

# The Executive

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SUMMARY



## GOVERNORS TAKING PROACTIVE STEPS TO COMBAT FOOD CRISIS



Also Inside

**Geometric Power Plant: Tinubu Hails Gov Oti**





# Commentary

## Caging a Prickly Challenge...

In much of human history, hunger has triggered revolutions, birthing new societies. But taking little for granted, Nigeria's thirty-six state governors who are history-savvy are rallying to cage the prickly challenge of food crisis currently unsettling the subnational space.

Providing statistical substantiation of the crisis, in its Consumer Price Index (CPI) report for January, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said food inflation surged to 35.4 percent. According to the NBS, the rise in food inflation was caused by increased prices of bread and cereals, oil and fat, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish, meat, and fruit.

But not letting the grass grow under their feet, His Excellency, Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, CON, governor of Kwara State, who is also Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF, alongside Governors Agbu Kefas of Taraba State; Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State; and Ahmed Ododo of Kogi State recently stormed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS) to interface with the federal government and push for increased crop production to tackle food inflation and food shortages in Nigeria.

The other state chief executives are not sleeping on their oars either as they put on their multi-hued thinking caps to stabilise their jurisdictions. From Governor Adeleke of Osun State, Prof. Babagana Zulum of Borno State, Peter Mbah of Enugu State to Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State, Abba Yusuf of Kano State and others, it's game on.

This edition also tracks 'Shrinkflation,' - an aspect of the food crisis - as consumers groan under it and now pay more for less quantity and quality. But the proactive measures governors are taking are expected to rein in such challenges.

Meanwhile, Nigerians bade farewell to Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu SAN, CON, former governor of Ondo State. In a eulogy filled with both grief and admiration at the St. Andrew's Cathedral, Imola Street, Owo, Ondo State, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who led the nation in mourning lauded Akeredolu's "indomitable legacy of national service."

Reflecting on the transience of life and the enduring impact of our choices, President Tinubu who was represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima lauded Akeredolu's courage, dedication, and his unwavering stance as "a fearless soldier for his people."

Away from mourning, NGF Secretariat's Agric Advisor, Prof. Abba Gambo provides a juicy insight into the economic importance of the mango fruit. This will be music to many as hunger could certainly be relieved by these succulent fruits, in addition to its other economic benefits.

Meanwhile as Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State test runs the state's novel Red Line Train and inspects the rail facilities ahead of its commissioning, Governor Dauda Lawal of Zamfara State hosted the Swedish ambassador in Nigeria, Annika Hahn-Englund.

Governor Lawal expressed his administration's readiness to collaborate with Sweden across various sectors, including mining, agriculture, renewable energy, education, and healthcare. Significantly such collaborations are playing out across many states with foreign countries and big local investors.

At the NGF Secretariat, several activities played out as it hosted/engaged diverse groups. The Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG); the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, NIPC; the Association of Nigerian Artisans & Technicians (ASNAT); the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and the International Monetary Fund, IMF, all came calling.

In our Gender Issues segment, the Nigeria Governors' Spouses Forum (NGSF) issued a compelling call to both the federal and state governments to declare a state of emergency on substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking across Nigeria.

The Chairperson of the Forum, Ambassador Olufolake Abdulrasaq, emphasized the critical need for mobilizing resources to combat the pervasive drug pandemic gripping the nation.

Meanwhile, in a fetching display of generosity and support, Her Excellency Hajia Zainab Nasare Idris Kauran Gwandu, the First Lady of Kebbi State, recently made a significant contribution of N10m to empower women entrepreneurs in the region.

In commemoration of the International Day for Zero Tolerance on Female Genital Mutilation, the Ebonyi State First Lady organized a community outreach event in Ezza Inyimagu, Izzi Local Government Area of the state.

Her Excellency, Olufolake Abdularazaq, Chairperson and First Lady of Kwara State, hosted a delegation from UNAIDS at the NSGF Secretariat in Abuja, where low access to antenatal care in certain states and rates of mother to child transmission of HIV in Nigeria took center stage.

Please read on.

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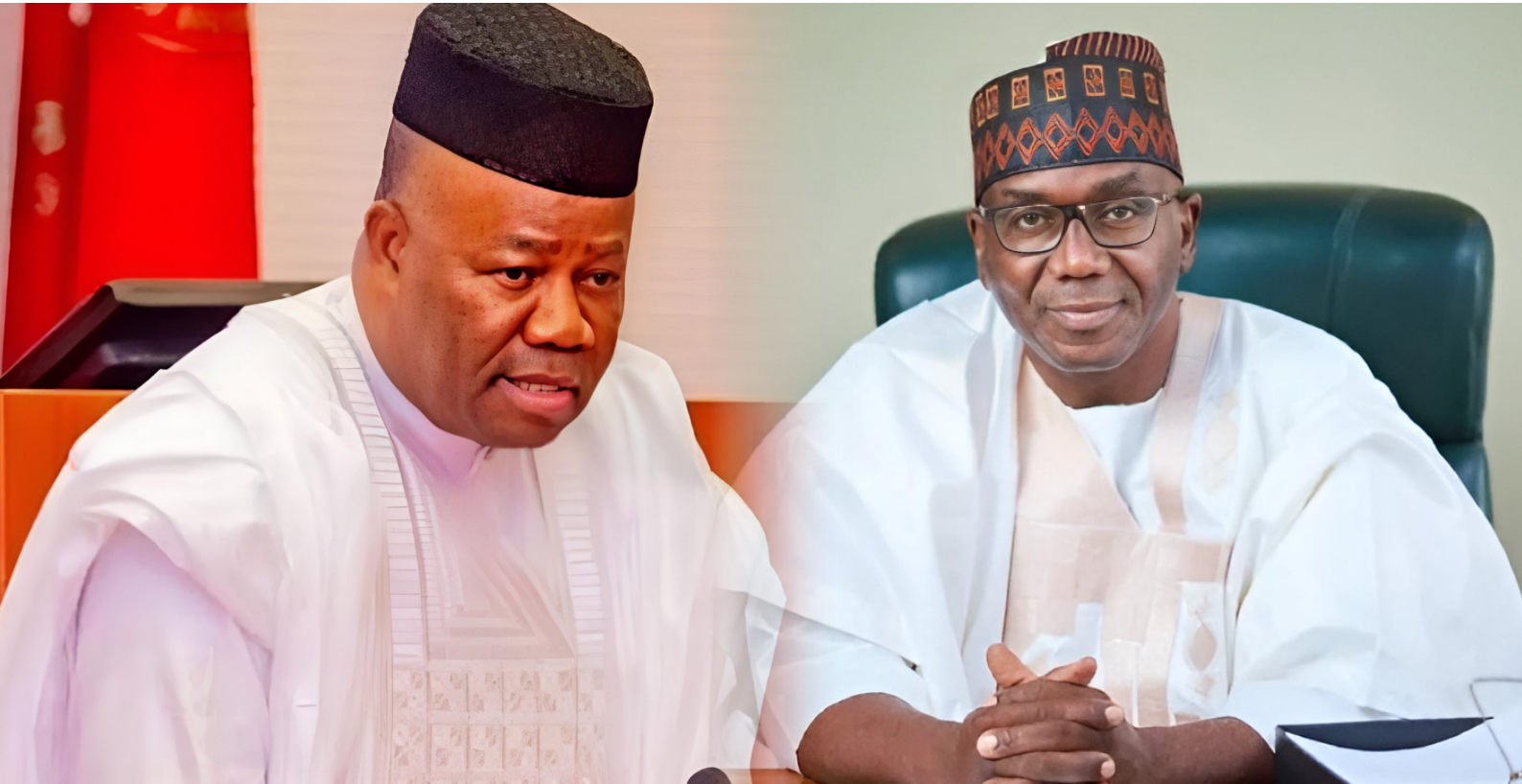
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## Phantom N30bn Largesse:

# Sen. Akpabio Apologises to State Governors

The President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, has finally apologised to the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) under the leadership of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq of Kwara State over his comment on the N30bn allowance allegedly given to state governors to cushion the effect of inflation in food prices.

This was coming after the Senate President recently held a meeting with the NGF Chairman and some of his counterparts in Abuja.

Akpabio had, at a plenary sitting said an "unverified report" indicated that state governors received N30bn each from the Federation Account to cushion the effect of inflation and the high cost of food prices.

The statement spawned considerable unrest among the public, pitching citizens against their governors and demanding accountability for the money they did not collect.

However Senator Akpabio in a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Esemey Eyiboh, retracted the statement, saying the Senate President held the governors in high esteem.

### The statement read:

"During the session, the President of the Senate commented on the payment of an unverified cumulative sum of about N30bn to the sub-national governments by the Federal Government for various interventions to ameliorate the food situation of our citizens at the sub-national governments.

"The unfortunate conjectures to take away the kernel in the material facts of FAAC payment are rather regretted. In considering the well-intended motive of urging state governments to collaborate with the Federal government of President Bola Tinubu to facilitate strategic interventions to mitigate the prevailing economic situation in the country remains the underpinning motivation in the comment.

"The President of the Senate is not oblivious to the fact that state governments are functional partners in all the efforts of the current administration of President Bola Tinubu and are also valuable stakeholders' in the various legislative engagements of the legislature in creating the nexus between the legislature and the people."

Eyiboh added that Akpabio has always demonstrated commitment to team building and shall not do less in the circumstance.

He, therefore, urged the sub-national governments not to be distracted by any misunderstanding of the context and true meaning of the statement.

He added, "The President of the Senate recognises and appreciates the current efforts of the governors at ameliorating the adverse effects of the current inclement socio-economic environment and therefore invites more hands on the plow to complement the renewed hope agenda."





## ISSUED AT THE END OF THE EMERGENCY VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM (1ST IN 2024)

HELD ON TUESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 2024.

**W**e, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our emergency virtual meeting held on the 6th of February, 2024 following a briefing by the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and the representative of the Director General of the Department of State Service (DSS), deliberated on the security situation and food stability in the country and resolved as follows:

1. Recognised the need to address the connection between food inflation, naira depreciation and rising insecurity across parts of the country from a systemic perspective and called for urgent discussions with, and synergy amongst stakeholders in improving the situation in the shortest possible time.
2. Agreed on the following immediate actions:
  - a. Reduce Foreign Exchange Demand: by use of moral suasion to reduce dependence on foreign exchange, imported goods and services.
  - b. Improve Foreign Exchange Supply: by easing commodity export requirements to encourage exportation and supply of foreign exchange; Curbing illegal export of solid minerals; and increasing crude oil production to earn more foreign exchange.
  - c. Support improved Enforcement efforts: by reviewing the extant criminal justice laws in the States to ensure quick dispensation of justice on perpetrators of insecurity in the States; supporting the office of the National Security Adviser in the States to enhance the nature and quality of intelligence.
3. Reiterated Governors' commitment to deploying emergency food interventions, including incentivizing food production, release of food items from strategic food reserves and collaboration with food millers and commodity traders in their various States to boost food availability as an immediate short-term action.



**AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq**  
Governor, Kwara State, &  
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum

## ■ COVER STORY

# GOVERNORS TAKING PROACTIVE STEPS TO COMBAT FOOD CRISIS

A mix of issues are sparking unrest and triggering significant food crisis in the subnational space but state governors are responding, interfacing with the central government and projecting new governance game-plans to stabilize the states, writes **LOUIS ACHI**



According to Senegalese diplomat and ex-Director-General of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (1994-2011), Jacques Diouf, "Hunger is not an issue of charity. It is an issue of justice." Former US President John F. Kennedy spoke to the same existential dilemma when he proclaimed that, "If a free society cannot help the many who are hungry, it cannot save the few who are rich."

These philosophical postulations by a notable diplomat, on one hand, and a famous political leader, on the other, fundamentally capture the kernel of the current food crisis challenging the central government and putting the subnationals on the spot.

It cannot be disputed that this prickly, alarming situation has genuinely roused the energy and governance nous of the nation's state chief executives to dig deeper and birth policies that would stave off and ultimately stabilize an

incipient state breakdown.

In its consumer price index (CPI) report for January, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said food inflation surged to 35.4 percent. According to the NBS, the rise in food inflation was caused by increased prices of bread and cereals, oil and fat, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish, meat, and fruit.

Seizing the bull by the horns in connection with dealing with this stark reality and ensuring food security to head off the brewing crisis, His Excellency, Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, CON, governor of Kwara State, who is incidentally Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGE, alongside Governors Agbu Kefas of Taraba State; Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State; and Ahmed Ododo of Kogi State recently stormed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS) to interface with the federal government and push for increased crop production to tackle food inflation and food shortages in Nigeria.

Speaking on behalf of the governors, Governor Abdulrazaq stated that the Anchor Borrowers Programme that was previously implemented by the Central Bank of Nigeria did not achieve much. He called on the agriculture minister to work hard to meet the food targets of government, as this was vital for the Nigerian masses, adding that state governors would work with





the ministry.

