



THE NGF IN

2019





WE'RE COMMITTED TO CHANGING LIVES OF PLWDS, WOMEN, YOUTHS – AJIKE ABDULRAZAQ

A mother, wife and professional woman, Kwara State First Lady, Olufolaka Ajike Abdulrazaq has been in the diplomatic service for almost 28 years. Holding a Masters in International Law and Diplomacy, she has worked in South Africa, France, and the UK.

In this interview with the Nigeria Governors' Forum's PUBLICATIONS OFFICER, HALIMA AHMED she stressed the commitment of the state government and her office to changing the lives of youths, women, and people living with disabilities. She also reiterated her commitment towards empowering more women in stereotype traditional skills dominated by men in the society

Tell us about your pet projects?

I started the Ajike Peoples Support Centre, mainly because I have done lots of giving back programmes but not in a systematic manner.

So it was important to start the Ajike People Support Centre as a way of doing things in a more organized way and reach out, give back to women, children, the youths. I am the mother of grown up boys so I never exclude men from what I do. They and their friends have been instrumental in achieving lots of things, so our focus is on women, men and youths and our primary focus is on people that are marginalised.

Studies show that low status women are vulnerable to gender-based violence. Have you experienced this?

We just had 16 days of activism and advocacy on gender-based violence that started 25th November to 10th December. This year a lot of us did things to show that we are no longer happy with the level of gender-based violence in Nigeria and that it is important to take a stand against it. There are so many incidences that you do not need to know any in particular but you hear about so many things in the media. In Kwara, a little girl three and a half years old, under four years was brought to me. She was allegedly assaulted by a 60-year-old man. When the doctors gave me a report of her injuries, it was really sad and it made me more driven towards taking a stand against gender-based violence. It took the intervention of my office



and Ministry of Women Affairs in Kwara State to make the perpetrator face the full wrath of the law. The young girl was put under the care of the Ministry and there are lots of stigmas so we tend to keep their names from the media so that people will not get to identify these victims. So, we encourage people to speak out and seek an end to the stigmatisation of people do not stigmatised victims because it will make them keep silent and this is not good for their psyche.

Just recently, you took care of 1000 indigent women. Are you planning to do that more often?

Yes, we have done this in different stages with different non-governmental organisations and women groups that is why I have lots of respect for women in Kwara. They stood up with me to achieve this because you know the old style of when you empower people, they take the items away and sell it off because they don't know how to use them. We have to stop that and train them in skills acquisition programmes such as tie and dye, face screen, make up, battic, shoe making, purses, and now we realised that we have done this for these women and they are now able to train other people and make a living from it. All this creates an avenue to change the status quo. And it helps to remove them from the poverty cycle and teach others around them. So many groups have partnered with me like Educated Women in Politics, Ajike Peoples Support Group, Folake Forum, and so many others. They come to me and I help them to pilot the programme and we are going to sustain this because the more people you empower the better. It means going to all the 16 local government area and not just one or two; so we are going to reach as much as we can to make them all economically viable.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 5



The NGF in 2019

The journey of a thousand miles, they say starts with a step. For the Nigeria Governors' Forum, the year 2019 started tardily, tepidly. It is an election year. Our principals, whether they were contesting elections or not, were busy strategizing with or, for their preferred candidates at their different levels. Governance, as in any country, during an election year suffers minor bruises, which may not have been intended or intentional.

But when the year took off in earnest, it began with fanfare. A new Chairman and a Vice Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum were chosen. Dr John Fayemi Kayode of Ekiti State, by the constitution of the NGF became the only likely Excellency to benefit from the arrangement, being the only second term governor in the zone though, he was only returning to Government House Ekiti after a brief political sabbatical.

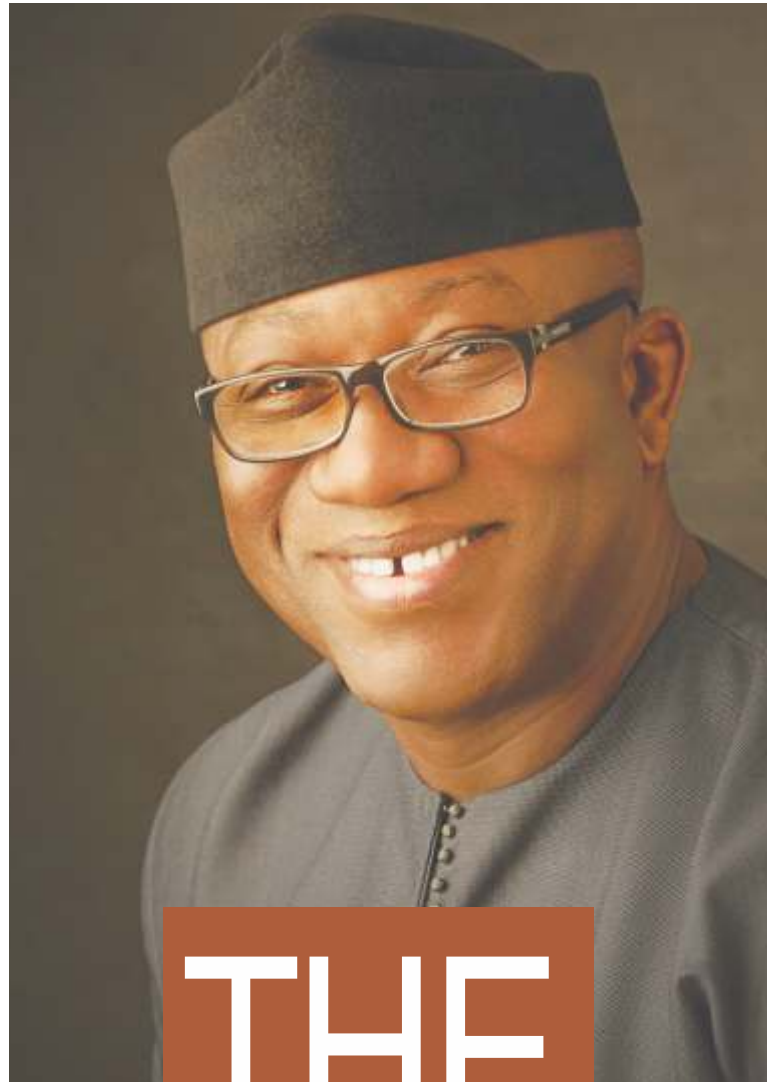
Rt. Hon Aminu Waziri Tambuwal became the Vice Chairman that Governor John Kayode Fayemi chose to work with and the entire house agreed.

Earlier in that quarter of the year, the Nigeria Governors' Forum organized an induction for new and returning governors. That same induction gave birth to the Nigeria Governors' Spouses Forum, which is currently led by Erelu Bisi Fayemi and First Lady of Ekiti State.

That event, which took place on the second day of the Induction program, marked the end of the Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar's very eventful era as Chairman of the NGF.

NGF activities ran full throttle when the Economy section of the office commenced its programs for the year. As at the time of writing this report, more than 410 tax officials and other operators of the economy at the subnational level were trained by the NGF.

The IGR Peer Learning events complemented the other Internally Generated Revenue confer-



THE

ACTIVITIES OF THE NGF DID NOT END IN THE COUNTRY. AS A WAY OF ADDING VALUE TO GOVERNANCE, THE NGF ORGANIZED A SIDE EVENT AT THE UNITED NATION'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK TO CLIMAX ITS REBRANDING

ences which drew inspiration from all over the country. NGF consultants were also at hand to drive the processes to success.

The activities of the NGF did not end in the country. As a way of adding value to governance, the NGF organized a side event at the United Nations' General Assembly in New York to climax its rebranding. In the same vein, the NGF steered governors to the 7th Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) in August. TICAD was initiated by the Japanese Government in 1993 and holds every 3 years with the last Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2016.

The Conference is co-organized by the United Nations, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank and the African Union Commission (AUC).

TICAD took place in August and by October, the 4th Istanbul PPO Week was afoot. Public Private Partnerships are now seen as the

most effective tool to achieve sustainable infrastructure development for developing countries. With ever dwindling public funds to carry out infrastructure projects, the need to involve the private sector in closing the infrastructure gap is even more crucial. That is why the NGF attended.

The Istanbul PPP Week is an annual event which brings together influential infrastructure practitioners in a bid to strengthen collaboration between the public & private sectors.

One remarkable activity of the year was



...NGF IN 2019

the visit by governors to the headquarters of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, USA. The foundation, according to Mr. Bill Gates himself is poised to spend more money in Nigeria and is looking at veering attention to agriculture, in Africa nay Nigeria, where it has its biggest engagements. It is to the delight of the Governors that Mr. Bill Gates walked them through his entire estate, privilege that is hardly extended to visitors to the Foundation. It showed the high esteem with which the Foundation holds the NGF.

In November, the NGF trained Attorneys General from the Ministry of Justice and all senior states counsels from all over the country on Electronic Evidence gathering.

During the course of 2019, several visitors sought the intervention of the NGF to either intervene or to try and influence the institutionalization of their projects. They include the Society for Water and Sanitation, NUJ, Chinese Investors, World Bank, DFID, US-AIDS, UNICEF, FIRS, Customs, Police Force, NNPC, NIPC, and several other SDGs.

Towards the end of the year, the NGF also conducted, along with the Premium Times Newspaper, a training on Budget Reporting for journalists in the country. This, according to the Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana Bayo Okauru is to have grounded journalists doing the work of covering the planning, execution and monitoring of the budget processes and implementation at the subnational level, not to talk of its monitoring and evaluation.

There were also celebrations. The NGF celebrated the last Country Director of the World Bank, Mr. Ben Massoud and his wife Anne when they were leaving the country. It was an honour that only Ben Massoud was given because of his understanding of the Nigerian dynamics in development and how he assisted states to achieve certain development objectives which impacted on the people. It is safe therefore to state that the NGF ended strong in 2019.

What next? It is expected that as designed by the leadership of the NGF, the States' Peer Review Mechanism, a flagship of the Forum, which has been in abeyance, would experience a strong and forceful return. This is in realization of



THE

**NGF WILL ALSO IN 2020
LAUNCH THE STATE
OF THE ART SPECIAL
E-LIBRARY. LOCATED
IN A WORLD CLASS
SERENE ENVIRONMENT,
THE SPECIAL LIBRARY**

the ambition of the Chairman of the Forum Dr John Kayode Fayemi to inject a process that challenges governors to deliver on their mandates. The Governors' Lecture series, which will expose governors to open conversation on their stewardship will also be unveiled just as the State of the States conference which is being organized in conjunction with CWC and the Financial Times of London will get the Forum soaring.

The NGF will also in 2020 launch the state of the art Special e-Library. Located in a world class serene environment, the Special Library is a one-stop information resource hub that collects, stores, preserves and disseminates knowledge-based information resources in print and digital formats for the library patrons seeking information and knowledge on the core thematic areas of the Forum. It would be open to the general public in 2020.

In the same vein, several interventions from donor agencies and other stakeholders will continue simultaneously with the other activities of the NGF, come 2020.



WE'RE COMMITTED TO CHANGING LIVES OF PLWDS, WOMEN, YOUTHS

The girl-child has been deprived of quality education. How do you intend to use your office to turn things around in the state?

We have commenced a sensitive program and we are ensuring that proper information is disseminated that it is important that the girl child is educated because there is a popular saying that when you educate the girl child you educate a nation. So, it is important not to leave the girl child behind because things are becoming more technological; you have to be smart positively to achieve your goal in life and it is quite amazing that men are quite receptive to the message. Yes, men are quite receptive to the message that girls should stay in school. So you are aware of the rehabilitation of schools and it is encouraging people to stay in school because when the environment is more conducive the likelihood of them to stay in school. We are also taking some messages to the school and on Human Rights Day. We go into this school and talk to them. We did a drug eradication programme and we ensured that school children and youth corps members, university students participated. And because they are participating, there is enthusiasm and I believe we will be able to do more in the future.

