

The Executive

...AN NGF MONTHLY PUBLICATION

Vol.3. No. 50 April & May 2023 editions



SUMMARY



2023 Induction *Special*



**New Govs
on the block**



All the news at the 2023 Induction

Omnibus is the most appropriate word to describe this edition of the Governors' magazine of choice for improved governance and elevated performance discourse. This time around, the edition contains messages that convey the activities that steer the lives of the citizenry in a most impactful and positive way. Lately, the Primary Healthcare Challenge has been trending. It is a signature initiative of UNICEF, that amplifies healthcare delivery in the country. UNICEF works in the world's toughest places to help people survive. It is partnering the NGF, led in the Health Sector by the Forum's Health Advisor, Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab. The NGF Health Section is in partnership with not just UNICEF, but also the BMGF, The Dangote Foundation and several others all designed to provide decent and affordable healthcare to the man on the streets. This collaboration is displayed here before the winners of the PHC Challenge are unveiled at the NGF Induction. Along the line you would read how 6.2m children were left unvaccinated during the Covid era.

The best healthcare delivery options for all, at the subnational level, is the NGF's goal. The coverage of Health and the other sectors in its six core

mandate areas is pronounced in this issue, featuring Education, the Economy, Agriculture, Infrastructure and Security areas that are at the heart of the NGF's interventions. Donor agencies have shown not just progress but also trusts the NGF to deliver on its campaigns, see the pages for examples.

As an induction edition, the Executive Summary has tried to touch on most of the issues in many states. Some incoming governors are featured, and what's more, you can read about the impressive lives of the distinguished invitees, either as Speakers or panelists. They range from Former or serving Governors. Technocrats, diplomats, or captains of industry. The activities covered by this issue is a pointer that there will be no dull moment at the Induction.

The Mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, who will be visiting Africa for the first time, is a guest of the Induction. Read about his political trajectory and the methods he adopted to fight crime in NYC digitally. McAuliffe, who served as governor of Virginia from 2014 to 2018, is also featured in this edition. McAuliffe prioritizes access to quality health care, housing and educational

opportunities, which eminently qualifies him to speak at the NGF induction because his priorities tally firmly with the core mandate areas of the NGF. McAuliffe has said he would require vaccines for students, teachers and health care workers and would support businesses that imposed mandates.

Quite impressively, McAuliffe believes in the need for affordable health care, wants to lower prescription drug costs, end gun violence and move Virginia toward clean energy while promoting green jobs. He is the real deal. Listen to him speak at the induction.

Also inside is the profile of the man whose ideas are moving Kenya to a middle income economy by 2030, Professor Peter Anyang Nyong'o and Governor of the Kisumu County of Kenya. As a Kenyan Minister of National Planning and Development he implemented, albeit successfully, a Kenyan blueprint for poverty reduction strategy and wealth creation. Hear him speak and be inspired.

Finally, this omnibus edition combines both the April and May editions of the Executive Summary. It is a must read.

THE TEAM

Director-General
Asishana B. **OKAURU**
Executive Director (Fin & Admin)
Abubakar **JIBIA**
Executive Director (Res & Str)
Abdullateef **SHITTU**
Director Media & Public Affairs
Abdulrazaque **BELLO-BARKINDO**

Snr. Publications Officer
Halima S. **AHMED**
Social Media Officer
Isioma N. **Ononye**
NGF Health Advisor
Dr. Ahmad **ABDULWAHAB**
Agric. Economist
Bunmi **AKANBI**

Senior Economist
Abdulaziz **OLORUNISHOLA**
Senior Librarian
Naomi **UBOGU**
Research
Imogen **Ilamah**
IT
Bassi **HEMAN**

Ubong **ESSIEN**
Photo Editor
Saeed **SANUSI**
Director Legal
Chijioke **CHUKU**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<p>02 COMMENTARY: ALL THE NEWS AT THE 2023 INDUCTION</p>		<p>04/05 MATERNAL MORTALITY: 82,000 NIGERIAN WOMEN DIE YEARLY FROM PREGNANCY- RELATED COMPLICATIONS – UNICEF</p>	<p>06 WHO ADVOCATES BROADENING OF 'ONE HEALTH' PROGRAMME</p>	<p>07 NIGERIA RECORDS 447 SUSPECTED CHOLERA CASES – NCDC</p> 		
<p>08 NTDS: NGO EXECUTES 1,400 FREE SURGERIES IN 6 STATES</p>		<p>09 HEALTH INSURANCE: AUTHORITY TO FINE-TUNE 237,000 PTAD PENSIONERS' ENROLLMENT</p>		<p>10 MENINGITIS KILLS 52 PERSONS IN 21 STATES IN NIGERIA</p> 		
	<p>11 ADELEKE RECALLS SUSPENDED OSUN HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME BOSS</p>	<p>12/13 FOOD FOR THOUGHT</p>			<p>14 HOW NHIA, ROCHE GAVE 55 CANCER PATIENTS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, INNOVATIVE TREATMENT</p>	<p>15 UNILORIN GYNAECOLOGIST: CERVICAL CANCER KILLS 28 NIGERIAN WOMEN DAILY</p> 
<p>18-19 AS PHC MoU STATES PLAN FOR 2023</p>		<p>30 JUST CALL ME MALLAM DIKKA RADDA</p>		<p>31 DOMESTIC FOOD PRICES REMAIN HIGH – WORLD BANK</p> 		
	<p>32/33 WORKERS WILL MISS YOU – LABOUR TELLS UGWUANYI</p>	<p>34-36 WE SHALL REPOSITION EKSU FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE – OYEBANJI</p>			<p>37 KADUNA GOVT REINSTATES 1,288 SACKED PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS</p>	<p>38 WIKE SAYS "I WILL BOW OUT A FULFILLED MAN"</p> 
<p>39 LAGOS DEPUTY GOV. TASKS PARENTS ON GOOD CHILD REARING FOR A BETTER NATION</p>		<p>40 MY DOORS ALWAYS OPEN – BAYO LAWAL, OYO DEP GOV.</p>		<p>41 THE SECURITY VOTES MUST SECURE THE PEOPLE</p>	<p>42 TAXES AS KEY TO NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT</p> 	
	<p>43 GENDER INCLUSION: MIA CARTHUR FOUNDATION, KOGI GOVT BAG 2023 AFRICAN SABRE PR AWARDS</p>	<p>44 WORLD BANK SAYS 850M PEOPLE LACK PROOF OF IDENTITY WORLDWIDE</p> 		<p>45 GANDUJIE BEGS FOR FORGIVENESS, SAYS "I'VE FORGIVEN THOSE WHO WRONGED ME"</p>	<p>46 EX-ANAMBRA GOV. MBADINJUJU DIES AT 78, SOLUDO MOURNS</p> 	
<p>48/49 THE NATIONAL PLAN ON FINANCING SAFE SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA</p>		<p>50 ONDO GOVT. DISTRIBUTES RELIEF MATERIALS TO RAINSTORM VICTIMS IN AKURE</p>		<p>51 HOW HEALTHCARE CRISIS INFORMED BILL TO LEGISLATE MIGRATION OF WORKERS – LAWMAKER</p>	<p>52/53 700 INDIGENT WOMEN, CHILDREN GET FREE MEDICAL CARE IN ABUJA</p> 	
	<p>54 ANAMBRA RATES HIGHEST IN CHILDHOOD TUBERCULOSIS</p>	<p>55 ANY CS PROCEDURES CAN BE AVOIDED WITH TRADITIONAL MEDICINE – TBA</p> 		<p>56 UNICEF TO WORK WITH CHIPS AGENTS TO INCREASE AWARENESS ON IMMUNISATION</p>	<p>57 OVER 600,000 CHILDREN NOT IMMUNIZED IN KANO, OTHERS – UNICEF</p> 	
<p>58 FLOODING: UNICEF, NOA TRAIN VOLUNTEERS, HEALTH EDUCATORS ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS</p>		<p>59 NURSES, MIDWIVES LAMENT EXCLUSION FROM 40 PER CENT PAY RISE FOR FG WORKERS</p>		<p>60 WHO ESTIMATES 6.2M NIGERIAN CHILDREN UNVACCINATED DUE TO COVID-19</p> 	<p>62 ERADICATING MALARIA IN NIGERIA</p> 	
	<p>64 EARTH DAY: ENVIRONMENTALISTS CALL FOR SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>66 OGUN GOVT SET TO DEPLOY GAS- PROPELLED MASS TRANSIT VEHICLES</p> 		<p>68 ZULUM IN MALAM-FATORI, APPROVES ARMOURED CARRIERS, PATROL VEHICLES FOR SOLDIERS</p>	<p>69 OTTI NAMES ONYENKPA, OMOIGUI, OTEH, OTHERS AS TRANSITION COUNCIL MEMBERS</p> 	
<p>70 TAMBUWAL NAMES 28-MEMBER TRANSITION COMMITTEE</p>		<p>75 SANWO-OLU PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR</p>		<p>76/77 ANAMBRA'S PATH TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE 2023 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS</p>		<p>79 I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR QUALITY EDUCATION LEGACY – OBASEKI</p> 

Maternal Mortality:

82,000 Nigerian women die yearly from pregnancy-related complications – UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has said that about 82,000 Nigerian women die yearly from complications from pregnancy or childbirth in the country.

It broke it down to 225 women dying every day from maternal mortality, which requires urgent action from the Federal Government and all stakeholders to halt the menace in the country.

The UNICEF Chief of Health in Nigeria, Dr Eduardo Celades, disclosed these in Lagos at a three-Day Media Dialogue on COVID-19 and Routine Immunization, organised by UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Culture.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Maternal mortality refers to deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth. From 2000 to 2020, the global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) declined by 34 per cent – from 342 deaths to 223 deaths per 100,000 live births, according to UN inter-agency estimates.

On the other hand, the global humanitarian intervention agency revealed that the country was now witnessing eight million childbirths yearly, expressing worry that the situation was not commensurate with healthcare indices in the country.

NAN recalled that the new death rate arising from pregnancy-related complications doubled the figure released by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), just in March

2022, when it said that at least 40,000 women in the country lose their lives to pregnancy-related issues annually.

It also said that over one million children, under the age of five, also die as a result of losing their mothers to pregnancy delivery complications.

But speaking at the media dialogue, Celades said that Nigeria has a very high rate of maternal mortality at the moment, stating that the global maternal mortality report from 2000 to 2020, was recently launched as the source.

According to him, the new figures which he said were received, will help UNICEF in its response to health challenges in the country.

He said: "In the last few months and weeks, we got new data. The report is telling us that the number of women dying from pregnancy-related causes is very high. About 82,000 are estimated to

die every year from maternal mortality.

"What we are doing is to strengthen primary health care in the country.

"We hope that the data would help us in our response and the response with the government in Nigeria.

"The other one is the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), an analysis where there is the main issue and how we can face them.

"The other new data is the global maternal mortality trends, 2000 to 2020. This is a new report that was launched a couple of weeks ago and we wanted to share that with you because we think this could influence how we work and define how we work with the government so that we can all align and we can have a common narrative.

"We think that this is the new way of working. We are learning and we are trying to innovate. Nigeria is one of the most complex countries in the world in

terms of public health issues facing it.

"It is the second country in the world with more zero-dose children—the ones that have not had any single vaccine. It is the country in the world with high maternal mortality.

"Last year was the biggest outbreak in the world and Nigeria has an extremely weak health system. So, we are trying to think from different angles because we at UNICEF and the UN cannot move alone. To do that, we need the government to work with journalists and social media influencers to make the change that is needed."

He said that UNICEF is planning to launch antigenes virus vaccines in the country soon, noting that the vaccine would immunise children against some childhood diseases.

He said that the country is moving towards the attainment of SDG three, but, its current pace is insufficient to meet the targets.

"Maternal mortality is not going down. Maternal mortality is the same. We have seen that it has reduced by about 12 per cent in the last 20 years but it is not enough if we want to achieve the target.

"So, from UNICEF, our main approach is to try to accelerate interventions to make an impact. Now, we have seven more years to 2030 and we are halfway. If we continue like this, some donors will leave in the next few years, so we have a window of opportunities," he explained.

He called for an increase in effective investments in primary healthcare, at the state level as well as the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF).

"The second one is that now, we have a very powerful tool to get Universal Health Coverage, (UHC). To reduce maternal mortality, we must focus on National Health Insurance. So I appeal for expansion of the National Health Insurance as much as we can.

"We must invest in the most vulnerable. We appeal to the state governments to allocate resources and with partners we will allocate enough resources to that.

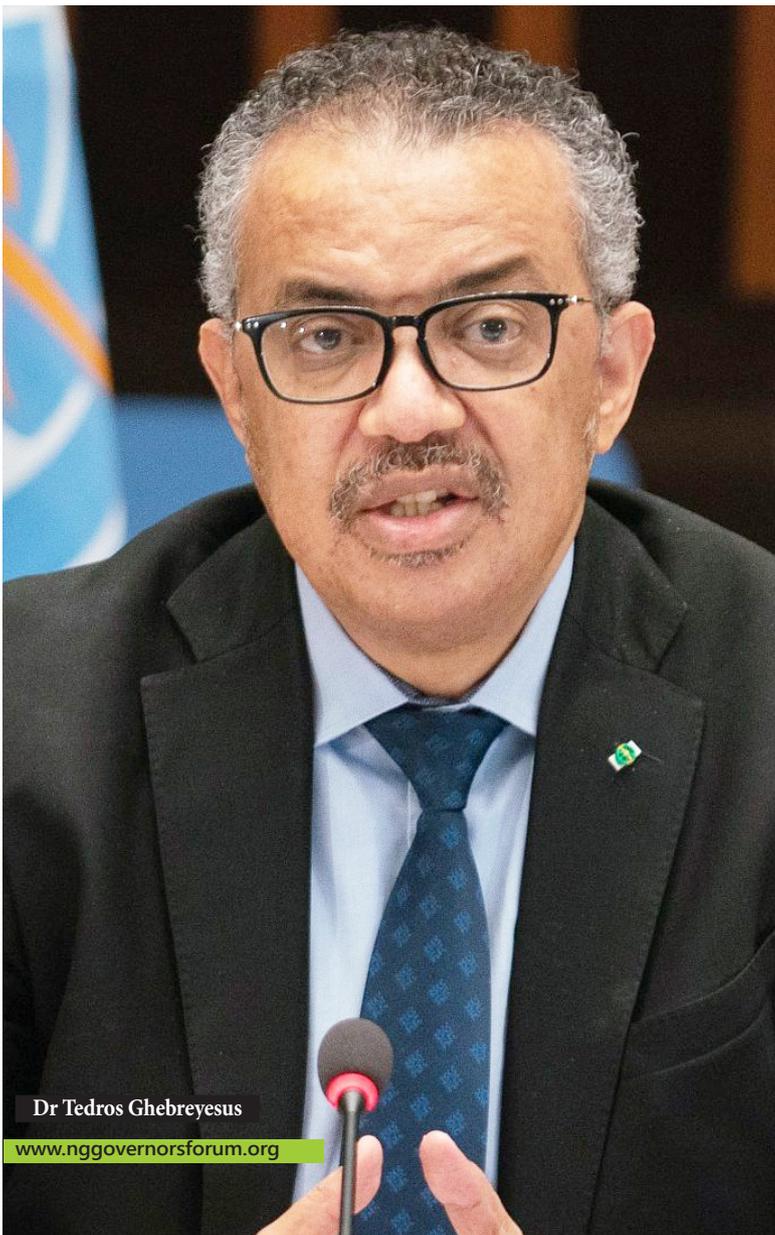
"Our third appeal is to target the most vulnerable, those women who don't have access in the most hard-to-reach areas and in the more inaccessible places. We need to invest in getting into these areas," he said.

He disclosed that UNICEF was working in collaboration with the Nigerian Governors Forum and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to launch what he described as Leadership Challenge.

"The challenge is called the Primary Healthcare Leadership Challenge and the idea is to recognize and reward state governments that are investing more in primary health care.

The launch, he said, would attract different categories of awards with US\$200 million as the highest to states that would win from the six geopolitical zones of the country.

WHO advocates broadening of 'One Health' programme



Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus

The World Health Organisation (WHO) says there is need to broaden the 'One Health Approach' and make it a reality, not just a concept.

Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, WHO's Director-General, said this during an online media conference tagged "COVID-19."

Ghebreyesus said in 2022, the tripartite became a quadripartite with the addition of the UN Environment Programme.

"In March ending, the quadripartite held its executive annual meeting in Geneva.

"Together, we released a call to action to translate the One Health concept into concrete policy action in countries.

"We are calling on countries to prioritise One Health, by strengthening the policies, strategies, plans, evidence, investment and workforce needed to properly address the threats that arise from our relationship with animals and the environment.

"To support these actions, the quadripartite in March ending endorsed a draft guide for the implementation of the One Health Joint Plan of Action," he said.

Ghebreyesus said that the organisation was pleased to see that 'One Health' had been included as a key principle in the "zero draft" of the pandemic accord that countries are now negotiating.

According to him, a One Health approach will be essential for preventing viruses from spilling over from animals to humans.

The WHO boss said it was how many outbreaks had started, including HIV, Marburg, Ebola, avian influenza, mpox, MERS and the SARS epidemic in 2003.

"One of the most instrumental people in identifying SARS as a new and deadly disease was Dr Carlo Urbani, who was the director of infectious diseases for WHO's Western Pacific Region, working in Vietnam.

"One day, Dr Urbani received a call from a hospital in Hanoi to assist in investigating what appeared to be a severe case of flu. After examining the patient, he realised it was not flu, and something else was going on," he said.

Ghebreyesus said that Urbani's rapid actions were critical in helping to contain the epidemic by triggering a global response that was key to stopping the outbreak in Vietnam, and saving countless lives around the world.

He said that the outbreaks of Marburg virus disease was another reminder that the world can only truly protect human health if they also protect the health of animals and the planet, which sustains all life.

"One Health is not a new concept. For decades, WHO has been working with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the World Organisation for Animal Health in a tripartite partnership," he said.

He said that such action would help to address the health risks that would arise from the interactions between humans, animals and the environment.



...says 1 in 6 people globally affected by infertility

Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said in a new report that large numbers of people are affected by infertility in their lifetime.

The report said that around 17.5 per cent of the adult population roughly one in six worldwide experience infertility, showing the urgent need to increase access to affordable, high-quality fertility care for those in need.

“The new estimates show limited variation in the prevalence of infertility between regions.

“The rates are comparable for high-, middle- and low-income countries, indicating that this is a major health challenge globally.

“Lifetime prevalence was 17.8 per cent in high income countries and 16.5 per cent in low- and middle income countries.”

Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, the Director-General, WHO, said that the report revealed an important truth infertility does not discriminate.

“The sheer proportion of people affected show the need to widen access to fertility care and ensure this issue is no longer sidelined in health research and policy, so that safe, effective, and affordable ways to attain parenthood are available for those who seek it,” Ghebreyesus said.

According to him, infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system, defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.

He said that it can cause significant distress, stigma and financial hardship, affecting people’s mental and psychosocial well-being.

The WHO boss said that despite the magnitude of the issue, solutions for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infertility including assisted reproductive technology such as In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) remained underfunded and inaccessible to many due to high costs, social stigma and limited availability.

Ghebreyesus said that at present, in most countries, fertility treatments are largely funded out of pocket often resulting in devastating financial costs.

He said that people in the poorest countries spend a greater proportion of their income on fertility care compared to people in wealthier countries.

Ghebreyesus said that high costs frequently prevent people from accessing infertility treatments or alternatively, can catapult them into poverty as a consequence of seeking care.

Dr Pascale Allotey, the Director of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, WHO, said that millions of people face catastrophic healthcare costs after seeking treatment for infertility, making this a major equity issue and all too often, a medical poverty trap for those affected.

Allotey said that better policies and public financing can significantly improve access to treatment and protect poorer households from falling into poverty as a result.

Nigeria records 447 suspected cholera cases – NCDC

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) says no fewer than 6 states – Cross River (397), Zamfara (25), Ebonyi (11), Abia (9), Bayelsa (3) and Kano (2), have reported 447 suspected cholera cases in weeks 5 to 9 of 2023.

The NCDC disclosed this via its official website recently.

It said 12 states have reported suspected cholera cases since the beginning of 2023 – Abia, Bayelsa, Benue, Cross River, Ebonyi, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Ondo, Osun, Sokoto and Zamfara.

The agency said that as

of March 5, a total of 922 suspected cases, including 32 deaths (CFR 3.5%), were reported from the 12 States in 2023, including Cross River (16), Ebonyi (six), Abia (six), Niger (two), Zamfara (one) and Bayelsa (one).

The NCDC’s epidemiological report showed that of all the cases recorded since the beginning of 2023, Cross River state accounted for 70 per cent of the cumulative cases across the country, with its 647 cases.

It said that Cross River’s 16 deaths, accounted for 50 per cent of all cholera deaths in the country.

The NCDC said: “National multi-sectoral Cholera Technical Working Group (TWG) continues to monitor response across states.

It said that of the suspected cases since the beginning of 2023, the age group above 45 years is the most affected for males and females.

The NCDC added that of all suspected cases, 54 per cent were males and 46 per cent were females.



NTDs: NGO executes 1,400 free surgeries in 6 states

It is therefore imperative to eliminate this disease to prevent unnecessary suffering and reduce poverty among our people

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), the Mission to Save the Helpless (MITOSATH), says that it has executed over 1,400 mass hydrocelectomy for hydrocele cases arising from Lymphatic filariasis in six states across the federation.

Dr Francisca Olamiju, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), stated this during a flag-off of the second phase of the hydrocelectomy and management of Lymphoedema at the Specialist Hospital, Okitipupa, Ondo State.

Olamiju said that the NGO had been offering free medical services to patients of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) for many years in the country.

She said that 58 persons had benefited from the free surgery and management of the disease in the Central Senatorial District of the state.

The CEO said that though 50 persons were estimated to benefit from the free surgeries, the NGO could still accommodate 100 persons, saying that nobody would be sent back.

Olamiju explained that the state is endemic of lymphatic filariasis, hence there is the need for the intervention so that people could have a good life.

According to her, MITOSATH is committed to improving the quality of life of the poor and indigent people through advocacy, raising awareness, resource mobilization and energizing the collective will of all stakeholders for the control and elimination of NTDs.

The common NTDs in the state are: Onchocerciasis, Lymphatic filariasis, Soil Transmitted Helminthes and Trachoma.

She promised that the NGO would extend the gesture to the northern senatorial zone of the state and other parts of the federation.

Also speaking, the state Commissioner for Health, Banji Ajaka, said that Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a neglected tropical disease which usually occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes.

Ajaka added that the infection would cause damage to the lymphatic system.

“The painful and profoundly disfiguring visible manifestations of the disease, lymphoedema, elephantiasis and scrotal swelling occur later in life and can lead to permanent disability.

“These patients are not only physically disabled, but suffer mental, social and financial losses contributing to stigma and poverty,” he said.

The commissioner explained that the World Health Organization (WHO) said that over 36 million people across the world had hydrocele and lymphoedema arising from lymphatic filariasis.

“Nigeria contributed significantly to this global burden. In Ondo State, 17 Local Government Areas (LGAS) are endemic for this disease.

“It is therefore imperative to eliminate this disease to prevent unnecessary suffering and reduce poverty among our people, including acute inflammatory episodes, which can be reduced and prevented with simple measures of hygiene, skin care, exercises, and

elevation of affected limbs,” he stated.

Ajaka said that surgery would alleviate most cases of hydrocele, while awareness on prevention and management of the disease is highly essential.

He, therefore, appreciated MITOSATH for regularly providing the needed financial support for NTDs elimination activities in the state, saying that the partnership had yielded tremendous achievements in eliminating the disease in the state.

The commissioner said that the state government had established NTDs Clinic at the Ondo State Primary Health Care Development Agency (OSPHCDA) in Akure.

He added that the state is the first state in the southern region of Nigeria to implement free mass hydrocelectomy for infected citizens with 58 cases done in the Central Senatorial District.

Ajaka said that the state had also developed an electronic data collection system for active case search of NTDs, including lymphatic filariasis.

He extended his appreciation to the management of the OSPHCDA under the leadership of Dr Francis Adegoke Akanbiemu, for its strong commitment to the realization of government agenda in the health sector.

He promised that the government would not relent in its drive to ensure that people live a healthy and happy life.

Mr Akin Adejuwon, the NTDs Data Manager in the state, said that four NTDs which are: onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and lymphatic filariasis are prevalent in the state.

Adejuwon asked those with symptoms of the common NTDs to approach the NTD Office for medical attention.

He explained that the government had made available free drugs to be used once in a year for anybody from age five except the pregnant women.

According to him, the NTDs could be prevented hence the need to take the drug once in a year.

The programme which includes free screening, surgery and management will be for five days and the beneficiaries are given free food and transport fares.

Health Insurance: Authority to fine-tune 237,000 PTAD pensioners' enrollment

The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) says it will raise a bilateral committee to fine-tune the protocol of enrolling 237,000 pensioners under Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD) for health insurance.

The NHIA Deputy General Manager, Emmanuel Ononokpono, made this known in a statement in Abuja, adding that the Director-General of NHIA, Prof. Mohammed Sambo, disclosed this when Dr Chioma Ejikeme, Executive Secretary of PTAD paid him a courtesy visit.

He quoted Sambo as saying “the authority has put in motion, the process leading up to extending health insurance to pensioners.

“Extending health insurance to pensioners is consistent with best practices around the world.”

According to him, the most effective care for aging persons is to give them adequate access to affordable and quality healthcare.

The authority boss said that health insurance

coverage for pensioners is a critical aspect of attaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

He added that government is favourably disposed to ensuring that persons who served the country with better part of their lives should have access to care without further financial burden.

On the issue of how the initiative would be funded, Sambo said that healthcare must be paid for because it is impossible for it to be free.

He said that support of relevant government agencies would be required to achieve sustainable financing.

According to him, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Department of State Services (DSS) are already paying for healthcare coverage of their retirees.

“Funding healthcare for pensioners is critical to institutionalising the initiative and making it enduring,” he stressed.

Sambo also said that the authority is in a position to start the process of coverage of pensioners through an internal budgetary provision.

