

STATE PEER REVIEW REPORT NO. 2

ABRIDGED VERSION

EKITI STATE
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EKITI STATE
NIGERIA

STATE PEER REVIEW REPORT

EKITI STATE / ABRIDGED VERSION

MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE SPRM

Justice Muhammed Lawal Uwais
CHAIRMAN

Senator (Dr) Abubakar Bukola Saraki
VICE CHAIRMAN

His Excellency Dr Donald Duke

Professor Oladipupo Adamolekun

Professor Akachi Ezeigbo

Mrs Ayo Obe

Ms Ijeoma Nwaogwugwu

Dr Shamsudeen Usman,
HONOURABLE MINISTER, NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION.

Amb.Tunji Olagunju,
SENIOR ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT ON NEPAD.

Dr.Yemi Kale,
STATISTICIAN-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION

Dr Precious Kalamba Gbeneol,
SENIOR SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT ON
THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS).

NGF Secretariat

Mr. Asishana Okauru
Director-General

Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat,
No. 1 Deng Xiaoping Street
Off AIT Junction,
Asokoro Extension, Abuja



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
BPP	Bureau of Public Procurement
CSTS	Civil Service Transformation Strategy
EDS	Ekiti State Development Strategy
EGDP	Ekiti State Gender Development Policy
DFID	Department for International Development
FRL	Fiscal Responsibility Law
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
FOI	Freedom of Information
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	International Development Assistance
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IGR	Internally Generated Revenue
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IBM	International Business Machines
LGAs	Local Government Areas
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTSS	Medium Term Sector Strategies
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development



NGF	Nigeria Governors' Forum
NULGE	National Union of Local Government Employees
ORAS	Operation Renovate All Schools
OTSD	Office of Transformation Service and Delivery
PHC	Primary Health Centres
PPL	Public Procurement Law
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPRM	State Peer Review Mechanism
SSMP	State Statistical Master Plan
TDNA	Teachers' Development and Needs Assessment
TRM	Technical Review Mission
TRP	Technical Review Panel
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UDRF	Unified Drug Revolving Fund
YCADC	Youth Commercial Agriculture Development Programme

1.

INTRODUCTION

The State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) was conceived and designed by the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) as an instrument to assist in improving the development programmes and governance processes in the states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, through periodic reviews, of each of the States. The methodology and modality for the reviews consist primarily of the sharing of experiences among the States and the identification and reinforcement of commendable and innovative practices unveiled in the review process.

The mandate for this task derives from a 2007 resolution of the country's National Economic Council (NEC), an inter-government body established under the 1999 Constitution requesting all thirty-six (36) States of the Federation to establish a peer review mechanism, drawing on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The NEC Resolution was subsequently endorsed by all 36 State Governors in the country under the NGF platform.

The endorsement provided the basis for the design and inauguration of the SPM in the country. A great deal of preparatory work went into the design, elaboration, adoption and launching of the SPM. Important milestones in this respect included (i) the finalization of the Base Document for the SPM in July 2011; (ii) the inauguration of an 11-member Steering Committee on 2nd November 2011 in Abuja, with the former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais as Chairman; and (iii) the training of 107 Consultants, selected through a national competitive process, to assist the Steering Committee during the Technical Review Mission, in May 2012 in Abuja.

Following the launch of the State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) on 17 May, 2011 in Abuja, Ekiti State embraced the process in line with the commitment of its current administration to continually strengthen participatory democratic process. The Commissioner for Integration and Intergovernmental Affairs was appointed to coordinate the SPM process in the State. A Steering Committee chaired by the Most Rev. Felix Femi Ajakaiye, the Catholic Bishop of Ekiti State, was also inaugurated to facilitate the process.

The Ekiti State Initiation/Sensitization Workshop which formally commenced the implementation of the SPRM process in the State was organised by the Ekiti State Government in collaboration with the NGF Secretariat on 10th and 11th November, 2011.

