

**NIGERIA  
GOVERNORS'  
FORUM**



# **THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**AN NGF MONTHLY PUBLICATION**

**Vol.1. No. 9 September, 2018**



## **How Govs Are Tackling POVERTY**



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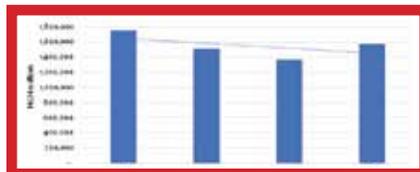


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**TOUCHING LIVES IN MORE WAYS ...**

**GOVERNMENT OF ANWARU STATE NIGERIA**

**Agriculture**

- 11,200 hectares reseeded/planted
- 21,200 hectares covered with grass
- 48,500 registered rice farmers
- 4200 people trained for rice rice rice
- Scholarship holders, of girls & boys - 2000
- Alkano Peace Primary 15,000 dry and 1000 weekly
- 1000 registered cow herders

**Roads & Infrastructure**

- Over 1700km of roads
- 25 bridges
- Construction of the State Secretariat Annex
- Construction of 1000 km of roads
- Upgrade of Airport road to category 2
- Only 1000 km of roads in the state
- Provision of 1000 km of roads
- 1000 km of roads
- 1000 km of roads
- 1000 km of roads

**Education**

- Over 200 rural development projects across 115 LGAs
- Over 400 non-registered rural extension projects
- Rehabilitation / construction of over 2000m of rural roads

**Rural Development**

- Free medical services for children below 5 years, pregnant women & the aged
- Over 22 Centres of the art and medical education
- Construction & upgrading of 1000 health care facilities across the state
- 1000 km of roads
- Free screening & treatment of over 15,000 people for various ailments

**Youth Employment**

- Over 10,000 youths trained in various skills
- 1000 trained for small scale entrepreneurs and traders
- 1000 trained for small scale entrepreneurs and traders
- 1000 trained for small scale entrepreneurs and traders
- 1000 trained for small scale entrepreneurs and traders

**Health**

- 1000 km of roads

**Social Services**

- 1000 km of roads

**Health**

- 1000 km of roads

**Health**

- 1000 km of roads

**Health**

- 1000 km of roads

**Health**

- 1000 km of roads

**Health**

- 1000 km of roads

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# States new fiscal reality - a review

In the last three years, State governments have experienced a combination of adverse fiscal and macroeconomic conditions that have exerted strong pressures on their fiscal sustainability. Following the fall in oil prices since mid-2014 which led to a slump in oil revenues and a contraction in economic activities in 2016, governments have had their budget operations disrupted by both shocks in revenue shortfall and weaknesses of high and largely unrealistic budgets.

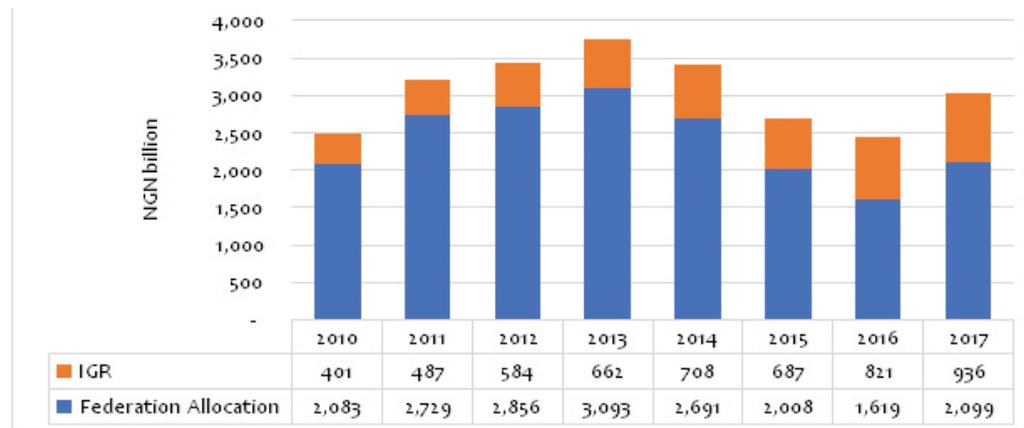
The mid-2014 oil bust was the latest of the recurring episodes of boom and bust cycles, similar to the oil collapse of 1980 – 1986, and the sharp decline recorded in 2009, when oil prices fell sharply from around US\$100 to just above US\$60 in one year. The impact has been devastating and it has resulted in a steep turnaround for a country that was hitherto ranked amongst the world's fastest growing economies, bringing with it fiscal shocks and macroeconomic disruptions amidst rising unemployment and poverty.

This piece is intended to highlight the impact of the recent oil price slump on the fiscal environment of States, the response of State governments, as well as useful lessons for the future.

## Falling Federation Revenues

One of the direct impacts of the oil price slump was the fall in State revenues. State governments recorded arguably one of the worse periods of revenue contraction, as federation revenues declined steadily over a three-year period between 2014 – 2016 at rates of 13%, 25% and 19% respectively. Federation revenues declined from N3.1 trillion in 2013 to N2 trillion in 2015 and N1.6 trillion by 2016 before settling at N2.1 trillion in 2017 (figure 1). The fiscal rebalancing saw a reversal of the previous growth trend in federation transfers to a record comparable to the total of N2.1 trillion recorded in 2010. The reversal accounted for a loss of over N4 trillion in unearned income for the 36 State governments between 2014 and 2017.

Figure 1: Contraction in State revenues, 2010–17



Source: Office of the Accountant General of the Federation and Joint Tax Board

## Rising Domestic Revenues

To prevent governments from shutdown, the aftershocks of the fiscal crisis compelled States to rapidly grow their domestic revenue. Internally generated revenue (IGR) grew by 20% in 2016, up from a 2.9% contraction recorded in 2015. By 2017, IGR reached N936 billion as State governments deepened efforts to raise revenues. Common reforms that triggered the growth in resource mobilization included granting autonomy to tax authorities, improving taxpayer mapping and incorporating the informal sector, adopting modern technology to block widespread leakages in revenue collection, community engagement, tax-for-service initiatives and the review of obsolete laws and tax rates.

The rise in domestic revenues helped shore up domestic financing, but much of the growth was accounted for by only a few States due to the varied level of reform implementation – much of it also unstable. For example, in 2016, States such as Kwara, Kano, and Ogun recorded high growth rates in IGR reaching 140%, 127% and 111% respectively, while major winners in 2017 were Sokoto (98.4%), Jigawa (88%), and Borno (86%). The high growth in domestic revenues has provided strong evidence on the expansive room for revenue mobilisation and the gap between the revenue potential and revenue effort of most States.

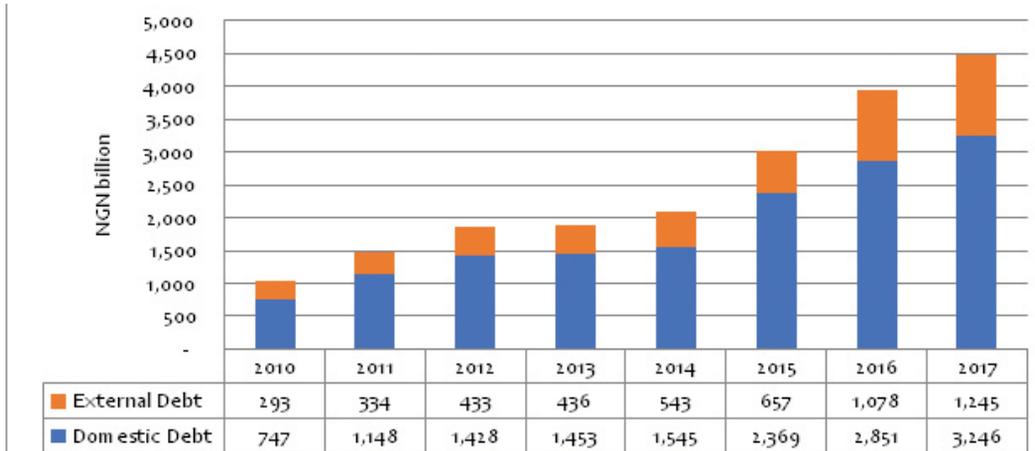
## Rise in government borrowing

The periods of 2015, 2016 and 2017 also marked an era of higher debt vulnerability, with records of high budget deficits, mounting debts and unpaid public sector wages across States. During the period, the federal government responded by providing bailout packages to States to help shore up short term liquidity and address accumulating wage bills, pension and contractors' arrears, but the bailouts also had other unintended consequences, leading to a spike in deductions from federation transfers and extending pressures on the ability of State governments to service short-term debts.

Total public debts have tripled in the last seven years, growing from N1 trillion in 2010 to N4.5 trillion in 2017, with more States transiting into higher debt positions and a higher risk of default. Much of the growth in debt stock was largely due to the rise in government borrowing in the last three years. Government borrowing grew from an annual compound rate of 22% between 2010 and 2013, to 30% since 2014 to date. The rise in government borrowing has also been widespread, but for a few States including Anambra, Jigawa, Sokoto and Yobe that maintained a low debt stock and only six (6) States reducing their total debt stocks in 2017 – Bayelsa, Delta, Gombe, Imo, Kebbi and Osun.

# States new fiscal reality - a review

State debts have risen faster than revenues, 2010–17



Source: Debt Management Office

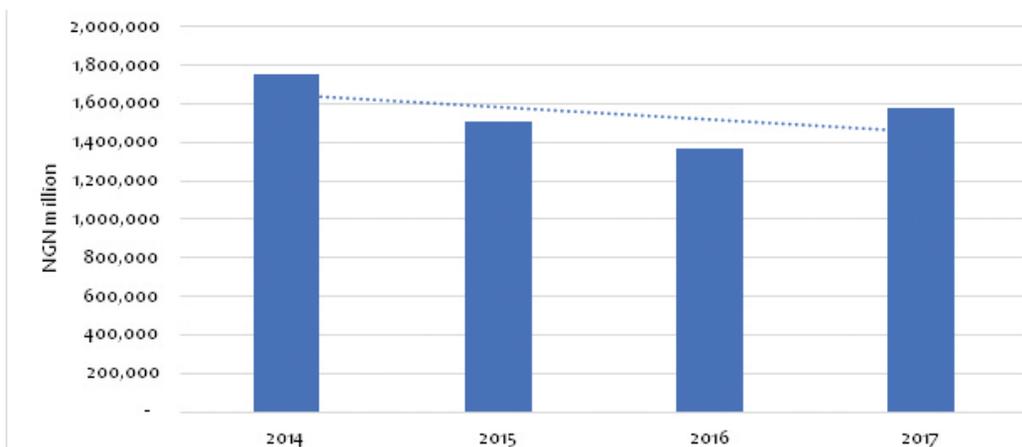
Note: 32 States debt figures are as at end-December 2017, 3 States' (Akwa-Ibom, Katsina and Lagos States) as at September 2017 and Borno State as at June 2017.

The unsustainable rise in public debts calls for stronger fiscal consolidation and policy adjustments including managing public sector employment which accounts for a large share of domestic debts, only behind contractor arrears.