Ejikeme, who highlighted the plight of pensioners around the country, added that the law setting up PTAD gave leverage to the agency to explore ways of improving the welfare of pensioners.

She said that promoting the welfare of pensioners is central to the operations of the agency.

According to her, PTAD has worked to ensure transparent and accountable system for retirees.

She said that an ICT-driven system codenamed — “I am Alive” Confirmation Solution” enabled a verification process that cleaned up the database by removing fictitious pensioners, maintaining that PTAD has developed the most reliable data on pensioners.

Funding healthcare for pensioners is critical to institutionalising the initiative and making it enduring

Meningitis kills 52 persons in 21 states in Nigeria

Fifty-two persons have died from Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) in 21 states, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed.

The NCDC said as of March 5, a total of 628 suspected cases including 52 deaths (CFR 8.3%) were reported from 21 states in 2022/2023 CSM seasons.

20 states that reported suspected CSM cases in 2022/2023 were: Abia, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Ebonyi, Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and

Zamfara.

The report added that “91% of all cumulative cases were from four (4) states – Jigawa (509 cases), Bauchi (23 cases), Zamfara (22 cases) and Oyo (14 cases).”

According to the report, “62% of the cases are male patients while 38% are females.”

It was also disclosed that “ten LGAs across five states, Jigawa (7), Bauchi (1), Oyo (1), Plateau (1) and Zamfara (1), reported more than 5 cases each this CSM seasons 2022/2023.”

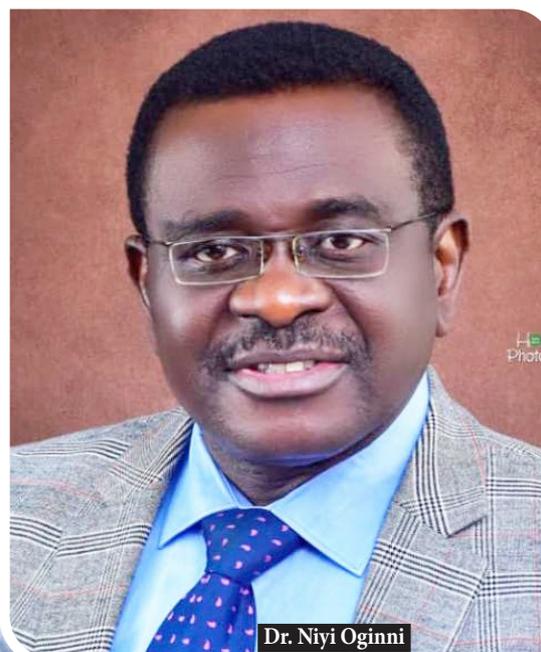
The number of new suspected cases in epidemiological week nine decreased by 84% compared with epidemiological week nine.

The national multi-sectoral Cerebrospinal Meningitis Technical Working Group (TWG) continued to monitor response across states.

Adeleke recalls suspended Osun Health Insurance Scheme boss



Gov. Adeleke



Dr. Niyi Oginni

Osun state governor, Ademola Adeleke of Osun has ordered the immediate recall of the suspended Executive Secretary of the State Health Insurance Scheme (OHIS), Dr. Niyi Oginni.

This is contained in a statement issued by the Spokesperson to the Governor, Olawale Rasheed, and made available to newsmen in Osogbo.

Adeleke had, on December 31, 2022, ordered the suspension of Oginni and Dr. Adebukola Olujide, Head of the Primary Health Care Development Board in the state.

Rasheed said that Oginni's recall was premised on the review of the report of the Contract and MOU Committee as well as the disturbing reports of the imminent collapse of the state health insurance scheme.

"The decision was also linked to the need to comply with public service regulations, which stipulated procedures and conditions for discipline

and management of public servants," he said.

The governor's spokesman said that Adeleke also recalled the executive secretary in order to normalise the operations of the agency by ensuring its continuous patronage across the state.

According to him, Oginni's recall takes immediate effect.

The suspension of the two top officials was a sequel to the interim report of the Committee on Contracts and MOU, chaired by Mr. Niyi Owolade.

The report had indicted the two agency chiefs of gross abuse of office, mismanagement of public resources, and serial violations of the public service regulations and laws.

The report also unearthed alleged unethical practices of the officials, manifesting in contract awards without due process, non-remittance of actual tender fees collected from contractors, contracts without value for money, and deliberate splitting of contracts.



Food for thought

The biggest conspiracy against the growth and dominance of Africa and Africans is not the work of Bill Gates, Monsanto, 5G, the Coronavirus or imperialists or colonialists.

It is not Donald Trump, China, Boris Johnson or Queen Elizabeth. It is not a right wing conspiracy, or a left wing conspiracy, neither is it a grand plan of Israel or even the Middle East.

Africa's biggest problem is its leadership. "VAGABONDS IN POWER"

No world leader, or richest man in the world will use electromagnetic waves or vaccines to kill us. And let me tell you why:

(1) In 2018 alone, about 230,000 brand new Toyota Land Cruiser 80 (2018 models) were sold in Africa. Lets assume that private sector and NGOs bought 50% of those (a very conservative estimate), then it means the other half were bought by African governments. This means that at a very very generous base price of \$60,000, \$690 Million

was spent IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA ALONE for governmental bodies and officials to buy JUST TOYOTA LAND CRUISERS!

(Sales Data Source: Toyota Global Website)

(2) The WHO Global Health Expenditure database puts General Government Expenditure for health for Sub-Saharan Africa at US\$361.777 Million US Dollars for 2017. If we even made the figure \$362 Million, it means that we spent averagely 52% of what we were willing to spend on Land Cruisers than on health of our own citizens. This is just cost of acquisition, not maintenance.

(3) In 2016, Africa accounted for 1.1% (US\$22.3 billion) of global investments in R&D. Globally, pharmaceutical companies are among the top investors in R&D in the health science sector, but this is not the case in Africa.

(4) Africa has 15% of the world's population and 25% of the world's disease burden, but only 1% of the world's research and development budget is spent in the whole of Africa. Even that, it comes from external resources. Africa, a content of about 1 billion people, holds only 0.1% of the world's patents. Only 198 researchers per million people. Yet even then, remember that our R&D expenditure is mostly sourced from abroad. If



you think I'm lying, the 2 main centers for Corona testing are funded by Germany and Japan!

(5). Illicit financial losses from corruption and embezzlement alone amount to some \$50 Billion annually. Guess where it goes to? The WEST! When you are flying abroad, who usually sits in business class and sleeps and wines and dines in the finest hotels in Europe and America? Is it the African immigrant hustler or the African politician and his cronies? Who do you see when you go to the Palms in Dubai or Abu Dhabi? Or in Monaco or on the Champs D'Elysses? How many politicians own \$1 million houses across different continents?

(6) In such a situation, do you really think someone wants to destroy us with a virus? We have already systematically weakened our systems. We have very little industrial capacity, we have sold whatever is remaining in Africa to Chinese, we only contribute to 2% of the worlds manufacturing. Our leaders pride themselves in dashing us bicycles, t-shirts and bags of imported rice. Do you think any rational individual needs to employ sophisticated methods which will endanger their own people to destroy us when we are doing such a nice job of it ourselves?

THINK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

For every day that we live, our compromised healthcare systems and the egos of our leaders are going to sink us further. We have no capacity to produce ANYTHING that will help us. We don't even have the

research labs to provide us with solutions against the virus.

Yet we have an and Christian & Muslim countries where "men of God" are opinion leaders spewing all sorts of controversies because we have been wired to believe in miracles more than science. Sub-saharan Africa contributes on average only .05% of the world's mathematics PhD holders. Wanna compare that with PhD holders in say Theology ? Be my guest!!

Hey wait, Ghana still plans to source from churches \$100 million to build a cathedral with a Bible Museum, hoping that it will be a tourist attraction. But nobody remembers the last time it bothered to refurbish its museum of science and technology, which has at its entrance a steam tractor from the early 20th century and an old Gatlin Gun.

We keep crying about drug testing on poor Africans, but how many virologists do we have, and how many virus institutes do we have to

deal with the over 25% disease burden that we have? Or have our spiritual leaders in the shrines, mosques and churches suddenly become disease experts?

What is the ratio of doctors, nurses & other healthcare professionals to patients, or medical labs to patients in Sub-Saharan Africa?

At this stage, we don't need Bill Gates to wipe us off the earth. We are doing fine with our incompetence. We have not even began challenging the Chinese who are forcing governments to mortgage their mines and rivers for alluvial gold and bauxite reserves for roads that will last maybe 10 years.

If you think Coronavirus, digital medical records, vaccine trials and 5G networks are designed to destroy Africans for the monopoly of some old computer scientist living in Oregon or Washington State in the US, then you probably should save us all and succumb to the virus as you don't belong in the 21st century anyway. I know its harsh, but thats the truth. There is no conspiracy against us.

We are the captains of our own fate.

- unknown Author



How NHIA, Roche gave 55 cancer patients access to affordable, innovative treatment



The General Manager, Roche Nigeria, Ladi Hameed (left) with Director General, NHIA, Mohammed Sambo, in Abuja

About 55 cancer patients who may have lost hope in their situation were granted access to innovative treatment and affordable medicines through the landmark partnership between the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) and a healthcare firm, Roche.

Details of the partnership, the spokesperson of the NHIA, Emmanuel Ononokpono, said, ensures that affordable cancer medicines are made available to beneficiaries through an agreed costs sharing system between the two organisations.

Ononokpono said within the scope of that arrangement, Roche would pay 50 percent of the cost of treatment for the patient, while the NHIA would take care of 30 percent and the patient 20 percent.

Speaking at the presentation of the progress report of the partnership, the Director General, NHIA, Mohammed Sambo acknowledged the positive impact of the partnership.

"This partnership shows that it is helping Nigerians affected by cancer to proactively avoid financial hardship by supporting them to focus on the most important thing of all: their healthcare.

"We are very pleased with the

impact this is having, and this is why we are going to henceforth focus on rolling this out even further, by expanding to more centres nationwide.

"I also want to use this opportunity to remind everyone that health insurance under NHIA is available to all Nigerians. We have offices across the country for purposes of enrollment so that they can access innovative treatments as being implemented under the partnership," he said.

Also speaking at the occasion, the General Manager, Roche Nigeria, Ladi Hameed, commended NHIA for making the partnership possible.

"The barriers that are preventing access are persistent and complex, but they are solvable, and together we are making a difference.

"Roche is very proud to partner with the NHIA to make innovative treatments broadly, rapidly and equitably accessible to Nigerians, when they need them. We commit to continuing this partnership, and to contributing to bold solutions that support sustainable health ecosystems and a future where every Nigerian can access world-class Healthcare," Hameed said.

Ononokpono who gave the background to the partnership told reporters that it was inspired by three

themes: the need for patients to access medicines for diagnostic solutions, the need for capacity building and the need for policy advocacy.

"We clearly see that patients are starting to get the access that they need. The 55 patients who received innovative cancer care through the partnership were enrollees of the NHIA and patients in the seven pilot medical centres; University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital (AKTH), University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), University College Hospital (UCH) and the Federal Teaching Hospital, Gombe.

Roche, one of the first industrial manufacturers of branded medicines, has grown into the world's largest biotechnology company and the global leader in in-vitro diagnostics. The company pursues scientific excellence to discover and develop medicines and diagnostics for improving and saving the lives of people around the world.



UNILORIN gynaecologist: Cervical cancer kills 28 Nigerian women daily

Prof. Adegboyega Fawole of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), says about 28 Nigerian women die of cervical cancer daily.

Fawole said this in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, while speaking at the 231st Inaugural Lecture of UNILORIN with the theme, 'Reversing Nigerian Women's Poor Health Indices: Challenges and Prospects'.

According to him, the cervical cancer specific profile shows that our female population is 99.1 million.

"The crude cervical cancer incidence per 100,000 women was 11.9 and cumulative risk of cervical cancer ages 0 to 74 in 2020 was 1.9 per cent.

"The summary of this is that every day, about 28 Nigerian women die from cervical cancer," he said.

The gynaecologist, who teaches in the Faculty of

Clinical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, UNILORIN, stated that cervical cancer affected over half a million women each year globally.

"It kills a quarter of a million and one woman dies of the disease every two minutes, adding up to over 270,000 deaths globally per year.

"This makes it one of the greatest threats to women's health. Each one is a tragedy, and we can prevent it.

"Most of these women are not diagnosed early enough and lack access to life-saving treatment. If we don't act, deaths from cervical cancer will rise by almost 50 per cent by 2030," Fawole added.

Fawole explained that infection by Human Papilloma Virus was the most important risk factor for cervical cancer.

The gynaecologist, who warned against early exposure to sex at a tender

age, especially younger than 18 years old and having many sexual partners, explained that smoking and having a weakened immune system, including HIV/AIDs, puts women at higher risk of the disease.

He, however, enjoined people to take responsibility for their healthcare and the environment and change their attitude towards over-reliance on the government.

Fawole also urged women to be more encouraged to increase their use of obstetrics services manned by professional healthcare workers.

"The government should continue its trajectory on the health insurance scheme and implement the proposed coverage of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to cover more of the population soonest," the gynaecologist added.

PHC LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE



PHOTO CAPTION

- 1 Members of the PHC Leadership Challenge Independent Judging Panel
- 2 NGF and UNICEF team
- 3 Prof. Hadiza Galadanci, member PHC Leadership Challenge IJP
- 4 Dr. Dorothy Esangbedo, member PHC Leadership Challenge IJP

- 5 Prof Benjamin Uzochukwu, member PHC Leadership Challenge IJP
- 6 Prof. Ebitimitula Etebu, VC Bayelsa State University, Yenagoa
- 7 Eduardo Celades, Chief of Health UNICEF Nigeria
- 8 Dr. Ahmed Abdulwahab, Senior Health Advisor NGF

**PHOTO CAPTION**

1 Chairperson of the PHC Leadership Challenge Independent Judging Panel, Prof. Clara Ejemi with program Technical Committee members

2 National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) team

3 Prof. Innocent Ujah, past president of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA)

4 Dr. Oladimeji Olayinka, Member PHC Leadership Challenge IJP

5 L-R: Dr. Fatima Daura, Dr. Dorothy Esangbedo and Dr. Zara Hudire; members of the IJP

6 Dr. Chinckwu Oreh, Public Health Specialist NGF

7 Prof. Clara Ejemi Chairperson of the PHC Leadership Challenge Independent Judging Panel

8 L-R: Ifeyinwa Onwudinjo, Chris Elemuwa and M.M Abubakar



As PHC MoU States Plan For 2023

other PHC commodities of the right quantity and quality at the right time at the last mile (service delivery points)

The purpose of this year-end review exercise is to assess and enhance the delivery of the PHC MoU program against state-specific results through effective implementation of supported strategies, interventions, approaches, and activities.

The objectives of this workshop however span across the following areas;

- To enhance understanding among program managers and implementers of the objectives, delivery strategies, and activities, supported by the initiative and their linkages.
- To review the results attained (or missed) in the course of 2022 implementation of the initiative.
- To develop evidence-based, result-oriented, and actionable workplan for Year 2/2023, including:
 - a. To identify reprogrammable interventions, activities, and resources for Year 2 programme year, upon agreed principles with donor and partners and based on the long-term impact, sustainability, and accountability for PHC in the States.
 - b. To ensure inclusion of updated key activities including but not limited to HPV introduction, measles SIA, FIPV etc.
 - c. To ensure alignment with other investments and priorities (zero-dose strategy, Functional PHC in priority LGAs, COVID and other investments) ensuring state leadership, coordination, efficiency, and synergy.
 - d. States to identify specific technical Assistance needs for 2023 and beyond.

The workshop in Abuja (Fraser Suites) and Kano (Tahir Guest Palace) hosted Gombe and Taraba States on the 28th and 29th of March, Niger and Bayelsa States on the 30th and 31st of March 2023, Zamfara and Kebbi States on the 3rd and 4th of April and Katsina and Jigawa States

A review and planning workshop for the eight GAVI Primary Health Care Memorandum of Understanding states took place between the 28th of March to the 6th of April 2023 in Abuja and Kano. The workshop was conducted in two phases with the first four states of Gombe, Taraba, Bayelsa and Niger having theirs in Abuja while the remaining four states of Kebbi, Zamfara, Jigawa and Katsina had theirs in Kano.

This 8-day workshop was conducted to assess program performance following the program roll out in 2022 as well as planning for 2023. Generally, implementation was successfully accomplished across all States in year 1. The Year 1 (2022) review exercise aims to steep learning curves for all 8 MoU States, mostly around the establishment of programmatic and financial accountability mechanisms and provision of an enabling environment for the accomplishment of the program's set objectives which are as follows;

- To build the leadership and governance capacity and institutionalize accountability for policy makers at federal, states and local levels for evidence-based policies and strategic planning
- To improve coverage and equity for immunization and PHC service delivery
- To improve demand creation and institutionalize revised community engagement strategy for immunization and PHC.
- To strengthen the health management information system and the integrated surveillance systems for enhanced prevention, detection, diagnosis, and control of diseases, with improved data quality for decision making
- To improve capacity and optimize distribution of frontline health workers and EPI managers for RI and PHC
- To ensure availability of 100% bundled vaccines and



on the 5th and 6th of April with attendance from the NPHCDA, Gavi, UNICEF and WHO. The Honorable Commissioners of Health and Executive Secretaries of the SPHCB were also in attendance and actively involved in the workshop.

All attending states made presentations on their current implementation progress which catalyzed into a plenary discussion where grey areas were highlighted, achievements applauded, and areas of improvement were pointed out with potential recommendations.

Based on reports from each state, there seems to be remarkable achievements across all the thematic areas of the MoU ranging from better coordination of PHC activities across the states as the Deputy Governors have taken ownership of the PHC task force by leading quarterly and in some cases bimonthly review meetings of the task force which has also been replicated at the LGA stimulating the LGA task force revitalization. In terms of service delivery, more children are being reached with vaccines due to an increase in immunization sessions and outreaches. Some states however have gone an extra mile by introducing special initiatives for immunization such as market vaccination outreaches and State outreach days where specific days are earmarked for immunization purposes. The reports also show a marked improvement in immunization coverage as shown by PENTA1, PENTA3 and MCV1 coverage of all the states. Most states have also reactivated WDCs and household sensitization on immunization services which

has in turn improved ANC1 and ANC4 thereby increasing skilled birth attendance. In terms of HRH, States have also recruited, trained and deployed additional human resources thereby improving the capacity of the state health workforce. There is also a marked reduction of stock out of vaccines at service delivery points due to an improvement in vaccine logistics. A remarkable Improvement in timeliness and completeness of data reporting has also been recorded. Most States have trained LGA program officers on data triangulation and use of data for action while procurement of ICT equipment and Internet facilities has also been completed. All of these have positively impacted on the zero dose outcomes across all the states.

NPHCDA leadership were on ground to discuss Federal Level Priorities with the states, assuring them of their commitment to work together to see to the success of this MoU and PHC Strengthening at large. The Gavi country team also discussed Gavi Investment Priorities in the country currently with particular focus on the roll out of HPV vaccines, Zero dose reduction and Measles Vaccination Campaign in some States of the Federation. The need to align all of these priorities and investments at both the federal and state levels was thoroughly discussed across the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Fund, Zero dose reduction and service integration areas.

States also engaged in group work by thematic areas to identify new and reprogrammed activities and interventions and highlight TA support to deliver planned results for year 2. Subsequently, states came up with a revised work plan for year 2 based on the group work with guidance from the NGF, UNICEF and WHO team. Overall, this review workshop was a success because states were able to develop the 2023 Annual Operational Plan for Gavi to review within a short period of time.

In conclusion, this MoU has stimulated all states PHC and RI outcomes positively and there seems to be an enhanced sense of ownership with commitments for better results.



NGF staff Profile



Mr. A. B. Okauru, Esq
Director General, Nigeria Governors' Forum

Mr. A. B. Okauru is the Director General of the Nigeria Governors' Forum. He joined the Nigeria Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003 as a foundation staff, from where he was appointed as pioneer Director of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), a position he held till November 2009 when he left the services of the EFCC. He previously worked at Arthur Andersen & Co., Nigeria as Management trainee and later at IBM at the Research Triangle Park, NC, USA first as an Operations Analyst and later as an e-Business Analyst.

Mr. Okauru is an Economist and a Lawyer. In 2016, Mr. Okauru was awarded a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) degree from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

Mr. Shittu is Executive Director, Strategy and Research. He is an economist, human capital development expert, and a seasoned manager, with over twenty eight (28) years experiences in both the private and the public sectors.

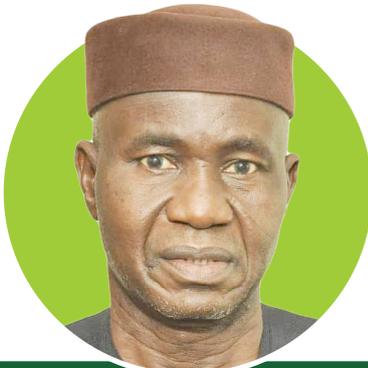
After a stint with National Oil & Chemical Company – formerly Shell Oil Marketing, Mr. Shittu was appointed Deputy Director (Privatization and Commercialization) with the Bureau of Public Enterprise. He equally served as Special Assistant to the Hon. Minister of Transport and Communication, during which he was saddled with the responsibility for the establishment of Nigeria Communication Commission, an assignment he discharged creditably.

Mr Shittu is a member of several professional associations including Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Governance and Leadership Technology; Fellow, Institute of Administrators and Research, and Fellow, Salzburg Seminar in Salzburg, Austria.

Mr. Shittu is the chairman of the induction committee.



Otumba Alhaji L. O. J Shittu
Executive Director, Strategy and Research



Mohammed Abubakar Jibia
Executive Director of Finance and Administration

Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Jibia is the Executive Director Finance and Administration.

He holds a B.Sc. Degree in Sociology/Mass Communications, Msc in Economics and a Masters in Banking and Finance from Bayero University, Kano State; a Masters in Business Administration from Ahmadu Bello University, Kano State Nigeria.

He started his career in banking with the Central Bank of Nigeria Kano State, Nigeria, where his exemplary qualities placed him in distinguished positions such as Senior Supervisor, Assistant Manager, Manager/Senior Manager and Assistant Director. He was later transferred to the Abuja Co-coordinators Office where he contributed immensely to the take-off of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Abuja Branch. He was later deployed to the Development Finance Department.

Mohammed Jibia is a member of many professional bodies which include the Nigeria Institute of Management, the Nigeria Economic Society, the Nigeria Institute of Training and Development etc. He is also a Certified Customer Relations Manager.

Chijioke Chuku is the Director of Legal and Legal Adviser of the Nigeria Governors' Forum.

He is an alumnus of Federal Government College Okigwe, Imo State holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in English Language and Literature from the Abia State University, Uturu. He also has a Bachelor of Laws degree (LLB) from the University of Calabar, a Barrister at Law (BL) from the Nigerian Law School and a Master of Laws (LLM) degree in Law and Development from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

Chijioke, a recipient of several diplomas and certificates from Nigeria and abroad including the Lagos Business School, the International Law Institute (an affiliate of Georgetown University), Washington, the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) as well as the Harvard Business School (HBS). He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators (UK and Nigeria), member, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) and Notary Public of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.



Chijioke Chuku, Esq
Director of Legal

*Eghosa Michael*

Assistant Director and Head, Stakeholder Relationship & SDGs

Mr. Eghosa Michael Omoigui is an Assistant Director and Head, Stakeholder Relationship & SDGs at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat.

His responsibilities include to prioritise strategic trade and investment partnerships that align with the organizations objectives, and to monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the subnational level. He also leads the Forum of Regions of Africa (FORAF) Desk at NGF - the team that provides support to the President of FORAF, a sub- entity of United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG Africa.

A seasoned Project Manager, with 17yrs experience in Stakeholder mapping and engagements from both public and private sectors, he started his career as a banker in oil and gas financing with First City Monument Bank, FCMB Ltd, transitioned to project management in aviation revenue automation with Venture Garden Group, and expanded his horizon to public services and governance reforms as a Project consultant to different organizations working on national and subnational projects. These include with the Federal Ministry of Transport, Kaduna State government and Edo State government.

Eghosa has a BSc in Economics and a Master's in business administration both from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Ebenezer, Leo the Great Ph.D. (Dr Leo), hails from Ula-Upata town in Ahoada-East Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. He was born on November 10, 1981.

He had his primary, secondary and tertiary education in Nigeria. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Education from the University of Ibadan in 2006; a Master of Science Degree (M.Sc.), and a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Political Science with specialisation in Comparative/Nigerian Government and Politics from the University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria in 2012 and 2018 respectively.

He was a Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria before joining the NGF in 2022.

Dr Leo is a renowned scholar, researcher, educationist and political scientist with over 16 years post qualification experience in teaching and research in the education sector.

Dr Leo heads the Education Department at the Secretariat of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF).

He is engaged in policy formulation, domestication, implementation, review and evaluation of educational policies and programmes through partnership and collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education, donor agencies, stakeholders, government institutions and agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations and Multinational Corporations for educational development and sustainable social

*Ebenezer, Leo the Great Ph.D*

Head, Education

transformation for the collective benefit of the government and people of Nigeria especially at the subnational levels of government and governance.

He is married with kids and loves travelling, reading and writing.

*David Nabena*

Grants Manager

experience in the fields of development economics, public finance, public governance, and the politics of development.

Currently, David works as a Grants Manager for the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat, where he focuses on providing State governments with the tools needed to deliver better revenue and spending outcomes. He served as Chief Economist for the organisation, where he led the development of economic policy options for sub-national governments in the country and coordinated several collaborative projects with development partners including the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Nations development agencies, and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office programmes in Nigeria.

David has co-authored studies with reputable institutions such as the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), Finland; the Centre for Conflict Resolution, South Africa; the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Zimbabwe; the Brookings Institute; the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK; and the

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Among other major records, he is credited with leading the development of Nigeria's first subnational public finance database.

David holds an MSc in Financial Engineering from the Alliance Manchester Business School, UK, and a BSc in Economics from the University of Port Harcourt Nigeria. In his spare time, he enjoys reading and exploring new topics in his field of expertise.