As an advocate for gender-based issues, what are doing to change the narratives of women in the state?

We will continue to have awareness discussions. And also, the women group when they pay me a courtesy visit, we talk and we seek strategic means to avert any form of violence among women. We encourage them to learn how to speak out and become bold and don't think of the stigma and seek help and counsel. We also collaborate with other NGOs to achieve this.

WE

WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE AWARENESS DISCUSSIONS. AND ALSO, THE WOMEN GROUP WHEN THEY PAY ME A COURTESY VISIT, WE TALK AND WE SEEK STRATEGIC MEANS TO AVERT ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE AMONG WOMEN

What are doing to change the lives of people living with disabilities in the state?

This morning I just left a programme focused on them and they were really happy. We have incorporated them into anything we do in the state. The women groups also reach out to the disabled people. Disability is not all about those that can't walk or talk or any form of

disability. They are an active part of our project here and they work in partnership with the women groups. And the best way to help them is to empower them with what will make them more viable in life. Sometimes in London, we



look for groups that can assist with the purchase of wheelchairs, walking stick and visual aids. We will continue to work on them to ensure they have the aid to be optimally engaged.

Who are your role models?

It is a difficult question to answer because there are several women I look up to like my mother, my grandmother, my mother-in-law and other women in my family that have shown such strength. Also, there are several women that you can point hands to that have excelled in several fields of endeavours, so I have all of them as my role models.

What is your advice to women in northern Nigeria?

My message is that they should look at women around them who are trailblazing and say to themselves, that they can do what they are doing and it is important to be confident and reach for the stars and not to be obscured by anyone. If you look around you will observe that men work with women who have excelled and showcase themselves, so it is important that women be the best they can be. It is also important to have fun in life and try to have a balanced existence. Not too much work because much work is not good and too much play is not good either. So aim for the stars and work



hard.

What is your opinion about the NGF?

The NGF has been wonderful. We have watched them and must say they have made us proud locally and internationally and they have made us proud. And we want them to continue to do that and the programmes they organised for the Wives of the Governors, I mean First Ladies. I will like to say to them kudos and they should keep it up.



EKITI FIRST LADY & CHAIRPERSON OF NGSF PROFILE OF ERELU BISI FAYEMI

The Wife of the Governor of Ekiti State, Erelu Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, is a Feminist Activist, Gender and Development Specialist, Social Entrepreneur, Policy Advocate, and Writer. She has a BA (1984) and MA (1988) in History from the University of Ife, Nigeria (now Obafemi Awolowo University). She also received an MA in Gender and Society (1992) from Middlesex University, UK.

She served as the Director of Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), an international development organisation for African women based in London, UK, with an Africa regional office in Kampala, Uganda, from 1991-2001. While she was the Director of AMWA, she established the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), a training and networking forum for young African women. The leadership institute she developed has become such a powerful legacy that today, the AWLI has trained over 6,000 women across Africa, and most of these women are now in senior decision-making positions as Vice-President, Ministers, Members of Parliaments, academics, civil society leaders and employees of international organizations.

She co-founded the African Women's Development Fund, (AWDF)

DURING THE 1ST TERM OF DR KAYODE FAYEMI AS GOVERNOR OF EKITI STATE, NIGERIA, (2010-2014), ERELU FAYEMI WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN A RANGE OF POLICY ADVOCACY, GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMS IN EKITI STATE

at the Africa Leadership Center, King's College, London. Erelu Fayemi has a PhD in Sociology (Honoris Causa) from the Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED) in Ogun State.

- the first Africa-wide grant-making foundation for women based in Ghana, and served as the first Executive Director from 2001-2010. She is currently Principal Partner, Amandla Consulting, specializing in leadership development for women, and she runs an online community called Abovewhispers.com. She was until recently, a UN Women Nigeria Senior Advisor, and is currently a Visiting Senior Research Fellow



During the 1st term of Dr Kayode Fayemi as Governor of Ekiti State, Nigeria, (2010-2014), Erelu Fayemi was actively involved in a range of policy advocacy, grassroots empowerment and social inclusion programs in Ekiti State. She led the campaign to enact a Gender Based Violence Prohibition Law (2011, revised in October 2019) an Equal Opportunities Bill (2013) and a HIV Anti-Stigma Bill (2014). Mrs Fayemi continues to work on the implementation and sustainability of these initiatives as First Lady of Ekiti State for the second time. She is currently Chair of the Gender Based Violence Law Management Committee, Ekiti State and Chair, Ekiti State AIDS Control Agency. She serves on the Executive Board of the African Women's Development Fund, and is a member of the Governing Council of Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State. She is also on the Steering Committee of the Regional African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) and a member of AWLN-Nigeria Steering Committee where she serves as an Adviser.

Erelu Fayemi is the author of 'Speaking for Myself': Perspectives on Social, Political and Feminist Activism in Africa (2013), 'Speaking above a Whisper', (2013) an autobiography and 'Loud Whispers' (2017). She also co-edited 'Voice, Power and Soul', with Jessica Horn (2008) a compilation of images and stories of African Feminists.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF HE ERELU BISI FAYEMI

1. POLICY ADVOCACY

HE Erelu Bisi Fayemi is a Gender Specialist and Policy Advocate. She has used her office to advocate for laws and policies in Ekiti State: The Gender Based Violence Prohibition Law (2011), Ekiti State Gender Policy (2011) the Gender and Equal Opportunities Law (2013) and the HIV Anti-Stigma Law (2014). She is currently involved in the following advocacy initiatives:

- Implementation of the GBV Law of 2011: As Chair of the Management Committee for the implementation of the GBV Law, HE Erelu Fayemi is



BISI FAYEMI

dedicated to ensuring that this very important legislation continues to protect vulnerable citizens from all forms of violence and abuse. In addition,

HE continues to advocate for the rights of children and against harmful traditional practices such as widowhood rights that undermine the rights and well-being of widows.

- Gender and Vulnerable Persons Unit (GVPU): With the support of the Ministry of Justice, Ekiti State, there is a GVPU based in the office of HE, coordinated by a Lawyer and a team of dedicated volunteers who help citizens in distress (mostly women but not exclusively) through timely interventions.

- HIV/AIDS Awareness: As Chair of the Ekiti State AIDS Control Agency (EKSACA) HE lends her voice to HIV Awareness, prevention and treatment efforts in Ekiti State.

- Keep Girls in School Campaign: This new advocacy initiative of HE Erelu Bisi Fayemi, is aimed at creating awareness and mobilizing resources to ensure that girls stay in school for as long as possible.

- Anti-Female Genital Mutilation: HE is currently involved in activities to remove Ekiti State from the list of States with a high prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation. Using a combination of community sensitization, awareness raising and economic empowerment activities, HE provides support to the Ekiti State FGM Task Force. HE recently initiated the 'Drop the blades' program, the first of its kind in Nigeria, aimed at granting amnesty to local circumcisers in exchange for empowerment.

- Cancer Prevention and Healthy Living: HE is a passionate advocate for cancer prevention and healthy living, using her various networks and platforms to promote these issues wherever she goes, as well as organizing regular screenings for women. In October 2013, HE's Ekiti Development Foundation worked with the Ekiti State Government to establish the Funmilayo Olayinka Diagnostic and Well-Being Center at the Ekiti State Teaching Hospital.

- Open-Defecation Champion: In a partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Utilities, HE is an Advocacy Champion against open-defecation, again trying to minimize this practice in Ekiti State.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

HE Erelu Bisi Fayemi has initiated a number of projects to provide support to people under the auspices of the Ekiti Development Foundation. They include the following:

- Social Welfare Fund: This is a monthly disbursement program that provides financial assistance to people for medical bills, school fees, rent and other urgent needs. The target beneficiaries are widows, unemployed people and those who are incapacitated in various ways.

- Small Business Development: This is another monthly disbursement program which provides grants for economic empowerment to serious minded women and young people who have identified business opportunities but might not be eligible for a bank loan.

- Multiple Births Trust Fund: This is another initiative of HE Erelu Bisi Fayemi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. It provides financial and product support to poor families with multiple births and long-term investments for families with triplets and above.

- Elderly Outreach Program: HE has a Food Bank initiative for the elderly known as Ounje Arugbowhich distributes food packages to elderly people in need across the State.

3. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

HE is involved in a number of projects to provide leadership development opportunities for women and young people in Ekiti State and beyond.

- Forum of Spouses of Ekiti State Officials (FOSESO): This network was established by HE in June 2011 and reactivated in July 2019.

- Forum of Women in Leadership (FOWIL) Ekiti State: This is a forum for women holding positions in the Ekiti State Government for mutual support and peer learning

- Young Women in Politics: This is a network of young women in politics in Ekiti State. Members of FOSESO and FOWIL are meant to serve as mentors to the young women in politics.

- Above Whispers: In 2016, HE established the Above Whispers Media Group and the Above Whispers Foundation. The AWMG runs the news, information and social justice focused website Above Whispers, where HE writes her weekly column Loud Whispers. Her weekly articles are syndicated in national newspapers such as Vanguard, Daily Independent, The Sun and Daily Express. Proceeds from HE's books Speaking Above a Whisper (2013) Speaking for Myself (2013) and Loud Whispers (2017) are donated to the Above Whispers Foundation which supports women's leadership development activities.

4. ARTS AND CULTURE

HE is a tireless supporter of the Arts and Culture community. She provides technical support to the Ekiti State Council of Arts and Culture, and she has been responsible for bringing several Ekiti talents to the limelight. She is the Global Ambassador of Africa Fashion Week London, and is well known for her love and promotion of African textiles. She is currently committed to promoting the mat weaving and pottery industries in Ekiti State, as well as reviving the indigenous cloth weaving industry.



Chairperson of NGWF & First Lady of Ekiti State, Mrs Bisi Fayemi, on a tour of the secretariat, with her is the DG, NGF, Mr. A.B Okaro



GOV. YAHAYA'S US TRIP: A HARBINGER OF BETTER TOMORROW FOR GOMBE

By Ismaila Uba Misilli

The most important route to acquire the trust of the people in any society, irrespective of race, ethnicity or religion, is the ability to match words with actions.

In politics, especially in this part of the world, talk is cheap and many political leaders do not care about leaving any legacy behind.

But in Gombe State, the reverse is the case. Gone are the days of cheap talk while good governance is sacrificed on the altar of greed and wealth acquisition.

Since the emergence of his Excellency, Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, at the helm of Gombe's affairs, there has been a consistent departure from the culture of empty promises as he has been matching his words with actions with in critical sectors.

Frankly, Governor Yahaya's leadership style is one sweetener to the taste of governance in Gombe State. Many have testified that it is the harbinger of great things to come for the good people of the state.

Of the many good works by Governor Inuwa Yahaya, his recent trip to the United States of America (USA) has received resounding applause for its prospective impact on the health, education, agriculture, water, environment and other sectors. His engagements during the trip are pointers to the fact that Governor Inuwa Yahaya understands the depth of damage he inherited and the urgent need to galvanise all possible assistance in partnership and collaboration to reverse the ugly trend and put the state on the pedestal of sustainable growth and development.

Hence, the US trip can rightly be said to be targeted at ensuring that the good people of Gombe feel the impact of his administration vis-à-vis promises made to them during the campaigns.