## Unstable trends in government budgets

Large revenue windfalls recorded during boom periods have historically destabilized the budgets of both federal and State governments. The boom periods have tended to lure governments into unsustainable increases in expenditures, in which they find themselves locked in when revenues fall. While a number of States including Akwa Ibom, Nasarawa and Yobe have made spending adjustments in line with current fiscal realities, the challenge of realistic budgeting still remains for most States, and characteristic of government budgets. The rise in unrealistic budgets has become a major threat to fiscal policy implementation and development planning in the country.

Government spending slightly adjusting, total expenditure of 10 representative States, 2014–17



Source: Budgets of States

Accounting for up to 40% of the total budget of a number of States, personnel costs is another major threat to budget implementation in the country. The excesses of public sector employment have continued to crowd out funding for health, education and infrastructural development.

## Closing

In the last three years, governments have implemented notable measures to improve the fiscal sustainability of States, but significant risks remain. Revenues have settled at a new normal below records preceding 2014, debts are unlikely to be cleared in the medium term, while budget implementation has remained at risk of weak revenue forecasting and poor spending efficiency. The new reality of fiscal trends highlights the need for a consensus on key fiscal governance reforms that will lead States to fiscal sustainability. These reforms are ongoing across States, but governments require collective action to drive both political and institutional cooperation. These reforms must target the structure of State economies, source of government revenues, nature of the political system and the capacity of government institutions.

# NGF IGR Dashboard Training

**T**he NGF through its Dashboard program organized a training for the 37 desk officers of the IGR Dashboard which held on September 10, 2018. The IGR dashboard was launched in 2017 by the Nigeria Governors' Forum, the NGF Secretariat drives the operation of the programme and supports the implementation and monitoring of commendable practices of the Dashboard, including those agreed at JTB meetings. The Dashboard provides a diagnosis of the State's tax environment and identifies specific areas that require interventions. The Data is collected through objective-based questionnaires completed by the State Internal Revenue Service (SIRS). Currently 28 states have visited the platform, while 22 states have uploaded data on the Dashboard.

The DG in his opening remarks highlighted that in spite of the country's poor track record in raising domestic revenues over the years, the training will serve as a renewed push for fiscal independ-

ence and a groundswell of activities.

Key issues addressed at the training include; (i) The current status of the Dashboard, (ii) Highlight commendable best practices (iii) Come up with recommendations for Governors, SIRS, and JTB, (iv) Educate participants on accessing the site including how to request technical assistance.

After extensive deliberations, Delegates recommended as follows;

- The need to Implement relevant laws that grant both administrative and financial autonomy to the SIRS.
- The State internal revenue service was advised to implement e-billing systems across MDAs to curb leakages.
- The Joint Tax Board (JTB) was advised to among other things, facilitate State ownership and management of TIN technology.
- Improve inter-departmental collaboration within the Service, Institute a special department and strategy to engage HNWI's, Leverage existing databases like BVN, CAC, etc.



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1. Director General, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Asishana B.Okauru exchanging pleasantries with the Desk Officers of the IGR Dashboard during the training at NGF Secretariat, Abuja.

2. DG, NGF, Asishana B.Okauru addressing the Desk Officers of the IGR Dashboard during the training at NGF Secretariat.

3. Cross Section of Desk Officers of the IGR Dashboard during the training at NGF Secretariat.

4. NGF Senior Economist David Nabena addressing the Desk Officers of the IGR Dashboard during the training at NGF Secretariat.

5. .Cross Section of Desk Officers of the IGR Dashboard during the training at NGF Secretariat, Abuja.

6. Dr. Mark Abani addressing the Desk Officers of the IGR Dashboard.



## Governors' Pro-poor initiatives

**P**ro poor initiatives mean different things to different people. There are states like Ebonyi where the state capital exudes pride in its urbanization which the people believe has emancipated the poor by providing the infrastructure that propels their businesses to the next level. But when in Kano, governor Ganduje assisted indigent citizens in the coffee and bread business otherwise known as *Mai Shayi* many people cried wolf. But what is true for Kano may not necessarily be true for Port Hacourt. Nigeria is a large country with different proclivities and inclinations by geopolitical region, by state and even by local government. So in Kaduna, pro poor is the liberation of education from the hands of quacks who for decades have denied the sons and daughters of the downtrodden qualitative education.

Juxtaposed, one begins to get the feeling that pro poor initiatives do not just constitute job creation, an enabling environment or the provision of seed money to the under privileged or physically challenged, but it involves even the supply of fertilizers, facilitating healthcare delivery, introducing the NHIS to the uninitiated among many others.

Sometimes there are indications that some problems cover an entire geo-political region because of the fact that they share the same socio-economic

environment and therefore suffer from the same social disadvantages and require the same things to uplift their living standards. It is curious but truer than anyone can assume. It is for the same reasons that governors also provide the same things as dividends of democracy in a particular geopolitical region. The soothing thing is that the last three years have seen an upward mobility in the standards of living of the Nigerian people and a notch higher assumption of responsibility among the governors.

For this cover, the team at The Executive Summary would like to specifically thank all the officials in charge of media and publicity at the subnational level for responding, some very swiftly and some with some prodding, to the team's request for entries into this edition. We may not have achieved a graded response but as the saying goes, half a loaf is better than none.

In particular, the team would like to mention senior journalists like Bala Dan Abu of Taraba State, Mike Uдах of the South East Governors Forum, Mark Nyelong of Plateau, Mark Dickson of Adama State, Charles Udoh, the Information Commissioner in Akwa Ibom State among many other quick response officials who supplied us with informatics and other contributions to make this edition possible.

We appeal for greater participation next time.

## NGF gets a Librarian

### Naomi Onoriode Tietie-Ubogu

**T**he NGF has recruited a Librarian. She is Mrs. Naomi Onoriode Tietie-Ubogu, a cool-headed professional, who graduated with a Second Class (Upper Division) in Library and Information Sciences from the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2010.

Mrs. Naomi Onoriode Tietie Ubogu is a highly sought-after professional, thorough-bred Librarian having worked in reputable organizations and also served as confidential secretary, personal assistant and administrative/finance manager in several organizations around the country.

Married to Williams Ubogu of Onecard Top-up Nigeria, a Lagos-based telecoms company, Naomi resumed work at the Nigerian Governors' Forum Secretariat in Abuja a couple of months ago as the NGF's Library/Records Manager. She is a certified customer service professional (CCSP) and a Telesales professional (CTP) among many of her other qualities.

Naomi loves nature and enjoys spending time with family and friends. Above all she is a very simple, down-to-earth woman and happily married.





## Darius Ishaku: Friend of the poor

One year ago they had no hope, no future, no profession, no recognisable or respectable identity and no income. They were part of the itinerant army of the unemployed and unemployable women and youths that pounded the streets every day in search of something, anything, to do just to eke out a living.

Recently, their stories and statuses changed. They became proud sons and daughters of their parents and worthy citizens of Taraba who have not only become self-employed but were hoping to become employers of labour soon.

They are the 335 women and youths who recently graduated from a three-month skills acquisition programme organised by the administration of Governor Darius Dickson Ishaku.

The beneficiaries handed free start-up packages that included generators, sewing machines, weaving machines, computers and printers, hair dryers and all other equipment and tools they will require to start their own business.

Job creation and economic empowerment of the people was part of the campaign agenda of Governor Ishaku. He had promised to put the state on the part of sustainable recovery from its many years of crises, neglect and underdevelopment. That also includes ameliorating the level of poverty in the state.

Women and youths belong to that critical group of the vulnerable. How that would be achieved was part of the vision which Ishaku came with into office. When he decided to create the body known as

the Rescue Agenda and its principal organ also known as the Rescue Watch, not many people knew where Ishaku was headed. Today, these two "father-and-child" agencies have become powerful instruments of service delivery for the administration.

The Rescue Watch it was that coordinated the recruitment of participants for the first batch of the skill acquisition programme that graduated recently. Before then, Ishaku wanted to know those critical things that people at the grassroots level in the state earnestly desired from his administration. And it was to the Rescue Watch team he turned to do the job of finding out. Members of the group which include special advisers and special assistants went to work at the grassroots level and came back afterwards with reports that indicated that the desire and desperation for employment was deep-rooted among the people, particularly, women and youths.

That report, according to Governor Ishaku, informed the decision of government to package a poverty alleviation programme with skills acquisition as its critical ingredient.

Beneficiaries all graduated with skills in tailoring, footwear designing, soap making, wood craft, carpentry, welding, hair dressing, computer services and weaving of traditional clothes such as "Kyadzwe" and "Langtan."

The power in the skills acquisition programme is three-fold. It is a means of self-sustenance for the direct beneficiaries. It is also a means through which they can help their dependents survive hard times.



## Umahi: A sigh of relief

**G**overnor David Nweze Umahi of Ebonyi state may be described as one who has his ancestry among the gods judging from his sterling record of good governance. He may also be said to be someone the people have waited for since the creation of their state in 1991 to give them the much-needed help. These descriptions may be well-fitting for an executive who is not given to delivering shoddy, run-of-the-mill state service to the people; and they are not a case of hyperactive judgment.

For instance, in just a little over three years he has stamped his signature on infrastructure and many socioeconomic and political developments in the state in sharp contrast to what the people are used to, hence Ebonyians are wondering if a god has not come to deliver them from their medieval, old-fashioned ways. Looking at the trail of admirable footprints of the man they gave their mandates in 2015 Ebonyians cannot but heave a sigh of relief.

Describing the present state of things in Ebonyi state, one Abuja-based indigene said that the Governor has achieved a paradigm shift from old assumptions where past leaders and chiefs of state either evaded responsibilities or busied themselves with rendering shoddy, ineffectual services to the people. According to this man-in-the-street opinion, Governor Umahi mounted the saddle at a time when Ebonyians needed quality, selfless service in the administration of the state most: critical infrastructure especially internal roads in the state capital; artery roads in various towns and villages across the state; structural facelifts in education and health care.

Believing that health is wealth Governor Umahi first declared a state of emergency in the health sector mapping out billions of naira to reconstruct the General hospitals in the state. To this end the chief press secretary to the governor said that majority of the reconstruction works at the hospitals have been completed while others are still ongoing, adding that because of his commitment to improving the health status of Ebonyi people, the governor also quickly built the first Virology Centre in the entire South East to reduce the number of deaths recorded from Lassa fever and other viral diseases in the state.

Solidly asphalted roads presently crisscross and link the entire 13 local

government areas of the state in what analysts call a most unprecedented developmental stride since the creation of the state. According to the governor's spokesman, federal roads in the state which hitherto were death-traps were not left out. He said the Executive Governor wasted no time to embark on reconstruction of major federal roads in the state especially the Afikpo-Abakaliki road, the Amasiri/Okposi federal road and the Nkalagu/Nigercem road.

He said, "The roads are at about 99% completion stage and all sitting on rigid concrete pavement."

Ebonyi state is the last of the five states created out of the former East Central state, and record has it that that geographical expression now called Ebonyi state was somewhat neglected in the developmental action plans of the East Central State governments, and later by the governments of the greater states which ceded lands for the creation of Ebonyi.