David Nabena is a seasoned economist who specializes in advising governments on how to improve their development outcomes. With a combination of applied research, management tools, model-based estimation tools, and political economy analysis, David has gained extensive



Hauwa Haliru-Hassan
Assistant Director/ Head of HR and Governance

Hauwa Haliru- Hassan is a Lawyer and a Human Resources Professional. She graduated from Ahmadu Bello University, and was called to the Nigeria Bar in 2002.

She holds a MBA in Human Resources from the same institution and a PGD in Technology and Intellectual Property Law from University of Liverpool. She has attended relevant trainings, seminars and workshops spanning across the diverse landscape of her professional career from Local and International Institutions like Harvard Business School, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) etc.

Her degree in Civil Law and over 20 years work experience in various organisations and in different capacities in the private sector earned her a career at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat NGFS as an Assistant Director/ Head of HR and Governance. Before her recent appointment as the pioneer CEO at the Nigeria Governors Wives' Forum Secretariat, she was responsible for Coordinating the Gender Desk at the NGF Secretariat.

Olanrewaju Ajogbasile is a governance specialist with over 10 years experience leading public policy, public financial management, decentralization and institutional performance improvement research, advocacy and reform programs. His experience cuts across initiatives at the Federal and State level as well as working with various development partners including the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the World Bank.

Olanrewaju is currently the Senior Programme Manager of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) HelpDesk Technical Assistance Programme and the NGF World Bank funded States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Technical Assistance Project. Both provide technical assistance to State governments in form of technical advisory and capacity building support including facilitating training, peer learning, exchange visits, reform domestication guides, etc. Thematic areas of support include medium-term planning, budgeting, audit, cash management, public procurement, revenue mobilization, and debt management amongst others.

A recent initiative championed by Olanrewaju under the HelpDesk Programme is the eLearning Management System which will host and deliver online courses curated around subnational reform actions and programs to support capacity building for domestication.

Olanrewaju Ajogbasile holds a Masters Degree in Financial Economics from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom and a first class



Olanrewaju Ajogbasile
Senior Programme Manager

Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics from the Redeemer's University, Osun State, Nigeria. He also possesses training certificates in Political Economy, Financial Management for Development Projects and the Kaplan-Norton Balance Scorecard for Strategic Planning and Execution.



Ruth Kelechi Ogboh
Librarian

Ruth Kelechi Ogboh graduated from the University of Nigeria Nsukka with a Bsc in Library and Information Science.

She was born on 3rd November, 1998.

Ruth is from Aro in Arochukwu LGA of Abia State.

Email: rogboh@ngf.org.ng

Hobbies: Reading, Meeting new people, and Listening to Music



Fatima Y. Usman Katsina
Head, Legislative Affairs, Peace & Inclusive Security

Hajiya Fatima Y. Usman Katsina, an indigene of Katsina State, calls herself a product of the best of Nigerian government. In 2009 she was recruited by the Nigerian Governors' Forum as their Pioneer Technical Advisor, blessing her with the opportunity to participate in all three tiers of government, Federal, State and Local. She quickly earned a reputation as a hard working administrator with the ability to bring government organizations, ministries, and donor partners together, and get things done in record time. Above all else Hajiya Fatima considers herself a Patriot ready to serve the nation.

In 2022 Hajiya Fatima returned to the NGF as Head of Legislative Affairs and Head of Peace and Inclusive Security. In 2015 she served as Senior Special Adviser on Development Partners and Donor Agencies for Katsina state. In 2011 she stepped in as Chief of Staff for the then Distinguished Senator, Gbemisola Saraki, with a mandate to ensure the levels of output matched or exceeded the levels of input.

As a loyal daughter of the nation, Hajiya Fatima has picked up the mantle to positively impact the sub-nationals, promote good governance and support their existing security structures. To make a difference, give back to the nation and POSITIVELY IMPACT lives!!

Hajiya Fatima believes there is no better place to do that than the Nigerian Governors' Forum.

The health unit of the NGF Secretariat is responsible for coordinating all health-related interventions being championed by the secretariat. We are committed to catalysing a stronger health system and better health outcomes at the subnational level in line with national goals and strategies.

Our Vision

Is to be the leading go-to resource and learning hub for catalysing subnational health development and contributing to health SDGs.

Our Mission

Is to keep the NGF informed and up-to-date on health priorities and promote evidence-based decision-making & actions, accountability, and learning for better health outcomes at the subnational level.

What We Do

We leverage our convening powers to support States to achieve their health goals through Evidence Generation, High-Level Advocacy, Resource Mobilization, Accountability and Partnerships, and Capacity Building.

We also engage with key federal MDAs, such as the FMOH, NHIA, NPHCDA, FMFBNP, and Office of the Vice President

Our Team

The health team is a multidisciplinary team that includes high-profile professionals that have excelled in different fields of endeavour including Advocacy, Health Policy Analysis, Health Systems Strengthening, Public Health, Health Financing, Health Information System, Immunization, Supply Chain, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning.

Our key Partners

BMGF, ADE, GAVI, UNICEF, R4D, NHED.

The Health Team



The Team

Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab: Senior Health Advisor
 Dr. Chinekwu Oreh: Health Specialist
 Dr. Avuwa Oteri: Immunization Advisor
 Maryam Musa Yahaya: Programme Officer, PHC
 Marvellous Olatunji: MEAL Officer
 Chidinma Ezenwa: Nutrition Policy Analyst
 Adeoluwa Adegbemile: Nutrition Policy Analyst
 Abdulrazak Olalekan Are: Research Assistant

PROFILE

Eric L. Adams

Eric Adams has served the people of New York City as an NYPD officer, State Senator, Brooklyn Borough President, and now as the 110th Mayor of the City of New York. He gave voice to a diverse coalition of working families in all five boroughs and is leading the fight to bring back New York City's economy, reduce inequality, improve public safety, and build a stronger, healthier city that delivers for all New Yorkers.

Like so many New Yorkers, Mayor Eric Adams grew up with adversity—and overcame it.

As one of six children, born in Brownsville and raised in South Jamaica by a single mom who cleaned houses, Eric and his family did not always know if they would come home to an eviction notice on the front door or food on the table. And when he was

beaten by police in the basement of a precinct house at 15, Eric faced a life-changing act of injustice.

But instead of giving into anger, Eric turned his pain into purpose and decided to change the police department from within. He joined the NYPD and became one of its most outspoken officers, calling out racism and bias in the department and pushing for major reforms.

As a founder of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, Eric would often police the streets in a bulletproof vest one day during the high-crime 1980's and 1990's and protest bad behavior by cops the next, marching side-by-side with his fellow civil rights advocates. He rose to the rank of captain, helping to build the first computerized system for tracking crime in the city, which led to historic gains in public safety.

Eric's efforts to change policing began his lifelong work to improve and protect New York. From the NYPD, he moved on to the State Senate, where he represented sections of central and Brownstone Brooklyn. In Albany, Eric built winning coalitions to advance New York City's values and goals, helping to push through measures to protect tenants and workers, combat gun violence, end the NYPD's abuses of stop and frisk, and advance human rights — including marriage equality. He also became the first person of color to chair the Senate's Homeland Security Committee.

Eric was then elected Brooklyn Borough President in 2013 by putting together a diverse coalition of Brooklynites to become the borough's first Black leader. As the representative of one of the nation's largest counties, Eric fought tirelessly to grow the local economy, invest in schools, reduce inequality, improve public safety, and advocate for smart policies and better government that delivers for all New Yorkers.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the city, Eric moved a mattress into his office and worked around the clock to deliver donated meals and PPE to essential workers and vulnerable New Yorkers, demanding government produce more equitable relief.

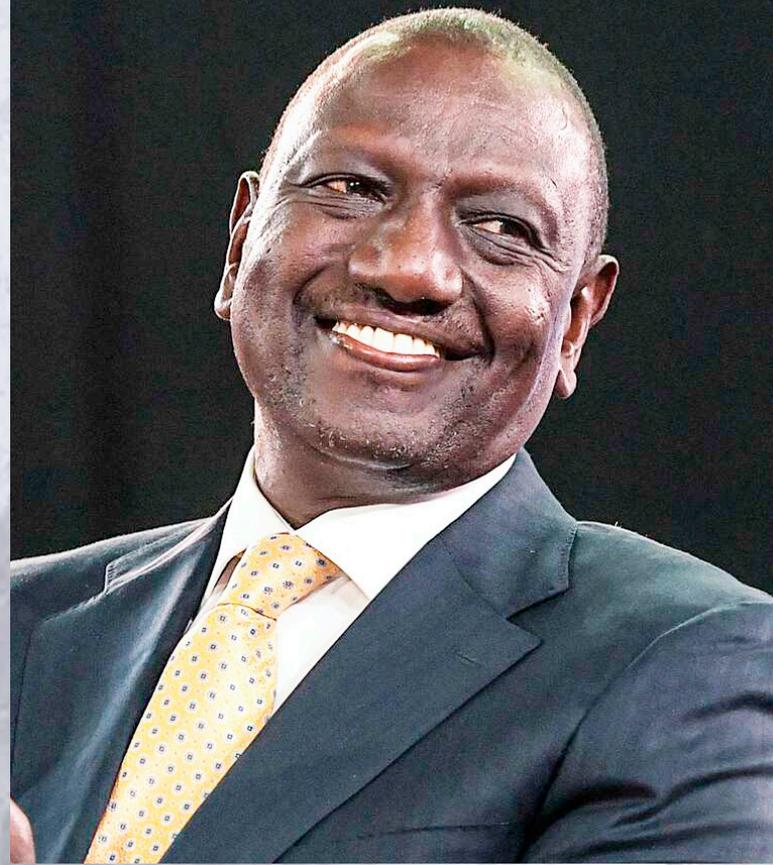
In addition to continuing to fight for struggling New Yorkers and a better quality of life for all, Eric became a national leader on public health policy after learning he had developed Type 2 diabetes. Following his diagnosis, Eric completely changed his diet and his body, reversing the disease and launching a personal mission to educate New Yorkers about preventative care and wellness. His work has already led to successful proactive public health efforts across the city and increased education in schools and with high-risk populations in lower-income areas, partnering with civic organizations and health experts.

Eric is a lifelong New Yorker. He received his master's degree in public administration from Marist College, and is a graduate of New York City Technical College and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. He is also a proud product of New York City public schools, including Bayside High School in Queens. Today he lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where he has resided for over 20 years. Eric is the proud father of Jordan, an aspiring filmmaker and graduate of American University.

JEAN PIERRE ELONG MBASSI

General Secretary of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)

Mr Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi has been the Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) since 2007. He was Chairman of the Cities Alliance Interim Management Board until April 2016. He is also Co-Chairman of the World Cities Scientific Development Alliance (WCSDA), and Deputy Secretary General of the China-Africa Forum of Local Authorities. Mr Elong Mbassi is the man behind the Africities Summits, the most important event of African cities, regions and local authorities, which he has overseen since the first edition in 1998. Mr. Elong Mbassi has nearly 40 years of experience in urban development and land use planning, urban services, local economic development, local community governance, housing and slum restructuring. From 1996 to 1999, he was the very first Secretary General of the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC), at the same time as he was Secretary General of the Municipal Development Partnership (MDP) from 1992 to 2006. Previously, from 1981 to 1991, Mr. Elong Mbassi was the director of the first urban project co-financed by the World Bank in Cameroon, which focused on the restructuring and development of an unhealthy housing area of 300,000 inhabitants in the city of Douala. Mr. Elong Mbassi began his professional career in Paris, France, where he was a researcher and then a project manager at the Cooperation and Development Agency from 1973 to 1980.



H.E President William Ruto

William Kipchirchir Samoei Arap Ruto (born 21st December 1966) is a Kenyan politician who is serving as the fifth and current President of Kenya. Prior to ascending to Presidency, Ruto was the 11th deputy president after previously serving in several cabinet positions such as the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and as Minister for Higher Education.

Ruto was elected Member of Parliament for Eldoret North constituency from 1997 to 2007, under the KANU and 2007 to 2013 under the ODM. He served as Minister for Home Affairs under the Daniel Arap Moi administration from August to December 2002. Under the Mwai Kibaki administration, he was Minister of Agriculture from 2008 to 2010 and Minister for Higher Education from April to October 2010. Ruto ran for the deputy presidency in the 2013 election under the United Republican Party, becoming the running mate of Uhuru Kenyatta from The National Alliance (TNA).

PROFILE

McAuliffe

The Real Deal

...the man who beat the odds

Terry McAuliffe is a former governor of the State of Virginia, a place which bars governors from serving successive terms.

Earlier this year, the seasoned candidate – whose story in the Democratic Party is defined by millions of dollars raised, the Clintons, and a tenure as chair of the Democratic National Committee – held his ground among a primary field of younger, more liberal challengers, proving, at least in Virginia, Democrats are not yet tired of long-time politicians.

McAuliffe prioritizes access to quality health care, housing and educational opportunities, which eminently qualifies him to speak at the NGF induction because his priorities tally firmly with the core mandate areas of the NGF. McAuliffe has said he would require vaccines for students, teachers and health care workers and would support businesses that imposed mandates. Quite impressively, McAuliffe believes in the need for affordable health care, wants to lower prescription drug costs, end gun violence and move Virginia toward clean energy while promoting green jobs.

McAuliffe, who served as governor of Virginia from 2014 to 2018, has been a staple in Democratic politics for decades. Before putting his own name on the ballot, McAuliffe had long been a prolific Democratic fundraiser

and adviser, with close ties to Bill and Hillary Clinton. McAuliffe would often boast of raising around \$275 million for an assortment of Clinton efforts, including both of Bill Clinton's presidential campaigns and Hillary Clinton's first Senate campaign.

As a Governor, he focused intently on bringing business to Virginia during his years in office, often touting the economic success he had during his tenure, such as bringing 200,000 new jobs to Virginia, he says. He often sparred with the state's Republican-controlled legislature, vetoing a record number of bills. He ended his time in office by restoring voting rights for thousands of formerly convicted felons in Virginia. And McAuliffe, who was governor when Donald Trump was elected to the presidency in 2016, became one of many Democratic governors who worked to oppose much of what Trump's administration attempted.

Following his time as governor, he was also a CNN commentator. McAuliffe, after considering a presidential run himself, endorsed Joe Biden during the 2020 Democratic primary and was considered for a Cabinet post in the Biden administration. In 2020, Biden referred to McAuliffe as the "once and future governor of Virginia."

Since taking office, Biden has stumped for McAuliffe and in June told Virginians they had to make him their

state's governor again. "You got to elect him again, and I mean this, not just for Virginia, for the country. The country is looking, these off-year elections, the country's looking. This is a big deal," Biden said at the time. McAuliffe doubled down on the potential national ramifications of the Virginia gubernatorial race during an interview with CNN.

He has beaten the odds before. Since the 1970s, the winner of Virginia's gubernatorial election came from the party opposite the one that had won the White House. The lone exception was when McAuliffe was elected in 2013, a year after Barack Obama had won his second term, a fact the former governor has often used on the campaign trail.

Despite a number of primary challengers eager to knock down the old guard, the former governor entered the Democratic primary race as the clear front-runner, boasting strong fundraising numbers, a long list of endorsements and near-total name recognition he carried through to clinch the primary election.

When it comes to schools, McAuliffe said, "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach." McAuliffe will be discussing areas where he is known to have excelled in the United States – transitions. He is speaking on a smooth transition coordination from campaigning to office, paying attention to critical priorities, taking control of schedules, maintaining work-life balance, and building bridges with arms and tiers of government. If you are an incoming Governor, it will be worth your while to take a listen to the "Real deal."





H.E. PROF.
**Peter
Anyang'
Nyong'o**

Kenya's Mr Fix It

Governor, Kisumu County. Governor Professor Peter Anyang' Nyong'o is the current governor for Kisumu County after the 2017 general election. He is the former Senator for Kisumu County and the Secretary General of the Orange Democratic Movement.

He is an academician as his title, 'Professor', says and was the first Kenyan to receive a First Class Honors Degree at the Faculty of Social Science, Department of Political Science at East Africa's oldest institution of higher learning.

His record at the Ministry of Planning and National Development is exemplary. All his successors have really struggled to beat this record. As the Minister, he developed and played a key role in the implementation of the PRSP, Poverty Reduction Strategy for wealth and employment creation which NARC government used as a development blueprint. This paper is the ideas behind Economic Stimulus Programs we see in every corner of Kenya. Vision 2030 was also his brainchild, a brilliant blueprint

that will move Kenya to a middle-income economy by the year 2030.

Prof Nyong'o performed exceptionally above expectations when he was appointed the minister for medical services in 2008. He reformed KEMSA from being an agency to Authority independent from political interference and getting funding directly from the treasury.

He also transformed NHIF from a Hospital Fund into National Health Insurance Fund to provide universal healthcare to Kenyans. Together with Charity Ngilu in 2004, they initiated a process to provide Kenyans with universal health coverage.

His reign as a Member of Parliament for Kisumu Rural saw several schools constructed and a lot more expanded and upgraded. Through his connections in the academia, he awarded many scholarships to needy students to study at various universities locally and abroad. Kisumu has the potential to compete with modern cities around the globe under the leadership of Kisumu Governor, Prof Peter Anyang Nyong'o

O'Malley:

second time around

O'Malley Martin Joseph, Former Governor of Maryland, USA was a guest of the NGF and spoke on this same platform back in 2019. No stranger to Nigeria and the NGF, O'Malley whose experiences are already being relished by the American audience, where he speaks regularly, in some cases pro-bono, will be sharing that vast experience again with Nigeria's incoming Governors.

He will help incoming Governors and some of the returning ones, who require further debriefing on articulating a Vision for Your Administration, shaping Your Agenda, tracking Your Campaign Promises, focusing Your Priorities (Strategic Planning) and last, but by no way the least, defining Your Legacy, all political lessons that those who might have forgotten wouldn't decline a refresher.

O'Malley is an American politician whose trajectory defines the American Dream. From his humble beginnings in December 1982, while still in college, O'Malley joined the Gary Hart presidential campaign for the 1984 election. In late 1983, he volunteered to go to Iowa where he phone-banked, organized volunteers, played guitar and sang at small fundraisers and other events. In 1986, while in law school, O'Malley was named by then-Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski as state field director for her successful primary and general election campaigns for the U.S. Senate. He served as a legislative fellow in Mikulski's Senate office in 1987 and 1988.

Then he enjoyed a steady climb on the political rodeo. In 1990, O'Malley ran for the Maryland State Senate in the 43rd State Senate District in northeast Baltimore. He was considered an underdog when he first filed to challenge a one term incumbent, but out of nowhere led on election night but lost eventually when the absentee ballots were counted.

O'Malley announced his decision to run for Mayor of Baltimore in 1999. Again, his entrance into the race was greatly unexpected, and he faced initial difficulties as the only Caucasian candidate for mayor of a city which had been predominantly African American. O'Malley focused on reducing crime and received the endorsement of several key African American lawmakers and church leaders, attributes that make his contributions, once again, tailor-made for his NGF audience.

In 2003, O'Malley ran for re-election. He was challenged in the Democratic primary by four candidates but defeated them with 67% of the vote. During his first mayoral campaign, O'Malley focused on a message of reducing crime. In his first year in office, he adopted a statistics-based tracking system called "CitiStat", modeled after Compstat, a crime-management program first employed in the mid-1990s in New York City. The system logged every call for service into a database for analysis. In 2004, the CitiStat accountability tool won Harvard University's "Innovations in American Government" award.

In 2002, at the age of 39, O'Malley was named "The Best Young Mayor in the Country" by Esquire; and in 2005, TIME magazine named him one of America's "Top 5 Big City Mayors". [37] In August 2005, Business Week Magazine Online called him one of five "new stars" in the Democratic Party. O'Malley "has become the Party's go-to guy on protecting the homeland. The telegenic Mayor has developed a detailed plan for rail and port safety. The Baltimore Sun endorsed O'Malley, saying: "When he was first elected mayor in 1999, the former two-term city councilman inherited a city of rising crime, failing schools, and shrinking economic prospects. He was able to reverse course in all of these areas." Even his critics admit his successes. The Washington Post for example, which endorsed his opponent, noted that O'Malley, while "not solving the problems of rampant crime and rough schools in Baltimore," had "put a dent in them".



JUST CALL ME Mallam Dikko Radda

Dikko Umaru Radda is the Governor-Elect of Katsina state.

Dikko Umaru Radda was born on September 10, 1970, in Hayin gada town of Dutsin-ma Local Government Area of Katsina state. He started his formal education at Radda Primary school from 1974, then proceeded to Zaria Teachers College between 1980 and 1985. Radda would later attend Kafanchan College of Education in 1986-1990, where he obtained his NCE certificate. He completed Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi in 1996, with a B-Tech. Agric Economics and Extension (Hons) studies, then he got admission into Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in 1998, and obtained MSC in Agric Extension and Rural Sociology 2004.

Dikko returned to ABU Zaria in 2005 to obtain a master's in international affairs and diplomacy. He completed his PhD in Agriculture and Rural Sociology in 2015.

Mallam Dikko was a schoolteacher, a banker and one time Chairman of Charanchi Local Government Area of Katsina State between January 2005 and April 2007.

The other positions he held were; Senior Assistant to Members of Parliament, NASS, Abuja, 2012-2014, Secretary of Public Welfare (APC), June 2014-July 2015.

He held the traditional title of Gwagwar Katsina in Katsina Emirate and was also Chief of Staff to the Governor of Katsina State.

Radda was also Director General/Chief Executive Officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN).

Achievements

On 12th December 2005, President Olusegun Obasanjo awarded Dikko Umaru Radda, the most outstanding local

government chairman in Nigeria.

Dikko believes there is nothing special about being governor.

The Governor-elect, rejects the title of 'His Excellency' usually attached to serving governors, saying he would prefer to be addressed by his name alone, saying that people will determine whether he was excellent or not after his tenure. Speaking with newsmen in Abuja, the governor-elect said there is nothing spectacular about being a governor. "I think it's just a responsibility that someone has to take. And when I was declared the winner and saw the overwhelming applause that I received in my state, it gave me mixed feelings. I know that the people of Katsina repose a lot of hope in me; they believe in me."

"I want to be as normal as anybody because I don't want that thing (Excellency) to get into my head. I will prefer if people can call me Mr. Governor or Mallam Dikko Radda."

He said his immediate focus will be the security of the state and civil service reforms.

"A year before I aspired to become a governor, I already had my blueprint called Building a Future. Our focus is to tackle insecurity in Katsina state.

"Secondly, we want to also reform the public service, digitalize it and provide training or retraining of our public servants because they are the bridge with which you can carry out your policies.

"We also want to look at education which is a cardinal part of development. Healthcare is also of major concern because when you look at the social aspect of our society, because of this insurgency, there are so many people who are displaced from their homes, and old men who cannot carter for themselves. They need the help of the government.

"So we want to also establish public care

scheme and this public care scheme will need at least 15 Public Social Care Centers that will cater for those categories of people in Katsina state.

"We also want to prepare the local economy and MSMEs because this is the engine room for economic development and that is the only way you can provide jobs for our teeming youths.

"I want to also establish an agency like SMEDAN which will be under the office of the governor so that I can handle it seriously and ensure that it's effective. And then we also want to look at the internally generated revenue.

"We don't want to continue to rely on the federal allocation for state activities. We also want to look at land reforms.

"We want to review our land and also review our master plan so that we can have a state of our dream, a capital of our dream, and this is the policy direction of our administration."

The Katsina state governor-elect urged the people and the opposition parties in the state to join hands with him to deliver on his mandate.

He said: "I think for the opposition I'm expecting each and every one of them to come on board let's build Katsina state together and I think for anybody who aspired to be a governor of the state, his mind is just on the people. What do I do to change the lives of the people? How do I provide better living standards for the people? I think that is the essence of government.

"So for any election, there should be a winner and a loser. And I've said it even before now I have prayed to Almighty God that may the best candidate for the people of Katsina win, and if there is anybody who is better than me, God should give the leadership to the person but despite this prayer I got elected. So that means I have a lot ahead of me.

"The time of politics is over"

Domestic food prices remain high

– World Bank



The World Bank says

domestic food price inflation remains high across the world.

This is according to the latest Food Security Update report obtained from the World Bank website by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja.

The report showed information from the latest month between October 2022 and February 2023 for which food price inflation data were available.

It showed high inflation in almost all low- and middle-income countries with inflation levels above five per cent in 88.21 per cent of low-income countries.

“Inflation in 93 per cent of lower-middle-income countries, and 89.0 per cent of upper-middle-income countries and many experiencing double-digit inflation.”

In addition, the report said about 85.7 per cent of high-income countries were experiencing high food price inflation.

“The countries affected most are in Africa, North America, Latin America, South Asia, Europe, and Central Asia.”

It said according to a recent report from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

(FAO), the benchmark index of international food commodity prices declined for the 11th consecutive month in February 2023.

“The FAO Food Price Index averaged 129.8 points in February, a marginal 0.6 per cent decrease from January 2023 and an 18.7 per cent decrease from its peak in March 2022.”

NAN also recalls that the heads of FAO, IMF, World Bank Group, World Food Programme, and World Trade Organisation released a Third Joint statement on Feb 8.

The statement was to draw attention on the need to prevent a worsening of the food and nutrition security crisis, while further urgent actions are required to rescue hunger hotspots.

A call was also made to facilitate trade, improve the functioning of markets, and enhance the role of the private sector

It was also a call to reform and repurpose harmful subsidies with careful targeting and efficiency.

The executives also urged countries to balance short-term urgent interventions with longer-term resilience efforts as they respond to the crisis.

“

Inflation in 93 per cent of lower-middle-income countries, and 89.0 per cent of upper-middle-income countries and many experiencing double-digit inflation



Workers will miss you

- Labour tells Ugwuanyi

The leadership of the organised labour in Enugu State comprising the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) has paid glowing tributes to Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi for his commitment to the welfare of the state's workforce notwithstanding the avalanche of challenges that dogged his administration since 2015.

The labour leaders in what could be described as a valedictory visit to Governor Ugwuanyi at the Government House, Enugu, said that the governor has done so well for the workers even though "we may not say that you have solved all the issues facing workers."