His words: “We could not achieve much with the CBN Anchor Borrowers programme; it was very challenging. The issue of food security is a one-stop-shop and we need to concentrate on what we are doing. We need to concentrate on what we are doing for the dry season farming.

“The minister has come up with a programme on cassava, rice and maize and we want to engage in that programme and urgently make sure we improve on our yield and deliver to the Nigerian population.

“We want to get to a stage where we export our food. What we have now is that, because of the devaluation of our naira, Nigeria’s food is being exported to West Africa and is the cheapest in the region today.”

He added that the governors had “come to the realisation that we have a new Ministry of Agriculture, because over the last four years, before this administration, the engagement was not too productive.

Further according to Governor Abdulrazaq, “This was because the CBN took over most of what the agriculture ministry use to do. Our trips to the ministry at that time were not fruitful. But now we have seen strong engagement and sense from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and that is why we are here today.”

Governor Abdulrazaq also said the governors had also noted that food in Nigeria was the cheapest in West Africa, adding that Nigeria’s neighbours were using its food to trade.

His words: “They are taking our soya and other stuff to make foreign exchange for themselves. That is not a bad thing. What we need to do is to ramp up production and increase our yields per hectare so that we can feed West Africa, feed ourselves 100 per cent and export food. That is the goal we must achieve.... whatever subsidy that is coming from the federal government will be improved upon by the states.”

On his part, the Hon. Minister, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Sen.

Abubakar Kyari, described the four governors’ visit as a huge endorsement for the progressive drive towards the much-needed collaboration between the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and state governments.

According to him, “It is with a view to creating an agricultural sector fit for a nation as endowed as Nigeria with massive arable fertile land, abundant water resources and agricultural labour force. This visit is, in my view, beyond a courtesy call. The bigger picture we seek to create now is to vastly increase agricultural production all year round.



*We want to get to a stage where we export our food. What we have now is that, because of the devaluation of our naira, Nigeria’s food is being exported to West Africa and is the cheapest in the region today*

“This is with the cardinal objective of driving down food inflation, creating employment, reducing poverty, engendering economic growth and development, as well promoting inclusivity.”

He pointed out that “Ahead of the second phase of the Dry Season Food Production Programme under the National Agricultural Growth Scheme and Agro-Pocket, I sent out Expression of Interests to the governors of the 36 States and Federal Capital Territory, to which responses have been encouraging.

“Indeed, a number of your brother governors have paid visits to our corporate headquarters here. These include the Governors of Jigawa, Katsina, Ekiti, Niger, Kebbi, and Sokoto states in furtherance of the collaboration that we are seeking for the success of the Dry Season Food Production Programme.”

It could also be recalled that mid-February, President Bola Tinubu met with all 36 state governors under the auspices of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum at the Council Chamber of the Aso Rock Villa, Abuja. The meeting trails the recent hike in food prices and economic

hardship, key themes of the meeting.

In attendance were Vice President Kashim Shettima, Director-General of the Department of State Services, Yusuf Bichi; the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, George Akume; the Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun; the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu and the President’s Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabamila.

Governors who attended were those of Kwara, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq; Imo, Hope Uzodinma; Borno, Prof. Babagana Zulum, Edo, Godwin Obaseki; Rivers, Sim Fubara; Ekiti, Biodun Oyebanji, Nasarawa, Abdullahi Sule and Anambra Prof. Charles Soludo.







Also present were the Governors of Plateau, Caleb Mutfwang; Kaduna, Uba Sani; Adamawa, Ahmadu Fintiri; Jigawa, Umar Namadi; Kogi, Ahmed Ododo; Yobe, Mai Mala Buni; Niger, Mohammed Bago; Abia, Alex Otti; Enugu, Peter Mbah; Benue, Hyacinth Alia and Babajide Sandi-Olu of Lagos.

The Governors of Delta, Bauchi, Oyo, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kano were represented by their deputies. Ministers of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike; Agriculture, Abubakar Kyari; and Information, Mohammed Idris, also attended.

Twenty-four hours after President Tinubu met with state governors, Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State unveiled his government's food security plan as he advocated national unity to resolve the current national economic crisis.

Governor Adeleke visited the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security during which he opened up on the extensive agenda of the state government on food security and expanded food production.

Given rapt attention by his host, the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Senator Abubakar Kyari, the Osun State governor accompanied by his Commissioner for Agriculture, Tola Faseru said: "These are emergency eras in the economic life of this nation. We therefore have a duty to look and act beyond partisan politics and ensure collective efforts towards restoration of normalcy. A federation works best when component units join hands for common good.

"It is in that line that I am here today. The first reason is to brief you on what the Osun State government is doing on the issue of food security and ongoing economic challenges facing the nation.

"Mr. President briefed the state governors on the state of the nation. He outlined several steps state governors should take to stem the crisis of food security and inflation.

"I am happy to report that the Osun government has been very proactive. First we are setting up a State Security Trust Fund to mobilise financing for security agencies. This is going to be private sector driven.

"Secondly, I have convened a food security meeting to brainstorm on how to further secure our farmlands. I will be meeting representatives of Hunters Association and the Amotekun Commanders alongside the Civil Defense and Police

Services. The goal is to strengthen farm security.

"Our administration is also working on Small Farmers' Equipment Lending service. This is to ease the access of small scale farmers to tractors and other needed machineries. We are meeting this week to finalise the plan ahead of the onset of the rainy planting season.

"To expand food production, we are also pushing to implement a City to Farm programme. This was designed to encourage young small scale farmers. This will expand production and also engage our youth.

"This is alongside our plans for a regional farmers' markets where offtakers can meet farmers for exchange and market relationship. We need your technical support to implement many of the listed areas.

"On a more general level, our administration recently unveiled a Cocoa Revival plan for the state. It involves several activities which focus on moving Osun from 3rd to 1st cocoa producer in Nigeria. We seek partnership with the federal Ministry of Agriculture on this.

"Our government is also interested in the livestock development programme. We have submitted our expression of interest. Kindly help to facilitate early approval.

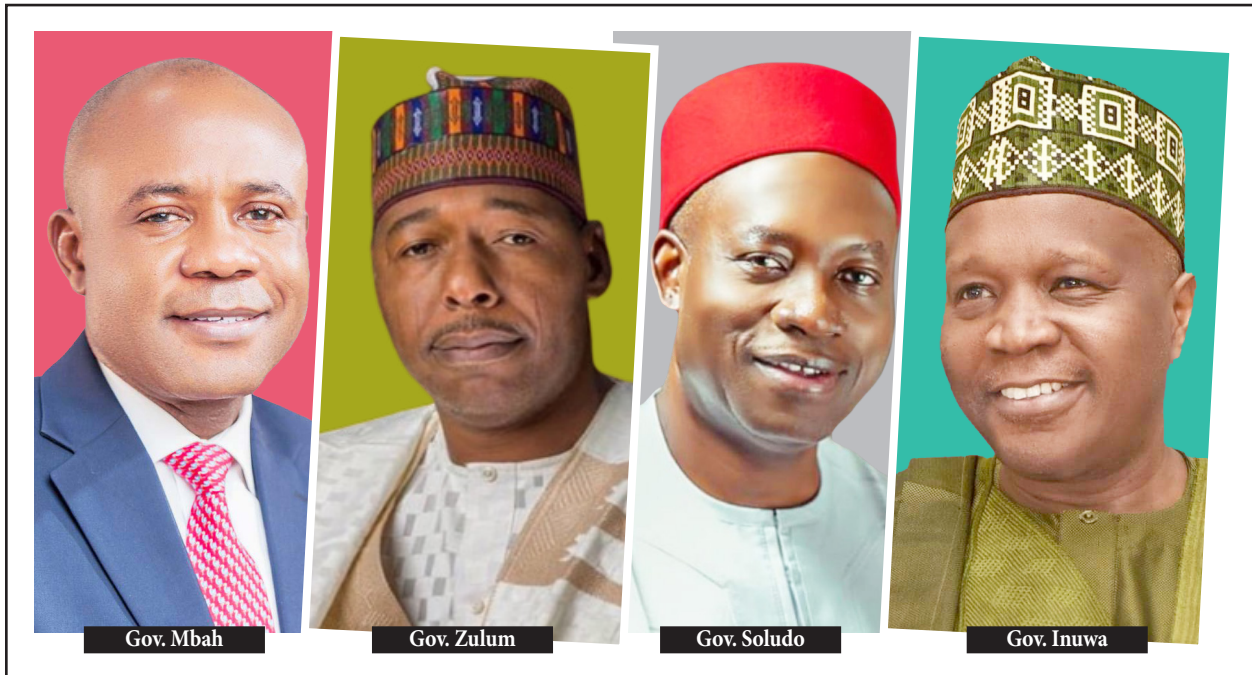
"The state is also interested in the Agro-processing zones project being implemented under the African Development Bank. I hosted a delegation of the AFDB in Osun two weeks ago. Your ministry's support on this is also solicited.

Meanwhile, in Lagos State, amid the high cost of food stuff Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, expressed his government's willingness to expand its relationship with the Netherlands in different sectors, especially the agricultural sector to ensure food security in the state.

The governor expressed this position while recently receiving the Netherlands Minister

*To expand food production, we are also pushing to implement a City to Farm programme*





of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Geoffrey Leeuwen, and his contemporary in Migration, Eric Burg, at his official residence in Ikoyi. Deputy Governor, Kadri Hamzat, on behalf of the governor, stated that the bilateral relationship between Nigeria and Netherlands had existed for over 400 years.

Sanwo-Olu said his administration was ready to strengthen the existing relationship with the Netherlands in different sectors, especially agriculture.

“We are willing to implement some of the lessons we have learnt from the Netherlands, particularly to enhance food production, storage, amongst others,” he said.

As part of its drive for food security, the Lagos State Government last month said it was activating plan for the state red meat Initiative with the establishment of a feedlot system, a butchers’ academy and a meat shop in the state.

On his part, Leeuwen said the Netherlands government was committed to working on transitions that were crucial to the economy and business opportunities in both Netherlands and Nigeria, with specific interest in Lagos.

In another related development, amid the high cost of food stuff, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu urged farmers in the state to collaborate with their colleagues in other states of the country to enable them bring their produce and sell in Lagos with the highest population in the country.

Responding, the agriculture minister, Senator Abubakar, commended the multi-partisan approach of Governor Adeleke to state governance, pledging to work on all the areas touched by the governor.

In Akwa Ibom State, the government is planning to establish an agency which will buy food items in bulk and then sell them at cheaper prices to the residents. Towards this end, the Akwa Ibom State Governor, Umo Eno, has forwarded to the House of Assembly a

bill for the establishment of the agency.

Ekerete Udoh, the spokesperson to the governor, disclosed this recently, in a statement in Uyo, the state capital. Governor Eno, who urged residents to be patient, promised to sign the bill into law when it is passed by the assembly.

His words: “We will buy the food items in bulk and ensure that they are made available to our people at relatively lower prices. The process will be transparent. I want to thank the House of Assembly for the expeditious manner this Bill is being treated. I want to assure our people that we feel their pain and are working hard to ensure that food security for our people is guaranteed.”

In Kano State, authorities raided warehouses where traders are suspected of hoarding food supplies. Meanwhile, Yobe State government banned bulk purchases of grain from local markets to stop hoarding and exports across Nigeria's borders saying it was to “stem the tide of food scarcity and high cost of grains”.

Niger State Governor Mohammed Umar Bago announced a ban on the mass purchase of foodstuffs from local markets. He ordered security forces to confiscate trucks carrying products in bulk and “share the food to the people”.

But it can hardly be disputed that some of these measures are just stop-gap measures that cannot fundamentally solve the food problem many are facing.

In Enugu State, Governor Peter Mbah said his administration will eradicate hunger and poverty in the state and unlock the rural economy through investment in agriculture and agro-industrialisation. Mbah, who was represented by the secretary to the state government, Professor

Chidiebere Onyia, said this during the celebration of the 2023 World Food Day in Enugu.

The governor said the state government was intensifying efforts to grow the economy of the state from \$4.4 billion to \$30 billion through massive investment in agriculture by attracting investors, empowering the farmers and opening the rural economy of the state.

As governors firmly respond to the multiple consequences of a food crisis, for the masses, it may just be morning yet on creation day.

*We are willing to implement some of the lessons we have learnt from the Netherlands, particularly to enhance food production, storage, amongst others*

BY PROFESSOR ABBA GAMBO

# SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS TO THE RISE IN FOOD PRICES



1. All markets in the country have large stocks of food (cereals, legumes, tuber and roots, fruits and vegetables, fish, and other proteins) on display. This indicates availability of food. The issue is affordability, a quick cash in the hands of the citizenry can ameliorate the rising food crisis.

