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Geometric Power will Turn Around The Economic Fortunes of our People – Gov. Ikpeazu

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu recently inspected the facilities at the Geometric Power Project at the Osisioma Industrial Layout, describing the Power Project as the “fulcrum upon which the industrial development of Aba, Abia and the South East will revolve”.

According to the Governor, “two years from today, the story of economic development in Aba and Abia State will take a completely different turn. Things will never be the same again around here and anyone who hasn't concluded plans to have presence here is already late”.

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu assured Professor Nnaji that the State Government will promptly construct the road leading into the plant. Earlier, the Chairman/CEO of Geometric Power Ltd, Professor Barth Nnaji and his wife, received the Governor and introduced him to key personnel of the company.

Before taking the Governor on a tour of the plant with its mega facilities, Professor Nnaji thanked Governor Ikpeazu for his consistent support which led to the revival of the project. He recounted how the Governor stood by the company and travelled with him to meet with different international institutional investors, providing the requisite support from the host state Government.

According to Professor Nnaji, this project wouldn't have seen the light of day without



the support of Governor Okezie Ikpeazu. He reaffirmed that Abia State Government owns 5% equity in the Project.

He told the Governor that currently the entire Aba gets a maximum of 50 megawatts of power from the National Grid but that the plant has a capacity to produce 140 megawatts of electricity which is more than enough to provide steady and sustainable power to Aba and its environs.

He further told the Governor that basically all the required support infrastructure was in place, including the 17km pipeline that takes gas from Owaza in Ukwa West LGA to the

plant and that six months from now, the plant will be commissioned for supply of power to the people of Abia State.

Professor Nnaji stated that long before the contractual problem that led to the stalling of the project, the sum of 500 Million Dollars had already been invested in the project, adding that this is the largest economic project in the entire South East of Nigeria.

He also told the Governor that the company was working towards building an estate for their workers within the industrial layout. The Governor was later taken round the massive power plant on inspection by Professor Nnaji.

Gov. Ikpeazu inaugurates two Major Gully Erosion Remediation Projects

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu recently officially commissioned the Gully Erosion Remediation Projects at Amuzukwu-Ibeku in Umuahia North LGA and Amuda - Achara Isuochi in Umunneochi LGA.

Also inaugurated as part of the projects were a 2.1 kilometres Road each constructed at Amuzukwu Umuahia and Amuda Isuochi as solar-powered street light, multi-purpose solar dryer and a Civic Hall provided by the Governor in collaboration with the World Bank through NEWMAP for the people.

Commissioning the projects at the various venues, Governor Okezie Ikpeazu said the problem of gully erosion is a major issue confronting some communities in the State, especially in Abia North. He noted that gully erosion threatens families, public infrastructure including schools among others, adding that the effect is usually devastating.

Dr. Ikpeazu maintained that gully erosion eats gradually and steadily and may have seri-

ous consequences in future and expressed joy that the devastating effect of the gully erosion in both Amuzukwu and Amuda Isuochi have been checked.

According to the Governor, the menace of the gully erosion in those sites were beyond the capacity of the immediate communities and State government, hence, his government's collaboration with the World Bank through the NEWMAP to arrest them permanently. He also expressed happiness that the road constructions and other projects done for the communities by his intervention have restored life, economy and relief for the people.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Environment, Chief Sam Nwogu and the Abia NEWMAP Project Coordinator, Engr. Izuchukwu Onwughara disclosed that the gully erosion sites were among the first five prioritized sites by the Abia State Government at the inception of NEWMAP in 2012 but work could not commence due to unavailability of counterpart

funds until Governor Ikpeazu in 2015 approved the payment of counterpart funds for the two projects which activated the injection of more funds which made the intervention to take place.

They informed that apart from the erosion remediation, and road construction, the project equally covered construction of civic centre, a borehole, livelihood enhancement programme and multi-purpose solar dryer for the indigenes. They added that the projects which started in 2016 were completed in record time and according to specifications. The cost of the two projects were put at N1.3 bn for Amuzukwu and N750m for Amuda Isuochi.

