

**MINUTES OF STAKEHOLDERS TOWNHALL MEETING ON YEAR 2021 BUDGET
ORGANISED BY MINISTRY OF FINANCE, BUDGET AND ECONOMIC PLANNING,
LOKOJA, KOGI STATE, HELD ON 14TH, OCTOBER, 2020 AT UNDERGRADUATE
THEATRE, FCE, OKENE, KOGI STATE.**

1.0.0 PREAMBLE

1.0.1 Stakeholders Town-hall Meeting has become an integral part of the budgeting process, after the two previous ones in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The aim of the engagement is to have in-person conversation with the people, regarding their needs that they wanted prioritize in the State Development Plan/ annual Budget. Key among the achievements of the previous stakeholders Town hall Meeting include the preparation of Citizens Budget, publishing of the approved Budget on the State website, holding stakeholder's engagement outside government facility, decentralizing stakeholders to the Senatorial level etc.

2.0.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

2.0.1 The Meeting started at 11:00AM with the National anthem and Ebira Anthem. This was followed by opening prayers offered by Mrs. Salami O. Alice (CDO, ADAVI) and Hajia Zainab Obansa (ADAVI) respectively.

3.0.0 OPENING REMARKS

3.0.1 **The Hon. Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Mukadam Asiwaju Ashiru Idris**, who welcomed participants to the meeting, underscored the importance of creating a platform like this, in which stakeholders would discuss and submit their needs for inclusion into the State Budget. He informed the meeting that, His Excellency, Alh. Yahaya Bello, strongly believed in participatory budgeting, which was why he gave a standing directive for this meeting to be made part of the annual budgeting process. According to the Commissioner, government found totally unacceptable the past practices in which budgets were prepared without inputs from the people. He, therefore, assured the people of Government unwavering commitment to discussing the budget with the people for the purpose of aligning the government priorities with the peoples' priorities.

3.0.2 The Commissioner said, the State revenue was significantly challenged over the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic, saying within the first quarter of the pandemic, the assumptions that informed the preparation of the 2020 Approved Budget could no longer endure, as the oil benchmark of \$57 Dollars per barrel upon which the Budget was prepared oscillated between \$17 and \$30 Dollar per barrel. At the same time, he said, the exchange rate, projected at N305/\$ rose to N360/\$. All other assumptions showed very bad signals such as inflation rates, GDP growth rate, unemployment. Under that difficult situation of a heavily plummeted revenue, he said Government had no option but to revise the Budget from the originally approved N176 Billion to N102 Billion, after due consultations with critical stakeholders. He continued that, in revising the 2020 Approved Budget, Overhead cost was cut down, the earlier planned recruitment exercises had to be suspended, admitted only critical pro-poor capital projects while provision were made for the completion of ongoing projects and maintenance of existing ones. He also said that provision was made to grant tax reliefs to vulnerable businesses as well as increased allocation for the health sector, to cater for Personal Protective Equipment, Medical allowances and health insurance. Provision were also made to support rural agriculture, social safety net support, livelihood support, public workfares support, all of which were provided for under the COVID-19 CARES program which was expected to take-off soon and continued in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

3.0.3 He continued that, the 2020 Budget had been revised in line with the effect of COVID-19, and the World Bank report indicated that the State Budget was in line with best practice, which would attract to the State, a grant of \$5,000,000 Dollars. On the credibility in tax administration and other key areas, a grant of \$2.5Million Dollars was also awarded to the State by the World Bank while in May, 2019, the state was awarded as the best State in North Central in Accountability and Transparency.

3.0.4 He equally stated that the Stakeholders engagement is considered important by Government, which was why key representatives of MDAs were part of the State team, to address the concerns of stakeholders in the different sectors and to liaise with stakeholders to obtain their inputs. He urged all the participants to actively participate in the process in order to achieve the objectives of His Excellency's inclusive governance.

3.0.5 In conclusion, he enjoined the good people of Kogi State, both at home and in diaspora, to heartily congratulate His Excellency, Alh. Yahaya Bello, the Executive Governor of Kogi State, over the strong affirmation of his victory at the polls by the Supreme Court as the duly elected Governor of Kogi State.

3.0.6 **Mr. E O Bayode, the SFTAS Coordinator (World Bank Assisted)**, spoke on the benefits of stakeholders' engagement on budget. He referred to Budget, as an estimation of revenue and expenses of government over a specified future period of time, usually one year, describing it as the most important public agency activities of government.