While in the US, Governor Inuwa Yahaya first, attended a roundtable on health and human capital development on the invitation of Bill and Melinda Gates and Aliko Dangote foundations in collaboration with the Nigerian Governors' Forum. He also met with the UN Deputy Secretary General, Hajiya Amina J Mohammed, who also facilitated the Governor's meeting with key UN agencies, including the UNDP, UNICEF and UNIDO.

He also visited the famous New York Academy of Sciences and the Qatar permanent mission in New York and most importantly, was able to get commitments that would assist Gombe State to achieve its blueprint for development and herald an era where the people would have value for their votes.

With an overwhelming crisis in the health and education sectors where emergencies have been declared, a major gain from the US trip is UNDP's pledge to support Gombe State's strategic development plan; as well as UNICEF's promise to increase activities in the health, education, water, sanitation and other critical sectors in Gombe state.

It is to be expected, therefore, that in no time, there would be significant

improvement in the health sector - in Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) - and other challenges, especially as Gov. Inuwa Yahaya is faithful with meeting the counterpart funding obligations with partners.

As one leader that means well for his people, the governor always explores any avenue to sell his policies, programmes, mission and vision and that was exactly what he did throughout his stay in America.

While in New York, the governor told a team from the New York Academy of Sciences that the Gombe State education sector was under a state of emergency; from primary, junior and senior secondary schools to adult and non-formal education.

After stressing that efforts to reduce out-of-school children is gaining momentum, alongside girl-child education, the governor was able to secure the commitment of the New York Academy of Sciences on strategic partnership and support in education, innovation and technology.

The President and Chief Executive Officer of the academy, Ellis Rubinstein told Governor Yahaya that in collaboration with UNICEF and other development partners, the academy was piloting a proof of concept about the innovation in 6 countries including Nigeria, India, Singapore and others, assuring that the academy would select Gombe as the pilot state for the project in Nigeria. He added that the fundamental goal of the initiative would be to mobilise a global community of change agents in education, technology, and other sectors to explore innovation and build transformational skilling plans that will advance the educational foundation necessary to achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

This is music to the ears of Gombe people who have suffered from effects of mismanagement of the education sector by past administrations as evident in nearly 700, 000 out-of-school children in the state.

It is expected that Gombe will soon record a drastic drop in number of out-of-school Children with these partnerships and collaborations in place but more delightful is the fact that the Qatar Permanent Mission in New York has shown commitment to improving girl-child education in the state. This will go a long way in ensuring that the girl-child is empowered to face the future with the requisite knowledge to stand up to their peers anywhere in the world.

For those that may think that securing commitment is not good enough, yes!

Governor Yahaya shares the same sentiment, hence his mandate to the state commissioner of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Special Adviser on Budget, Planning and Donor Agencies Coordination to engage the Mission



WITH

**AN OVERWHELMING
CRISIS IN THE HEALTH
AND EDUCATION
SECTORS WHERE
EMERGENCIES HAVE
BEEN DECLARED, A
MAJOR GAIN FROM
THE US TRIP IS
UNDP'S PLEDGE TO
SUPPORT GOMBE
STATE'S STRATEGIC
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



WIFE OF IMO STATE GOVERNOR, EBERE IHEDIOHA



Her Excellency Lady Ebere Ihedioha is a Chartered Accountant by Profession. Currently on leave from her Job at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

A mother of four (three boys and one Girl, she is a devout Christian. Her Foundation the CORDELIA BENSON FOUNDATION is focused on helping young indigent widows through making them self sufficient.

She is also devoted to empowering the girl-child. She has done so much to this end since her husband's swearing in since May 29th.

...A HARBINGER OF BETTER TOMORROW FOR GOMBE

on details and modalities of the intervention for the overall benefit of the people of the state. This is the kind of purpose-driven leadership that Gombe could have benefitted from in all its years of existence.

Knowing the potentials of the Agricultural sector in Gombe State, the Governor was also outlined the key priorities of his administration and sought for enhanced partnership and support in the sector to improve the economy of the state, knowing full well that over 70 per cent of its population are farmers.

As expected, Governor Yahaya, being a leader that is professionally conversant with figures, also attended the USA-Nigeria Business and Investment Summit, 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia after a successful working visit at the UN headquarters where he had fruitful engagements with key agencies of the inter-governmental organisation.

With the summit aimed at promoting steady mutual economic growth and development between United States of America and Nigeria, there is no doubt that Gombe State would also feel the economic impact

in that regard. The Governor used the opportunity to make presentation on available investment opportunities and incentives that will attract foreign direct investment into Gombe state.

“If we must make the people to feel the impact of genuine leadership, then the suffering of the majority must not be allowed for the foundation of the wealth of few.”

This has been the mindset of Gov. Inuwa Yahaya as evident in his prudent management of resources and leverage on partnerships and collaborations (home and abroad) that would improve the lots of the people.

The attention given to him by world bodies shows the kind of pedigree the Governor has and the integrity has been able to build within the few months in office.

When it comes to genuine leadership with sincerity of purpose, there are just few folks like Inuwa. With the intentional moves of the Governor in addressing the challenges before his administration, the signs are clear and we can now see that good governance is possible in Gombe State.

DOMESTICATE CHILD RIGHTS ACT, ASMAU INUWA YAHAYA TASKS STATE ASSEMBLY

Wife of the Gombe State Governor, Hajiya Asma'u Inuwa Yahaya, has urged Gombe State House of Assembly to assent to the Child Right Act (CRA), the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Acts.

Hajiya Yahaya also urged the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to take decisive action in ensuring that the Gender and Equal opportunity Bill are passed and domesticated in Gombe state by the current administration.

She noted during the commemoration of 16 days activism against Gender Based Violence in Gombe State, that this is an annual international campaign in collaboration with Northern Governor's Wives Forum.

Yahaya said Violence against Women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human right

violation which affects millions of girls and women at home, workplace or school regardless of age, background or level of education.

“Here in Gombe, a survey conducted had shown that at least two cases of rape happen every day. This suggests that 728 rape cases happen every year. It is assumed that most of these cases go unreported due to stigmatization from society.

“Gombe state is among the states that are yet to domesticate the Child Rights Act 17 years after Nigeria assented to the act in a legal document. The perpetrators of violence against women and children especially girls are aware that the Child right Act has not been domesticated in many states of the federation, they therefore take advantage of this opportunity to perpetrate their nefarious activities thereby causing pain to victims and members of their families”.



20 YEARS OF NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY: 1999-2019 AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL



Oxford 6th December 2019

Mr. Chairman, please let me add my voice to those of others and thank the organisers of this conference for the kind invitation extended to me to join such a galaxy of scholars. I believe I speak on behalf of my fellow countrymen and women in Nigeria when I say how much we appreciate the University of Oxford through St. Antony's College for the time and attention you have given to Nigeria since the inception of the African Studies programme here. And of course, a special thanks to my friend and brother, Professor Wale Adebaniwa for taking the African Studies Programme to greater heights. Eku se o!

Yes, I agree this university holds a unique place in the world. It is not just a home to great thinkers of the past, but it is also a constant reference for great ideas of the future. I am fully aware that the tradition of the influential study of Africa in this university predates the 2004 when this centre was founded, let me also state here that it is difficult to think of a Nigerian national leader or administration, since 1960 till date, that has not had his policy, pronouncement or at least thoughts influenced by studies or opinion from this University, so Oxford and Nigeria have been together for long, for better or for worse.

I am of the opinion that spaces of learning should be areas immune from raw partisan politics and I also feel that discussions in these places should never be

based on, or motivated by pure partisan affiliations, it is my view that a University or any other citadel or institution of learning should be dedicated to, and should accommodate only rigorous rational reflections that can illuminate minds of all for the betterment of the society.

During the early years of Nigeria's democracy, I was armed with a bachelor's degree in law from Usman Dan Fodio University in Sokoto and was studying for my master's degree. I had gone into law school as a young man full of idealism. Coming from humble beginnings, I had witnessed some of the inequalities of the legal system, and I wanted to work from the inside to change them. I thought that as a lawyer I could do my part to help the weak and vulnerable. At that time, I had no political aspirations, but I did have strong feelings about what I saw around me. Living under the military regime for most of my life, I had seen first-hand the impact of military dictatorship on society. I was frustrated by the slow pace of development in my country. And in the early part of this century, I became excited by the promise of democracy. I wanted to be involved. I became a legislative aide, and I started to believe that God had another path in mind for me.

In reflecting on the 20 years of Nigeria's Democracy, I will, therefore, do my best to refrain from any observation or pronouncement based on partisan affiliation and I will use facts to focus on the system as a whole knowing that political parties, citizens and politicians are largely variables and reflections of the system as a whole. The best or the worst we do is ultimately a product of, or a reaction to the system, or if you wish reaction to the environment in which we live and operate.

Looking back over the past two decades, I must admit that our democracy has not yet reached its potential. Threats of violence and corruption still undermine people's trust, and as elected officials, we still have much to do to demonstrate that we are worthy of that trust.

When we talk about 20 years of Nigeria's Democracy it is important that we first remind ourselves that the 20 years we are analysing means 20 years away from a period when under military dictatorship the Nigerian Government and country were treated as a pariah unit, not welcomed in the community of civil and democratic states. The period before the 20 years we are to talk about today, was a period in which Nigerian citizens could not vote at all, it was a time when groups and individuals could not express them-



selves at all let alone freely; 20 years ago, public officer holders were not accountable to any legislative body let alone to the general public.

Yes, in Nigeria, we now have elections where people can vote and be voted for, but how free and fair are these elections? Even within political parties, the credibility of elections and the whole internal democratic process depends on which faction of the party one belongs to. If we are to have a credible foundation for our democracy, this is the first thing we must address.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I refer to Institutions. I refer to the only base on which we, like any other truly democratic society, can build upon and the cover under which we, like any other truly democratic society, can get protection from the whims, madness or even cleverness of any single individual who might have his or her interests or flaws.

Institutions, not individuals protect the collective interest and grow the commonwealth in a fair, legal and lasting way. The best individuals can do is to help build institutions. The lack of institutions that all can truly trust and fully depend upon is perhaps the biggest flaw in our 20 years of democracy.

I can tell you that building systems that take all voices into consideration is hard work and it can be frustrating. Believing in a democracy means taking time to persuade and build consensus rather than seeing those who disagree as enemies to be overpowered. It means agreeing to accept the will of the majority when your side does not win. The temptation to circumvent the process through violence will always be with us and must be fought.

I am however optimistic because my experience first as a lawyer, later as a legislator and then as a governor has given me the rare opportunity to mix with people from all areas and persuasion of Nigeria and part of what this experience has shown me is that we have people that can build institutions.

We have people that understand the importance of strong and legitimate institutions that can work for all. The other important thing my experience has shown me thanks to my mental curiosity and physical travels to meet Nigerians across Nigeria and indeed outside Nigeria is that our fears, our desires, and aspirations as people are more similar than some want to make us believe.

I have noted that regardless of where people come from or wherever they live, or whichever language they speak or in whichever way they worship, what people, all kinds of people, really desire is to live in a peaceful environment where they can express themselves freely, work, study, love, worship and prosper. That is what most people feel democracy is about.

Nigerians expect development from Democracy; in Nigeria, we call it dividends of democracy. Nigerians share faith in democracy. But democracies do not exist solely on faith. Maintaining a democracy is work-

attentive work-- not only by our leaders but by the people as well.

We are all in this together. Nigerians be vigilant. I am convinced that to lead Nigeria to a place where citizens will be proud of our democracy and

happy to defend the institutions of democracy, we need men and women who understand that our greatest assets are our children and that the biggest gift we can give, the best way we can nurture these children is by giving them education, good education!