Also speaking, The Umunneochi LGA Chairman, Chief Ifeanyi Madu commended Governor Ikpeazu for his resolve to remediate and control the gully erosions and carry out other projects in Umunneochi LGA and the State in Nigeria and assured him of their continuous support.



Group photograph at the Interactive Dialogue with state governors, GAVI and International partners

NGF, OSSAP-SDGs Cooperation Target 17 Goals

The NGF Secretariat is working with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs) towards successful implementation of the 17 goals and their respective targets at the subnational level using the state peer review mechanisms and other engagements.

A recent meeting with UNDP (United Nation Development Programme) took place in December 2021. The purpose of

this meeting was to see how to optimise the performance of SDGs in Nigeria. The outcome of the meeting was to set up of special Centres/SDG hubs in six geo-political zones.

The criteria for selecting the states to set up these zones include: proximity to other states in the region, level of implementation of the social policy fund in the states, access to executives and peace and security in said state.

Based on these criteria the following hubs for the geo-political zones were

chosen. Northwest: Sokoto State, North-east: Gombe State, North Central: Nasarawa State, Southwest: Lagos State, Southeast: Enugu State, South-South: Delta State.

NGF is to work alongside OSSAP regarding getting the above-mentioned states to implement their work plans. States need to factor in their SDGs in their 10-year development plan so they can be streamlined. The OSSAP needs the NGF's help to assist in stirring a regional meeting for states.



Representatives of states at the Interactive Dialogue



NEWS FROM THE STATES

Refrain from Acts Capable Of Endangering National Unity, Gov. Bagudu Urges Journalists

Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has urged Journalists in the country to refrain from any act capable of endangering national unity, just as they should work towards bolstering peace and security.

Bagudu gave the charge late February when he opened a one-day Capacity Building Workshop for information Officers of the State Ministry of Information and Culture on Contemporary Methodology of News Gathering and Reporting.

The Chairman of the APC Governors' Forum said, "As newsmen, your position in the society is prime, therefore, must refrain from any act capable of endangering national unity."

Represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Babale Umar Yauri, Bagudu said: "The Press, popularly known as the 'fourth estate of the realm' is saddled with statutory role and responsibilities of educating and enlightening people on Government policies and programmes.

"Therefore, the press is the mirror through which Government policies, actions and inactions are viewed, measured, monitored and evaluated. For this reason among many others, the press needs to be educated, enlightened and well trained for it to diligently carry out its responsibilities of informing and educating people about Government policies.

"This is what informed the decision of approving the staging of this capacity building workshop taking place. We are faced with Security, Economic and Political challenges, among others, bedevilling the nation. Of more serious concern, is the challenge to Security and National Unity.

Kebbi Reiterates Commitment to Supporting Women Reach Their Potential



Kebbi State women have been assured of getting full support of the state government to realize their potential in the society.

The Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, represented by Babale Umar Yauri, Secretary to the State Government, stated this while declaring open the regional conference of women in surveying organized by Northern Women in Surveying in partnership with the State Government.

He said the present administration has remained committed to involving Women in decision making in all aspects of human endeavor.

According to him also, the State Government has provided them with enabling environment to make their meaningful contributions to the growth and development of the society.

While commending the association for organizing the conference, he said Kebbi State was ready to support any profession desirous of bringing development to people and the nation.

He lamented the limited number of female in Surveying, urging them to key into the profession. "The State Government is committed to sensitizing youths, particularly the Girl Child to study Surveying and Geo-informatics at the early stage of their lives," he said.

The Governor promised to employ the sur-

veyors who have successfully completed their studies and are seeking employment.

In his key note address, the Surveyor-General of the Federation, Dr. Abduganiyu Adeyemi -Adebomehin, identified youth empowerment as a critical element towards ensuring a crime-free society.

The Surveyor-General, who was represented by Alhaji Shehu Rufa'i, said: "Women as we are aware are mothers of the society, their empowerment is key to driving a crime free society, hence, the theme of this seminar is crucial at this particular period of our country's challenge.

"This seminar will certainly redirect the concept of our women in terms of the profession of Surveying and Geo-informatics."

He lauded the high record of achievements by WIS executives through advocacy, enlightening women on economic reliance, reliability and confidence in geospatial solution as an empowerment possibility for women and girls in today's Nigerian economy.