### ...IS ABAKALIKI STILL A GLORIFIED LGA HQ?

Rhythmically, Abakaliki has a singsong name which many in the South East in the not too distant past used to think has a kinship with backwardness. In the early days of human settlement, people in that part of the country were skeptical of relocating to the medieval-like eastern town, equating it with the Galilean Nazareth where nothing good could hardly happen. Even municipal authorities of present day Abakaliki corroborate that age-old environmental equation in their statements. According to the chief press secretary to the Ebonyi state Governor, the city was almost unfit to be named a state capital judging from its dusty outlook and dearth of social amenities and other life-support inducements. In a recent statement to the press the press secretary said, "Until now Abakaliki used to be called a glorified local government headquarters due to its dirt roads, and filth."

The spokesman added, "Today Governor Umahi, has done a lot to clean up the city to make it a befitting 21st century state capital. The governor promptly completed over one hundred and fifty urban roads and three flyovers within Abakaliki, the state capital in a space of three years."

A member of commonalty who spoke to The Executive Summary in Abuja called that achievement a supersonic speed in infrastructural de-



## ...A sigh of relief

velopment.

According to the statement, more of these interchanges are cited at Nkalagu Junction in Ishielu council area of the state while street lights have been put in most streets in Abakaliki for aesthetics and security purposes. The statement further revealed that four new roundabouts with water fountains have also been completed even as work on others continues, adding that the practice of indiscriminate dumping of refuse and sewage on the streets and other places in the state capital is now a thing of the past as trucks now move from door to door and street to street on a daily bases to evacuate these rubbish, thus making Abakaliki arguably the cleanest city not only in the South East but also in the entire country today.

According to the official statements, to further ensure the capital city is offered a thorough facelift Governor Umahi quickly renovated the Ebonyi State Government House, the House of Assembly Complex, and the Police headquar-

ters bringing them to international statuses, and drawing spectators from the different parts of the country. Officials maintains that the governor has not reached his oasis: he is building a new government house and a new state secretariat designed to give cut off Abakaliki a pride of place in the league of state capitals in the country, and place Ebonyi state on the map of developed states in the world. Officials say the new Government House is 80% completed.

Concerned Ebonyians living in Abuja support official reports which say, "Aside the construction of the new Government House at the centenary city, works has reached advanced stage on the new presidential lodge and new Governor's Office."

No doubt, if these structural facelifts continues unabated in the Ebonyi state capital, it may not be out of place to state that the erstwhile Nazareth-like city of Abakaliki might one day become the mecca and most aesthetically-desired city of the South East.

Water they say is life. And it goes to suggest that life itself is supported by this clear clourless liquid which is odourless when it is pure.

Perhaps in pursuit of this axiom, the government of Ebonyi state in August 2015 awarded contracts for the rehabilitation of the Sakamoree water line network as well as the reticulation of water from Oferekpe to Abakaliki and other communities and cities. The contract also included reactivation of the Juju Hill water reservoirs and other reservoirs in the city as well as the overhauling of the Abakaliki pipeline distribution network.

Governor Umahi has revived the state owned transport corporation known as EBOTRANS by purchasing thousands of brand new buses to ease the movement of Ebonyi citizens in and out of the state, thus increasing the internally generated revenue of the state.

The Umahi administration in the state knows quite well that farm produce survives on taking in water alone, so he installed a fertilizer blending plants, now operational at Onuebonyi Izzi and it is producing tons of fertilizer on daily bases. Still in agriculture, a mushroom farm of international standard situated in government house has been fully completed and now produces thousands of kilograms of mushrooms on daily bases.

Governor Umahi is also curbing unemployment by constructing a massive Waste to wealth recycling plant at Umuoghara, Ezza North LGA which is about 95% completed and Nkalagu cement factory is being resuscitated while Effium in Ohaukwu and Agba in Ishielu council areas will soon welcome first class cement factories.

The Governor has gone extra mile in building a greenhouse in the state that would be checkmating the harsh effects of global warming in front of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki permanent site.

In the education sector, Governor Umahi has rehabilitated about 200 public primary and secondary schools within three years, and by constructing more hostels and lecture

halls for the Ebonyi Statse University.

In commerce and industry, Governor David Nweze Umahi is rebuilding and completing the abandoned Abakaliki International Market now known as Margaret Umahi international market.

The market is 90% completed and would officially commence selling and buying on October 1st, 2018.





## Lalong: Spearheading local entrepreneurship

**A** critical area of development Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State has handled with uncommon zeal, zest and dexterity is his women and youth empowerment scheme.

As an administrator who understands that government exists to ameliorate the sufferings of the people, Governor Lalong immediately keyed into the Federal Government's Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency, SMEDAN.

He immediately sent an executive Bill to the State House of Assembly, culminating in the establishment of the Plateau State Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (PLASMEDA).

The agency has so far employed and empowered over four thousand women and youths who have benefited from various skills acquisition training programs and the distribution to them of thousands of starter-packs from a partnership with some establishments, such as the Industrial Training Fund (ITF).

As a result of the training, hundreds of them are today employers of labour, which has further reduced the number of unemployed youths and women in the state.

Lalong also provided an enabling environment for businesses to thrive in diverse ways in the state.

Plateau was the first state to establish the One-Stop-Shop in Nigeria, a clear demonstration of the Governor's commitment towards making the State an industrial hub for the nation.

The Governor's giant strides in the area of local entrepreneurship have yielded the desired multiplier effect. For instance, the state won the overall Best Prize at the 2018 National MSME Awards.

Jerry Mallo, from Bokkos, Plateau State, the CEO of Bennie Ventures, which specializes in the fabrication of agricultural machines, did the state and nation proud by emerging as the overall winner of the maiden edition of the MSME of the year award.

The exploits of Bennie Ventures is without doubt an eloquent testimony to the work that the Lalong administration is doing through PLASMEDA and other agencies to encourage small and medium enterprises in the State with the ultimate aim of empowering the poor.

Thus, the Rescue administration's policies and strategies in galvanizing the state from a civil service state to entrepreneurship can be said to be yielding the desired dividends for the state's teeming masses.

For instance, petty traders, farmers, artisans, and panoply of local entrepreneurs have been empowered along the value chain.

Having stabilised the state from incessant conflicts, the governor has

through the Plateau Investment and Property Development Company (PIPC) which had also gone under until recently revived, re-suscitated



number of the hitherto comatose firms among which are the Highland Bottling Company Ltd, Barkin Ladi, Bejafta Fertiliser, Panyam Fish

Farm etc. Through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement, trusted companies were invited to take over the operations of these companies with the government still having some percentage of stakes in them but never interfering with the operations of the companies as carried out by the private investors.

Governor Lalong's uncanny courage and ability to run the affairs of the state in the past three years like a monstrous colossus and getting positive results in the process through deliberate pro-masses empowerment policies are legendary and will outlive him as indelible legacies that will stand the test of time.



# Not wealthier but healthier

**B**efore Governor Samuel Ortom took the reins of governance in Benue state the health-care facilities that had made the state proud in the mid-1980s had begun to nosedive into oblivion, thus making the nationwide official recognition that the health institutions had enjoyed for churning out quality health professionals to wane until the state health sector almost became a laughing-stock. The facilities included the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the College of Health Technology, the Benue State University's College of Health Sciences, and the General Hospitals in all the 23 LGAs.

Someone called it a case of technical neglect over the decades as these institutions stopped admitting trainee students while some stopped delivering medical services all together because they could no longer fulfill those needs. And the problem became intractable and almost impossible to solve.

Perhaps, it was not just the reputation of the health institutions that suffered: Graduating students from the schools and colleges suffered too, as they were stuck and stagnated and unable to graduate due to lack of accreditation for their courses: Sick people died too, all because past leaders turned a blind eye at the rot in the health sector.

In a statement, Terver Akase, the Chief Press Secretary said that like a magician who wields a magic wand, Governor Ortom has in a little over three years been able to solve the problem. According to him, by the time the Ortom administration was inaugurated in May 2015, the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, and the College of Health Technology, Agasha had lost their accreditation for upwards of three years and were no longer admitting students. Because past leaders in the state did not care.

He said, "The loss of the accreditation status of the three schools was due to lack of adequate staff and infrastructure, dilapidated state of the few existing ones and absence of modern teaching facilities and other requirements as laid down by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria and other supervising authorities. Even the College of Health Sciences of the Benue State University, had not received full accreditation by May 2015, with the result that several sets of its students had stagnated for upwards of more than a decade without graduating. This was a worrisome situation when one appreciates the contributions medical doctors from the College could have been making to the health delivery system of the state if they were graduating regularly."

## ...In 3 Years 175 Graduating Physicians Took Medical Oaths In Benue

Four sets of students of the College of Health Sciences of the Benue State University have so far graduated and taken their Hippocratic oath since Governor Samuel Ortom took office in May 2015. These were students who were stalled for twelve years and could not complete their graduation examinations because the college previously did not meet the accredita-

tion requirement of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN).

Perhaps, pained by the rot in the state's health sector which had suffered great technical neglect in the hands of past leaders, the governor wasted no time providing the funds required for onward accreditation of the college to enable it commence the graduation of the students.

A few months later, the first set of students of the College completed their graduation examinations ending the long years of technical delay that robbed them of the opportunity of entering the medical practice.

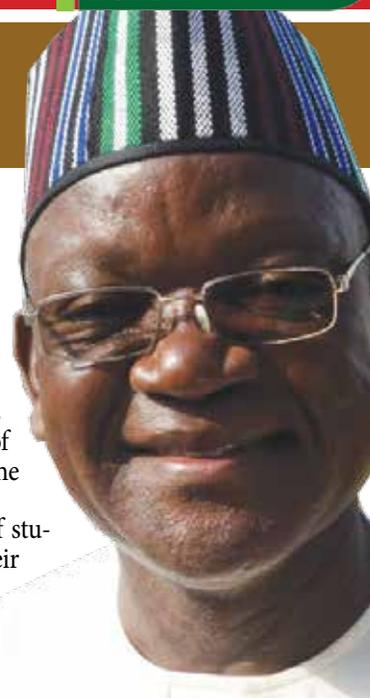
The governor had earlier at an executive council retreat held at the People House in Makurdi announced to the people that the college had received a five-year accreditation period, saying that the stage was now set for the state to reclaim its lost glory in the health care industry. The Ortom administration also turned its attention to the School of Nursing and Midwifery and College of Health Technology, Agasha, resolving to ensure that both schools had their accreditation restored fast. To this end, the administration renovated old structures and constructed new ones as laboratories, classrooms, auditoriums, offices, libraries, hostels and sports facilities equipped them with some state of the art gadgets.

In a bid to further lift Benue people off the poverty line Governor Ortom also directed that the casual appointments of 86 temporary staff of the School of Nursing and Midwifery be made permanent forthwith.

After providing the required facilities preparing the stage for the re-accreditation of the two schools, members of the accreditation team from the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria came to the state to evaluate the situation.

Re-accreditation of the two of the schools, and the College of Health Technology, Agasha was also promptly secured.

The Governor also intervened in the accreditation aspiration of the NKST School of Nursing and Midwifery, Mkar by making a donation of the sum of N10 million for the upgrading of the School to enable it meet the requirements. Following that intervention, the school was similarly granted a five-year accreditation period shortly after.