2. Nationally, most crops are planted once every year, but the Nigerian agro-ecological climate can take two or even three annual cropping cycles, for example:

- Yauri in Kebbi state produces rice 3 times a year.
- The plateau (Jos and Mambila) can produce maize and potatoes (both irish and sweet) three times annually.
- Wheat can also be grown twice a year in states like Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa, Borno, and Kaduna both rainfed and irrigated.

3. Hoarding is a major business in Nigeria. All over the country, large warehouses abound full to the brim with locally produced food items, grains, legumes, and even dried vegetables

like okra, hibiscus, pepper, tomato, and even dried baobab leaves. Opening those warehouses will add a huge tonnage of food to the country.

4. There is so much post-harvest loss in Nigeria. A deliberate policy of massive mop-up of food items can also reduce the hike in food. Small-scale agro-processing plants in major food-producing areas can further curb the huge post-harvest loss and bring down the hike in food prices.

5. Access to areas of massive food production through good rural roads will go a long way in mopping up agri-produce from areas of production to areas of demand.

6. The present status of our local markets are so very shanty, flooded during the rainy seasons, not motorable. The upgrade of such markets would further reduce the hike in the prices of foodstuffs.

7. There should be more stringent measures in controlling food prices in the country. Different places with different prices for the same product.

8. The commodity boards of yester-years should be re-introduced to safeguard farmers against middlemen, and also to bolster the productivity of the farmers, as well reduce the huge annual post-harvest loss. This will further curtail the present hike in the prices of foodstuffs.

9. The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) Weather forecast for 2024 states clearly that rainfall will be late in coming in most of the Northern states. Similarly, the duration of the rainfall shall be short, meaning 2024 might witness some drought conditions.

The recommendation is that the states to be affected, particularly those on the Northern fringes should be on the look out for early maturing crop varieties, as well as drought resistance varieties.

Finally, the sub-national should capitalize on the Agricultural comparative advantage of their respective states. Each of the 774 LGA' has some unique agricultural potentialities, they should be encouraged to produce more and add value.





## Geometric Power Plant: Tinubu Hails Gov Otti

...Says Abia on right track

President Bola Tinubu recently commissioned the 181-megawatt Geometric Power Plant in Aba, Abia State's commercial hub, 20 years after the project was initiated and commended Governor Alex Otti that Abia is indeed working.

President Tinubu who was represented Vice President Kashim Shettima also inaugurated three roads rehabilitated by the Abia State governor, Alex Otti, in Omoba, Jubilee, and Queens Street, all in Aba and told the Abia governor that the presidency is proud of him "for his developmental strides" in the state.

His words: "Within the last nine months, people of Abia State have witnessed a change in their fortunes. Abia is working, we are quite proud of the accomplishments of Alex Otti. He has brought to bear his wealth of experience, intellect, and exposure to the development of Abia State."

The president emphasised that quality leadership is very crucial to the development of the society, appreciating Governor Otti for his humility and the developments he is bringing to Abia.

Otti thanked the president for the support he has been giving to his administration since he assumed office, assuring the people of the state that his administration would fulfil his promises.

Aba Power Limited Electric, the newest electricity distribution company (DISCO), in Nigeria, will take electricity from the new plant and supply to 9 of the 17 Local Government Areas of Abia State.

Described as the biggest investment in the South-East Zone of Nigeria, Geometric Power has spent about \$800 million on its integrated power project, which includes building of 27-kilometre natural gas pipeline, from Owaza in Ukwa West LGA in Abia State,

to the Osisioma Industrial Layout in Aba.

According to Ben Caven, Managing Director, Geometric Power Ltd. "We have, in addition, installed 150,000 kilometres of cables and wires and installed four new power substations, as well as refurbished three others inherited from the defunct Power Holding Company of Nigeria, PHCN.

The Geometric Power Group was founded by Bart Nnaji, a professor and former minister of Power. Nnaji embarked on the integrated project after James Wolfensohn, a former World Bank President and then Nigeria's Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala visited Aba, on March 17, 2004, and discovered that the greatest challenge facing both large-scale and medium-scale industrialists in Aba, reputed to be the centre of indigenous manufacturing in Nigeria, is epileptic power supply.

Both Wolfensohn and Okonjo-Iweala appealed to Nnaji to assist with a power plant dedicated to Aba, following the 22MW Abuja Emergency Power Plant he led a team of Nigerian engineers to build in Abuja, from 2000 to 2001 that supplied uninterrupted power to critical places, like the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Company, the Central Bank headquarters, the Aso Rock and the entire Central Business District of Abuja.

Governor Alex Otti enthused that the project was as a result of the power to dream, saying with the power project in Aba, the city is now open to national and international businesses. The governor warned Geometric against customer extortion, urging the power company not to take undue advantage of the monopoly they have.

In his speech, the Minister of Power, Chief Adebayo Adebule, said, "The Integrated Aba Power Project is a sign that the long-time power problem in Nigeria will be resolved, calling on the Aba people to secure the project.

The minister disclosed, "An end is coming to estimated billing. There will not be estimated bills any longer, as consumers will now know what he is paying for".



SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES



### Private Sector Advisory Group Nigeria

The NGF Secretariat received a delegation from the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) to explore partnerships with the NGF. Specifically, the Group is seeking collaboration with the NGF in one of its key focus areas through an initiative called Regenerating Basic Education in Nigeria (RBEN).



### Courtesy visit by the Association of Nigerian Artisans & Technicians (ASNAT)

Association of Nigerian Artisans and Technicians (ASNAT) paid a courtesy visit to the secretariat to intimate the NGF on their operational activities and harness areas of possible collaboration and partnership.



### Courtesy visit by the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission

Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission paid a courtesy visit to the Nigeria Governors' Forum. The NIPC, as the primary agency of the federal government mandated to promote, coordinate and monitor all investments in Nigeria, is keen on engaging the NGF to foster a collaborative partnership aimed at driving investment and economic growth across the country.

### Courtesy visit from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ)

The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) paid the NGF a courtesy visit to discuss Peace and Social Cohesion, Energy and Climate change on potential areas for partnership.





## IMF, NGF Interface on Food Security, Policy Issues

Representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently visited the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat to survey areas of socio-economic concerns in the country.

The delegates were eager to know the state of food security, inflation, fiscal implementation as well as the effect of petrol subsidy removal in the nation.

Nigeria is a member of the IMF, by Article 4, of the IMF Charter. IMF Representatives are expected to visit member countries to take country survey on various aspects such as fiscal policy, food insecurity, exchange rate regime and others.

They advised on the need for the



country to fix its exchange rate crisis and tax servicing ratio. They also noted the issue of food and physical insecurity.

They made their observations and asked what the government was doing to remedy these issues.

In a feedback touching on the agricultural landscape, the Agric Advisor further gave some insights into the present agricultural challenges, in relation to the NIMET 2024 weather forecasts.

## US Embassy Delegation engages NGF in strategic talk on Nigeria's Power Sector

A high-profile delegation from the US Embassy, featuring representatives from the

Department of State, engaged in strategic discussions with key stakeholders in Nigeria's power sector

during a courtesy visit to the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) Secretariat in Abuja.

Led by Dr. Kathleen Woodhouse-Ledermann, the Energy Officer from the Department of State, the delegation explored collaborative opportunities with Nigerian state governments under the ambit of the Electricity Act 2023.

The meeting focused on crucial topics such as the role of state governments as defined by the Electricity Act 2023, the potential of renewable energy production, and the prospect of partnering with the NGF to promote an environment conducive to corporate procurement of clean energy in Nigeria.

This initiative harmonizes with the objectives of the US State Department's Clean Energy Demand Initiative (CEDI).

Additionally, a separate meeting with the Climate Department of the US Embassy, led by consultant Colbye Perm, discussed further collaboration possibilities with the NGF to facilitate corporate procurement of clean energy in Nigeria, in line with the recent changes brought by the Electricity Act established in 2023.

Other members of the delegation included Gary Zioff (Deloitte), Kathleen Woodhouse (US Dept. of State), and Janes Nissbaumer (US Embassy).







Shrinking sizes of confectioneries, baked items, foods and beverages across markets in the country are fast eating deep into the incomes and pockets of consumers, particularly in recent months, that consumers have for so long been left to be groaning under retrogressive market situation.

According to Kennedy Uwazota, the foregoing situation which consumers are faced with, in economics parlance is called 'Shrinkflation'.

He explained, "It is the situation where manufacturers resort to the practice of reducing the size of a product while maintaining its sticker price in the bid to cut cost of production".

He added, "Raising the price per given amount is a strategy employed by companies, mainly in the food and beverage industries, to stealthily boost profit margins".

As gathered from the popular online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, "In economics, shrinkflation is the process of shrinking the size or quantity of an item, or even sometimes reformulating or reducing the quality while its price remain the same or increase. The word is a portmanteau of the words shrink and inflation."

It further explained that Shrinkflation allows companies to increase their operating margin and profitability by reducing costs whilst maintaining sales volume, and is often used as an alternative to raising prices in line with inflation.

To economists, shrinkflation is a rise in the general price level of goods per unit of weight or volume, brought about by a reduction in the weight or size of the item sold. For instance, the price for one piece of the packaged product

## Consumers Groan Under 'Shrinkflation' As More Is Paid For Less Quantity

remains the same or could even be raised.

While buttressing their unanimous view, they explained that this sometimes does not affect inflation measures; such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Retail Price Index (RTI), that is, might not increase in the cost of a basket of retail goods and services, but many indicators of price levels, and thus inflation are linked to units of volume or weight of products, so that shrinkflation also affects the statistically represented inflation figures.

To this end, consumer advocates are critical of shrinkflation because it has the effect of stealthily reducing pack size in such a way that it would not be immediately obvious to buyers.

Thus, an unchanged price means that consumers are not alerted to the higher unit price. The practice adversely affects consumers' ability to make informed buying choices.

Still in the same nexus, consumers have been found to be deterred more by rises in prices than by reductions in pack sizes. Suppliers and retailers have been called upon to be upfront with customers.

As gathered, consumers are, for quite some months, yet to feel the prevalence of affordable goods in the markets, and worst of all, the soaring rate of inflation has not been pleasant to buyers across markets.

The current inflation rate, no doubt, will have a devastating effect on consumer prices as they would surely rise to unbearable rates.

Without any iota of exaggeration, it is obvious that consumers across the country are beginning to witness an unfriendly market, so to say, more than ever before making them to groan as the burden is literally eating into their pockets and disposable incomes.

For instance, the annual inflation rate in Nigeria rose in December, 2021 for the 16th straight month to a more than three-year high, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

This is as rising food costs lifted the price index, and Inflation climbed to 15.75% in December from 14.89% the previous month.

A separate food price index showed inflation at 19.56% in December, compared with 18.30%



in November.

An analyst at Lagos-based consultancy Financial Derivatives said the continued rise in the general price level is driven largely by forex rationing, output and productivity constraints, and higher logistics and distribution costs.

Against the foregoing background, there is no denying the fact that consumers are facing the most difficult moment across markets.

The situation, no doubt, provoked the Finance Minister, Zainab Ahmed to say she expects inflation to decline to 11.95% by end-2021, still above the government's single-digit target.

She added that the government would work on reducing food prices and the high cost of doing business as inflation has been in double-digits largely due to food prices.

The shoppers or rather buyers are not the only category of people that are been hit by inflation in consumer good markets as producers of various goods are equally been affected.

For instance, Premium Bread-makers Association of Nigeria (PBAN) has for the umpteenth time decried the high cost of production materials, particularly the high cost of flour, a major component in baking, describing the situation as one of the major challenges plaguing the industry, and therefore called for government's intervention to avoid its imminent collapse.

According to Ernest Nnorom, "What is prevailing in the bread and baked food market is what economists call "Shrinkflation".

"Shrinkflation is the practice of reducing the size of a product while maintaining its sticker price. This raises the price per given amount of that product. It is a form of inflation that occurs mostly in the food and beverage industries."

In his response to the ugly market situation, Funsho Olorunyomi, who has a predilection for a brand of sliced bread, said: "Each time I disembark from the bus at Ojota, on my way from the office at Ikeja, I usually buy two or three loaves of a particular brand of bread for my children but as it is at the moment, it is by each passing day becoming smaller in size while the price of a standard size of baked bread still remains at N300, and not correspondingly reduced to justify the size. Now, I am thinking of buying the brand that is known as "Agege bread" as a way of saving cost.

"The bakers may have decided to reduce the size of the sliced bread to meet the cost of production, and make profits."

The reason why the baking and confectionery market is experiencing

*The challenges we face as a result of the incessant increase in the prices of baking ingredients have rendered most premium bakeries comatose making us to operate at a loss*

"Shrinkflation" cannot be farfetched as the challenges the bakery industry is faced with are explanatory enough.