The National Coordinator, Survey, (Mrs) Olokeogun Damilola appreciated the Kebbi State Governor and Surveyor-General of the State for their doggedness and magnanimity in accepting to host the event.

KEBBI

Bagudu Promises to Reconstruct Nana Asmau Gov Girls College, Kamba

Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has assured students of Nana Asmau Government Girls College Kamba that Government would embark on the reconstruction of the school this week following fire outbreak which razed down one of the hostels.

He assured the students that work for the repairs and reconstruction of the school would start in earnest this week. His words: "I am here with my entourage to sympathise

with you over the unfortunate fire incident. I wish to thank the Principal, teachers, Sarkin Shiko, the security and all the good Samaritans who came and assisted you.

"I went round the damaged hostel which was gutted by fire and saw the level of destruction of the entire building and I equally saw your burnt properties. Government would start work this week to repair and reconstruct all the affected buildings in your school."

Bagudu charged the students to remain

focused on their studies, work together and maintain discipline.

He announced to the students the State Government's determination, in collaboration with World Bank, to fully equip and upgrade the school with all the necessary learning and entrepreneurship equipment through a program called, "Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGILE)". "This initiative will be very important to you in life even when you get married", he averred.



Erelu Bisi Fayemi

Woman Leader Of The Year

H.E. Erelu Bisi Fayemi, First Lady of Ekiti State, and Chairperson of the Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum has been named as the Women Leader of the Year, yesterday, at the inaugural International Women's Day Awards Gala jointly hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, European Union, British High Commission, and the Embassies of the United States of America, Germany and France, to commemorate International Women's Month. Women's History Month is an annual declared month that highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society.

The #IWDNaijaAwards is designed to celebrate women's achievements & recognizes individuals who have championed women's political and socioeconomic empowerment in Nigeria and beyond. In a statement by the UNDP office in Nigeria: "The International Women's Day Gala and Awards seeks to leverage the opportunity of the representation of 11 key countries in Nigeria by women Ambassadors to advocate for increased women representation in political and governance space, incentivise change by publicly recognising women empowerment champions, encourage decision-makers and policy makers to ensure adequate space is created for women in the spheres of policy and decision making and advance women's political and socio-economic empowerment."

In addition to having women in senior positions in the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, Nigeria is also fortunate to have women ambassadors in; the Republic of Benin, Burundi, Colombia, Cuba, European Union, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Malaysia, Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The gala event which attracted attendance of many accomplished women from across civil society, academia, government, the private sector, e.t.c., featured the presentation of awards to deserving individuals in recognition of their efforts and contribution to championing and advancing women's issues and agenda. Erelu Bisi Fayemi is a globally renowned feminist writ-



er, policy advocate, gender and development specialist, and social entrepreneur. In 2001, she co-founded the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), a foundation which has supported the work of over 4,000 women's rights organisations in 42 African countries, including Nigeria. In her role as the First Lady in Ekiti State, she has led campaigns to enact laws to protect women and girls from physical, economic, mental or sexual violence and improve their status in the state. She is a prolific writer and CEO of Above Whispers, an online community for women. In 2021, she was named amongst 107 Nigerian women "choosing to challenge the systems and structures that perpetuate gender in-

equality in the country", by Babab for Women's Human Rights.

In her acceptance speech, Erelu Fayemi said: "I am extremely honoured and humbled to receive the Woman Leader of the Year Award. I am genuinely delighted to be nominated in the company of such great women, all of whom are equally deserving of this prestigious award. This award is dedicated to all Nigerian Women. I would like us all to remember that: we are worthy; we are powerful; we have contributed significantly; we are important; we matter."

Funmi Ajala
Senior Special Assistant
(Media)
Office of the First Lady, Ekiti State



SECRETARIAT NEWS

Nigeria Govs' Wives Forum Backs NDLEA, Seeks Anti-Drug War Partnership



The Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum has declared total support for the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, and its ongoing war against abuse and trafficking of illicit drugs, while seeking a formidable partnership that will secure the states and Nigeria from the menace of drug sub-culture.

