

KOGI STATE MINISTRY OF BUDGET AND PLANNING. LOKOJA, KOGI STATE.

**MINUTES OF STAKEHOLDERS TOWNHALL MEETING ON YEAR 2020 BUDGET
HELD ON 2ND/10/2019 AT KAFAS MULTIPURPOSES EVENT CENTRE, PHASE II,
LOKOJA, KOGI STATE**

PREAMBLE

Stakeholders Town Hall meeting on Budget commenced, for the first time, last year, with the objective of deepening citizens' participation in the budgeting process. The Ministry of Budget and Planning had acted on many of the suggestions at the last year's meeting aimed at improving the credibility of the Budget such as decentralizing the meeting, publishing the Budget Call Circular on the State official website to enable the citizens take timely steps to make their inputs into the Budget etc.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

This year's meeting commenced at 11.40 am with Christian prayer by Executive Secretary, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the Muslim prayer by the Ag. GM of Kogi State Waste Management Board

The Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Hon. Paul Maiwada, welcomed stakeholders to the meeting. He informed them that, most of the suggestions made during last year's stakeholders engagement had been implemented and also assured them of the Ministry's resolve to continue to implement recommendations and inputs of the people.

In his keynote address, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Oloruntoba Kehinde, expressed appreciation to the stakeholders for participating at the meeting and for the opportunity to have a robust discussion on the year 2020 Budget. He enjoined them to see budget as a tool for development.

In her paper, the State Project Coordinator (Search for Common Ground International), Mrs. Gift Omoniwa, acknowledged the presence of his Excellency ably represented by the Commissioner for Budget and Planning and commended him for acting upon the call for the Ministry to make the Budget more accessible to the ordinary citizens. In conclusion, she suggested improvement in the following key areas:

*Budget implementation

*Budget feedback-there should be milestones at each step of the budget process.

*Participatory budgeting-involving the local government areas in the budget process.

*Timeliness-i.e. early commencement of the budgeting process.

*Budget review-this involves periodic evaluation of the budget, either monthly or quarterly.

The second paper was presented by Mr. E.O. Bayode. He said budgeting was one of the most important government activity, saying it involved different stages such as formulation, approval, execution and monitoring. He underlined the importance of stakeholders' engagement in the budget process and likens it, particularly the ordinary people, to a business venture who, though may not be directly involved in the day to day running of the business but are affected by the decisions and actions taken. In conclusion, he commended the State Government for adopting the stakeholders engagement option to ensure inclusive budget for the state.

COMMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A participant from the Ministry of Transport appealed to the Ministry of Budget and Planning that stakeholders' engagement should take place much earlier, particularly at the time Call Circulars were issued, to ensure meaningful participation of the people in the Budget, saying a situation in which the stakeholders' hardly had enough time to make informed inputs was not good enough. Another participant, Deaconess Roseline.o. Alabi, suggested that a Technical Advisory Committee be set up before the commencement of the budget process.

In his contribution, one of the representatives of CSOs, Mr. Okwutepa Aminu, from (LYDET-Convener of Kogi Youth) advocated for more synergy between the Ministry and Civil Society Organizations and observed that the allocation to Ministry of Youth and Sports was small.

Also, a participant, Mrs. Hellen Henry from Improve Achozi Foundation (IAF), observed that budgetary allocations to some key MDAs were small and suggested that a committee be set up to track the performance of the approved budgetary allocations in these MDAs.

Mr. Hamza Aliyu, from (Initiative for Grassroots Advancement) commended the Ministry for developing the Medium Term Expenditure Framework(MTEF) for 2019 Budget and advised that the MTEF for 2020 Budget should be developed too. He further suggested that the Ministry of Finance should have done a review of the 2019 budget as a basis for the stakeholders' meeting.

Mr. Ojochenemi Amadi (Foundation for Enhancement and Promotion of Family Life) commended the Ministry for its noticeable efforts at improving the budgeting process, saying the first step was to have a credible budget document that involved a participatory process.

A participant from the High Court advised the State to improve on the percentage of budget implementation, saying the essence of the stakeholders meeting would have been lost if funds were not released to implement the approved budget. He told the meeting that, since Budget was law, relevant sanctions should be applied for not implementing any aspect of the budget.

In their responses, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Oloruntoba Kehinde and Mr. E.O. Bayode explained the processes and technicalities in the budgeting process, which involved allocation of scarce resources, saying until the Draft budget had been considered and approved by the State House of Assembly, amendments were still possible to accommodate the needs of the communities. Commissioner Kehinde Toba said further that the MTEF and MTSS (medium term sector strategy) had been duly prepared and could be accessed on the Ministry's official website. The Administrator of Koton-Karfe Local Government, Hon. Mohammed Tanko Musa expressed appreciation to the representatives of the Judiciary for drawing attention to the implication of non implementation of the approved Budget.

The Hon. Commissioner for Budget and Planning advised the stakeholders to submit their inputs to the relevant MDAs, for capturing in the Budget Proposals

CLOSING REMARKS

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Planning, Mr. P.O. Stephens, who gave the vote of thanks, commended the participants for the interactive nature of the meeting, saying the essence of the meeting had been largely achieved. He said the Ministry was open to advice and suggestion that would improve the quality of the budget, for the overall good of the people.

The meeting closed at 1:30PM after the Muslim and Christian prayers.

 02/10/19

HON. P.Z MAIWADA

COMMISSIONER OF BUDGET

AND PLANNING

(CHAIRMAN)


 2/10/19

MRS GIFT OMONIWA

SEARCH FOR COMMON

GROUND

(REP.CSO)

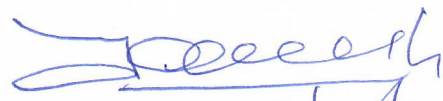
 02/10/19

HAMZA ALIYU

INITIATIVE FOR GRASSROOT

ADVANCEMENT

(REP.CSO)

 2/10/19

SANNI H.M

AG.DIRECTOR BUDGET

(SECRETARY)