**Ortom**





## Ajimobi:

## Champion of the Health

## Insurance Scheme



**R**iding on the back of the National Health Insurance Scheme, the Oyo State government is providing easy access to healthcare for its citizens at an affordable cost through various prepayment systems. They also followed up this well acclaimed policy with innovative strategies designed to ensure unfettered access to healthcare services by residents of the state, especially the vulnerable class.

With the inauguration of the Oyo State Health Insurance Scheme, followed by the launch of a N50 billion Healthcare Endowment Fund for the “restoration and transformation of government hospitals and health centres in Oyo State”, the state has again set another pace for others to follow. The measure adopted by the state government involved fostering strong partnerships with the private sector, development partners and other stakeholders in the health sector to pool resources, knowledge and skills that would ultimately help in achieving the desired goal of improved access to affordable and high-quality healthcare service delivery across the state.

Speaking at the inauguration of the health insurance scheme, the Governor, Senator Abiola Ajimobi, noted that scheme was the first by a state government in the country. “We have taken Oyo State higher than we met it.”

This health insurance scheme is for everyone, especially the poor and that is why we have pegged the registration at N200 only and a monthly premium fee of N650. It is free for children under age five and pregnant women.

This scheme is one among the various health initiatives the state offers

the people to give them accessible, affordable and quality healthcare. The free health service, where several people are being treated, is presently going on across the state as the government is committed to making life meaningful for its people.

In concrete terms, the endowment fund is expected to provide the much-needed funds for the renovation and upgrading of all primary and secondary health institutions in the state, including 57 General Hospitals and 622 Primary Health Centres; procurement of medical equipment and consumables, as well as training and motivation of medical personnel. The Oyo State Government has expressed determination to reduce the prevalence of breast and cervical cancer among women in the state to minimal level, saying that over 16,500 women are expected to benefit from a free cancer screening.

The government said that the free screening cancer was a collaborative effort of the Oyo State Ministry of Health, the Local Government Councils across the state and the Access to Basic Care Foundation, a non-governmental organization founded by the wife of the State Governor, Mrs. Florence Ajimobi.

The government explained that the exercise would be provided for 500 women in each of the 33 Local councils and their Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) for the next six weeks.

Speaking at the flag off of the free screening exercise, Mrs. Ajimobi stated that the state government is committed to reduce the prevalence of breast and cervical cancer, noting that the screening exercise will also serve as human capacity building for nurses in the state who are responsible for cancer screening.



# Shettima: Restoring Borno



Shettima

constructed more secondary schools, reconstructed and rehabilitated their quarters, built additional 30 classrooms each in all the government colleges, the Government Girls Colleges and the Government Girls Secondary School in Yerwa. To

capit all, he went ahead to establish the Borno state university.

In the imbroglio brought upon the state by Boko Haram campaigners in the state and most of the North East zone which were enough to cripple commerce and industry, the Shettima administration was not daunted one bit. Rather the governor turned his attention to setting up employment

generating concerns in the state designed to succour the perfectly dehumanized citizens, thus helping to lift them off the poverty line. To this end the administration set up a plastic company for the production of plastic chairs, water tanks, nylon, mat and other household utensils where Borno people were gainfully employed.

To further productivity in the state a solar panel plant was built to generate about 40 Megawatts of electricity for use of the factories and the state at large. A Tomato Processing Plant, a corn-chef manufacturing plant and a water bottling company were also established designed to boost the economic base of the state.

To crown his employment-based developments, and improve agriculture the ever-forward-looking, citizen-friendly governor set up a farm implement production factory which has hitherto helped farmers in the state. He also set up an onion Processing plant and a cassava processing plant, too. Shettima's achievements in Borno State despite the challenges and setbacks caused by insurgency remain legendary and beats the imaginations of Borno people and visitors alike. Education and infrastructure holds and remains the key to tackling poverty, emancipating people and of course, creating wealth in the long run.

**W**ith only a few months to the end of his second term, Governor Kashim Shettima is determined to rebuild Borno State from the ruins caused by Boko Haram. He has led for seven years amid insurgency and rebellion.

From May, 2011, the administration embarked on people-oriented projects in the state designed to stamp out fear occasioned by Boko Haram terror attacks. These were clearly seen in the areas of road construction, building and renovation of schools and hospitals, resettlement programmes and other critical sectors. However Shettima's administration focuses more on education and infrastructural development as a tool for his post insurgency economic recovery.

Based on the recovery and peace building assessment report jointly authored by the World Bank, the European Union, the Nigerian Government, and states of the northeast, about 500 schools were destroyed by Boko Haram in Borno State. To effectively wipe the tear stained faces of parents and school children in the state Governor Shettima did not wish to await foreign intervention, but rather took some bold and decisive steps in 2015 to rebuild the destroyed schools and construct new ones. The governor constructed 43 schools across the state, and procured the very best learning technology known as K-yan technology to equip them reconstructed the schools destroyed in the Boko Haram insurgencies.

Before the emergence of the Shettima administration in the state, pupils and students learned in a frustrating environment whereby they either stood or squatted in classes to take lessons. But Shettima promptly provided adequate furniture to most of the schools.

Despite the very meaning of Boko Haram which is, 'receiving western education is abominable', the Shettima administration made **Boko** not **Haram** and went ahead to promote education at all levels. The administration con-





## Governor Abubakar Yari: A friend of the masses



"Never leave a friend behind. Friends are all we have to get us through this life-and they are the only things from this world that we could hope to see in the next."

– Dean Koontz



**G**overnor Abdulaziz Yari is one man who has vowed not to leave anyone behind in terms of making sure they benefit from excellent governance.

In the last seven and half years, Zamfara state under the leadership of governor Abdul'Aziz Yari Abubakar, has witnessed progressive development in all strata of the economy. Since 2011, Yari has proven that he came to make a difference and has thus surpassed the achievements of all his predecessors which include two civilians and a military governor.

He has proven to be a dynamic leader with a unique style of leadership who remains one or the only governor in the country whose administration in collaboration with the local government councils awarded and constructed at a least 20 kilometers and up to 30 kilometers township roads for the 14 local government headquarters and major towns.

This makes the local government headquarters towns and villages more accessible in the movement of goods and services.

Yari has also constructed and rehabilitated state and federal roads linking up the rural areas with major and big towns and neighbouring states of Sokoto, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna and Niger.

Some projects between 2017-2018 are:

- i. Construction of Township roads in Shinkafi, Zurmi, Birnin Magaji and Kaura Namoda at the cost of N12,958,071,533.31;
  - ii. Bungudu-Nahucho-Kyambarawa Road was also completed at the cost of N2,194,351,977.00;
  - iii. Kaura Namoda-Birnin Magaji-Dauran Road at the cost of N7,994,123,358.16;
  - iv. Bungudu-Gada Road at the cost of N1,012,486,736.43;
  - v. Dakitakwas-Kebbi Border Road at the cost of N7,569,744,195.94;
  - vi. Talata Mafara By-pass at the cost of N3,829,455,689.97;
  - vii. Reconstruction of Gusau By-pass at the cost of N2,298,368,167.80;
- Other roads reconstructed by Yari are: Daki Takwas to Kebbi border road; construction of Gummi to Gayari Road; construction of T/Mafara-Faru-Janbako-Tashar Bako Road; construction of 128 kilometres Magami-Dangulbi-Dankurmi-Sabon Birnin Bagega-Anka Road which is ongoing; construction of 42 kilometres Tashar Awwali-Kagara-Garbadu-Sauna-T/Mafara; construction of 14.5 Gummi-Fass Kebbi Border Road; construction of 11 kilometres Yandoto-Shemori-Mada Road; construction of 33.5 kilometres Gummi-Gyalange-Bardoki-Gayari Road; Dualisation of some township roads in Gusau metropolis; Reconstruction of Gusau bye pass road; construction of Kaura na moda-B/magaji-Dauran road.

Yari also has proven that he is a man with his own mind and vision hence putting more emphasis on physical development which is currently resulting in total transformation of the state from rural to a modern state.

The governor is not only demonstrating and showing that he is focused and determined but has also shown zeal to take the state further hence the implementation of people-oriented programmes and policies which has helped in changing the fortunes of the agrarian state.

### Health

In the health sector, Governor Yari's administration, apart from completing the Yarima Bakura Specialist Hospital in Gusau, has built and upgraded many general hospitals across the state, thereby taking comprehensive health care services to the people in all nooks and crannies of the state. All existing Primary Health Centres (PHCs) facilities in the state got the magical wands of the governor while new ones were built to make quality

Continued on Pg 16



## ...A friend of the masses



health accessible to the rural populace.

To control and reduced maternal mortality in Zamfara State, the health sector was also reformed as part of the areas of priority. Hospitals were renovated, expanded and equipped with modern health facilities and health personnel across the state.

Yari upgraded Kasuwar Daji Primary Health Centre to a General Hospital with full facilities. Equally, the administration rehabilitated and expanded the Maru General Hospital and that of Bakura and Bukkuyum.

The rehabilitation and expansion involved the provision of full packaged facilities in the rehabilitated hospitals. Also completed is the Millennium Hospital in Gusau which was named Yariman Bakura Specialist Hospital. The hospital is now a referral point for the teeming populace and even neighboring states.

Governor Yari has committed the sum of N3,663,187,622.02 in the execution of various health projects. These include the renovation of General Hospitals at Zurmi, Bakura, Birnin Magaji, Bungudu, and Primary Healthcare Centres at Gamji and Gyalange, and ongoing total overhauling of old Federal Medical Centre, Gusau, as well as expansion of Ahmad Sani Yariman Bakura Specialist Hospital, Gusau.

Funds are also ready for the renovation and upgrading of the hospitals of Kaura Namoda, Gummi, Talata Mafara and Tsafe.

Establishment of centre for Demographic surveillances, situated at Nahuche and training and retraining of medical staff at the established Kidney and Dialysis Centre as well as cancer detection and management amongst others.

### Education

In the education sector, Governor Yari is also champion as more new schools- both primary and secondary all over the state are being built to meet the rising number of enrolments.

According to records, Zamfara used to be one of the educationally less developed states but Yari has bridged that gap. He gave an open invitation

to all Zamfara indigenes who attained the status of academic "Doctor" (PhD) and Professors from all fields and requested for a comprehensive details on how best to develop education in Zamfara.

After thorough meetings and visits with both pupils, students, teachers and lecturers, the committee of academicians recommended a renovation and construction of 750 blocks of three classrooms among primary and secondary schools as well as improved teacher remuneration, training and retraining, purchase of instructional materials and returning out of schools children to their respective levels of studies.

The state government under the School Feeding Programme spent the total sum of 3,125,094,665.69 Naira in the feeding of 154,198 students at 191 schools in the state from 2011 to 2015.

Governor Yari's commitment to the masses, especially farmers who formed the largest percentage of the state population.

For the 2018 wet farming season alone, his administration procured 25,000 metric tonnes of fertilisers worth over N3.1bn for farmers in the state.

Yari during the flag off of the sale of the fertilizers in Nasarawar-Burkullu town, said despite the high price of fertiliser at conventional markets, the state government will sell a bag of fertiliser to farmers at N5,000.