The organised labour stressed that Governor Ugwuanyi met the most difficult economic recession

twice in the history of Enugu State and in Nigeria, and yet, he was able to address the basic needs of the workers to a satisfactory level, and enjoyed a harmonious working relationship with the state workforce.

Pointing out that Enugu is predominantly a civil service state with inherent huge wage bills and other related financial obligations to be attended to monthly from the state's lean resources, the workers appreciated the governor's remarkable efforts in addressing their needs and also attending to the development of the state.

Speaking on behalf of the workers of the state and leaders of the organised labour, the State Chairman of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), Comrade Bennett Asogwa, disclosed that their relationship with Governor Ugwuanyi was very cordial and unprecedented in the history



of the state, saying: "Your Excellency, we are going to miss you seriously.

Comrade Asogwa highlighted the good things that Governor Ugwuanyi's administration did for the workers to include payment of N30,000 new minimum wage with its consequential adjustment, enhanced civil servants' welfare, regular payment of workers' salaries and retirees' pensions as well as promotion, training and retraining of workers, besides making 100 lucky civil servants proud landlords of one bedroom apartment each.

He went on to thank the governor and reassured him of their unceasing prayers, solidarity and support.

"If we sit down and count what you (Ugwuanyi) have done for workers, that is the only time people will understand how far you have taken us.

"You gave us that free hand that we could call, we could text, we could come physically at any time interact with you. It is a very rare privilege even considering your tight schedule as a governor.

"Your Excellency, you have already set the precedence that must be sustained because

If we sit down and count what you (Ugwuanyi) have done for workers, that is the only time people will understand how far you have taken us

whatever the case may be, nobody will say he is going to meet more difficult economic challenges than you met because we know you came in when there was economic recession in the country and thereafter, the COVID-19 pandemic a long with the EndSARS protests, among others.

"These challenges did not scare you from implementing the new minimum wage. There were so many other abandoned structures before you came in as governor and you brought things to order.

Appreciating the workers for their kind words, solidarity and support all this while, Governor Ugwuanyi charged them to remain focused and committed to the peace and progress of the state.

He urged them to extend the same support and cooperation to his successor.

The climax of the visit was the formal introduction of the new State Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Barr. Fabian Nwigbo and other new executives of the union to Governor Ugwuanyi.

Also present at the event were the Commissioner for Lands and Urban Development, Nnanyelugo Chidi Aroh and the Special Adviser to the Governor on Due Process, Mr. Sylvanus Onoyima.

We shall reposition EKSU for academic excellence

– Oyebanji

...promises intervention through collaboration with stakeholders

Ekiti state Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji has said his administration would reposition Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti as a centre of academic excellence with a strategic collaboration with the University Council, management and unions, students body, parents and other stakeholders.

The Governor stated this while receiving a delegation of the National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS) led by its Vice President, Mr Akinteye Babatunde in his office.

He said he had to constitute the University council after rigorous but careful consultation and came up with people he believe could add value to the institution and help solve the myriad of problems bedeviling it.

He assured that his government would do what is administratively possible to return EKSU to its pride of place and save it from total collapse as he would not want to be seen as usurping the power and responsibility of the university council and that of management.

The NANS leadership has sought the intervention of the Governor in the tuition fee issue in the University in the meeting held at the Governor's Office, Ado-Ekiti.

Governor Oyebanji, who is also the Visitor to the University identified what he called "politicization of school fees" by some political leaders as one of the sources of crises in the university.

He said a situation where school fees were reduced for political reasons without recourse to or consultation with council and management in order to arrive at a realistic fees chargeable would always lead to crisis.

He stressed the need for all the stakeholders of the institution to have a meeting where the development and repositioning of the institution would be discussed and bring an end to all problems once and for all.



Governor Oyebanji, who noted that the institution was without electricity supply for more than ten years promised to restore electricity supply to the institution through the state owned Independent Power Project (IPP) as well as the timely completion of the 12kilometer road from Ado-Ekiti through the University gate to Iworoko Ekiti to make the campus more conducive for academic work.

He commended the maturity displayed by all unions in the institution thanking them for their perseverance, sacrifice and for having interest of the state and the students at heart.

"I'm obligated to EKSU, EKSU produced me and I'm proud of it. So, I plead with you to show patience and see what we are going to do, because I have confidence in the ability of the newly appointed council members to bring to bear their wealth of experience in ensuring that we have a university that works, university that gives you pride and which guarantee a stable educational system.

"As a government, we are working so hard to ensure that we get electricity to that place, we are constructing the road to Iworoko. Part of the reason why we are doing that is to ensure that you have thoroughfare to campus and we've spent billions of Naira on that road just to make life easy for you.

"EKSU is sick, extremely sick and its in ICU and we have a choice to either live it to die and close it down or we attempt a revival

of that institution.

"One thing I can assure you is that we can't be emotional about the problem in EKSU, students complain that they don't graduate on time, workers are not been paid regularly. You spoke about subvention.

"We have a choice either to push for a 21st century institution or a glorified secondary school, I went to the same university and I knew how it was then compared to now with respect to quality of education not minding the physical structures. I don't know if you are aware, Mr Vice President, that for the past ten years, EKSU has no electricity despite having students studying Engineering and Computer Science, last week I demanded for what it will cost government to extend that state's IPP to the university and they said it will cost N500Million, I will rather do that than ask the university to bear the cost.

"The reason I am saying this is for you to know that we have a stake in the University because most of the cabinet members including myself were alumni of EKSU. I have an endowment of N250,000 in the institution for the best student. So, all of us are critical stakeholders in that University. The Governor stated.

Earlier, the Vice President of NANS, Comrade Akinteye Babatunde requested the intervention of the Governor to make EKSU management reverse the hike in the tuition of the institution saying education was a right of every Nigerian and should not be allowed to be commercialized.

Akinteye noted that high tuition fees of the institution has led to drastic reduction to student enrolment at EKSU stressing the need for government to increase subvention to the institution to enable it meet its responsibility to its workers and offset its debt of N13Billion.

Also at the meeting were the Secretary to the State Government, Dr Habib Adubiario, Head of Service, Barr. Bamidele Agbede, Special Adviser on Education, Science and Technology, Dr Bimpe Aderiye, Special Adviser, Media and Strategy, My Yinka Oyebo, Chairman, Academic Staff Union of Universities, Dr Kayode Arogundade and former President of NANS, Comrade Sunday Ashefon.

...charges governing councils

Meanwhile, Governor Oyebanji has inaugurated chairmen and members of the Governing Councils of three state owned higher institutions with a charge to them to develop a rescue agenda to reposition the institutions to enviable heights.

Inaugurating the councils at the Conference Hall of the Governor's Office, Ado-Ekiti Governor Oyebanji urged the newly inaugurated council members to enhance educational performance and functionality of the institutions by attracting endowment funds from outside the universities as government could not fully fund higher institutions alone.

The Governor said universities were expected to be repositories of knowledge, invention, innovation and talents, adding that higher institutions in the state should not be left out.

Among those inaugurated were a former Vice Chancellor of University of Ado-Ekiti now Ekiti State University, Professor Akin Oyeboode as the Chairman/Pro Chancellor of EKSU, Ado-Ekiti; former Vice Chancellor of EKSU, Prof. Dipo Aina as the Chairman/Pro Chancellor of Bamidele Olumilua University of Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti and Dr Adedamola Dada as Chairman of Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti.

The Governor, who is also the visitor to the three institutions stated that the council members, were all selected based on their track records, to be part of Ekiti prosperity agenda because of the abiding confidence in their character, competence and courage to act rightly with a proven pedigree of professional distinction and evident achievements in their various endeavors among others.

Governor Oyebanji, who noted that the institutions were already faced with myriad of challenges, expressed confidence that with the array of the members of the councils, the institutions would return to its pride of place among Nigeria and World universities.

He therefore charged the councils' members to work assiduously and in tandem with management and other stakeholders to chart a way forward on how to end academic dents in the institutions.

While congratulating the council members on their new appointment, the Governor appealed to various stakeholders in the state to come up with way forward on how to attract and retain the best in our universities and develop a blueprint on how to make the institutions self-sustaining, competitive and of first choice.

"Ladies and gentlemen, as we inaugurate the various Councils today, it is important I reiterate the fact that we are still faced with a myriad of challenges in the education sector, particularly in our higher institutions of learning. The Councils of our universities must therefore work assiduously with the management and other



stakeholders to forge a way forward on how to end academic instability, students restiveness, unpaid salaries, bureaucratic slackness that makes it impossible to get certificate and transcript ready on time and a whole lot of problems that continue to bedevil the development of the institutions. "You have been carefully headhunted to be part of our Ekiti prosperity agenda because of our abiding confidence in your character, competence and courage to act rightly and cause a progressive change in the life of the institutions under your care. All of you are coming from a proven pedigree of professional distinction and evident achievement in your various endeavours. We are grateful to you for your willingness to commit your time and resource to the development our State.

"I urge the Council and the management to come up with a rescue agenda on how to reposition the institutions to an enviable height. In the world of today, where new generation universities are giving the older ones a run for their money, our universities must strive to be on top of the league in research, endowment and training of globally competitive students." He said.

Professor Akin Oyeboode, the Pro-chancellor and Council Chairman of Ekiti State University, who spoke on behalf of the council members, thanked the Governor for the opportunity to serve and for the confidence reposed in them to reposition the universities to their pride of place among Universities in Nigeria.

Kaduna Govt reinstates 1,288 sacked primary school teachers



Gov. El-Rufai

The Kaduna State Government has reinstated 1,288 public primary school teachers sacked in June 2022 after the conduct of competency test.

Hauwa Mohammed, the Public Relation Officer, State Universal Basic Education Board (Kaduna SUBEB), made this known in a statement issued in Kaduna.

Mohammed explained that 1,266 were affected by the competency test, while 22 others were removed from the government payroll for alleged unproven claims.

Recall that the board had in June 2022 sacked 2,357 primary school teachers over incompetence.

The board had explained that of the figure, 2,192 teachers were dismissed for their failure to sit for the test, while 165 teachers were sacked for poor performance.

Some of the affected teachers, however, complained that they wrote the examination and passed, but were still sacked, while others claimed to be sick at the time of the test and provided proof.

Some of the affected workers claimed to have been kidnapped at the time; while some claimed to be on suspension due to verification of their certificates, while others claimed to be central administration staff, and as such, exempted from writing the test.

“Having examined and verified their complaints, the state government approved the reinstatement of 392 teachers, who wrote and passed the test, and 515 central administration staff that were officially exempted from the test.

“Others are: 298 teachers, who were verified to be sick at the time of the test, as well as 61 teachers that were kidnapped or involved in accidents verified by their respective Education Secretaries.

“Also, 22 teachers, who were permanently removed from the payroll for unsubstantiated claims were equally reinstated, amounting to a total of 1,288 reinstated workers.

The spokesperson therefore advised all affected teachers to collect their reinstatement letters from their respective Education Secretaries immediately.

...Appoints transition committee

Kaduna State Government has announced a 65-person Transition Committee which will prepare the roadmap for the implementation of the SUSTAIN manifesto of the incoming administration.

A statement from Sir Kashim Ibrahim House, disclosed that the committee comprises nominees of the outgoing Malam Nasir El-Rufai administration and Senator Uba Sani, the Governor-elect.

“The Transition Committee will be chaired by Balarabe Abbas Lawal, the incumbent Secretary to the

State Government, who was chairman of the Transition Committee in 2015 and vice-chairman in 2019.

“Nuhu Isyaku Buzun, the Permanent Secretary Cabinet and Political Affairs, will serve as secretary to the Committee, which will soon be inaugurated,” the statement added.

Special Adviser on Media and Communication, Mr Muiyiwa Adekeye, explained that the incoming governor, Senator Uba Sani SUSTAIN manifesto is at the core of governance agenda of the next administration.

According to the statement, the SUSTAIN manifesto will “continue the progress recorded in the state since 2015,” adding that “the committee will also arrange the ceremonies to usher in the new government.”

Wike says “I will bow out a fulfilled man”

The Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike says he will bow out of office on May 29 as a fulfilled man, having positively impacted the 23 local government areas of the state.

The governor charged the incoming administration on stewardship.

Wike made the statement during a Thanksgiving Service organized by the state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Rumuokwurushi, Obio/Akpor local government area of the state.

Wike said that only a blind man or an enemy of the state would refuse to admit the extent of spread of equitable infrastructure across the state.

“If your politics is not about the interest of your people, then you have a problem; the electorate are now wiser, you must be ready to present a full ‘report card’ to your people by 2027 if you must continue in politics.”

The governor also attributed the party’s victory at the polls to evidential impacts in the area of good governance and gender balance.

She said there were females serving as Vice-chairmen in the 23 local government areas with not less than 5 female ward councillors in each area and also a handful of female Senators and

bers-elect.

The governor urged the Governor-elect, Mr Siminialayi Fubara and his team not to be distracted by the opposition “bent on dragging them at the tribunal”.

Earlier, the programme’s host and Bishop in charge of the cathedral, Innocent Ordu, noted that Nigeria needed political office holders who were problem solvers not excuse givers.

Reading from the book of James chapter 4: 8, he urged the incoming administration to always seek God’s guidance in their quest for wisdom to deliver good governance to the people of the state.

“We need performance and we need game changers like the outgoing governor, Nyesom Wike, who is indeed a game changer.

“To achieve good governance, particularly in Rivers, Mr Governor-elect, I urge you to assemble a very strong team which by all standards, is competent and capable.

“A team of passionate individuals who love the state more than they love their pockets, a good leader will always surround himself with a team of honest, courageous, God-fearing men and women of integrity to deliver on their assigned tasks,” he said.

“
Nigeria
needed
political office
holders who
were problem
solvers not
excuse givers



Gov. Wike

Oyo governor renames First Technical varsity

The Oyo state governor, has renamed the First Technical University Ibadan to Abiola Ajimobi First Technical University.

The governor announced the name change on his Twitter handle @seyiamakinde.

“After attending the second convocation ceremony of the First Technical University,

Ibadan. I congratulated all graduands of the university and urged them to be good ambassadors of Tech-U and Oyo State as they move to the next phase of their lives.

“I also announced that we have made the decision to rename the university the Abiola Ajimobi First Technical University in honour of my predecessor who established the university.”



Gov. Makinde
www.nggovernorsforum.org

Lagos Deputy Gov. tasks parents on good Child rearing for a better nation

The Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, has urged parents to inculcate contentment and good moral character in their children, to have a progressive nation.

Hamzat gave the advice in Ogba, Lagos at the 3rd Ramadan Lecture and Prayer in memory of his late father, Oba Muftau Hamzat of Afowowa Kingdom, Ewekoro Local Government of Ogun.

The deputy governor noted that no nation could develop “when the citizens fail to behave well”.

He added that it was the duty of every parent to follow the laid down childcare protocol and make sure that every child was well trained.

“As parents, we should ensure proper child rearing and not mislead our children into believing that they can always get whatever they want.

“We should train them about contentment, being respectful to elders and their mates, comportment, humility, hard work, perseverance and other values that make a

complete human being,” he said.

The deputy governor also advised parents to spend more time with their children, in spite of their busy schedules.

He added that it was important for them to make their children understand the essence of life, what it meant, what was needed to be done, and how things should be done.

He also enjoined parents to give priority to their children’s upbringing.

“They need effective monitoring due to their exposure to the internet.

“If they are not well trained, somebody else, who does not share their values, will train them on the internet,” he explained.

Hamzat, therefore, tasked parents to instill their cultural values, ethics, morals, and discipline into their children so that they could grow as responsible children that obeyed and feared God, and not as internet children, who did not know right from left.

Similarly, the Executive Chairman of Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government, Mr Usman Hamzat, urged parents to instill good moral values in their children, “as you are the major trainers of the children”.

The Chairman noted that the best way to train a child was to look after them right from birth.

He added that parents



should be of good character “because children emulate what they see in their parents and this is what they will eventually portray to the society.

“With good characters at home, the teaching of the books of God and good education, the children will be good in the community”.

In his lecture entitled “Child Upbringing in Islam”, Sheikh Ismail Agbayawo, Chairman, Council of Muslim Umma of Ifako-Ijaiye/Ojokoro, said that

“raising children was beyond having one to send on errands or having someone to bury them when they died, or to take care of them at old age”.

According to him, a child is rather begotten to live after the parent and demonstrate the good teachings and legacies of the parents.

He, therefore, urged parents to bring up their children in a Godly way and ensure that they exposed them to both western and moral education, to be responsible to themselves, their parents and community at large.



My doors always open

– Bayo Lawal, Oyo Dep Gov.

Prof. Afis Oladosu, Lecturer in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, has advised Nigerians not to see any leader as a saviour who could provide their needs.

Oladosu gave the advice at an annual Ramadan Lecture organised by the Muslim Lawyers' Association of Nigeria (MULAN), Oyo State branch in Ibadan.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the theme of the lecture was: "Model For Accountable Leadership In A Pluralistic Society".

He urged Nigerians to always put their faith in God as the only ONE who could meet their needs and not leaders or any other human being.

The don, however, called on those in position of authorities not to neglect their responsibilities in providing the needed social amenities for the populace, urging them to use their sacred position to better the lives of the citizens.

He, also urged them to fear God in their deeds and have it at the back of their minds that they would one day account for their deeds in the hereafter.

"Nigerians need credible leaders who are committed and have concern for the citizens.

"The responsibility of followers is to pray for the leaders and give them advise to enable them to succeed.

"As Muslims, we must maintain our sanctity in this Month of Ramadan and beyond.

"We must be in control of our anger, forgive and forget whenever anyone offends us and put our trust in Allah," he said.

Also, the Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Bayo Lawal, said that some people doubted his faith of being a Muslim, but most people believed that he remained a committed Muslim.

Lawal said that as a representative of the face of Muslims in government, his doors were always open to address their challenges.

He called on the Muslims to use the advantage



The responsibility of followers is to pray for the leaders and give them advise to enable them to succeed

of being in government to pursue whatever that would benefit the society.

In his remarks, the Chairman of MULAN, Oyo State branch, Alhaji Akeem Adetunji, called on the newly elected leaders in Nigeria to fear Allah in all their deeds and always listen to advise in order to succeed.

Adetunji said the topic of the lecture was chosen deliberately because of its relevance to the tone of the prevailing political atmosphere in Nigeria.

He prayed Allah to direct the affairs of the country and make it a shining light in the comity of nations.

The Chairman of the Day, Mr Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), said that the essence of Ramadan fasting for Muslims was to take away their bad habits and compelled leaders to be just and incorruptible.

Fagbemi, represented by Mr Kazeem Gbadamosi (SAN), urged Muslims not to return to their bad habits, which they have refrained from during the Month of Ramadan.

Commenting, Mr Yusuf Ali (SAN), represented by Mr Ojo Adebayo (SAN), former Oyo State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, commended MULAN for the Ramadan programme.

Ali urged Muslims to always use their numerical strength in striving for position of authority and be good ambassadors of Islam.

"We must be of good conduct while in position of authority in order to portray the good image of Islam," Ali said.

He urged Nigerians to always call leaders to order whenever they were going astray.

Present at the occasion were Prof. Muslih Yahya, the Executive Secretary of Muslim Umah of South-West Nigeria (MUSWEN); Alhaja Sofiat Oyediran, the Chief Registrar, Oyo State High Court; Justice Mashud Abas, President of Court of Appeal, Oyo State and Alhaji Lasu Sanusi (SAN), a Patron of MULAN.

Others included: Mrs Folasade Aladeniyi, Chairperson, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Ibadan branch; Justice M. Olagunju, National President of MULAN and Dr Kazeem Olaniyan among others.

OPINION

The Security Votes Must Secure The People

By Dele Olowu

Weak governance and oversight structures have often imposed an air of incredulity on public finance instruments in Nigeria. Perhaps none enjoys greater infamy than the so called “Security Vote”, a discretion by which incumbents of state institutions, are allowed to peel off a percentage of receipts to address unnamed exigencies. This discretion has an unfathomable history and some have traced it to the war years, when Commanders with frontline responsibilities, needed untrammelled discretion to address the urgent savageries of forward positions.

This convention has now slipped into civic and public administration, and some of the abuses have been detected in the past and sometimes punished. In 2018, for example one Governor was famously convicted and jailed fourteen years for the misuse of security votes.

Justice Emmanuel Agima who read the judgement noted “that in Nigeria, there was a pervasive tendency on the part of public officers to regard or treat security votes collected by them as their personal entitlements or funds.” He continued “this is completely wrong. Any public officer in charge of such funds must either account for them or return them to the public coffers. Failure to do so amounts to stealing.” Several other former Governors remain under the threat of investigation in respect of security vote abuse.

Malfeasance in public life is a continuing anguish and expresses itself globally. In

spite of the regular drama associated with revelations of public theft, there is evidence of an increasing resolve to attack corruption in public places. Great concern has been provoked by the recent Financial Action Task Force FATF and European Union EU grey listing of Nigeria over shortfalls in combating illicit finance and organized crime.

The Financial Action Task Force is the global money laundering and terrorist financial watchdog. The 39 member body sets international standards to ensure that national authorities can effectively go after illicit funds linked to drug trafficking, illicit arms trade, cyber fraud and other serious crimes. The grey listing of Nigeria, particularly by FATF is a special worry as it could be an indicator that parts of security votes are still going to unseemly purposes.

The routine declarative avowal that our Governors are the chief security officers of states is sometimes met with grunts of utter disbelief. Even if a constitutional warrant existed for this assumption, the fact that control of all the security establishment rests in the exclusive federal list, should mean that we dress our Governors in borrowed robes or as some might say, in no robes at all. But in truth, even if not constitutionally sanctioned

, our Governors play a crucial role in maintaining peace in their local jurisdictions. So in effect, the security vote, once denounced as a cesspool for supporting self-help has become a tool for arresting social and political danger.

Sometimes, control of security by the Governors can be dodgy. For example, when in October 2020: the ENDSARS protests seemed to have reached worrying limits, Babajide Sanwo-Olu imposed a total curfew. However that same night soldiers went to the toll gate plaza and a fracas broke out. It is still a matter

of great controversy who exactly, authorized the intervention of the military. But what must be acknowledged is that you can not control what you do not own. However security has become an increasing obligation

of state administrations. The maintenance of civic order in the public space is an important item in the agenda of every Governor. The Nigerian Governor's Forum has been keenly aware of this and has therefore continued to sharpen the sensibilities of our Governors in respect of this all important function.

In saner times, security obligations of Governors did not go beyond settling community fights over ancestral lands or the desecration of shrines and burial grounds. Now the environment has changed and

differences are expressed in more exuberant and harmful terms.

Thus our Governors have been challenged to provide support so that existential threats can be arrested. One of the entities which has benefited most visibly from state governments is the Nigerian Police Force. One credible source has observed that the funding given to the Nigerian police by state governments is higher than what the police force gets from the Federal government. This benevolence should be applauded but it can however be counterproductive.

The donor does not for example, engage in a proper needs assessment before swamping the police with gifts.

Sometimes the police receives huge convoys of vehicles as if the police was a transport company. At other times a contradiction is created, as the Police suddenly owns more vehicles than it can provide fuel for or than it can reasonably maintain. Thus vehicles are abandoned on account of simple mechanical reversals that can sometimes lead to or be exploited for premature boarding. Security challenges are real and are now widespread. The vote is growing and can be justified by the virulence of the challenges around us. But in addressing these challenges the impression must not be created that there is a redundancy of funds at the state level. A state does no real favors when it endows an entity with more vehicles than it needs, while the donor itself, is unable to provide potable drinking water for citizens even in its capital city alone. Then of great consequence is the fact that these security votes are not properly accounted for.

“

The routine declarative avowal that our Governors are the chief security officers of states is sometimes met with grunts of utter disbelief

VIEWPOINT

Taxes as Key to Nigeria's Economic and Infrastructure Development

To begin this discussion, it is imperative that we attempt to understand what taxes are all about.

Taxation is defined as the imposition of compulsory levies on individuals or entities by governments across the world. Taxation is used primarily to raise revenue to finance government expenditures among other reasons.

The Nigerian government is primarily reliant on taxes as they are a significant source of revenue and a major source of income for the government to discharge its responsibilities.

No one doubts the fact that the country today falls short of infrastructural development despite the unprecedented turnaround in revenue generation and collection courtesy of the country's Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS under the leadership of its Executive Chairman, Muhammad Nami.

The FIRS in Nigeria is the agency of the Federal Government Agency statutorily charged with the responsibility and powers to assess, collect, account, and enforce payment

of taxes accruable to the Government of the Federation.

It is commonly said that taxation is a contribution individual and corporate entities make toward national development. Many see this as their obligation under the social contract where they contribute to enabling the government to provide social amenities, welfare services, and infrastructural development among others.

Visible and noticeable key projects the government has executed with taxes across education, roads, health, power, agriculture, and other key sectors have dotted the country

It is not in doubt that the FIRS has been up and doing significantly and substantially improving revenue generation and collection in the country in the last few years. In return, the country's infrastructural development has steadily improved across the length and breadth of the country.

Since Government cannot provide these resources if citizens do not reciprocate by paying their taxes when due as an obligation, citizens must assist the government to provide it with resources to fund the development of the country.

Visible and noticeable key projects the government has executed with

taxes across education, roads, health, power, agriculture, and other key sectors have dotted the country. Examples abound in the construction of the Loko-Oweto Bridge; the Second Niger Bridge, the construction and equipping of Primary Health Care Centres, and the building and equipping of schools with the necessary infrastructure among many others.

Records show that TETFUND has disbursed over N2 trillion financed through the 2.5% education tax from the assessable profit of companies operating in Nigeria.

The government needs taxes as sustainable sources of funding social programmes like health, education, infrastructure, and other services which are important to achieve the common goal of a prosperous, functional, and orderly society and most importantly to foster the country's economic growth and development.

One can confidently say that governments raise revenues so as to pay for public goods and services. The commitment of the FIRS leadership in pursuing taxes generation and collection is very encouraging.

Undoubtedly, taxes are key to Nigeria's survival, and economic and infrastructural development and FIRS is at the centre of it while doing the country proud.

Gender inclusion: MacArthur Foundation, Kogi Govt bag 2023 African SABRE PR Awards

For supporting campaigns on gender inclusion in communication practice, the MacArthur Foundation and Kogi State Government are among the winners of the Africa Public Relations Awards 2023 which recognises Superior Achievement in Branding Reputation and Engagement (SABRE).

