

The

EXECUTIVE

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SUMMARY

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GOVERNORS'
FORUM



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ALSO INSIDE

Update On
cVPV2
Outbreak

Advocacy that Heals



PROF. ABBA GAMBO

The African Development Bank And Its Several Interjections Into Food Security In Nigeria

The African Development Bank was founded in 1964, with constituent institutions of the:

- The African Development Bank (ADB)
- The African Development Fund (ADF) and
- The Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF)

The shareholders are the 54 African countries, called "Regional Member Countries" and 27 non-African countries called "Non Regional Members". The USA has a very substantial input and interest in the Bank.

The Headquarters is at Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Dr Akinwunmi A. Adesina is the 8th and current president of the African Development Bank, He was first elected to the office on the 28th of May 2015. He was a former Minister of Agriculture of Nigeria. Within the period of his tenure, Dr Adesina initiated the e-wallet policy, decentralization of the FMARD into regional offices, the Cassava bread experiment etc. He however succeeded in making agriculture to be "a real investment-based venture" away from the traditional hereditary-based substance agriculture to a more robust and technology driven sector. His introduction of the e-wallet for the supply of seeds and fertilizers, also brought in digitalization for the very first time in the sector.

Recently, Dr Adesina was quoted as "By 2030, the size of the food and agriculture business in Africa will reach \$1 Trillion. So, if you are thinking of how to make money, that is the sector to be in.

Dr Adesina is quite right. The covid 19 pandemic proved him right, when the only venture was Agriculture.

Similarly, the Russia/Ukraine Crisis, which started on the 24th of February, 2022 has further shown that the food industry is a very great global hub; with Wheat alone, playing a significant part of global politics.

This year, the African Development Bank has committed more than \$520 million for the Special Agro-Industrial Processing zones (SAPZ); with contributions from IFAD and the Islamic Development Bank, with 7 States namely : Cross-Rivers, Kogi, Kaduna, Ogun, Imo, Kano and Oyo with the FCT as pilots.

The SAPZ, consists of the following components:

The special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) program is a flagship African Development Bank initiative. The zones bring together the production, processing, storage, transport and marketing of commodities – including cotton and maize. This will increase productivity and competitiveness and reduce logistics costs.

The programme has four broad components: support for the development of enabling climate-adapted infrastructure for agro-industrial hubs; improving agricultural productivity

and enterprise development to enhance value chains and job creation in the SAPZ catchment areas; supporting agro-industrial zone policy and institutional development, and program coordination and management.

The African Development Bank is developing SAPZ in 18 African countries. Among the projects under implementation, there is one each in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Madagascar, Senegal and Togo and four in Ethiopia.

The SAPZ program in Nigeria is the largest, both in scale and scope. Phase 1 is being implemented over five years, beginning in 2022. This is in seven states: Cross River (cocoa, rice, and cassava); Imo (beef and dairy livestock); Kaduna (tomato, maize, and ginger); Kano (rice, tomato, groundnuts, and sesame oil); Kwara (livestock),

Ogun (Cassava, rice, poultry, and fisheries); and Oyo (cassava, soybean, rice). It is also being rolled out in the country's Abuja Federal Capital Territory (beef and dairy livestock). The program will later be rolled out in more states. States participating in the first phase were chosen based on readiness and to achieve a balance across Nigeria's six geo-political zones.

The project areas cover 19% of Nigeria's land mass and 50.4 million of the country's population. Key expected outputs of the first phase are infrastructure development for eight agro-industrial processing hubs and fifteen agricultural transformation centers.

Phase one connects 2,300 hectares of irrigated land and farms to market access roads.

There will be a supply of certified agricultural inputs and extension services. Other phase 1 outputs will be skills development for farmers and micro, small- and

medium-scale enterprises and an updated agro-industrial zone policy with a special regulatory regime.

The African Development Bank and key development partners are co-financing the first phase for a value of \$538.05 million. The African Development Bank is providing \$210 million. The Islamic Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development are jointly contributing \$310 million. The Nigerian government is providing \$18.05 million.

Given Nigeria's enormous potential for agriculture, the SAPZ program will help strengthen the country's agricultural supply chain. It supports sustainable agro-industrial development and unlocks the country's agriculture sector to promote industrialization by developing value chains for strategic livestock and crops, including rice, cassava and tomatoes.

The program will enhance the competitiveness of key selected value chains. It will achieve this through increased production, aggregation, and processing activities driven by private-sector investments.

About 1.5 million households are expected to benefit directly throughout the agricultural value chain. This includes private agribusinesses, agro-processors, smallholder farmers, agripreneurs, and agro-dealers. SAPZs will create at least 400,000 direct jobs, and a further 1.6 million indirect jobs during construction and the operational phase. Micro, small, and medium enterprises, including factories, along the value chain will create most of the jobs, along with tenant industries in the agro-industrial hubs.

With the above scenario, the president of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwunmi A. Adesina is after all right that the size of the Agribusiness in Africa will reach \$ 1 trillion in 2030.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



COVER STORY **20-21**

ADVOCACY THAT HEALS

02

THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND ITS SEVERAL INTERJECTIONS INTO FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA



04

COMMENTARY: ADVOCACY HEALS

05

A HEALTH SECURITY HARDLINER
-DR OLUTOMI MARCELLINA COKER

6-8

WORLD DIABETES DAY WITH PROFESSOR FELICIA ANUMAH



9

COP27
WHAT INFORMED OUR NEW GRANT TO NIGERIA, AFRICA
-GATES FOUNDATION



10-12

HERBAL PLANTS WILL DRIVE NIGERIA'S HEALTHCARE REVOLUTION
- PHARM. ZAINAB SHARIFF



13

A DOCTOR AND A WRITER
- DR INNOCENT VAKKAI



14

DR. MUHAMMAD MAKUSIDI: UTILITARIANISM IN HEALTHCARE



15

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE: OYO GOVERNMENT PRESENTS GENERATORS TO 351 PHCS

16

CROSS RIVER TARGETS 900,000 CHILDREN FOR 2ND PHASE OF VACCINATION AGAINST POLIO



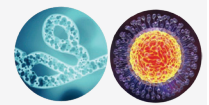
17

A MOST EXPERIENCED HEALTH AGENT



18-19

NEW DENGUE VACCINE AND POSSIBILITY OF MRNA VACCINE FOR EBOLA



22

HELPING HEALTH FINANCING THROUGH (TAKAFUL) ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES



23-25

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY: GOMBE BAGS 4 WORLD BANK/ SFTAS AWARDS

26

ZULUM GRANTS N814M TO 9,154 MSME'S AT LAUNCH OF 'BO-CARES'



27

KDSG UNVEILS BUSINESS INITIATIVE FOR TALENTED YOUTHS



28

GOMBE AT COP 27: SHARES SUCCESS STORY, SEEKS PARTNERSHIP ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



29-32

THE NGF AT FORAF



33

COURTESY VISIT BY THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' WIVES FORUM TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM SECRETARIAT



34-35

UPDATE ON CVPV2 OUTBREAK AND RESPONSE PROGRESS TO NIGERIA GOVERNORS FORUM

36

OYEBANJI INAUGURATES TWO COMMISSIONERS, NINE SPECIAL ADVISERS



37

STRENGTHENING IMMUNIZATION AND PHC SERVICES



38

EGYPTIAN INVESTORS MEET GOV. BAGUDU ON AGRICULTURE



39

BUNI: MY GOVT 'LL SUSTAIN TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY LEADERSHIP





Commentary

Advocacy Heals

The tours by the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and Governor of Sokoto State, Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, to strategic development partners, ministries and parastatals has brought a lot of comfort to the Forum. As a former Vice Chairman of the Forum under his predecessor, Fayemi, he seems to have lapped up the importance of advocacy quite appropriately.

He received very high value organizations and proved he is on top of their issues. The Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission brought its entire retinue of commissioners to the NGF Secretariat.

RMAFC was established by Decree No. 49 of 1989 and later amended by Decree 98 of 1993 (now RMAFC Act CAP R7 LFN 2004) under Section 153(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended), the Commission is listed as one of the fourteen (14) Federal Executive Bodies.

Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission has been at the forefront of calls for reduction in Nigeria's day-to-day government expenditure. Through Seminars and Workshops, the Commission has continued to proffer useful suggestions to governments at all levels on the need to scale down on unnecessary expenditure and to monitor expenses on developmental projects that would impact positively on the lives of the citizenry.

This is in line with the core mandate of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF; which is not just out to reduce cost of governance but to also facilitate good governance.

The asks of the RMAFC were clear and obvious. The currency was rapidly losing value and

life was becoming unbearable for the most vulnerable in society. Something must be done to ameliorate the situation. Tambuwal concurred and promised to reach out to his brother governors to address next steps.

The visit to the minister of Health Dr Ohanire was like a homecoming for the NGF Chairman. That week, different sections of society was lamenting the paucity of health workers from the auxiliary ones to consultants. To stem this tide, both the minister and the NGF Chairman proffered solutions, including long distance consultation and bonding.

The Chairman also visited the World Bank's Country Director in Nigeria, Dr Shubham Chaudhuri at his home. His entire staff present they explored the viability of the World Bank projects that the states are benefitting from and their new initiatives. These included NG-CARES, SABER and the now extended SFTAS program.

There were also visits by the NESG among others. In all the Chairman provided advocacy that heals and his engagements allayed all fears that a change of guard at the Forum may result in a slowing down of momentum. It didn't, instead the Chairman put foot to fire and is pulling away without delay.

The change of baton between the opposing parties did not affect the morale of Governors. At the 8th NGF teleconference there was commendable participation as recognized by the Executive Director, Research and Strategy, Dr Abdullateef Shittu, after the meeting. The attendance was swelling even when the meeting was half-way and in spite of a postponement to after dark. There were presentations by the World Bank, the Interior Ministry, SFTAS and the Health Advisor.

Cost of Governance is any cost associated with the running of government. In other words, it is the cost incurred by the government in the course of providing goods and services to the citizenry. It may be subdivided into recurrent and capital expenditure. Whereas recurrent expenditure is government spending on overhead and personnel costs, capital expenditure on the other hand is government spending in providing infrastructural facilities.

It has a Chairman and Members from each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory appointed by the President. Chairman sought audience with him and were received.

THE TEAM

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A Health Security Hardliner

Dr Olutomi Marcellina Coker

As a Commissioner of Health, Dr Olutomi Marcellina Coker played an active role during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. She sensitized the public about COVID-19, emphasizing that the government's commitment to the well-being and safety of citizens was non-negotiable.

Dr Olutomi Marcellina Coker enjoined Ogun State citizens to be vigilant and urged any person with a history of recent travel to affected countries to make themselves known to the State Epidemiologist and to observe a self-quarantine for 14 days being the incubation period. As part of health security in her state, Dr Olutomi Marcellina Coker ensured that hospitals were up to par.

During that period she exhibited sincere commitment to health security; four hospitals in Ogun State that fell foul of regulations were shut down after she had, during a monitoring and compliance exercise, warned owners of private health facilities to uphold the expected standard of practice required by law or face strict sanctions. Dr Tomi was to later explain that the move was informed by one unprofessional doctor's prescription on social media. She expressed her displeasure over the unprofessional conduct which according to her, depicts quackery, insisting that that was unacceptable under her watch.

Dr Olutomi Marcellina Coker's work experience is varied. Before she became Commissioner of Health in Ogun State, she worked as Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist for the Portland Hospital for Women and Children.

She was also at the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHF for 19 years in Watford, United Kingdom as the Clinical Director of Obstetrics, a consultant, and an Obstetrics Risk Lead and Labour Ward Clinician. In



DR. OLUTOMI

to also

be renovated across the twenty local government areas of the state. Dr Tomi said that three general hospitals such as the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital have been given a facelift with a change of equipment in addition to internal road works. She also hinted that half a billion naira was spent on equipping secondary facilities with theatre beds, x-ray machines and aesthetic machines for state hospitals.

She disclosed that there are beneficial collaborations with the private sector, and some industries in Ogun State have been provided with eighty-bed wards, plus x-rays and ultrasounds, just as ambulances have been donated to raise their number from from six to twenty-six.

Dr Tomi emphasized that Primary health centres are the foundation of health systems in any country or in any state and that Ogun State has 521 primary health centres spread across the local governments. In the last two months, 34 nurses and midwives were recruited into primary centres. Ogun state under Dr Tomi aims to have a doctor or two in each local government. "We are also reviewing the salary of the doctors to ensure their work-life balance that is right for them, so that they can stay at their workplace and not be disenfranchised."

Dr Tomi also talked about the health insurance scheme with its multiple facets. The state is operating the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund which is the informal centre. Already, they have been able to enrol 50,000 indigenous people who can't afford to pay for their healthcare across the 20 LGAs to receive free healthcare.

Ogun State is working to increase the sensitization for the health insurance scheme. That they are working on advertisements and getting an ambassador to be the face of the insurance. To have an insurance card means that when one is registered, they would attend to you for any headache, malaria, hypertension, or diabetes if it is in the primary health centre. If they can't handle it, they would refer them to a tertiary institution such as a general or state hospital and because of the insurance scheme, there is a commitment to pay fifty per cent of the bill.

Dr Tomi desires to have all indigenes of Ogun State on a health insurance scheme. She insists that every citizen is qualified for a health insurance card. What qualifies them is that they are a resident or citizens of Ogun State. Finally, she concluded that "we aim to increase the amount of service that is available and to ensure that we improve the services as well as the healthcare workers that attend to patients throughout the state.

World Diabetes Day

with Professor Felicia Anumah

The world marks World Diabetes Day on Monday, the 14th of November. Diabetes is said to have taken over 416,000 lives on the African continent. PROFESSOR FELICIA ANUMAH, the Former Dean of the Faculty of Clinical Services at the University of Abuja said that diabetes is one of the non-communicable and lifestyle diseases. She added that diabetes is an epidemic in the world, particularly in low and middle-income countries. It is a big problem that should concern everyone such as the government and its people as it contributes to global mortality. In 2021, 6.7 million people died from diabetes all over the world and of course, Nigeria contributed to this figure.

What Has Been the Roadmap to Early Detection?

There is a big challenge in Nigeria as it concerns early detection. The truth is that out of these numbers, you mentioned that 1 in every 2 people do not know they have diabetes.

Unfortunately, it is a very silent disease that can be there and the individual thinks that he or she is alright. Going about his or her business but the disease causes quiet damage inside as it destroys all the organs.

Now, by the time the person realises that something is going on, the kidneys have failed, and the eyes are gone. Also, the limb has a problem and needs to be amputated.

Early diagnosis is critical and the theme of World Diabetes Day for the year is education and access to care. The education to empower people to prevent.

The truth is that ninety (90%) of the cases of diabetes is Type 2 diabetes and it is preventable if people are empowered to know how to live right.

We need to empower people to have this in their consciousness that there are risk factors that are responsible for the disease and the risk factors can be fought to prevent it.

If someone has access to affordable and uninterrupted care, they can live their normal lifespan.

What is the Situation in Nigeria when it comes to Healthcare and Affordability?

In Nigeria, we run mainly an out-of-pocket system. We know we have the National Health Insurance Scheme but the people who have access to it and have keyed into it are just about mainly 5% of Nigerians.

The majority pay for health insurance from their pockets.

What we see is that patients are on their own and treatment of diabetes is not cheap so many of them can't afford it.

Sometimes, even accessibility is a problem. At the end of the day, the burden of the complications of diabetes is worrisome and shameful.

What are the Numbers/Figures and Rates of Diabetes in Nigeria?

When you don't take care of diabetes, it is responsible for many costly and devastating complications such as blindness and kidney failure.

We know that when there is kidney failure from diabetes, that is a death sentence on the forehead of that individual.

It is important for that individual to have adequate dialysis in the week and to have the drugs to take care of all the challenges around kidney failure. Also, the individual may need an average of 100,000 to 150,000 per week to survive. That is an expensive life to lead.

How many on their own afford Diabetes Treatment?

What happens is that family members contribute money initially but when their funds get exhausted, they give up and wait for the person to die.

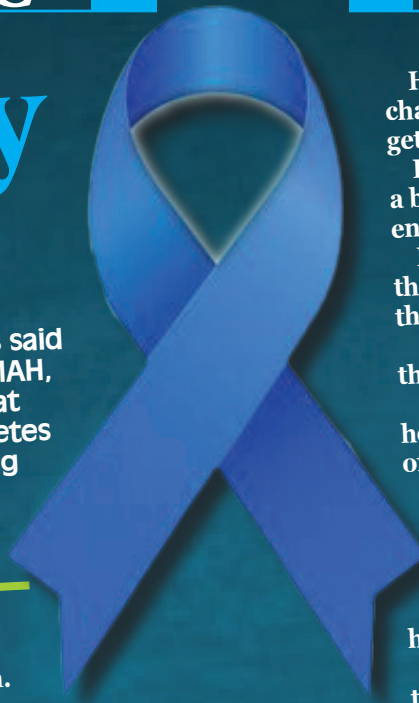
How Does One's Lifestyle Influence Diabetes?