Yari's administration is sustaining partnership with IFAD and Fadama III in food production and training of youths in various agricultural entrepreneurship.

Yari's administration has also disbursed N190 million to empower 260 farmers' groups across the state in rice and sorghum production through partnership with Fadama III.

For the years 2016 to 2018, Zamfara state government procured 50,000 metric tons of assorted fertilizer for distribution to the farmers. The sum of N6.8 billion was spent for the purchase of the commodity. Government bought the fertilizers at the cost of N8,500 per bag and sold to farmers at the rate of N5000, making the farmers enjoy a subsidy of N3,500.





**PHO**



**NGF Chairman & Gov. of Zamfara State, Abdul-Aziz Yari Abubakar (right); Ondo State Gov. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu discussing with the Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Mrs. Yetunde Onanuga during the NGF meeting in Abuja.**



**Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki and his Ondo State counterpart Gov. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu meet at the NGF Board room.**



**NGF Chairman & Gov. of Ondo State, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu shake with Kaduna State Governor, Baduru Abubakar of Jigawa State.**



**L-R: Governors of Plateau, Kebbi, Zamfara and Ondo Simon Lalong, Atiku Bagudu, Abdul-Aziz Yari Abubakar and Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, during the NGF meeting in Abuja.**



**Nasarawa State Deputy Governor, Silas Agara (left) with his Bayelsa State counterpart, Gboribiogha John Jonah during the NGF meeting in Abuja.**



**R-L: Mrs Yasola Akinbode and Dr Paulin Basinga of Borno State during the meeting.**



**L-R: Chairman, NGF, Abdul-Aziz Yari Abubakar, Anambra State Governor, Willie Obiano and Ondo State Gov. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu during the NGF meeting in Abuja.**



# PHOTOSPEAK



Governor of Zamfara State, Abdul-Aziz Yari Abubakar (right) in a handshake with Jigawa State Governor, Nasir el-Rufai while Governor Muhammed Baduru of Jigawa State looks on.



Deputy Governor Enugu State, Mrs. Cecelia Ezeilo (left) exchanging pleasantries with her Oyo State counterpart, Chief Moses Alake Adeyemo.



Representative of the Office of Vice President; Dr. Zakari, Dangote Group and a representative from the Bill Gates Foundation make a presentation at the August NGF meeting.



Executive Director Research and Strategy, NGE, Abdullateef Shittu; Olanrewaju Ajogbasile of NGE, Kaduna State governor, Nasir el-Rufai and the Head, Media and Public Affairs, Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkndo.



L-R: Osun State Governor, Rauf Aregbesola exchanging pleasantries with his Ondo State counterpart, Oluwarotimi Akereolu while Gov. Simon Lalong of Plateau State looks on.



Governor Muhammed Baduru Abubakar of Jigawa State (right) with DG NGE, Mr. Asishana B. Okauru



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# TOUCHING LIVES IN MORE WAYS ...



## Agriculture

- 11,000 hectares coconut plantation
- 2,100 hectares cassava plantation in 15 LGAs (FADAMA)
- 48,900 registered rice farmers
- 450 youths trained on cocoa maintenance
- Subsidized fertilizers, oil palm & cocoa seedlings
- Akwa Prime Hatchery -10,000 day old chicks weekly
- Free Improved Corn seedlings
- Vegetable Green Houses
- Cattle ranch loading...
- Over 1,200 hectares of rice cultivated
- Construction of Tractor Hiring Enterprise Centre



## Roads & Infrastructure

- Over 1700km of roads
- 35 bridges
- Completion of the State Secretariat Annex
- Construction of 2nd airport runway
- Upgrade of Airport main runway to category 2
- Only state to own & maintain an airport independently
- Flood control at Nsikok Eduok Avenue, Uyo
- 21 Storey modern office complex...loading



## Education

- Free & compulsory basic education in public schools
- Take over of 7 community secondary schools
- Construction & Renovation of 208 school blocks
- Strategic interventions in tertiary institutions - roads, equipment, academic blocks, etc
- Procurement & distribution of free text books & other educational materials
- Subventions to public primary & secondary schools
- Over N600 million WAEC fees for indigenes in public secondary schools annually



## Rural Development

- Over 300 rural development projects across 31LGAs
- Over 400 inter-ministerial rural intervention projects
- Rehabilitation / construction of over 500km of rural feeder roads.



## Salaries & Entitlements

- Prompt payment of salaries & allowances to Public Servants.
- Payment of gratuity
- Payment of backlog of 10 years pension.



## Health

- Free medical services for children below 5 years, pregnant women & the aged.
- Over 25 Containers of state-of-the art medical equipment
- Construction & upgrading of secondary healthcare facilities across the state
- Relief for over 4,000 mal-nourished children
- Free screening & treatment of over 15,000 people for various eye diseases



## Youth Empowerment, Capacity Building & Sports Developments

- Over 20,000 youths trained in various skills
- Ongoing construction of 10 Modern Sports Centres
- N2bn interest free loan for small scale entrepreneurs and traders
- First and second Akwa Ibom State Youth Sports Festival
- Through sound financial planning, investment and management,
- Akwa Ibom has become the Football Capital of Nigeria - Hosted the Super Eagles to becoming the first African Team to qualify for the Russia 2018 World Cup with a match still to play.
- Akwa United won Nigeria FA Cup twice in 3 years
- Ibom Angels emerged runners up 2017 Nigeria Female FA Cup (the first time a female team from the state has ever qualified for the finals of a major national competition).
- Team Akwa Ibom finished 2nd on the medals table at 2017 National Sports Festival
- The state received 3 Excellence Awards on Sports Development from the Federal Government
  - Most Comprehensive Sports Development Programme
  - Most Patriotic Sports Supporters
  - Best Sports Infrastructure
- Governor Udom Emmanuel was Best Sports Governor 2017
- Ongoing reconstruction of Eket stadium



## Industrialization

- Syringe Manufacturing Factory (Largest in Africa)
- Panel Factory & Toothpick Factory
- Electric Digital Metering Solutions Manufacturing Factory
- Resuscitation of Peacock Point Industry
- 153 mW Ibom Power Plant & 3 sub-stations
- Fertilizer Blending Factory
- Ibom Industrial Park/ Jetty loading...
- Plastic Manufacturing Factory loading...
- Flour Mills and Coconut Refinery loading...



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Promise delivered.

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His Excellency  
Mr. Udom Emmanuel  
Governor, Akwa Ibom State





## Gov Amosun: Combining health with wealth for Ogun indigenes

**H**ealth is wealth is a common proverb which reveals that nothing is important in life than being in a good state of mind and body. No one can be happy and peaceful without sound health as there is no success in people's lives if they suffer bad health.

This is why Governor Ibikunle Amosun's strides in the health sector is being widely celebrated in the country.

For the last seven and half years, the good people of Ogun State have been witnesses to the capacity of one man sufficiently possessed of more than enough political astuteness to will greatness to the greater majority of his people.

Amosun has provided affordable and efficient healthcare delivery which is the second of the five-cardinal development agenda of the Mission to Rebuild Ogun State. This agenda seeks to provide quality and accessible health services to all categories of individuals in both rural and urban settings of the State.

Towards the achievement of this cardinal programme, the Ogun State Government, under the leadership of Governor Ibikunle Amosun, upgraded the Totoro Primary Health Centre into a Comprehensive Health Centre. This has also been replicated in the other Local Government Areas of the State. The Totoro PHC was a three-room centre with an attached outpost structure used as antenatal care and reception area. This facility was demolished and replaced with the construction of a state-of-the-art one-storey building with a partial underground section.

To ensure a world-class secondary and tertiary level healthcare that supports the primary healthcare in the state, a state-of-the-art Radio-Diagnostic Centre was established at the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH) through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative. This Centre provides services such as multi-dimensional digital X-ray, ultrasound facility, telemedicine, mammography, fluoroscopy and CT scan.

Since 2011, more than 80 Primary Health Care centres have been rehabilitated. Equipment, boreholes, back-up power supplies and medical personnel have also been provided to make the facilities functional.

In a bid to improve the quality of service delivery in all the State's primary and secondary health facilities, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with Support for National Malaria Programme (SUNMAP), introduced the integrated Support Supervision/On the Job Capacity Building (ISS/OJCB) programme.

The Amosun administration's Gbomoro Health Scheme ensures that pregnant women not only enjoy free health services, but receive free antenatal materials and 'mama kit' for mother and baby.

In order to ensure easy mobilisation of the rural communities



for immunisation and other health-based exercises, communication gadgets were purchased for all the 236 wards in the State.

In 2012, four modern Advanced Life-Support (ALS) ambulances were procured and six abandoned vehicles were refurbished to Basic Life Support (BLS) standard as the first step in the on-going programme to revive the Ogun State Ambulance Services (OGSAS). In order to bridge the human resources gap and boost health care delivery in the State, the Amosun administration has employed more than 800 qualified medical workers. It ensures that records of private medical facilities in the State are computerized to provide for easy monitoring and data analysis.

Since 2011, the administration has ensured the procurement of affordable drugs and consumables from reputable companies and suppliers through a competitive bidding process. This has helped to use resources more efficiently and reduce the risk of inferior medication.

Also, government set up across the State 35 HIV/AIDS Counseling/Testing Centres and 31 Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) sites to take care of people living with HIV/AIDS, including free drugs for those living with the disease.

The partnership between the State Government and Rotary Club International resulted in the donation of 500 artificial limbs and establishment of an artificial limb service centre in the State. Also, the collaboration between the Government, Rotary Club International and Indo Eye Care Foundation helped in offering free eye surgical operation to Ogun residents.

Besides the agreement with MTN Foundation on Mobile Clinic, the Governor signed a multi-million dollar five-year deal with a major Nigerian Corporation (SHELL) to revitalise primary health care delivery, especially among the rural population. And Ogun State is now benefitting from the maternal and child health programmes of the agencies of the United Nations.

The Amosun administration has also launched a Community-Based Health Insurance Scheme popularly called (ARAYA), which has now been adjudged as a best practice all over the country.

Ogun State has sustained its Wild Polio-free status and there have been no cases recorded since 2011.



## Abdullahi Abubakar: Standing tall in Bauchi

**G**overnor Mohammed Abdullahi Abubakar's giant strides in different sectors of the state's economy has made him stand tall and though it is amongst his peers. Even though it is his first tenure in the state, the governor has turned around the fortunes of the people of Bauchi state.

He quickly identified education as a critical area for quick intervention. Before his emergence it might not be out of place to state that that sector was in shambles at all levels. For instance, at the time, there was disturbing failure rates of students who sat in national examinations of WEAC, NECO and NABTEB. By way of illustration, only 3 percent of those who sat for WEAC, NECO and NABTEB in 2015 secured 5 credits and above in the entire state. The very few who attended private schools had better results. This meant that only 3% of those who passed out of secondary schools in the state were qualified for tertiary level admission.

The Governor lost no time to areas of quick intervention. He provided office furniture and equipment in most of the public schools, and ICT laboratories, and promptly stopped brain drain in all government schools. At the primary and junior secondary school levels, the administration constructed new ones and renovated over 800 classroom blocks in different parts of the state. He also provided an enabling environment to promote the study of science and technology.