I believe that the burden of leadership must be shared among those who understand that every ward in Nigeria should have a full-fledged functional secondary school. That is why in Sokoto, in the last 5 years our education has always taken the largest part of our budget.

There is no point in having educated people who will not live long, so I also strongly believe that health in Nigeria must be made a priority. We need to build health institutions and facilities that are near to the people, affordable for all and capable of effectively and efficiently preventing and curing sicknesses.

We need to drastically improve our attitude to research, practice, and remuneration related to the provision of healthcare services. A major area in which we have not done well in the past 20 years, is food security.

We need to make it a priority and policy to feed our people. The Agric Sector must be seen as a strong po-

tential source for creating jobs and wealth. A particular area that we have particularly left adrift in the past 20 years is housing. This is very sad and strange to me because housing does not only cater for very basic and obvious needs of almost everyone in the country, but it is also one area that can easily create employment and wealth, it is an area that can positively affect most citizens as a process and as an outcome. At the moment we are having a deficit of over 20 million housing units.

It is my opinion that a democracy of well-housed citizens is a stronger democracy.

The last 20 years have also sadly seen the growth of security issues that are sometimes, tinted in ethnopolitical shades, as well as in religious and professional and colours. Insecurity, whether in form of raw and pure banditry, to organised crime or fraud, to terrorism, of any kind, is powered by an army of desperate, reckless and hopeless youths who do not see a future in a legitimate society and who do not share the values proclaimed by such society.

So far, we have not been able to win the battle against insecurity in a way that will make our citizens feel truly safe across the length and breadth of Nigeria and we have not in the last 20 years made the rest of the world see Nigeria as a place safe enough to go to without apprehension or extra care.

It must be said here, that the issue of insecurity is a global issue and it will



I
**CAN TELL YOU
THAT BUILDING
SYSTEMS THAT TAKE
ALL VOICES INTO
CONSIDERATION
IS HARD WORK
AND IT CAN BE
FRUSTRATING**

CONTINUES ON PAGE 20



NGF SPECIAL LIBRARY: A CUSTODIAN OF KNOWLEDGE-BASED INFORMATION RESOURCES

By Naomi Tietie

Libraries are important cornerstones of a healthy organization. Having documents in an organization is not enough as storing, preserving, proper organization and quick dissemination of information resources are what makes a document valuable. The Nigeria Governors' Forum special library is a legacy of the Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru. His passion for the preservation of knowledge information resources of the Nigeria Governors' Forum is what gave birth to the establishment of the Nigeria Governors' Forum Special Library in August 2018.

Located in a world class serene environment, the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Special Library is a one stop information resource hub that collects, stores, preserves and disseminates knowledge-based information resources in print and digital formats for the library patrons seeking information and knowledge on the core thematic areas of the Nigeria Governors' Forum.

The NGF special library catalogue contains documents and publications that cuts across all the 36 States of Nigeria, Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs), International Development partners, NGF Secretariat and External authors. Some of such documents and publications are; NGF HelpDesk Publications, NGF Dashboard Publications, NGF Strategic Plan, NGF Executive Summary, State Peer Review Mechanism, Governors' Induction documents, Inaugural Speeches of Presidents and Governors, Guide Book for Transitioning -Out Governors in Nigeria, The Nigeria Governors' Forum Retreats, NGF Meeting documents, National Economic Council documents, Federation Account Allocation Committee document, National Governors Association publications, African Development Bank Group publications, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation documents, World Bank publications, Cleen Foundation publications, United Nations publications, Department for International Development publications, World Health Organization publications, UNICEF publications, FIRS publications, Joint Tax Board publications, National Primary Health Care Development Agency Publications, Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission Publications, Bureau of Public Procurement publications, Bureau of Public Service Reforms Publications, Central Bank of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Finance, The Nigerian Economic Summit Group, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, States budgets, Reports of the Accountant General of the Federation, Reports of the Auditor General of the Federation, State Peer Review Tour documents of the 36 States, Investments profiles, Magazines, Journals, Newsletters, Audio Visual materials, Books on Governance, Politics, Security, Biography, Tax, Policy, Public Financial Management, Economics,

THE LIBRARY IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING AUTOMATION AND DIGITIZATION USING WORLD BEST INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY SOFTWARE FOR THE NGF E-LIBRARY AND REPOSITORY ...



Emotions, Psychology, Media, Law, Constitution, Youth Empowerment, Knowledge Management, Entrepreneurship and Development etc.

The library is currently undergoing automation and digitization using world best international library software for the NGF e-library and repository which will enable the library to provide top-notch services to the library patrons from any location using any device.

The library will be officially unveiled to external patrons (researchers, students, information scientist etc.) next year to explore, research, read and learn.

Except on the days when it is closed during public holidays, the NGF special library is open on Mondays to Fridays from 9:00 am to 5:00pm daily to internal patrons to have access to documents and publications inside the library. Documents and publications are properly shelved, classified, labeled and available on the library open shelves for self-retrieval. However, confidential documents are kept in closed shelves in the library and may not be available to some of the library users or may be available for limited use if permission is granted.

The resources of the NGF e-Library will be available for access via the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) as soon as the Library automation and digitization is complete for use by the library patrons (Internal and External).



NGF NUTRITION SCORECARD DEVELOPMENT

Dr Gianni Dongo

To achieve sustainable and equitable growth, there is a need for policymakers to focus on Nigeria's most ubiquitous and high yielding resource which is Human Capital Development, HCD.

HCD is a composite term that covers the necessary ingredients needed to develop the potential inherent in a working population to be ultimately productive. This is even more relevant in our clime considering that Africa would have 41% of the working population of the world in just over 20 years' time.

How do we ensure we that we develop the right human resources? It begins, as almost everything, with birth and ensuring adequate nutrition for the growing child. Evidence shows that poor feeding practices of newborns and children translates to reduced performance in IQ tests, comparatively reduced lifetime earnings and productivity. It is for this reason that providing the right nutrition forms a base for developing human capital. Stunting is simply abnormal growth and is a result of long-term malnutrition. Stunted children perform poorer in mathematical tests.

In Nigeria, where there is are 13 million children who are under-five and stunted, there is an urgent to address this now to halt the already serious impact on human capital.

Following the NGF's prioritization of nutrition, the NGF secretariat has been working with partners to develop metrics that will track evidence-based policies and plans for improved outcomes in nutrition. This is expected to pay particular relevance to the enabling policy environment that when Governors put in place will create an environment for the right implementers to drive their vision for better nutrition.

The NGF Secretariat started this project in August 2019, with the aim to improve coordination between the sectors relevant to nutrition as enshrined in the National Policy on Food and Nutrition. To improve this, there is a need to revitalize and support state committees on food and nutrition, develop coordinated multi-sectoral plans for nutrition that must include; Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Water and Women Affairs. Critical to achieving this is to develop a strong narrative for the effectiveness of coordination against outcomes and effectively presenting this via a dashboard to the NGF consistently.

NGF has strategically been engaging with its technical partners (Ministry of Budget and Planning, Health, Agriculture, Women Affairs, NPHCDA) on this project. The NGF secretariat called a technical session of policy advisors of partners focused on nutrition: UNICEF, CS-SUNN, Alive and Thrive, Save the Children, DataDENT on Monday, December 9th, 2019.



IN NIGERIA, WHERE THERE IS ARE 13 MILLION CHILDREN WHO ARE UNDER-FIVE AND STUNTED, THERE IS AN URGENT TO ADDRESS THIS NOW TO HALT THE ALREADY SERIOUS IMPACT ON HUMAN CAPITAL.

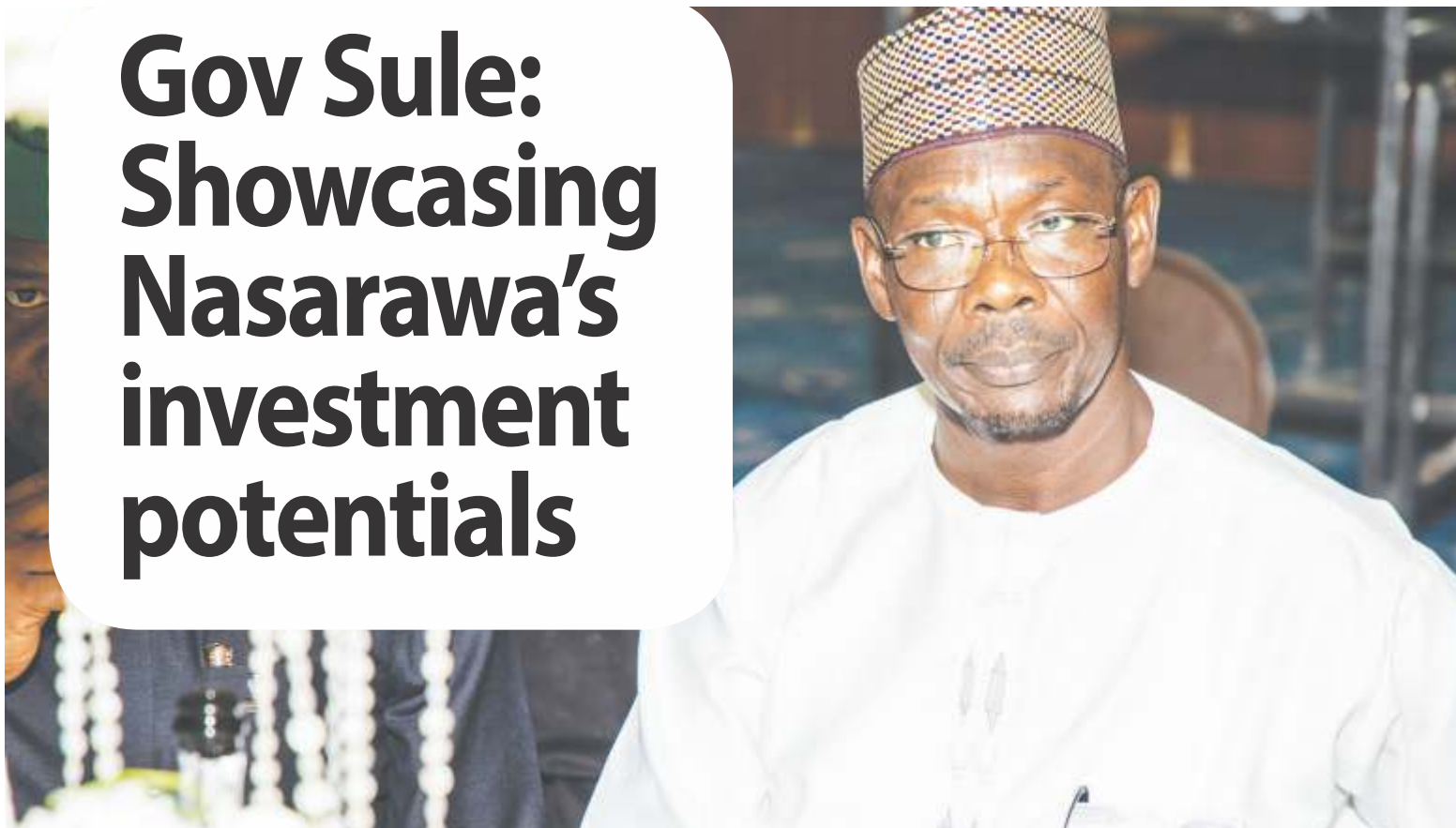
The session was chaired by the Senior Health Advisor of the NGF and key outputs produced included identification and validation of metrics that would be able to track progress.

This begins the process to develop a comprehensive scorecard in nutrition for the NGF that would change the narrative in Nutrition for human capital development in Nigeria.