Thereafter, the process witnessed a lull in the State. A follow-up Mission to Ekiti State was fielded by the Secretariat on 26th and 27th March 2012 to reinvigorate the process. Ekiti State submitted its Self-Assessment Report to the Secretariat on Monday 24th September 2012, and this paved the way for the State Technical Review Mission.

The State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) Technical Review Mission (TRM) to Ekiti State, the second in the country, took place from 20th to 27th October, 2012. Professors Oladipupo Adamolekun and Akachi Ezeigbo, both members of the SPRM Steering Committee, led the team of consultants that participated in the Mission to validate the State Self-Assessment Report through stakeholders' meetings across the State. The TRM also inspected a number of key projects.



His Excellency Kayode Fayemi with the
Rt. Hon Rotimi Amaechi, Chairman of the Forum
and some members of the Steering Committee
during the Initiation and Sensitization Workshop



His Excellency Kayode Fayemi with Members
of the Ekiti State Technical Review Mission

2.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Ekiti State was excised out of Ondo State on 1st October 1996. It was one of the six states created by the military government in the last restructuring of the country, before the return to civil rule in 1999. The State is bounded in the north by Kogi and Kwara States, in the west by Osun State and in the east by Ondo State.

As at 2006, Ekiti State's population was 2,398,957. It has a land area of 6,353 sq. km, bigger than only four States: Imo, Abia, Anambra and Lagos. It is divided into sixteen LGAs. The State is homogenous, the people being all of Ekiti-speaking Yoruba stock.

Ekiti is abundantly endowed with natural resources that are largely untapped. These include casserrite, columbite and tantalite which are found in Ijero-Ekiti, ceramic (ball) clays and kaolinite clays which are available in Isan Ekiti and Oye LGA; feldspar which is found in OkeEwu in Ijero Ekiti and in Aramoko; and bauxite in Orin-Ekiti in Ido/Osi LGA. About 70%of the population is engaged in agriculture. Notwithstanding the predominantly agrarian character of the state, Ekiti people are renowned for their love of education and large number of high calibre academic and professional personnel of Ekiti origin, are to be found in top positions in national and international institutions, academia and professional organizations.

Among the galaxy of Ekiti State achievers are Chief Afe Babalola SAN; Chief Wole Olanipekun SAN; Prof. Funmi Falusi-Olopade – globally renowned Professor of Oncology and member of the United States National Cancer Advisory Board; Oluwatosin Helen Otitoju –the first ever Howard graduate recipient of the Poincaré Fellowship at the California Institute of Technology for Postgraduate Studies, recipient, national merit award and Young Person of the Year Award at the Future Awards 2006;two NNOM laureates:late Prof. B. O. Osuntokun (Medicine) and Prof. J. F. Ade Ajayi (History), former Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos; the late Prof. Sam Aluko, foremost

economist, social critic and reformer; the late Prof. Adegoke Olubunmo, first Nigerian professor of Mathematics; and Prof. Niyi Osundare, literary luminary, fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, and recipient of the Noma Award.

The quest for the creation of Ekiti was a long-cherished ambition of the people of the State. The excision of Ondo State (of which Ekiti was a part) from the Western State in 1976 was a half-way station on the road to the fulfilment of this dream, which came to reality in 1996. Thus when the people of Ekiti State elected their Governor and members of the State House of Assembly in 1999, they were hopeful that self-determination would result in rapid socio-economic development. The Alliance for Democracy won the election of 1999, but lost the 2003 election which brought in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to power. However, the PDP's hold on power was tenuous because of internal party crises, which paved the way for the simultaneous impeachment of the Governor and Deputy Governor on 16th October 2006. The political intrigues that culminated in their impeachment also resulted in the removal of the State Chief Judge, who was side-lined by the State House of Assembly to pave the way for the impeachments.