We have risk factors that can lead an individual or people to diabetes, particularly Type 2 diabetes.

One is ageing because as we age, there are metabolic factors that occur that tilt the body towards the disease spectrum.

As we are ageing, blood pressure tends to rise. Also, as we are ageing, our blood sugar tends to rise.

Lastly, as we are ageing, the cells tend to go out of order and misbehave.



PROF. FELICIA

However, if people are empowered, then they can change their behaviour on time to prevent us from getting here.

Being overweight and having diabetes is also a big risk factor as we have cultural beliefs that encourage weight.

For example, when we see people with weight, they command respect, and our impression is that this person is living well or the person has arrived.

Yet God is a perfect scientist. For every height, there is an ideal weight.

If you allow the weight to get above what the height is willing to carry, then that is the beginning of problems.

Weight on its own can bring hypertension. Weight on its own can bring diabetes.

Now, family history matters. If a parent has diabetes, then the child has a forty per cent chance of obtaining it at one stage or the other in his or her lifetime.

Also, if one brother or one sister has diabetes, they can have it. If both parents have diabetes, then the child has a 70 per cent chance of obtaining it.

So this person has to avoid gaining weight like a plague for the whole of his or her lifetime, the way we avoided COVID.

That is the way that it should be, but the person has to be empowered to know what he or she must do.

When you know the family history, then you know why an individual would become diabetic.

Of course, in the urban setting, our diet also impacts things.

We are civilized so we have also acquired the diseases of civilisation. We have abandoned the African diet for the western diet of civilisation.

We all feel very good when we go to the eateries and eat the junk there and what they have is full of oil, sugar, and salt.

It makes us feel good and classy when we get there that we can no longer prepare healthy food at home to eat.

These are some of the challenges that we have that we need to let people know.

Physical activity is also another risk factor. We no longer move to burn

our calories and whatever calories we take; we have to burn them out for metabolic balance and prevent disease, but people feel big. They sit in one place and call all manner of servants around to get things done.

In Nigeria, prevention is the cheapest option we have rather than have the disease and battle with the consequences.

People must be empowered to prevent it. That is the cheapest option in this country.

The theme is to get people educated and to prevent them from tomorrow's challenges.

When it comes to access to care, the government has a big role to play in educating and empowering people.

Even health professionals, we must empower them to have healthcare.

The care of diabetes is a 24/7 business for the patients themselves. Ninety per cent of the time, they care for themselves so they need to be empowered to know how they can truly care for themselves.

The government also has a big role to play when it comes to early screening and empowering healthcare professionals and policies that will help in preventing diabetes in this country.

How Can One Create a Habit of Having Self-Check?

It is very simple. People need to get a Glucometer to check your blood sugar in the morning before they eat and then again, two hours after they have eaten.

They need to also know how their body responds to the food that they have eaten. It is possible for anyone to get a Glucometer and check themselves.

The problem is how many Nigerians can afford to buy a Glucometer?

It is between 5,000 and 7000 naira. Those who can't afford to get meters can walk to any clinic to get their blood sugar checked to follow it up and know what is going on in their body.

What Are the Triggers and Warning Signs that can lead to Diabetes?



The truth is that **90%** of the cases of diabetes is Type 2 diabetes and it is preventable if people are empowered to know how to live right



Diabetes is a silent disease and might not give any signs. The blood sugar is high and it can cause damage inside the body and there might be no sign. That overemphasizes the issue of checking.

There are people who have the symptoms like unexplained weight loss. Someone is losing weight and doesn't know the reason why.

Diabetes can make someone lose weight as though the person has HIV. The person notices there is an increase in urinary output.

The person notices that there are going to the bathroom almost 10 times a day to pass urine and at times at night can't sleep because they get up to pass urine.

The challenge I have with Nigerians is that they notice a difference in their physiology, and they don't do much about it.

An example someone would tell you is that they have been passing urine excessively for one or two years, but they didn't go anywhere.

These things continue to go on with many complications.

The eye has a problem, and it is diabetes. The heart has a problem, and it is diabetes.

The person comes with a stroke and a heart attack and it is the cause of diabetes.

In Nigeria, many of the patients come with complications, rather than them coming with symptoms.

The warning signs are that when people notice any difference in the function of their body, they should not take it for granted.

It is better for them to go and check and to know that there is nothing rather than, there is something and you don't know for years that the complications have come.

We give individuals a lot of education to know how to be their own doctors.

That is why we need the training of healthcare professionals to know what to do with these patients when they have the diagnosis of diabetes.

We need to empower them to be in charge.

What is Being Done to Create



PROF. FELICIA

Awareness of Diabetes?

People are organising diabetes walks, campaigns and screenings to detect those who have it.

We are starting a program at the University of Abuja, an educational program. A Master's in Diabetes Education so we can raise healthcare professionals to empower others to prevent the disease.

How is Pregnancy-Induced Diabetes Managed?

We have two types of diabetes in pregnancy. We can have a diabetes patient who becomes pregnant. That is different from somebody who was not diabetic before but gets pregnant and then the blood sugar shows up and from 24 weeks, the blood sugar is high.

That patient does not need to go to a health centre. They need to go to a centre where there is a specialist to manage both the mother and the child.

High blood sugar during pregnancy has consequences on both the mother and the child, especially since the child can die in the uterus.

There is a need for expert care so that the blood sugar is managed and the mother and baby are safe during pregnancy.

Pregnancy is a stage that disorganises the physiology of the woman which can bring about diabetes.

We call pregnancy a diabetogenic stage because the hormones produced during pregnancy counter the hormones that help us to take care of everything that we eat which is a source of energy which is insulin.

Some have genetic issues whereby they are not producing enough insulin.

The higher the number of children, the likelihood that a person would get diabetes.

As long as we are strong enough to move around and do things for ourselves, we should.

We can wake up in our room and do some aerobics. You can walk around your compound several times.

You walk briskly and you are sweating. That is a way of burning calories.

If you don't go to the gym, then you can do enough exercise at home.

Also, we must take a second look at our diet and stop taking sweet things that have refined sugars such as cake and ice cream.

We need to reduce the bulk of food that we take and increase the vegetables to our meals.

We also need to step down on the amount of oil that we produce. One gram of carbohydrates would give you about four calories. One gram of protein would give you four calories. One gram of fat/oil would give you about nine calories. You are taking in so many calories that you can't burn.

We should put very little oil in whatever we say that we are cooking. Empowerment is a continuous thing that we must continue to do.

**COP27**

What informed our new grant to Nigeria, Africa – Gates Foundation

Bill and Melinda Foundation says its new commitment of 1.4 billion dollars to Africa, including Nigeria is to spur the region-led innovation to build a pipeline of climate-smart agriculture projects for smallholder farmers.

Mr Enock Chikava, Interim Director, Agricultural Development of the foundation stated this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt at the sidelines of the ongoing UN Conference on Climate Change.

While 2.1 million dollars is meant for research and development in agriculture sector in Nigeria, Chikava said that the foundation would mobilise 9 million dollars for technologies that would help the region make a difference in livestock and crop.

“Our focus is 100 per cent on smallholder farmers. If you look at the impact of climate change over the years, which I am sure in your own country, last year there was a severe drought and this year floods.

“So if you look at that, there are so many things which are against the people livelihood, because a 50 per cent of your people depend on agriculture and if the 30 per cent on your economy is driven by agriculture, it means you need to protect it.

“Now, there is that very platform that is responsible for lifting people out of extreme poverty is under huge threat because of climate change and because we focus 100 per cent on smallholder farmers, we are going to be spending \$1.4 billion to make sure that we do much better work.

“By that we mean crops like cassava. We need cassavas that can tolerate draughts and floods. In Nigeria, flood has been the issue. In the research



BILL & MELINDA GATES

pipeline, the draught genre was never part and rarely a game, but now, we have draught and likely we are going to have more frequent draught.

“So we need to be improving cassava in Nigeria not only for today, but also for the future. So we do that and we focus on crops like cowpea. In cowpea, Nigeria’s worth is 4.9 hectares, and that is a source of protein for the majority of the farmers.

“By introducing new varieties, which are climate resilient, we are going to make sure that smallholder farmers have access to them,” he said.

On performance of Africa in various interventions, the Gates official said some countries were making progress while others are lagging behind.

“There is a biannual preview looking at every country, the progress it is making because there are certain indicators.

“If you look at those indicators, you will see which countries are doing well, which countries are lagging behind.

“There is Maputo/Malabo declaration that states 10 per cent of budget must be for agriculture, but Nigeria commits less than 2.5 per cent.

“You can’t be successful without focusing on research and development. Do you know palm tree, its states of origin is Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

“Now two countries – Malaysia and Indonesia produce 98 per cent of the global palm. Do you know the biggest importer? Nigeria.

“The difference is R & D and that can happen in cassava; it can happen in any other one. That is why it is super important that we focus on research and development,” said Chikava.

On performance of Africa in various interventions, the Gates official said some countries were making progress while others are lagging behind

Herbal Plants Will Drive Nigeria's Healthcare Revolution

- PHARM. ZAINAB SHARIFF

Pioneer Director, Traditional Complementary and Alternative Medicine (TCAM) Department, Federal Ministry of Health, Pharm. Zainab Ujudud Shariff, highlights the importance of integrative medicine and dissects the necessity of national rediscovery of herbal plants and their utilization to fundamentally change Nigeria's health story, especially at the primary healthcare level

Up close you could easily pick her vibrations of energy. She is clearly a scientist more at home with proactive analyses and focussed action. Not surprisingly, in over three decades of her high-intensity interventions, she has demonstrated that pharmacy, administration, public service and now integrative medicine fundamentally address human development.

Leaning forward, Pharm. Zainab Ujudud Shariff quickly provides a succinct overview of her strategic niche in the nation's healthcare big picture. Her words: "Now, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recognizes three healthcare systems. It has accepted the orthodox - which we call allopathic medicine. They don't have any issues with that; they all have traditional standards. They also agree with traditional medicine because it is indigenous medicine. It is

part of your culture. There is no culture that does not have its own systems of healing.

"WHO has also approved of what we call complementary and alternative medicine. If it is not orthodox or traditional medicine, then it is a scam. For any health intervention that is neither orthodox nor traditional, we group them as scams. The new intake is a combination of the three that we look at holistically which is called Integrative Medicine.

"For us in Nigeria, if we want to copy the Indians or the Chinese because of their population, we must see how their healthcare systems function. They combine all three but in Nigeria, we are yet to do that. There is poor recognition of the TCAM system but at the ministry, we are doing our best.

"We have developed policies and guidelines. We work with practitioners and all relevant stakeholders to be able to see how we can integrate into our healthcare, especially at the Primary Healthcare level. Eighty percent of our people access traditional medicine as their basic healthcare. That is

community medicine.

"What we need to do now is to know how we can officially integrate the systems. Things are moving slowly but we do hope that there is a strong political will. The issue is that we are too orthodox-inclined, and we are too westernized. We believe that our own is not good. Some of these old practitioners are dying with their reservoir of knowledge. If you have them, you need to take the knowledge and collaborate. That would go along a better way to harness the health, social and economic benefits."

Shariff further explains that Integrative Medicine, recognized by WHO, is a combination of orthodox, traditional complementary and alternative medicines and some countries are already doing this - such as Germany, India, Japan, and USA. But what progress has been made in Integrative Medicine in Nigeria? Her response mirrored some lack of enthusiasm.

"There has not been much progress made in Nigeria. We need to do better, and we can do better if we there is a strong political will and determination. For now, we are advocating integrative medicine for hospitals of Traditional Complementary and Alternative Medicine (TCAM). TCAM Department is new. We started in just 2018. It used to be a division. I am the pioneer and incidentally, pioneer Director.

"We are looking at collaboration with the technical experts, for instance, from China. We want China to come and set up a Nigerian (TCAM) hospital. The same principle goes with the Indians. That way, we have these systems that are officially accepted and can be officially accessed by the populace. Addressing these challenges would improve health indices and would go a long way in preventing health challenges because the TCAM focuses more on prevention."

She also clarifies the TCAM Department of the Federal Ministry of Health that is driving the novel medical niche adding that "You have come to a relevant department that is doing that."

Clearly, the evolution or inception new policies of such scale certainly would need inputs of the national parliament to make it effective. Shariff agrees and explains that with regards to the policies relevant to TCAM and integrative medicine, legislation remains a challenge.

According to her, "The legislation is where we have a bit of a challenge. The Bill is at the National Assembly waiting for enactment into law. We hope that it can be done before the end of this year so that we can have a council that can regulate. We would also have an institute where our people can be purely trained in this aspect. We continue to look at a prototype of China and India which are already more experienced in this field."

On the issue of sustainability, the pharmacist explains that "the advantage of these practices would bring in mind some social and economic benefits. You can't discuss traditional medicine without thinking about the products. The main product is medicinal plants and Nigeria is blessed with over 10,000 species of medicinal plant products. Yet, we have not utilized even twenty percent. Yet, we have arable land and these medicinal plants are all available in all the zones of this country.

Looking at the role of subnationals in domesticating integrative medicine and exploiting the huge herbal plants' potential, she is emphatic that state governors have a critical role to play. Her words: "I wish that each state governor would know the value of its medicinal plants. If you know the value of the medicinal plants, then you know the value addition it will generate which translates to whole lot of revenue. Apart from the health benefits, there would

I wish that each state governor would know the value of its medicinal plants. If you know the value of the medicinal plants, then you know the value addition it will generate which translates to whole lot of revenue

be social and economic benefits. If we know the importance of medicinal plants, we will vastly cultivate them and when you cultivate them, are you not creating jobs?

"Medicinal plants have health benefits and environmental benefits. You are looking at issues of climate change. Then, there are also the benefits of value addition in processing medicinal plants. All these imported products are bought at a high cost. We have refused to believe in what we have. We have refused to harness, and we have refused to listen to the people that are experts in this field. We have refused to support research as much as we can.

"I am looking at a very lucrative area and these plants are found in states. The state governors should look inwards. They should look at what they have. For example, I wish the Sokoto State governor, knew the value of garlic and onions he has. If he sets up a processing farm for garlic, you would be surprised. If you do not harness what you have in front of you, that is God-given treasures - then you can never move forward. You can't rely on only what is being brought from outside.

"State governors have the advantage, and they can massively cultivate these medicinal plants and process them. All they need to do is contact the relevant agency such as the Ministry of Health and the (TCAM) department.

"They can collaborate with NAFDAC, NIPRID and then, of course, private partners. The Chinese and Indian are coming to seek collaboration and set up herbal industries. We advocate for national standards first before international standards. What can Nigeria eat? Let our own people do our own standards. I would say West African standards first. We can't keep emulating foreigners. Our health indices are not improving because we refuse to develop the local content that can help us. That is the truth."

But beyond the obvious passion Shariff brings to her calling, are there specific data to substantiate her submission that there are over 10,000 medicinal plants in Nigeria, traversing all the geo-agricultural zones? She again quickly demonstrates that scientists don't just talk to impress.

In her words: "We have documents that we worked on. We have a Pharmacopeia, Harvard Pharmacopeia. We have documents that guide you to see the plants that we have. We have already done Volume 1 and we are working on Volume 2 to add more medicinal plants.

"In scientific research, we work with universities that give us this data and we work with them as a committee. This is an area that I want the state governors to look at, especially at the Primary Healthcare Level. What we are looking at is training those health professional practitioners. Give them some basic training and code of conduct and ethics; put them at that Primary Healthcare Level with close contact with other professional experts.

"If the practitioner does his own, he can now refer it to the orthodox doctor or health care professional that is trained. If we do that at the primary healthcare level, we would strengthen quality healthcare services.

"If you don't include traditional medicine or



complementary medicine in our primary health care level which is (WHO-approved) and 80 per cent accessed, can we progress? We want to incorporate things in the right way.”

Swiveling to the specific challenges hobbling the progression of traditional and complementary medicine in the country, she explains that delay by the national parliament in passing the Bill that will give immense legislative traction to TCAM domestication is regrettable.

According to her, “For one, we need the Bill to be passed urgently. That is the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Bill. Since 2007, we have been fighting over the Bill and in 2019, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved the Bill. Now, it is up to the National Assembly. The National Assembly should enact it into law and once we have the law, we can now regulate and institutionalize it.”