Over the coming months, the NGF secretariat would work to finalize the metrics and present the completed scorecard to the NGF.



Gov Sule: Showcasing Nasarawa's investment potentials



Nasarawa State Governor, His Excellency Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule recently presented the state to Flour Mills Nigeria as economic giant with enormous potential. Governor Sule, who led a high-powered team to the headquarters of Flour Mills in Lagos to showcase the economic potentials of Nasarawa State, said the state had a strong value chain in the development of cassava.

The exploratory visit saw Governor Sule reaffirm that Nasarawa State provides the most suitable fertile land and geographic advantage in terms of access to markets for Flour Mills Nigeria, should the company accept to venture into large scale cassava farming in the state.

The Governor further enumerated that the absence of improved cassava variety in Nigeria offers Flour Mills a lucrative gap to take advantage of and that under his stewardship, agriculture has been repositioned as a key competitive sector in Nasarawa State.

He stated that now is the time for Flour Mills to seize the opportunity of the highest level of political will already in place and the robust prevailing enabling environment being provided, as well as the world class digital land administration system of NAGIS: Nasarawa Geographic Information Service, to invest in Nasarawa State.

On his part, the Group Managing Director of Flour Mills Nigeria, Mr. Paul Gbededo acknowledged that without doubt, "Nasarawa State means

Business", and that the fact that Governor Sule clearly communicated the purpose of the meeting, even before arriving Lagos, showed that the government in Nasarawa State was proactive and investor focused.

Mr. Gbededo lauded the business presentation of the Nasarawa State team led by the Governor, describing it as compelling and in-depth, hard-work and a brilliant acumen to attract investment at par with global standards.

At the end of the meeting, it was resolved that Flour Mills Nigeria will invest in Agri-processing in Nasarawa State with investments in Cassava farming and Sugar plantation.

On the entourage of His Excellency Governor Sule were Attorney General, Prof. Abdulkarim Kana, Commissioner of Agriculture, Prof Otaki Alanana and Lands Commissioner, Prof Salisu Alizaga. Others are: Special Adviser on Investment, Ibrahim Adamu Abdullahi, and Perm Sec Naphthali Dachor for Agriculture and Perm Sec Stephen Dogo of

Lands; as well as DG Nagis, Sonny Agassi and Surveyor General Yusuf Awuya.

IT

**WAS RESOLVED
THAT FLOUR MILLS
NIGERIA WILL INVEST
IN AGRI-PROCESSING
IN NASARAWA STATE
WITH INVESTMENTS IN
CASSAVA FARMING AND
SUGAR PLANTATION**

GROW YOUR EXPORT BUSINESS WITH FIDELITY



We Are Fidelity. We Keep Our Word

Contact Us: +234 (1) 448-5252
true.serve@fidelitybank.ng



Fidelity Bank Plc
INC 1031022

FOLLOW US:     

www.fidelitybank.ng



PHOTOSPE



Deputy Govs in a warm handshake



World Bank Director for Nigeria, Shubam Chaudrimaking a point



L-R: Govs of K...
Abdul...



Cross-section of governors at the meeting



Deputy Governor of Kaduna State, Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe discussing with the DG, NGF, Mr Asishana Okauru while the Executive Director Admin/Finance, Alhaji Jibia looks on



The team from Department for International Development (DFID)



Dr Faisal of PHCDA (left) with Dr Ahmed of the NGF

PHOTOSPEAK

A NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM MONTHLY PUBLICATION



PEAK



atsina, Kwara, Taraba, Sokoto and Plateau State, Masari, Ishaq, Ishaku, Tambuwal and Lalong, respectively



...Philip Shuibui and Gov Tambuwal



A cross section of governors



Gov Bello Masari and Alh. Jibia, ED Fin & Admin



NGF (right)



Zamfara State Governor, Matawalle in a handshake with Tambuwal



Deputy Governor of Edo State, Philip Shuibui with the DG NGF



PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE IGR DASHBOARD CONFERENCE WHICH TOOK PLACE IN 2019



NGF facilitators, Dr Mark Abani, Lanre Ajogbasile and David Nabena



A CORPER'S PERSPECTIVE OF THE NGF

A Corpers' Delight?



In all honesty, the first time any of us became aware of the Nigeria Governors' Forum is around the time we were posted to work for the Secretariat. This ignorance and uncertainty, coupled with the possibility of rejection, made coming in even more difficult than it should have been.

Alas, as we stepped through the majestic gate, the grand door and the ever-so-warm office assistant, a bit of calm was restored because the office struck us as calm, receptive and deliberate.

The interview process began, we met a couple of very knowledgeable members of staff who had questions and/or good wishes for us, and finally we met the DG who welcomed us to the office and wished us all the very best in the employ of the NGF Secretariat for the next year.

Now we're here, somewhat acclimatized, and informed enough to present our perspective of the NGF.

The first thing that struck us about the NGF is that it is a very broad organization. And you cannot afford to be left behind! Each of us graduated with one degree – Accounting, Economics and Law – and thought that life would be just as streamlined as that. The NGF, however, offers a wide scope of issues ranging from Health to Agriculture to Taxation. And it is all hands on deck. So, one day you are researching the Paris Climate Agreement, and the next, you are researching on the

2015 budget of Zamfara State. Inexperience is not an excuse.

Second, the office is a learning organisation. Thus, it expects each of us to continually expand our capacity, continuously transform ourselves to achieve set targets, and nurture new patterns of thinking.

The office requires a lot of learning, unlearning and relearning and so, it is an interesting place for a young mind with a lot of curiosity. Indeed, there are no boundaries to the knowledge base that the office possesses and willingly offers.

Third, the NGF is particularly interested in our wellbeing which is surprising when compared to what obtains in other Nigerian establishments where the youth corps members are subjects of neglect. The NGF introduced us to the Education USA initiative (amongst others) and has been of great assistance to our academic and intellectual make up.

In conclusion, the Nigeria Governors' Forum is a great organisation. We acknowledge that no establishment is perfect, but the NGF comes pretty close because we have seen all the work that goes on here and all the good that comes forth from the office.

It is a place that any corps member would want to experience as it broadens the mind, enriches the soul and gives hope for a better tomorrow.



20 YEARS OF NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY: 1999-2019 AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL

be unwise to oversimplify such a complex issue. I, however, believe that two major things among others to fight and win the war on all form of insecurity is to focus on one side, on prevention through the battle of minds through education and engagement and on the other side build a superior security force that can contain all strands of enemies of peace and security.

The oxygen that helps criminals and terrorists stay alive is made up of the availability of an army of desperate, reckless and hopeless youths who do not see a future in legitimate society.

We need to stop this flow. We need to provide education and hope for these youths so that we can win them away from joining the flocks of those who want to harm us.

It is important to do all that we possibly can do to ensure that potential armies of criminals and terrorists feel they are better off been part of a legitimate society and not the illegal part of it. We must identify and engage idle hands so that they do not fall prey and become the devil's workshop.

Another important area of prevention is intelligence gathering. We need to shape our security system in a way that can intercept and foil plans, actions, groups and individuals that want to bring harm to us. We certainly need to better train, better equip and give better care to our servicemen and women who are currently largely understaffed, highly overworked and generally disillusioned.

Allow me to pay tribute to all our gallant officers and men of our security services, serving and those who have lost their lives in the service of our dear country.

Allow me to be a lawyer here and to say where the rule of law does not reign there will not only be chaos and danger but also that there can be supreme, no progress and prosperity.

The question of disrespect for the rule of law is one major problem that we have not been able to solve in the last 20 years.

There is a myth that Nigeria is ungovernable because of its many religions and languages. I do not believe it. It has become a cliché to say, "our diversity is our strength." Well, there is something to be said for clichés. I believe the reason this thought has been repeated so often is that it is true.

As I have traveled around the country, I have found that insights and answers can be found in all of our communities. The building blocks needed for the somewhat elusive common ground we seek as a nation already exists.

My emergence as the speaker of the house Representatives in 2011 is a case in point, where there was a consensus by the majority of members to support my candidature irrespective of political, religious and ethnic differences. Our varied backgrounds provide different ways of approaching problems and different perspectives, and this gives us enormous potential.

This is not to say that our differences are not real. One of the great challenges inherent to any democracy, but especially in a society as diverse as ours, is to ensure that representatives elected by the majority do not leave the members of minorities feeling that democracy is-- to quote one of your famous Oxford alums, Oscar Wilde-- 'the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people.'

As elected leaders, it is incumbent upon us to act for the benefit of ALL of our constituents, not only to listen but to demonstrate that we are listening.

A few suggestions are necessary here. The first is that a new electoral act that entrenches a foolproof electronic voting system and reduces the interference of security agencies in elections has become urgent. Secondly, Judicial

reform that enhances the independence of the judiciary is key to the sustenance of Nigeria's democracy. A situation where senior judicial officers can be removed almost whimsically leaves much to be desired. Thirdly, the appointment and removal of heads of security agencies, especially the Police, which is the central security organisation in a democracy should be made subject to Legislative approval. Fourthly, the zero-sum nature of Nigeria's politics needs to be revisited in such a way that the winner take all system is changed for a more inclusive system to eliminate extreme desperation to win elections.

Fifthly, as we reflect on the 20 years of democracy in Nigeria for the period 1999 and 2019, we must begin to refocus our attention to the electorate in terms of why and how their mandates matter. Delivery of good government has emerged as one of the central bases for democratic consolidation. If citizens feel that a government is working for them and totally committed to their interests and welfare it is easy to mobilize them for development. In this sense, the notion of mandate is linked to the authority vested in the elected representatives by the people to govern on their behalf. The link between the people and the election is that through the ballot box, they are able to confer or withdraw their support to a political party or candidate.

Lastly, the need for national unity, inclusive and fair approach to governance is a sure guarantee for democratic stability. At the end of the day, our fault lines and cleavages will be better managed where there is a sense of belonging by all groups within the nation.

To do so, we need to learn from our past, be bold enough to see and accept where we have gotten it wrong, understand the need to pull together our best minds in a bid to build a lasting fair, functional, truly representative and flexible institutions that work for All Nigerians.

I thank you very much.





TWENTY YEARS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN NIGERIA: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

By H.E. Dr. Kayode Fayemi, CON
Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria; Chairman, Nigeria Governors Forum

Protocols and Introductions

1. Let me start by expressing my gratitude to the leadership of the African Studies Centre, here at Oxford University - especially my good friend and brother, Prof. Wale Adebani, the Rhodes Professor of Race Relations, for the invitation to participate in this conference.

2. It is always refreshing to return from the blast furnace of Nigerian politics to the rarefied atmosphere of intellectual engagements. I am pleased to be here and to reconnect with kindred spirit from all over the world, including the keynote speaker for this conference Professor Larry Diamond, my teacher and friend.

3. The theme for this conference is a very important one. All over the world, democracy seems to be facing an existential crisis. In his latest book, *Ill Winds* (2019), Prof. Diamond captures the essence of this crisis. He writes,

"After three decades in which democracy was spreading and another in which it was stagnating and slowly eroding, we are now witnessing a global retreat from freedom. In every region of the world, autocrats are seizing the initiative, democrats are on the defensive, and the space for competitive politics and free expression is shrinking. Established democracies are facing relentless scandals, sweeping citizen disaffection, and existential threats to their survival."

4. There is no Nigerian exceptionalism to the picture painted by Professor Diamond, but the Nigerian picture exemplifies why democracy is a journey full of potholes, hills, valleys, undulating lands rather than a destination with a clear road-map.