3.0.7 Mr. Bayode stated further that, Stakeholders engagement strengthened openness, transparency and accountability, thereby improving the credibility of government decisions. The engagement provided a wider opportunity to gather information and feedback to guide the decisions of government; He said, information gathered from stakeholders' engagement, would enable government to prove to the citizens that inputs that were harvested from the budgeting process were intended to meet the desires, needs and priorities of the people; He said Stakeholders' engagement ultimately leads to improved governance system and inclusion of people from all backgrounds. The more views gathered in the process of budget formulation, the more likely the final product of the budget would meet the most needs and address the most concerns possible, he said; Trust would be built between the people and Government through stakeholders' engagement. He said collecting ideas and inputs from stakeholders across all areas would engender peace and stability in governance, leading to less agitations from the citizenry and finally, stakeholders' involvement in the budget process engenders ownership of the budget.

3.0.8 In conclusion, Mr. Bayode commended the State Governor, for the laudable initiative which, if sustained, had the ingredients of building trust and partnership with the people for the accelerated growth and sustainable development of the State.

4.0.0 REMARKS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.0.1 **Obiyo Ateiza Aliyu-President-General (Ebira Youth Congress)**; PG Obiyo commended the State Government for involving the Grassroots in the budgeting process. He Stated that the credibility of the meeting would be judged by the implementation of the people's priorities, as discussed in this engagement

exercise, saying that was the only way Government could win the confidence of the people.

4.0.2 Mr. Obiyo affirmed that the State revenue was significantly challenged over the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic, advising Government to prioritize the welfare of Workers through prompt payment of salaries, as it had multiplier effect on the Citizens as well as cushion the effect of the Pandemic. He continued that provision should also be made to grant tax reliefs to vulnerable businesses as well as support rural agriculture, social safety net support, livelihood support and public workfares support.

4.0.3 He commended Government efforts on Security but noted more need to be done in order to safeguard Farmers and the general public from the menace of Herdsmen, Bandits, Armed Robbers and Kidnappers.

4.0.4 On the dilapidated state of roads from Okene to Lokoja, he appealed to Government to prioritize the rehabilitation of the roads in order to attract development to the area.

4.0.5 **M. O. Salau-Representing Okenwen Youths**; He expressed concern on the deteriorating state of roads in the area and appealed to government to rehabilitate the roads. He equally sought Government attention on the development of recreational centers.

4.0.6 **Otori Jimoh-CSO (FCE, Okene)**. Mr. Otori appealed to Government on the following;

- Reminder to His Excellency of the FCE Pedestrian bridge he promised to construct last year for the safety of the students.
- Establishment of a Police post in front of the institution.
- Improve power supply to the institution.
- Provision of a Bus to ease the movements of Students.

4.0.7 **Isah Abdulazeez-Community Youth (Okehi)**, commended the Government for hosting the Stakeholders meeting and advised thus;

- Stakeholders Town-hall Meetings be extended to all local government areas.
- Appealed for provision of portable water supply in Otete community.
- Construction of the Pedestrian bridge in FCE Okene.

4.0.8. **Momoh Adeiza Salihu-Planning Officer (Ajaokuta LGA)**, appealed to government to ensure the following issues are addressed;

- Renovation and Rehabilitation of the Cottage Hospital at Ajaokuta LGA
- Renovation and Rehabilitation of Roads at Ajaokuta LGA

4.0.9 **Barrister Yusuf Suleiman-PRO, (Ogori-Magongo LGA)**, appreciated government's effort at establishing cordial relationship with the communities and requested for the following;

- Rehabilitation of dilapidated Schools in Ogori-Magongo LGA.
- Recruitment of qualified Teachers.
- Constructions of Roads and Drainage
- Empowerment of Youth in Ogori-Magongo

4.1.0 **Lasisi Sheidu-Secretary (Okehi LGA)**, requested government to upgrade the Science Secondary Schools in the state to support the newly established University of Science.

4.1.1 **Akpati Sylvester-HOD, BPRS (Adavi)**, made the following observations and advised Government to address the issues;

- Absence of Traditional Rulers at the Stakeholders Town-hall Meeting; Government should reach out to them early during subsequent meeting.
- Decentralizing the Stakeholders Town-hall Meeting to other Local Governments Areas within Kogi Central Senatorial District.
- Proper management and disposal of waste should be taken serious in order to prevent outbreak of diseases.

4.1.2 **Abaniwo Nathaniel-Rep, Civil Society Organization**, commended Government for taking Governance to the Grassroots by initiating the Stakeholders Town-hall Meeting. He also advised government to endeavor to always initiate lasting project which might serve as a legacy project.

4.1.3 **Comrade William A. Olotu-Media Aide to Chief Whip (Okehi LGA)**, appealed to Government to ensure that issues discussed during the Stakeholders Meeting were implemented. He continued that Civil Servants' Salary should also be prioritized while the Fire Service be rehabilitated and adequately

equipped to fight any fire outbreak, saying the State was very vulnerable to fire disasters.