The impeachment imbroglio led to a situation in which the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, the Deputy Governor and the Governor simultaneously claimed to be the State's chief executive for a few days. Ostensibly because of the flawed process followed by the State House of Assembly in removing the executive and the multiple claimants to the political leadership of the State, President Olusegun Obasanjo declared a State of Emergency in Ekiti State on 19th October, 2006 and appointed retired General Tunji Olurin as a Sole Administrator for six months, during which period he presided over the 2007 general elections in Ekiti State.

INEC declared the PDP winner of the 2007 election in the state, but the Action Congress of Nigeria(ACN) went to the Election Tribunal to challenge the result. In August 2008, the Election Tribunal confirmed the PDP candidate, Eng. Segun Oni, as winner of the gubernatorial election. Dissatisfied, the ACN candidate, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, went to the Appeal Court which in February 2009, nullified Oni's election and ordered re-run elections within 90 days in 10 out of Ekiti's 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Although INEC again declared that Oni had won the re-run elections conducted in April 2009, Fayemi disagreed and again went to the Election Tribunal. The Tribunal dismissed his petition in May 2010, so he proceeded to the Court of Appeal, which declared him the winner of the election in October 2010. Dr. Fayemi thus assumed office as Governor in October 2010 after a protracted judicial struggle.

Commendably, these twists and turns in the electoral fortunes of the two parties and their candidates through the legal system did not degenerate to an outbreak of violence among their supporters. This shows that the Ekiti electorate has matured significantly and accepted the electoral system's in-built redress mechanism as a legitimate and appropriate way to handle electoral disputes.

3.

SUMMARY
OF FINDINGS
IN THE
SPRM FOCUS
AREAS

3.1 Thematic Pillars

Policy Strategy

The policy framework for the state developmental agenda comprises the Ekiti State Development Strategy (EDS) and the Eight Point Agenda of the administration which has drawn inspiration from national and international development and human rights instruments and frameworks, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Nigeria Vision 20: 2020, the African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). However, a costed implementation plan would be needed for the Ekiti Development Strategy to establish clear linkages between activities being implemented, and annual budgets and strategic results anticipated in the strategic plan.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) Department of the Budget and Economic Planning Ministry is saddled with M and E and it conducts routine monitoring and evaluation of projects as well as sectoral impact assessment. A promising initiative is the Office of Transformation Service and Delivery (OTSD) which was established in 2011 with the support of the Department for International Development (DFID) in a bid to fast track efficient and effective service delivery. OTSD conducted the first quarter performance assessment of 16 MDAs in the first week of April 2012. The assessment revealed that MDAs listed too many activities in their work plans with unrealistic targets and delivery times; and that some MDAs do not have the capacity to carry out some of the activities listed in their work plans.

There is a State Statistics Law (2010) and there are plans to appoint a Statistician General to manage the State Bureau of Statistics which is housed in the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning.

Economic Development

Sound economic management received a boost in Ekiti State with the formulation of the Ekiti State Development Strategy which derived its reference from the Government's 8-Point Agenda. The policy framework is complemented by institutional reforms to ensure that resources are harnessed and used in an optimal way to achieve maximum benefits for the citizens.

The index of economic activities used as proxy by the UNDP to compute state GDP shows that Ekiti State has the third highest GDP per capita among the six states in the South West. Only Lagos and Ondo States have a higher GDP per capita. The National Bureau of Statistics data on the incidence of poverty show that poverty has worsened from 20.11% in 2004 to 59.1% in 2010. In 2010, Ekiti State had the second highest absolute poverty incidence in the South West (after Ogun State with 62.3%). The unemployment index at 14 per cent (13.8 per cent for male and 14.2 per cent for female) is also quite high for the South West, next to Ondo and Osun States. Ekiti State also performed poorly in the World Bank's "Doing Business in Nigeria" 2010 report, which compares regulations in 36 States and the FCT. It ranked 34th in terms of ease of doing business.

Public Finance Management

Ekiti State government has done well in domesticating the Fiscal Responsibility Law (FRL) and ensuring that the law includes most of the main ingredients of fiscal responsibility. The government has also commenced moves towards the medium term approach to fiscal planning by preparing the first Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSS). However, it can enhance current efforts at fiscal planning by ensuring the existence of adequate professional capacity in the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning to perform the necessary functions.