She further notes that, “Just as we regulate the Pharmacist Council, Dental and Medical Council, Nursing Council, then you now have these practitioners regulated and they can deliver in line with the traditional medicine policy. That can deliver parallel services with quality healthcare respecting one another for the purpose of providing health and quality services to the public.

Cut to the bone



PHARM. ZAINAB

funding remains the make-or-buy determinant of even the most critical projects. Is the TCAM project different? Shariff responds in the negative and regrets that programs that have local content are not much funded in contrast to those that have foreign content.

“When you have approval, then the funding would come. For now, if you observe, programs that have local content are not much funded. Those that have international content are much more funded which is wrong,” she clarifies - noting that “We should re-think this. The governors should re-think.”

She gives managing malaria as an example of the primary healthcare level quandary. “An example would be when it comes to managing malaria, everything about the malaria drug is imported. We tried in 2008 to domesticate a plant and we succeeded but there was not enough political will and it went off.”

Recalling that in the thick of the Covid-19 affliction, Madagascar went and domesticated its own vaccine and we started buying COVID-19 from them, she notes that they sold and made profit.

But it is not all bad news at the home front. According to Shariff, “I am glad we are working with raw materials on this project. We have three pilot farms that are cultivating it: Kano, Abuja, and Niger. We are happy to see that the plant is growing, and the advantage of that plant is that it has multiple purposes.

“If you grow something in your land, you look at the multipurpose. The leaf is useful. The stalk is useful. This is based on scientific analysis. If you take the leaf to make your malaria medicine, the stalk and shaft can make mosquito coil which you can give to the rural people instead of the nets.

“But you know, these things have a lot of international barriers. But we should be able to move forward with the political will. Consider how did China do it? How did India do it? They also have their own local and international content growing side by side.

If they were to import drugs for billions of people, where would they get the drugs? The Nigerian population is growing and will we continue to rely on raw materials? We also need medicine security.”

Looking at the big picture, how can the Nigeria Governors’

Forum (NGF) play a role in what’s unfolding? The pioneer TCAM Department Director was emphatic - “They must firm up their political will. The primary healthcare system is at their level. They should focus. They should sit down and see how they can integrate those practitioners with standards in their primary healthcare level and put them on a referral system.

“For example, I would say that we get community expert practitioners at primary healthcare centres. There are guidelines for the practice. When the Bill is passed first and then what is needed is to implement the bill at the LGA level. They can fill some of the spaces at the primary healthcare level. They can deliver their own quality health services at the state.

“The states have multiple advantages because we are talking about diversification. We are talking about agriculture. These medicinal plants should be cultivated. I’m not just an ordinary Pharmacist; I’m a Pharmacist with a difference. I have the passion and I developed it. I’ve authored up to nine books. All of them are focused on this one area. Honestly, we must promote local content, such as medicinal plants. They matter.

“The state governors stand to benefit from this. All that needs to be done is just that we need to make a presentation to them. Then, they go back to their states and set up their own committee and see what they can sacrifice.”

What is Shariff’s source of passion which has transformed her into a pathfinder? In her words: “When you look at yourself and you decide why you are in this field, you notice that God has anointed some people to do some special assignments. It is a calling over the years. Read me up from 1996 to-date. I have been very focused on this calling, and I recognise that it is God’s calling for me, coupled with the inheritance.

“You see me. I dream of medicinal plants. I see medicinal plants and I make medicinal plants. I accept it as a message that God has called me to do and He decided to make me a Pharmacist first so that when I speak, they know that I am speaking with my knowledge.”

What message does Shariff have for the national Assembly, the national leadership and sub-nationals?

Hear her: “At the national level, we are doing all right. But my message to the people is that we can do better. We need to support the departments aggressively and we need to pursue local content in a defined way. Once we say local content, we should look at local content and work hard to develop it.

“We need to have an enabling environment that is attractive. We could also have pilots and at the sub-national level which is your entity (NGF’s), we need to have a special presentation so they see the value of what they have. No state is poor. There is no state that is poor in this country. They need to sit down and look at what God has given them first and harness them, it matters.”

No state is poor. There is no state that is poor in this country. They need to sit down and look at what God has given them first and harness them, it matters



A Doctor and a Writer

- Dr Innocent Vakkai

Many people are known for their gift of gap, but Dr Innocent Vakkai who has several publications to his name is rather known as a prolific author and a mathematical genius. Dr Vakkai has written such books as that of the Prevalence and Reinfection Rates of Soil-transmitted Helminths among School Children in Ardo-kola Local Government Area of Taraba state and the Prevalence of Breast and Cervical cancer among women in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital.

Dr Innocent Vakkai is the Health Commissioner for Taraba State. He hails from Ardo-Kola Local Government Area. He was born on 28th December 1971 and is married with two (2) children.

He started his educational career at Luggere Primary School, Jimeta- Yola from 1977-1983 and proceeded to General Murtala Mohammed College, Yola from 1983-1988. He enrolled into the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria from 1990-1998 as well as National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria from 2002-2009.

Some of his achievements or better put, endowments are that he is a Consultant Public Health Physician and had won the 1st position in Gongola State's Young Scientists competition in 1987. Not done, the genius in him led him to win the 1st position, Mathematical quiz competition in Gongola state in 1988. As icing on the cake, he was also Head of Nigeria Delegation to Belize Central America.

Some of the workshops that he attended are that of a retro-viral use in the Treatment of HIV in the Caribbean and Surveillance Training by World Health Organisation (WHO) in Abuja. He also successfully handled the COVID-19 pandemic in Taraba State.

Vakkai said the campaign against the virus was launched through spreading awareness in all media outfits. All places of worship were given hand sanitizers, use of face masks were emphasised and maintaining of social distance was and is still being preached as a measure of clamping down on the pandemic, as a result of which

Some of his achievements or better put, endowments are that he is a Consultant Public Health Physician and had won the 1st position in Gongola State's Young Scientists competition in 1987



DR INNOCENT

Taraba was one of the States with fewer cases of COVID-19 in the country.

Since the index case of eight returnee-indigenes of the state were tested positive in Jalingo, the state witnessed only three victims at the isolation centre in Jalingo until the matter subsided.

According to Vakkai, Taraba State recorded only three victims of COVID-19 at the State's isolation centre in Jalingo after the interception of one hundred and thirty travellers from Kano who were quarantined and eight were tested positive to the virus as the index case. Also, Taraba State was one of the states that GAVI and the NGF partnered with for health strengthening.

The Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization, GAVI partnered with Taraba and seven other states on health system strengthening. The support is expected to run for 3 years and would incorporate the Primary Health Care Under One Roof, PHCUOR implementation in the select States.



Dr. Muhammad Makusidi Utilitarianism in healthcare

The sole aim of the healthcare provision scheme in Niger State, according to Dr Muhammad Maksudi, the state's health commissioner, is to provide access to quality health care services for Niger State residents and reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures on health care.

This, in all its ramifications is a utilitarian concept, which is based on the principle of pooling ready resources together and sharing risks. The NGSCHS has been designed to spread financial risk to all members of the pool. The risk will, therefore, be shared between the healthy and the sick, the young and the aged, the rich and the poor," he explained.

He announced two packages of registration of the health scheme to include a premium of 7,200 per annum and N600 per month, adding that a total of 311 health providers which include 288 public and 28 private sector operatives have been accredited respectively across the State to offer services to the people.

Dr Makusidi maintained that "the scheme has a triple effect that includes helping the government to reduce the burden on capital projects, individuals would not need to run looking for money to pay for their medical bills and the health facilities will no longer need to go to the government for funding.

The funds accrued to the scheme will be judiciously utilized in a transparent manner and the state government has so far expended the sum of N130 million into the scheme."

Another achievement for Niger State is the high enrolment of clients for the family planning method. A total of 50,000 clients in Niger state have accepted the Family Planning method adding that the development was following the support and encouragement given by the State government.

The State's Commissioner for Health and Hospital Services, Dr Mohammed Makusidi also stressed the need for Nigerlites to key into the Family Planning programme for maximum benefit. He said the Niger state government is using family planning to solve the problem of population explosion and maternal mortality where 512 women out of every 1,000 births in Nigeria die annually.

An interesting development in Niger State is the launch of the Contributory Health Scheme. The

scheme will provide quality health care services to residents and reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket expenditures on healthcare. The Commissioner for Health and Hospital Services in the State, Dr Muhammad Maku Sidi stated this during a press briefing, in preparation for the launching of the health contributory scheme in Minna, the State Capital.

The health Commissioner further said that over 50 thousand enrollees including Vulnerable persons and Informal Sectors have commenced accessing healthcare services.

"The essence of launching the scheme is multi-pronged; to show the commitment and political will of the Government to the Scheme and to create awareness for the Scheme as well as to expand buy-in of all strata of residents into the Scheme,"

Makusidi said.



THE ESSENCE OF LAUNCHING THE SCHEME IS MULTI-PRONGED; TO SHOW THE COMMITMENT AND POLITICAL WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE SCHEME AND TO CREATE AWARENESS FOR THE SCHEME AS WELL AS TO EXPAND BUY-IN OF ALL STRATA OF RESIDENTS INTO THE SCHEME



DR. MUHAMMAD



PRIMARY HEALTHCARE: Oyo Government Presents Generators to 351 PHCs



GOV MAKINDE



The Oyo State Government has kick-started the equipping of the three-hundred and fifty-one (351) Primary Healthcare Centres in the State, with new power generating sets.

During a symbolic presentation of 97 generating sets to some primary healthcare centres, in Ibadan, the Engineering Technical Lead of PHCs Renovation Committee, Engr. Ademola Aderinto said henceforth PHCs will be powered by an alternative source, whenever there is disruption of power supply by the electricity provider.

Dr. Olatunji said the project was executed to ensure quality health service delivery at the centre

Engr. Aderinto, who is the Special Assistant on Environment said the aim of Governor Seyi Makinde was to ensure that 351 primary healthcare centres in Oyo State are equipped for the comfort of patients.

He added that part of the project's goal is to deliver generators for electricity supply to all renovated centers.

Aderinto also said, the Oyo State Government has sunk boreholes to ensure a steady supply of water not only to the PHCs, but also to the community through taps placed outside the PHCs.

Engr. Aderinto said Engr. Seyi Makinde's vision is to make healthcare more accessible and equitable to all residents of Oyo state.

"Part of this vision is the renovation/upgrade of one (1) Primary Healthcare Center (PHC) per ward (there are 351 wards in Oyo state) to the standard category three (3) PHC. This project that began in 2021, has resulted in over 206 newly renovated PHCs, as well as many newly

built PHCs", he said.

"This project was initiated by the Oyo State Governor's Office in collaboration with the Oyo State Primary Health Care Board and the Oyo State Ministry of Health, and is led by the Special Adviser to the Governor Health, Dr. Funmi Salami, as the Project Lead and Chairperson of the Renovation Committee".

Also speaking, the Executive Secretary, Oyo State Primary Healthcare Board, Dr. Muideen Olatunji, said the aim of the Government is to make healthcare available to all Oyo residents.

Dr. Olatunji said the project was executed to ensure quality health service delivery at the centre.

He thanked Dominant Engineering, who upgraded/ built new 99 PHCs, for handing over 97 generators to the PHCs.

Speaking earlier, the Chairman, Ward Development Committee, WDC, Mr. Abdulfatah Oloyede said the initiative has been well-received by Oyo state communities.

He thanked Oyo State Government for the gesture, adding that WDCs, an apolitical group, applauds the laudable gesture.

The event was graced by the Chairman, ALGON and Egbeda Local Government Area, Hon. Sikiru Sanda who appealed to residents to reciprocate Governor Makinde's gesture with massive votes.

Also present was the Chairman, Ibadan North Local Government, Saheed Oladayo Yusuf among others.

Cross River targets 900,000 children for 2nd phase of vaccination against Polio

Linda Ayade, Wife of Governor Ben Ayade has said the state government is targeting no less than nine hundred children across the 18 local government Areas for the second phase of vaccination against Poliomyelitis.

The First Lady said this in Calabar during the official flag-off of outbreak response of Poliomyelitis in the state.

According to her, the exercise is aimed at keeping polio out of Cross River State.

"We do not want any of our children to be deformed, we want a healthy and enterprising State, it's important for our children to remain healthy" she stated.

She urged mother's and parents to take advantage of the exercise by vaccinating their children and be reminded that Covid-19

is also around the corner, hence the need to be safe.

"We do not want deformity in any of our children, come out and bring your children to ensure that they take the second dose of polio, let us prevent polio in our state"

In a remarks, the state Commissioner for Health, Dr better Edu urged mothers to take the opportunity seriously by bringing their children for vaccination.

Dr. Edu, who was

represented by Dr Iwara Iwara, said it is an opportunity to mobilized all the work force for the campaign and ensure that the state remained the first and Poliomyelitis free.

Earlier the Director General of Cross River State Primary Health Care Development Authority, Dr Janet Ekpeyong, said even though the state is polio free, there are some reported cases of Poliomyelitis in the neighboring State, of which we cannot afford to ignore but to continue with the advocacy of eradicating the disease completely from the state.

She stated that the flag off exercise is to mark the outbreak response in the State.

"Ekpeyong said we have succeeded in eradicating Poliomyelitis in the State, but because of our neighboring State and the challenges in some of our

communities, we haven't recorded any case of type 2 Poliomyelitis in the State" She noted.

In their separate good will messages, Chairman House Committee on Health, Hon Ekpo Ekpo, Pella Umar of UNICEF, Efraim Chukwu of WHO, and the representative of traditional rulers, all pledged their continued support and partnership to the state's Ministry of Health in their efforts to make the state polio free.



CROSS RIVER FIRST LADY, LINDA AYADE, DURING THE OFFICIAL FLAG-OFF OF OUTBREAK RESPONSE OF POLIOMYELITIS IN STATE.

Cross River flags-off 2022 integrated measles campaign, targets 100% coverage

The Cross River State Government has flagged-off of the 2022 Integrated measles vaccination campaign in Calabar, the state capital.

The campaign which began from Nov. 3 to 10 was for introduction of the rotavirus and COVID-19 vaccination.

Media reports state that the rotavirus is a very contagious virus that causes diarrhea and other intestinal symptoms in infants and other young children worldwide.

Flagging-off the campaign, The Deputy Governor of Cross River State, Prof. Ivara Esu, said the issue of immunisation and vaccination were very dear to the state.

Esu said even though measles was a very dangerous disease for children, its seeming increase in occurrence among children was becoming alarming and must be checked.

He said: "Today, people are no longer worried about COVID-19, so, they no longer wear masks or observe social distancing; this is enhancing the spread of preventable diseases that would have easily been prevented.

"We urge parents whose children were from 0 to 5 years of age who have missed this vaccine to come forward and ensure that their wards are vaccinated against measles and diarrhea while adults avail themselves of COVID-19 vaccination.

"This administration attaches 100 per cent attention on the issue of vaccination and immunisation and hopes that residents in the state would do same," he noted.

In her remarks, Janet Ekpenyong, Director General, Cross River Primary Healthcare Development Agency (CRSPHCDA) said measles was one of the major causes of infant and child mortality.

She noted that this was why every two to four years, they carried-out an integrated measles campaign to bridge the gap in terms of children who missed the routine immunisation.



A most experienced health agent

Doctor Zakari Usman is a senior-level health program manager with valuable experience in project start up, stakeholder involvement, implementation and scale up as well as project close-out. Today he is the Commissioner of Health for Kogi State. He has built his career progressively over the last 15 years in a variety of roles spanning both technical, managerial as well as leadership and governance responsibilities in both local and international non-governmental organizations and the public sector.

He is currently the Chief Medical Director/ Chief Executive of the Kogi State Hospitals' Management board where his role includes

budgeting, and financial management of the board to ensure smooth appropriation and application of funds to improve health facilities operation and treatment outcomes. He collaborates with NGOs and other stakeholders in the health sector to provide the leadership platform for effective program implementation and activities that contribute to health systems' strengthening.

He has useful field experience in community driven interventions in the area of TB, Malaria, Nutrition and ART program having participated as member of the coordinating team of the first ever community ARV program in Nigeria, a flagship project in response to the UNAIDS ambitious 90:90:90 project for epidemiological control in Benue state.

He is equally highly experienced in performance management having managed projects and personnel with two different US agencies (USAID and CDC) as well as the Global fund and currently doing the same in public service as Chief Medical Director of the largest MDA in Kogi State.

Dr Zakari has valuable experience in project start up, stakeholder involvement, implementation and scale up as well as project close-out. The Commissioner is keenly grounded in community driven interventions in the area of Malaria, Nutrition and ART program having participated as member of the coordinating team

of the first ever community ARV program in Nigeria, a flagship project in response to the UNAIDS ambitious 90:90:90 project for epidemiological control in Benue state.