5. In the period preceding Nigeria's transition to democracy in 1999, especially since the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, I spent my time literally at the barricades, seeking to democratise and humanise power in Nigeria. In the last decade, I have become one of many placed in positions of power, holding power in trust, and seeking to deploy power in the service of public good.



AFTER

AFTER THREE DECADES IN WHICH DEMOCRACY WAS SPREADING AND ANOTHER IN WHICH IT WAS STAGNATING AND SLOWLY ERODING, WE ARE NOW WITNESSING A GLOBAL RETREAT FROM FREEDOM

6. Therefore, in addressing the question of successes and failures of our democracy in the last two decades, my reflections this morning really centres around understanding the relationship between fighting against and fighting for. While much of what we did during the years in the democracy struggle was constructed as a struggle against unaccountable power, it was also a struggle for accountable power, a struggle for life, for liberty and for the pursuit of happiness - as the American credo would have it. Our resistance at the barricades was consequently not only to stop power from violating the commonwealth and the people's will, but also one geared towards putting it in the service of the common good to create a life more abundant.

7. The context and process of that journey to democratisation is however as important as the eventual outcome. Whether we agree about the successes and challenges, I believe our discussion this morning should not simply be one of transition from military rule to a political society, but the extent to which we are able to achieve full citizens' participation in our democracy. Our discussion should also focus on the making of leaders and citizens in a good society. Without active citizen participation, the legitimacy of our political institutions

will continue to decline.

8. For this reason, I believe strongly that political leaders -



...SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

be they politicians or activists - should worry because their ability to lead effectively is being seriously undermined by the desertion of the average citizens from the public space, deepening our crisis of legitimacy and empowering alternatives to democracy - especially populist demagoguery.

9. Yet this lack of legitimacy cuts both ways: when we the people withdraw our trust in leaders or discountenance politicians, we make our democratic institutions less effective and risk making ourselves ungovernable. In spite of the progress made so far in Nigeria, this risk cannot be over-emphasised. But, first - the context of our transition.

1999: False Dawn or Little Beginnings

10. While the elections of 1999 were generally welcomed both in Nigeria and abroad as a crucial turning point, the optimism in some quarters was more cautious. Considering our long history of military tyranny, it seemed prudent to emphasize the distinction between holding elections and implementing genuine democratization of structures and systems that had been shaped by totalitarian instincts for almost two decades.

11. At the time, I was personally of the view that real democratization would require more than voting; it would require a complete rethinking of how our society was organized. (Fayemi:1999). Yet, among the many qualities of democracy, free and fair elections is one of the most important. Without committing what scholars have described as the "fallacy of electoralism", we can say: no election, no democracy, and within that context, Nigerians were right to have embraced the exit of the military and the return of the ballot.

12. In any case, for the democracy movement at the time, it was a case of anything but the military. The assortment of activists and politicians mainly wanted the military out of power. The politics of taking over power was a secondary consideration. As such, the pro-democracy movement was in no shape to comply with the organizational demands of a nationwide campaign for power.

13. There were also genuine disagreements over the way forward by key elements of the movement. Some favoured entry into the field to contest for power in the post-military era. Others wanted a continued struggle to realize far-reaching constitutional reforms. While some opted out entirely, preferring to boycott the

transition process until their demands for deeper constitutional and structural changes were implemented.

14. Thus divided by significant disagreements on tactics and strategy, the movement could not reconstitute itself into an effective political actor. Moreover, at the end of military dictatorship,

the movement was too weak, exhausted by the stress of confrontation and the enormous toll that the struggle had taken, to really mount a realistic political challenge.

15. For these reasons, when the shape of the 4th Republic emerged, it seemed that those who had worked the most to enthrone democracy were sidelined while those that had been beneficiaries of and collaborators with military regimes took center stage. In hindsight, it may be said that the pro-democracy movement suffered from a lack of strategic definition in terms of articulating the next phase of the struggle. We were so pre-occupied with getting the military out of power that we did not have the time to devise appropriate tactical and strategic responses to that very eventuality.

16. In the event, the all-consuming haste to get the military out of power also framed some of the troubling birth defects of the 4th Republic, chief among which are the fact that the constitution - the guiding document of the republic was not generated through a popular democratic process but by a conclave that simply edited past constitutions.

17. Indeed, the 4th Republic commenced before anyone actu-



THE

POLITICS OF TAKING OVER POWER WAS A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION. AS SUCH, THE PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT WAS IN NO SHAPE TO COMPLY WITH THE ORGANIZATIONAL DEMANDS OF A NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN FOR POWER



...SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

ally saw the constitution. But at the time, the overriding imperative was to get the military out of power. Concerns about the provenance of the constitution were deemed obstructive or churlish worries that could prolong military rule. No one wanted to give the military an excuse to stay a day longer especially when the regime at the time was minded to make a swift exit.

18. The late Chief Bola Ige once observed that what occurred in 1999 was not a transition from military dictatorship to democracy but from military rule to civilian rule. By this, he meant that 1999 had not ushered in democratization in one blow but rather a phase of demilitarization that would ultimately lead to democracy. My own sense of the transition in 1999 was that it had been shaped significantly by the manner of Abacha's exit and the arrival of General Abdulsalam Abubakar who eventually handed over to the elected civilian government. The dominance of the ruling party's hierarchy by retired army generals and civilians with close links to military elites set the tone for party formation and resulted in an authoritarian presidential leadership rather than authentic democratic governance.

19. I have once argued that, in essence, the nature of the transition did not ensure a transformation of the political culture that would have led to a complete overhaul of our systems and structures; it merely effected a re-arrangement of the political space (Fayemi, 1999). The politico-cultural fundamentals that inform the conduct of elites remained the same. The widespread euphoria that accompanied the exit of the military and the entry of a civilian government prevented a sober appreciation of how entrenched the military had become in all aspects of Nigerian life. Many of the challenges that our democracy is experiencing now cannot be extricated from that complicated history and from the residue of its military provenance.

20. Regardless, it is important not to understate or devalue what occurred in 1999. A transition did happen. However lofty the expectations of the citizenry may have been regarding the advent of democracy, no realistic student of power dynamics could have imagined that democracy would flower so quickly in Nigeria given the long decades of military rule which had warped public consciousness and institutional instincts. It is, therefore, far more useful to see the 1999 transition as a case of humble beginnings and baby steps on the way to democratic maturity rather than a false dawn.

The Journey so far

21. The last two decades of democratisation in Nigeria has witnessed significant social, economic and political changes. Although the record is mixed and the debate rages on between 'Naija-optimists' and 'Naija-pessimists', there seems to be a more vibrant industry of 'Naija-pessimism' out there that leaves no room for

'Naija-realism'. Indeed, one often shudders at the various epithets used to describe the condition of the Nigerian state in political science and popular literature - failed, collapsed, incapable, pro-forma democracy, and add to this semi-democracy to mention but a few.

22. Both optimists and pessimists of the Nigerian condition focus on outcomes, linking these outcomes in a linear relationship with particular reforms and assuming static environments. The truth is that significant variations often exist in between these broad generalizations when we move away from outcomes and focus on the quality, texture, tenor and content of democratic and governance reform in Nigeria, in order not to warrant excessive cynicism or exaggerated optimism.

23. Equally, we must move away from a focus on judgments pegged to macro-reforms on big ticket issues - democratization, privatization, anti-corruption, insecurity - that we try to measure in large, dramatic shifts. Opportunities to accelerate change and strengthen governance structures are often missed in the context of this almost exclusive macro/country level focus.

24. Worse, this focus may deepen the challenges inherent in the process of change, by discounting the significance in all instances of partial reforms. Rather than focus on dramatic reform or revolutionary change, it is important to understand that social change in Africa requires a longer term perspective not amenable to the typical binaries of success and failure. What has become clear to close watchers of political reform in the last two decades is that while macro-level/country level analyses are important, it is the complex mix of evolving factors at more micro-levels that also determine outcomes.

25. Most times, scholars of democratization ignore partial reform, inconclusive contests, transition reversals and democratic subversions, failing to recognize that failure in one instance may result in more enduring reforms. Such analyses focus on wholesome macro-transitions while ignoring changes in bits, parts or segments of the sub-national systems.

26. The dialectics of reform in Nigeria, and indeed in the whole of Africa has demonstrated in the last two decades that rarely does transformation come from a single, big shift but rather as a cumulative effect of small, incremental shifts and improvements. In this vein, societal transformation in the past two decades of our democratization has led to the emergence of new social forces, changed the importance of others and consequently altered the relationships among various social and political actors.

27. So, to different degrees and with different forms of agency - people are engaging, or if we like, confronting the state and insisting, both in violent and peaceful ways, that the state must respond to society. What the concept and practices of democratic reform have also alerted us to, in very complex ways are the fundamental ways in which government is only one of the actors, even if the most critical actor, in governance.

**REGARDLESS,
IT IS
IMPORTANT
NOT TO
UNDERSTATE
OR DEVALUE
WHAT
OCCURRED
IN 1999. A
TRANSITION
DID HAPPEN.**

CONTINUES ON PAGE 26



ZAMFARA FIRST LADY HAJIA AISHA BELLO MUHAMMAD



Hajia Aisha Bello Muhammad (MON) (Matawalle Maradun) was born on 19th January in that beautiful year into the family of late Ahmad Mohammad Grima (Sarki Abuja), a renowned businessman and Ambassador of Peace from Borno State.

One can tell by the woman she has become that she's not just schooled but very well brought up.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

She attended new Capital School Asokoro for primary education while secondary education was at Community Secondary School/ TITSAL Abuja where she emerged the best graduating student in Further Mathematics and Chemistry.

She is also tutored in Alrahaman Islamic School, Abuja and is no doubt a good Islamic scholar.

Holding a diploma in Information Technology Networking and Computer, her hunger for further education took her to Skyline University at the United Arab Emirates (Dubai), where she later transferred to Nile-Turkish Abuja to obtain her BSc in Business Information System in the year 2015 after which she proceeded to Kaduna State for the compulsory National Youth Service Corp (NYSC). She however emerged as one of the best corps members due her commitment on the issue of women and children which was her pure Community Development Service (CDS).

MARITAL BACKGROUND:

The not only beautiful but very intelligent Aisha is happily married to His Bello Muhammad, MON, (Matawalle Maradun), the Executive Governor of Zamfara State. The marriage was contracted in the year 2013 and has so far blossomed. She is today a great support pillar as the Zamfara State First Lady to her husband and his government. She has taken up many laudable projects which includes the Zamfara

Women Empowerment Scheme that is currently ongoing.

HOBBIES: Hajia Aisha Bello Muhammad, Mon, (Matawalle Maradun) loves many sporting activities, but her best hobby is human development. She derives joy in touching lives hence her quest to rewrite the story of Zamfara Women and Children as regards Empowerment and Education.

Prior to her emergence as the First Lady of Zamfara State, She had partnered with many NGOs to impacts on the lives of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Abuja and Borno State.



MRS. RACHEL UMAHI: BRINGING SUCCOUR TO EBONYI INDIGENES

The Wife of the Governor of Ebonyi State, Her Excellency Chief Mrs. Rachel Umahi, has been Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation is the pet project of the amiable wife of Ebonyi State Governor.

The Foundation, which was inaugurated on the 30th of June 2015, has since become the breadwinning platform and long expected hope for indigent widows, the weak in society, orphans and vulnerable children. The foundation is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation has four thematic areas. They are health, education, empowerment and women liberation.

Because the fulcrum of living is good health and only a healthy citizenry make a healthy society, the Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation has identified maternal health and child survival as challenging areas to address urgently. Issues of breast and cervical cancer, fistula, prolapse, mal nutrition, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and immunization are common problems particularly, among the rural and poor illiterate.

