

**MINUTES OF STAKEHOLDERS TOWNHALL ENGAGEMENT ON YEAR 2021 BUDGET
ORGANISED BY MINISTRY OF FINANCE, BUDGET AND ECONOMIC PLANNING,
LOKOJA, KOGI STATE, HELD ON 15TH, OCTOBER, 2020 AT DR ADO IBRAHIM'S
MAIN AUDITORIUM, KOGI STATE UNIVERSITY (KSU), ANYIGBA, KOGI STATE.**

1.0.0 PREAMBLE

1.0.1 Stakeholders Townhall Meeting continued after the successes recorded from preceding meetings in the last two years with main objectives of ensuring accountability and inclusiveness in the Budgeting process. The ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning had acted on many of the suggestions from the preceding Meetings. Key among the suggestion was the decentralization of the meeting to the three senatorial zones of the State, which is why the year 2021 Budget Stakeholders Town hall Meeting took place in Anyigba, Kogi East Senatorial District.

2.0.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

2.0.1 The meeting commenced at 11:34AM with Prayers by Mr. Ekpa M. Joseph (MOW) and Mr. Shamsudeen Abdulazeez (MFBEP).

3.0.0 OPENING REMARKS

3.0.1 The Hon. **Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Mukadam Asiwaju Ashiru Idris**, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Alh. Jimoh A. Muhammed, welcomed participants to the meeting and emphasized the importance of creating a platform where stakeholders would discuss and submit their needs for inclusion into the State Budget. He informed the meeting that, His Excellency, Alh. Yahaya Bello, gave a standing directive for this meeting to be made a critical part of the annual budgeting process. He, therefore, hinted that, the people would always be consulted in key government activities and their priorities would be factored into policies, programs and projects. By this, he said, government priorities would be aligned with people's priorities in the State Development Plan, to be implemented gradually through the annual Budget within the limit of the available resources. He mentioned the achievements of the ongoing reform of the budget process, which included making key fiscal documents publicly available on the state official website such as the Approved Budget, Revised Budget, Citizens Budget (in English, Yoruba, Epira and Igala), Audited Financial

Statements, MTEF, MTSS for 9 pilot MDAs and quarterly Budget performance reports.

3.0.2 The Commissioner said, the State revenue had been 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, the exchange rate, projected at N305/\$ rose to N360/\$. He said 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.

3.0.3. He continued that, in revising the 2020 Approved Budget, Overhead cost was cut down, the earlier planned recruitment exercise was suspended, admitted only critical pro-poor capital projects while provisions were made for the completion of ongoing projects and maintenance of existing ones. He said tax reliefs were granted to vulnerable businesses as well as increased allocation for the health sector, to cater for Personal Protective Equipment, Medical allowances and health insurance. He said provisions 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 continue in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

3.0.4 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 Revised Budget was done in line with set guidelines. He said the representatives of the big spending MDAs were part of the State team on this engagement exercise, to answer stakeholders' questions on key Government projects/ programs and other related issues.

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 and assured them of

continued review of Government developmental agenda in order to improve the quality of life of the people.

3.0.6 Mr E O Bayode, the SFTAS Coordinator (World Bank Assisted), who spoke on the benefits of stakeholders' engagement in the budgeting processing, defined Budget as the process whereby decision-makers allocate scarce resources to fund vital public services and facilities. According to him, stakeholders' engagement provided a credible means of gathering information and feedback to guide the decisions of government. He said, the information gathered from stakeholders' engagement would enable the government to prove to the citizens that the decisions that were made in the budgeting process were intended to meet the desires, needs and priorities of the people; He maintained that, 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 posited that, consistent engaging the citizens would help the government to maintain credibility over time; Collecting ideas and inputs from stakeholders across all areas would engender peace and stability in governance occasioned by less agitations from the citizenry and finally Stakeholders involvement in the budget process engendered peoples' ownership of the budget. He appreciated His Excellency for the laudable initiative which, if sustained, had the ingredient to promotes openness, transparency and accountability.