He is equally highly experienced in performance management as well as the Global fund and currently doing the same in public service.

He has trainings and practical knowledge of donor agency policy and regulation issues as well as the challenges of sustainability of donor funded projects and that has been an important part of the solution.



HE IS EQUALLY HIGHLY EXPERIENCED IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS THE GLOBAL FUND AND CURRENTLY DOING THE SAME IN PUBLIC SERVICE

performance management of all the 57 secondary health facilities and the over 3000 staff of the board. He is equally responsible for planning,

DR. ZAKARI

New Dengue Vaccine And Possibility Of MRNA Vaccine For Ebola

Dengue is a viral disease transmitted by the species of the female mosquitoes of *Aedes aegypti* and in some cases by *A. albopictus*.

The female mosquitoes also transmit during their blood meal, other viral diseases, including yellow fever, chikungunya and Zika. Dengue infects millions of people and kills tens of thousands of people annually. Dengue symptoms are mild but severe dengue complications can arise leading to life-threatening bleeding, organ failure and/or plasma leakage.

Dengue is divided into four distinct variations known as serovar or serotype. Thus, we have DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4. But DENV-1 and DENV-2 serotypes are the most common dengue involved in global outbreaks.

Dengvaxia to date is the only approved vaccine for dengue, and it is only administered to people who have already been infected with the virus. The reason for this is that if given to uninfected people, the vaccine has the potential to cause a severe disease, including haemorrhagic fever. It is believed that the haemorrhagic fever is caused by a rare and serious condition called antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE).

Dengue as mentioned before, has four serotypes, which are similar but for slight differences. A person infected with one of the dengue serotypes would generate an immune response to that serotype. But when the person is infected with a second serotype, the initially generated antibody from the first serotype infection may bind to the virus and ease that virus's entrance into cells, thus, the name of such condition is called antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE). This gives rise to the severe form of the disease, called dengue haemorrhagic fever.

Recovery from dengue infection provides a lifelong immunity, however, the immunity is specific for that serotype. Cross-immunity to other serotypes is common but is only partial and temporary. Normally protection from any two of the four dengue serotypes is required to avoid or reduce the

occurrence of serious disease. And after a second infection or vaccination followed by an infection, people are typically protected against all four serotypes.

A second vaccine for dengue called Qdenga has been developed by Takeda, Japan. The vaccine is meant for people unexposed to dengue unlike the Dengvaxia vaccine, which was for people already infected with the virus. In other words, Qdenga is a preventative vaccine, while Dengvaxia is a therapeutic vaccine. Qdenga is a two-dose inactivated-virus vaccine using the serotype DENV-2 as a backbone to engineer in genes for key proteins from the other three serotypes.

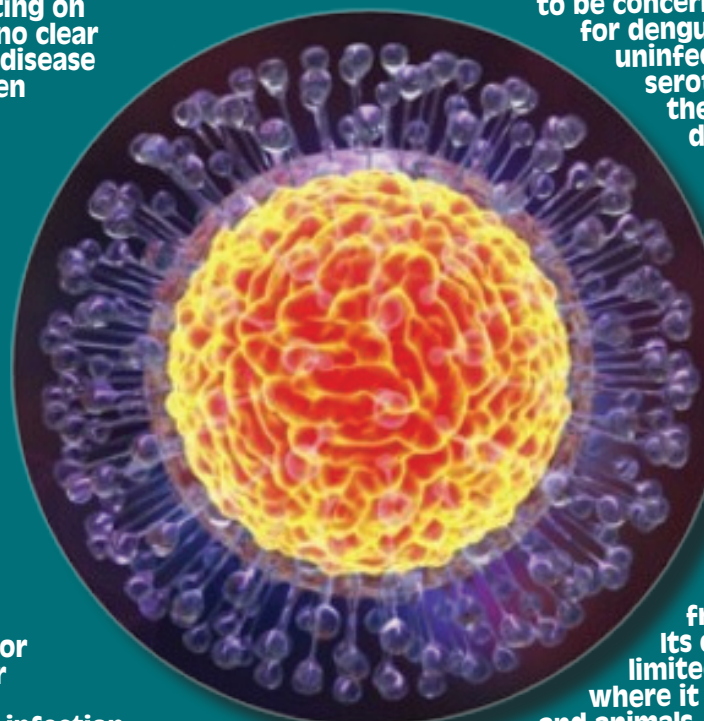
The vaccine was approved for use in August by the Indonesian drug regulator for people aged between 6 and 45 years old, but without taking any precautionary measure to test for previous exposure to dengue. The European Medicines Agency is also considering approving the vaccine without testing on the basis that the vaccine showed no clear evidence of a higher risk of severe disease (or ADE) in people who have not been infected previously by the virus.

This lack of testing for antibody-dependent enhancement, ADE, is worrying to many scientists. Though the company, Takeda, was quick to reassure the scientific community by releasing data from the clinical trial conducted over four and half years and involving more than 28,000 people. The Phase 3 clinical trial conducted in 8 countries and involving about 19,000 children of ages 4 to 16, was published in 2019. The data showed that after one year of receiving the vaccine, an 80% efficacy was achieved against symptomatic dengue and 95% against hospitalisation. Four and half years after immunisation, the efficacy dropped to only 61% for symptomatic infection and 84% for hospitalisation.

The uniqueness of dengue is that infection with the disease elicits an immune response strong enough to protect against a second infection with any of the serotypes. This



EBOLA VIRUS



DENGUE VIRUS

blanket protection lasts for only two years after which the protection applies only to the serotype the person was first infected. This means that the person will be at increased risk of ADE should the person be exposed to other serotypes.

A similar pattern was seen with Dengvaxia, which was certified safe as at the time it underwent clinical trials. But after some years when the blanket protection offered by the vaccine had worn off in previously uninfected children, the vaccine was found to almost double the risk of severe disease, including dengue haemorrhagic fever.

Rivera and coworkers reporting the result of their exploratory analysis in the July 2022 issue of the journal, *Clinical Infectious Disease*, showed that Takeda's dengue vaccine, which is based on serotype DENV-2 backbone, offered previously uninfected people protection against all serotypes for 3 years after which there was little, or no protection offered against DENV-1 or DENV-3. This study was carried out in countries where incidences of DENV-4 were limited as to warrant carrying out the same analysis as was done for DENV-1 and DENV-3.

Taking together, people are rightly to be concerned if the new vaccine for dengue does not protect uninfected people against all four serotypes as the potential for the occurrence of antibody-dependent enhancement, ADE, is high. A thorough clinical analysis of the new vaccine should be carried out in more people who have not been previously exposed to dengue before the vaccine is rolled out to the public.

In another development, a new messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine for Ebola is being rumoured. Ebola is a deadly disease caused by viruses from the genus, *Ebolavirus*. Its outbreak is sporadic and limited to the African continent where it affects both humans and animals, including pigs, gorillas, chimpanzees, and monkeys.

There are six species of *Ebolavirus*: Ebola virus (species *Zaire ebolavirus*),

Sudan virus (species *Sudan ebolavirus*), Tai Forest virus, (species *Tai Forest ebolavirus*, formerly called *Côte d'Ivoire ebolavirus*), Bundibugyo virus (species *Bundibugyo ebolavirus*), Reston virus (species *Reston ebolavirus*), and Bombali virus (species *Bombali ebolavirus*).

The first four species are known to affect humans, while the Reston virus can affect animals. The Bombali virus first identified in 2018 is not known to cause any disease in either humans or animals.

There are currently two vaccines developed against the Zaire ebolavirus, notorious for the 2013 – 2016 Ebola epidemic in West Africa. These vaccines are called rVSV-ZEBIV or Ervebo developed by Merck, and Zabdeno/Mvabea developed by Johnson & Johnson. They only protect against the Zaire ebolavirus. The current outbreak in Uganda that has so far claimed the lives of 51 people and infected further 132 others, is caused by the Sudan ebolavirus. There are no vaccines developed yet for the virus.

Ervebo has some unpleasant side effects and is approved for use only in people over 18 years old. While Zabdeno/Mvabea by Johnson & Johnson is administered in two doses of about two months apart to one-year olds and above.

Moderna who in parallel with Pfizer-BioNTech, developed a successful mRNA vaccine against COVID-19, is reported to be close to securing a deal with the US Department of Defence to develop mRNA vaccines against some biological threats, including Ebola and other filoviruses. The nature of the vaccine is yet unclear as to whether it would target individual species of the *Ebolavirus* or the whole six species. It would be great if the latter is the case, but it all depends on a lot of factors, including cost, efficacy of the vaccine, experimental limitations, etc.

The technique employed in developing the mRNA vaccines that were successful against COVID-19, involved the use of mRNA to encode the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein so that once the mRNA entered the cells in the body, the cells then make copies of the spike protein. The newly synthesised spike proteins are responsible in initiating robust immune responses, which clear the virus.

The design of the mRNA vaccines makes it easier to tweak the proteins encoded by the mRNA in the event of the emergence of a new variant as seen in the recent mRNA vaccines, which had been tweaked to protect against the coronavirus Omicron variant. The same technique could be applied for the Ebola virus, which might include adding different strands of the mRNA in the design to induce immune responses against multiple filoviruses simultaneously. Employing mRNA vaccines against the Ebola virus is an attractive prospect especially as the virus is not known to mutate as frequently as the coronavirus. Moreover, the vaccines are demonstratively safe and effective. The only drawbacks are the cost and storage, as mRNA vaccines need to be stored in colder conditions compared with other conventional vaccines.

THE DESIGN OF THE MRNA VACCINES MAKES IT EASIER TO TWEAK THE PROTEINS ENCODED BY THE MRNA IN THE EVENT OF THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW VARIANT AS SEEN IN THE RECENT MRNA VACCINES, WHICH HAD BEEN TWEAKED TO PROTECT AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS OMICRON VARIANT

ADVOCACY *that heals*

The Nigeria Governors' Forum operates under six core mandate areas, including but not limited to health, education, security, the economy, agriculture and infrastructure. The overall interest of the governors in these areas is to further performance in governance and deliver dividends of democracy in a most constructive manner. The Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Sokoto State, Rt Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, the Mutawallin Sokoto is not lost on this point, which is why as soon as he assumed office he commenced a familiarization and advocacy tour of critical partners' enclaves to reestablish the principles of continuity at the Forum.

One of such visits took the chairman to the ministries of Health and Finance and much more have been scribbled down for the future.

These advocacy visits are aimed at strengthening collaboration with the Nigerian Healthcare Sector. The visit was led by the NGF Chairman and the Governor of Sokoto, His Excellency, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal. The Chairman said that since inception, we have worked together to promote healthcare services in the country.

He said the COVID-19 collaboration created synergy between the federal government and the sub-nationals. He added that health is a priority, and he asks the health team to review its counterpart funding policies so as to make it performance based. Governor Tambuwal further stated that the challenges witnessed have



THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE TEAM MEETS WITH THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM SECRETARIAT



MINISTER OF FINANCE, BUDGET, AND PLANNING, MRS ZAINAB AHMED RECEIVES NGF MAGAZINES FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NGF, AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL

resulted in a serious brain drain and he implores the federal government to come to a roundtable to see how best we can arrest this.

At the meeting was also Faisal Shuaib, the ED/CEO of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA).

He said the NPHCDA is obliged to make healthcare available to all citizens and the faculty must function to drive confidence. "It must be financed because society needs to provide for those who don't have the financial muscle to afford healthcare."

He added that the strong must be able to take care of the weak and the poor and vulnerable should be part of the social register. Dr Faisal further stated that medical facilities need to have certain types of equipment such as a water source that every hospital can have access to.

He also praised the NGF Chairman and said that he has made efforts across the board and left no one behind. "There is no success unless working with state governments agencies on board and the NPHCDA and I are working closely to cement the relationship," he said.

Some other challenges that the NPHCDA requires the support from the state government are in terms of human resources. He said that we need to train more doctors, nurses, midwives, and health education practitioners to improve awareness of hygiene and nutrition.

WORLD BANK COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR NIGERIA, SHUBHAM CHAUDHURI WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NGF, AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL



CHAIRMAN OF THE NGF, AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL SHAKES HANDS WITH THE MINISTER OF HEALTH DR DR OSAGIE EHANIRE



WORLD BANK COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR NIGERIA, SHUBHAM CHAUDHURI WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NGF, AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NGF, MR ASISHANA BAYO OKAURU

"Nigeria produces 3000 doctors every year and about 1000 doctors leave. We would like to plead with the states to retain doctors."

That the relationship between states and doctors needed to improve. He suggested that some states introduce bonding. That it is state-sponsored which is a good idea.

"Once you train someone, ensure that they give back before they disappear," he said. At the meeting was also the Director General of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Mohammed Nasir Sambo who said that the Governors' Forum is a critical organ for the Federal Ministry of Health.

He said that the National Health Summit appreciates the President for signing the Health Act. That we all must work closely to ensure that the content is realised.

As it relates to the National Coordinator for Supply Chain, he said that we have developed a scorecard which deals with states that have warehouses and we will agree to improve management. He also said that for vaccine manufacturing, NHIS invites NGF to be a part of the process and produce locally.

The Chairman was also at the residence of the Country Director of the World Bank in Nigeria, Dr. Chaudhuri who explained the benefits that the World Bank had derived from partnering with the Nigeria Governors' Forum. Both men touched on the expiration of the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability for results SFTAS program and its sister program SABER.

Professor Folusho Okunmadewa of the World Bank who explained the NG-Cares program says it is well-designed to accommodate social shocks. That is why it is seen as an antidote to the flood disasters that have ravaged several states in the country. He recommended that the NG-CARES support should be directed towards the impact of floods in the country. NG-CARES offers states an opportunity to reset with the resources available to them. Meeting the DLIs he said would effectively lead to the recovery of livelihoods of the weak and vulnerable. Under the program are such positive opportunities for states where they are allowed to take advances and pay later.

SABER on the other hand is a follow-up of SFTAS. It makes states, where it was tried, an own engine room for their growth.

Helping health financing through (Takaful) Islamic principles

Dr. Mohammad Ali Inname is the Commissioner for Health in Sokoto State. He reasoned that in the state's efforts to ensure the actualization of universal health coverage for the indigent, poor and vulnerable residents of Sokoto state, the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Health Finance and Governance (HFG) Project supported the mobilization of their domestic resources, reducing financial barriers, expanding health insurance, and implementing provider payment systems.

This support resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto State Contributory Health Care Management Agency (SOCHEMA) scheme bill in 2016 by Governor Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal. In anticipation of the actualization of the scheme bill, the project conducted a wide range of initiatives to engage state-wide stakeholder buy-in through workshops and advocacy visits.

The Sokoto State House of Assembly conducted a public hearing on the SOCHEMA bill that was attended by key stakeholders from different sectors, including community, religious leaders, trade unions, labour unions, MDAs, professionals, and the private sector, who expressed their endorsement.

Provisions for additional sources of funding incorporated an increase from 1% to 2% of the state consolidated revenue fund (CRF), 1% contribution from local government associations (LGAs), 240 million NGN monthly from the Zakat fund (funds collected from obligatory annual payments under Islamic law on certain kinds of property, and used for charitable and religious purposes), and 0.5% of contract funds. A seminar was also organised for journalists and media practitioners to sensitize the public on the components of the health contributory scheme for effective communication of its benefits to the public. HFG supported the development of a draft Health Financing Policy Framework document which will guide all health financing mechanisms in the state across the 3-health financing functions, and was in alignment with the National Health Financing Policy. HFG also provided SOCHEMA with organizational development support that resulted in capacity enhancement training of staff and coordination support to ensure improved efficiency and alignment of financing goals. The SOCHEMA bill was passed into law by the House of Assembly in February 2018 and launched by the Governor in July 2018. Key stakeholders in the state have since branded the passing of SOCHEMA into law as a legacy of the current administration, as captured here:

"Establishment of SOCHEMA Agency with a legally binding Bill is the greatest achievement under this present administration led by Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal CFR. It is a legacy that I am proud to live behind as the Commissioner of Health, I believe it is a machinery of reforming and a revolution of healthcare services towards minimizing out of pocket spending to the barest minimum for the attainment of a sound Universal Health Coverage in our Communities".

There are grounds to expect improvements in health financing in Nigeria as a whole, as both the executive and legislative branches of the federal and state government are now attending to the challenges as demonstrated by Sokoto state. This successful policy choice in Sokoto state also evolved as a result of the combination of multiple sources generated from the Zakat Fund and the CRF. Dr. Muhammad Ali Inname, Special Adviser to the Governor on Contributory Scheme said that:

"Sokoto State has made history as the only state with Health Financing system that is based on Islamic Takaful (providing guarantee in an Islamic way) insurance principles. Indeed, the passage of SOCHEMA into law has opened a new chapter with redefined Health Care Services in all the 23 Local Governments of Sokoto State".