In February this year, Chief Mrs. Rachel Umahi hosted a team from USAID led by the Deputy Chief of Party. In that team was Dr. Habib Sadauki, the Country Executive Director of Fistula Care Plus Project. The major thrust of discussion was prevention and treatment of fistula and prolapse. She has hosted many other international NGOs. Similarly on the 14th of March 2016, Chief Mrs. Rachel Umahi flagged off a free cervical cancer screening exercise for all Ebonyi women with the support of Joyce John Foundation. On Tuesday 5th July 2016, the foundation in collaboration with UNFPA flagged off an aggressive campaign against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation is currently canvassing for support among relevant agencies and stakeholders on other health issues that concern children and women.

Girl child education and schools drop out among teenagers are of great concern to this NGO. The foundation led by its vision bearer Chief Mrs Rachel Umahi has carried out advocacy to traditional rulers, local government administrators and opinion leaders to address matters of gender rights and equal opportunity for all. The concern is to ensure that the girl child is given adequate education before marriage.

Again, the foundation is working with experts to know why there is increasing schools dropout among teenagers. Already, the foundation has sadly discovered that teenagers who drop out from schools are immediate tools for deviant behavior in society. Perhaps that is why cultism, kidnapping and armed robbery is on the increase.

Through the Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation, young ones are being supported in diverse ways to encourage them not just to read, but to take education very seriously. Systematic designs for



G

**IRL CHILD
EDUCATION
AND
SCHOOLS
DROP OUT
AMONG
TEENAGERS
ARE OF
GREAT
CONCERN TO
THIS NGO**

proper grooming and mentoring are adopted. Some of the immediate support includes constant distribution of learning materials and counseling.

Moreover, identifying indigent children in dire need is key to the programme.

To address poverty and provide relief, skills acquisition programmes are currently provided across the local government areas of Ebonyi State. Through this programme, women and youths particularly girls, are taught different skills for empowerment. For the women particularly, skills acquired will enable them support their families.

Part of the empowerment, is in assisting adult women who are interested to acquire education. There is healthy collaboration with the State Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education. Many women who could not acquire education at their younger age are now given opportunity

The constraint of developing countries such as ours where many women seem to be living in bondage is quite instructive. Their voices are not heard either socially or politically even though they constitute a significant population. Many women have worked so hard to earn a place in decision making process, but are hardly given opportunity for leadership. To break this jinx, the Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation advocates for women and also encourages them to aspire to the peak of their career. The foundation works with professional women and groups who will help bring out women from their cocoons with a view to giving them a voice, liberate them and empower them for socio-economic and political assignments.

With the approval and support of His Excellency, Engr. Chief David Umahi, many Ebonyi women are today holding sensitive political and administrative positions.

Determined to succeed in the face of challenges, Her Excellency, Chief Mrs. Rachel Umahi knows that she cannot go it alone. She knows that she needs a lot of technical and financial support to achieve the purpose of her office and the mandate of her pet project the Family Succour and Upliftment Foundation. Because of this, Chief Mrs. Rachel Umahi has paid advocacy to most of the international NGOs, ministries and agencies that work directly on maternal health, child survival and youth and women empowerment.

The office of the wife of Ebonyi State governor has continued to organize various activities for widows, the youth, orphans and vulnerable children alongside other groups. The governor's wife has visited widows in their homes, comforted those hit by tragedy, visited orphanages and hospitals where she paid hospital bills for indigent patients who were held back after treatment because they could not settle their bills among many others.



...SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

28. It would be grossly inaccurate to say that Nigeria has not made progress since 1999. We live in a far greater conducive climate of freedom than those of us who came of age during military rule can recall. There is generally more respect for civil liberties and human rights. The demilitarization of politics has widened the space within which democratic reforms are occurring. Those who are profoundly pessimistic about the Nigerian enterprise continually cite the absence of economic dividends which might serve to “validate” democracy in the eyes of ordinary Nigerians as a major risk to the sustainability of democracy. And there is no question that democracy must deliver concrete development – qualitative and quantitative.

29. In times past however, the mismanagement of the economy by democratic regimes was cited by military adventurers who seized power from civilian governments. Arguably, the period between 1983 and 1999 served to dispel the myth that military dictatorships were better economic managers than democratic governments.

30. More importantly, the reward for democracy is yet more democracy. Proper economic policy which embodies the hopes and aspirations of the people can only be forged in the furnace of a widening democratic space and a revival of the lost democratic art of public conversation. Perhaps the major problem with 1999 and the disenchantment with the pace of change since then is perceptual.

31. We need a shift in consciousness from the inflated and fantastic expectations

of a democratic destination to a wayfaring mindset that interprets our condition at any point in time in evolutionary terms as a continuing struggle. We have to reject the agonizing generalizations of Nigerian life that casts a blanket of stagnation over every sector. The notion that nothing has changed since 1999 and that things have in fact grown worse is cynical, misleading and self-defeating. They are also discouraging to many conscientious and patriotic Nigerians in public service, private sector and civil society who have committed themselves to rebuilding the Nigerian nation.

32. From the tone of negative reportage about Nigeria, one would think that such Nigerians do not exist, but they do! The fact is that there are pockets of progress all over the country where change-minded Nigerians have opted to light candles instead of merely cursing the darkness. Over the past decade, the quality of those at the forefront of politics has also improved. There are more progressive-minded actors in the field. That quality and quantity can be expected to rise in the coming years.

33. There are places where transformations in the way we live and govern ourselves are proceeding quietly, slowly and steadily despite the odds. The elephant in the room is really the need to ask if anything would significantly improve, even with the best of intentions and an increase in the number of reform minded patriots in our political space.

It's Still the Structure, Stupid!!!

34. What the current challenges that our democracy is experiencing speaks to the utmost understanding of democracy as a permanent work in progress. Few statements exemplify this better than the American mantra of making “a more perfect union.” If the United States, a nation forged out of common purpose and common consent, perpetually seeks to make a more perfect union, it is evident that the task of nation building will be far more daunting in a state created without the consent of the people and imposed by colonial power.

**WE NEED A SHIFT IN
CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THE
INFLATED AND FANTASTIC
EXPECTATIONS OF A DEMOCRATIC
DESTINATION TO A WAYFARING
MINDSET THAT INTERPRETS OUR
CONDITION AT ANY POINT IN TIME
IN EVOLUTIONARY TERMS AS A
CONTINUING STRUGGLE**





...SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

35. It is even more dismaying if such a state has not succeeded in re-making itself by re-negotiating the basis of its fundamental national association. The structural deformities of the Nigerian federation have circumscribed many possibilities for our state and our country as a whole. It is very difficult to sustain good governance at the national level in Nigeria because of the structural fatalities that have held her hostage.

36. The over-concentration of powers in the federal-centre must yield to decentralisation of power and devolution of authority. Therefore, a fundamental restructuring of the Nigerian federation is an unavoidable step for the creation and sustenance of a participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive national governance and one that is based on respect for the rule of law. I am convinced that this can, and will definitely happen in Nigeria and some point in the near future.

37. This is why our Party - the All Progressives Congress (APC) - included "restructuring" in our manifestoe for the 2015 and 2019 general elections, and have been working towards it. With this, I believe the question of deepening democracy and enhancing development will be largely resolved. Nigeria cannot achieve this without an honest national conversation and resolution by Nigerians to come together as one people sharing a common destiny.

38. The fundamental restructuring of Nigeria will address key questions of political transformation; such issues as the writing of a people's constitution and the question of constitutional governance, the fundamental precepts or authorising principles of national togetherness, citizenship and the nationality question, the political economy of federalism, including the allocation of public revenue, security sector governance, human rights, social justice, minority rights, electoral system, type of government - parliamentary or presidential, proportional representation, e.t.c.

False Dichotomies - Civil Society Vs Political Society

39. My personal odyssey that led me from activism to public service informs my sense of our democracy as a journey and a struggle. I had returned from exile in 1999 discerning that a new phase of activism required a more direct engagement at home with the new dispensation. My work focused on building bridges between the government and civil society that would enable the national leadership benefit from the talents and ideas of citizens within and outside the country.

40. In time, however, I became convinced that the efforts required to reform the system are not necessarily the same as the efforts necessary to transform it. I faced two choices. I could remain on the sidelines as it were with my engagement restricted to a theoretical and low-risk involvement in the unfolding dynamics of power and politics in my country. Or I could become an actor in the political system, attaining a more practical understanding of what it would take to effect transformation, and thereby function as an agent of change from within the system. I opted for the latter as I had no intention of remaining on the sidelines as an eternal critic of the system.

41. In 2005, I decided to run for public office and announced my candidacy for the governorship of Ekiti State, Nigeria. My journey to that office, beginning with my being at the receiving end of chicanery unprecedented even by Nigerian standards in the 2007 elections, through a protracted le-



gal battle to reclaim my mandate and an election rerun which I won, were an invaluable education in the byzantine ways and means of Nigerian politics.

42. It took three and a half years of legal proceedings before my electoral mandate was restored by the courts. It however did not end there; the electoral robbers and their collaborators had the effrontery to institute a most ridiculous case at the Supreme Court challenging my governorship. This case was decided six whole years after the substantive election was held!

43. Despite the onerous difficulties involved in my own struggle, I am resolute in my conviction that Nigeria belongs to those who are prepared to stand up, stand firm and take control of their destinies. 'It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped', many would recall the words of Senator Robert Kennedy to the University of Cape Town students in 1966 and many of those students joined the ranks of those who made change possible in South Africa.

44. Our young democracy can only be enhanced by testing our institutions to their limits. My case, its protracted nature notwithstanding, suggested that there are embers of hope for our democracy that have to be stoked by the discipline of committed and focused engagement. Troubled and corrupt as our judicial system is, we are witnessing increasing evidence of significant judicial activism in the country, with



...SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES



very positive outcomes across board.

Implications of Political Economy of Oil in Nigeria
45. I would like to make a brief remark on the economic structure of the Nigerian state and its political imperatives on the outcome of progress in the last two decades. As previous speakers had noted, the political economy of oil in Nigeria has had the most profound implications on the governance structure, political culture and national crisis. Many have fervently argued that the structural imbalance in the socio-political systems of Nigeria can be traced to the politics of oil wealth and its distribution. Some have opined, perhaps rightly so, that the quest to be at the command center of the oil money is at the roots of most crisis in Nigeria. It is also suggested to be the motivation for the promotion and opposition to the call for restructuring in certain quarters.

46. The political economy of oil in Nigeria has en-

sured that there is a general culture of entitlement, cake-sharing syndrome, vulnerable and volatile economic atmosphere in terms of economic stability as a result of unpredictable international prices of crude and indeed, the politics of violent arms struggle as a weapon of blackmail for economic gains. The entire political structure of Nigeria is built on the rent-seeking opportunity that oil wealth provides. There are endless agitations for more bureaucratic institutions as a way of making the bulk to go round and an unrelenting class struggle to have a bite of the cherry.

47. This has gravely impacted on our optimal performance as a democratic nation; as it has entrenched violent electoral culture (what is called do-or die politics), corruption in all the sectors of the nation and hindered the adoption of transformative economic policies that have lifted investments in the nation's economy. It has also led to the underperformance of the sub-national government and in fact, aided general resistance to needed socio-political and nn economic reforms that could have led to quicker economic prosperity for the nation.

48. As it would be expected, prosperity without productivity would only happen in an economy where rent-seeking is the order of the day. The last two decades of democratic experience has showed that the political economy of Nigeria is built around allocation and prebendal patronage. The nation has witnessed mind-boggling theft of public funds and the frittering of the commonwealth by the past administrations. Therefore, the problems of electoral violence, sectarian attacks, ethnic agitations and other enablers of national instability are all traceable to the politics of economic control of the nation's oil wealth.