4.0.0 REMARKS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.0.1 The Onu of Ankpa, Alhaji Abdulmalik Umar, welcomed participants and appreciated Government for the opportunity to gather in the interest of Kogi State. He praised Governor Alhaji Yahaya Bello for instituting Transparency and Accountability in Government. He pleaded with Government to ensure that contributions by stakeholders were carefully considered and implemented, saying as stakeholders in the budget process, we were now collectively responsible for the success or otherwise of the Budget. The Onu Ankpa called attention to be paid to the following;

- **Maintenance of Government Facilities;** Citizens should be made to adopt maintenance culture; this would improve the way and manner existing and new Government structures were utilized.

- **Rehabilitation of Ankpa General Hospital;** The Hospital is dilapidated and requires Government renovation work, as well as Drug supply, Recruitment of qualified Doctors and Medical Personnel.
- **Project Light-up Kogi-East;** The project should extend to all the rural areas in Kogi East.
- **Provision of Tractors;** This is to facilitate the clearing of Arable lands for farming.
- **Road Construction;** This involves the rehabilitation of roads in Ankpa township and construction of new ones in rural areas to facilitate easy movement of farm produce to urban area.

4.0.2 **Mrs Okwute Patricia Eleojo-Accountant (Ibaji LGA)**, thanked the State Government for the opportunity to put forward request from her area. She called for only implementable items to be captured in the Budget, saying education and road maintenance and construction should be prioritized.

4.0.3 **Mr. Sebastian Shaibu-Director, PHC, Bassa LGA**, commended the Light-up Kogi -East Project and noted that availability of power supply would empower the people and stimulate the economy. He therefore suggested the following priority areas:

- **To extend the light project beyond Anyigba to other part of Igala land including Olamaboro LGA**
- **To prioritize Road construction in Kogi-East**
- **To strengthen Project Monitoring**

4.0.4 **Mr. Ibrahim Omede-HOD, WORKS, Bassa LGA**, appealed to Government to provide the following in Kogi East;

- **Fire-fighting Equipment**
- **Portable Drinking Water**

4.0.5 **Mr. Momoh I. Monday-Planning Officer of Omala LGA**, commended Government effort in **Lighting up Kogi East** and also the on-going construction of **Ankpa-Omala-Bagana Road**. He called attention to be paid to the following:

- **light up of Omala LGA, as part of light up Kogi East program, saying the area had not had electricity in 5 years**

- **Rehabilitation of Abejukolo-Ankpa Road, saying the road was a dead trap.**

4.0.6 Mr. Ali Echu-HOD, Budget of Idah LGA, commended the State Government and called on Government to ensure agric. inputs were delivered to the farmers at the right time, given the fact that farming was a seasonal activity.

4.0.7 Mr. Obaniwo Nathaniel- Representative CSOs, also commended the facilitators of the Stakeholders Meeting but called for attention to be paid to the following:

- **Oguma-Sheria Road (Bassa LGA)**
- **Resuscitation of abandoned Portable Water Supply Projects in Bassa LGA**
- **Timely Provision of Agricultural equipment's and Inputs like Tractors, Fertilizers, Pesticides etc. to Farmers in Bassa LGA**
- **Operation Light-up Kogi East should be extended to Bassa LGA**
- **The use of specific and accurate Farmers Data to reach out to genuine Farmers.**

4.0.8 Mr. Solomon D Akuh-HOD, BPRS Igala-Mela LGA drew attention to following priority areas:

- **Erosion Menace, which he said was affecting both existing and new roads, saying urgent action was needed to remedy the situation.**
- **Youth restiveness; He called for relevant youth programs to be initiated to positively engaged the youths, especially youths in Agriculture.**

4.0.9 Mr. Mohammed Bako Shehu-HOD Budget, Bassa LGA, said the major problem in the Local Government was the non-payment of full salaries to workers. He called for emergency to be declared on workers' salaries. He pleaded with Government to improve on the 40% Salary currently being paid to Local Government workers.

4.1.0 Mr Isaiah M Adaji-HOD, EDUCATION, Bassa LGA, stated that Bassa LGA presented request for the following Educational Materials;

- **Textbooks for both Secondary and Primary Schools**
- **Science Laboratory Equipment's**
- **Computers**
- **Teaching Aids**

- Sport Equipment's

5.0.0 RESPONSE BY COMMISSIONER OF FINANCE, BUDGET AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

5.0.1 The Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning represented by the Permanent Secretary, Alh. Jimoh A. Muhammed, expressed appreciation to the stakeholders, particularly the Royal fathers, representatives of Local Governments, CSOs. He said the era of preparing bogus unachievable Budget was over, calling on people to ensure that only priority projects were submitted, as the state revenue had dwindled considerably. He said Budget, being an expected income and expenditure would be driven largely by how much the expected revenues were realized.