Ekiti State has a good regulatory framework for procurement (including procurement legislation), but there are challenges in its implementation. The government will need to match the spirit behind enactment of the Public Procurement Law (PPL) by implementing its provisions fully. This will mean strengthening the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), including ensuring that it has appropriate professional staffing and freedom to operate and ensuring greater use of open competitive bidding in procurement activities.

Human Resource Management

Ekiti state has a very educated work-force. The State Public service has 25,671 staff, made up of 12,965 in the Civil service, 11,536 in the teaching service and 1,170 in parastatals. However, there are insufficient skills to drive the machinery of modern government. For example, there is low ICT penetration and weak record management capacity – factors that are key to enhanced service delivery.

The current administration has started implementing a merit-based recruitment policy. This commenced in 2011 with the appointment of the Head of Service (HOS) and Permanent Secretaries (PS) through competitive examinations. The Accountant-General and Administrative secretaries were also appointed through a competitive process. This is a significant departure from the old practice of unbridled influence and nepotism in the recruitment process. However, a robust training policy that should match this commendable merit-based recruitment policy is currently lacking. An innovative measure worthy of note is the creation of work group platforms by the Governor. The platforms discuss the yearly work-plans, collaborations, areas of conflict, and duplications. However, the Mission confirms that there is no robust feedback mechanism to measure service user satisfaction. The same goes for the issue of awareness of measures by which redress can be sought. One significant commendable affirmative action is the policy of automatic employment for suitably qualified persons with physical disabilities.

Citizen Participation, Social Inclusion and Protection

Ekiti State has accepted and put in place structures in line with the community policing policy of the federal government. It has also established the State Vigilante Service. The TRP found out that youths in the various communities it visited have been integrated into traditional local security-maintenance structures and processes. The result is that the youths routinely participate in crime prevention in their individual communities. Six zonal family courts were constituted for Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the state, while palace courts at community levels are being strengthened for enhanced administration of justice. This has added value to the justice system.

The current administration is exceptionally highly sensitive to issues relating to gender and vulnerable groups. There is an array of gender-based laws that have either been made or domesticated by the state that seek to protect women against harmful or discriminatory practices. In 2011 the State adopted the Ekiti State Gender Development Policy to provide a policy framework for promoting gender equality and social protection for women in the State. Consequent upon this, the state passed the Gender-Based Violence (Prohibition) Law No 21 of 2011, which criminalizes abuse (including harmful traditional practices), as well as child and women trafficking.

The Ekiti State Independent Electoral Commission's work has been made difficult by persistent litigation before the Ekiti State High Court surrounding elections to local government councils and by the general tense and volatile partisan environment of competitive party and electoral politics in the state. This tense situation as well as the failure to conduct local government elections, as various stakeholders pointed out to the TRP, has meant that the electorate in the state have been unable to exercise their democratic rights to elect their local government chairs and councillors through free and fair elections.

3.2 Sectors

Education

The quality of education in the nation's Fountain of Knowledge has deteriorated. For example, the examination results show that with the exception of JSS candidates who recorded 98% and 96.4% passes in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 respectively, poor performances were recorded in the other examinations by SSS candidates as follows: NECO: 11% in 2009/2010, and WAEC: 18% and 33% in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011, respectively.

Ekiti State Government is tackling the challenges identified in the sector head on. It continues to strive for a conducive learning environment by adopting and complying with the National Policy on Education's minimum standards. Other measures that have been taken to revamp the education sector include: the use of Quality Assurance instrument for monitoring and evaluation, Operation Renovate All Schools (ORAS), improved infrastructure, the return of schools to the missions, appointment of three Tutors General, to supervise schools, and school heads in each senatorial district, the bringing together of junior and senior secondary schools under one administration, and the establishment of a remedial college in each of the 16 LGAs to take care of SSCE repeaters.