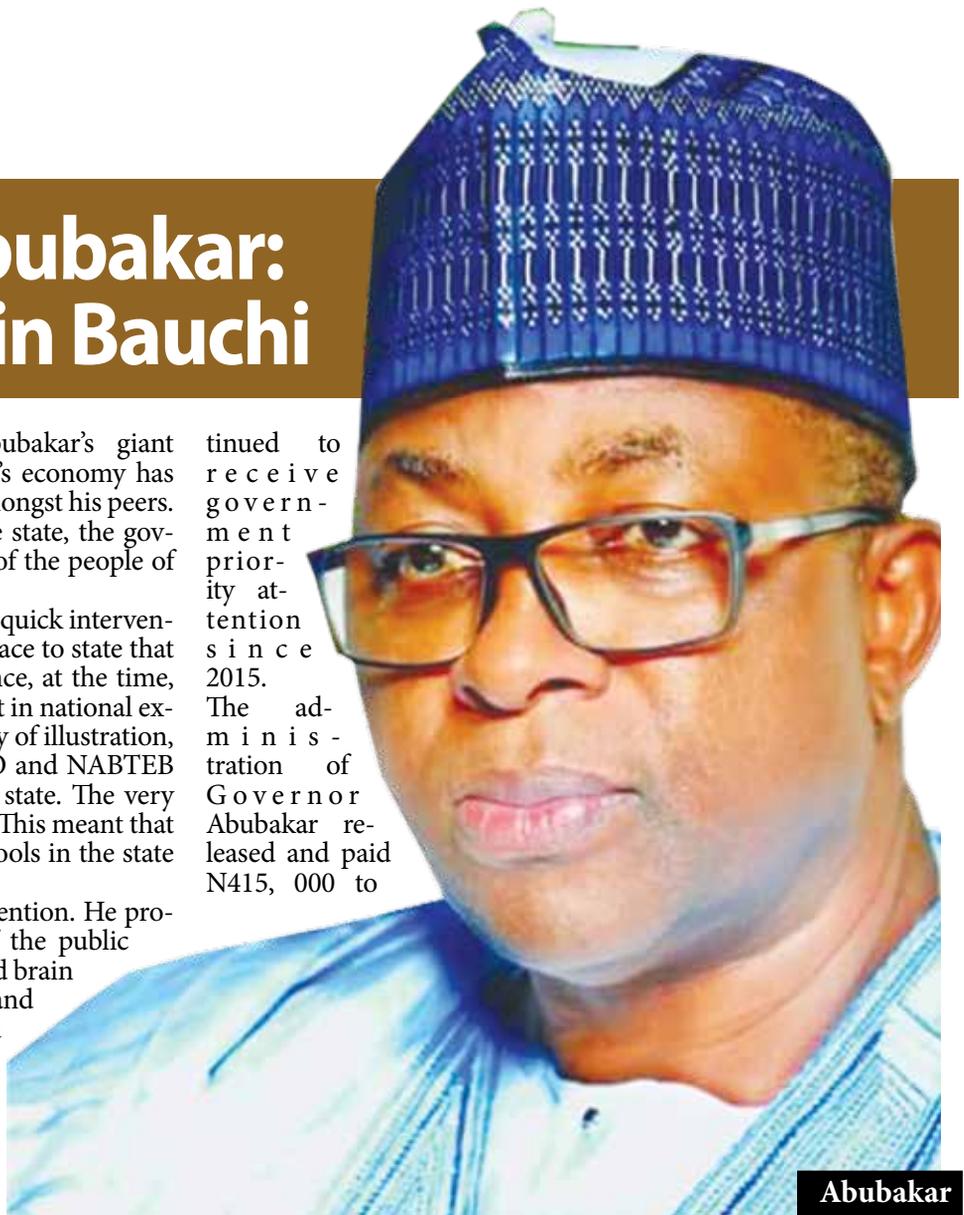
To further reposition the education sector in the state the administration paid up a backlog of salaries and allowances inherited from the past administration. Despite the economic meltdown, the administration met its obligation of sourcing 50% of UBEC counterpart funds for the 2014 and 2015 UBEC matching grants which made the state to benefit a lot from the UBEC special intervention projects.

In the area of ICT, over 400 youths have been sent to Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi and the Bauchi State University, Gadau where they were trained in computer. Governor Abubakar similarly released N80 million to reduce the backlog of expenditure on schools feeding programme and about N120 million to settle WAEC and NABTEB registration fees for indigenes of Bauchi state in the year 2016.

In 2016, Governor Mohammed Abubakar provided 2014 and 2015 UBEC matching grants of over N1.8 billion, the first of its kind in the history of the state. Over the years, tertiary students of Bauchi state origin have been offered scholarship allowances and this has con-

tinued to receive government priority attention since 2015.

The administration of Governor Abubakar released and paid N415, 000 to



**Abubakar**

each student of the Nigerian Law School of Bauchi state origin, inherited from the past administration in respect of the 2013/2014 and initial payment for 2014/2015 academic sessions. About N116 million was also released and paid to foreign students.

At the Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, where more academic staff have been trained within and outside the country for higher degrees up to doctorate levels, additional undergraduate courses were approved by the Senate of the University of Maiduguri, raising the number of courses run by the College and affiliated to the University to 13 undergraduate courses, and other postgraduate and diploma courses. The National University Commission, has reaccredited all courses were reassessed. The college supported each non-teaching staff who wishes to pursue higher degree courses with 100, 000 each academic session, and so far 50 non-teaching staff have benefitted.



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# #kidsAreAmazing Winners



@Muyii

To Olukoyejo  
You are simply awesome From birth  
till date bless God for giving you to  
us You are amazing  
Luv dad

@Faiza73

Eva is a super princess who  
can do anything with her super power,  
especially love her family.



# Gov Bindow: Building roads to economic recovery

One of the earliest things that I learnt in my junior secondary school days was that a major characteristic of living things is the ability to move from one place to another. The day-to-day activities of man demands movement and interaction to ensure that needs are met and other necessities of life are put in motion.

There is virtually nothing that you do daily that does not require the usage of road(s) in one way or the other. When you wake up in the morning and set to go to work or business, take your children to school, you are sick and need to access to medical care, you need to buy groceries from the market or stores, you're a farmer and need to bring your harvest home, want to go to the place of worship (church or mosque), attend your preferred social events or seek security agents' intervention, just name it, you must require the use of road(s).

These reasons and more informed Adamawa State Governor Muhammed Umaru Jibrilla's determination to construct good network of roads for the benefit of the state's resi-

dents, in addition to creating an enabling environment for investors. It is a fundamental foundation towards infrastructural development that cannot be ignored.

Taking cognisance of how central good motorable roads were to efficient and conducive living, the governor, known by his pet name Bindow, after taking the oath of office on May 29, 2015, accessed the deplorable condition of roads in the state. He realised that even major roads in the city centre were in dilapidated conditions. (often referred to as the shame of Yola), now the shame has been taken away, all thanks to Bindow. He (Bindow) has set out to right the wrongs of the past and has achieved that through a plan that has enhanced growth ensured that businesses and other human activities move efficiently and unhindered.

Bindow believes that the ease with which people move around would attract investors, enhance efficiency in healthcare, commerce, agriculture, education and other sectors, hence his resolve to embark on good road construction.

The Adamawa State

Ministry of Works, as at the last count, has constructed about 345 roads in 19 local Government areas of the state which includes

- Yola North
- Yola South
- Guyuk
- Shelleng
- Numan
- Demsa
- Ganye
- Mubi North
- Mubi South
- Song
- Girei
- Fufore
- Gombi
- Mayobelwa
- Jada
- Maiha
- Hong
- Madagali

This includes the 35.7km Kiri-Shelleng road neglected for over 4 decades and the over 27km Girei-Pariya-wurobokki road which is key to enhancing trans border trade thereby improving the economic life of the people.

The road constructions in the state is about 425.5 kilometers with 6.75 kilometres of it as dual carriage-way. All the roads are township roads with reinforced concrete line drains, various sizes of box culverts, including a 3 span bridge at Mubi,



**Bindow**

2 span bridge at Mayoine road and a 4 span bridge at Song.

Rural roads are not left out. They are taken care of under the Rural Access Mobility Project (RAMP) programme with the state promptly paying its counterpart fund. The first project flagged off by Governor Bindow is the Labondo-Borrong road a rural road construction under the RAMP Project.

It is worthy of note that the faster and easier a sick patient gets to a health facility, the higher the chances of getting adequate attention and healthcare. A road filled with potholes will endanger and worsen the condition of a sick person on his/her way to the hospital.

When farmers harvest their produce, one of the

major challenges they face is how to transport such goods to the market. It is the stance of the governor that perishable farm produce will reach the market and consumers in time when good roads are available. He also believes that the cost of transportation will be reduced and positively moderating the cost of goods.

For those who argue on priorities of projects, direct impact should also be a consideration, especially when it cuts across both the rich and the poor. The roads constructed by Bindow are pliable both by the elite and the poor in Adamawa State. In fact, most of the roads constructed are in communities massed by poor residents of Adamawa.



# Al-Makura: A fair deal for the disabled



**A** governor with so much love and compassion for the poor and indigent in Nasarawa State, Governor Tanko Al-Makura has done so much to tackle the menace of poverty in the state. Since he assumed office in 2011, Governor Al-Makura has taken it upon himself to bring succour to his people via special projects that address their burdens and essential needs.

One of such is the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Programme (NAYES). The programme seeks to among other things address the growing challenge faced by young persons with limited educational training and capacity to acquire skills that would enhance their quality of life.

This is largely in furtherance of Al-Makura's vision to transform the multitude of young men and women in the state to productive agents of development.

Thousands of young men and women have been trained in various life supporting skills such as environmental inspectors, traffic wardens and community vigilante forces.

Adding spice to the work of the governor is an initiative by the State First Lady, Her Excellency, Hajiya Salamatu Al-Makura. She has through her pet project called Mother and Child Care Education Foundation (MCCEF) alleviated the sufferings of many.

The programme is geared towards empowering poor and vulnerable women in the state and it has over the years trained thousands of women through vocational skills and relevant technology programmes. This is in addition to other physical intervention programmes such as provision of grants, loans, sewing machines, and tricycles.

In a bid to promote entrepreneurship in graduating students, especially those in technical schools in Nasarawa, the state government, working in collaboration with the government and people of Singapore, provided training in modern tools and easy to manage technology for the take-off of small scale or cottage industries.

This is being achieved through the equipping of the various Technical

Institutions located in Assakio, Agwada, Mada Station and Doma. The state government has also standardised the various Skills Acquisition Centres spread across the three senatorial districts of the state, namely: Doma and

Lafia for Nasarawa South Senatorial District; Wamba for Nasarawa North and Nasarawa for Nasarawa West Senatorial District.

This development has enabled young persons both in and out of school to access these facilities and acquire skills that have enabled them achieve self-actualisation in life.

Declaring that people with disabilities, deserve every right to enjoy life and encouragement, Governor Al-Makura put in place legislation through the State House of Assembly that would ensure the promotion of their rights and privileges so that they would have a fair deal in terms of representation and appointment.

