



**ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 14th TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA
GOVERNORS' FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 5th AUGUST 2020**

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held today, deliberated on issues affecting the country, particularly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. The NGF Chairman Dr John Kayode Fayemi provided an update on:

a. The finalization of plans for the flag-off and distribution of food items to vulnerable persons in all the 36 States by the Forum with the private sector-led Coalition against COVID-19 (CACOVID). The kick-off which started in Borno, Edo, Enugu and Kano State on Tuesday 4th August 2020, will hold daily in at least one State in each geopolitical zone until 11th August 2020.

b. The recent attack on the convoy of the Borno State Governor Professor Babagana Umara Zulum and the rapidly degenerating state of security across the country. The Chairman stated that the NEC Ad-Hoc Committee on Security and Policing met on Tuesday 4th August 2020 with the heads of the nation's security agencies to discuss and review the security challenges in the country. According to the Chairman, Resolutions reached will be presented to Mr. President shortly.

c. The meeting deliberated on the ongoing negotiation between the NGF and the federal government to waive the requirement that State governments provide counterpart funds before they can access Universal Basic Education (UBE) Funds. The move was taken in the light of the impact of COVID-19 which has affected the capacity of State governments to provide counterpart funds required to access various national funds and statutory levies.

d. The collaboration between the NGF and the Centre for Values in Leadership (CVL) to organize a Webinar on Governance and Insecurity Challenges in the country was discussed. The Webinar will facilitate an interaction between Governors and the public to shed more light on some of the strategies deployed to tackle insecurity amidst the battle against COVID-19 in Nigeria.

e. The intervention of the Forum in the nationwide strike action by the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) in June 2020. The Chairman stated that some of the States Governments still have unresolved issues with the Resident



Doctors and enjoined Governors to engage with the State branches of the Association to resolve these disputes. Some of the issues include unpaid salaries for doctors and the non-domestication and non-implementation of the Medical Residency Training Act, 2017.

2. The Forum received further updates from:

a. Alhaji Aliko Dangote on behalf of the Coalition against COVID-19 (CACOVID) on the flag-off and distribution of CACOVID palliatives to States. The flag-off started on Tuesday, 4th August 2020 in Borno, Edo, Enugu and Kano States. The launch is ongoing and will hold daily across one State each in the six geopolitical zones until Tuesday 11th August 2020 when it will be concluded in all 36 States of the Federation.

b. The Honourable Minister of State for Education, Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba briefed members on guidelines for the resumption of schools in the country. The Ministry has been engaging with governors through the NGF Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 and through regular meetings with State Commissioners for Education.

c. The Chairman of the NGF Sub-Committee interfacing with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19, Governor Dr. Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa of Delta State. Dr. Okowa briefed Governors of the measures discussed with the PTF on reopening the economy. His update highlighted concerns such as guidelines required to reopen schools; resumption of international flights; the need for increased testing capacity and sample collection centers in all local government areas in the country; disbursement of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund and other health-related facilities; dissemination of guidelines for home care for COVID-19 cases; and the non-availability of reagents in the country due to its high demand globally.

d. The Programme Manager NGF HelpDesk - SFTAS Technical Assistance Project, Olanrewaju Ajogbasile provided an update on the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and (SFTAS) programme and pending actions for State governments, including the publication of comprehensive audited financial statements by five (5) remaining States and preparations for the 2019 SFTAS Annual Performance Assessment (APA) exercise to be conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation (OAuGF) starting 9th August 2020.



Thereafter, members of the Forum Resolved as follows:

1. All COVID-19 Task Forces in the various States will work closely with their Palliatives Implementation Committees to target the most vulnerable population in society for the distribution of the CACOVID palliatives, particularly in local governments that have been identified as epicenters. States will also take cognizance of the possibility of a second wave of COVID-19 infection and should start preparing preventive measures.
2. The Forum will continue to engage with the federal government on the suspension of State counterpart funds required for accessing UBE funds. The Forum had adopted the Report of the National Economic Council Ad-Hoc Committee on COVID-19 chaired by the Vice President, which recommended the immediate suspension of the requirement for State Governments to provide matching funds to access grants like UBEC.
3. In preparation for the 2019 Annual Performance Assessment of the SFTAS programme which is expected to start from 9th August 2020, State governments will ensure appropriate health and security measures are put in place to ensure a seamless exercise by the teams from the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation (OAuGF).
4. The NGF Secretariat will provide Technical Assistance to the remaining five (5) States yet to publish their Audited Financial Statement (AFS).
5. Lastly, State governments with unresolved issues with their Resident Doctors were enjoined to meet with the Association at least at the local level to agree on workable solutions in the face of the current challenges in the country.

**Governor Kayode Fayemi
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum
5th August 2020**