Health

A review of the health sector in Ekiti State revealed that the state is not lacking in strategies and public health policies that can engender good health outcomes if assiduously adhered to. The state has 293 Primary Health Centres (PHC), 20 General Hospitals and 2 Tertiary Health Institutions. Although the State Government has instituted plans to upgrade the services provided in health facilities through the Free Maternal and Child Health programme which is available in 34 PHC facilities spread over the 3 senatorial districts, the functionality of the totality of the PHC facilities in Ekiti State is uneven. Spending on health also falls short of accepted standards, as a large gap still

exists between the funds eventually released for health projects and the 15%ideal endorsed by African Heads of State in the Abuja declaration. However, the state has made remarkable progress in immunization and vitamin A supplementation. There is a functioning Unified Drug Revolving Fund (UDRF) and the State Ministry of Health and related agencies have been restructured to reposition them for the attainment of the set objectives.

Agriculture

Agriculture holds the key to the socio-economic revival and development of Ekiti state. Through various programmes and policies, the State government has indicated its determination to revive agriculture and reposition it so as to meet the desired agricultural development objectives. It plans to raise at least 50%of its internally-generated revenue (IGR) from agriculture and engage 20,000 youths in mechanized agriculture by the year 2014. The state government is committed to the implementation of its initiatives,(Youth Commercial Agriculture Development(YCAD), Cocoa rebirth, Rice expansion, etc.) which are being nurtured to stimulate increased IGR, create jobs and reduce poverty from improved agricultural production. However, the strategies and interventions seem to be fragmented and need to be streamlined into a state-wide intervention framework that clearly defines roles of all sector players especially the private sector, if they are to achieve real efficiency and effectiveness.

Environment

Activities in the environment sector in Ekiti State are anchored and driven by the Ministry of Housing and Environment in collaboration with other relevant Ministries and Agencies. An integrated policy on waste management exists and in most LGAs and there is evidence of compliance with the directives of the Waste Management board to set aside at least one hectare of land as dumpsites for the management and recycling of waste. Nevertheless, the synergy between the Waste Management Board and other relevant ministries is very weak and should be strengthened.

Although the level of pollution in the state is relatively low due to its low industrial base, its impact will become more intense with the industrialization drive going on in the state. There is currently no State policy on air, land or water pollution, and during the TRM tour of LGAs, there were a number of complaints from citizens that pollution and radiation from the G.S.M. masts erected in residential neighbourhoods is on the increase.

Infrastructure

Ekiti State Government considers infrastructure as critical to the rapid transformation of the state. It forms one of the items in the current Government's 8-Point Agenda for eradicating poverty.

Roads: The State Government has accorded priority to road construction with a good asphaltic road network linking the State Capital with most of the 16 local government headquarters. However, side drains carrying capacity are lacking in some of the old roads.

Electricity: Most communities have been electrified through the provision of and replacement of faulty transformers. As a result, power supply has improved in the State. The energy required in the state is 100MW but the maximum capacity at present is 40MW, and supply sometimes drops as low as 15MW.

Water: Ekiti State has huge surface water resources and four large water dams. Nevertheless, the needs of the various communities for potable water are not fully met. While water demand is 280 Million litres per day (MLD), the installed capacity for urban and small town is 199 MLD and capacity utilization is 34 MLD. For water supply in many areas, the state relies substantially on boreholes constructed under the MDGs Programme, but several of them are not functional.

The Steering Committee identified the following seven commendable practices during the TRM process based on the following criteria: (i) that the initiative has substantially met its objectives over a period of two years or longer; and (ii) that the lessons learned from implementing the initiative could be of interest to other States for the purpose of peer learning, and possibly the Federal Government.

4.1 Crosscutting

Transparency and Public Accountability: Ekiti State Government is highly committed to transparency and accountability in governance. It has passed a number of laws, which seek to enhance public accountability. Ekiti State is the first in the federation to enact a State version of the Freedom of Information Act, with the passage of the Ekiti State Freedom of Information Law, No. 10 of 2011. It gives the public the right of access to public records and information under the control of the State Government and its agencies, Local Governments, and any companies in which the state or any LGA has a controlling interest.