DR. MOHAMMAD

Eighty percent of indigenes live without health insurance. Technically speaking, out of its estimated population of 5.3 million, 4.5 million people are without health insurance





FISCAL TRANSPARENCY: GOMBE BAGS 4 WORLD BANK/ SFTAS AWARDS

Gombe State, under the dynamic leadership of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has won the World Bank's States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability (SFTAS) Award in four key categories owing to reforms that have impacted positively on its fiscal transparency and accountability in public resource management.

SFTAS is a programme that encourages and motivates Nigerian States towards improvement of their PFM systems, processes and institution aimed at strengthening fiscal transparency to help build trust in government, facilitate accountability in public resource management and ensuring sustainability in the participating states.

An event, tagged "Federal Government of Nigeria/World Bank States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) recognition Dinner with Governors/Award Night" was organised to celebrate the achievements of SFTAS since inception.

The event took place at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja on Monday, 14th November, 2022.

During the occasion, Gombe State received awards of Excellent Performance on Fiscal Transparency and Accountability, Very Good performances on efficiency of Public expenditure, Domestic Revenue Mobilization and on overall SFTAS

Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI's). Gombe is also ranked 5th in the overall rankings for SFTAS.

The Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development, Muhammad Gambo Magaji who received the awards on behalf of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya attributed the feat attained by Gombe State to the political will and determination of Governor Inuwa Yahaya to reform and reposition the state's public finance management structure to compare with international best practices.

He said the Governor provided support and the freedom for the steering committee to implement policies and procedures that ensured the state met all requirements attached to the Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI's) under the SFTAS programme without interference.

The Finance Commissioner noted that Governor Inuwa has enthroned a durable system that instills probity, transparency accountability, due process and the rule of law in governance.



State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability And Sustainability Program For Results

Results: 2018 to 2022

1

SFTAS PROGRAM FOR RESULTS: 2018 TO 2022 STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE: SUMMARY

OVERALL: OVER ENTIRE PERIOD & ALL DLRs	GREATEST IMPROVEMENT: 2018-2019 TO 2020-2021	FISCAL TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY	DOMESTIC REVENUE MOBILIZATION	EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURES	DEBT SUSTAINABILITY
TOP PERFORMER					
YOBE	BORNO	YOBE	OSUN	EDO	JIGAWA
EXCELLENT PERFORMERS: TOP 10% OF STATES					
JIGAWA KEBBI EBONYI	NASARAWA KEBBI BAYELSA	GOMBE DELTA EKITI	SOKOTO KADUNA BAUCHI	BORNO NIGER EBONYI	YOBE KEBBI KOGI EBONYI
VERY GOOD PERFORMERS: TOP 25% OF STATES					
SOKOTO GOMBE	ZAMFARA IMO KANO EBONYI AKWA IBOM	EDO ABIA ONDO ENUGU KOGI	KEBBI JIGAWA EBONYI KOGI PLATEAU GOMBE NASARAWA	DELTA YOBE KEBBI	SOKOTO BORNO NASARAWA NIGER DELTA AKWA IBOM



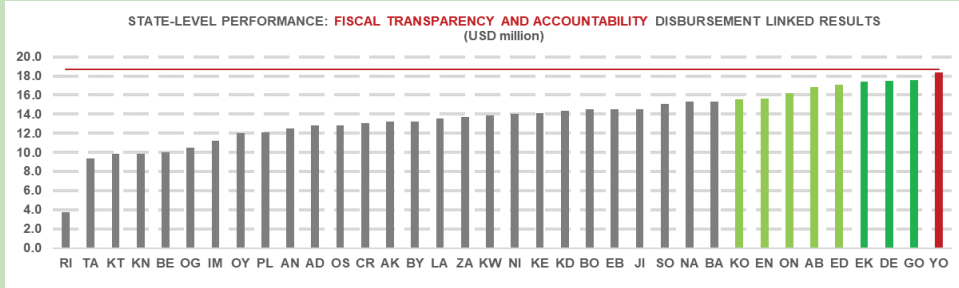
2 STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE UNDER SFTAS RESULTS AREA: FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



TOP PERFORMER
YOBE

EXCELLENT PERFORMERS:
TOP 10% OF STATES
GOMBE
DELTA
EKITI

VERY GOOD PERFORMERS:
TOP 25% OF STATES
EDO
ABIA
ONDO
ENUGU
KOGI



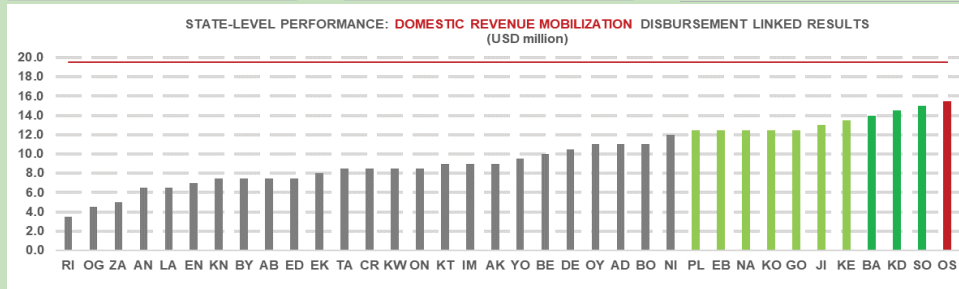
3 STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE UNDER SFTAS RESULTS AREA: DOMESTIC REVENUE MOBILIZATION



TOP PERFORMER
OSUN

EXCELLENT PERFORMERS:
TOP 10% OF STATES
SOKOTO
KADUNA
BAUCHI

VERY GOOD PERFORMERS:
TOP 25% OF STATES
KEBBI
JIGAWA
GOMBE
KOGI
NASARAWA
EBONYI
PLATEAU



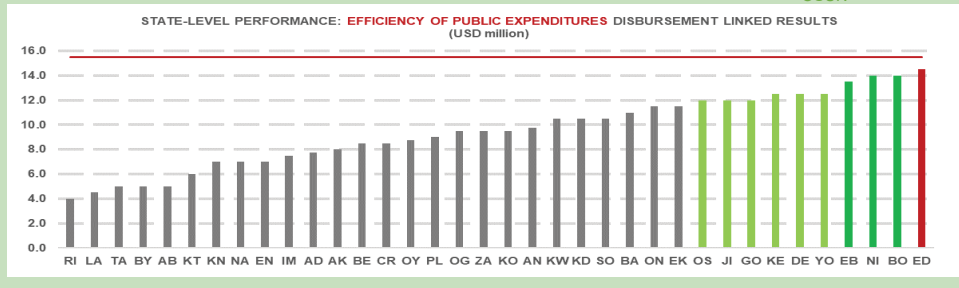
4 STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE UNDER SFTAS RESULTS AREA: EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURES



TOP PERFORMER
EDO

EXCELLENT PERFORMERS:
TOP 10% OF STATES
BORNO
NIGER
EBONYI

VERY GOOD PERFORMERS:
TOP 25% OF STATES
YOBE
DELTA
KEBBI
GOMBE
JIGAWA
OSUN





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STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE UNDER SFTAS
RESULTS AREA: DEBT SUSTAINABILITY



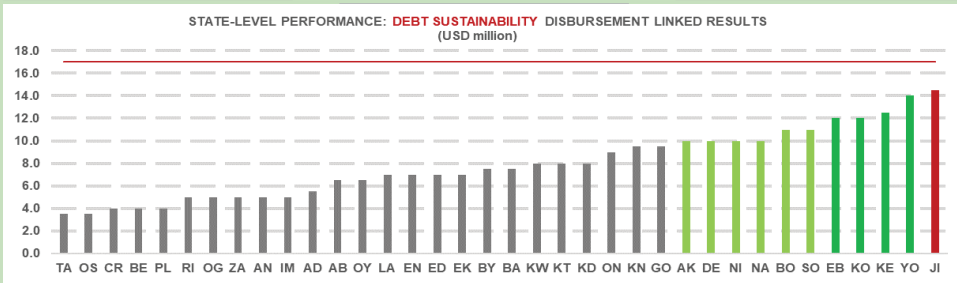
TOP PERFORMER
JIGAWA

EXCELLENT PERFORMERS:
TOP 10% OF STATES

YOBE
KEBBI
KOGI
EBONYI

VERY GOOD PERFORMERS:
TOP 25% OF STATES

SOKOTO
BORNO
NASARAWA
NIGER
DELTA
AKWA IBOM



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STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE UNDER SFTAS
CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE: 2018-2019 TO 2020-2021



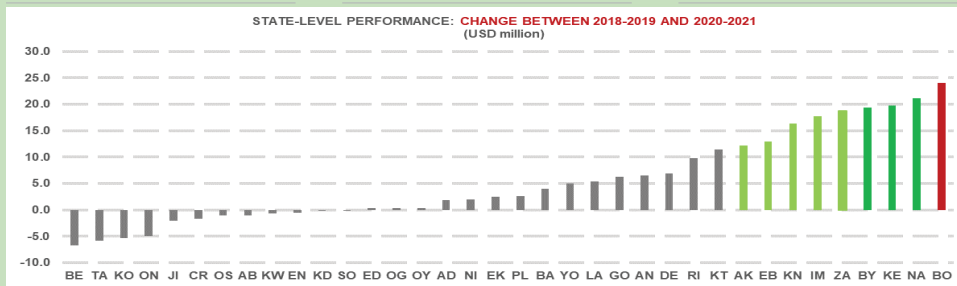
TOP PERFORMER
BORNO

EXCELLENT PERFORMERS:
TOP 10% OF STATES

NASARAWA
KEBBI
BAYELSA

VERY GOOD PERFORMERS:
TOP 25% OF STATES

ZAMFARA
IMO
KANO
EBONYI
AKWA IBOM



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STATE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE UNDER SFTAS
OVERALL PERFORMANCE: OVER ENTIRE PERIOD AND ALL DLRS



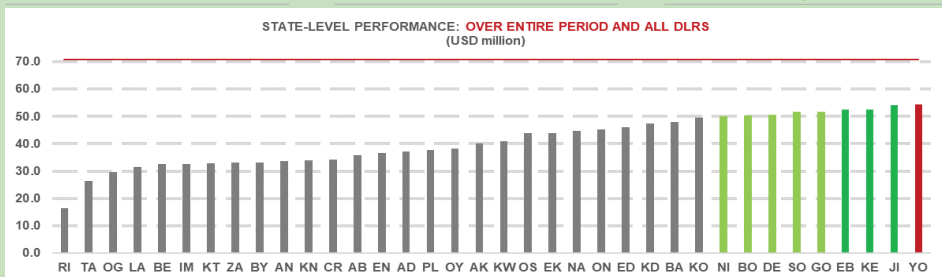
TOP PERFORMER
YOBE

EXCELLENT PERFORMERS:
TOP 10% OF STATES

JIGAWA
KEBBI
EBONYI

VERY GOOD PERFORMERS:
TOP 25% OF STATES

GOMBE
SOKOTO
DELTA
BORNO
NIGER





NEWS

From the states

ZULUM GRANTS N814M TO 9,154 MSME'S AT LAUNCH OF 'BO-CARES'

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum has released a grant worth N814m to a combined number of 9,154 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME's), to stimulate local businesses.

The Governor gave the grant at the launch of the "Borno COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus" programme, codenamed "BO-CARES".

'BO-CARES' is Borno State's domestication of the Federal Government's 'NG-CARES', to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the poor and vulnerable households and small scales enterprises.

BO-CARES, Zulum explained at the launch, hopes to minimize youth restiveness by boosting individual and cooperative businesses operated by youths.

The combined 9,154 beneficiaries were made up of 4, 024 tricycle operators through their Amalgamated Union of NAPEP riders, 3,130 operators of mobile phone repairers and retailers under the Borno State Association of GSM operators and 2,000 tailors from the Borno State Tailoring Association.

Commissioner for Youth Empowerment, Sports Development and Poverty Alleviation, Saina Buba, whose ministry coordinated the exercise, enjoined beneficiaries to put the grant into proper use to enhance their businesses.

Buba noted that Governor Zulum has in three years disbursed 4.2 billion naira to numerous groups to stimulate Borno's economy.

Managing Director of the Borno State Microfinance Bank, Dr. Bello Alh. Ibrahim added that the Zulum administration established an ultra-modern mechanic village to boost MSME's across Borno State.

In a goodwill message, Bank of Industry's Project Manager, Ali Mustapha Bello assured that the Bank will provide support to improve local capacity in order to achieve the desired goal of the program.

Before Tuesday's release of N814m to 9,154 MSME's, Governor Zulum had approved and disbursed funds for different economic empowerment initiatives.

Last year (2021) 13,500 SMEs were empowered across Biu, Gwoza, Ngala and Jere Local Government Areas with N900 million naira.

Also in same 2021, Zulum disbursed N350m to about 4,250 artisans and traders of different categories and locations within Maiduguri Metropolis and Jere Local Government Area.

The Governor had also distributed 100 brand new Toyota Taxis and 500 KEKE NAPEP at 50% subsidized repayment in Maiduguri and another 40 cars and 40 KEKE NAPEP in Biu.



In 2020, Zulum disbursed N1b to 7,200 SMEs drawn from Maiduguri Monday Market Traders Association, Budum Market Traders Association, Babban Layi Textile Dealers Association, Animal Feeds Sellers Association, Metro Plaza Market Association, Customs Vegetable Dealers Association, MAISANDARI Youth Development Association, Borno State Women Empowerment Association, Barracks Women Traders Association, Borno State Firewood Sellers Association, Baga Road Small Scale Traders and Tashan Bama Tipper Drivers Association.

The occasion was attended by Speaker of Borno State House of Assembly, represented by the Deputy speaker, Engr. Abdullahi Askira, former Deputy Governor, Usman Mamman Durkwa, Member representing MMC at the lower chamber of the national assembly, Abdulkadir Rahis, the State APC Chairman, Ali Bukar Dalori, and the APC senatorial candidate for Borno Central, Kaka Shehu Lawan.

NASARAWA GOVT URGES YOUTHS TO SHUN VIOLENCE, SOCIAL ILLS

The Nasarawa State Government has urged youths to shun violence and other negative acts capable of destroying their future and that of the state at large.

The state Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Amb. Lucky Yargwa, made the call in Lafia at a townhall meeting with youth various groups across the state.

The forum was themed: "Breaking The Barriers To Meaningful Participation And Inclusion In Advocacy".

Yargwa said that the importance of peace to human and societal development could not be overemphasised, hence the need of his call in that direction.

He commended the youths for celebrating their day, while calling for peaceful co-existence among the youths.

The commissioner also applauded the youths for supporting Gov. Abdullahi Sule's administration to exceed all expectations in

the state.

He assured them that the state government would continue to support youth activities in the state to enable them excel and give them a sense of belonging.

"And to enable them compete favourably with their counterparts around the globe," he said.

The commissioner further called on them to mobilise support for the re-election of the governor and all ensure the success of other APC candidates in the 2023 general elections.

Earlier, the state Chairman of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Mr Ja'afar Loko, applauded Sule for approving the celebration of the day in the state.

"For appointing young people into various areas of his administration, and for creating programmes and policies that have direct impact on the youths which continue to improve their welfare.





KDSG UNVEILS BUSINESS INITIATIVE FOR TALENTED YOUTHS

Kaduna State Government unveiled business initiative for talented youth aimed at boosting human capital development, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

NAN reports that the initiative called "Buy and Sell initiative for the talent, was a programme designed to boost human capital development in the state through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Declaring the programme open, the state Deputy Governor, Dr Hadiza Balarabe, said it was part the state government initiatives to boost human capital development.

She said that the government had established the Kaduna State Enterprise Development Agency and Kaduna State Women Empowerment Fund to build the capacity of small and medium enterprises and empower citizens, especially women and youths.

The deputy governor expressed the continued support of the government toward improving the MSMEs in the state.

She noted that MSMEs were recognised as one of the major contributors to the economies of most nations in the world.

In his goodwill message, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Mr Niyi Adebayo, appreciated the organisers for the initiative, interest and passion for promoting

trade through buying and selling.