This was the highlight of a meeting between the leadership of the forum and the Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd.) at the Agency's National Headquarters in Abuja on Thursday 3rd February 2022. Ekiti State First Lady and Chairperson of NGWF, Erelu Bisi Fayemi led the delegation, which includes First Lady of Kwara, Mrs. Olufolake Abdurasaq; Imo, Mrs. Chioma Uzodinma and Yobe, Hajiya Hafsat Kollere Buni.

Welcoming the governors' wives, Gen. Marwa expressed appreciation for the visit, adding that the interest shown by them in the country's drug problem shows their humanity and commitment to support their husbands engender a better society devoid of drug-induced criminalities.

"Let me put it on record that President Mu-

hammadu Buhari is the number one drug fighter in Nigeria today because of all he has done to ensure the country wins the war against abuse and trafficking of illicit drugs. As such, we count on the states especially the governors' wives as the pillars and partners through which citizens across the states, local councils and communities are mobilised to reject this ravaging sub-culture, he stated.

He charged the governors wives to work with their husbands to make the drug problem a major priority on their agenda; support the state commands of NDLEA with logistics; set up rehabilitation centres; provide jobs and skills for the youths; massive advocacy campaigns on state-owned media houses and mandatory drug tests for students, workers as well as intending couples among others.

In her remarks, Erelu Fayemi said they came on the visit to inform Gen. Marwa of their collective decision to adopt anti-drug abuse as a flagship project to address the alarming problem of drug abuse in our communities.

According to her, "We are therefore here today to pledge our support for NDLEA to ensure that our country and communities become drug

NEWS BRIEF

NGF Meets with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Dangote Foundation

Today, the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) hosted a delegation from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation led by its President, Dr Christopher Elias, and Alhaji Aliko Dangote, founder of Dangote Foundation.

The meeting deliberated extensively on resource mobilisation and collaboration at subnational levels to address the nation's healthcare needs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum look forward to continued partnership with Gates and Dangote Foundation in building better resilience and confidence in public healthcare delivery in our country.

free. We are not willing to stand by as mothers and see our children consumed by this menace."

They presented four requests, all of which were instantly granted by Gen. Marwa. Their demands include that NDLEA continues to see State First Ladies as important allies in furtherance of the objectives of the agency; involve them in the fight against drugs as Champions in their respective States; help build the capacity of State First Ladies and their teams to be effective partners in the war against drug abuse and involve them in national and State campaigns against drugs.

In their contributions, the First Ladies of Kwara, Imo and Yobe expressed their willingness to key into the War Against Drug Abuse, WADA advocacy agenda and the National Drug Control Master Plan, NDCMP, of the agency in their respective states.

Northern Govs Mourn Sardauna's Grandson

The Northern Governors Forum has expressed sadness and shock over the death of the grandson of the late Premier of the Northern Region, Magajin Garin Sokoto, Alhaji Hassan Danbaba who died in Kaduna on Saturday.

Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Plateau State Simon Bako Lalong in a condolence message described the death of the Magajin Garin Sokoto as a great loss to the Sokoto Caliphate, Sokoto State, the Northern region and nation at large.

Lalong said the deceased was a highly respected traditional title holder who walked in the footsteps of his grandfather Sir Ahmadu Bello and used his influence to serve the people through every available opportunity. He said Alhaji Danbaba devoted himself to the service of his people through humility, hardwork, generosity and forthrightness.