The FOI Law is emblematic of a new openness and transparency that have started to characterize governance in Ekiti State since 2010. The State's 2012 budget is fully uploaded on the state's website, which is very interactive and ranked as the best state website by the NGF Secretariat. Similarly, all recent laws, policy documents, news releases and contracts vetted by the Bureau of Public Procurement are posted on the website.

Social Protection and Inclusion: The implementation of the social security scheme for the elderly is a pace setter in the introduction of social security policy in Nigeria. The Ekiti State Senior Citizen's Welfare Law authorizes the provision of assistance to resident elderly people, which includes free healthcare and the payment of welfare grants. To be eligible, one must be 65 years old and above, not receiving any pension, and earning less than N3,000 monthly. In addition, the person must have been resident in the state for the last three years. Nearly 20,000 elderly citizens have been enrolled as beneficiaries since it was introduced. Although this figure may be regarded as modest, considering that over 87,000 people participated in the enumeration exercise, it is important to enforce eligibility rules lest undeserving claimants benefit from the scheme and undermine its credibility and affordability.

Participation and Inclusiveness: The Government strives to ensure popular participation in State policy-making processes. Participation and ownership of policies was one of the key issues considered in the formulation of the Ekiti State Development Strategy and it has remained a strong feature of governance in the State. Evidence gathered by the Mission confirmed that Ekiti State has an inclusive budget and policy-making consultative process. The Governor and the cabinet hold several scheduled Town Hall meetings with the elders of communities, councils of traditional rulers, leaders of community development associations and town unions, women and youth leaders, representatives of people living with disabilities, leaders of religious organizations, and other stakeholders to deliberate on development strategies and budget inputs. Recommendations from these consultations are factored into policies and projects captured in the annual budgets.

Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort: After years of neglect since it was first discovered in the 1950s, Ikogosi Warm Spring, where warm and cold water oozing from different sources flowing separately to join in a pool but each retaining its thermal identity, is fast becoming the next port of call as tourist spot. In collaboration with a South African firm, the State Government is developing a World Class 'tourism corridor' around the spring. Topping the priority list is lodging for visitors, which is undergoing extensive rehabilitation. While most of the rooms are being redesigned to conform to international standards, 24 others are being constructed to serve pupils and students who may be on educational excursions. Overlooking the Spring, five-star duplexes are almost completed, to cater for upper class visitors. When completed, the project will not only diversify the economy of the State, but will also project the rich culture of the Ekitis to the outside world and promote nature conservation and environmental education.

4.2. Thematic Areas

Education

Revamping Education: In line with the state's focus on education as a vehicle for individual social mobility and socio-economic development of the state, and being concerned about the decay in the standard of education, the Fayemi administration has embarked on a holistic restructuring and restitution of education in the state at all levels. This has involved the merger of universities, re-equipping of schools with appropriate furniture and sporting equipment, and starting teachers on a whole range of training and retraining after the scandalous discovery that fewer than 10 % of teachers in the state's primary schools could pass a Primary Four examination. At secondary school level, the administration has renovated or built new school buildings with a distinctive red colour. The TRM was informed that about 100 schools have already benefited in the first phase and that the exercise would continue until all public schools would have been renovated.

Commitment to rapid enhancement of ICT Competency: Besides rehabilitating several school buildings, the state has adopted a policy of promoting computer literacy among secondary school students. At the time of writing this report, the State had distributed 11,000 solar-powered laptops to secondary school students and 7,000 to their teachers under a partnership arrangement with Samsung, which supplied the hardware and Microsoft, which is providing the software for the e-governance project. The goal is to provide 33,000 laptops to students and 18,000 to teachers under the e-school project in the first year of the project. The Government has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Samsung to build a computer engineering centre in the state, which will drive the State's e-governance programme. The MOU includes the building of a technology park, and deployment of smart city and safe cities initiatives in Ekiti State. The ICT infrastructure is also expected to have a positive impact on the state's healthcare system.