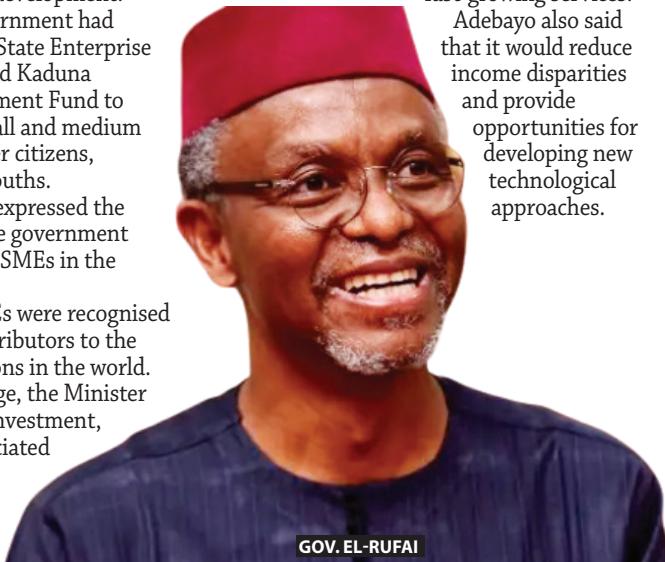
Adebayo, who was represented by Mr Sadiq Bako, described trade as one of the key mandate of the ministry, which he said was largely supported by MSMEs.

He pledged support to the initiative in view of the big role MSMEs play in the growth of the Nigerian economy.

According to him, MSMEs are responsible for driving innovation and competition in many sectors of the country's economy.

The minister said that the new initiative would go a long way in creating jobs at relatively low capital cost, especially in the fast-growing services.

Adebayo also said that it would reduce income disparities and provide opportunities for developing new technological approaches.



GOV. EL-RUFAI

KDSG DISBURSES N600M TO EMPOWER WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Kaduna State Government says it has so far disbursed over N600 million to women entrepreneurs through its Women Empowerment Fund initiated in 2018.

The Commissioner for Human Services and Social Development, Hajia Hafsat Baba disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna.

Baba said that the fund was issued to women entrepreneur cooperatives and clusters across the state as soft loan.

She said that the fund was initiated to develop small and medium scale

industries and reduce gender-based barriers in the business environment.

"It is also to support business skills and financial capacities in women, who are already in business and can use it to increase their capital," she said.

The commissioner said that women cooperatives and clusters in rural and urban areas could access between N5, 000 and N10 million without collateral, "to access the money you need to go through the bank for the sake of accountability and transparency."

According to Baba, most of the beneficiaries have been paying back the loan they collected.

The commissioner said that the government had been monitoring the beneficiaries and their performance to adequately capture success stories and learn lessons.

According to her, disbursement of the loan for 2022 is currently ongoing.

INVESTMENTS: WHAT KADUNA HAS ACHIEVED IN SEVEN YEARS - EL-RUFAI



Gov. El-Rufai

Kaduna State Government has attracted a total investment portfolio of \$4, 488,000,000 comprising actualized and announced investments, and has created 75, 750 direct and indirect jobs, in the last seven years .

The government has also been providing the conducive environment for the private sector to drive the economy, by embarking on numerous policy actions and reforms, including the hosting of the yearly Kaduna Economic and Investment Summit (KadInvest) since 2016.

Governor Nasir El-Rufai made this known in his presentation at the 7th edition of the three-day Kaduna Economic and Investment Summit (KadInvest 7.0) which commenced on Thursday.

The governor who gave a recap of what his administration achieved since inception, explained why investors should invest in Kaduna state, citing abundance of natural resources, a productive workforce, steady economic growth and being the gateway to the northern market.

"Kaduna state is also the most improved state in 2018 Ease of Doing Business Subnational report by the World Bank and it has a very investor-friendly environment," he said.

El-Rufai further said that the state "is also the third biggest consumer market in Nigeria, the third most populous state in Nigeria and has 52% of Nigeria's consumer market."

"Besides, Kaduna state is rich in mineral resources as it has over 25 non-oil mineral deposits, including gold, iron ore and marble," he added.



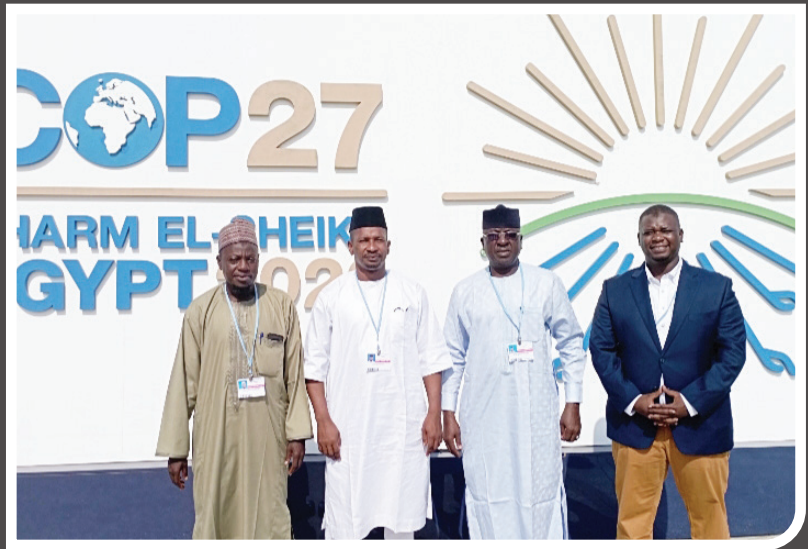
GOMBE AT COP 27 Shares Success Story, Seeks Partnership On Environmental Sustainability Agenda

Gombe State is taking advantage of the ongoing 27th UN Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt to engage stakeholders towards implementing solutions to local challenges caused by climate change in the state.

The summit, tagged COP 27, brought together leaders in government, civil society, industry, and finance from around the world to raise ambition and accelerate action to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

As a flag bearer in environmental management, Gombe State is sharing with the international community, the successes recorded by Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya in the areas of afforestation and reforestation, especially under the Gombe Goes Green (3G) flagship project.

Gombe State is being represented at the International conference by the Commissioner of Environment and Forest Resources, Alh. Shehu Ibrahim Madugu and Gombe State Coordinator of Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes



(ACReSAL) Project, Dr. Sani Adamu Jauro.

The Gombe delegation met with key stakeholders on the sidelines of the conference where they shared experience and sought for partnership in addressing numerous environmental challenges in Gombe State.

According to Shehu Madugu, the environment is a priority of Inuwa Yahaya administration, explaining to his hosts, that the unwavering commitment of the Governor to environmental sustainability inspired the State to initiate the largest and most comprehensive environmental restoration project in the North East subregion, the Gombe Goes Green (3G) under which at least 1 million trees are being planted annually.

"So far about 4 million trees have been planted, through which 364 hectares of degraded land have been recovered while Gully erosion control works are also ongoing across the State together with the Network-11-100 road revolution project which has so far seen the construction of over 500km of roads".

The Commissioner of Environment assured that Gombe is committed to the protection and improvement of the environment as well as safeguarding the forests and wildlife of the state, and therefore welcomes partnerships that will strengthen its environmental sustainability plan which is the cornerstone of its development agenda.

UZODIMMA UNVEILS IMO DIGITAL ECONOMIC AGENDA 2022 - 2026

Gov. Hope Uzodimma of Imo has unveiled the state's digital economic agenda for the years 2022 to 2026 to capture all communities in the state in an organised economic net.

Uzodimma, who launched the agenda in Owerri on Monday, said that it was anchored on six strategic pillars aimed at harmonizing digitalization plans for the state's economy.

The pillars include digital literacy and skill, solid infrastructure, service infrastructure, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, collaboration and partnership. Uzodimma, who was represented by the state Commissioner for Digital Economy and E-Government, Mr Chimezie Amadi, said that the implementation of the

agenda would lay the foundation for digitalization of state Government's institutions.

He said the policy document was formulated to harness ICT potential, provide new solutions to developmental challenges and foster economic growth and competitiveness. He added that it would enhance access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion. "The agenda will foster strategic partnership with the tech ecosystem, facilitate broadband penetration across towns and villages to enable fast pace-based social economic growth in the State. "Imo is the first State to establish a Ministry of Digital-Economy and E-Government

with the sole objective of supporting the Federal Government's policy trust of diversifying the economy through the deployment of digital technology," he said.

He added that the full implementation of the Imo Digital Economy Agenda (IDEA) 2022-2026 would position Imo as the Digital Skills Hub in Africa. He also said that it would help build smart cities that leverage digital technologies to drive governance, innovation and entrepreneurship while promoting value creation and prosperity for all.

He also said that it would position Imo as Africa's highest supplier of market-entry and high level digital skills with sustained digital literacy and skills programmes to create opportunities for Imo Digital Status to solve local and global challenges.

THE NGF AT FORAF

A delegation from the Nigeria Governors' Forum was in Morocco to participate in Forum of Regions of Africa, the FORAF's Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee and the 26th Pan African Council of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) which held from 1st - 2nd November 2022 in Tangier, Morocco. Both meetings were chaired by the UCLGA President, Ms. Fatimetou Abdel Malick, who is also the President of the Region of Nouakchott (Mauritania).

Those who attended the meeting include Mr. Eghosa Omoigui the Team lead, Juliet Chima and Hajiya Fatima Y. Usman Katsina.

The Forum of the Regions of Africa (FORAF) was initiated during the eighth edition of the Africities Summit, in November 2018 in Marrakesh, Morocco. And was formally inaugurated during its first meeting held between 8th to 10th September 2022 in Saïdia, Morocco organized by the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) in collaboration with the Association of Moroccan Regions (ARM) and the Regional Council of Oriental (CRO).

Sequel to this first meeting, FORAF being a sub-entity of UCLGA, participated in the Pan African Council sessions and held several side meetings to advance the objectives of the Forum which include to

- Promote collaboration between the different levels of governance in each country as well as at the pan-African level.

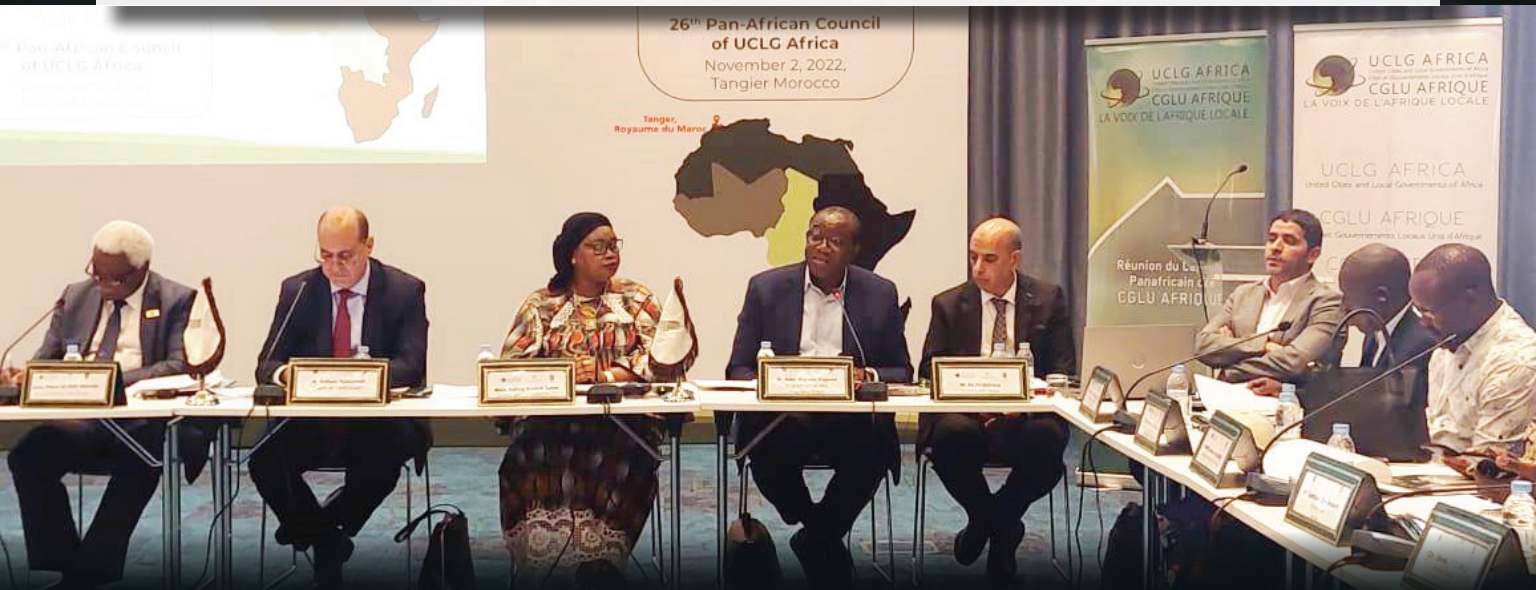
- Make it possible to publicize the wealth of experiences conducted by the various regional governments within the continent and internationally.

- Ensure the territorialization of national public policies and global and African agendas, as well as the corresponding means of implementation.

- Work to create a climate of good neighbourliness, peace and harmony between African communities and societies through the implementation of decentralized cooperation programs between regional and local governments within the different Regional Economic Communities.

One of the highlights to this November meeting was the strategic partnership with Afrexim bank after their successful co-hosting of the 2nd African Sub sovereign Network (AfSNET) Conference with the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) in September 2022. This resulted in the drafting of an MoU where Afrexim bank will subsume the AfSNET conferences and technical support under the UCLGA Economic and Financial pillars.

The MoU is in its final stages of review and agreement is expected to be signed in November 2022. A technical working group (TWG) which includes members from Afrexim bank, UCLGA Secretariat, NGF and AfCFTA, is concurrently developing a 3-year implementation plan to operationalize the MoU starting from Q4 2022.





BACKGROUND

Following the successful establishment of the Forum of Regions of Africa and the election of its governing bodies on 9th September 2022 in Saidia, Morocco, the FORAF President, Dr, Kayode Fayemi was invited to participate in the 28th Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee and the 26th Pan African Council of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) which held from 1st - 2nd November 2022 in Tangier, Morocco. Both meetings were chaired by the UCLGA President, Ms. Fatimetou Abdel Malick, who is also the President of the Region of Nouakchott (Mauritania).

The 2-day event also provided the opportunity for the FORAF Presidency to hold its maiden meeting to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Afrexim Bank as well as the workplan to guide the activities of the FORAF.

Day 1 – 28th Ordinary Session Of The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is the highest decision-making body of UCLG Africa. Membership of the Committee is made up of 15 members (3 from each of the 5 African sub-regions). The Committee deliberated on the following items on the agenda:

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the 27th Session
2. Implementation Status of 27th Session Recommendations
3. Report of the Activities of the General Secretariat
4. Presentation of the 2023 Budget and Workplan
5. Participation in COP27

This session was wrapped up with a commendation to the UCLGA Secretariat by the FORAF President, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, for all the great work. Dr. Fayemi also admonished the UCLGA Secretariat to be weary of overstressing itself in servicing the various sub-entities. In response, the Secretary General assured members that the Secretariat will continue to function effectively as it is a structured system that execute responsibilities through its members or associations.

Day 2 – 26th Session Of The Pan African Council

The UCLGA Pan African Council is the main organ for monitoring the implementation of UCLG-Africa's policies and is responsible for ensuring compliance with policies approved by the General Assembly and translation into UCLG-Africa's intervention strategies and programs.

The opening of the Pan African Council was marked by the speeches of Mr. Mounir Lymouri, President of the Municipal Council of Tangiers and President of the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Municipal Councils (AMPCC) and Mrs. Fatimetou Abdel Malick, President of the Region of Nouakchott (Mauritania) and President of UCLG Africa.

During the stakeholder meeting of the 28th Session of the Executive Committee, contact with Ambassador Albashir Saleh was established. As the number one Nigerian citizen in Morocco, the Ambassador stands out as a key stakeholder. After introductions with President Fayemi, a highlevel meeting was held with Alhaji Mansur Nuhu Bamali, the Minister – Political Affairs, Nigerian Embassy to

the Kingdom of Morocco also in attendance.

Both parties exulted that due credit must be given to Morocco for the role it played in supporting Nigeria's emergence as president of FORAF. Commenting that this is also due in part to the cordial and productive relationship Morocco enjoys with President Buhari. Sighting that multiple M.O.Us have been signed between Nigeria and Morocco, the Phosphate Agreement with Aliku Dangote and the Gas Pipeline Project, to mention a few. President Fayemi remarked that as former Minister of Mines and Steel, he was quite familiar with the M.O.Us Nigeria has signed with Morocco and also confirmed the positive nature of the relationship with President Buhari and the King of Morocco. He continued to remark that with an active office for FORAF in view, as well as a draft MOU with AFREXIM Bank was under consideration for the mobilization of Africa free Trade Area, to facilitate trade, industry, and production. There is a need for Nigeria to act as a strong force to bluster our foreign policy with



Nigeria as a key player. Nigeria Governors' Forum was praised for its comprehensive and collective approach to building Africa.