It would be recalled that towards the end of last year that the president of the association, Mr. Tosan Jemide pointed out that there is a tremendous percentage increase in the price of diesel, which is used to power factory generators on a 24-hour basis.

He said: "Whilst we acknowledge the challenges the ghastly COVID- 19 pandemic has thrown the entire world into, and we are not oblivious of the difficulties ahead, we call on the Federal Government to come to our aid as we can no longer breathe. Although we have been experiencing difficulties for a while, the period between March 2020 and August 2020, the price of flour which is our major ingredient has increased from N10,500 naira per 50kg bag to N13,500 naira per bag. Sugar increased from N13,500 per bag, went as high as N29,000 and down to N19,000 per bag in the corresponding period. Margarine, from N5,800 is almost N11,000. A 25 litre can of Vegetable oil which was about N13,000 thousand now sells for N16,000 while Milk which was hitherto N29,000, now goes for N52,000. Preservative (Calcium Propionate) increased from N25,000 to N34,500, with the possibility of further price increases not ruled out.

"The challenges we face as a result of the incessant increase in the prices of baking ingredients have rendered most premium bakeries comatose making us to operate at a loss.

"Given the current situation, most premium bakeries may be forced to embark on a price increase, which will further make bread unaffordable to the common man," he said.

He explained that although the prices of flour, sugar and other baking items had increased threefold in recent years, there had been no corresponding increase in the prices of premium bread by its members.

Greg Egberanwen in his contribution, said while it is very clear that bakers have been finding it difficult to increase the price of baked products, the government cannot compel bakers to stop shrinking the sizes of their products to recover the cost of production. However, he was reminded that the Federal Competition Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) made its intention known sometimes ago to put a halt to the exploitative act by bakers.

*Culled from Daily Independent*



# AKETI'S FAREWELL







## Sanwo-Olu Inaugurates Lagos Red Line Train Project

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has officially inaugurated the Lagos Mass Rail Transit (LMRT) Red Line Train Project.

Commissioned by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the project's first phase spans 37 km from Agbado in Ogun State to the Oyingbo axis of Lagos State, featuring eight stations including Agbado, Iju, Agege, Ikeja, Oshodi, Mushin, Yaba, and Oyingbo.

In his address, Governor Sanwo-Olu commended the President for his unwavering support to the state and reiterated his administration's commitment to developing the transport sector.

"For the first time in the history of Lagos, we have an integrated transportation system, comprising the road, which is the BRT that we are using, the rail, which is the rail mass transit programme, and the waterways, through the state ferries," he said.

Governor Sanwo-Olu also hinted at plans to expand the LMRT

train project, stating, "There are a total of 6 lines that we have on our Lagos rail mass transit system when fully developed. We have started preliminary works on the next rail projects – the green line and the purple line. The green line is a 71.4 km rail from Marina to Lekki free trade zone, while the Purple line is a 54.3 km rail from Ojo close to Lasu into Mowe, Ogun State."

During the event, Governor Sanwo-Olu and Mr. Tinubu also witnessed the signing of the contract for Phase 2 of the LMRT Red Line Train Project (Oyingbo to Marina).

Olatunde Owoye, a resident who attended the event, praised the initiative, stating, "I believe that it will help the transport sector because of the traffic in Lagos. I know people will love it because they will be able to meet up various activities. It will also reduce the rate of accidents on our major roads."

In his address, President Tinubu expressed optimism about Nigeria's economic future, saying, "I speak to Nigerians through this podium that change is possible. We cannot afford to relax. We will grow the economy; we will free ourselves from the penury. I'm assuring you that Nigeria will be out of economic problems; we just need to persevere and work hard."

Mr. Tinubu urged the Minister of Transportation, Sa'id Alkali, present at the event, to collaborate with other ministries at the sub-national level to achieve all-round development across the country.

This initial phase spans from Agbado in Ogun State to the Oyingbo area of Lagos State, covering a distance of 37 km and featuring eight stations.



# Gender Issues

NIGERIA  
GOVERNORS  
SPOUSES' FORUM

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► *Also Inside*

**Govs' Spouses Forum Wants State of Emergency on Drugs**

**MRS. BAMIDELE ABIODUN**

**A philanthropist  
extraordinaire  
and servant  
leader**





## Govs' Spouses Forum Wants State of Emergency on Drugs

The Nigeria Governors' Spouses Forum (NGSF) has issued a compelling call to both the Federal and State Governments to declare a state of emergency on substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking across Nigeria.

This urgent appeal was encapsulated in a communique released on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024, following a two-day Drug Prevention Treatment and Care (DPTC) training organized by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for wives of state governors in Abuja.

The Chairperson of the Forum, Ambassador Olufolake Abdulrasaq, emphasized the critical need for mobilizing resources to combat the pervasive drug pandemic gripping the nation.

Among the resolutions outlined in the communique, the governors' wives stressed the imperative to revitalize State Drug Control Committees (SDCC) and ramp up rehabilitation programs aimed at holistic recovery for those struggling with drug addiction.

The communique underscored the





necessity for collaborative efforts between governments, parents, educators, and law enforcement agencies to fortify drug prevention initiatives.

Additionally, it advocated for the establishment of standardized drug rehabilitation centers across the country to provide accessible treatment options and reduce societal stigma surrounding drug dependency.

Recognizing the integral role of leadership in driving change, the governors' wives committed to leveraging their positions to facilitate the establishment and reinforcement of State Drug Control Committees (SDC), with first ladies appointed as chairs to spearhead effective anti-drug initiatives in their respective states.

Furthermore, the Forum adopted the Drug Abuse Prevention Treatment and Care (DPTC) programs as a flagship project, chaired by first ladies, aimed at mitigating the scourge of drug abuse among women and promoting inclusive access to treatment.

The Forum also pledged to collaborate with the private sector and civil society organizations to expand treatment infrastructure and embed drug prevention strategies within community interventions.

The resolutions of the First Ladies Forum were rooted in a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of drug abuse on societal well-being, including its correlation with criminality, educational dropout rates, and public health crises. Acknowledging the commendable efforts of NDLEA under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd), the governors' wives expressed readiness to translate the knowledge gained from the training into actionable measures within their states.

Brig. Gen. Marwa commended the commitment of the First Ladies to combating drug abuse and urged them to translate the lessons learned into concrete actions within their respective states. He emphasized the pivotal role of leadership in driving effective drug prevention strategies and expressed confidence in the impact of their collective efforts in curbing the drug menace nationwide.





## The Inspiring Legacy of MRS. BAMIDELE ABIODUN

**M**rs Bamidele Abiodun was born on the 16th of July, 1966 to the family of Professor Oladipo Oduye, a former deputy vice chancellor at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and the late Mrs Abimbola Wosilat Oduye both from Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State. She obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Zoology from The University of Ibadan in 1988 before delving into world of business in the mid 1990s.

Mrs Abiodun is the first lady of Ogun state and the wife of His Excellency, Prince Dapo Abiodun, Executive Governor of Ogun State. They got married in 1990. While blessed with five children, the family faced the devastating loss of their eldest, Olugbenga Abiodun, a renowned Nigerian DJ known as DJ Olu, in 2017.

In June 2019, she was appointed as the United Nations Sustainable Development Champion by the Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD). During her tenure as first lady of Ogun State, she has initiated several programs with a focus on social welfare, health, education and poverty reduction.

Abiodun entered the world of business in the mid-1990s. As first lady of Ogun State, she has initiated several programs with a focus on social welfare, education and poverty reduction. She has also been linked with ongoing work at the School for Special Needs in Abeokuta, Ogun State. In the month of August 2019, Mrs. Abiodun, in partnership with Learn Africa Plc., donated 42,000 books to primary and secondary schools in Ogun State.

In November 2019, Mrs Abiodun presented her commitment to advance the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action, at a high-level conference convened by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Nairobi, Kenya.

On the 6th February 2019, Mrs Abiodun partnered with First City Monument Bank (FCMB) on the SHEVENTURES program, an initiative focused on boosting the economic capacity of women by offering both financial and non-financial support

to small and medium scale businesses owned by women. SHEVENTURES announced plans to grant 40 business women with small and medium scale businesses in Ogun State, interest-free loans quarterly

As First Lady of Ogun State, she has initiated several programs with a focus on social welfare, health, education, poverty reduction, violence against women and the COVID 19 global pandemic response. She has also been linked with ongoing work at the School for Special Needs in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Mrs. Bamidele Abiodun, a philanthropist extraordinaire and servant leader, stands as a testament to the power of compassion and purpose-driven leadership. Her story unfolds as a dramatic narrative of resilience, hope, and transformative impact on the lives she touches.

SHE HAS INITIATED SEVERAL PROGRAMS WITH A FOCUS ON SOCIAL WELFARE, EDUCATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

**A philanthropist  
extraordinaire and  
servant leader**





## KEBBI FIRST LADY DONATES N10M TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS



In a heartwarming display of generosity and support, Her Excellency Hajia Zainab Nasare Idris Kauran Gwandu, the First Lady of Kebbi State, recently made a significant contribution of N10m to empower women entrepreneurs in the region.

This inspiring gesture took place during the prestigious Ramadan Funfair and Award Ceremony held at the presidential banquet hall in Birin Kebbi.

The event which served as a platform for young entrepreneurs to showcase their talents and innovative ideas was a testament to Her Excellency's commitment to fostering economic empowerment among women in Kebbi State. Through initiatives like these, she targets celebrating the success of women entrepreneurs but also to provide them with opportunities for growth and recognition on a larger scale.

During her address at the ceremony, Her Excellency emphasized the importance of utilizing acquired skills for both personal advancement and enhancing the global reputation of Kebbi State. Her visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to the state's progress were evident in her call to action, urging entrepreneurs to seize the opportunities at their disposal.

Her Excellency's philanthropic efforts and unwavering support serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration for women entrepreneurs across Kebbi State. Through her generosity and encouragement, she continues to empower individuals to strive for excellence and make meaningful contributions to society.

## The NGSF Chairperson Meets with UNAIDS Delegation

Her Excellency, Olufolake Abdularazaq, Chairperson and First Lady of Kwara State, hosted a delegation from UNAIDS at the NGSF Secretariat in Abuja.

The delegation was led by Country Director Dr. Leo Zekeng. During the interview, Dr. Zekeng provided an overview of the concerning rates of mother to child transmission of HIV in Nigeria which currently stands at 26,000 children born with the disease every year.

He emphasized the urgency of reversing these numbers highlighting that mother to child transmission can be eradicated and prevented.

The discussion also addressed the issue of low access to antenatal care in certain states and stressed the immediate need to increase the number of pregnant women receiving antenatal care, particularly in states with low attendance rates.

Potential area of collaboration between NGSF and UNAIDS to address these challenges were explored during the meeting.





## PRICILLA OTTI, ABIA'S FIRST LADY ADDRESSES WATER SCARCITY

In a compassionate response to the plight of Ajatakiri village in Ajata na Igu autonomous community, Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State, the First Lady, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has taken decisive action to address the pressing issue of water scarcity.

Amidst concerns over the contamination of the village's only source of drinking water, Mrs. Otti stepped forward with a gesture of solidarity and support.

During her visit to the community, Mrs. Otti personally delivered relief materials and expressed her deep concern for the residents affected by the water crisis. She emphasized the importance of investigating the contamination to hold those responsible accountable and ensure the well-being of the community.

In a proactive move to alleviate the hardships faced by Ajatakiri village, Mrs. Otti announced plans to sink two boreholes and provide reticulated water through collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, in partnership with the Mayor of Ikwuano LGA. This initiative aims to offer immediate relief while investigations into the contamination are underway.

Addressing the community, Mrs. Otti underscored the urgency of the situation and urged residents to refrain from using the contaminated river water due to potential health risks. She pledged to relay the community's challenges to the Governor, emphasizing his commitment to addressing the needs of the people.

Echoing Mrs. Otti's sentiments, Chief Okeosisi Harbour, an esteemed Elder statesman, highlighted the immense hardship experienced by the community following the water contamination. He expressed gratitude for the swift response from the government and praised Mrs. Otti for her dedication to resolving the crisis.

Through her proactive leadership and genuine



concern for the welfare of the people, Mrs. Priscilla Otti exemplifies the spirit of compassion and solidarity in times of adversity. Her efforts stand as a testament to the government's commitment to the well-being of all citizens, ensuring that no community is left behind in times of need.

### Genital Mutilation:

## Ebonyi First Lady Organises Community Outreach

In commemoration of the International Day for Zero Tolerance on Female Genital Mutilation, the Ebonyi State First Lady organized a community outreach event in Ezza Inyimagu, Izzi Local Government Area of the state.

The outreach has better health for rural women and children and internally displaced persons foundation, BERWO and United Nations Population Fund collaborating with office of the First Lady.