Health

Free Health Missions to Complement Free Medical Services and Low HIV/ AIDS:

Since January 2011, Ekiti State has embarked on Free Health Missions designed as an outreach model. In large numbers, patients are screened and treated by a team of medical personnel. The consultations are carried out at designated mission sites such as hospital premises, town halls or palace squares. Drugs, eyeglasses, contraceptive devices and IEC materials are made available to those who present themselves at designated mission sites. About 263,918 people have so far benefitted from these missions. Ekiti State also has the second lowest HIV/AIDS infection rate in the country, (Kebbi State is the lowest.) At 1.4% down from 3.1% in 2003, the rate of infection is the lowest in the South-West which has an average rate of 2.8%.

5.

OVERARCHING ISSUES

Overarching issues are those issues that have been identified in more than one thematic area or are important enough to deserve a holistic approach because of their wider impact on the quality of governance in the State. They are deemed important enough to be singled out in order to inform as well as to facilitate prioritisation, first by the Forum, and then by the State in the implementation of the State Programme of Action (SPoA). Five of such overarching issues were identified.

Local Government Administration: Local governance in the sense of a representative local government established through competitive elections as envisaged by Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution is in the doldrums in Ekiti State. Local government elections have not been conducted as and when due in the state since 1999. The conduct of local elections has been thwarted by successive governments not playing by the letter and spirit of the relevant laws that regulate the establishment of the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC), which has responsibility for conducting local elections.

Problems caused by the absence of elected LGA officials have been compounded by amendments to the Local Government Law which have the effect of centralizing Local Government powers in the hands of the Executive. The Local Government Administration (Amendment) Law No. 7 of 2011 reduced the tenure of LGAs to two years, and also transferred to the Governor the power to appoint people to all the positions that should have been filled at the discretion of an elected LG Chairman.

Civil Service Reform: By the time the Fayemi-led Government assumed office in October 2010, the State civil service bore the marks of the unstable political

environment in which it had operated since 2003. It was politicized and weak and consequently inefficient and ineffective. In 2011 Ekiti State adopted a Civil Service Transformation Strategy (CSTS) to reform the civil service, improve its governance capacity and make it more efficient and effective. Among the key aspects of the strategy which the Government has started to implement are measures to ensure that the civil service has a strong and credible leadership, recruitment is substantially (80%) merit-based, and training and orientation of civil servants is consistent to inculcate professionalism.

However, implementation of the reforms has not been without difficulties. As expected, there has been resistance to the implementation of such a radical programme, since it could expose indolence and lack of self-improvement of officers, and thereby result in adverse consequences for their career progression. Consequently, the Government needs to assure civil servants of its good faith in carrying out the reforms. The consistent application of meritocracy in appointments in the short period since the reforms commenced has convinced most objective civil servants that the practice is in the best interest of the public service of the State.

However, attempts to ascertain the training needs of 16,000 primary and secondary school teachers provoked a strike, largely because of the fear of the unknown and the poor communication strategy of the Government. It can be argued that the Teachers' Development and Needs Assessment (TDNA) could have been more smoothly implemented if the Government had held prior effective and sustained dialogue with the teachers, for whom the TDNA initially seemed too similar to the competence tests administered to LGA employees and Secondary School Principals in the past, which had resulted in the disengagement of some of them. They feared that the TDNA might have similar consequences. The National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) had called local government employees out on strike to challenge the dismissal of its members following similar competence tests.

This episode shows that the Government needs to improve its industrial relations management capacity. States generally need to develop their own industrial relations capacities rather than rely on the Federal Ministry of Labour and the National Industrial Court to resolve labour disputes, whose processes are slow and costly, both in time and in resources.