As a demonstration of his personal commitment to the wellbeing of the physically challenged, Governor Al-Makura built a multi-million naira special school tagged "School of Excellence" which is located in Ombi II, a suburb of Lafia the state capital, for their education and skills acquisition training.

The Special School which is multi-disciplinary in nature takes between 250 to 300 students and pupils undergo various trainings based on their disabilities in academic and skills acquisition.

Besides the Special school, Governor Al-Makura also established craft centres in Keana, Keffi and Obi as part of deliberate efforts to address the high indices of poverty among the population.

The amiable governor also provided financial grants to the less privileged in the society, especially women. They were given start-up packs to enable them engage in petty trading.





# el-Rufai: Who laughs last?

**Over 20,000 teachers were relieved of their jobs in Kaduna state in the wake of this year. Government branded them unqualified and lacking in the skills required for the impartation of good quality education to schoolchildren. What remains to be understood is whether the dismissal will impact poverty line and make the state fairly wealthy in the long-run**

**T**he removal of a whopping number of teachers, about 22,000 of them, from the payroll of the Kaduna state government in January this year has caused a lot of heartaches to caregivers and education stakeholders in the state. Some of these people argue that non-payment of their monthly salaries was a clear case of insensitivity and misgovernment which could only deepen the widespread poverty among the citizens. Supporters of this position from across the state maintain that the El-Rufai administration should rather pursue programmes, and initiate policies that would help the masses. They believe that the monthly salaries of the so-called ill-equipped teachers have over the years helped to reduce hunger, lack and deprivation in many Kaduna families, and halted all-together the hitherto gradual march to absolute poverty and destitution. Some of the teachers dared to view the governor as a vicious man whose behaviours have haunted families across the state ever since he assumed the mantle of leadership.

Replying his critics Governor Nasir el-Rufai said that the policy of elimination of quack teachers from the list of staff in the state's education system started many years ago in Patrick Yakowa's administration wherein a five-year window was allowed for unqualified instructors to make up for their deficiencies if they would continue in their jobs as teachers.

The affected teachers, and their sympathizers alluded to poverty alleviation. But is there any correlation between the two factors - faulty teaching infrastructure and the states poverty level?

Experts maintain that poverty can actually be curbed or at least reduced substantially if appropriate government policies are effectively executed. According to one Abraham Sule, a Kaduna indigene and Radio Nigeria (Hausa service) reporter, this is the first time a governor summons up the courage to dare people with commercial, political and religious influence in the state. Governor el-Rufai has in the last three years instituted substantive reforms to overturn what these men of power did to stagnate the state. He said the governor's policy in education is geared towards radically addressing poverty by changing the education infrastructure of Kaduna state, adding that the foundation for qualitative education in the state since its creation had decayed because of ethnic and religious loyalty, and favoritism shown by powerbrokers in the state who appointed their friends and relatives to choice positions even when they were not qualified.

Commenting on the present state of public schools, Sule said that Governor el-Rufai came prepared to replicate what he did in the education sector in the FCT where he radically up-scaled the quality of public schools to world-class standard and made them readily affordable to children of parents in the poor income brackets.

Another concerned citizen, Hassan Galadima, a poet and publisher said that with screaming billboards placed all over the state which read,



el -Rufai

'The poorest of the poor deserves quality education in Kaduna state', the government of Mallam Nasir el-Rufai is making good their promise to improve the economic status of the state through reinventing education by weeding the sector and ridding it of quacks who make false claims of experience in the teaching profession.

Perhaps, a good many people in the state and beyond are not very familiar with Governor el-Rufai's antecedents. The governor had been described as a reformer par excellence when he cleaned up the rot in the physical and educational master-plan of the Federal Capital Territory. He did not leave the place void but replaced what he displaced with workable alternatives.

"Mallam el-Rufai dismissed 20,000 unqualified teachers. These so-called teachers never bothered to go to the classrooms; they just sat at home and drew monthly salaries. But he has replaced them quickly with a corresponding number of educated and better-equipped professionals. An independent consultancy firm promptly conducted recruitment exercises to replace the sacked teachers. And there was no case of godfather phenomenon nor interferences from any traditional stools in the state.

Today, Kaduna scored the highest mark in exams in the north, making the saying "he who laughs last laughs best" more relevant than ever.



# South East Governors' Forum: One Year After



**T**he Governors of the five South East States of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo inaugurated a secretariat in the Enugu state Government House, popularly called Lion Building on August 14, 2017.

Led by a Director-General, Prof. Simon Ortuanya, the secretariat has a Deputy Director-General, Mr. Udo Romson and three Directors, namely, Orlando Nweze (Director of Finance and Administration); Michael Udah (Director of Media and Communication) and Chibuike Amaechi (Director of Projects).

Before the inauguration of their secretariat, the South East Governors had been meeting and discussing issues of common interest under the aegis of the South East Governors' Forum (SEGF).

At the inauguration of their secretariat, the chairman of South East Governors' Forum and Governor of Ebonyi State, His Excellency, Engr. Dr. David Umahi, FNSE, FNATE charged the secretariat staff to co-ordinate the activities of the forum and provide support and direction to the governors.

According to the paper establishing it, the South East Governors' Forum "is a platform that offers the various governors of the South East region opportunity to pool ideas and resources together in order to confront common socio-economic challenges and undertake projects that will uplift the wellbeing of the people of the region".

The forum offers the collaborating South East states great opportunities for peer learning and synergistic pursuit of political, social and economic issues relevant to them.

The policy thrust of the SEGF includes, but is not limited to, socio-economic issues which revolve around production, distribution and exchange as well as security- the maintenance of law and order and safe custody of people and property. There is also an infrastructural dimension, that is, the provision of capital goods which will accelerate productive activities.

On its part, the SEGF Secretariat which is the technical and administrative arm of the SEGF, provides support for and oversees the day-to-day running of the Forum. As the policy hub providing administrative, research and technical support to the Forum in carrying out its strategic objectives, it effectively engages partners and stakeholders. The secretariat is a resource center which provides reliable and current information in relevant areas of policy making. It also sources funds for the implementation of identified South East regional projects.

The Secretariat primarily focuses on the provision of secretarial services to the SEGF, liaises with development partners with a view to facilitating regional development while formulating policies which make for regional integration.

One year after its inauguration, what has the South East Governors' Forum Secretariat achieved?

There is no doubt that the South East Governors' Forum secretariat hit the ground running. Shortly after its birth and thanks to the collaboration of the Department for International Development (DFID) – PERL, it fashioned out its vision, mission, mandate and strategic goals. This singular step has fine-tuned and revolutionized the Forum's perception and approach to issues.

The immediate gain of the foregoing was the hosting of the South East Economic Summit (SEES) in November 2017, just three months after the secretariat was set up. The economic summit themed "Re-positioning the South East for Rapid Economic Development" brought together Government and private sector players whose brainstorming sessions led to the development of such thematic areas as Agriculture, Power, Infrastructure, Health and Media.

The economic summit has provided a road map of sorts which has continued to guide the activities of the SEGF. A few examples will suffice here.

The South East stakeholders Forum on Agriculture held in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State capital from 6th to 7th March, 2018 was in pursuance of the offerings from the economic summit in the area of Agriculture. The same is true of "Learning Alliance on Fiscal Sustainability Plan (FSP) / Open Government Partnership (OGP) and Budget Engagement", another event which the Secretariat also organized, again in collaboration with UKaid PERL in Abakaliki on March 8, 2018.

In the area of infrastructure, the Secretariat is working to actualize its dream of having a ring road across the South East region which is one way of integrating the zone. Preliminary studies and discussions with prospective investors are seriously going on.

There are serious moves in the areas of Health, skill acquisition/education, power and the like.

The South East Governors' Forum secretariat has built good relationships with several bodies/partners. The benefits of these relationships are enormous and are positively rubbing off on the South East region. The partners include, but are by no means limited to, Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR), e-health Africa, Aka Ikenga, South East Economic Development Company (SEREDEC), Brenthurst Foundation of South Africa and Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission.

It is worth-mentioning that apart from the DAWN Commission which hosted the SEGF Secretariat staff in its Ibadan office when the latter came on a two-day study tour, all the other partners mentioned above have physically met and discussed areas of collaboration with South East Governors. Such parleys were arranged by the SEGF Secretariat.

Other major events organized by the Secretariat of the South East



## ...One Year After

Governors' Forum within this first year of its existence include a retreat aimed at fine-tuning its corporate plan which was held in Awka, Anambra State in collaboration with PERL – ARC on July 26 this year; a session with Anambra State actors (Ministry of Economic Planning, Budget and Development Partners, Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Community Affairs and other stakeholders drawn from the communities in the 21 Local Government Areas of the state. This was also facilitated by PERL – ARC, South East Zone. That event which was also held in Jul (last month) was aimed at strengthening Government processes for managing a participatory/open governance model popularly called the Community Charter of Demand (CCD).

The CCD was created in and by Anambra State Government, and in line with its commitment to working with various partners to trigger public sector reforms and improvement in service delivery through lesson sharing and adoption, PERL, South East quickly joined hands with SEGF secretariat to give this model a touch of finesse and share it among the four other states (Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) of the South East region in line with one of the mandates of the SEGF management team to facilitate and conduct peer learning in the region.

Fortunately, this peer learning exercise was jointly carried out in Owerri, Imo state by SEGF and PERL from August 14 to 16. The CCD is a process which allows communities to participate in governance by submitting to the Anambra State Government what projects they want to be executed in their domains so that State Government can include them in its Budget preparation. It brings together traditional rulers, town union associations, women, the youths and all other strata of people (the demand side) as well as Government officials who constitute the supply side.

With the way the Secretariat of the East Governor's Forum has carried



Umahi

on thus far and given the support of the Governors of the region and DFID-PERL/ARC, there is no doubt that the South East region will soon be transformed, thus lending credence to our new slogan from marginalization to maximization.

*Udah is the Director, Media and Communication, South East Governor's Forum Secretariat.*

## Communique arising from the meeting of the South East Governors held on Sunday, 2nd day of September, 2018, at Government House, Enugu

a) The Chairman, Nwaeze Dave Umahi, FNAGE, FNATE, in his welcome remarks thanked the Governor of Enugu State for constantly hosting the Forum meetings and for his huge infrastructural development in the State. He also thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for the success of the first South East Conference on 2017 Capital Budget Implementation, as it affects the South East Region held in Enugu State.

b) The Forum received an interim report from the South East Consultative Committee on Health, set up to facilitate the establishment of world class health facilities in each State of the South East Zone. The Forum noted the caliber of health and other professionals in the Committee and commended them for the progress so far and urged them to work towards ensuring the transformation of the Zone into a medical

tourist destination in Nigeria.

c) The Forum appreciated the Federal Government for the intervention on the Akanu Ibiam International Airport, Enugu, but however drew its attention to the deplorable state of the runway, the runway lights and the tarmac and called on the Hon. Minister of State for Aviation to visit the Airport for an on the spot assessment and urgent intervention. The Forum also requested that urgent steps be taken for the reactivation of the cargo section of the Airport.

d) The Forum received presentation from the South East Region Development Fund (SENDEF), a financial arm of SEREDEC and urged them to channel all development plans in the South East region through the Secretariat of the Forum.