The Department of State Security Service (DSS) and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) also bagged Certificates of Excellence of the annual award event hosted by Provoke Media in collaboration with the African Public Relations Association (APRA) to celebrate campaigns that demonstrate the highest levels of creativity, integrity, and effectiveness.

The campaigns of the four recipients were undertaken in partnership with a multi-award-winning PR agency, Image Merchants Promotion Limited (IMPR), the Publishers of PRNigeria, and Economic Confidential.

The MacArthur Foundation and Kogi State Government jointly won a Trophy and Certificate of Excellence for Employee Communication and West-African region Categories of the awards for supporting PRNigeria's campaign on gender inclusiveness titled "Nigerian Ladies in PR" where female interns and staff are trained and tasked with advocacies that promote inter-ethnic relations, national unity, good governance, and gender equality. The campaigns were executed through public speaking, press releases, article writing, social media engagements, and book publishing.

The DSS campaign was recognised under Public Sector/Government Category for tackling lingering fuel scarcity threatening the Ember Months through stakeholder engagement and effective communication.

The NITDA campaign was recognised under Public Affairs/Government Relations Category for deploying mainstream and social media, as a tech regulatory agency in countering misconceptions by educating the public on the benefits of its Code of Practice for Social Media and Online Platforms.

The campaigns for the 2023 Africa SABRE Awards were evaluated by a jury of industry leaders. The



award trophies and certificates of excellence will be presented to the winners at the Africa SABRE award ceremony on May 18, as part of the 2023 African Public Relations Conference (APRA) in Lusaka, Zambia.

Apart from Image Merchants Promotion Limited based in Abuja, other PR firms from Nigeria, mostly Lagos-based also won various categories of the SABRE awards. They include CMC Connect, Chain Reactions Africa, LSF PR, Integrated Indigo Limited, 9mobile with Chenist Communications and BHM.

Leading PR firms mostly from South and East Africa also bagged multiple awards. They include APO Group, BCW, Hill+Knowlton East Africa Limited; Razor PR/M&C Saatchi Group, Ogilvy South Africa, P&L Consulting Limited, Edelman Africa, MSL, WE Communications and Retroviral PR of South-Africa.

Other award winners across the African Continent include Instinctif Partners Africa, Eclipse Communications, Tribeca Public Relations, Zethical (Mauritius), KAMuses, Clockwork and Publicis Groupe.

The winning organisations and brands whose campaigns were promoted by PR firms in Africa include Lagos State Government, Ford South Africa, Mastercard Foundation, Jack Ma Foundation, Kenya Airways, NISSAN, Hollard Insurance Ghana

In entertainment, media, and communication technology, the winning brands include: Vodacom, MTN, Airtel, 9Mobile, IBM, Microsoft, HP, Canon, Multichoice, Johnnie Walker, Warner Brothers, and BetKing Nigeria

The winning brands in the food and beverage industry include Honeywell Group Limited, Nestle, Floor Mill Nigeria, Shoprite, KFC, Nigerian Breweries, Kenya Breweries, East African Breweries, Coca Cola, and Phoenix Beverage.

World Bank says 850m people lack proof of identity worldwide

The World Bank says 850 million people across the world do not have proof of identity, with half of the number being people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Practice Manager for Social Protection and Jobs, West and Central Africa of the World Bank, Mr. Christian Bodewig, stated this on Wednesday.

He spoke at the inaugural meeting of the Supervisory Committee for the West Africa Unique Identification for Regional Integration and Inclusion (WURI) Programme, held at Raddison Blu Hotel, Ikeja.

He said that lack of identity was a major challenge which must be resolved in the nearest future, noting that identification systems are paramount for public and private service providers to facilitate access to basic services.

WURI is a multi phase programme financed by the World Bank and implemented by Economic Community of West African States.

Its aim is to foster regional dialogues and co-operation for cross border mutual recognition of foundational identity systems for access to services.

"In a rapidly changing world, identification systems have become a fundamental pillar on which public and private service providers rely to facilitate access to basic services such as social protection, health, education, water, electricity, financial and digital services.

"It is estimated that approximately 850 million people worldwide lack proof of identity, half of whom are in Sub-Saharan Africa, and this creates daily challenges for the people concerned.

"It is a major obstacle to the efforts of states as they strive to organise and augment participation in society through the services offered to the population," he said.

He noted that the WURI programme had adopted a regional vision from its conception and took into account the high level of intra-regional mobility in the ECOWAS region.

Bodewig said that the programme aims to facilitate access to services by providing proof of government-recognized identity in participating countries.

"The programme is structured through national projects, and at the same time, it's a project of cross-border



interoperability of the foundational identification systems of each of the participating countries, and mutual recognition of those credentials, allowing access to services therein.

"The vision is ambitious and innovative and its scope goes beyond these six countries, paving the way for other countries to facilitate cross-border access to services and greater movement of people and goods," he said.

He expressed confidence in the political will of the participating states and their capacities to meet the challenges and ambition of the programme and its vision of boosting human capital in the region.

Bodewig reiterated the bank's commitment to supporting economic development and improving the well-being of people.

Mrs Massandje Toure-Litse, Commissioner, Economic Affairs and Agriculture, said that the commission had commissioned technical studies to shed light on the roadmap for cross border interoperability of foundational identity systems across the six member states.

She noted that the commission would harmonise with committees to facilitate cooperation towards attainment of the programme's goals.

"There is much for the member states to discuss as we collaborate on linking the foundational identity systems to at least four services across the region.

"It is a huge task, but its achievement is nonetheless within our reach if we relentlessly sustain and even improve momentum gathered by all," she said.

Mr Albert Siaw-Boateng, Project Coordinator/Director of Free Movement of Persons and Migration, said that the programme would help in addressing poverty in the region.

He noted that it would also help in strengthening economies of the countries involved in the programme.

"In every programme initiated, the core aim is to help the interest of the masses, so this programme would ensure that people have access to basic facilities through identification.

"Due to the lack of proper identification, people have been missing out on several benefits so the importance of this programme cannot be overemphasized," he said.

Permanent representatives of the six member states signed the governance framework of the supervisory committee.

The member states are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Togo.



Ganduje has pardoned 4,000 inmates in 8 years – Official

Kano State governor Abdullahi Ganduje has pardoned 4,000 inmates in the last eight years, Chief Press Secretary to the deputy governor, Malam Hassan Fagge, said in Kano.

Fagge, in a statement, quoted Ganduje as stating this while pardoning 43 inmates at the Goron Dutse custodial facility to mark this year's Eid-el-Fitr celebration.

Represented by his deputy, Alhaji Nasiru Gawuna, Ganduje said that his government had, within the eight years, spent N4.9 million to settle fines and compensations for the inmates.

While stressing that freedom was everything to human life, he called on the pardoned inmates to exhibit good character on return to the society.

Mr Suleiman Inuwa, the Controller of the correctional service in the State, in a remark, explained that the gesture would assist in decongesting the facilities.

He added that it would also ensure peaceful atmosphere in the yard.

Inuwa urged the beneficiaries to be good ambassadors of the Nigerian Correctional Service by being law abiding.

Mallam Abdullahi Garba, Chairman of the Council on Prerogative of Mercy, thanked the governor for exercising the power conferred on him by the constitution to free the inmates.

He also thanked the correctional service management and the council for recommending the inmates for that gesture.

Ganduje begs for forgiveness, says "I've forgiven those who wronged me"

Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano State has begged for forgiveness from those he might have offended in the course of governing the state.

Ganduje spoke at a Ramadan lecture series at Al Furqan Juma'at Mosque located at Nasarawa GRA, Kano.

The governor said he had forgiven those who wronged him and they should reciprocate the same by forgiving him.

"I've forgiven anyone who at one time disparaged my person and my character for whatever reasons, and on my part, I equally beg or seek for your forgiveness for all that I've done wrong to you," Ganduje said.

He said the inspiration

was drawn from the position of Islam, adding that "as espoused by the leader of this Mosque, forgiveness occupies a prime spot in our religion.

"My tenure as governor of Kano state has come to an end, and this is a farewell greeting. I wish you all the best.

"For those who we have wronged, forgive us, on my part I've forgiven those who wronged me no matter the weight of the offence."

Ganduje's two terms of eight years as the chief helmsman of Nigeria's most populous state inches close to an end on May 29, 2023, where he is expected to hand over rein of power to the opposition New Nigeria People's Party's governor-elect, Abba Kabiru.



Ex-Anambra Gov, Mbadinuju dies at 78, Soludo mourns

Former Governor of Anambra State, Dr Chinwoke Mbadinuju, is dead, a family source has announced.

The deceased son, Cheta, said their patriarch died at the National Hospital, Abuja, aged 78.

Cheta announced the death on behalf of the family in a statement issued in Awka and made available to newsmen.

He stated: "With a heavy heart, but utmost gratitude to God for a life well spent, we announce the passing of our father, grandfather, uncle, friend and associate, Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, a former

governor of Anambra and elder statesman.

"At this trying time, we pray for God's grace and mercy upon him and those he left behind to mourn him.

"His funeral arrangements will be announced in due course by the family," Cheta added.

In a reaction, Gov. Chukwuma Soludo commiserated with the deceased family, Uli Community of Ihiala Local Government Area and entire people of Anambra over the loss.

In a statement signed by Christian Aburime, his Press Secretary,

Soludo said the late 'Odera', as he was fondly called, would be remembered for signing the Law that created the Anambra Vigilance Service, Anambra State University, Uli, among other legacy projects.

He urged the family to ensure it sustained his good legacies and prayed God to grant his soul eternal repose.



Late Mbadinuju

...A great loss to Nigeria says Yahaya Bello

Gov. Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has described the death of former Anambra Governor, Chinwoke Mbadinuju, as a great loss to Nigeria

In a condolence message to the Government and People of Anambra, family and friends of the deceased, issued in Lokoja by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, the governor expressed shock over the death.

"I am deeply humbled and saddened by the news of the death of former Governor of Anambra, His Excellency Chinwoke Mbadinuju.

"His death is a great loss to us all, and his contributions to Anambra in particular where he served as governor between 1999 and 2003 and Nigeria in general will always remain prominent.

"I hereby offer my sincere condolences to the people of

Anambra, family, friends and associates of the deceased and pray that the Almighty God grants them the strength and comfort to weather the difficult period."

The governor said that he shared in their grief, and offered his sincere condolences to them and prayed Almighty God to grant them the strength and comfort to weather the difficult period.

Bello also described Mbadinuju, who was also former editor of Times International and Associate Professor of Politics and African Studies at the State University of New York, as a "visionary" leader.

According to him, the late Mbadinuju, while as Governor, had a clear understanding of the challenges facing his state and painstakingly designed programs and policies that prioritized the security of his people while providing a level playing field for

all Anambra citizens.

He expressed confidence that the late governor would always be remembered for his sacrifices, contributions and the remarkable impact that he had on the people of the state.

"As we mourn the passing of our senior colleague and elder brother, we must also celebrate his life, pay tribute to his good works, and pledge to emulate his ideals.

"Please accept my heartfelt condolences, and may the soul of the former Governor rest in peace with the Almighty God," he prayed.

NAN reports that before joining mainstream politics, he was an Associate Professor of Politics and African Studies at the State University of New York.

He was personal assistant to the governor of the old Enugu State, Dr Jim Nwobodo, between 1979 and 1980.

He also served as a personal assistant to former President Shehu Shagari between 1980 and 1983.

He was married to Nnebuogo and they have five children: Ada, Chetachi, Nwachukwu, Uche and Chima.

KNOW YOUR 2023 Elected Governors



ALEX OTTI
ABIA STATE



ENO UMO
AKWA IBOM STATE



MOHAMMED BALA
BAUCHI STATE



ALIA HYACINTH
BENUE STATE



BABAGANA ZULUM
BORNO STATE



OTUNBASO BASSEY
CROSS RIVER STATE



OBOREVORI SHERIFF
DELTA STATE



PETER MBA
ENUGU STATE



NWIFURU FRANCIS
EBONYI STATE



INUWA YAHAYA
GOMBE STATE



NAMADI UMAR
JIGAWA STATE



SANI UBA
KADUNA STATE



YUSUF KABIR
KANO STATE



DIKKO RADDA
KATSINA STATE



ABDURAZAQ ABDULRAHMAN
KWARA STATE



ABDULLAHI SULE
NASARAWA STATE



MOHAMMED BAGO
NIGER STATE



DAPO ABIODUN
OGUN STATE



SEYI MAKINDE
OYO STATE



MUTWANG CALEB
PLATEAU STATE



MAI MALA BUNI
YOBE STATE



LAWAL DAUDA
ZAMFARA STATE



BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU
LAGOS STATE



KEFAS AGBU
TARABA STATE



AHMED ALIYU
SOKOTO STATE



FUBARA SIMINALAYI
RIVERS STATE



Ahmadu Fintiri
ADAMAWA STATE



Nasir Idris
KEBBI STATE



The National Plan On Financing Safe Schools In Nigeria

The

National Plan on Financing Safe Schools in Nigeria was launched by the Hon. Minister of Finance, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, Dr (Mrs) Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, CON, on 16th December 2022. Hon. Minister of Women Affairs, Her Excellency, Dame Pauline Tallen; Hon. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency, Ambassador Zubairu Dada; Hon. Minister of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Goodluck Nanah Opiah; and Hon. Minister of State for Finance, Budget, and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanade Agba were in attendance. The Inspector General of Police, Alkali Baba Usman; Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor; Director General of the

Department of State Security, Alhaji Yusuf Magaji Bichi; Commandant General of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Ahmed Abubakar Audi were also in attendance. Top officials of the Ministries, civil society groups, development partners, relevant stakeholders in education and the press were fully represented. The Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, was represented by the Head of Education at the Secretariat of the Nigeria Governors' Forum. The launch of the National Plan on Financing Safe Schools in Nigeria was sequel to the formal signing of the Safe School Declaration Ratification Documents by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari on 31st December 2019, which signalled the commitment of Nigeria to implement the Safe School Declaration and demonstrate the resolve of government to address the challenges posed by conflicts and insecurity to safe schools in the country.

Key indicators

1. The National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools in Nigeria was launched in August 2021 by the Federal Ministry of Education.

This was aimed at mobilising resources and implement an action plan that would effectively provide a safer and more secured teaching and learning environment for over 40 million school children and their teachers in about 81,545 schools in the country.

2. The federal and state governments are expected to contribute to the funding of the safe school programme through budgetary allocations and other statutory interventions. This became pertinent because many children are currently out of school due to insecurity. The provision of a safe and secured learning environment in Nigeria is a fundamental thrust of government at all levels.

3. In driving the implementation process, the State Ministry of Education is expected to constitute a state steering committee headed by the Hon. Commissioner of Education; technical committee by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education; and implementation committee headed by the Chairman, State Universal Basic Education Commission. This is also applicable at the Federal Ministry of Education. These are implementation strategies to reopen over 11,536 schools

closed between December 2020 and March 2022.

4. The State Ministry of Education is mandated by the policy to conduct hazard assessments of schools within their purview and put necessary measures in place to ameliorate or remove identified hazards through the provision of necessary funding, facilities, training, and interventions. This was necessitated by the fact that, between 2009 and 2022, 611 teachers have been killed, 19,000 teachers have been displaced, 910 schools have been damaged or destroyed in Nigeria. Also, over 900,000 children have lost access to learning, while 75 percent of children in Internally Displaced People's camps do not attend schools. There are also cases of pupils and students in captivity in the country.

5. State Ministries of Education are expected to collaborate and cooperate with the Federal Ministry of Education and local governments to promote safety and security in schools and ensure more effective and timely emergency preparedness and response against insurgency, terrorism, banditry, cultism, ritual killings, ethnic militancy, separatist agitation, illicit drug abuse, bullying, child molestation, sexual assault, and abuse of corporal punishment in schools.

6. The Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning adopted the project in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education. A Secretariat of Financing Safe Schools Programme was established in the Ministry of Finance to coordinate the programme and push for funding in the 2023 appropriation to strengthen security resilience and integrate host communities in the protection of education in the country.

7. The Safe School programme with an initial financial lifespan of four years (2023-2026) was captured in the 2023 budget of the Ministry of Finance, and launched on the 16th of December 2022, at the auditorium of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning. A budget estimates of N27 billion was proposed for the short-term implementation of the programme in 2023.

8. The overall goal of the National Plan on Financing Safe Schools in Nigeria is to create an effective and efficient national school security and emergency response infrastructure aimed at enhancing the capacity of security agencies to gather intelligence, prevent, and respond to attacks on education and the school community. This is strategically aimed at building and equipping the school security and emergency response and coordination centres in Abuja and 18 very high risks states in the first phase of the programme in 2023.

Situation Analysis

1. Stakeholders approved the Safe School Implementation Costed Plan consisting of integrated intervention measures of kinetic and non-kinetic measures, security resilience in host communities, policy advocacy, security and data collection, and mitigation measures, and other structured interventions. These formed the template for the four years (2023-2026) costed plan. The budgetary provision in the 2023 appropriation act was also based on the validated plan. The total estimated investment by the federal and state governments for the four years medium term implementation plan is N145 billion. The Federal government is expected to commit the sum of N120 billion, while states will contribute about N25 billion between 2023 to 2026 through statutory appropriations and sundry interventions to the safe school

programme.

2. After the launch of the National Plan on Financing Safe Schools in Nigeria, the National Schools Security Emergency Response Centre was launched at the NSCDC headquarters in Abuja on Tuesday 14th March 2023. The centre is expected to coordinate safe school emergence response across the states of the federation.

3. The validation workshop on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the National Safe Schools and Emergency Response Centre was held on 23rd March 2023 at the NSCDC headquarters in Abuja. The SOP is the operating manual for the emergency response centres across the states of the federation and the head office in Abuja. The aim is to engage schools and host communities to fully understand and promote school safety and security based on the national action plan on financing safe school in Nigeria. This will ensure participation active participation of stakeholders in the assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the safe school programme through the systematic use of participatory assessment in the federation.

4. The National Safe School Emergency Response Centre will be established in the 36 states of the federation. The pilot project will be carried out in 18 states, three from each geopolitical zone. Adamawa, Anambra, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Katsina, Nasarawa, Niger, Ondo, Plateau, Yobe and Zamfara States were listed for the pilot project. This requires the collaboration of relevant stakeholders to reach out to states to support and facilitate the establishment of the emergency response centres in these states to kickstart the project.

5. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is proposing a collaboration with the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) in reaching out to states in the establishment of the response centres and timely report and evaluation of the programme in the federation to achieve the intended purpose. The advocacy and political engagement to strengthen and sustain government commitment to safe school declaration and implementation guidelines will be possible with the support of governors especially in the 18 states in the first phase of the programme.

The National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-free Schools in Nigeria is aimed at responding to needs of learners and the violence that affects them in and around the school environment. The policy seeks to utilise all hazard approach which builds on existing school safety and security laws and policy initiatives to identify and put mechanisms in place to address natural, man-made, structural, and non-structural hazards that affect the well-being of learners, teachers, school users and the school community to ensure the safety and security of schools in Nigeria. This applies to all schools and tertiary institutions in the country. This will be possible when relevant stakeholders join hands to reproduce, disseminate, tract and ensure compliance to the implementation guidelines of the national policy. With the support and collaboration of state governments, security agencies and relevant stakeholders, the safety and security of schools in Nigeria will be taken seriously and annual budgetary provisions made to ensure seamless implementation of the National Plan on Financing Safe Schools in Nigeria.

- Head, Education
Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF)

“
The federal and state governments are expected to contribute to the funding of the safe school programme through budgetary allocations and other statutory interventions



Ondo govt. distributes relief materials to rainstorm victims in Akure

The Ondo State Government has distributed relief materials to victims of a recent rainstorm that wreaked havoc in Akure and its environs.

Mr Lucky Aiyedatiwa, the Acting Governor of Ondo State, who presented the relief items to the affected residents, said it was to provide succour following the losses they suffered.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that items donated included roofing sheets, nails, and bags of cement.

Aiyedatiwa said the gesture was part of the present administration's demonstration of commitment to the well being of the people.

He urged the people to join hands with the government by keeping a clean environment and shun dumping of waste in waterways.

Aiyedatiwa also advised the people to plant trees around their houses that would serve as windbreakers, as well as to provide fresh air.

"You will agree with me that this administration since inception has delivered massive dividends to the people through the execution of life-

impacting projects across the state.

"While our administration will do all in her capacity to give succour to people affected by all kinds of disasters across Ondo State, whose lives and livelihood may have been altered.

"It is expected that our people at the grassroots level would join us in advocating for a disaster-free environment by cultivating the culture of planting trees.

"This will serve as windbreakers in our communities and also continue to discourage the indiscriminate felling of trees and the blocking of water channels and drainages," he said.

Aiyedatiwa, who expressed happiness that no life was lost in the incident, said "if there is life, there is hope."

The acting governor said that disasters do not just occur in a vacuum, but were often as a result of human action or inaction.

"Let us, therefore join hands and work together in this onerous task of enhancing our communal resilience and protecting our valued environmental assets.

"This demands concerted efforts on

Disaster Risk Reduction and enhanced collaboration between emergency responders in the community, local and state levels.

Earlier, Mr Femi Obideyi, Secretary of State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) had commended the state governor for the prompt intervention, which he said was the fastest in the history of disaster intervention in the state.

NAN reports that the rainstorm, which affected some communities in Akure, happened between March 26 and 29.

According to Obideyi, over 300 houses were affected by the incident and the governor promised to respond quickly, which he did.

One of the beneficiaries, Mrs Rachael Faluyi, appreciated the government's quick intervention to the plight of the people.

Another beneficiary, Mrs Kadijat Jamiu said she never expected such quick intervention and it would go a long way to ensure the rehabilitation of affected buildings.

How healthcare crisis informed bill to legislate migration of workers – Lawmaker

The legislator representing Lagos at the House of Representatives, Abdulganiyu Johnson says his bill that seeks to bar Nigeria-trained medical doctors and dentists from travelling abroad to practice unless they have put in a minimum of five years in Nigeria is informed by the crisis in the nation's health sector.

The lawmaker, who sponsored the bill, told newsmen in Abuja while making clarifications on the *raison d'être* of the bill against the backdrop of the controversy it has generated.

The bill seeking to mandate Nigeria-trained medical and dental practitioners to practise for a minimum of five years in the country before being granted full licence passed the second reading in the House of Representatives on April 6.

Johnson, however, said the bill was not meant to prevent anyone from travelling abroad as being speculated, pointing out that it was meant to forestall the looming crisis in the health sector.

According to him, this is not an attempt to trample on their human rights. We have crisis in the health sector and I am just providing a solution.

“Our population is more than 200million and the number of medical doctors we have is about 10,000. If care is not taken may be herbalists will have to take over and be treating our people.

“We have crisis already and how do we mitigate it? Let us increase the number of years they (doctors) will get their licenses and this is not to stop them from travelling abroad.

“The five years include their national service and housemanship period, which amounts to three years and it is a way of promoting professionalism. You can register for your residency and engage in hospital services.

“By the time they complete the three years they would

have completed their residency, it will be a win-win for the country and the medical doctors,” he said.

Johnson said that with the residency training, the doctors would become specialists, pointing out it would be a way of promoting the nation's medical doctors to be specialists instead of just being general practitioners.

He said UK decision to place Nigeria medical personnel on red alert from coming to their country was a pointer to his bill.

According to him, we have crisis and if the UK said we cannot continue to deplete their medical doctors that shows they are in support of my position.

To the lawmaker, the medical doctors were only looking at the bill from their own point of view but not holistically and not also looking at the nation to see the challenges it was facing.

Johnson, however, said there was room for debate during public hearing to lay all issues on the table, adding that those agitating that the bill should be limited to public schools medical and dental graduates did not understand the issues at stake.

According to him, when it comes to licensing a professional, the school he attended does not matter.

He said the institutions were to train and guide medical doctors, adding that they would all come together when they would be writing their professional examinations.

The lawmaker said the bill also involved welfare and improving their working conditions, adding that by the time the country upgraded its medical facilities, “no one will be going abroad for medical treatment”.





700 indigent women, children get free medical care in Abuja

The International Centre for Islamic Culture and Education (ICICE) has offered free medical treatment to over 700 indigent women, children and the elderly in Karmo, Abuja.

Reports said that the centre was the custodian of Al-Noor Mosque, Abuja.

Addressing newsmen during the exercise, Dr Mohammed Ibrahim, Chairman of the Medical Outreach Committee, said most of the beneficiaries have illnesses that are easily treatable, but lack access to healthcare.

“We have been doing this free medical outreach regularly until the time when we had the outbreak

of COVID-19 pandemic and we had to slow down.

“During this month of Ramadan this is our second outing. This is a community which deserves medical care, a lot of them have illnesses that are easily treatable, but unfortunately they have no access to healthcare.

“We are here to help where we can and people have come out in large numbers and our volunteer doctors, nurses and others are ready to help.

“We are going to be here until we see everyone who has a complain,” he added.

Ibrahim, who is also a member of the Advisory Board of ICICE, said those with serious medical challenges would be referred to appropriate health

Plateau Govt. lauds WHO for successes in public health

The Plateau State Government has lauded the World Health Organisation (WHO) for successes recorded in public health as the organisation marks its 75th anniversary.

The state's Commissioner for Health, Dr Nimkong Ndam, commended the organisation in Jos when the state celebrated the World Health Day.

The World Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated every year on April 7 under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization and other related organisations.

The WHO held the first World Health Assembly in 1948.

Ndam said that WHO, through its public health programmes and activities, improved the quality and well-being of Plateau peoples' lives in the last seven and half decades.

He added that “through the World Health Organisation, there has been a lot of progress in the protection of people from diseases and millions of lives saved through childhood immunisation.”

The commissioner said that the anniversary of WHO showed that it was possible to come together for a common purpose to enhance humanity.

Ndam commended the WHO for

its targeted support to the state by providing both technical and material support in every health activity it carried out.

He said that the impact of the world body was mostly felt in the areas of disease surveillance and epidemiological response, immunisation, infrastructure development and technical know-how.

He, therefore, assured the organisation of the support needed from the state government.