The collaborative efforts of these



organization brought political stakeholders, traditional rulers and members of the aforementioned community together to educate them about the consequences of practicing genital mutilation in the society.

A recent case of one teenager, Edu Oluchi, a survivor who was recently cut in the same community brought the First Lady's attention to the community. She has pledged to enforce the eradication of the inhumane act in Ebonyi State.





## HPV VACCINE: NGF, NGSF Hold Workshop for Members

The Nigeria Governors’ Forum, NGF, and the Nigeria Governors Spouses’ Forum, NGSF, recently held a virtual workshop with the aim of sensitizing start first Ladies about cervical cancer, the Human Papiloma Virus (HPV) and its vaccine.

Speaking during the workshop the first Lady of Kwara State and chairperson Nigeria Governors Spouses’ Forum, Her Excellency Ambassador Professor Olufolake Abdulrazaq, commended the roll out of the HPV vaccine as part of National Routine Immunization schedule by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency.

The chairperson of NGSF decried the reluctance of some parents in presenting their children and wards for the vaccination and enjoined members of the Forum to deepen engagements in their respective states to reverse this trend.


Ambassador Abdulrazaq however thanked NGF for the workshop while urging members of the NGSF to harness the opportunities the event presents to improve capacities towards making lasting impact on the lives of every Nigerian girl as well as dispel misconceptions surrounding the HPV Vaccine.

According to statistics, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among Nigerian women, with approximately 14,000 new cases and 8,000 deaths reported annually. Additionally, HPV infection, which is a leading cause of cervical cancer is prevalent among young Nigerian Women with an estimated

26.3% prevalence rate.

These figures underscore the urgent need for comprehensive initiatives including vaccination programs and awareness campaigns to combat the burden of cervical cancer and HPV infection in Nigeria.

During the workshop presentations centered around what the HPV vaccine is, its mode of transmission, cervical cancer, its impacts, preventive measures and the implementation strategy for the HPV vaccine in Nigeria by Professor Issac Adewole, Professor Ayebo Sadoh, Professor Hadiza Galadanci, Dr. Aisha Mustapha, Dr. A Rufai and Dr. Oteri.



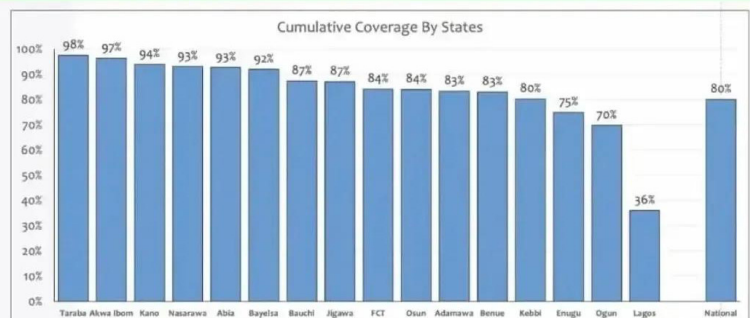
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM

### Why the First Ladies

HEALTH

- Cervical cancer is an issue that affects women.
- As First Ladies, you are mothers of all in your states and as mother you are concerned about happenings in your states.
- First Ladies, as mothers, are in the best position to champion the vaccine roll out in their respective states.
- First Ladies have an established track record in successful mobilization for other interventions – Polio and other childhood vaccines, Nutrition, Child Rights etc.

HPV Vaccination Rate Using MAC Campaign Targets (80% of TP). Data as at Jan 29th



Source: Daily Call-In Data





## Jigawa, Katsina, Kano Collaborate with EU, UNICEF to Empower 1.5m Children, Youths

**T**he European Union (EU) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have announced their commitment to enroll and skill 1.5 million children, youths, and adolescents across Jigawa, Katsina, and Kano states.

The pledge was made by the Senior Education Manager at UNICEF's Kano Field Office, Michael Banda, during a crucial multi-sectoral meeting of key stakeholders focused on education and youth empowerment projects.

The meeting, held on Wednesday in Kano, highlights the importance of addressing educational and developmental needs among the younger population.

Banda said that the programme was aimed at increasing the number of girls and boys benefiting from safe, inclusive, relevant learning and skills development opportunities in Kano, Jigawa and Sokoto states.

He said the four-year programme which commenced from October 2023 to August 2027, would cover Kano, Jigawa and Sokoto states.

"The programme operation is categorised into three main outputs involving strengthened education governance and learning, expanded access to safe and inclusive learning environment and giving quality, continuous learning and enhanced competencies."

The education manager pointed out that in Nigeria, many children between seven and 14 could not read or write simple sentence.

"Our aim is for them to get skill that will make them competitive, marketable and self sustaining, to start a business.

"We are also looking at Integrated Qur'anic School because we have Qur'anic schools that do an integrated curriculum which includes literacy and numeracy beyond the religious education.

"We are going to catch everyone, including those who do not have space in the formal school," he said.

Banda said that Kano State had been selected to be one of the top beneficiaries of the newly introduced European Union-funded education and empowerment programme in Nigeria.

According to him, Kano will have the lion share of the project because of its population and the number of out-of-school children.

He said that EU was not only concentrating its resources in Kano, but in Northwest, Northeast and other states in Nigeria.

The UNICEF education manager added that the EU was an all-weather partner for UNICEF and various states in ensuring that all children accessed quality education.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Education, Alhaji Umar Doguwa, commended the development partners for the gesture.

He restated the state government's commitment to invest in education sector.



HAJIYA

# Umma Kaltume Ahmed

**H**ajiya Umma K. Ahmed is the Kaduna State Commissioner of Health. She is a seasoned administrator and leader through a distinguished career that spans over 36 years across various sectors. Born on November 11, 1967, in Birnin Gwari Local Government, Kaduna State, she embarked on her academic journey at the University of Abuja, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in public administration in 2004. Further enriching her academic portfolio, she obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Education from Bayero University Kano in 2008, followed by a Professional Post Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECD-VU) from the University of Ibadan. Her commitment to leadership excellence was capped with a certification in Executive Leadership in the 21st Century from the Harvard Kennedy School, USA, in 2022.

Hajiya Umma's career trajectory reflects her versatile expertise and leadership capabilities. Starting as a Desk Officer of Early Childcare and Education at the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in Kaduna in 2009, she rose through the ranks to become the Principal Education Officer in 2011 and Director of Education (Chief Education Officer) by 2015. Her administrative acumen led to her appointment as Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Kaduna, in 2018, and subsequently as the Director General of Kaduna State Schools Quality Assurance Authority (KSSQAA) in 2019. Her governance experience was further broadened as the Administrator of Birnin-Gwari Local Government Council, Kaduna, in 2021, and later as the Commissioner, Ministry of Local Government Affairs, Kaduna, from 2022 to 2023.

Currently, as the Commissioner of Health for Kaduna State, Hajiya Umma leverages her vast experience in administration and education to spearhead health initiatives, policies, and services that aim to improve the welfare and health outcomes of Kaduna's residents. Her leadership is informed by a rich blend of academic qualifications and practical governance experience, making her a pivotal figure in Kaduna State's health sector.







## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

# EMMANUEL IKECHUKWU OBI

**A**ssociate Professor Emmanuel Ikechukwu Obi has carved a significant niche in the field of public health, both within Enugu State and on a national level in Nigeria. As a dedicated medical doctor and public health advocate, his professional journey is marked by a deep commitment to improving health outcomes through effective policy, education, and community engagement.

Currently serving as the Commissioner of Health in Enugu State, a position he has held previously, Obi's tenure is characterized by his efforts in health promotion, policy formulation, and the implementation of comprehensive health communication strategies. His expertise in global health initiatives positions him as a vital contributor to health sector reforms and public health advancements.

Obi's leadership extends beyond his commissioner role. He is actively involved in several key health committees and boards, including the Presidential Health Sector Reform Programme Committee 2022, where he contributes as a member of the Leadership and Governance Team. His role as the Southeast Coordinator for the Nigeria Health Commissioners Forum further amplifies his influence in shaping health policies and practices across the region.

His academic contributions are equally

noteworthy. As an associate professor and a member of the Enugu State University College of Medicine Board, Obi plays a pivotal role in shaping future medical professionals. His involvement with the Enugu State Agency for Universal Health Coverage and the Enugu State Primary Healthcare Development Agency underscores his commitment to accessible and quality healthcare for all.

Obi's past leadership positions, such as the Chairman of the Association of Public Health Physicians of Nigeria (APHPN) Enugu State Chapter and the Public Relations Officer for the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria at UNTH, highlight his active engagement in professional medical communities.

His career also includes significant advisory roles, such as the Senior Executive Advisor to the Chief Medical Director at UNTH and the Senior Special Adviser/Head of Projects and Partnerships Management Office at UNTH. His academic endeavors are notable, including his position as an honorary consultant and lecturer in the Community Medicine Department at UNN/UNTH, and his pioneering work in health promotion and communication.

Obi's involvement in various health projects, including those supported by USAID, DFID, and John Snow Inc., among others, showcases his broad experience in health system strengthening initiatives. His educational background, with degrees from Nnamdi Azikiwe University and UNN, and his fellowship with the National Postgraduate Medical College, provide a solid foundation for his extensive career in public health.

Associate Professor Emmanuel Ikechukwu Obi's career is a testament to his unwavering dedication to enhancing healthcare delivery, policy, and education, making a lasting impact on public health in Enugu State and across Nigeria.



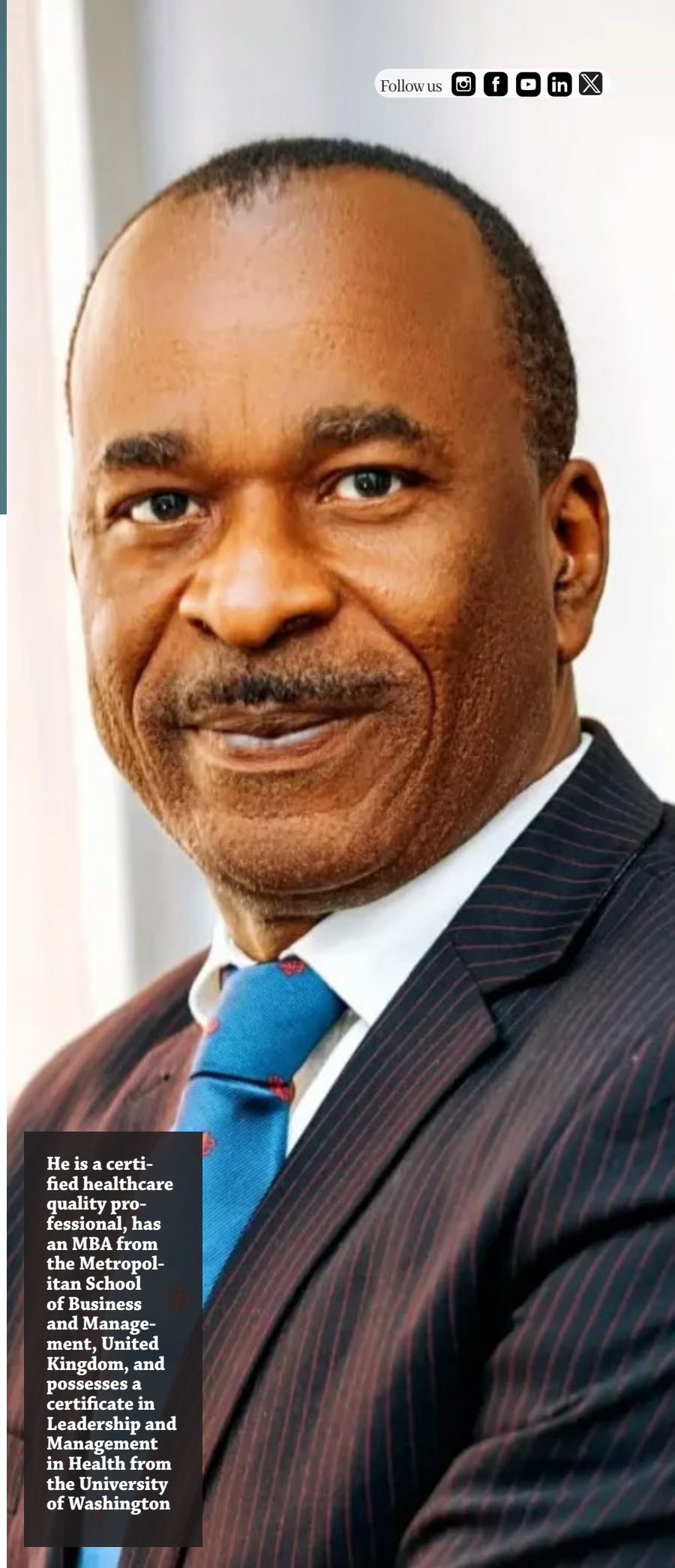
# DR. SAMUEL ALLI

**D**r. Samuel Alli, appointed as the Honourable Commissioner for Health in Edo State in June 2023, epitomizes dedication and expertise in the healthcare sector. With over two decades of experience, his journey in medicine and healthcare administration is marked by a strong commitment to healthcare excellence and innovation.