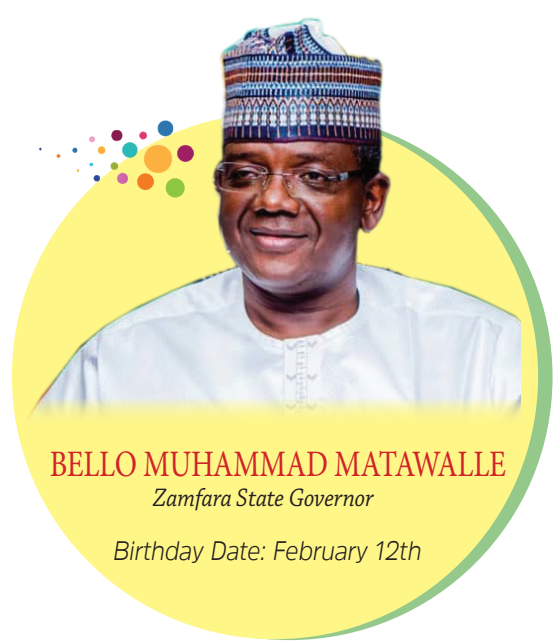
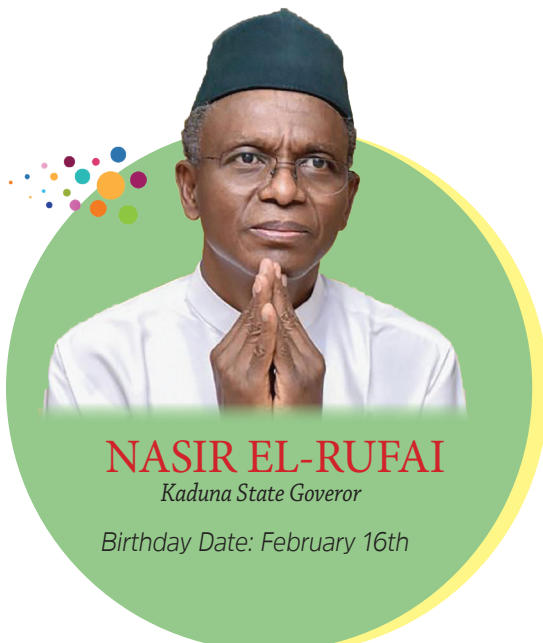
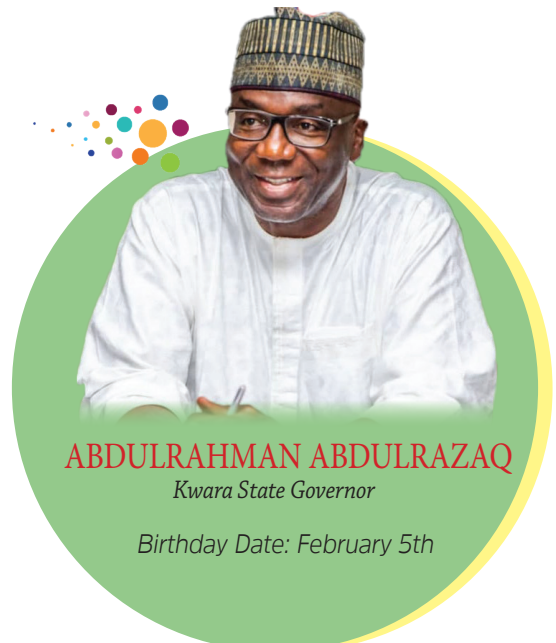
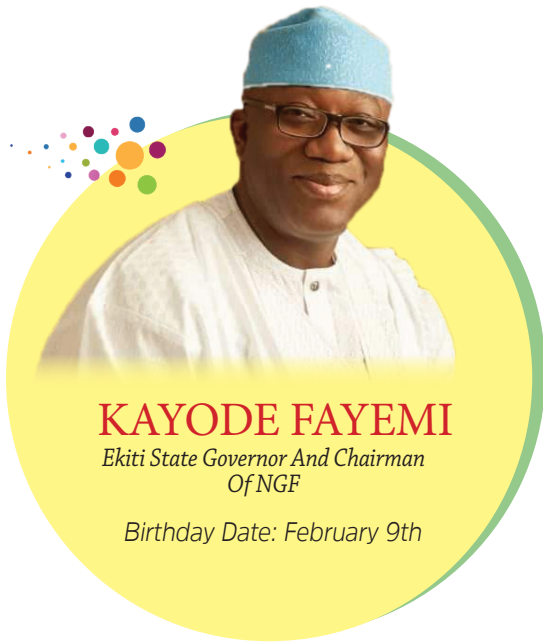
As an influential title holder in the Sokoto Caliphate, the deceased carried himself with dignity and candour,

working with other leaders within the North and other parts of the country to find solutions to the many challenges of the nation. His role in reviving agriculture particularly rice farming has been widely acknowledged.

Lalong also conveyed the heartfelt condolences of the Northern Governors to his immediate family, the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, Governor Aminu Tambuwal, the Government and people of Sokoto State.