Responding, Dr Musa Wade, the WHO Coordinator in Plateau State, assured the continuous support of the state.



Gov. Lalong

facilities under the sponsorship of the centre.

“It is very important for communities and organisations like ours to go out to help people in need, to complement government efforts,” he added.

The centre's Director-General, Dr Kabir Kabo-Usman, said the over 700 people who turned up included persons with disabilities.

He explained that Karmo was chosen based on a need assessment earlier conducted by the centre, in line with its mandate of offering assistance in the areas of poverty reduction and healthcare.

“These people don't have adequate drinking water, they don't have good roads and they don't have good schools.

“We are doing our best to give them all the necessary medical assessment, diagnosis, treatment and relevant medication and medicaments that they require.

“Not only that, we also make sure that they are referred to general hospitals, and those

that are tremendously urgent, the centre takes care of that; that is part of our responsibility,” Kabo-Usman added.

Head of the Medical Team, Dr Amina Kumaliya, said most of those attended to were hypertensive and diabetic, while some have malaria, peptic ulcer, respiratory tract infection and diarrhea.

“We saw one patient that has hernia. So we intend to help the patient to do follow up and if there is any need of surgery.

“We also saw one that has breast tumor which we will also inform the management of the ICICE so that we can follow up the patient to a tertiary hospital to take care of it,” she said.

The Head of Hausa community in Karmo, Malam Bashir Musa, expressed gratitude to the ICICE for the gesture.

“The free medical assistance to the community is the first of its kind, we have never received this kind of medical assistance, that is why you see the large turn out of people,” Musa said.

Anambra rates highest in childhood tuberculosis

Dr Ugochukwu Chukwulobelu, Programme Manager, Anambra State Tuberculosis, Leprosy and Buruli Ulcer Management, says the state ranks highest in Childhood Tuberculosis (TB) contribution in Nigeria.

Chukwulobelu made the disclosure at the ongoing stakeholders' engagement organised by the Federal Ministry of Health, in partnership with the KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation and Breakthrough Action Nigeria in Awka.

He described TB as an airborne disease caused by a bacteria called "Mycobacterium tuberculosis" which usually attacks the lungs and could also damage other parts of the body.

The programme manager said the disease spreads through the air when a person with tuberculosis of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes or talks.

"According to statistics on TB burden, Nigeria ranks number six in the world and number one in Africa, with every local government having TB

cases.

"Anambra has the highest burden of TB drug resistance cases and childhood TB contribution in the South-East and Nigeria. This is not a good thing for the state.

"To reduce the high burden of TB, the state government, in collaboration with the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme (NTBLCP) and other partners, set up 14 laboratories with gene Xpert machines for diagnoses.

"We have about 800 Directly Observed Treatments (DOTS) Centres for TB, but the major problem is lack of awareness among residents about TB, its diagnosis and treatment," he said.

Chukwulobelu urged the media to intensify reportage on the burden and symptoms of the disease as well as how and where patients could get medical help.

"Persistent cough for two weeks or more, fever, unexplainable weight loss and drenching night sweats are signs used to screen patients.

"Residents should report suspected cases of TB within their communities.

"TB patients should also adhere to their treatments to prevent drug resistance TB cases which are even more dangerous.

"Everyone has a role to play to reduce the burden of the disease," the programme manager said.

Also, Dr Chijioke Oke of KNCV-Nigeria, said children living with adults, who have TB, children who are HIV positive and malnourished children, were at risk of getting TB.

Oke identified low childhood TB awareness, stigma, low funding for childhood TB and low index suspicion for childhood TB by healthcare providers, as some of the challenges with the control of the disease in the state.

He said that children's stool was required to test children for TB, because they do not know how to spit out sputum after coughing, but rather swallow it.

"Our major challenge with Childhood TB control in the state is that parents are scared and do not allow doctors to take their children's stool for test.

"Some of them think the medical personnel want to use their children's stool for 'juju'.

"It shows the level of ignorance and lack of awareness among residents," Oke said."



Pregnancy: Many CS procedures can be avoided with traditional medicine – TBA

A Traditional Medicine Birth Attendant (TBA), Mr Moruf Abuna, says many incidences of caesarean sections (CS) can be avoided if pregnant women give birth in traditional clinics.

Abuna, who is the Chairman of TBAs in Amuwo Odofin, Lagos State, said their patients preferred TBAs over orthodox clinics and maternities because the traditional birth attendants were readily available and accessible.

He said the women also believed that the TBAs could manage some pregnancy-related issues better than the medical practitioners.

“From my experience and that of other TBAs, if they gather 100 per cent of patients they want to do CS on, by God’s grace, 80 per cent will deliver their babies without CS and any crisis,” he said.

Abuna said the success story of the TBAs was due to some herbal medicines which help pregnant women deliver safely, without any crisis and side effects.

“Like babies in transverse position (lying across the uterus), 100 per cent is CS in medical hospitals but we have herbs that God will use to turn the baby to normal position,” he said.

However, he said that pregnant women with cases such as high blood pressure, placenta previa and bleeding were referred to medical hospitals for treatment.

He noted that it was mandatory for women who attended traditional clinics for the first time to have their blood pressure checked and run some blood tests, including HIV, genotype and blood group for rhesus factor.

Abuna, who is also a member of the Task Force at the Lagos State Traditional Medicine Board (LSTMB), said that members of the TBAs were trained and licensed by the board.

He said the LSTMB regulates the activities of the TBAs in Lagos State and had imposed certain limitations on them.

Explore ICT to boost healthcare delivery – Experts tell govts, private sector

Experts in the health sector have urged government and healthcare providers in the private sector take advantage of opportunities presented by technologies to boost healthcare delivery in the country.

This is contained in a statement issued in Abuja by Oluwakemi Eluma, Finance and Compliance Manager, ACIOE associates limited.

Eluma said in the statement the advice was part of the resolutions by participants at a webinar on Human Resources for Health Challenges and Universal Coverage in Nigeria.

It was organised by ACIOE Associates in collaboration with ACOE Foundation.

She said healthcare providers should leverage on and “enhance digital health to improve telemedicine in Nigeria”.

She said the participants also advocated increased government spending and private sector support.

“This will include closing the existing gaps by reforming suitable monetary and nonmonetary incentive packages to encourage qualified health workers to work in rural and remote areas”, Eluma said.

On the manpower deficit in the health sector, Eluma said the participants urged both the private and public sectors to attract more experts to train more healthcare workers to match up with the population.

She said they also urged increased capacity of training institutions and streamlining admission criteria.

“Current statistics reveals that one doctor is available to treat 30,000 patients in some southern parts of Nigeria, while states in the north are as bad as one doctor to 45,000 patients.

“WHO recommended that the appropriate ratio of people to doctors is 1: 100.

Adopt transformative strategies in the scale-up of health workers education and strengthen the capacity and quality of health training institutions through accreditation”, she said.

She reckoned that investments in health workers from the public and private sectors should align with population health needs and health system demands.



UNICEF to work with CHIPS agents to increase awareness on immunisation

On vaccine storage, she said that it was very critical that they were stored in the right place and in the right quality.

Ochola-Odongo said to achieve this, the whole chain system was to be expanded so that there could be enough space, to be able to store the vaccines as near to the population as possible.

“Right now UNICEF is in partnership with GAVI to expand the cold chain stores in Lagos, Abuja and Kano.

“So we need the refrigerators, which may not necessarily be for powered only by electricity because we know the electricity gaps in this country”, she added.

She said that routine immunisation incited an unprecedented infodemic highlighting the impact of misinformation, disinformation, and information disseminated with malicious intent on the effectiveness of immunisation.

“Building the capacity of relevant stakeholders, such as healthcare workers and the media, through trainings and the provision of access to useful infodemic management resources has proven to be an effective approach.

“Engaging communities through identified trusted sources of information is an effective approach, as it helps to build trust through timely communication that is specific to the local context,” she explained.

According to the SOWC report, vaccine confidence is volatile and time specific, warning that a total of 67 million children missed out on vaccinations between 2019 and 2021, with vaccination coverage levels decreasing in 112 countries.

“In 2022, for example, the number of measles cases was more than double the total in the previous year.

“Of the 67 million children who missed out on routine vaccination between 2019 and 2022, 48 million did not receive a single routine vaccine, also known as “zero-dose”.

“As of the end of 2021, India and Nigeria (both countries with very large birth cohorts) had the largest numbers of zero-dose children, with Nigeria having two million “zero-dose” children.”

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), says it will work with Community Health Influencers Promoters and Services (CHIPS) agents to increase awareness on routine immunisation in Nigeria.

UNICEF Nigeria Health Manager, Dr Dorothy Ochola-Odongo, said this in Abuja during a news conference on the State of the World Children (SOWC) report.

She said it is important to have CHIPS agents participate fully in the social mobilisation activities, to inspire confidence in parents and caregivers in the communities.

“We have to make sure that we inspire confidence in the parents and caregivers in the communities for them to be able to accept the vaccine.

“What we are doing within this area is working with a network of voluntary community mobilisers in the states that are most affected.

“These volunteer community organisers who are selected by the communities, are good listeners and communicators and can convince the public about the importance of making their children vaccinated.

“They are trusted and we are investing a lot on this so that you can gain that confidence in the community,” she said.

Over 600,000 children not immunized in Kano, others – UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says over 600,000 children are yet to be immunised against childhood killer diseases in Kano, Katsina and Jigawa states.

UNICEF's Chief Field Officer in Kano state, Rahama Farah, said this during a media briefing on the organisation's State of the World Children's (SOWC) 2023: Immunisation and Zero Dose situation in Kano Field office states.

He said of the numbers, Kano state had the highest number with over 300,000 of yet to be immunised children, representing 55 per cent. Farah said the children were scattered across 44 local government areas (LGAs) with majority resident in Kano state followed by Jigawa and Katsina.

He said that the victims were in remote and out-of-reach of normal health system areas.

"We in UNICEF are very concerned about the zero dose number of children not immunised in the three states of Kano, Katsina and Jigawa under the Kano field office. "We are concerned because this is the basic fundamental child rights in terms of having access to immunisation services. "We know that globally, children are dying because they don't have access to preventable diseases vaccination. "And this is a major concern for us in Nigeria and Kano in particular," he said.

The official stated that: "Over 600,000 children who missed first dose of immunisation are in Kano, Katsina and Jigawa States. "Over 300,000 of the children who are in Kano, represents 55 per cent.

"We have 26 per cent of the children in Jigawa state and 19 per cent in Katsina state. "We are calling on every community leader, policy makers to put hands together to build partnership and reduce the high number of children not immunised against the child killer diseases." "We are calling on the government to increase investment in health system to reach out to the children.

"We also call for community engagement in terms of creating demand and build the confidence on the effectiveness of the vaccines," Farah added.

Similarly, the UNICEF's Health Specialist, Abimbola Aman-Olaniyo, said children who were not immunised were obviously vulnerable to preventable diseases and prone to outbreaks, citing the recent cases of Diphtheria outbreak in Kano state and Celebrosprospinal meningitis in Jigawa state.

2.2m Nigerian children miss out on immunization, says UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has raised the alarm that 2.2 million Nigerian children representing 30 percent of the entire children population in the country are missing out on immunization.

The UNICEF Nigeria Chief of Health, Dr. Eduardo Celades at a media briefing on the state of the world children (SOWC) report in Abuja, said it was sad that Nigeria had such large size of children missing out on all forms of vaccination.

He said: "2.2 million children in Nigeria missed out on immunization, representing 30 percent."

He disclosed that some of the factors responsible for this included non-availability of adequate human resources, accessibility to a large expanse of land, insisting that quality leadership was key to getting these challenges solved.

He said despite these challenges, many children had continued to be immunized in the country, noting that over 15,000 additional community health workers have been trained in recent times.

Celades also disclosed that over 1,700 Primary Health Care facilities (out of 3,476) in 14 States meet PHC minimum standards, adding that 25 health facilities have functional level 2 newborn units.

He said there exist several state-level and national capacities built to prepare and respond to public health emergencies.

He said over the past five years, one major accomplishment has been the increase in Penta-3 vaccinations, administered to children under one year to protect them from five life-threatening diseases.

He disclosed that Penta-3 coverage rise from 33 percent to 57 percent, reaching 7.9 million children, noting that another major success was the 84 percent decrease in cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 in 2022, stating that despite an outbreak of the disease, the number of children vaccinated against polio tripled to 58 million thanks to joint efforts with partners.

He said in keeping with UNICEF's global nutrition strategy, the emphasis has shifted from the treatment of malnutrition to its prevention, explaining that Vitamin A supplementation is one key preventive intervention that promotes child development and lowers the risk of cognitive delays and child mortality due to malnutrition.

He disclosed that for the first time in five years, two rounds of Vitamin A supplementation were successfully completed in Nigeria in 2022, noting that 35 million children received one dose and 23 million children received two doses of Vitamin A, constituting a massive increase from the 9.8 million reached with one round of Vitamin A supplementation in 2021.





Flooding: UNICEF, NOA train volunteers, health educators on emergency preparedness

This situation makes it necessary for UNICEF to intervene by bringing together relevant stakeholders to brainstorm on how to reduce the negative effect of flood disaster

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) has trained volunteers and health educators in Niger to respond to emergency in terms of flooding in communities.

The training –“Training of Community Facilitators in Emergency Preparedness”– in Minna aimed at preparing community facilitators for engagements with identified communities that had been impacted or would likely be impacted by flooding, officials said.

Mrs Chinwe Ezeife, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF Kaduna Field Office, noted that women, children and elderly were usually worst hit during flooding emergency.

“People from riverine communities, especially, are hard-hit during flooding.

“This situation makes it necessary for UNICEF to intervene by bringing together relevant stakeholders to brainstorm on how to reduce the negative effect of flood disaster.

“The communication gap between relevant agencies within the areas affected by flooding is responsible for the annual disaster over the years,” she said.

She appealed to government at all levels to take proactive measures before the rain set in to save lives and property.

In his welcome address, Alhaji Yahaya Gbongbo, Director, NOA, Niger, said that the volunteers were to conduct 400 house-to-house meetings to discuss protection during emergencies with members of communities.

Gbongbo said that the efforts was to strengthen community facilitators with skill for engaging communities in conversation in resilience building.

He added that it was also to provide facilitators with a tool to guide their conversations with communities and prepare them to embrace and use communities' view in the design and implementation of a support plan among others.

Malam Salihu Garba, the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) representative, said that the agency had immediately swung into action on receiving the annual predictions from NEMA .

Garba said that the agency had met with relevant stakeholders from the state and local government levels to come up with ways to mitigate flood disaster.

NAN reports that participants at the training were drawn from Mokwa, Edati, Lavun, Gbako, Agaie, Katcha, Lapai, Bosso, Shiroro, Rafi, Wushishi, Mashegu and Borgu local governments.

In their separate remarks, the participants appreciated UNICEF and NOA for the training, saying that the training had further broadened their understanding on how to engage with community members to discuss ways to mitigate impact of flooding.

Nurses, midwives lament exclusion from 40 per cent pay rise for FG workers



The National Association Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, Federal Health Institution (NANNM-FHI) sector, has decried the exclusion of its members in the recent 40 per cent pay rise for federal workers.

The association expressed its displeasure in a statement issued by Mr Morakinyo-Olajide Rilwan, National Chairman, NANNM-FHI sector, to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja.

Rilwan said the attention of nurses and midwives in FHI of Nigeria has been drawn to the commencement of 40 per cent peculiar allowance pay rise for workers in the Federal

Government establishment with outright exclusions of its members.

He described the exclusion as an aberration and attempt to cause problems in the system.

He said that nurses and other health workers have been calling for salary adjustment since 2016, with several committees set up to this effect.

Rilwan said the committees are yet to see the light of the day with their report.

The national chairman recalled that the Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige, had earlier said before the payment that the pay rise was to justify the

current economic reality of the country.

Rilwan quoted Ngige as saying that, "the pay rise for Federal Government workers was to cushion the effects of inflation, rising cost of living, hike in transportation fare, housing and electricity tariff."

He said that the federal government had no justification to exclude some sections of civil servants, especially in the health sector from the pay rise since everyone, including the workers patronise the same market and pay same bills.

He said the action was also coming when there is mass exodus of nurses and

midwives out of the country for greener pastures with aftermath effect of increase workload on the few nurses on ground.

Rilwan said, "Instead of motivating those health workers, who have agreed to stay in the country to salvage the health system by this pay rise, the best thing government could do was to exclude nurses.

"The last time Consolidated Health Salary Scale (CONHESS) was adjusted was in 2010 and most of the allowances due to nurses were being short paid, for instance 30 per cent shift allowance with less than 10 per cent being paid to nurses.

"Many things are causing agitation, including Nurses Special Salary Structure.

"However, we are just getting the news this weekend and we are studying the situation while consultation with relevant stakeholders is ongoing, especially our parent body.

"But the fact is that our members are not happy with the exclusion and we cannot continue keeping quiet.

"Nurses have suffered enough neglect and deprivation as front line workers in health sector," he said.

Rilwan said that NANNM is happy that civil servant salaries are increased, but would resist such exclusion for its members if steps are not taken regarding nurses pay rise.

He said that the nurses association had remained calm over time despite the series of neglect and government had been taken that for granted, but this time around, it was not easy calming members down as they are ready to take action.

The national chairman, FHI sector, said that NANNM would resist any form of deprivation in the health sector, especially in the area of remuneration, training and policy making.

WHO estimates 6.2m Nigerian children unvaccinated due to COVID-19



The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 6.2 million Nigerian children are zero doses (unvaccinated), a consequence of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 to 2021.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, said this in Abuja at a news conference to celebrate the African Vaccination Week (AVW) and World Immunization Week with the theme “The Big Catch-Up”.

“The Big Catch Up is actually a year-long campaign aiming to reverse the serious setbacks in routine immunization.

“We acknowledge current efforts by government for 83 per cent reduction in circulating Variant Polio Virus type 2.

“Also a significant feat in sustaining certification for the eradication Wild Polio Virus in Nigeria,” she said.

Moeti, represented by Dr Walter Mulombo, WHO Country Representative to Nigeria, said that an estimated 33 million children would need to be vaccinated in Africa between 2023 and 2025.

According to her, such will put the continent back on track to achieve the 2030 global immunization goals that include reducing morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases.

“In the Africa Region, WHO estimate show that the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on routine immunization services has driven up the number of zero-dose and under-immunized children

“The effect causes rising by 16 per cent between 2019 and 2021 and pushing the cumulative total (2019–2021) to around 33 million, which represents nearly half the global estimate.

“In Nigeria, WHO estimates that in 2019 to 2021, 6.2 million children are zero dose; a consequence of the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic,” she said.

According to her, reaching these children will require renewed and intensified efforts by governments and partners.

Moeti said that to galvanise the commitments required, WHO conducted a high-level event during the African Union Summit in February 2023.

“At the summit, African Heads of State endorsed a declaration aimed at revamping and scaling up routine immunisation across the continent.

“Also, to implementing urgent measures to address persistent bottlenecks in vaccine and health care delivery systems,” she said.

The regional director said the day was a global push by WHO and partners to intensify efforts to reach children, who missed vaccinations, as well as to restore and strengthen routine immunization programmes.

“The proactiveness of the government and the National Primary Health Care Agency for implementing the Optimized Outreach Sessions, integration of Routine Immunization during COVID-19 vaccination, Measles and Yellow Fever Supplementary Immunization Activities.

“These are key for the reduction in the high burden of zero-dose children in Nigeria and align the theme for the 2023 AVW celebration.

“The plan to introduce malaria vaccine in routine immunisation

and Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) in 2023 and 2024 are commendable,

“This is as it aligns with establishing a life-course platform for immunization for optimum dividend from vaccination,” she said.

Moeti said that the day required the full participation of all key stakeholders including the media to communicate with caregivers to take children for routine immunisation services at the nearest health facility.

She encouraged the media to create awareness to enable children who missed their immunisation schedules to go to the nearest health facility to be assessed and vaccinated appropriately.

According to her, it is necessary to encourage community leaders to take responsibility to organise and participate fully in the conduct of immunization sessions including monitoring uptake of vaccines in the community

“We need to encourage traditional and religious leaders with Civil Society Groups to mobilise the community to always demand and access immunisation services.

“The media should let them know that vaccine is safe and effective against vaccine-preventable diseases,” she said.

The regional director said that for the organisation support for AVW, it was supporting Nigeria’s full participation in the Regional Working Group for Catch-up to ensure effective planning.

She said it would also ensure resource mobilisation for the 20 countries with high burden of zero dose children in the region.

“WHO since 2015 issued revised immunisation scheduled to support the “Big Catch-up” where children who have missed being vaccinated can be safely vaccinated with appropriate vaccines.

“This is part of over 15 guidelines and strategies issued to countries including Nigeria.

COVID-19: Group moves to close vaccination gap created by virus

The global partners, a non-governmental organization has announced a new effort: “The Big Catch-up”, to vaccinate millions of children and restore immunisation progress lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It said in a statement that the pandemic saw essential immunisation levels decrease in over 100 countries, leading to rising outbreaks of measles, diphtheria, polio and yellow fever.

It said that the “Big Catch-up” was an extended effort to lift vaccination levels among children to at least pre-pandemic levels and endeavours to exceed.

“Led by a broad range of national and global health partners, the Big Catch-up also aims to ensure stronger primary health care services for essential immunisation in the future.

In a speech, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organisation, said millions of children and adolescents, particularly in lower-income countries, have missed out on life-saving vaccinations, while outbreaks of these deadly diseases have risen.

Ghebreyesus said on Monday that the organisation was supporting dozens of countries to restore immunisation and other essential health

services.

“Catching up is a top priority. No child should die of a vaccine-preventable disease,” he said.

Also, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said that routine vaccines were typically a child’s first entry into their health system.

According to her, children who missed out on their early vaccines are at added risk of being cut out of health care in the long run.

“The longer we wait to reach and vaccinate these children, the more vulnerable they become and the greater the risk of more deadly disease outbreaks.

“Countries, global partners and local communities must come together to strengthen services, build trust and save lives.” she said.

Dr Seth Berkley, Chief Executive Officer, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, said the partners could not allow a legacy of the pandemic to be the undoing of many years’ work, protecting more and more children from deadly, preventable diseases.

“Global health partners, working with governments and communities, must do everything we can to protect the life of every child,” Berkley said.

Dr Chris Elias, President of Global Development at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said vaccines were a public health triumph.

Kogi takes delivery of N1bn medical consignment for malaria prevention

The Kogi Government said it had taken delivery of medical consignment worth N1 billion for malaria prevention in the state.

The state’s Commissioner for Health, Dr Zakari Usman, disclosed this at a news conference in Lokoja, as part of activities to mark the 2023 World Malaria Day celebration.

According to Usman, the consignment, received recently from “Malaria Consortium”, its partner in the control of malaria, was aimed at reducing the endemic disease to its barest minimum in Kogi.

He said 2023 which would be the 16th year celebration of the World Malaria Day, had its theme as “Delivering Zero Malaria: Invest, Innovate and Implement”.

Usman noted that Gov. Yahaya Bello administration’s chief policy for the realisation of Malaria Free State was put in place under “Bello’s Medicalcare Initiative”, which provides opportunity for citizens to go to hospitals to access free treatment and preventive measures.

The commissioner stressed that the present administration in the state had done its best in the recruitment of medical doctors, nurses and other categories of health personnel.

He added that it had also procured drugs to tackle the health needs of the people.

“I am happy to inform you that in Kogi state, malaria endemic has drastically dropped to 16 per cent and we are aiming at having zero percentage by God’s grace.

“Having zero percentage which I strongly believe is achievable as we will not relent in our investment, innovation and implementation in the control of the malaria disease in Kogi.

“In 2020, over 241 clinical cases on malaria endemic and 2,027 deaths were recorded from Sub-sahara Africa which is caused by female Anopheles mosquitoes

“Malaria prevention I believe is everybody’s business hence the need for both the public and private organisations as well as individuals to complement government’s efforts in this task,” he said.

Earlier, the Director Public Health of the Ministry, Dr Francis Akpa, described malaria as Killer disease if not treated immediately.

He appealed to citizens, especially the most vulnerable children and pregnant women in Sub-sahara Africa, to play their part to ensure malaria-free Society.






Eradicating *Malaria In Nigeria*

On World Malaria Day, the world has the opportunity to reflect on the progress made towards defeating one of the deadliest diseases of our time.

According to the 2021 World Malaria Report from the World Health Organisation (WHO), Nigeria contributes 27 per cent to the global malaria burden (one out of every four persons having malaria) and 32 per cent to malaria deaths globally (about one out of every three deaths).

In the considered opinion of this newspaper, world malaria day, as an event, provides an opportunity to assess the strides made in the fight against malaria and to evaluate the country's commitment to ending this scourge.

In the last two decades, Nigeria has been battling malaria with varying degrees of success. Despite the government's commitment to eradicating the disease, it remains a leading cause of death in the country.

It is instructive to note that the disease is responsible for about 11 per cent of maternal mortality, 30 per cent of childhood mortality, and 60 per cent of outpatient visits to healthcare facilities.

Regrettably, in our view, while many countries have eradicated malaria, it remains a scourge in Africa and Nigeria especially and the reasons are not far to seek.

For instance, globally, 40 countries and territories have been granted a malaria-free certification from WHO – including, most recently, El Salvador (2021), Algeria (2019), Argentina (2019), Paraguay (2018), and Uzbekistan (2018).

Also, China is the first country in the WHO Western Pacific Region to be awarded a malaria-free certification in 2021 in more than three decades. Other

countries in the region that have achieved this status include Australia (1981), Singapore (1982), and Brunei Darussalam (1987).

Malaria was eradicated in Europe by the combination of insecticide spraying, drug therapy, and environmental engineering.

However, in recent years, Nigeria has made significant strides in the fight against malaria. The 2021 Nigeria Malaria Indicator Survey Report has shown that the prevalence of the disease in the country has decreased from 23 per cent in 2018 to 22 per cent in 2021.

The NMIS report also showed that malaria prevalence is highest among children aged 48 to 59 months and the prevalence is highest in the northwest at 51.6 per cent.

This progress is possible thanks to efforts by the government, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders in implementing effective malaria control strategies.