5.0.2 On Agriculture, he said many initiatives were being undertaken by Government such as the launching of 100 Tractors to be mobilized to all Local Government Areas, procurement of 9200 tons of Fertilizer etc. He said His Excellency, Alh. Yahaya Bello, the Executive Governor of Kogi State, was deeply interested in ensuring that farms inputs, particularly fertilizers got to the real farmers.

5.0.3 On projects Light up Kogi East and the concerns about ensuring that it covered every part of the Senatorial District, he emphasized that no part of Kogi East would be left in darkness. He said the prevailing challenge was that of resources over the effects of COVID-19 but promised the State Government would always prioritize the needs of the people.

5.0.4 He informed the meeting that, key among Government priorities in 2021 would be road construction, saying Oguma-Sheria road was on Government priority list. He said Government was working on improving the IGR to enable it funds some of these priority projects.

5.0.5 On Fire Service, the Commissioner said the State was treating the matter with every sense of urgency, following the recent unfortunate Felele petrol Tanker fire incident. He said efforts were underway at strengthening the Firefighting capacity of the State through the procurement of Firefighting equipment.

5.0.6 The Commissioner said provision of potable water in Kogi East would also be prioritized in view of its preeminence in driving development.

5.0.7 On Health Care, he said more emphasis would be given to Secondary Health institutions, as quite a lot of investments had been made on Primary Health care.

5.0.8 On the issue of Erosion ravaging roads, the Commissioner said Government was not unaware of the menace. He said an Agency of Government, NEWMAP, supported by the World Bank was addressing the issues of erosion, advising the people to forward erosion issues to NEWMAP, with photographs and site descriptions, for necessary interventions.

5.0.9 On Youth restiveness, he said a wide-ranging youth related packages were being prepared to support youth development. Such, he said, include MSMSEs, agriculture, etc.

5.1.0 The Commissioner sympathized with Local Government Workers on the issue of 40% Salary and agreed that it had been a recurring issue in the 3 Senatorial Districts, saying the message would be delivered to the appropriate authority

6.0.0 CLOSING REMARKS/ VOTE OF THANKS

6.0.1 **Mr. Sanni H M-The Director International Cooperation (MFBEP)**, expressed appreciation to Government and other stakeholders for making governance more engaging and participatory. He said it was unfair that, Budget as a document aimed at serving the people, would be devoid of people inputs. According to him, the people who prepared the Budget were less than 1% of the population, saying the assumed priorities of the people might actually not be the desired priorities of the people. He said stakeholders' engagement exercise was consistent with best practices, calling on the people to show more interest in it in order to fully institutionalize the practice and achieve the overall objectives of improving the credibility of the budget. He advised the people to ensure that, their requests were specific in order to facilitate inclusion in the Budget, as a general request such as water or road without specifying the location would be very difficult to be captured in the Budget. He thanked everyone including His Excellency, the Executive Governor, the Hon. Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, the Guest lecturer, the State Director of Budget and his team, the Vice Chancellor of Kogi State University and her team, the Royal fathers, the representatives of the Local Government in the Senatorial District, the CSOs etc. for their frank and robust participation and contributions.

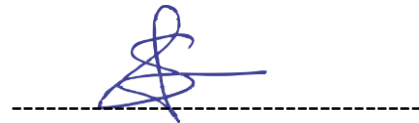
7.0.0 CLOSING

7.0.1 The Meeting came to an end at 1:35PM after prayers by Mrs. Shaibu Mercy (MOEST) and Mr. Shamsudeen Abdulazeez (MFBEP)

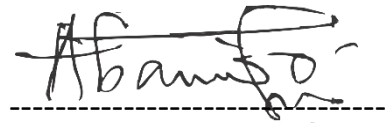


Mukadam Asiwaju Asiru Idris

Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning.



Mohammed Bako Shehu
HOD(Budget)
Bassa LGA



Obaniwo C Nathaniel
CSO
Executive Director
(RECAN)



HRH. Alh. Abdulmalik Umar
Onu of Ankpa



OJI Odoma Paul
Olamaboro LGA



Mr. Olajide Samuel
Director Budget
MFBEP