Educationally grounded with an MBBS from the University of Jos, Dr. Alli further specialized in obstetrics and gynecology, showcasing his commitment to women's health and reproductive care. His academic accolades do not end there; he is a certified healthcare quality professional, has an MBA from the Metropolitan School of Business and Management, United Kingdom, and possesses a certificate in Leadership and Management in Health from the University of Washington.

Dr. Alli's professional background is as diverse as it is impressive. He has held pivotal roles in several leading healthcare institutions, including Eko Hospital and Lagoon Hospitals in Lagos, Lily Hospitals in Warri, and Garki Hospital in Abuja. His expertise extends beyond clinical practice into healthcare management, where he has made significant contributions. Notable positions at The Hygeia HMO, Critical Rescue International (CRI), UnicHealth Insurance, and as MD/CEO at the Nigeria Police HMO in Abuja, highlight his versatile skill set in managing healthcare services and ensuring quality care.

In his current role as Honourable Commissioner for Health in Edo State, Dr. Alli is committed to transforming the healthcare landscape. His focus on enhancing healthcare services, optimizing institutional performance, and implementing innovative healthcare solutions aims to positively impact the well-being of Edo State's residents. Dr. Alli's unwavering dedication to advancing healthcare standards and his visionary leadership are pivotal in navigating the challenges of public health and driving improvements in the state's healthcare system.



**He is a certified healthcare quality professional, has an MBA from the Metropolitan School of Business and Management, United Kingdom, and possesses a certificate in Leadership and Management in Health from the University of Washington**



## Dr. (Mrs.) **ADEDOLAPO FASAWE**

**D**r. (Mrs.) Adedolapo Fasawe, is a distinguished expert in public health and environmental sustainability currently holds the esteemed position of Mandate Secretary for Health and Environment in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). With a rich background that includes spearheading major initiatives as the General Manager/CEO of the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), Dr. Fasawe brings a wealth of experience to her role in the FCT. Her leadership is characterized by a steadfast commitment to integrating health and environmental strategies to improve the quality of life for residents and promote sustainable development.

Her professional journey is marked by significant contributions to public health, environmental conservation, and sustainability, showcasing her ability to navigate complex challenges with innovative

solutions. At LASEPA, Dr. Fasawe was instrumental in launching critical campaigns such as the Noiseless Lagos Campaign and the Ban of Single Use Plastic Bags Campaign, demonstrating her dedication to creating a healthier, more sustainable environment.

In her current capacity as Mandate Secretary, Dr. Fasawe continues to champion the development and implementation of comprehensive policies that address the interconnectedness of health and environmental issues. Her leadership is pivotal in fostering initiatives that not only enhance public health but also ensure the environmental integrity of the FCT, marking her as a visionary in the field and a key figure in Nigeria's journey towards sustainable urban development.





## Economic importance of **Mango** (*Mangifera indica*)

**W**ood is extensively used for low-cost furniture, floor, ceiling boards, window frames, heavy packing cases, match splints, brush backs, oar blades, agricultural implements etc. The bark possesses 16% to 20% tannin and has been employed for tanning hides. It yields a yellow dye, or, with turmeric and lime, a bright rose-pink. Mango kernel decoction and powder (not tannin-free) are used as vermifuges and as astringents in diarrhoea, hemorrhages and bleeding hemorrhoids. The fat is administered in cases of stomatitis. Extracts of unripe fruits and of bark, stems and leaves have shown antibiotic activity. A somewhat resinous, red-brown gum from the trunk is used for mending crockery in tropical Africa. In India, it is sold as a substitute for gum arabic. Dried flowers are of medicinal value and used for curing dysentery and catarrh of bladder. It is a cure for wasp sting, rubbed between hands and left to dry. Mango fruit is one of the delicious fruit of India exported to many countries. The green unripe fruits are used in curries, sharbats and pickles, used for research and development, used as shelter belt.

### NUTRITION

Calories: 99, protein: 1.35 g, fat: 0.63 g, carbohydrate: 24.8 g, sugar: 22.6 g, fiber: 2.64 g, potassium: 277 mg, vitamin C: 60.1 mg, vitamin A, RAE: 89.1 micrograms (mcg), beta carotene: 1,060 mcg, lutein and zeaxanthin: 38 mcg, folate: 71 mcg.

### BENEFITS OF MANGO LEAVES

Rich in beneficial plant compounds, Mango leaves contain several beneficial plant compounds, including polyphenols and terpenoids. Polyphenols have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which help improve gut bacteria and treat or prevent conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Terpenoids are antioxidants that protect cells from harmful free radicals and play a key role in optimal vision and immune health. In addition, mango leaves are a potential source of minerals such as nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, iron, sodium, calcium, magnesium, and vitamins such as A, B, E, and C.

High in antioxidants, Free radicals generated during the metabolic process contribute to various degenerative diseases such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, ischemic diseases, and neurological disorders. Mango leaves contain phenolics and flavonoids—antioxidants that help lessen the adverse effects of free radicals and prevent cellular damage. High in anti-inflammatory properties, chronic inflammation (a prolonged immune response) can increase the risk of various diseases including Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. According to one animal study, mango leaf extract has anti-inflammatory effects which may help counteract artificially induced oxidative and inflammatory biomarkers in the brain.

May help fight diabetes, animal studies suggest that the tender leaves of the mango tree contain phytochemicals and tannins called anthocyanidins, which can help treat high blood sugar levels. The leaves contain a compound called 3beta-taraxerol and ethyl acetate extract that synergize with insulin to activate glucose transporter type 4 (gated channel in the cells that facilitates glucose movement in the cells) and stimulate the synthesis of glycogen. Due to these factors, mango leaves may help treat diabetic angiopathy and diabetic retinopathy. Promotes digestive health. Regular intake of mango leaf infusion acts as a stomach tonic, flushing out toxins from the body and helping prevent various stomach ailments such as stomach ulcers and digestive disorders. Prevent weight gain, mango leaf extract contains mangiferin, a compound that helps activate higher levels of adiponectin. Adiponectin is a cell signaling protein that plays a role in fat metabolism and sugar regulation in the body, export Revenue: Mangoes are a major source of export revenue for many tropical countries, contributing significantly to their economies. Employment Generation: Mango cultivation, harvesting,

**The diverse culinary uses of mangoes extend beyond fresh consumption, with chefs and food entrepreneurs incorporating mangoes into various dishes, contributing to culinary innovation and creating new markets**



and processing provide employment opportunities for a large number of people, including farm laborers and workers in processing units. Smallholder Livelihoods: Smallholder farmers often rely on mango cultivation as a primary source of income, contributing to poverty reduction and improved livelihoods. Diversification of Agriculture: Mango cultivation diversifies agricultural landscapes, reducing dependence on monoculture and promoting biodiversity. Food Security: Mangoes are a rich source of vitamins and minerals, contributing to food security by enhancing nutritional diversity in diets. Agro-Tourism: Mango orchards attract tourists, contributing to agro-tourism and providing additional income for farmers, pharmaceutical and Cosmetic Industry: Mango by-products, such as seed kernels and extracts, have applications in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, research and Development. Ongoing research in mango genetics and cultivation techniques enhances crop yield, disease resistance, and overall productivity, international Trade: Mangoes are globally traded, with major exporting countries like India, Mexico, and Thailand participating in the international fruit market, processing Industry: Mangoes are processed into various products like purees, juices, jams, and dried slices, adding value to the crop and creating additional economic opportunities. Climate Resilience: Some mango varieties are resilient to harsh climatic conditions, making them a valuable crop for farmers facing climate uncertainties. Fiber Production: Mango trees provide wood and fibers that can be used in various industries, contributing to sustainable resource utilization. Livestock Feed: Mango by-products, such as

peels and seeds, can be used as feed for livestock, offering an additional revenue stream for farmers. Bioenergy Production: Mango waste can be utilized in the production of bioenergy, contributing to renewable energy sources and waste reduction. Educational Opportunities: Mango cultivation provides educational opportunities in agriculture and horticulture, enhancing skills and knowledge among farming communities. Traditional Medicine: Mango leaves and bark are used in traditional medicine for various purposes, creating economic opportunities in the herbal medicine sector. Economic Resilience: Mango trees often have a long lifespan, providing a stable and long-term source of income for farmers, contributing to economic resilience. Seed Oil Production: Mango seed oil has applications in the food and cosmetic industries, contributing to the production of various products. Beekeeping: Mango orchards support beekeeping activities, enhancing pollination and supporting honey production. Social Entrepreneurship: Initiatives focusing on sustainable and ethical mango cultivation contribute to social entrepreneurship, promoting fair trade practices. Carbon Sequestration: Mango orchards contribute to carbon sequestration, playing a role in mitigating climate change by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide. Food Processing Industry Linkages: Mango cultivation creates linkages with the food processing industry, fostering collaborations and business opportunities in processing and preserving mango products. Culinary Innovation: The diverse culinary uses of mangoes extend beyond fresh consumption, with chefs and food entrepreneurs incorporating mangoes into various dishes, contributing to culinary innovation and creating new markets. Eco-friendly Packaging: Mangoes, as a fruit, are often packaged and transported using eco-friendly materials, aligning with consumer preferences for sustainable and environmentally friendly products. Regional Branding and Marketing: Mangoes are often associated with specific regions known for their unique varieties. This regional branding contributes to marketing strategies, attracting consumers and supporting local economies. Insurance Against Crop Failure: Mango trees' ability to withstand adverse conditions provides a form of insurance for farmers against crop failures, ensuring a more stable income source. Tissue Culture and Cloning: Advancements in tissue culture and cloning techniques have facilitated the mass production of disease-resistant and high-yielding mango plants, supporting sustainable agriculture practices. Floral

and Nursery Industry: Mango trees, valued for their ornamental qualities, contribute to the floral and nursery industry, generating revenue through the sale of saplings and ornamental plants. Horticultural Training Centers: Mango cultivation provides a practical platform for horticultural training centers, where farmers can learn modern farming techniques, pest control, and crop management. Market Diversification: Mango products, including dried mango slices, mango chutneys, and pickles, contribute to market diversification, meeting varied consumer preferences and expanding market reach. E-commerce Opportunities: The rise of e-commerce platforms facilitates direct-to-consumer sales of mango products, creating opportunities for farmers to reach a broader market and increase sales. Waste-to-Energy Initiatives: Mango waste, including peels and seeds, can be utilized in waste-to-energy initiatives, contributing to sustainable energy production and waste management. Educational Partnerships: Mango cultivation provides opportunities for partnerships between educational institutions and farmers, fostering collaborative research and knowledge exchange. Pesticide and Fertilizer Industries: The mango industry creates demand for pesticides and fertilizers, supporting the agricultural input industries. Supply Chain Optimization: Innovations in supply chain management, including cold storage facilities and transportation technologies, contribute to the optimization of the mango supply chain, reducing post-harvest losses.

Government Revenue: Taxation and export duties on mango-related activities contribute to government revenue, supporting public services and infrastructure development. Youth Employment: Mango farming can engage the younger generation in agriculture, addressing youth unemployment and promoting the transfer of traditional knowledge to younger farmers. International Collaboration in Research: Mango research often involves collaboration between international agricultural research institutions, fostering global knowledge exchange and advancements in mango cultivation practices. Artisanal Products: Mango wood and fibers are used by artisans to create handicrafts, contributing to the artisanal industry and providing additional income streams. Community Festivals and Events: Mango festivals and events promote community engagement, attracting visitors and boosting local economies through increased tourism.



## Gov Abba and Dangote: A collaboration to ease hunger

President, Dangote Conglomerate, Alh. Aliko Dangote has pledged to support social policies and human development initiative of Governor Abba Yusuf which are targeted to ameliorate the economic burden in Kano State.

Dangote made the pledge when he met with Governor Abba Yusuf at the government house in Kano. Governor Yusuf acknowledged that the common man could hardly survive the present state of inflation in Nigeria.

Specifically, Dangote promised to support Kano to improve health, education and empowerment of indigent citizens.

"We are here first of all to congratulate you on your victory at the Supreme Court. I want to assure you of our support throughout your administration, maybe not only four years but eight years.

"Kano is home to me even though the MC addressed me as the richest black man; but you can address me as a Kano indigene. I am your subject and you can always call on me for cooperation to see how do we develop Kano.

"And going forward we really need to see how we can develop areas of health, education, empowerment, how do we assist the government because government cannot do it alone".

In a statement issued by Governor's Spokesperson, Sanusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, Dangote further added: "I want to assure you that we would continue to support you, not because I am from Kano but because I know your intentions are good.

