



Communiqué

ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 25TH TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM (2ND IN 2021) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2021.

We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held on 10th February 2021 received extensive briefs on a number of issues, deliberated on various matters of national concern and reached some resolutions:

1. On the current conversation on the COVID-19 pandemic, which is focused on making vaccines available as soon as possible to Nigerians, the Chairman called on all relevant agencies and public-spirited organizations involved in the procurement of vaccines to work amicably to ensure that the vaccines arrive the country quickly. He announced that the NGF will shortly inaugurate an advisory group of experts to provide high-level strategic guidance and support to the NGF on the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines in the short time and the local production of vaccines in the medium to long term.
2. The Forum is also engaging directly with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) to ensure that vaccines are administered equitably, first to workers who are on the frontlines of the pandemic.
3. The Forum deliberated on the underutilization of fiscal facilities in the country including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Fund, the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) and the Saving One Million Lives programme for results (SOML) which are meant to expand the size and scope of resources spent on health and education across all States of the Federation. The Forum recognises that the timely implementation of these facilities in line with the financing plans of States is vital to ensure expenditure coherence and the sustainability for several projects on primary health care and basic education implemented at the State-level, especially during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic where the demand for government intervention has been heightened.
4. On the Saving One Million Lives (SOML) performance for results project, the Chairman announced that the Federal Ministry of Health, the Commissioners for Health Forum and the World Bank have



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resolved to distribute the outstanding funds under the Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI 1,2) equally amongst all the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

5. On the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF), the Chairman expressed concern over the delay in the payment of funds to the three pilot BHCPF States of Abia, Niger and Osun. He urged the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and the World Bank (WB) to urgently disburse the funds to these States using the original BHCPF Guidelines for States.
6. Following an update from Governors on the various initiatives taken by State governments to address the rising insecurity in the country due to the activities of herdsmen, members reached a consensus on the need for the country to transition into modern systems of animal husbandry that will replace open, night and underage grazing in the country. State governments are encouraged to put in place systems to accelerate the grazing initiative of the National Livestock Transformation Plan and ranching in the country.
7. The Forum respects the right of abode of all Nigerians and strongly condemns criminality and the ethnic profiling of crime in the country in an effort to frame the widespread banditry and the herders-farmers crisis. In the light of the economic and security risks that have arisen from these circumstances, the Forum resolved to urgently convene an emergency meeting of all Governors.
8. The Chairman of the Northern States Governors' Forum (NSGF) and Governor of Plateau State, Rt Hon. Simon Bako Lalong provided an update on steps taken by the Governors of the nineteen (19) Northern States and cautioned against the tagging of ethnic groups based on the misbehavior of a few criminally minded individuals. He called on State governors to address this matter head-on in their various States.
9. Following an update by Governor Abubakar Bagudu of Kebbi State, members resolved to immediately address the misinformation from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources that it has so far registered 4.5 million farmers nationwide under the Agriculture for Food and Jobs Plan (AFJP),



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a key component of the Nigeria Economic and Sustainability Plan (NESP) designed to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on farmers.

10. On the Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2020-2025 (NNBP), the Chairman briefed the Forum on the letter from the Broadband Implementation Steering Committee (BISC) requesting Governors to give effect to some of the Infrastructure, Policy and Demand Drivers Pillars of the Broadband Plan in order to achieve full implementation of the NNBP.
11. The Chairman drew the attention of members to the letter from the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) requesting States to submit details of work done at the subnational level on lifting people out of poverty. This information will help the Council in developing a poverty reduction strategy/plan at the national level. States are expected to submit these on or 26th February, 2021.
12. The Chairman announced that the Forum was in receipt of a letter from the Nigeria Governors' Wives Against Gender Based Violence (NGWA-GBV) thanking members particularly the Governors of Kogi, Ondo, Niger, Plateau and Ekiti who attended the High Level Policy Dialogue on December 2, 2020 for their support in making the event a huge success. The NGWA-GBV implored Governors to maintain the momentum around the emergency declared on GBV on June 10th, 2020. While noting the concerns of the NGWA-GBV, Governors resolved to endorse all requests and proposals contained in its letter dated January 26th, 2021.
13. Following the Presentation that was made at the 24th NGF Teleconference meeting on enhancing States' IGR through harmonized Traffic Management System, the Secretariat was mandated to convene a meeting of the Committee headed by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, to further review and advise the Forum on the project.
14. On the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) performance for result programme, the Chairman briefed the Forum on emerging concerns with the Independent Verification Agent (IVA) following the nomination of a new Auditor General for the Federation. He assured members that the Governor of Edo State who doubles as the Chairman of the NGF SFTAS Committee



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is working with relevant stakeholders to engender a final resolution that will sustain the momentum and quality service delivered by the IVA on the programme so far.

15. As part of the SFTAS update, Ajogbasile Olanrewaju, Senior Programme Manager (HelpDesk and SFTAS TA Programme) at the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat provided the following:
 - a. All 36 States are set to meet the 2020 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) Eligibility Criteria having prepared and published online an IPSAS-compliant 2019 Audited Financial Statements by 31 August 2020 and their FY2021 State Budgets under the National Chart of Accounts (NCoA) by 31st January 2021.
 - b. Twenty Six (26) States including Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba and Yobe State achieved the Disbursement Linked Indicator (DLI) 12.1 (*strengthened procurement function for COVID-19 or emergency situation and facilitated participation of SMEs in public procurement in the resilient recovery phase*).
 - c. Anambra State Annual Performance Assessment (APA) result for Disbursement Linked Indicator (DLI) 11.1 (*announced and started implementation of a tax compliance relief program for individual taxpayers and businesses*) has been revised following additional considerations that confirm that the State met the requirements of the DLI.
 - d. State Governors were encouraged to sustain high-level support for the SFTAS programme, promote an incentivised environment for participating Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as State officials. They were also advised to leverage existing technical assistance on the programme and implement in full and not in part the SFTAS verification protocols for the annual eligibility criteria and Disbursement Linked Results (DLRs).



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16. On the operations of SFTAS, the Governor of Edo State, H.E Godwin Obaseki called on members to further strengthen the institutional capacity of the NGF Secretariat to become a stronger resource and policy centre for the provision of technical assistance to States.
17. The Chairman formally informed members of the death of the father of their colleague, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa and prayed for the family and the people of Delta State. Members offered their sincere condolence and noted the decision of the Okowa family to opt for a quiet private burial this month, while a Celebration of Life event will be held on August 21, 2021.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Fayemi".

**Governor Kayode Fayemi
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum
10th February 2021**