4.1.4 Mr. Maku O-Accountant (Okehi LGA), advised Government to concentrate on the following;

- Youth and Women Development, because they remained the back bones of every community.
- Provision of security for farmers to carry out farming activities without fear of attack from herdsmen.
- Rehabilitation of Okene/Ihima and Ayere roads.

4.1.5 Munirat Ibrahim-Relief Focal (Adavi), commended government and sought its support for the women empowerment.

4.1.6 Mrs. Salami Alice-CDO (Adavi), pleaded for Government assistance in fighting the menace of gully erosion in Adavi LGA.

4.1.7 Adeyemi Andrew-Kogi State Internal revenue service (KGIRS), advised citizens to pay their taxes for the development of the state.

4.1.8 Emmanuel Puke-HOD, Budget and Planning (Ogori-Magongo), advised Government to rehabilitate the bad road network in Ageva and Ogori. He called on Government to prioritize the Infrastructural development and payment of Workers Salary.

4.1.9 Sheik Adai Mamman-Kogi State Auditor, NLC (Okene LGA) commended the State Government on the success of the Stakeholders Town-hall Meeting and asked for attention in the following areas;

- Prompt payment of LGA Workers Salary.
- Construction of Pedestrian bridge at FCE Okene.
- Involvement of traditional rulers during Stakeholders Meeting by creating proper awareness and sending frequent reminders. He expressed concern that, several traditional rulers attended last year's meeting but were absent this year.

5.0.0 RESPONSE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF FINANCE, BUDGET AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

5.0.1 The Hon. Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Asiwaju Mukadam Ashiru Idris, thanked the participants for their inputs and constructive criticisms, which he said, had added significant value to the process. He said Government had listened carefully to the needs of the people, saying all inputs would be properly documented in the State Development Plan, to be implemented gradually through the annual Budget.

5.0.2 On mitigating the effect of COVID-19, he said Government had procured 9200 bags of Fertilizer to be distributed free of charge to genuine farmers. In addition, he said, Government had 100-No tractors to be distributed to all Local Government Areas for farming activities.

5.0.3 On the Herdsmen-Farmers conflict, the Commissioner informed the meeting that, Government was in the process of creating a new security outfit to manage conflict and to ensure farmers resume farming activities without fear.

5.0.4 On tackling the menace of Gully Erosion, the Commissioner requested that Camera Snapshot and proper description of erosion sites should be forwarded to his office for necessary action.

5.0.5 On the construction of pedestrian bridge at FCE Okene, he Promised to discuss the issue with His Excellency.

5.0.6 On the upgrading of science schools, the Commissioner informed the meeting that, Government had already set aside funds for the purpose.

5.0.7 On the Water Supply projects, he said Government was seriously working on it and that, approval was being awaited, for commissioning.

5.0.8 On Waste management and control, he advised the people to commit to clean environment and proper waste management, saying there was no way Government alone could do it. He decried the attitude of indiscriminate dumping of waste.

5.0.9 The Hon. Commissioner promised to send invitation early to traditional rulers next year in order to have their inputs in the Budget process, saying the

Stakeholders Townhall Meeting coincided with many people-oriented commissioning such as fertilizer and tractors, which could have accounted for the none presence of the invited traditional rulers.

5.1.0 In conclusion, he advised citizens to perform their civic responsibility in order to help government carry out its development agenda.

6.0.0 CLOSING REMARKS

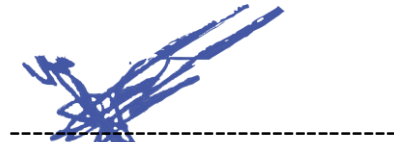
6.0.1 Permanent Secretary, Mr. Jimoh Muhammed thanked His Excellency, Alh. Yahaya Bello, the Executive Governor of Kogi State, the Hon. Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Mukadam Asiwaju Asiru Idris for creating the enabling environment for the engagement and the stakeholders for their frank contributions, assuring them of government commitment to serving the people with the best of its ability.

7.0.0 CLOSING PRAYERS

7.0.1 The meeting rose at 2.25pm



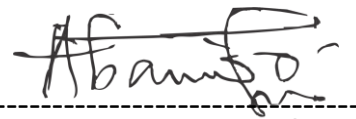
Mukadam Asiwaju Asiru Idris
Commissioner of Finance Budget
and Economic Planning



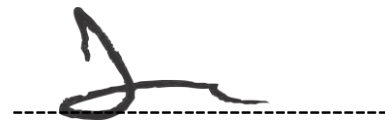
Obiyo Ateiza Aliyu
President-General
(EYC)



Mr. Olajide Samuel
Director Budget (MFBEP)



Obaniwo C Nathaniel
CSO
Executive Director
(RECAN)



Sheik Adai Mamman
Kogi State Auditor, NLC
Okene LGA