"You have the mandate of the people and I know that it is very difficult for any human being to clap with the two hands now. For now you will be the right hand, and we would be your left hand, together we shall clap.

"So be rest assured that we would support you and support your administration and we want to tell you that we would continue to pray for your success because your success is ours. I am sorry for coming this late because I supposed to have been hear before now but I am being traveling alot.

"Not that we took the government for granted because I really want to have enough time to come and tell you that we believe in your administration and we are ready to support you". Dangote assured.

On his part, Governor Yusuf solicited support of the oil magnate

*So be rest assured that we would support you and support your administration and we want to tell you that we would continue to pray for your success because your success is ours*

for the establishment of independent power plant to revive the ailing industries and boost the economic strength of the state.

Similarly, the Governor told Dangote that Kano darely need establishment of sickle cell hospital to provide free medication for the patients.

Besides, the Governor pleaded with the business tycoon on the completion of gigantic projects initiated by the Dangote Foundation which include Accident and Emergency ward, Surgical and Theatre complex and maternity/pediatric building, all in Murtala Muhammad Specialists Hospital.

He noted that as a proud indigene of the state, Alhaji Dangote is capable and willing to execute as many projects as possible that is why "I am using the opportunity to solicit and appeal for alot from him to the people of the state".

Governor Yusuf added, "I want to make passionate appeal to you to extend your assistance by completing the gigantic projects initiated by your foundation which include Accident and Emergency ward, Surgical and Theatre complex and maternity/ Pediatric building all in Murtala Muhammad Specialists Hospital" the governor further appealed.

In the area of infrastructural development, the governor Expressed the need for Dangote to assist in the provision of modern roads construction, Housing, community development as well as human capital development, among others.

While appreciating the kind gesture of Aliko Dangote in the area of education and health care development, especially in the eradication of poliomyelitis, the governor gave the assurance that any form of support will be used judiciously.





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## Katsina Govt moves to tackle inflation, empower communities against terror attacks

To checkmate the continuous increment in the prices of food and other commodities in Katsina State, Governor Dikko Umaru Radda held a 'strategic meeting' with key stakeholders in the state.

The meeting was attended by Alhaji Abdulmumuni Kabir Usman, Emir of Katsina, and that of Daura, Alhaji Umar Faruq Umar, together with the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Alhaji Nasiru Yahya, the State Chief Judge, Justice Musa Danladi Abubakar, and the Grand Khadi of Katsina, Justice Kabir Abubakar.

Others include the Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Abdullahi Garba Faskari, Heads of security outfits, and some members of the State Executive Council, among others.

Speaking during the meeting, Governor Radda said the state government is aware of the daily rise in prices of essential commodities, which is subjecting people to untold hardship.

This situation, he said, forced residents of Niger and Kano states to embark on demonstrations, recently.

According to him, reports have shown that the mass export of commodities from Nigeria to Niger Republic, Mali and other neighbouring countries, together with some Nigerians hoarding essential food commodities, are responsible for the daily increment in prices of goods and commodities.

Meanwhile, Governor Radda has reiterated his administration's commitment to organizing training and providing necessary logistics support to any Katsina community ready to protect itself from criminal attacks.

He said the state government is seriously concerned about Katsina's insecurity, hence the need for a collective effort in fighting the ugly trend.

The governor regretted that bandits have now adopted the use of reinforcement from neighbouring forests to launch an attack and kidnap innocent citizens, regardless of their economic status.

## Zulum unveils counterterrorism curriculum for Islamic Schools in Borno

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, has unveiled a unified curriculum for Islamic schools aimed at countering violent extremist ideologies and helping avert young people from being radicalised by terrorist groups.

At an event held at the council chamber of the Government House on Tuesday, Zulum said, "Our Islamic schools have been operating without a unified curriculum for at least three to four decades and that is a matter of great concern to all of us. The so-called Boko Haram insurgency started as a result of some misleading preaching, therefore, it is imperative for us to devise a way to avert such in the future."

Zulum assured that his administration will ensure that all Islamic schools strictly adhere to implementing their activities based on the new unified curriculum.

Governor Zulum emphasised the importance of teaching and preaching according to the authentic content of the holy books.

He said, We are currently witnessing another development, and we are concerned by the way some scholars preach. Therefore, the government of Borno State will do everything possible to ensure that teaching and preaching comply with the proper content of the

holy books."

Zulum also noted that the new curriculum was prepared based on the policies of the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, which he said will qualify students from private Islamic schools to get admission to universities and colleges.

Speaking earlier, the Chairman of the Arabic and Tsangaya Education Board, Khalifah Sheikh Ali Abulfathi, said the curriculum is based on the Maliki School of thought, which centres on the teaching of Arabic, Quran, Hadith, Tauhid and fight.



## Niger expects delivery of 1,000 mechanized farm tools – Bago

**N**iger state governor, Mohammed Bago says the state government is expecting delivery of 1,000 mechanized farming tools, including 300 tractors and 1,000 handhels by the end of February 2024.

Bago stated this while inspecting some of the tractors and handhels delivered to the state at the Minna Airport recently.

The state government earlier announced a \$650 million partnership between it and John Deere Limited, a manufacturing company in the United States.

Bago therefore explained that the state is expecting more than 1,000 tractors in the next six months.

The governor maintained that the effort is geared towards achieving food sufficiency in the state.

The governor announced that it has so far cleared over a million hectares of land for cultivation in the state.

This online platform reports that the Niger state governor had also inspected some bulletproof Toyota Land Cruiser Buffalos procured by the state government in a bid to tackle insecurity in some parts of the state.

Bago said that the vehicles would further consolidate his effort to secure the state from bandits and other criminal elements.

When Bago presented the 2024 budget tagged “Budget for the Future” to the state House of Assembly in December last year, he



said his administration would give priority to agriculture to harness the vast arable land and abundant water resources of the state which the Governor said can make the state become a major agricultural hub in Nigeria.

He said it is in a bid to harness its agricultural potential and improve the livelihoods of its rural population, Bago announced a series of initiatives aimed at promoting food security, rural development, and livestock management.

According to him, his administration plans to leverage its comparative advantage in agriculture by providing farmers with improved agricultural inputs, expanding cultivation areas, offering extension services, providing tractors, and attracting donor support to the sector.

Bago added that the government proposed to invest N43.5 billion in the agricultural sector to attract at least one billion US dollars of investment to the state which is in tandem with the government’s commitment to maximize and fully harness its green economy potentials.

This commitment, according to the Governor, is reflected in the allocation of funds for buffer stock initiatives, which will address fluctuations in food prices by purchasing assorted grains.

### HARDSHIP:

## Akwa Ibom govt to buy food in bulk, resell to residents at cheaper rates

**A**midst growing concerns over economic hardship and rising food prices, Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State has taken proactive steps to mitigate the impact on residents.

The governor has proposed the establishment of the State Bulk Purchasing Agency, presenting a bill to this effect to the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly.

The primary objective of the State Bulk Purchasing Agency is to make staple food items more affordable for the citizens.

Governor Eno expressed his commitment to ensuring that essential food commodities are within reach for the people of Akwa Ibom.

The proposed mechanism involves the bulk procurement of food items, which will subsequently be sold to the public at prices lower than those prevailing in the current market.

Governor Eno emphasized the importance of transparency in the entire process, assuring citizens that the initiative would be executed with utmost openness.

The governor acknowledged the economic challenges faced by the people and underscored his administration’s commitment to finding practical solutions to alleviate the impact of inflation on household budgets.

The bill for establishing the State Bulk Purchasing Agency is currently being considered in the state legislature.

Governor Eno commended the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly for the swift attention given to the proposed legislation, expressing optimism that it would be expeditiously passed into law.

To assure citizens of his commitment to their welfare, Governor Eno stated, “I want to thank the House of Assembly for the expeditious manner this bill is being treated.

“I want to assure our people that we feel their pain and are working hard to ensure that food security for our people is guaranteed.”

While urging patience from the public, the governor affirmed that implementing the proposed agency would contribute significantly to addressing the economic challenges residents face.





**GOV MUTFWANG LAUNCHES VICTIMS SUPPORT FUND, ENSURES TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY TO DONORS**

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has affirmed his administration's commitment to transparently and accountably distribute relief materials to victims of terrorist attacks in the state. These materials were generously provided by the Federal Government's Victims Support Fund (VSF), overseen by Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd). He further disclosed the establishment of a committee,

headed by the Secretary to the Government of the State, tasked with overseeing the distribution process. This committee will comprise representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the media, community leaders, and other pertinent stakeholders. Governor Mutfwang delivered these assurances during the official launch of the VSF 2023/2024 programme, designed

to enhance livelihoods and empower communities in Bassa, Riyom, and Barkin-Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State. He extended gratitude to Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd) and the VSF management for their intervention in aiding displaced persons in Plateau, affirming the continued trust between the State Government, VSF, and the people of Plateau.

**Gombe Tops Socio-Economic Performance Index, Achieves AAA Rating**

Gombe State has emerged as the leading state in socio-economic performance, earning an impressive AAA rating with a PSPI Score of 0.80, according to the 2023 National Assessment Report by PCL. This rating places Gombe ahead of all other states and the FCT. The report highlights Gombe's remarkable performance across various socio-economic parameters, including economic potentials, socioeconomic performance, and risk management. Despite challenges, particularly in the North-East region affected by Boko Haram insurgency, Gombe stands out for its efficient utilization of limited resources to drive significant socio-economic progress. Key factors contributing to Gombe's high rating include continuity in government,



Gov. Inuwa

strategic investments in infrastructure, alignment with federal initiatives, economic diversification, and agricultural programs. Additionally, the state's proactive approach to security issues has fostered unparalleled peace and stability, laying a solid foundation for sustained progress and economic growth. PCL expresses confidence in Gombe's current economic policies and programs under the leadership of Governor Inuwa, highlighting the state's potential to serve as a model for sustainable development. By continuing to engage its populace, invest in education, and pursue collaborative initiatives, Gombe is poised to achieve even greater prosperity and socioeconomic growth.



## ■ DELTA STATE NEWS

# Oborewori inaugurates Norsworthy Palm Processing Plant in Delta

The Governor of Delta State, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori recently said the successful inauguration of a 10 metric tonnes per hour oil palm processing mill at Akwukwu-Igbo in Oshimili North local government area of the state was a great addition to the local economy and an excellent example of public private partnership.

Governor Oborewori stated this in his remarks at the inauguration of the plant at Norsworthy Farms and Agro Allied Industries, Akwukwu-Igbo in Oshimili North Local Government Area of the state.

He commended the immediate past Governor of the state, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, for supporting the establishment of the farm.

Oborewori said; "It is my pleasure to be here today to inaugurate this ultra-modern oil processing plant which is a great addition to our local economy and an excellent example of public private partnership.

"It is a glorious opportunity for us to maximise our comparative advantage in oil palm production and transformation of the agricultural landscape in the state.

"I salute the courage and industry of Engr Gabriel Ogbechie, an outstanding businessman and Chairman of Norsworthy Farms Limited.

"Dr Ogbechie is an exemplary Deltan who has demonstrated his love

and commitment to the economic development of the state through massive investments and creation of job opportunities for our people.

"Aside this multi-billion naira farm, his investments in RainOil petrol stations are found in every nook and crannies of the state."

He urged other successful businessmen from the state to emulate Gabriel Ogbechie in investing in the state's economy by channeling their investments home.

"No matter where your investments are, home is the best. What you are doing is something you will be remembered for.

"As a government, we are very proud to be part of this project which holds strong prospects for the urbanisation of the host community and more employment opportunities for our teeming youth population.

"It goes without saying that beautiful investments like this in the non-oil sector will aid economic diversification, enhance the business competitiveness of the state and stimulate exports.

"Another reason we are having problems with foreign exchange is because we are always importing; so, by the time we start exporting, the value of the dollar will start coming down."

He appreciated the efforts of previous administrations in the state, which,

according to him, were yielding results and urged Norsworthy Farms to spread their tentacles by investing in also establishing in Delta Central and South.

According to the governor, "our administration is determined to boost food security by encouraging farmers with already-made markets for their products and make agricultural farm produce exportable for value addition."

He assured prospective investors that Delta was very safe for investments, adding, "Delta is very peaceful, stable and we welcome all investors to come to the state.

"Furthermore, the Delta State Public and Private Property Protection Law prohibits forceful entry and illegal occupation of public and private landed property, violent and fraudulent conducts in relation to private and public property is in full force.

"With this law, the issue of 'Deve', land grabbing is now a thing of the past and even recently, we inaugurated a task force to stop encroachment of all lands fully acquired by the state government.

"Let me assure you that your request for 10,000 hectares of land is achievable but must be spread across the three senatorial districts.

"Oshimili North Local Government Council is already preparing for the Internally -Generated Revenue (IGR)







here ; so, other local governments should also benefit from such investments.

