



**ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 22ND NGF MEETING (HYBRID) OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS'
FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND DECEMBER 2020**

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held on 2nd December 2020, deliberated on issues affecting the country, particularly on the issue of national security and the recent killings of over forty-three (43) rice farmers in Borno State.

The NGF Chairman provided updates on the following:

- a. A delegation of members of the Forum paid a commiseration visit to the Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Zulum, in Maiduguri on 1st December, 2020, over the killing of over forty (40) rice farmers in Garin Kwashebe in Jere Local Government Area of Borno State on Saturday, November 28, 2020, by suspected Boko Haram terrorists.
- b. On the aftermath to the EndSARS protests, the judicial commissions of enquiry instituted by Governors across the thirty-six (36) States of the federation to probe petitions of brutality by law enforcement agents were in progress.
- c. Following Mr. President's approval of the request of Governors for change in the financing model of the Universal Basic Education from the current counterpart funding requirement to a Program-for-Result performance driven model, the NGF Secretariat was following up with the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice to complete work on drafting the Executive Order to guide Mr. President's directive.
- d. There were further updates on Stamp Duty Collections and the controversial Water Resources Bill. On the former, the position of the law is that stamp duty belongs primarily to the States and the various platforms were collection channels for payment to the States. The Forum is currently reviewing options open to the States. On the latter, the Secretariat is tracking feedback from States on the Water Resources Bill in order to coordinate the Forum's response to the Ministry.
- e. The Forum is currently intervening in resolving the lingering ASUU strike and has secured certain concessions from the Federal Government with the hope that the strike action will be called off shortly.



f. Finally, on the delayed release of Saving One Million Lives (SOML) funding, the Chairman acknowledged concerns from members and explained that the delay was due to observations made by the World Bank on the technical quality of the SMART Survey which makes it difficult to use the result for fund disbursement. Also, the total amount won by the States was more than the funds remaining in the funding envelope. He proposed the option of using a prorated approach to disburse the fund and urged the Honourable Minister of Health to convene a meeting of the SOML Steering Committee to resolve the issue.

2. The Forum also received the following presentations:

- a. Governor Nasir El Rufai, Chairman of the National Economic Council (NEC) Adhoc Committee on Leveraging Portion of Accumulated Pension Funds for Investment in NSIA, briefed the Forum on a proposed National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) under the auspices of the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) such that a total sum of N2 Trillion Naira at 9% interest can be accessed through the NSIA. The NGF Chairman noted that the CBN Governor had a similar proposal to access N15 Trillion Naira for national infrastructure funding through INFACREDIT at a lower interest rate of 5%.
- b. The National Coordinator of the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on Covid19 Dr Sani Aliyu addressed the Forum on the increasing cases of severe illness among Covid19 patients in the country especially in Abuja. Dr Aliyu made a plea to Governors to remain very vigilant and keep their treatment Centers open. He expressed concerns of the PTF on the low testing rates in most of the States and communicated PTF plans to launch a “COVID19 Testing Week” in which 450 tests would be conducted in each of the 774 LGAs over a 2-week period. He solicited for the cooperation of the Governors especially for the funding of the exercise, which is expected to be funded from the COVID19 fund disbursed to the States by the Federal Government. On COVID-19 vaccines, the Forum was informed that about 44 million Nigerians would immediately qualify for the vaccines, which includes medical personnel and the most vulnerable group among which are those over 50 years of age.
- c. The Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning SFTAS Programme Coordination Unit (PCU), National Programme Coordinator, Mr. Stephen Okon and the World Bank Task Team Leader, Yue Man Lee, both provided updates to the Forum on the progress recorded by States on the programme. They highlighted as noteworthy the improved performance of States in the just concluded 2019 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for



which 32 States are eligible for disbursement before the end of 2020, compared to 2018 APA where only 24 States met the Eligibility Criteria of publishing their approved budget and audited financial statement online. Already, 36 States are on track to meet the 2020 SFTAS Eligibility Criteria (EC) having published online IPSAS-compliant 2019 audited financial statements by 31st August 2020.

- d. The Chairman of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), Asue Ighodalo as well as the Chief Executive Officer, Laoye Jaiyeola, briefed members on the resolutions of the 26th Nigerian Economic Summit held in Abuja from November 23-24, 2020; and that the outcomes and recommendations will be presented to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in a detailed report, for consideration, adoption and implementation.

Thereafter, members of the Forum resolved to:

1. Meet with Mr. President as soon as possible to address security challenges across the country particularly in the light of the carnage in Borno State;
2. Support the necessary reforms that will result in a police force that works for all. As an immediate to medium-term measure, members agreed to pay close attention to the conduct of police officers across the country in order to get them and other internal security operatives fully back to work as they have not been functioning to full capacity since the EndSARS protests with the attendant security exposure to the safety of lives and properties of the ordinary citizens;
3. Maintain its stance that stamp duties belong primarily to States and the various collection platforms are channels of payment to the States; while aligning with the guidance provided by its lawyers and experts.
4. Direct State Attorney Generals to review the Water Resources Bill and send their input to the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat as quickly as possible;
5. Endorse the two proposals that canvassed for infrastructure development by both the Governor Nasir el Rufai Committee and the Central Bank Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emefiele, noting that both were not mutually exclusive and could be adopted simultaneously with one streaming into the other;
6. Agree to keep active and operational the State COVID -19 Task Force Teams and Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) in addition to ensuring the prompt release of funds as outlined in the State Incidence Action Plans (IAP), keeping temporary treatment centers open, ramping up



COVID-19 testing across the country, and support the planned “COVID-19 Testing Week’ to be launched by the PTF;

7. Commit to achieving the second Eligibility Criteria (EC) requirement of publishing online their approved FY21 Annual State Budget, prepared under the National Chart of Accounts, by 31st January 2021. Governors also restated their commitment to implement reforms associated with the programme including the deployment of a Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to support effective land administration and an efficient property tax system;
8. Inaugurate the NGF-NESG Economic Roundtable (NNER) Steering Committee, whose technical committee is to commence the implementation of the strategic plan; which includes but not limited to the national mapping of subnational endowments; global mapping of sub-national entities for global competitiveness and development of competitiveness toolkits;
9. Finally, encourage the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to hasten the implementation of the truce elements in their resolutions so as to allow schools reopen immediately.

Governor John Kayode Fayemi
Chairman, Nigeria Governors’ Forum
2nd December 2020