49. We absolutely must begin to interrogate a grand bargain that would allow for more focused collaborative work on growing the non-oil economy. The current administration has made some progress in this regard with increased focus on priority sectors such as Agriculture and Mining, but clearly we still have a long way to go.

Conclusion

IF

**WE HAVE
DEMOCRATIC
PROCESSES THAT
ARE INCLUSIVE
ENOUGH, THE ISSUE
OF 'PROBLEMATIC
SPOUSES' THAT
KEEP BEING OUR
REFERENCE POINT
CAN BE ADDRESSED
IN VARIOUS WAYS**

50. What we established in 1999 is the right to choose our leaders via the ballot. What we must not do is assume a teleological link between elections and democracy. The notion that once you have elections, all else will follow is no doubt a pipe dream that is now obvious to all and even now there is nothing irreversible about democracy in Nigeria.

51. It's also why our theory of change must not assume that democracy is a destination with a clear road-map. The deepening of other factors like the economic well-being of the citizens is a necessary enabler of democratic consolidation. Ultimately, developing and strengthening the political culture or the civic community that can stand between populism and dogma is the most critical success factor.

52. A cursory look at our current electoral journey in the last two decades clearly point to elements of consolidation and deepening of our democracy but other aspects of the journey raises serious concern. For example, in 2015, we crossed a major turning point with the first alternation of power since 1999. Political science literature regards this as a clear evidence of democratic consolidation. In that same election cycle, the opposition - APC - won election in two thirds of the 36 governorship elections wrestling power from PDP in no fewer than 12 states. In

fact, PDP managed to retain only two governorships in the entire northern region of 19 states - Gombe and Taraba.

53. By 2019, although the APC retained the Presidency and gained Kwara and Gombe states, it lost six critical governorships in Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Imo, Oyo and Zamfara states and nearly lost the most populous state - Kano - which went into a re-run. In the 29 states where elections held in 2019, APC won in only 15 while PDP won 14 - a much



...SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

closer contest than the picture often painted.

54. Clearly, the Elections management body is improving in the technical aspects of its operations but elections are not simply technocratic, they are inherently political. It is about who gains power, who loses power and who wants power back, and a lot happens in that cocktail. But we all should also be worried with what we do with power, once gained.

55. So, democracy is more than just the ability to choose one's leaders. Again, as Prof. Diamond argues in his latest book, *Ill Winds*, its means:

“strong protection for basic liberties, such as freedom of the press, association, assembly, belief and religion; the fair treatment of racial and cultural minorities; a robust rule of law; in which all citizens are equal under the law and no one is above it; an independent judiciary to uphold that principle, trust-worthy law enforcement institutions to check the potential for high government officials to behave corruptly; and a lively civil society made up of independent associations, social movements...”

56. The current phase of the struggle is therefore not just about maintaining the sanctity of the ballot but also holding those elected accountable and stimulating civic engagement in the public realm, in a way that democratizes ownership and improve the quality of life of our people. We must banish the idea that governance is something performed by a team of gifted performers or strong men, while the rest of the citizens are mere spectators or complainers.

57. During the days of military rule, some soldiers declared with more than a touch of hubris that politics is much too important to be left to politicians. By this they meant that the military had the right to be political players since politicians had generally proven inept. Ultimately, the military proved to be no better at politics and governance themselves.

58. But there is a fundamental truth to the saying that politics is too important to be left to politicians. It is about redefining politics itself, transforming it from a rarefied craft reserved for a select few professional politicians, to the protocols and relationships that undergird personal, communal and social well-being. In other words, politics is the management of human relationships, interactions and aspirations in the service of the common good. It is not something mysterious that only “politicians” do; it is how citizens operate. Politics is a civic responsibility. It is how we engage with each other. The pursuit of good govern-



DURING THE DAYS OF MILITARY RULE, SOME SOLDIERS DECLARED WITH MORE THAN A TOUCH OF HUBRIS THAT POLITICS IS MUCH TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LEFT TO POLITICIANS

ance means that politicians can no longer be left to their own devices.

59. Seen in this light, the mutual estrangement of government and civil society will end. The civil society will continue to express the communal instinct to regulate power but the chronic antagonism that poisons relations between the state and civil society will be replaced by mutual respect and positive tension. Civic engagement means that the state can access a much larger pool of wisdom and knowledge made available by a new rapport with civil society. In return, participatory governance will become much more practicable across all levels of governance.

60. Before we arrive at that new rapport between the state and society, we must work hard to address a lingering threat, a carry-over from the days of military rule. The biggest challenge facing us as democrats is to rebuild trust between the state and society. The relationship between both spheres is often needlessly adversarial owing to a lack of trust. Simply put, Nigerians do not trust their governments and this has made it difficult, indeed in some cases, impossible, to build mass citizen movements for a fuller democratic engagement.

61. Residual distrust of power feeds apathy, disinterest and cynical disengagement. The people distrust their governments but not enough to actively check them and avert excesses of power. Rather, they distrust them so much that they desert the state and many simply do not care enough about the public realm. This indifference is dangerous for democracy. Democratic institutions cannot survive or be strengthened in a climate of antipathy nor can politicians long retain their legitimacy under such circumstances. If the price of a free society is eternal vigilance, then apathy will carry a severe penalty for our republic.

62. Yet looking back on two decades of democratisation in Nigeria, it is instructive to note that only civic movements mobilised in the context of larger patriotic interests can overwhelm the forces of impunity. It is the discipline of civic engagement that will keep at bay those who wish to turn back the hands of the clock and return us to the dark days of totalitarian rule. The struggle we are engaged in is dedicated to making this democracy truly a government of the people, for the people and by the people, and by so doing honour the memory of all those who paid the supreme sacrifice pursuant of our



ADMISSIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE IN NIGERIAN COURTS

By Chijioke Chuku, Esq



Information technology and communications have merged in a way that has rapidly changed the way transactions and relationships are conducted globally, so much so that the truism 'no longer business as usual' can no longer be considered a mere cliché.

Businesses are now consummated electronically, and transactions are concluded, recorded and reported on electronic or technological platforms. This has in no small way aided the rise of global commerce and the courts have now keyed into the electronic cum digital age by recognizing and admitting electronically generated documents and other forms of evidence.

Digital or electronic evidence refers to any probative information stored or transmitted in digital form that a party to a court case may use at trial. Electronic evidence has assumed a very important position in the adjudication of disputes or cases, criminal or civil. Anything done on the computer or the internet usually leaves traces or digital footprints which can serve as evidence in legal proceedings. Electronic evidence can therefore aid the investigation and solving of crimes by law enforcement agents. All this is possible because we are living in an age where most of the things hitherto done manually are now done on computers, computer-like devices, or with the aid of computers and computer network.

The Nigerian lawyer, to be competent and relevant in the

D

**IGITAL OR
ELECTRONIC
EVIDENCE
REFERS TO ANY
PROBATIVE
INFORMATION
STORED OR
TRANSMITTED
IN DIGITAL
FORM THAT
A PARTY TO A
COURT CASE
MAY USE AT
TRIAL.**

scheme of things, ought to be sufficiently literate in the technical issues regarding electronic evidence so as to understand and make use of electronic evidence. Since the enactment of the Evidence Act of 2011, Nigerian courts have frequently had to confront thorny issues regarding the treatment of evidence generated from computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices. The thorn in the judicial flesh is the question and scope of admissibility.

Although section 84 governs admissibility of electronic evidence, the courts have adopted differing, sometimes conflicting, approaches to the application and interpretation of this section. How can bench and bar establish the correct position of the law and attain a modicum of certainty, guidance, and predictive lawyering?

The Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), as part of its contribution to effective public sector governance held a workshop on electronic evidence for State Counsel from across the country. This workshop began on 12th November 2019 and ended on 26th November 2019.

The Workshop, which assembled leading subject-matter experts from the judiciary, the practising bar and the learned academia deepened the understanding of the dynamics around this vital and trending subject, a fact attested to by feedback from participants.



NGF TRAINS JOURNALISTS ON BUDGET TRACKING, INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

The Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), in partnership with Premium Times Services Limited, recently conducted training for reporters covering the activities of the Forum and select journalists from across the 36 states of the federation.

The training focus was on budget tracking and data-driven journalism, as well as introducing participants to activities and achievements of the NGF as a policy hub. Aside capacity building for the journalists to report more competently on governance and development, a key objective of the workshop was to improve relationship between the media and the Forum. The training took place on November 7th and 8th, 2019 at the Forum's secretariat. A total of 40 participants attended the workshop, out of a total of 51 invited. The training was declared opened by the Director General of the NGF, Mr. Asishana Okauru.

Thirteen (13) technical sessions were held facilitated by experts in the field during the course of the two days the training lasted. The training was participatory and the journalists were particularly bemused by the operations of the NGF and areas of policy support the Forum offers to states. Participants made case for extension of the training to their colleagues, especially those reporting in states, in order to bridge knowledge gap and promote excellence.

Media is an important tool for interface between those in position of leadership and the governed. It is also a barometer which gauges public reaction to policies and perception about issues. It can also be used to feel the pulse and get feedback from the public. This important role of the media as a go-between makes it imperative that those in the media are adequately informed to be able to perform that role creditably. It is in this light that Premium Times Services Limited proposed to the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) a training workshop for journalists to bring them up to speed on modern ethical ways journalism.

The topics were chosen based on relevance to contemporary practice of journalism and global trends. In view of increasing phenomenon of fake news, the training was planned to give emphasis on evidence based reporting, dealing with fake news and media ethics. The training was also thought as an opportunity to give the journalists insights into the activities of the NGF, for them to be better informed and report about the forum and the governors from a position of knowledge. The prop-

osition was made in 2018 but because of some challenges faced by the Secretariat, and elections in the early part of 2019, it could not be held until this month. Participants Premium Times team worked with the Media and Publicity unit of the NGF Secretariat in drawing up list of participants. The Secretariat provided a list of 19 journalists covering the NGF activities, while 32 other participants were invited from across states of the federation with special emphasis was given to reporters from state-owned media organisations.

A total of 40 participants made it to the training, with very wide representation among state-owned and private media organisations. Modules and Faculty A total of thirteen (13) technical sessions were slated for the training, aside welcome speeches and keynote address. The modules were drawn out to introduce participants to the basic principles of modern day journalism driven by data and evidence.

It also include sessions on using online tools for research on stories, 1 and understanding the budgeting process. This is in addition to sessions about NGF's works in the areas of governance and revenue drive as well as the health sector. The trainers for were among the best in the field, with vast experience in media practice and training. They include experts in journalism like Dapo Olorunyomi and Musikilu Mojeed; a budget and procurement expert, Stanley Achonu; an expert on data journalism and digital tools, Joshua Olufemi; media security professional, Peter Nkanga, among others. The NGF also provided some of its best led by the Executive Director (Administration and Finance), Mr Abubakar Jibia, Senior Economist, Mr David Nabena; and the Health Team.





Zenith Bank **SME Facility**

Beauty | Confectionery | FitFam

Grow your business with a Zenith Bank SME Facility for the Beauty, Confectionery and FitFam industries, at only

9% per annum



Terms and conditions apply

Bank the Eazy way with ***966#**
EazyBanking



For enquiries and feedback, kindly contact **ZenithDirect**, our 24hr interactive Contact Centre:

+234 1 278 7000, +234 1 292 7000, 0700ZENITHBANK
zenithdirect@zenithbank.com

www.zenithbank.com