On this World Malaria Day, we must commend the Nigerian government for its efforts in the fight against malaria. The government's commitment to malaria prevention and treatment has been demonstrated by its approval of a new malaria vaccine from Oxford University. This makes Nigeria the second country in the world after Ghana to approve the vaccine.

This new vaccine, called R21/Matrix-M, was found to be highly effective in clinical trials and could help reduce the number of malaria cases in Nigeria. The vaccine has shown a 77 per cent efficacy rate against malaria in early trials, and it is hoped that it will be a game-changer in the fight against the disease.

Indeed, there should be a serious enlightenment campaign for people to take the malaria vaccine. We recall the serious campaign by some religious and political leaders against taking the COVID-19

vaccine. It should not be allowed to replicate in the case of this malaria vaccine.

The approval of this vaccine is a significant achievement for Nigeria, as it shows the government's commitment to finding new and innovative solutions to tackle malaria. It also highlights the country's leadership in the fight against the disease.

However, we must not forget that there is still much work to be done in the fight against malaria. Despite the progress made, malaria remains a significant health challenge in Nigeria, and it will take sustained efforts to eliminate the disease.

The government must continue to prioritize malaria prevention and treatment, including increasing access to insecticide-treated nets, providing effective diagnosis and treatment, and improving surveillance and data collection.

These measures are critical in achieving Nigeria's goal of eliminating malaria by 2025.

Consequently, on this World Malaria Day, we celebrate the progress made in the fight against the disease in Nigeria. We commend the government's commitment to finding new solutions to tackle the disease and the approval of the new malaria vaccine from Oxford University.

However, we must not rest on our laurels. We must continue to work together to eliminate malaria once and for all.



THE ENVIRONMENT

Stop paying “lip service” to WASH, FG tells state govts

Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Suleiman Adamu, has cautioned state governments on paying “lip service” to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues and urged them to prioritise the issues on their development plan.

Adamu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in New York that the federal government was doing enough, but the state and local governments had been paying lip service to WASH issues.

He said he had been canvassing for states to involve more in WASH for the past seven years, noting that the Federal Government has put in place so many incentives to encourage the State Governments.

“In 2016, having realised that we have not achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we were supposed to meet 75 per cent but we were at 68 per cent.

“We were at 68 per cent when I came into office and MDGs were ending them, I asked, why did we fail to meet the targets of MDGs?

“We realised, we were all relying on budgetary allocation, and we looked at the statistics and realised that we had 68 per cent coverage at the national level.

“If you disintegrate the data, 50 per cent of the rural areas were not covered,” Adamu said.

To address this gap, the minister said the Federal Government came up with the ‘Partnership for Expanded Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (PEWASH)’ Programme to increase water coverage.

According to him, PEWASH is a national collaborative instrument towards improving access to water and sanitation specifically in rural areas.

Adamu said that PEWASH was designed for two things, primarily to address the issue of access to water, sanitation and hygiene for rural communities, but at the same time to incentivise states to invest more.

“With the PEWASH programme, it is on 50/50 bases, the Federal Government will contribute 50 per cent while the State Governments will contribute 50 per cent for Water Scheme and we’re working with 21 states now,” he said.

In addition, Adamu said that in 2018, the ministry

did a diagnostic report that showed that water supply was in the decline, saying that the report shows that only 30 per cent of Nigeria’s population in 1992 had pipe borne water.

“The percentage dropped to seven per cent in 2015, so it shows that the sector is in serious crisis.

“And that was when we now launched the new National WASH Action Plan which was launched by President Buhari on November 2018 alongside that launch, he declared a state of emergency on water sanitation and hygiene.

“This is a sector that is in crisis and he requested all states to join the Federal Government so that we move together to change the indices.

“After that, we now established a new budget line to support states, which again to practically use the National Water Resources policy, we put a new budget line so that states can come without urban water supply schemes and investments”. Again in 2019, the minister said to further actualise the roadmap to end open defecation, the Federal Government launched the national campaign against open defecation,

He said the following day after the launch, President Buhari backed it with an Executive Order number nine, giving it some legal teeth to “establishing the Secretariat and the enabling framework for us to operate.

“We’ve also tried so far without success, but we’re not giving up through the National Water Resources bill to establish a WASH water sanitation hygiene fund that will support states in their efforts to invest more in the area of water, sanitation, hygiene.

“So, all the efforts have been done at the Federal level, all the incentives have been provided. It is now ready for the states to follow suit.

“So, I think we have demonstrated at the federal level a total commitment to meeting our aspirations and that it’s the Sustainable Development Goals 6.1 and 6.2.

“But we need partners, we need the states to be operating at the same level and that has been a challenge for us,” the minister said.

Earth Day: Environmentalists call for sustainable waste management

The Oyo State Government, has called on residents to contribute their quota in the ongoing efforts to ensure sustainable waste management.

This is contained in a statement by issued in Ibadan the Oyo State Commissioner for Information, Dr Wasiu Olatubosun.

He quoted the Chairman, Oyo State Waste Task Force, Mrs Adedayo Aderonke, as making the call, during a Webinar in commemoration of 2023 World Earth Day.

Speaking on the theme "Sustainable Waste Management: Investing in our planet for a cleaner future", Adedayo was quoted as expressing concern at the degradation of the earth through indiscriminate waste disposal by humans.

She said the State government was determined to address waste management chain in the state.

Adedayo said government had constructed roads which had resulted led which has

reduced food wastage arising from road accidents and long hours spent on road.

"The Oyo State Government has ensured construction of roads leading to the northern part of the State, (Oke-Ogun), because that is where food items are produced.

"By doing this, there is a massive reduction in food loss, and in the next 2-3 years, food will get to consumers quicker," she said.

According to her, some of the uncoordinated human activities which have inflicted serious damage on the earth included, indiscriminate disposal of wastes, and high intensity of fossil fuel among other factors.

She implored the citizenry to imbibe the spirit of going green by planting flowers which she said would help in protecting the environment.

In his presentation, Mr Abimbola Gbenjo, an environmentalist, implored Ibadan residents to use appropriate waste containers during waste disposal.

Mr Emmanuel Ola-Olawoyo, another participant at the webinar said humans were responsible for most of the global climate challenges due to their poor waste management.

He added such poor practices had manifested in rising temperature and other related climate crisis.

Ola-Olawoyo commended the Oyo Government for changing the narratives and taking bold steps to end indiscriminate waste disposal in the state.

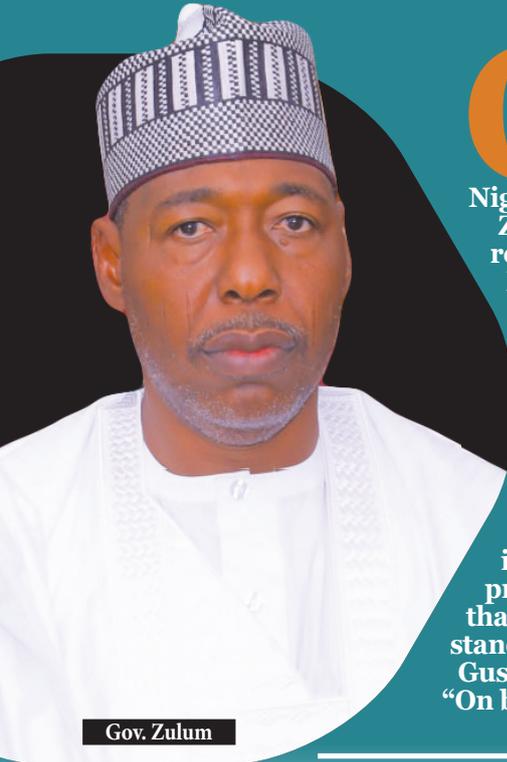
Seun Fasuhanmi, Mottainai's Chief Operating Officer, a waste management consulting firm said that Public Private Partnership would bring about rapid development in the waste management scheme in Oyo state.

Fasuhanmi urged the legislative arm and all other actors in the environment sector to pursue laws and resolutions that would save the earth by reducing unnecessary carbon emission activities, among others.

She implored the citizenry to imbibe the spirit of going green by planting flowers which she said would help in protecting the environment



Zulum at Easter: Pray Our Second Term Outperforms First



Gov. Zulum

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum has felicitated with Christians in Borno State and the rest of Nigeria at Easter.

Zulum, in his message released by his spokesman, Malam Isa Gusau, urged citizens in Borno State to pray for the full restoration of peace in the state and to also pray that the second term of his administration will be guided by God to deliver on hundreds of infrastructure projects, programmes and policies that will improve the living standards of his people. Gusau's statement reads: "On behalf of Borno State

Government, I heartily felicitate with our Christian brothers and sisters in Borno and across Nigeria at this Easter season."

"I urge security agencies to sustain their good efforts in preserving security during the festivities and far beyond." "I call on all celebrants to make sacrifices in reaching out to family members, friends, neighbours and other community members who might be in need of help."

"As we round up our first term, I want to specially request that all the good people of Borno State commit our second term to prayers by devoutly asking God to guide us towards the full restoration of peace, towards the safe resettlement of citizens still displaced, towards the reviving of means of livelihoods across all communities previously affected by insurgents' destructions and the strengthening of economies in areas less affected by attacks in all senatorial zones."

"I also seek prayers that God guides us to undertake hundreds of meaningful infrastructural projects, programmes and policies that will fairly impact on all our 27 local government areas."

"Above all, I seek prayers that God sustains our human efforts to be good leaders whose hearts and minds will remain overwhelmed by the sincerest desire to serve the good people of Borno State."

...Flags-off Borno's Second Flyover

Professor Babagana Umara Zulum has flagged-off the construction of Borno's second flyover meant to further decongest traffic and increase development in the state capital.

Zulum had constructed Borno's first flyover with upper and lower layers. The project is located around the customs roundabout with roads to three parts of the town. It started in January 2020 and was commissioned by President Buhari in December 2021.

The second flyover is to be sited around the Borno Express which has a T-junction, with roads connecting the three key parts of Maiduguri towards the International airport, township Stadium and Tashan Kano, as well as the city centre (Secretariat, Post Office, Monday Market etc).

The flyover will cover about 600m of a concrete bridge with additional road networks.

Zulum at the launch tasked contractors "Insha Allah, we (Borno State Government) shall

ensure the release of funds as at when due. I task you (the contractors) to ensure that quality of work is done. Insha'Allah, in the next phase of our dispensation we will provide more dividends of democracy to the people of Borno", Zulum said.

... Chinese COY to deliver at N5.8b

A Chinese Company, Eighteenth Engineering Company (EEC) was awarded the contract for the sum of N5.8 billion.

The company won after a bidding process following documentation that was done at the State's Ministry of Works Headquarters in Maiduguri.

Borno's Commissioner of Works, Architect Isa Garba Haladu, signed contract agreement on behalf of Borno State Government while representative of the EEC signed for the Chinese company. The project is targeted for completion before the end of this year, 2023, bearing any unforeseen challenge(s).



Gov. Abiodun

Ogun govt set to deploy gas-propelled mass transit vehicles

The Ogun State Government is set to deploy Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) propelled vehicles across the state.

The state government stated that the use of CNG fuel in vehicles, compared with diesel, would reduce vehicle operations and maintenance costs.

While taking delivery of vehicle CNG conversion kits, the Ogun State Commissioner for Transportation, Mr. Gbenga Dairo, stressed that Governor Dapo Abiodun-led administration's initiative to adopt CNG fuel for state owned rolling stock assets aligns with the state transport policy objectives co-developed with the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (UKFCDO).

Dairo, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Sola Osasona, stated that the project, in partnership with MAUTO HOLDO DMCC, would have a first phase consisting of installing CNG conversion kits on 15 Ashok Leyland mass transit buses and 2 Hyundai buses in use by Ogun MDAs.

He added that the soon-to-commence conversion process for the pilot phase will serve as a test run and is expected to take between four to six weeks.

The commissioner said it will involve the Mass Transit buses currently in operation in the state capital, Abeokuta, as well as others to be deployed in the fleet to serve the planned Mowe-Berger Axis.

MAUTO has deployed engineers and technicians to the state to provide 'hands-on' training for auto mechanics and technicians on CNG conversion.

The commissioner added that MAUTO was also working with

the state government towards entering into a joint venture to plan, design, and establish a modern workshop facility with adequate capacity to undertake industrial scale conversion of vehicles to CNG use.

According to the commissioner, the initiative would lead to a cleaner economy, provide job opportunities during the conversion process, and reduce the cost of fuel, saying with diesel prices being deregulated and petrol prices increasing, natural gas is currently the cheapest form of fuel.

Also Speaking, the Permanent Secretary, Bureau of Political Affairs and Administration, Office of the Governor, Kehinde Onasanya, described Governor Abiodun as a man who keeps his promises.

He stated that the delivery of the kits is a testimony to the governor's commitment to achieving an eco-friendly means of transportation.

On his part, the Senior Special Assistant to Ogun State Governor on Energy, Olaniji Adedapo, stated that the state government planned to achieve this through a "Gas-to-Transport" strategy that include the conversion of all BMT buses to natural gas.

Adedapo added that the project is also part of a gas-to-power strategy that would light up some parts of the state.

Nigeria's unemployment rate may hit 40.6% amid economic slowdown, says KPMG



KPMG says Nigeria's unemployment rate will rise further to 40.6 percent in 2023.

In its report titled 'Global Economic Outlook', the professional services firm said the figure is based on its estimates.

As at fourth quarter (Q4) of 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said the country's unemployment rate stood at 33.3 percent.

"Unemployment is expected to continue to be a major challenge in 2023 due to the limited investment by the private sector, low industrialization and slower than required economic growth and consequently the inability of the economy to absorb

the 4.5 million new entrants into the Nigerian job market every year," KPMG said in the report.

"Although lagged, the National Bureau of Statistics recorded an increase in the national unemployment rate from 23.1% in 2018 to 33.3% in 2020.

"We estimate that this rate has increased to 37.7% in 2022 and will rise further to 40.6% in 2023."

KPMG projected that Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) would continue to grow at a relatively slow pace of three percent in 2023.

This, it said, is due to the slowdown in economic activity that typically characterises periods of political transition in Nigeria.

The firm said the spillover from an expected slowdown in the global economy and its trade and financial flows implications are likely to drag on the country's GDP.

KPMG said that key non-oil sectors such as manufacturing, trade, accommodation, food services and transportation would be negatively affected by the naira redesign policy introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), further slowing down overall GDP growth in 2023.

"Nevertheless, we expect telecommunications, trade services, as well as an expected

recovery in the oil sector, on account of measures being taken to tackle security issues, to drive our forecast of 3% growth in 2023," the firm said.

KPMG further projected that the incoming administration would face a deeply rooted challenging environment characterized by fragile and slow economic growth and challenges in the foreign exchange market.

It added that government revenue remained inadequate to support much needed expenditure, leading to a high debt stock and high debt service payments.



Zulum in Malam-Fatori, approves Armoured carriers, patrol vehicles for soldiers



Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, paid an assessment visit to Malam-Fatori, a former Boko Haram stronghold on the shores of the Lake Chad, recently.

Malam-Fatori is headquarters of Abadam Local Government Area (LGA) in northern Borno and is yet to be fully reoccupied by residents since Boko Haram violently took over the town around 2014 and forced residents to flee to Niger Republic. The military dislodged the insurgents but it was not clear in what year.

Zulum had visited Malam-Fatori a couple of times, first to commence reconstruction and other times to supervise ongoing works.

In his latest visit the governor held interactions with troops at 68 battalion of the Nigerian Army in charge of the town who also led the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in the area.

Zulum was received by the

commanding officer of 68 battalion, Malam-Fatori, Col. A. Onyeukwu.

The governor announced his approval for the soon to be released armoured personnel carriers (APCs), patrol vehicles and some security gadgets for soldiers.

The support, Zulum noted, was to strengthen the military's capacity to increase their effectiveness in the fight against insurgents.

The governor commended the officers and men of 68 Battalion, Malam-Fatori, for their bravery and professionalism in discharging their duties.

... Targets May for resettlement

Meanwhile, Governor Zulum during the visit, disclosed that his purpose was to see for himself the clearance process in the town and to also offer support to the military ahead of his target for safe and voluntary return of refugees to Malam-Fatori community.

The refugees are currently in

neighboring Bosso, Tumor and Diffa, all in the Republic of Niger.

The governor is targeting May for resettling of the refugees.

"My main objective here is to see for myself the clearance exercise and discuss how we can return people. The town was displaced due to flood last year", Zulum said.

He added, "we want the people to return for normal activities to resume to this part of the state, insha'Allah. We will give all the necessary support to the Nigerian military to make sure that this objective is achieved. We call on our people to be resilient and give maximum cooperation to the security operatives working to restore normalcy" Zulum said during his interaction with the commanding officer of 68 battalion, Malam-Fatori, Col. A. Onyeukwu.

Zulum was accompanied by the member House of reps-elect for Marte, Monguno and Nganzai, Engr. Bukar Talba, Commissioner for Local Government and Emirates Affairs, Sugun Mai Mele, Transition Council Chairman of Abadam and some prominent indigenes of Abadam.

Abia Governor-Elect, Dr Alex Otti, has announced a list of distinguished professionals and technocrats as members of his Transition Council.

The list, as contained in a statement issued to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Umuahia, is preparatory to his formal assumption of office on May 29, 2023.

According to the statement, the Council will be chaired by Victor Onyenkpa, Partner and COO, KPMG, and co-chaired by Ifueko Okauru, former Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

Aruma Oteh, former Director-General of Nigeria's Securities and Exchange Commission, former Treasurer and Vice President of the World Bank and currently a Director at FSD Africa, is also on the Council.

Other notable members are Prof. Ndubuisi Ekekwe, a Nigerian-born inventor who helped Apple design a semiconductor for the iPhone and Mr Uche Orji, the immediate past

Otti names Onyenkpa, Omoigui, Oteh, others as Transition Council members



CEO of Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA).

Also in the Council are Mr Victor Okoronkwo, Group Managing Director (GMD) of Aiteo Oil and Gas; Mr Frank Nneji, Founder of ABC Transport Company; and Ide John Udeagbala, an Aba-based business mogul.

The statement said that the Transition Council would help to articulate a policy document that would forge a direction and developmental agenda for Abia, in line with Otti's vision for the state.

Ikpeazu constitutes handover committee as Catholic priest leads Otti's eight-member team

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia has constituted a 23-member transition committee to prepare the ground for the smooth handover of power to the Governor-elect, Dr Alex Otti.

The committee, which is headed by the Secretary to the State Government, Mr Chris Ezem, included an eight-member team nominated to represent Otti's interest.

The Leader of Otti's team, Rev. Fr. Christian Anokwuru, told newsmen in Umuahia that the committee would be open and transparent in their deliberations for proper documentation of facts.

Anokwuru said, "For a smooth and seamless handover of power and the sake of interfacing, eight members of Otti's transition council were nominated to join the government committee."

He said that the government team had quality members, which included

commissioners, businessmen and professionals.

"It is my hope that they will be honest and frank in their responses to critical questions that we shall raise concerning strategic government's projects for documentation," he said.

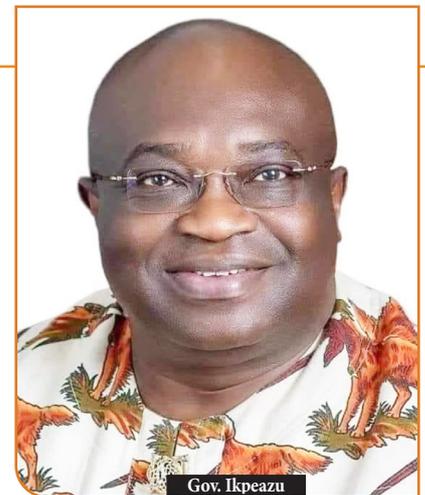
He also spoke on the composition of Otti's 100-member Transition Council, which was inaugurated in Aba.

Anokwuru, who holds a doctorate degree in Political Philosophy, said that the council had been dissolved into 10 sub-themes, comprising between eight and 10 members each.

He said that Otti appointed egg heads, professionals and captains of industry, who had excelled in their respective walks of life into the council.

"The composition of the council is perfect and cuts across all strata of society, which includes politicians, technocrats and academicians.

"I belong to the sub-theme on Good



Governance, which is an area I have strong passion as a political philosopher so I am practicing my profession," Anokwuru said.

According to him, Otti's manifesto made the council's work easier, having provided a template for the council to work with.

"The governor-elect has already taken proper documentation of the needs of the state, which captures every sector of the state economy.

"The assignment given to us is not a jamboree but a serious one that will enable us to look critically and make quality recommendations to his blueprint and manifesto.

Tambuwal names 28-member transition committee



The Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has approved the appointment of the Transition Committee for handing over to the incoming administration.

This is contained in a statement by the Senior Special Assistant (Media and Publicity) to the Governor Abdulnasir Abubakar Sanyinna.

The committee has the Deputy Governor, Manir Muhammad Dan Iya as Chairman and the Secretary to the State Government Mohammad Mainasara Ahmad, as Co-Chairman.

Members of the committee include the Head of Civil Service, Abubakar Muhammad; the Commissioner Basic & Secondary Education, Muhammad Bello Abubakar and the Commissioner Ministry of Health, Muhammad Lema Abubakar.

Other are Commissioner of Finance, Dr. Muhammad Ali Inname; Commissioner of Agriculture, Professor Aminu Abubakar; Commissioner for Rural Development, Isah Bajini Galadanci and Commissioner of Animal Health & Fisheries Development, Professor Abdulkadir Usman Junaidu.

The committee also has the Commissioner of Higher Education, Professor Aisha Madawaki; the Commissioner Ministry of Lands and Housing, Aminu Bala Bodinga; Commissioner for Water Resources, Dahiru Yusuf Yabo and Commissioner for Internal Security, Abubakar Maikudi Ahmed.

The rest are Commissioner Ministry

for Local Government, Abdullahi Maigwandu; Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Bashir Gidado Jegawa; Commissioner Ministry of Women Affairs, Kulu Abdullahi Sifawa; Special Adviser on SDGs, Kabiru Aliyu; Special Adviser Primary Health Care Development Agency, Chika Umar; Special Adviser, SOCHEMA, Dr. Amamatu Yusuf and Special Adviser on Political Matters, Ibrahim Magaji Gusau.

The committee has the Permanent Secretary (Min. of Finance), Dahiru Balarabe Abbas as Secretary and Permanent Secretary (Cabinet Affairs), Bande Moh'd Rikina; Permanent Secretary (Min. of Agric), Abubakar Mohammed; Permanent Secretary (Min of Internal Security), Muazu Abubakar Madawaki; Permanent Secretary (Min of Budget), Arzika Usman Bodinga as co-secretaries, while Abdulkadir Moh'd Ahmad (Director Security), Mahmoud Jabbi Kilgori (A&GSD) and Naziru Bala (Cabinet Affairs) would serve as Assistants Secretaries.

The committee has the following terms of reference:

- a. Collate and document from the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) achievements recorded by the present administration from 2015 to 2023.
- b. Obtain and analyze reports from MDAs on all ongoing projects/programmes in relation to level of execution/ fiscal profile, constraints etc.
- c. Prepare a comprehensive handing over notes to the incoming administration on items a – c above to be ready by Monday, 15th May 2023.
- d. Organize befitting swearing-in ceremony in collaboration with the in-coming administration's team.
- e. Make any other effort(s) in ensuring that the next administration receives every support needed to make an early and quick start.



Kaduna: HarvestPlus mobilises 5,000 women to promote consumption of biofortified crops

A global agricultural organisation, HarvestPlus, has mobilised more than 5,000 women to promote the consumption of biofortified crops enriched with micronutrients and vitamins in Kaduna State.

The organisation's Nutrition and Post-harvest Manager, Ms Olatundun Kalejaiye, made this known to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna.

Kalejaiye described biofortification as a "food system approach that nutritionally enhanced food crops that are developed and grown, using modern biotechnology techniques, conventional plant breeding, and agronomic practices.

She pointed out that the major staple food in Nigeria included cassava, maize, sweet potato, rice, beans, yam, plantain, and millet, adding most of the crops were vitamins and mineral deficient.

She said that HarvestPlus worked with breeders using conventional means to naturally increase the nutrient and vitamins content of the staple crops.

She said that the organisation was promoting the consumption of biofortified Vitamins A cassava, maize, and orange flesh sweet potato in the state as part of efforts to address malnutrition.

According to her, the strategy is to make the biofortified crops available such

that women will be able to buy, process them into household meals and consume them.

"This will enable women to meet the nutritional needs of their family, thereby preventing malnutrition."

She said that the organisation had established a Women-led Extension Platform where women were reaching other women, adding that more than 5,000 had been reached in the last three months.

She explained that the women were made up of those with business potentials and those that were interested to make extra income for themselves.

The manager said that the women would be trained on how to make money from biofortified crops by making them available to households for consumption.

She added that another category of the women were women cooperatives dealing with maize processing who would be trained on how to introduce biofortified varieties into their businesses.

She said that the women would be driving nutrition education and information at community level, targeting the women in households.

"This is very critical for the women and community members to know the value of the nutrient and vitamins enriched crops for their nutritious wellbeing.

"The essence of engaging women to reach out to women is to ensure that women know the available biofortified crops and buy them for their family nutrition whenever they go to the market.

"There is also the market angle to this where we trained women on how to process these crops into products that they can sell and make money from it," she said.

Kalejaiye also said that the women were also being trained on how to process the crops to ensure that the nutrients were retained.

She said that HarvestPlus was leveraging on the fact that when women knew the right thing, they would do it and pass the information to their daughters and other girls around them.

"This can go from generation to generation," she said.

She added that the organisation was also working with farmers, providing technical support to enable them to grow the biofortified crops profitably.

She equally said that the farmers were provided with seeds and trained on good agronomic practices, while others were supported to do dry season farming so that they could cultivate all year round.

"Other famers and aggregators have been linked to industries in Lagos, so they already have a ready market and all they need to do is produce more.

"To further promote the adaptation of the fortified crops, HarvestPlus has recently launched the first national Biofortification recipe.

"The recipe features a collection of practical and traditional dishes that have been cleverly adapted to provide added nutrition and fight malnutrition through biofortified foods in the country," she said.