Challenges in Economic and Financial Management: The institutional framework for a sounder economic and financial management is still far from performing optimally. Inadequate staffing is a source of weakness, as the effective management of the policies and programmes of the Government is undermined by a service-wide shortage of qualified personnel to implement them in the MDAs, an important fact which the report of the OTSD admitted. Although Ekiti State has a well-educated workforce, most of it is in the lower management cadre and needs time to mature to offer the management skills required to meet the challenges of development that the State faces. Moreover, the recruitment of this workforce appears not to have been needs-based. Consequently, despite the relatively high quality of the workforce, the

public service faces critical shortages of professional and technical staff across the public service. This undermines the capacity to achieve the goal of rapid transformation of the State. It is therefore important that recruitment into the service should not only be strictly merit-based, but also based on needs' assessments of the various MDAs.

The staffing needs of the Bureau of Public Procurement and the Fiscal Responsibility Commission are particularly urgent because of their critical roles in the governance enhancement efforts of the State. The Mission found that critical shortages of professional staff in these agencies were undermining -their capacity to carry out their responsibilities.

Boosting Internally Generated Revenue: Ekiti State has raised its internally-generated revenue (IGR) from a mere N106m monthly in 2010 to N1b monthly by 2012. According to the Ekiti Internal Revenue Service, this feat was achieved through blocking leakages in revenue collection, and making tax payment affordable and convenient for people in the informal sector. This is commendable and indicative of the potential for increasing IGR further. However, the IGR as a proportion of actual total revenue was on the decline from 2009 to 2011. It was 9.8% in 2009; 7.9% in 2010 and 7.6% in 2011. The fact that IGR as a proportion of total income was low over the three years (2009-2011) shows that there is considerable room for improvement with a lot work still to be done to reduce the State's high dependence on allocations from federally-collected revenues. While the State is set to implement the unique national tax identification number, it is also important to examine the possibility of widening its tax base to increase the contribution of IGR to its revenues.

The Turbulent Political Environment: Ekiti State has had its own share of the untamed virulence of violent competitive party and electoral politics. After the return to civil rule in 1999, the State suffered a huge deficit of good political leadership imbued with and anchored firmly on the ethos of democratic political culture. The result has been the descent into the politics of bitterness, which continues to feed distrust, unhealthy scepticism and intolerance not only among the political elite but also the general public in the state. More worrisome have been the allegations, made to the TRM in public and private sessions, that party politics have tarnished the image of the judiciary and the civil service by dragging them into partisan politics in the state, with dire consequences for their neutrality and independence.

In recent months, tension has started to rise as politicians and political parties have started manoeuvring to position themselves favourably for the 2014 gubernatorial elections. The TRM believes that the political leadership across partisan party lines has the patriotic responsibility to rise above the politics of bitterness. To this end, it should begin to draw on and mine the rich vein of human resource and capital that it is endowed with for the sustainability of democracy and development in the state.

6.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Against the backdrop of growing unemployment, the government is encouraged to pursue with vigour the various strategies and measures geared towards generating employment opportunities that will open up the state economy, especially in the private sector. Furthermore, the State Bureau of Statistics should develop the capacity to conduct surveys on unemployment and employment.
 - The State Government should give the utmost priority to the conduct of local government elections in the state and work with all stakeholders in this respect to accelerate the resolution and removal of any impediments to the conduct of the elections.
 - Low IGR is a major challenge. The Government needs to strengthen its revenue collection machinery, especially the State Board of Internal Revenue, while widening the tax base.

7.

CONCLUSION

The Kayode Fayemi-led administration has no doubt done a lot to move the state forward and its developmental strategies and strides are quite laudable.

Within two years, it has restored confidence in Ekiti State among local and international development partners and investors with its people-oriented governance, while not shying away from making tough decisions. It is in appreciation of these landmark achievements that the Leadership Newspaper conferred on him the Governor of the Year Award for 2011. Complacency, however, would be a very costly disposition. The government must continue to restore and rebuild public trust in governance and re-create the necessary institutional architecture required to deliver change.

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