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Bagudu

## Bagudu: A farmers' delight

**T**here is no doubt that within a short time in office, Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has made appreciable progress in Kebbi State.

With a clear understanding that food surplus was necessary to improve the lives of the indigenes, Governor Bagudu made agriculture his focal point and soon became a household name in the country, especially on rice farming. This was as a result of the efforts of the governor and the Federal Government, through the Central Bank of Nigeria's Anchor Borrowers Programme.

Although a larger chunk of the money for the programme came from the CBN, the governor has demonstrated good political leadership to drive the process.

Bagudu also created similar loan packages worth several billions of naira to accommodate farmers who were left out in the CBN loan package. There is no doubt that the commitment shown by the governor has triggered off agricultural activities, especially rice production in most parts of the state in Suru, Augie, Kangiwa, Aliero, Argungu, Yauri, among other rice-producing communities.

Current statistics show that Nigeria requires seven million tons per annum to sufficiently meet its rice demand. But the governor promised President Muhammadu Buhari that Kebbi farm-

ers would be able to provide the country with one million tons annually.

Another feat achieved by the governor was the completion of Yauri Local Government township roads which now wear a new look.

Similarly, Bagudu has ensured that electricity supply to the state capital was maintained at least 20 hours daily. In fact, Kebbi is one of the few states in the country that enjoy almost uninterrupted power supply.

On assumption of office, the governor embarked on regular visits to the Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company and contributed a substantial amount of money to the company to provide transformers and cables to aid the distribution of electricity in the state. Street lights in the state capital which were hitherto not functional now work. He has also been pressurising the power companies dealing with electrification projects in Zuru and Yauri Local Government Areas to hasten the completion of the projects which has been at a snail pace for years.

In recognition of the enormous infrastructural dilapidation in the state the

In the health sector, a number of facilities have been put in place. The state Specialist Hospital Kalgo, was completed and put to use. Several free healthcare outreaches were held in partnership with the Moses Lake Medical team and Albashir International Hospital where more than 100,000

were reached.

The government renovated Maternity Ward Labour Room and ANC unit at the Argungu General Hospital and paid counterpart fund for Measles, Cerebrospinal Meningitis, Maternal Newborn and Child Health Week in the state and fulfilled criteria set by the World Bank to access 1.5 million dollars grant for saving one million lives programme.

The education sector also received attention as the first point of call by Governor Bagudu with series of assessment visits carried out across the state. A complete overhaul was carried out a blue print developed to cater for the educational needs of the state.

The sum of N146 million spent on the rehabilitation of dilapidated structures at the College of Agriculture Zuru, rehabilitation of its library complex, poultry, electrical workshop, agricultural engineering and water supply at the College. This was a major boost for the neglected College.

Another N145 million was spent for the construction of a 500-capacity female hostel at the Adamu Augie College of Education Argungu. Series of training workshops were held for teachers to update their knowledge.

Under the UBA Project 287, new classrooms were constructed across the state, renovation of 456 dilapidated classrooms, 236 units of toilets,

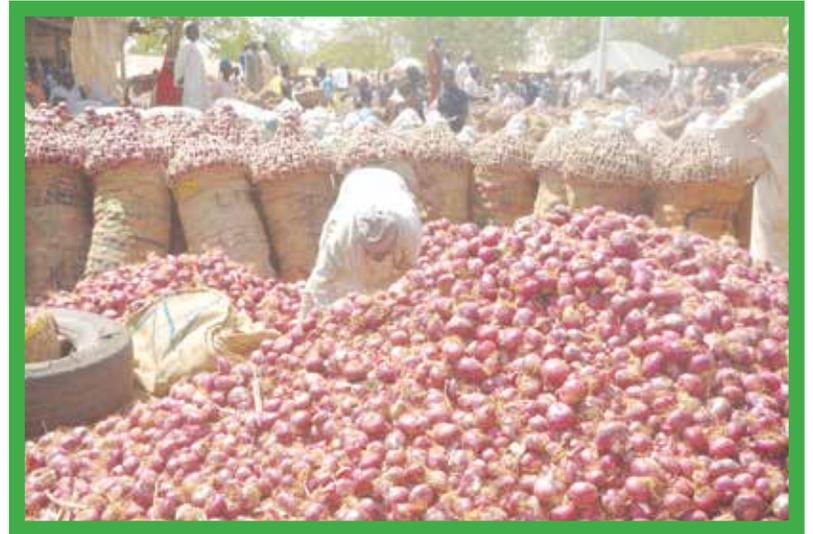
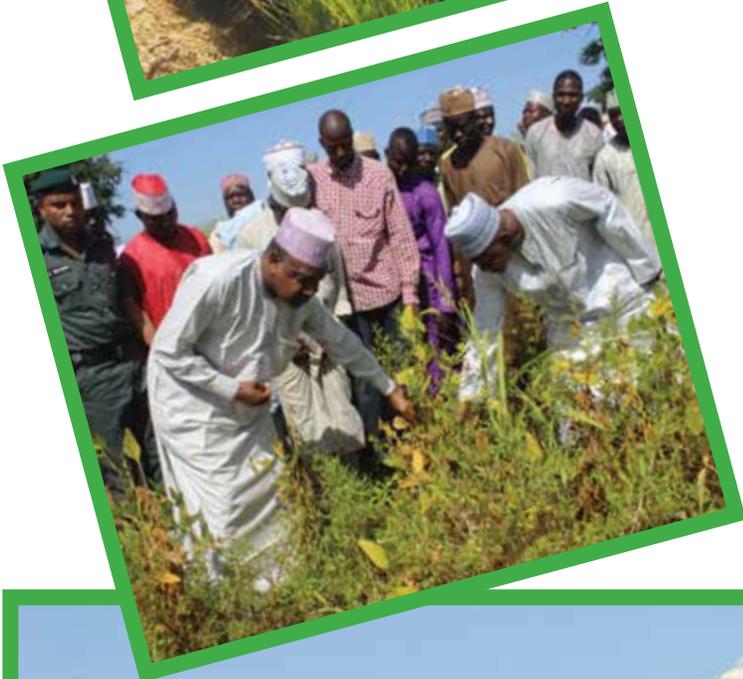


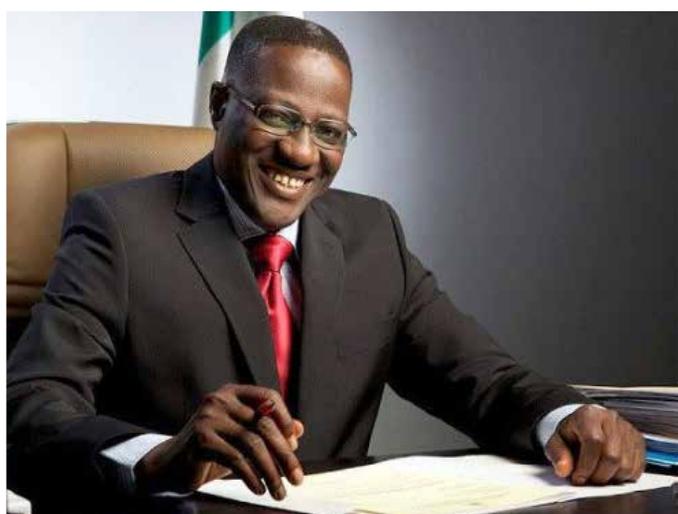
## Bagudu: A farmers' delight

procured 62,203 sets of furniture for pupils and 3,459 sets of furniture for teachers, 169 sets of ECCD equipment, drilling of 7 Nos. motorized boreholes and the procurement of 480 sets of computers as well as construction of 8 new computer rooms and 8 new libraries. 960 Library shelves, fencing of 20 selected primary schools, construction of administrative blocks in Nine (9) schools, construction of Science Laboratories, school hall and the procurement of eighteen (18) sets of Science equipment.

3000 were trained on methodology in core subjects of English Language, Mathematics, Basic science, religious and national values using child centred approach.

10,700 sets of two-seater desks for students were provided and ensured regular payment of WAEC and NECO fees and increased by 100% feeding allowances for exchange students on transit to their states.





# Ahmed: Promoting Pro-poor growth through SMEs

**T**here is increasing recognition that private sector development has an important role to play in job creation and poverty reduction.

The private sector, including small enterprises, contributes to poverty reduction when it creates employment either through the startup of new enterprises or the expansion of existing ones.

In order to stimulate economic growth for the benefit of the people, the Kwara State government under the leadership of Governor Abdulfatah

Ahmed supports the development of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the state. This development of productive enterprises by the government provides an adequate income for entrepreneurs and workers in the state, knowing full well that low productivity- a characteristic of many micro and small enterprises, limits wages and income and reduces the overall viability of an enterprise.

Therefore, in 2012, Governor Ahmed launched the Kwara State Micro-credit Intervention scheme with an initial seed sum of N250m to provide financial support to micro, small and medium-sized business owners.

The scheme allows new and existing small businesses to bid for funds to establish or expand their businesses. However, youth with workable business ideas or requisite skills and women are given priority.

Till date, the State government has injected a total of N1.28 billion into the Scheme, leading to a turnover of about N3 billion.

Under the SME scheme, a total of 1,848 cooperative societies have benefited and the funding provided by the government has assisted numerous members of these societies spread across the State to grow their businesses.

Also, since 2016, an additional sum of N16.3 million had been disbursed to about 52 cooperative societies through selected micro finance banks that are based within the operating environment of the target beneficiar-

ies.

Unarguably, one of the more high-profile approaches to poverty reduction is the provision of micro-finance. Finance is often used by poor households to engage in micro-enterprise activities, especially in the informal economy. The Micro-finance system adopted by the Ahmed-led administration is a useful way of channelling money to the poor and overcoming the obstacles they face in obtaining credit from formal financial institutions, such as banks.

In December 2017, the state government released N100 million SME funding to market associations in the state.

Skilled workers in 53 associations under the aegis of Artisan Congress of Kwara State had also benefited from the SME scheme. Also about 150 taxis, 25 buses and 193 motorcycles had been given out to beneficiaries across the state which is helping in improving their livelihood.

Being an agrarian state, farmers weren't left out. Over 160 farmers' associations across the State with not less than five farmers each had also benefitted from the micro-credit funding under the Off Taker Demand Driven Agriculture (ODDA) Scheme of the state government. Also under the ODDA, about N1 billion has been disbursed to 500 small holder farmers and 40 commercial farmers across the State. Farmers were also provided access to 2550 hectares of land in different parts of the State where



various crops were planted.

Additionally, as part of government policies to encourage small business owners and reduce poverty in the state, Governor Ahmed granted a five-year tax relief regime for small business owners through the State's Revenue Service (KWIRS).

The five-year tax relief regime, according to the governor, is imperative to allow for economic growth and development of the state.

It has therefore stimulated commerce, trade and economy and promoted pro-poor growth which is critical. With the interventions by the Ahmed-led government, employment and income opportunities for small enterprises in the state have improved.



# Gov Masari's Pro - poor initiatives in pictures





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