We Will Sustain Accountability and Transparency In Governance – Gov. Buni

Yobe state Governor, Mai Mala Buni, said his administration will sustain the leading position in accountability, transparency and Public Finance Auditing as rated by the State Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) a World Bank assisted-programme, and the Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative.

He stated this while reacting to the Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative report on the performance of Nigerian states on Subnational Audit Efficacy index 2022 in which Yobe state emerged as the Second Best Performing state in Nigeria.

The report which assessed the operational level of transparency and accountability in management of public funds and implementation of public policies in the 36 states, scored Yobe state as the Second-Best Performing state.

Buni explained that his administration would continue to apply prudence in the

use of public resources to ensure that there is value for money on all policies and programmes executed by the state government.

"We are a state with little resources and emerging out of an over a decade security challenge that needs resources to rebuild the state and its people.

"There are competing demands amidst little resources to rebuild the state, therefore, there must be accountability to achieve our set goals"

"The prudence applied in the use of our resources has assisted our administration greatly to execute our legacy projects that were recently commissioned by President Muhammadu Buhari.

"I am happy this report collaborates with the report by the State Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) a World Bank-assisted programme that rated Yobe state as the Overall Best Performing state in Nigeria in Accountability, Transparency and Good Governance" he said.

"The Public Procurement Association of Nigeria also rated our government as the best state in Transparency and Due Process in conducting government business in Nigeria, I am delighted our performances are being recognised by such reputable organizations," Buni said.

The Governor dedicated the awards to the people of the state "especially the civil servants who have been dedicated to our reform programmes in accountability, transparency and good governance.



Gov. Buni



Gov. Matawalle

Zamfara State has emerged the best performing State under the Federal government Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG CARES) Programme.

It has therefore earned the highest sum of N5.273 billion of the total sum of N43.5 billion approved for disbursement to the 36 states of the Federation and Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The Northwest state is closely followed by Bauchi state, which received N4.232 billion; Ondo state, N3.838 billion; Lagos State, N3.617 billion and Gombe, N3.396 billion.

Minister of State for Finance, Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanade

NG-Cares: Zamfara emerges best performing State, earns FG's N5.2bn

Agba who made the disclosure at a press conference in Abuja said out of the 36 States and the FCT that are participating in the NG-CARES Programme, seven States were unable to repay the Advance while One (1) State (Imo) did not earn any Result in the first round.

He further explained that if a State did not receive a reimbursement during the current round, they were still eligible for reimbursement during subsequent rounds, adding that in order to qualify, states must adhere to set guidelines outlined in the Programmes's Financing Agreement, Funds Release Policy and Independent Verification Agent Protocol.

He pointed out that there would be more assessments and any eligible State or the FCT that met these criteria would receive reimbursement accordingly.

Agba said, "The results of this first round of assessment shows that States and the FCT are improving on their strides to alleviate poverty in line with the commitment of President Muhammadu Buhari. The Programme has impacted over two million direct beneficiaries who are poor and vulnerable in the 36 States and the FCT.

"This is a testament to the success of the programme so far. You would recall that in order to ensure a seamless implementation of the programme and noting the challenge of paucity of funds faced by the states and the FCT, the Federal Government provided an initial advance of 35.3 billion Naira to all the 36 States and the FCT in March 2022 with a plan to recover the one-off advance during reimbursement.

"Within one year of giving out the advance, many states were able to achieve appreciable results and this informed the Federal Government's approval to release earned reimbursement to the states and the FCT based on their outstanding performance".

The Federal Government had approved the release of N45.3 billion as reimbursement to States and the FCT for the implementation of the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG CARES) Programme.

The National Coordinator of NG-CARES Programme, Dr Abdulkarim Obaje, made the disclosure in a statement by Mr Suleiman Odapu, Information and Communication Officer, NG-CARES, on Sunday in Abuja.



Osun HoS lauds Adeleke for prioritizing workers' training

Mr Ayanleye Aina, the Head of Service in Osun State, has praised the State Government for prioritizing staff members' training and retraining, stating that it would improve their effectiveness and efficiency, resulting in increased productivity.

He made this comment during an orientation programme in Osogbo for newly converted officers in the Departments of Works, Town Planning and Land Services at the local government level.

During the induction training, which was organized by the State Local Government Service Commission, Aina emphasized that such training would broaden the employees' knowledge and enable them to stay up to date with new developments in their profession.

He also urged the resource persons to make the training practical and interactive to enhance the officers' effectiveness and productivity.

In his welcome address, the Coordinating Director in the Commission, Barr. Lekan Babalola, appreciated Governor Adeleke for his people-friendly policies and charged the new officers to spread the governor's amiable disposition throughout the State.

He also commended the Head of Service for his efforts in making the induction training a reality.

The Chairman Forum of Engineers, Engr. Taofeek Ajibade, who was represented by Engr. Adewumi Busayo, viewed the training as an opportunity to sharpen their skills and continue to play a crucial role in dispensing dividends of democracy to the society.

He urged his colleagues to take advantage of the training to tap into the right direction with loyalty to the government of the day.

The Forum Chairman for the Town Planning and Land

Services Departments in the Local Government Service, TPL Rauf Adekola Maruf, emphasized the need to marry physical and social infrastructure facilities to secure a sustainable environment.

He promised, on behalf of his colleagues, to take the gains of the training to their various duty posts for proper implementation.

The training covered topics such as "Cost Effective Construction and Maintenance of Public Infrastructure: The Sustainable Development Approach" and "Public Service Ethics and Local Government Administration: The Role of Professionals in the Works, Town Planning and Land Services Departments," which were handled by Professor John Agbonifo and Mr. Kolawole Najeem Akintola.



Ikpeazu fumes over Abia varsity fee hike, orders return to old fee

Abia State Governor, Dr Okezie Ikpeazu, has ordered the immediate cancellation of the increment of the Abia State University (ABSU) tuition fee.

Invoice given some fresh students which went viral, showed that undergraduates in some departments had their fees skyrocket from N122,000 to N500,000.

Seeing the hike, Ikpeazu who is a Visitor to ABSU, directed the management of the university led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Maxwell Ogbulu, to immediately cancel the increase in school fees.

Governor Ikpeazu, who gave the directive via a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Onyebuchi Ememanka, said the increase which is by over 350 percent is unacceptable to the Abia State Government, especially given the current economic realities in the country.

The governor while acknowledging that it is becoming increasingly challenging for ABSU to play its role under the current fiscal regime, however, said the university management must "understand clearly that it must ensure that children of the poor in the state are given the opportunity to access tertiary education."

Ikpeazu further directed the university management to engage with all relevant stakeholders in the university community and have robust discussions before contemplating any hike in school fees.

The governor, however, assured the people of Abia State that the state government will continue to support the institution with subventions.

Kogi plans inland port to move cargo between northern and southern Nigeria

Kogi has begun talks with Chinese construction giant, China Civil Engineering and Construction Company (CCECC) for the construction of an inland transit port in Lokoja.

The port will serve as a link between Burutu in Delta and Port Harcourt via Onitsha.

Mr Onogwu Mohammed, media aide to Gov. Yahaya Bello, stated in Lokoja that a delegation of the Kogi government already held discussions with CCECC in Abuja preparatory to the execution of the project.

“Government believes that the port will rapidly develop the movement of agricultural produce and solid minerals cargo to and from the northern and southern parts of Nigeria.

“It will also scale up relationships between the state and the construction company for huge investments and development of the transport sector in Kogi,” he stated.

Mohammed stressed that Gov. Bello’s administration was doing all it could to attract huge investments into Kogi to stimulate rapid growth and development.



Gov. Bello

Why NBS revised Nigeria’s methodology for unemployment report

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has given reason why it decided to revise the methodology for the Labour Force Survey in the country.

The report, which discloses data and statistics on the country’s unemployment situation, has not been regular since 2021.

The Statistics agency said the publication has not been regular because of the need to review the methodology and implementation of the Nigeria labour force survey for generating data for the report.

The NBS said the review was necessary to devise a more sustainable method of conducting the survey, to accommodate the unique characteristics of the Nigerian Labour market.

Clarifying the decision to embark on the review, the NBS explained through its verified Twitter handle on Tuesday that this would ensure the methodology for collecting the data aligned with international standards and best practices.

“We have revised the methodology for the Labour Force Survey which produces the Unemployment Report, to ensure alignment with international standards and best practices,” the NBS said.

As part of its commitment to transparency and accountability, the NBS said it would actively engage with the public over the next few weeks, to explain the changes and their impact on the Labour Force Survey Results.

The agency urged the general public to visit its website at nigerianstat.gov.ng and other social media handles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube to get updates on the reviews on activities relating to its handling of all unemployment issues in the country.

“We believe that providing accurate and timely information is essential for evidence-based decision-making, and we remain

steadfast in our commitment to delivering reliable data to our stakeholders. We thank you for your continued support,” the NBS said.

In April 2021, Minister of Labour, Chris Ngige, said the World Bank, which has always collaborated with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to produce the report, had questioned the methodology deployed by the NBS to generate its employment statistics.

The minister said the Bank on several occasions queried the employment statistics released by the NBS as not complying with international standards and best practices.

He said the National Economic Advisory Council and representatives of the World Bank have held a virtual meeting to review Nigeria’s modalities for collecting employment statistics and data.

The Minister agreed there were some confusion concerning the accuracy of data generated by the NBS, adding that the government has resolved to take steps to ensure alignment with international standards.

“The World Bank says the NBS methodology doesn’t conform to the global standard, especially the ILO format of arriving at our unemployment index,” Ngige said.

But the NBS said it conducted a pre-test and pilot of the new data gathering methodology, trained trainers and enumerators, and organized a nationwide sensitization workshop for officials from the government, the private sector and academia.

Since the fourth quarter of last year, the NBS said it initiated data collection using the new approach, in anticipation of the quarterly release of the national results and disaggregated state-level results pending the official launching of the Nigeria labour force survey report using the new approach and methodology in the second quarter of this year.

Sanwo-Olu pledges support for private sector

Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State has pledged to provide critical infrastructure to support growth and development of private enterprises in the various sectors of the state's economy.

Sanwo-Olu made the pledge at the release of "The World Ahead 2023" a publication of The Economist.

The event was organised by Ecobank Nig. Ltd. at the Ecobank Pan African Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos State.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that The Economist is a British weekly publication offering global news and analysis with focus on politics, economy, international business, science and technology.

Sanwo-Olu was represented by his Deputy, Dr Obafemi Hamzat.

He said that his administration was committed to a private sector-driven economy where the government would be pre-occupied with designing and implementing policies and strategies.

"We will continue to sustain friendly and collaborative relationship with the business community with a view to developing solutions to issues of mutual concern," he said.

He said that the publication was valuable to policymakers and top private sector players, for strategic planning.

Sanwo-Olu said: "The concern of any governments and businesses around the globe, which this publication attempts to address through its insightful analysis of events and trends, is mainly how to navigate the murky waters.

"It also helps to turn the envisaged challenges into opportunities through well-designed and informed policies

and strategies.

"The Nigerian economy, as several economies across the world, has been impacted by the attendant results of global issues as well as other incendiary circumstances in our security space.

"As a government, we are constantly seeking out innovative strategies to ensure that our economy maintains its steady rise.

"Lagos continues to play a leading role as Africa's fastest-growing economy and choice destination for investment."

Sanwo-Olu expressed confidence that the publication's insights would enhance the capacity of policymakers and business owners.

He added that it would help to develop more realistic plans and strategies to achieve set goals in 2023 and beyond.

Earlier, Mr Bolaji Lawal, Managing Director, Ecobank Nig. Ltd., said that the publication would help to explore new ideas across Africa.

He added that it would help to stimulate growth and drive transformation in businesses.

Camelia Tsarouchis, the Managing Director of CT Productions, an International creative media agency, said that the publication would shape the world with its topics relied on by many leading decision makers as a key source of planning strategy.

Ogun Govt acquires drones to tackle criminal activities

Determined to monitor and check criminal activities, particularly along the major highways across Ogun State, Governor Dapo Abiodun says his administration has acquired security drones.

Abiodun gave the disclosure when he received the new Commissioner of Police, Yomi Oladimeji, who paid a courtesy visit to his office in Abeokuta.

He said that the state had acquired drones to allow it monitor, particularly, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and other major highways so that it could identify threats and respond to them with dispatch.

"CP Oladimeji, you have your job cut out for you. We have in the past had farmer/herders crises, and we are facing issues of cultism that continued to be on the rise, which we find very strange.

"There are issues of kidnapping here and there but I must thank the men and women of our law enforcement architecture, including the police, DSS, the military, Civil Defence and other members of our security architecture for the hard work," he said.

The governor said Ogun as a state with the highest number of industries and also serving as the education and religious capital, it was expected to have an influx of people with its attendant challenges.

He added that the desire of his administration was to have a crime-free society to attract more investors to the state.

He observed that in spite of numerous challenges facing the country, the state had remained peaceful, attributing the feat to the inter-agencies synergy among heads of security agencies.

Abiodun added that deployment of a water cannon and Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) by the IGP would help in tackling crimes and criminalities in the state.

He described the new CP as a round peg in a round hole, a legal practitioner vast in judiciary and security matters.

The governor added that his many years of traversing the nation as a police officer had prepared him for the task ahead.

Earlier, CP Oladimeji explained that the mission in the state was to protect the lives of law-abiding citizens, to enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

"We will be tough on criminals and friendly with law-abiding citizens. I want to assure the governor and the citizens that we will not rest on getting rid of criminals out of Ogun State.

"All we need is cooperation of the people and assistance from the government," the CP said.



Gov. Sanwo-Olu

Anambra's Path to Economic Prosperity: Exploring the Impact of the 2023 Constitutional Amendments

Last month, President Muhammadu Buhari signed three Constitutional Amendment Acts seeking to move some items from the Exclusive Legislative List to the Concurrent List in the Constitution. According to the 1999 Nigeria Constitution (as amended), the Exclusive Legislative List contains items only the National Assembly can legislate on; while items on the Concurrent List can be legislated on by both the Federal and State Governments.

Simply put, the Exclusive List involves only the Federal Government, while the Concurrent List involves both Federal and State Governments.

With the continuous clamour for "true federalism", "devolution of powers", and other terms that allow States have more authority over their affairs, this move by Mr. President has been met with positive feedback. However, analysts are still weighing the implications of the seemingly positive constitutional amendment.

"Was this Mr. President's way of leaving a legacy as he prepares to leave the highest seat of Power?"

"Can the new laws be the foundation for further devolution of power in Nigeria?"

"Are we finally witnessing the groundwork for true federalism?"

The answers to these questions lie in how States will choose to wield their new power and how this will translate to development at the State level.



Gov. Soludo

Let's take the Anambra example

In 2021, as part of the prerequisites to convince voters for a chance at Agu-Awka, the now-Governor of Anambra State, Prof. Chukwuma Charles Soludo released what he termed "the People's Manifesto". This document detailed his plan for the State if elected into office. In that plan, he explains the need for an engagement with the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC) and the need for the construction of a Railway network to decongest traffic and make transportation more efficient.

In response to this passionate covenant, the universe handed Prof. Soludo the necessary tools to achieve his dream of a liveable, prosperous, and smart megacity. He won the election and now, Aso Rock has given States the right to develop intrastate railway stations. States can also now generate, transmit and distribute power in areas covered by the national grid.

Why is this important?

Simple. In 2021, the People's Manifesto outlined a development plan based on what was obtainable at the time. The document asked for a car to transport NdiAnambra to the future; Aso Rock delivered a private jet. It is not a Bombardier Global 7500 yet, but still, we can fly.

Prof. Soludo's manifesto was very ambitious. It presents great ideas that can indeed spark Anambra's 4th industrial revolution creating a more industrialized economy for the State. The document also clearly states how funding will limit the actualization of this plan. The State Government simply cannot afford to fund the industrial revolution Anambra State desires. The IGR of the State no matter how prudently utilized will not cover the cost of developing the infrastructures necessary

for the industrial development outlined in the People's Manifesto. Hence the need to explore more creative means of funding.

This brings us back to how this constitutional amendment was God's Gift to Anambra State.

One of the benefits of moving the item "Railway" to the Concurrent List is that it opens the sector to private sector participation. Although the Federal Government still retains the right to make laws on interstate railways, the State Government can determine the intrastate development of railways. Private investors will no longer need to seek approval at the federal level but can now engage at the State level. This will help open the sector to much-needed private-sector participation and investment.

If the law can further be interpreted to allow the private sector handle railway operations while the Government focuses on policymaking and regulations, experts with financial and technical capacity will be encouraged to undertake the huge capital investment the sector requires. This will also reduce the burden of cost on the Government and increase the efficiency of Railways.

Already, the Anambra State Government had last year announced its engagement with the China Railway Beijing Engineering (CRBE) Ltd to conduct a feasibility study on the Onitsha SkyTrain project. This project at the final implementation is expected to connect Onitsha, Nnewi,

Anambra Govt establishes bureau of missing persons

The Anambra state government has approved the establishment of a bureau of missing persons.

Paul Nwosu, the Commissioner for Information in a statement said the approval was made at the State Executive Council meeting.

He said that the bureau would be domiciled in the ministry of Justice.

He said the establishment of the bureau was part of the fulfillment of the recommendation by the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission.

The Commission, which had Prof. Chidi Odinkalu as chairman, Bianca Ojukwu as Secretary and Prof. Sylvia Ifemeje the Commissioner of Justice as members submitted its report to Gov. Chukwuma Soludo on Feb. 17.

The Commissioner said part of the mandate of the Bureau was to trace cases of missing persons and come up with the needed database to support Police investigations and eventual prosecution of suspects.

The committee, inaugurated by Soludo in June 23, 2022, followed agitations that led to killings and destructions of property in the state and the south-east region.

The purpose of the committee is to seek a restorative justice approach for truth-telling or real facts, and for the healing of the victims of the violence.

It was to account for the responsibility and accountability of the actors, conditional mercy for the repentant perpetrators.

Awka, and Ekwulobia. With the new law, the State can now focus on policymaking and regulation, and explore more creative means of funding and investments, rather than bearing the cost of the entire project.

On the part of allowing States generate, transmit, and distribute electricity in areas covered by the National Grid, I have to admit; I was a bit confused.

My initial reaction was "Shouldn't States be more focused on areas NOT covered by the National Grid? That is, the unserved and the underserved areas". Seeing as the law was not a typo, I had to dig deeper.

For this law, the previous provision before the amendment restricted State assemblies to making laws on the areas NOT COVERED by the national grid system. With the amendment, the wording was changed to expand State Assemblies to make laws on areas that are COVERED by the national grid.

In simpler terms, the new amendment gives free rein to State Assemblies to make laws for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity to all areas in the State. So my initial thought was already covered in the previous provision. This just expands the power of States on electricity. It is important to mention that the Federal Government still maintains the right to legislate on the generation and transmission of electricity in any part of the country and manage the national grid system. This amendment allows for collaboration and partnership of sorts, not a replacement. For it to make an impact, State Assemblies will have to tailor their electricity laws taking the amendment into consideration.

"But Anambra already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with EEDC. Has the Anambra State electricity laws been amended?"

Great question.

As explained earlier, prior to the amendment, the States had some authority over electricity. Just not enough.

Let's go back to the People's Manifesto.

On Page 31, the document explores creative means to engage with EEDC, NERC, TCN, and the private sector to provide up to 18 hours of electricity to select locations. The recently signed MoU is simply a fulfillment of this promise.

Anambra State has undertaken the responsibility of developing policy, financing and framework, and the security of the proposed infrastructure projects necessary for the EEDC to meet up with the electricity demands of Ndi Anambra. On its part, the EEDC will lend its voice to aid the regulatory approval that will allow for private-sector participation in this sector. They will also undertake programs in collaboration with the TCN to fast-track the development of critical infrastructure in Anambra.

Furthermore, this free rein will allow States pursue alternative sources of Power Generation. For areas that are unserved by the national grid, States can encourage private-sector participation. Unserved and underserved communities can be divided to allow Independent Power Producer(s) (IPP) generate electricity. This will open the market and allow competition between IPPs. As expected, this will boost the economy of the State while reducing the burden on National Grid.

Anambra State has taken the initiative with the signing of an agreement with the EEDC. How this will pan out will be witnessed in the coming months. While we wait and observe, it may be wise to start exploring the investment opportunities in sectors the constitutional amendments touched on.

The Buhari-led administration despite criticisms has presented a well-packaged farewell gift to Nigerians with the recent amendments. Will this box ransom our extinguished hopes and give birth to further devolution of power? Until we collectively open the box, the cat may be dead or alive. Only one way to find out.

Sanwo-Olu to Lagosians: My second term'll be better than first tenure

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has assured the residents of the state that his second term administration will be better than the first tenure.

Sanwo-Olu said the rising prosperity of Lagos is on course, pledging that his administration is committed to the safety, security, and prosperity of the residents.

The governor said this during a special Eid-el-Fitr celebration in Ikeja, Lagos State, recently.

Sanwo-Olu congratulated the Muslim faithful for completing the Ramadan fasting and for using the occasion to pray fervently for Nigeria, Lagos State, President Muhammadu Buhari, and the President-elect, Bola Tinubu, among others.

He also commended the people of Lagos State for their steadfastness in the 2023 general election, which he said allowed him to be re-elected to run the affairs of Lagos State for another four years.

Sanwo-Olu said: "I want to enjoin all of us to continue to remain steadfast and continue to know that even as we end our first tenure and we are beginning our second tenure, the rising prosperity of Lagos is on course.

"This government will ensure that the Greater Lagos agenda, which will improve the quality of life and make life a lot more meaningful for every one of you, is what we are about.

"We believe that the additional four years will be easier, bigger, stronger, and better than the last four years."

Governor Sanwo-Olu further assured Nigerians that Tinubu, who is expected to be sworn into office on May 29, has the capacity to chart a new course for Nigeria.

"We will continue to remember him (Tinubu) in our prayers. God will strengthen him. God will be with him and abide with him.

"God will help him be able to deliver all the good things he has in stock for this country because indeed we need to chart a new course.

"We need to chart a new beginning for

our country and it is at this critical time that we are having a change in government; from one government to another; that new chart is most important. And we believe that with our President-elect, we have the faith and belief that he is a man that can do it and God will give him the strength and intellect to take this country to the next level," he added.

Also speaking, the deputy governor of Lagos State, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, urged Nigerians to continuously pray for their leaders, especially Tinubu for a successful tenure after his inauguration on May 29.

He also enjoined Muslims to train their children in Godly way.

On her part, the wife of the Lagos State Governor, Dr Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, urged the Muslims to sustain the principle of the teachings of the month of Ramadan by being truthful, peaceful, kind, compassionate, and living peacefully for continued cordial relationships among all, irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliation.

The First Lady also appreciated Lagosians for their massive support and vote of confidence reposed in Governor Sanwo-Olu and his deputy by re-electing them for a second term in office.



I want to be remembered for quality education legacy – Obaseki



Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki said he would want to be remembered for transforming public education and a better workforce needed for national development in the state.

Obaseki made this known during the Edo State Education Week 2023 with the theme, “Education for Alaghadaro: Investing in quality education and access for our children and youth,” in Benin.

He noted that his vision for the state in the next decade was to see that the state did not rely on oil resources alone from the Federal Government to run the economy.

“The future we seek is one in which millions of well educated citizens can participate in our economy with the advantage of the knowledge and education which they have acquired.

“Our grand plan is to make Edo state the best place to live and work by the year 2050, and we have realised that there is no better way to achieve this dream than through education.

“It is expedient to reiterate that the most cherished legacy I want to be remembered for as the Governor of Edo State is a legacy that we were able to transform public education.

“And opportunities for children across the various strata of our society so that they can get a decent world class education, just like we did growing up,” he said.

According to the governor, As many of you know, we started these reforms in 2018, when we launched the Edo State Basic Education Transformation (EdoBEST) programme.

“The programme sets a structure to address fundamental challenges such as quality of teachers, infrastructure and learning materials,” he added.

Obaseki, however, expressed gratitude to world bank and other stakeholders for their support in sustaining the EdoBEST which had enhanced the quality of education in the state.

The state Commissioner for Education, Joan Oviawe, said the ministry was committed to making every child a reading champion.

Edo distributes 3.3m books to schools in five years

Edo Government said it distributed 3.3 million textbooks and writing materials to 848 primary and 306 junior secondary schools in the state in the last five years.

The state chairman of the Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Mrs Ozavize Salami, disclosed this during the unveiling of 1.5 million books as part of activities to mark the Edo Education Week in Benin.

She stated that out of the 3.3 million, 1.8 million were distributed between 2018 and 2022 to public primary schools in the state since the inception of EdoBEST Programme.

“Today, you are surrounded by 1.5 million books which would be distributed to schools across the state.

“One million of these books will go to primary schools while over 500,000 would go to junior secondary schools,” she said.

According to her, instructional materials are critical to improving education and learning, hence the state government is doing its best to improve the education sector.

Also, Gov. Godwin Obaseki said there had been a lot of backlash of criticisms

directed at him and his government on the social media in spite of efforts made to move the state forward.

“Often time you go online and you see the attacks on me and my government, you will ask, if the government is doing all these things, why is there so much attacks on him?”

“I am sure if you go on most of the blogs, you will not see any stories about the improvements we have made in our schools, about how we have transformed our school system into learning systems. You will not see.

“They are waiting let Obaseki go and they will kill it and why is he wasting all these money to buy books for the children? Na books we go chop?”

“They are not interested in the future but the experience of the last one or two years have taught us that they will not succeed.

“They can’t because we can see the political evolution in our country” Obaseki said.

According to him, with the parents of more than 370,000 children in the school system, with the 20,000 teachers and education managers, government will go into the streets to let them know that EdoBEST must be sustained.

unicef | for every child

UNICEF is committed to realizing the rights of all children to help them build a strong foundation and have the best chance of fulfilling their potential. We believe that ensuring a happy and healthy child begins before birth: from ensuring his/her mother has access to good neonatal care and delivering in a clean, safe environment to reaching adulthood as a responsible, healthy and informed parent to the next generation. This journey relies on a child having access to shelter, good nutrition, clean water and sanitation, healthcare and education.



UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. And we never give up.

Discover UNICEF's work for every child, everywhere.

<https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>