GOVERNORS WHO CELEBRATED THEIR BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY





NEWS FROM THE STATES

Former Borno State Gov Senator Shettima Speaks: Gov Zulum's Problem is not money

I appointed him as Rector of Ramat Polytechnic Borno State; he did not build a house of his own.

I Appointed him as Borno State Commissioner for Reconstruction which I allocated 20billion Naira to construct houses for IDPs. Zulum did not build his house but was still staying in his family house in Maiduguri.

I was so shocked that I paid him an unscheduled visit only to confirm it was true. I made up my mind that day that he was going to replace me but I never informed him.

32 Borno State APC members wanted to succeed me in office; I was just laughing Knowing fully well that I had already chosen the most corruption free politician I have ever seen.

I brought the idea of him succeeding me; he vehemently rejected it and traveled out to Mecca.

He came back; I asked him again only for him to tell me he did not have money to purchase even Governorship form talk more of campaigns.

I personally purchased his nomination form and provided funds for his campaigns. Today I'm happy because I gave Borno State the best Governor ever.

© Sen Shettima true confession on Zulum. I love sharing things like this irrespective of the party, since this is the dream we all want for our dear country



Zulum

Dubai Expo: Gombe Governor Visits Nigerian Pavilion, Woos Investors



Inuwa

The Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State visited the Nigerian Pavilion at the EXPO 2020 Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), early March, 2022.

The Expo 2020 is a world exhibition of industrial goods and services, currently on-going in Dubai from 1st October, 2021 to 31st March, 2022. It was originally scheduled for October 20, 2020 to 10 April 2021, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will be recalled that President Muhammadu Buhari had in December, 2021, led a Nigerian delegation to Dubai to attend Nigeria Day and also participated in a trade and investment forum where he stressed the need to reinforce partnerships to limit the catastrophic consequences of the global surge in cases of COVID-19.

The EXPO 2020 Dubai, with the theme, "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future", provided the opportunity for Nigeria and indeed state governments and organisations to build meaningful partnerships for the betterment of their people.

There are over 20 different minerals and agricultural produce from Gombe State on display at the Nigerian Pavilion in Dubai.

During his visit, Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya interacted with the Nigerian officials as well as some prospective investors. With Gombe State's potentials in agrpreneurship, agro-allied processing and marketing brought to the fore, especially with the establishment of the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park in Dadinkowa, located within the vicinity of the completed hydropower plant, which already has 40 megawatts of power, the state is indeed a key investors' haven.

The project has also been described as big attraction for investors and industrialists, as the zone boasts of fertile agricultural land and other natural resources.

Work Progresses at the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park, Gombe

The Muhammadu Buhari Park, located at Dadinkowa, within the vicinity of the hydro power plant, when completed and operationalised, will be a hub for trade and investment. The project has been described as big attraction for investors and industrialists, as the zone boasts of fertile agricultural land and other natural resources.

The current administration of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has mapped out plans and other economic strategies that will enhance economic growth in the immediate host community, Gombe State and the nation at large.

These economic development initiatives will pave the way for both local and large-scale farmers to sell their farm produce to interested investors in their farmlands with-

out having to transport them elsewhere.

The job creation for the state teeming youths is another beneficial aspect of the initiative as well as revenue generation.

It could be recalled that Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya had last year presented the masterplan of the industrial park to President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa in Abuja and also intimated the C-in-C on the award of contract and commencement of the project there.

He explained that when completed, the park will not only boost the economic standing and stability of the State, but will create jobs for the teeming youths within and outside the State in the Agricultural production, processing, marketing and distribution among others.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum Special Library

THE LIBRARY YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR IN 2022 AND BEYOND!



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- ▶ LIBRARIES SHOULD BE THE NEW PLACE FOR INNOVATIONS
- ▶ A LIBRARY SHOULD BE A PLACE OF CREATIVITY AND IDEAS
- ▶ A LIBRARY SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF PATRONS

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A Special library which serves an organisation should be special indeed and meet the organisational goals and objectives.

The write up above captures what the new Nigeria Governors' Forum Library is all about.



The new NGF library is a place to read, learn and explore!

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