The Ambassador shared that he had an upcoming meeting with the Governors of Morocco.

In addition, the Ambassador is set to lead a delegation of Ministers and City Mayors, including Niger, Cameroon, Mali and Senegal, to Nigeria shortly. He requested an audience with H.E. Dr Fayemi, to which he responded positively



PRESENTATIONS

The session also featured various presentations from members and institutions present.

1. The Berkane Experience

The Mayor of Berkane presented the Berkane Smart City Project which leverages information communication technology for effective service delivery. Key lessons from the presentation include:

- Government must play an active role in transformation and evolution of the Public and Civil Service Sector, to meet the demands of the public. Their moto is "Be at the service of citizens".
- As a result, Morocco is operating a modern Monarchy with many democratic values and public dividends built in. The Kingdom of Morocco introduced a system of Advanced Regionalism, where a new constitution was adopted with 11 regions emerging. An Institutional Ecosystem that mirrors the governor's system.
- Other innovative features and guiding principles in the Moroccan Public Sector include the Social Disparity Index, Project Follow-up System, Citizen Notification Platform, and others.
- Corporate Human Resource principles are being applied in Civil Service Sectors, such as open spaces

and IT enable workspace, Simplification system and a "Following Management system".

2. AFRIXEMBANK Presentation

The focus was on key Financing Interventions in support of Intra-African Trade & Investments to stimulate a consistent expansion and diversification of African trade to rapidly increase Africa's share of global trade. The bank operates as a first-class profit oriented, socially responsible financial institution and center of excellence in African trade matters. The presenter expatiated on the banks trade strategy and financial instruments to implement them.

- i. Intra-African Trade Strategy: 4 Pillars
 1. Create – Facilitate capacity for expansion of production and processing capabilities
 2. Connect – Identify key institutions and agents to "connect the dots" in the intra-trade value chain
 3. Deliver – Deliver efficient and cost-effective distribution channels within the continent
 4. The Ancillary Pillar (Measure) – introduces monitoring and measurement mechanisms
- ii. Financing Instruments
 - Global Facility, Intra-African Investment Finance, Intra-African Investment Guarantee, Contracting



Related Guarantees, Export Contract Availability Guarantee, Guarantee in Support of Government Commitments to Project Promoters, Merchant Marine Facility, Fleet Financing, Afrexim bank Project Preparation Facility (APPF)

3. PACJA Initiative – Pan African Climate Justice Alliance

This presentation highlighted the advocacy initiatives towards climate action and impact, with a focus on the following.

- i. Policy Influence – formulation of national climate change and environmental governance policy and programs
- ii. Support local government on urban planning - Planning and organization urban mastery planning
- iii. Institution Strengthening – a cohesive, member responsive, and effective civil society platform capable of responding to a dynamic socio-political and ecological environment

4. ATTIA: African Territorial Trade and Investment Agency

A central theme for the meetings was the establishment of the African Territorial Trade and Investment Agency (formerly African Territorial Agency).

ATTIA will follow-through on the 3 pillars driving UCLGA. For Pillar 1, it will territorialize development in strategic sector areas (i.e., Health, Energy, Transportation) and map these projects across the regions. Pillar 2 will be to setup an e-academy, which will be an expansion of the Knowledge hub in Rabat to promote knowledge management across the territories (i.e., courses on Leadership, Budgeting).

The SG proposed that ATTIA be hosted in Nigeria and the establishment of the FORAF Desk in NGF, with a focus on the African agenda, and that signing an agreement with the secretariat of UCLGA will protect this institution from Nigerian politics. He further stated that ATTIA should be hosted in Nigeria for decentralization of UCLGA operations across Africa, in partnership with Afrexim bank, and that the NGF should lead the initiative for its governance given that it is a territorial concern.

Follow-Up Meetings

The next Executive Council meeting is scheduled for May 2023 in Kisumu, while the PAC will be in November 2023 in Lagos.



FORAF PRESIDENT DR. JOHN KAYODE FAYEMI AND THE NGF TEAM; L-R: FATIMA Y. USMAN, EGHOSA OMOIGUI, JULIET CHIMA AND OTHERS



L-R: KWARA STATE FIRST LADY, OLUFOLAKE ABDULRAZAQ, FORMER FIRST LADY OF EKITI STATE, BISI ADELEYE-FAYEMI, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM SECRETARIAT, MR ASISHANA BAYO OKAURU, MARYAM MAIRO MUSTAPHA AMINU WAZIRI, FIRST LADY OF SOKOTO STATE AND THE HEAD OF HR AND GOVERNANCE, HAUWA HALIRU



Courtesy Visit by the Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum to the Director General Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat

On November 15th, 2022, the Chair of the Nigeria Governors Wives Forum HE, Dr. Mariya Aminu Waziri and the former Chair HE Ireilu Bisi Fayemi and HE. Ambassador Olufolake Abdulrazaque paid a courtesy visit the DG NGE.

The meeting at the NGFS touched on several important issues.

It appreciated the continuous support of the NGF towards their initiative and thanked the NGF for going them the opportunity to collaborate with the secretariat especially with regards to the fight against Sexual and Gender Based Violence at the subnational

level.

The former chair, HE. Ireilu Bisi Fayemi introduced the new Chair to the DG. The Chair, reiterated that one of the objectives of the NGWF is complement the efforts of the husbands through projects and activities that address the plight of vulnerable citizens such as Women, Children, Youths and the Physically challenged. She shared her plans for the future which she emphasized cannot be achieved without the full support of the NGE.

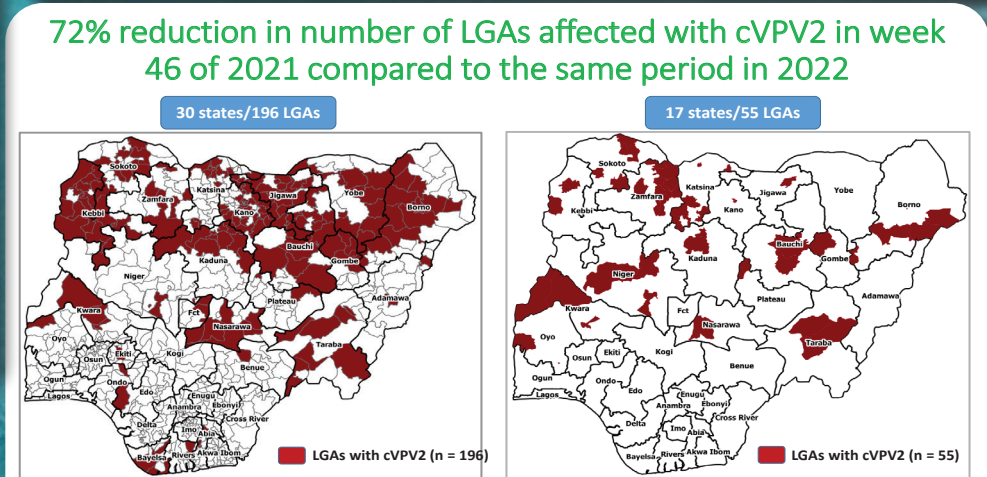
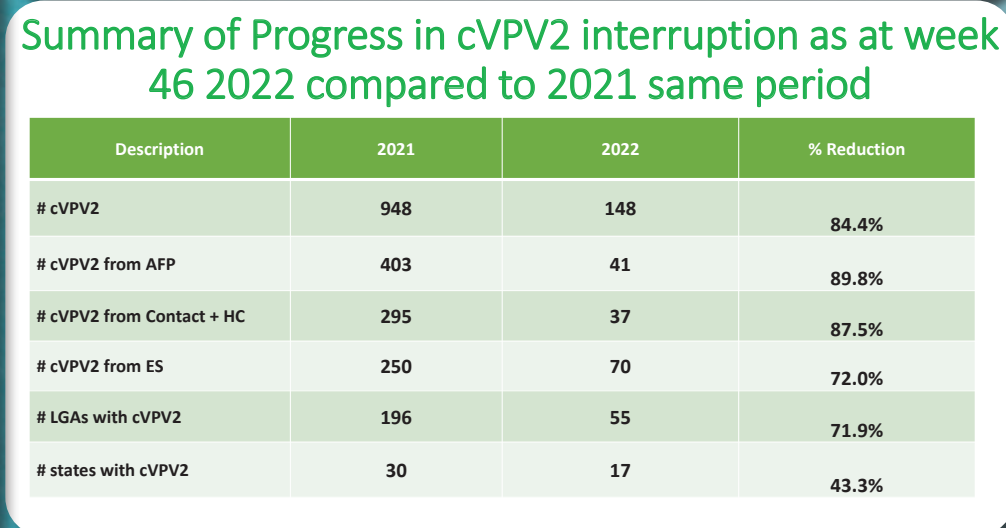
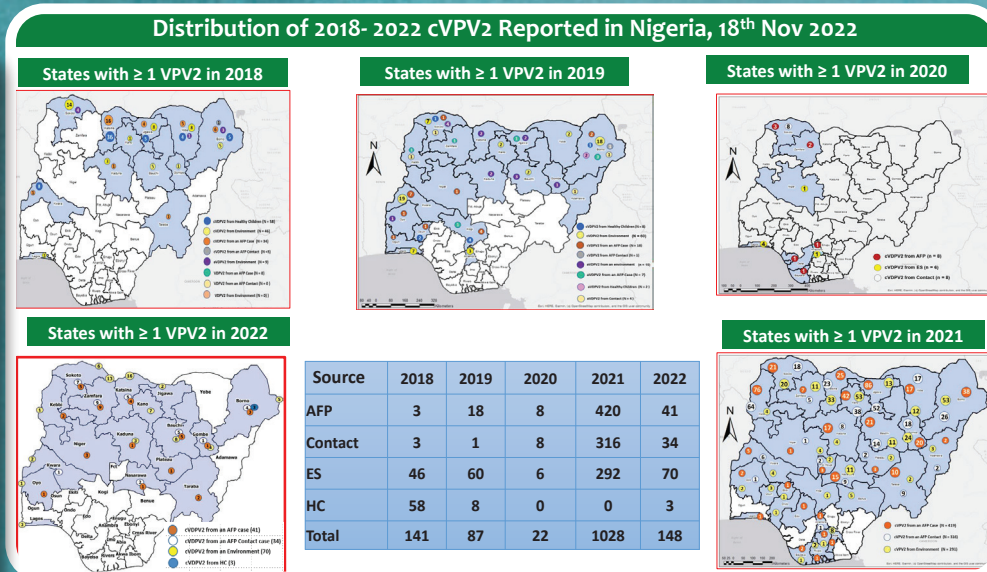
The DG informed the delegation that the Secretariat is always ready to provide technical support whenever it is required.

Update on cVPV2 outbreak

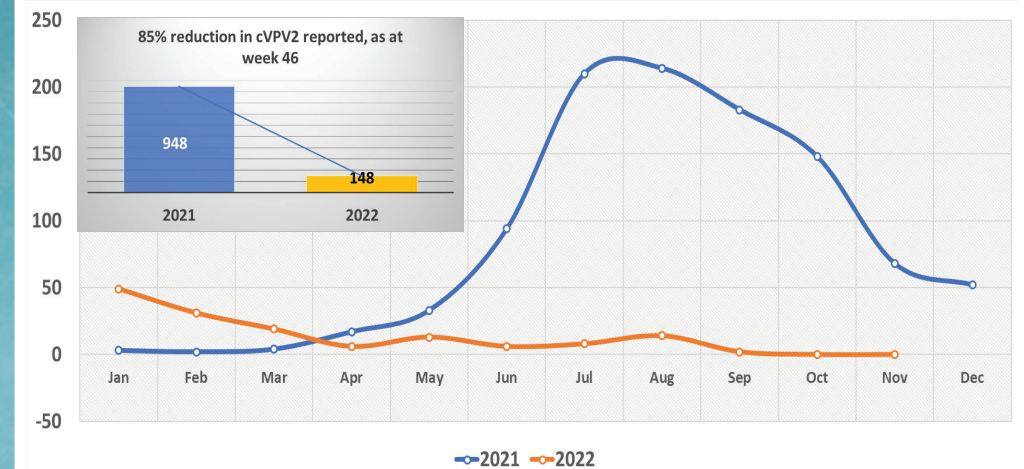
- As at Week 46
 - A total of 8470 AFP cases reported in 2022 with NP-AFP rate, Stool Adequacy and NPENT rate of 8.6, 97% and 11.7% respectively.
 - There were 9 new cVPV2 reported this week (3 from AFP, 4 from contacts and 2 from ES)
 - A total 5 compatibles reported in 2022.
- 2022: 148 cVPV2 from 55 LGAs across 17 states
 - 41 cVPV2 from AFP in 2022, with recent date of onset on **02 Sept 2022** from Gada LGA of Sokoto State.
 - 34 cVPV2 isolates from contact, with recent date of sample collection on **23 Aug 2022** from Zurmi LGA of Zamfara State
 - 3 cVPV2 from Health Children with recent date of sample collection on **07 Apr 2022** from Gwoza LGA of Borno State
 - 70 cVPV2 isolates from ES, with recent date of sample collection on **13 Sept 2022** from Sokoto North LGAs in Sokoto state
- All 37 states and FCT have completed at least four nOPV2 OBR.
 - 6 states: 8 nOPV2 OBRs
 - 6 states: 7 nOPV2 OBRs
 - 6 states: 6 nOPV2 OBRs
 - 2 states: 5 nOPV2 OBRs
 - 17 states: 4 nOPV2 OBRs
- Lagos and Oyo are breakthrough states (BTS).

Asks to NGF

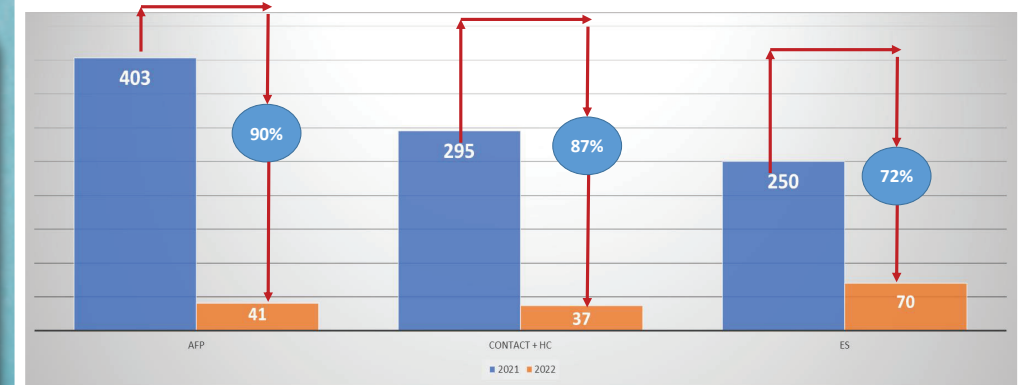
Approval and release of states counterpart funding for the OBRs Oversight by LGA Chairmen in their respective LGAs during OBRs



There is 85% reduction cVPV2 as of week 46 in 2022 compared to 2021 same period



There was a significant reduction in all types of CVPV2 in 2022 compared to 2021 (as at week 46)



Nigeria Proposed SIA calendar Dec 2022- Dec. 2023

Date	No of States	Details	Antigen	Remark
6-7 Dec 2022	ERC (Abuja)			Scheduled
17-20 Dec 22	OBR1 of Lagos/Oyo Virus (Lagos, Oyo, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Edo, Kogi, Kwara)	OBR1	nOPV2	Proposed
14-17 Jan 2023	OBR2 of Lagos/Oyo Virus (Lagos, Oyo, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Edo, Kogi, Kwara)	OBR2	nOPV2	Proposed
30 th Jan -4 th Feb 23	Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Yobe (Phase 1 - 8 States)	RI intensification	fIPV+bOPV	Proposed
20-25 March 23	FCT, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara (Phase 2 - 5 states)	RI intensification	fIPV+bOPV	Proposed
24 th - 29 April 2023	NIDs	"OBR1"	nOPV2	Proposed
22 nd - 27 th May 2023	NIDs	"OBR2"	nOPV2	Proposed
8 th - 11 th July 23	NIDs	Preventive Round	bOPV	Proposed
12 th - 15 th August 23	NIDs	Preventive Round	bOPV	Proposed
16 th - 19 th Sept 2023	SNIDs (18 States) 60%	OBR2	nOPV2	Proposed
14 th -17 th Oct 2023	SNIDs (11 states) 40%	OBR2	nOPV2	Proposed
10 th Jan to 31 st Dec 23	All CG States	IBRA	Multi antigen	Proposed

Oyebanji

inaugurates two Commissioners, nine Special Advisers

— CHARGES APPOINTEES TO CONTRIBUTE TO OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE



Ekiti State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji has inaugurated two newly appointed Commissioners and nine Special Advisers with a charge on the appointees to go the extra mile in contributing their time, talent and expertise to the overall development of the State.