“We are very very proud of your accomplishments because you are not just only investing in oil, you are also divesting and this one impacts our people more because it creates more jobs.”

The immediate past Governor of the state, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, while congratulating Norsworthy Farms, urged other wealthy citizens to invest in palm oil production.

Okowa, who expressed regret at the importation of palm oil in the country, appreciated the communities who donated land for the farm.

He said the out-growers scheme would improve the economy of the local communities around and urged them to key into the project.



## ...Approves N15.7bn for flood control measures

Meanwhile, Delta State Executive Council led by Governor Governor Sheriff Oborewori has approved N15.7bn for the construction of Phase 3 of flood control measures in Warri/Effurun and environs in Warri South and Uvwie Local Government Areas of the state.

Briefing journalists on the outcome of the State Executive Council meeting, the State Commissioner for Information, Dr Ifeanyi Osuoza said the phase 3 of the control measures will cover Airport Road, Ugborikoko, Bendel Estate and Ugboroke and environs in Uvwie and Warri South

Local Government Areas.

Osuoza who was flanked by Commissioner for Works Highways and Urban Roads, Comrade Reuben Izeze, Director-General Warri, Uvwie and Environs Development Agency (WUEDA) Prince Godwin Ejinyere and Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Sir Festus Ahon, said Exco also gave approval for N600 million counterpart fund for the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG Conditional Grants Scheme for Delta State.

Osuoza said: “We had a very engaging session at today’s Exco and above all Governor Sheriff Oborewori and the Exco took note of the hardship that Nigerians and Deltans are going through and he has resolved to make sure that he does everything humanly possible to puts smiles on the faces of Deltans.

“One of the major projects

approved today is the flood control measures in Warri/Effurun and Environs Phase 3.

“Phase 1 and Phase 2 were awarded long ago while Phase 3 entails Airport Road, Ugborikoko, Bendel Estate and Ugboroke in Uvwie and Warri South at a cost of N15.7bn.

“The second approval we got is the approval for the release of N600 million counterpart fund for the implementation of the 2024 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Conditional Grants and Schemes for Delta State.

On his part, Director-General of WUEDA, Prince Godwin Ejinyere said the Phase 1 has been completed while phase 2 is at 85 percent completion.

He said the Agency was planning a total solution for flood control measures in the Warri Stadium area, adding that design work around Enerhen Community, Igbudu, Odibo Estate among others were ongoing.





## ZAMFARA GOVERNOR HOSTS SWEDISH AMBASSADOR, DISCUSSES POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS

According to the statement, Governor Lawal has resolved to explore all possible ways to attract foreign investments and support from international partners.

“Governor Dauda Lawal hosted the Sweden Ambassador, Annika Hahn-Englund, in his Abuja office.

“The meeting aimed to create collaboration and partnership in critical areas of the economy, build long-term relationships, and implement transformative projects to benefit Zamfara State and its people.

“At the meeting, Governor Lawal assured the Swedish Ambassador of his administration’s readiness to promote collaboration and sustainable development across various sectors.

“Sweden has expressed interest in partnering with Zamfara State to build long-term relationships and implement transformative projects for the state’s people in Nigeria.”

Furthermore, the Ambassador pledged to offer Zamfara technical expertise in responsible mining practices, modern agricultural techniques, renewable energy infrastructure, and support in improving education and healthcare services.

**G**overnor Dauda Lawal expressed readiness to collaborate with Sweden across various sectors, including mining, agriculture, renewable energy, education, and healthcare in Zamfara.

Governor Lawal hosted the Swedish ambassador in Nigeria, Annika Hahn-Englund, last week in his Abuja office.

In a statement, recently, the spokesperson of the Zamfara State Governor, Sulaiman Bala Idris, disclosed that the Swedish Ambassador’s visit allowed both parties to engage in bilateral talks.

## Katsina State Governor Approves N16.7bn to Procure Fertilizers

**T**he Katsina state government has approved over Sixteen Billion Naira for the procurement of fertilizer to farmers across the state for the farming season.

This was disclosed by the Hon. Commissioner for agriculture, professor Ahmed Bakori after the state Executive Council meeting recently, at government House Katsina.

While giving the breakdown, Professor Bakori stated that the Twenty Thousand Metric Tones of the fertilizer components consist of; Six Thousand tones of Urea, Eight Thousand tones of NPK 15-15, and NPK 10-10. He added that agriculture and food security is one of the critical agenda of Governor Dikko Radda’s administration.

In another vein, the Commissioner for works, Housing and Transport, Engr. Sani Ingawa also disclosed that the state Exco has approved N1 Billion Naira road construction project beginning from Galadunci down to the residence of late general Hassan Katsina.

The state Executive Council also approved over Six Billion Naira for the settlement of contractors engagement by the previous administration to complete the ongoing projects awarded by the past administration.





# Oyebanji seeks US partnership on economic growth, cocoa development



**E**kiti State Governor, Mr. Biodun Oyebanji has solicited the support and partnership with the United States of America in developing the critical economic sectors of the state to achieve his administration's shared prosperity agenda.

Specifically, Ekiti State, according to Governor Oyebanji is desirous of the American government's support for its Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security on cocoa development as well as a collaboration between the state's knowledge Zone and US technology hub, the Silicon Valley.

Governor Oyebanji, who disclosed these in Ado-Ekiti during a meeting with a team from American Embassy led by the Charge d'Affaires, David Green, said the state would explore the American expertise, resources, and investment as a progressive partner in the areas of economy, security, climate change, innovations, among others.

The Ekiti State Governor, at the meeting which was attended by the Consul General of the American Embassy, William Stevens; Chairman of CAVISTA Holdings, who is also the Chairman of Corporate Council on Africa, Mr John Olajide; and some top embassy officials, thanked the American Government for the support the state has received in its agriculture development drive, especially the Ikun Dairy Farm.

He explained that the collaboration is expected to strengthen the state's economy, create jobs, and enhance the quality of life of her citizens.

Stressing that productivity remains the watchword in his administration's economic drive, Governor Oyebanji said any state that desires growth must be productive. "If a state must prosper, that state must work on productivity and for productivity to happen there must be collaboration with the private sector," he added.

He highlighted areas of collaborations with the United States to include support in the Agriculture sector, Ekiti Knowledge Zone, Youth and women empowerment, art and culture, climate change, health care, renewable energy, and investment promotion, among others.

The Governor expressed confidence that the collaborations would also unlock opportunities for advancement within the state, said his government is committed to driving economic prosperity and improving the standard of living of the citizens.

The Governor assured that his government would continue to provide enabling environment for private sectors with the aim of turning the state into production hub, thereby growing the economy of the state

"The State thank you for your support and investment Ikun Dairy Farm. Ikun is a game changer, they have done so well, but they can do better, so we will be looking for support at feed formulation and artificial examination because that will solve the foreign exchange problem." The Governor said.

Earlier in his remark, the Charge d'Affaires, David Green, expressed the readiness of the United States Government to work with Ekiti State government to achieve its economic growth, adding that the Embassy would identify potential areas of development where the US could lend a hand in enhancing the state's economic performance.

The Ambassador assured the Governor that the United States government is keen on ways to foster fruitful collaboration with the state government especially in the fields of Agriculture, health, knowledge economy, among others.

He promised to further the discussion with relevant agencies of the state government.





**Albinism:**

**Sanwo-olu Sponsors Treatment of Persons with Cancer-Related Issues**

Development Council, Jibowu.

Mrs. Oyetunde-Lawal said that Persons with Albinism are susceptible to some skin diseases due to the sensitivity of their skin and as a result of exposure to too much sun.

She opines that it becomes mandatory to educate Persons with Albinism and their parents on the importance of taking adequate care of the skin and ensuring the protection of the skin against all forms of diseases. She called on the general public to join hands with the government to ensure the protection and well-being of Persons with Albinism.

In her words, “Our efforts should be more of preventive than curative; cancer is not a joke, whether you are a Person with Disability or not, whenever you come across Person with Albinism not properly covered, please interrogate them, question them; ask them where their umbrellas are?”.



*Our efforts should be more of preventive than curative; cancer is not a joke*

“Ask them if they use their sunscreen regularly. Lend your voice towards ensuring that everyone is educated on the need to prioritise adequate skin protection as a preventive measure against all types of skin diseases. I urge parents of children with albinism to always ensure their skin is covered when they are outdoors”, she added.

The General Manager, while handing over Umbrellas, Protective Hats and Sunscreen tubes of 100 and 40 ml, to the Chairman of the Albinism Association of Nigeria, Mr. Tolani Ojuri, urged Persons with Albinism to desist from self-medication which can even lead to more severe complications, enjoining them to rather report to hospitals whenever they notice any issues with their skin for prompt attention.

“Please do not self-medicate, the nature of your skin and your realities are peculiar. If you self medicate it can cause a lot more pain for not only yourself but your loved ones”, she opined

Responding, Mr. Tolani Ojuri, on behalf of the Association, appreciated the Lagos State Government and LASODA for their contributions to the well-being of Persons with Albinism and promised to ensure even distribution of the donated items to the members.

Dignitaries present at the meeting are the Senior Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr. Oluwatoni Adeyemi; Consultant Dermatologist, Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Dr. Folakemi Cole-Adeife; Director, Medical Rehabilitation, Aids and Appliances, Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs, Mrs. Eniola Olukanni-Abokhai among others.

**T**he Lagos State Government under the Office for Disability Affairs (LASODA) has sponsored the treatment of seven people with albinism for various cancer-related issues and also provided Efudix creams to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital as preventive measures against skin cancers in Commemoration of World Cancer Day held recently.

The General Manager of LASODA, Mrs. Adenike Oyetunde-Lawal revealed this at a meeting with the Albinism Cluster group led by the Chairman of the Albinism Association of Nigeria (AAN), Mr. Tolani Ojuri, held at the Nigerian Educational Research and

**Gov Zulum Distributes N225m, 50,000 Bags of Rice, Clothing Materials to 70,000 Families**

**G**overnor Zulum of Borno State has distributed a total of N225 million, along with 50,000 bags of rice and clothing materials, benefiting 70,000 families in the region.

Addressing the recipients during the distribution program, Governor Zulum emphasized the significant increase in Borno State's allocation from the Federal Government, attributing this rise to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's efforts in

securing funds from oil subsidies.

He assured the people of Borno that he is diligently ensuring that the state receives its fair share of federal funds, mitigating the impact of oil subsidy removal on its residents.

Governor Zulum pledged to continue directing federal funds into the state's economy, striving to alleviate any adverse effects on the people of Borno.





# TRIBUTE TO A HERO

H.E Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu – 1956-2023



**A**keti, a hero of modern-day democracy and a true believer in the new Nigeria project. You fought not for fame or praise but for national interest, cohesion, and excellence to prevail.

*You were a true democrat who believed in fairness, equity, inclusion, and justice.*

*Full of wisdom, you will often take colleagues and friends on a trail of thought-provoking proverbial banter, encouraging unity in diversity, selflessness, and people-centric governance. Your counsel was prime and greatly admired by many including the NGF Secretariat.*

*When it mattered, you took a stand, even when it was an unpopular convention - whether on economic or socioeconomic matters, even on seamless transition of power, for democracy to thrive. Today, due in-part to your efforts, the southwest region celebrates Operation Amotekun,*

*the first regional security outfit initiated by a geopolitical zone to complement the police force, in the wake of rising insecurity.*

*As a Secretariat, we will miss you. We take solace in our memories of you, your good deeds and achievements.*

*The Secretariat is where it is today because of the sacrifices of members such as yourself, who have supported the positioning of the Secretariat as a policy hub and a resource center pivotal in advancing subnational development.*

*Asishana Bayo Okauru  
Director General  
Nigeria Governors' Forum  
Secretariat*

*31st January 2024*





# WARMEST <sup>50<sup>th</sup></sup> Birthday WISHES

» TO GOVERNOR OF NIGER STATE

His Excellency

**FARMER MOHAMMED  
UMARU BAGO**

Your Excellency Sir,

On behalf of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Secretariat, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to you on reaching this significant milestone of your 50th birthday.

Your leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the progress and development of Niger State have not only garnered respect but also admiration from your peers and constituents alike.

Your exemplary service to the people of Niger State serves as a beacon of inspiration for all governors across our great nation.

As you celebrate your birthday surrounded by loved ones and well-wishers, may the joy and fulfillment you have brought to others return to you exponentially. May your wisdom and vision continue to guide Niger State towards prosperity, peace, and unity.

We stand in solidarity with you as you embark on this new chapter of your journey. Together, let us continue to work tirelessly towards the betterment of our beloved country, Nigeria.

Once again, happy 50th birthday, Your Excellency and may the years ahead be filled with abundant blessings, good health, and continued success.

Warm regards.

**Signed:**

*A.B. Okauru, Director General,  
Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF)*