Speaking during the ceremony that took place at the Osuntokun Pavilion, Government House Grounds, Ado-Ekiti, Oyebanji said the appointees were selected based on their proven pedigree of professionalism, brilliance and personal accomplishments stressing that appointment under his administration must be earned based on competence, character and creativity to achieve excellent service delivery.

Mr Oyebanji urged the appointees to bring to bear their wealth of experience and leverage their competence to meet the expectation of the people as well as see their appointment as a rare opportunity to contribute to the development of the State.

The Governor urged members of the public not to put undue pressure on the appointees. He, however, told the newly inaugurated officials to carefully understand the nuances of the people and their environment, which according to him, is key to how far they can succeed in the determined effort to transform Ekiti State and make life better for the people.

He also allayed the fears of political leaders over appointments, restating his earlier stand that they would play very critical role in the appointment to political office holders, adding that the first set of appointment he made were purely professionals who were coming on board to put together the building blocks for future political appointees to build on.

Oyebanji charged the appointees to sustain those positive leadership qualities that stood them out and qualified them for the appointment, stating they were assuming office at a very challenging time when expectations are high and resources not readily available.

On 2023 presidential election, the Governor appealed to all political parties to adhere strictly to the campaign rules and regulations by ensuring that campaigns are issue-based and devoid of violence and rancour. He urged Ekiti electorate to ensure victory for the All Progressive Congress (APC) candidate, Asiawaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the polls, adding that he would personally lead the campaign.

“Today’s event is another significant move in our bid to ensure a very solid foundation for our government. It also marks the commencement of the implementation of our campaign manifestos.

“As you assume office today, you are expected to bring to bear your wealth of experience and leverage your competences

to meet the expectation of our people. I also want you to see your appointment as a clarion call to service and a rare opportunity to contribute to the development of Ekiti State and its people.

“I will like to place on record that I am committed to my campaign promise that party leaders will play a very critical role in appointment to political offices at the appropriate time.

“Those being sworn in today are pure professionals with no political alignment that can distract them from governance. They are coming on board to put together the building blocks for future political appointees to build on so that our people can benefit from a collaboration between the professional class and the political class.”, the Governor stated.

Speaking on behalf of the appointees, the newly inaugurated Special Adviser, Education, Science and Technology, Dr (Mrs) Bimpe Aderiye, thanked the Governor for finding them worthy, saying they would put in their best in their assigned responsibilities.

Those appointed as Commissioners are: Mr Akintunde Oyebode (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development) and Dr Oyebanji Filani (Ministry of Health and Human Services).

The new Special Advisers include: Mr Niyi Adebayo (Budget, Economic Planning and Performance Management); Mrs Tayo Adeola (Investment, Trade and Industry); Mr Ebenezer Boluwade (Agriculture and Food Security); Dr (Mrs) Kofoworola Olabimpe Aderiye (Education, Science and Technology).

Others are Chief Jide Awe (Political and Inter Party Affairs); Architect Tope Ogunleye (Bureau of Special Projects); Mr Seun Fakuade (Governance, Reforms and Innovation), Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Ogundana (Security Matters) and Mr Yinka Oyebode (Media and Strategy/ CPS).

At the event were the Deputy Governor, Chief (Mrs) Monisade Afuye, Wife of Governor, Dr (Mrs) Olayemi Oyebanji, Deputy Speaker, Ekiti State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Hakeem Jamiu, Secretary to the State Government, Dr (Mrs) Habib Adubiaro, Head of Service, Barr. Bamidele Agbede, APC Chairman, Barr. Paul Omotoso, members of the House of Assembly, body of Permanent Secretaries and traditional rulers.

Strengthening Immunization and PHC SERVICES



Gavi in February 2022, at the High-Level Mission to Nigeria entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with eight states of Bayelsa, Gombe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Taraba and Gombe. The MoU aims to strengthen Routine Immunization and PHC systems to significantly contribute to the reduction of mortality by preventing vaccine preventable deaths by attaining at least 80 per cent equitable, and sustainable coverage over a three-year period. As agreed at the kick off meeting of the MoU, NGF will facilitate a biannual review meeting aimed at assessing implementation status and progress towards the expected PHC MoU results, identify programme constraints and remedial actions and also to re-affirm partner commitment and accountability towards achieving the results.

The 1st biannual review meeting was carried out by Gavi, UNICEF and the eight MOU states on 7th and 8th November 2022, with NGF facilitating.

In attendance were State Deputy Governors and their states team comprising of the Honourable Commissioners of Health, Executive Secretaries of the state Primary Health Care Boards/Agencies,

program Officers overseeing the implementation of the workplan as well as the states' accountants handling the finances of the MOU. Also in attendance were technical officers from NPHC-DA, as well technical partners from WHO, UNICEF, BMGF, FCDO and GAC.

States highlighted their achievements, challenges, mitigation mechanism and a reflection on their priorities in the next 6 months.

A presentation summarizing the key points from the states' presentations were put together by NGF and UNICEF with key ask from Gavi centered around reprogramming of funds for effectiveness and support the deployment of drone technology for vaccine delivery in security compromised communities.

At the end of the review meeting, a symbolic handing over of procured items such as Hilux vans and motorcycles was done while awaiting the finalization of the documentation processes for the items.

Results:

The following were key results from the review meeting;

- All the 8 states have inaugurated and operationalised their states task force committees on PHC and immunization,

that regularly meet on a quarterly basis under the leadership of the state Executive Deputy Governors.

- All the 8 states have finalized the development of 2023 Annual Health Operational Workplans that include all activities funded under the PHC MoUs
- All the 8 states have improved coverage for Penta1 (87.9% compared to 74.3% in 2021), Penta3 (83.2% compared to 67.7% in 2021) and skilled birth attendance (22.4% compared to 19.4% in 2021)
- All eight states have commenced actions for the recruitment of Human resources for health and five have finalised and deployed health workers to priority PHC facilities. Bayelsa, Niger and Zamfara are in advanced stages of recruiting and deploying their HCWs.
- All 8 states have developed evidence-based accountability frameworks to ensure optimal performance of HRH in their states. Key commitments by the eight MOU states

Human Resources for Health:

- All health workers recruited through the MOU will be absorbed into the state civil service.
- Implement the accountability framework for HRH to ensure their efficiency.

Fund Release

- Facilitate the prompt release of budgeted funds for PHC

Demand Generation

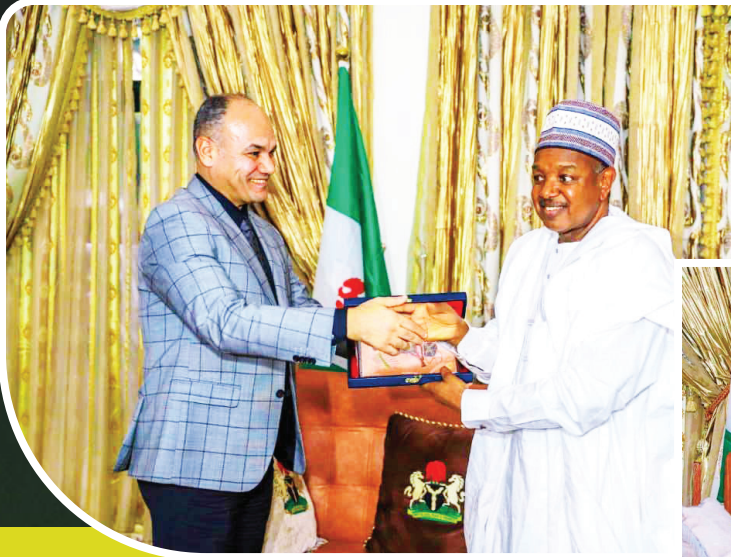
- Facilitate improvement in demand generation through innovative community initiatives such as the market strategy, Jakadan Lafiya and Gwarzo Masaurata.

Service Delivery

- Carry out all planned activities and services to ensure that zero-dose children are reduced
- All communities reached with PHC services.

Maintenance of Vehicles

- Commit to maintain project vehicles and use them for the purpose for which they were given.



Egyptian investors meet Gov. Bagudu on Agriculture

A team of international investors from Egypt on an investment visit led by Gen. Walid Yehia Soliman Morsy has visited Kebbi State to explore areas of partnership in agriculture.

The Egyptian delegation paid courtesy visit to Kebbi State Governor, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu in Government House, Birnin Kebbi on Wednesday.

Gov. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu told the investors from Egypt that President Muhammadu Buhari had worked so hard in the last seven years to provide an investor-friendly environment.

He said: "Nigeria has also in the period under review operating a programme, called, 'Ease of doing business."

"This is to ensure that all the regulatory and contracts frameworks were made easier and efficient.

"For instance, one of the largest rice mills in Nigeria, WACOT, domiciled in Kebbi State took only eleven months from land identification to commissioning."

Bagudu said that the proposed partnership between Egypt and the Nigerian investors was apt and timely.

According to the governor, the move was not misplaced as the two countries had an age-long mutually beneficial relationship which will only be bolstered now.

"We will produce together, add value together and market together. We have commonalities together.

"Nigeria's 200 million population provides a hub for investments and marketing, so also Egypt's vast potentials and being a gateway to Middle Eastern markets.

"More is being done to make the investments environment friendlier in Kebbi and Nigeria in general," Bagudu averred.

Bagudu further said over the years, his administration has provided conducive environment for investors to establish economic ventures in

the state.

The State, he explained in recent years, has served as rice hub where rice farmers within Nigeria and beyond have been visiting to emulate the agricultural successes of Kebbi State.

Bagudu pledged to collaborate and support the Egyptian delegation for stronger partnership in agriculture.

He thanked the delegation for choosing Kebbi State for their visit.

Speaking earlier, the leader of Egyptian delegation Gen. Walid Yehia Soliman Morsy acknowledged the hospitality of the people of the state, adding that the two countries will mutually benefit from the partnership.

He said his country has the potential to engage in the production and marketing of rice.

President of RIFAN, Alhaji Aminu Goronyo said that Nigeria was moving towards self sufficiency since 2021, taking over from Egypt, the erstwhile number one rice producer in Africa.

Goronyo added that Kebbi was the the birthplace of the rice revolution in Nigeria sequel to the flag off of the Anchor Borrower's Programme by Buhari in 2015.

He also noted that sequel to the uncommon commitment of Bagudu, Kebbi was playing key roles in ensuring a sustainable general food security in the country.

The CEO/MD of EGTA Investments, Bashir Yusuf Ibrahim who introduced the Egyptian delegation to Kebbi State Governor also described Kebbi as the home of Nigeria's agriculture.

He said that the visit would afford the members of the delegation to see the colossal potentials for investments in agriculture.

Ibrahim said that Egypt was looking towards Nigeria and Kebbi particularly to be self sufficient in rice production.

The Egyptian delegation went round the state to see some fadama rice farms.



Buni:

My govt 'll sustain transparency, accountability leadership

Yobe State Governor, Mai Mala Buni, says his administration would sustain the leadership position in due process, transparency, and accountability in government's transactions in Nigeria.

Buni stated this while responding to the Overall Top Performer Award on State Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS), a World Bank programme, won by the state.

Yobe State was presented the Top Performer overall best state among the 36 states of the federation by the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, at a dinner organised for the 36 state governors last week.

According to a statement issued by the state government on Tuesday, the governor said his administration would continue to

promote transparency and accountability in governance to have value for money on all expenditures.

"We are a state with low revenue and in dire need of infrastructure and services, we have to use our resources judiciously and transparently to achieve our set targets to improve the lives of our people" he stated.

Governor Buni commended the civil servants who believe and share the vision and mission of his administration, saying: "I want to specially appreciate our civil servants who are the implementors of government policies and programmes and for being on the same page with the government to achieve this great feat."

Speaking at the event, Ahmed, who spoke on behalf of the Federal Government, applauded the state governments for their performance in the ongoing SFTAS programme and producing positive results.

She expressed delight that the \$1.5 billion

SFTAS programme supported by the World Bank has promoted institutionalisation of fiscal reforms in the states.

The minister stated that the Federal Government's celebration of the success of the SFTAS programme and the presentation of the awards to best performing states in the successive Annual Performance Assessments was to spur the states to do more.

Other Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) of the State Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability programme include citizen-based budgets, timely preparation and publication of annual budgets and audited financial statements, as well as, adoption of the National Chart of Account.

Speaking on the development, the Director-General, Yobe State Bureau for Public

Procurement, Samaila Mai Adamu, attributed the rating of the state as the Overall Best Top Performer state by SFTAS to the leadership role of Governor Buni on due process.

"Governor Buni has always insist that every project executed by the state government must be checked by the Bureau to undergo due process for transparency and accountability.

"I am glad that the Bureau has been performing its functions and responsibilities without hindrance or interference from the executive," he said.

Samaila said Yobe state also won the best state in due process, accountability and transparency award from the Association of Public Procurement Practitioners of Nigeria (APPPN).

"This SFTAS award is a confirmation of the APPPN award that Yobe State has now assumed a new leading status on accountability and transparency," he added.

Communique

ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 8TH TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM (NGF) HELD Tuesday, 22nd November 2022

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, received briefings on various subnational programmes, interventions, and issues of national importance. On these we resolved as follows:

1. Regarding the \$418 Million Paris Club Refund and promissory notes issued to Consultants by the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Debt Management Office (DMO), the Forum remains resolute in exploring all legal channels available to it in ensuring that resources belonging to States are not unjustly or illegally paid to a few in the guise of consultancies.

2. The Forum following its advocacy that the proposed privatization of Ten (10) National Integrated Power Projects (NIPPs) by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) should be stopped, instructed its lawyers to approach the Federal High Court which at present has issued a Court Order restraining all the parties in the suit from taking any step or action that will make or render the outcome of the Motion on Notice seeking for Interlocutory Injunction nugatory. The effect of the Order of the Court is that Respondents cannot proceed with the proposed sale of the power plants belonging to the Niger Delta Power Holding Company Limited (NDPHCL) until the hearing and determination of the Motion on Notice for Interlocutory Injunction.

3. Sequel to discussions between sub-sovereigns at the recently concluded 2nd African Sub-Sovereign Government Network (AfsNET) Conference, the Forum agreed to pursue through its membership on the Forum of Regions of Africa (FORAF) and its partnership with the African Export-Import (AFREXIM) Bank, support for enhanced dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between sub-sovereign governments around intra-African trade, investment, industrialization, and development.

4. The Forum is monitoring the flood situation across the country and working with the Federal Government through the National Economic Council (NEC) and in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHDS), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (FMBBNP) and the World Bank to prepare emergency interventions to ameliorate the impact of the flood crisis especially to sustain Food Security.

5. Members were also briefed by the World Bank Task Team Leader (TTL), Professor Foluso Okunmadewa on the desired restructuring of the \$750 million Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program (CARES) programme to respond to

Nigeria 2022 Flood Response following discussions with States and the National Economic Council (NEC) Ad hoc Committee on Flooding. The restructuring will allow States reallocate funding from the programme for immediate response for livelihoods, assets and basic services. As the flood recedes, the States through the programme will be able to support the household enterprise recovery grants, short-term transfer of households displaced, labor intensive opportunities for unskilled labor, rehabilitation of basic services infrastructure, recovery of damaged agricultural infrastructure, rehabilitation of destroyed wet markets, amongst others.

6. The Forum received update from the Senior Programme Manager NGF States Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Technical Assistance Programme, Olanrewaju Ajogbasile, on the implementation progress of the SFTAS programme which is in its last phase of annual assessments. Members were also informed of technical assistance planned and on-going to support sustainability of the reforms including support to ensure States publish their 2023 budget in line with the National Chart of Account (NCoA). The Forum assured the programme of its commitment to sustain the reforms and implement recommendations that could further strengthen their public financial management systems.

7. The Honourable Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola briefed the Forum on the congestion of the custodial centers across the country and the digitalization of immigration processes. Members welcomed the report of the Minister and committed to working with law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) on the recommendations put forward as they relate to individual State jurisdiction.

8. Finally, the NGF Senior Health Advisor, Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab briefed the Forum on the progress with Polio/Routine Immunization highlighting that there has been an 85% reduction in the number of Circulating Vaccine-Derived PolioVirus (cVDPV) in 2022 from 1,028 cases recorded in 2021.

Members were also provided update on the implementation progress of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Project (CoPREP) and the recently launched Primary Health Care (PHC) Leadership Challenge. The Forum reiterated its commitment to the Seattle Commitments and PHC strengthening including the judicious use and timely release of counterpart fund where required.

Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal
Governor of Sokoto State &
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum
22nd November 2022