

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

**MINUTES OF STAKEHOLDERS TOWNHALL MEETING ON YEAR 2020 BUDGET
HELD ON 6TH /11/2019 AT THE UNDERGRADUATE AUDITORIUM, FCE.OKENE,
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 11.25 am with a prayer by one of the Royal Fathers, HRH Siyaka A Momoh.

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 brief Presentation at the meeting, the Coordinator of State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) for Kogi State and former Director of Macro Planning in the Ministry of Budget and Planning, Mr. E.O. Bayode, highlighted the importance of stakeholders' engagement in budget formulation. He explained that the usual practice had been that, Budget formulation and execution was done top – down but with the advent of participatory budgeting, it was now done bottom – up, underlining the involvement of key stakeholders in the process. According to him, without proper engagement of the stakeholders, it would be impossible to elicit the support and ownership of the people for the budget, which would affect the quality, percentage and timeliness of its implementation. He further emphasized that a

participatory budgeting process engenders greater transparency and accountability for the use of resources, improves trust between people and government, strengthen information gathering and feedback, improve governance system including ensuring peace and stability in the system. He concluded his presentation by commending the government for this laudable initiative which he said was consistent with best budgeting practices.

COMMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In his contribution, the President General of Ebira Youth Congress (EYC), Comrade Baba Abdulrazak welcome stakeholders to the meeting. He gave a brief history of the Organization and explained that it had always canvass support for good governance and justice. Furthermore, he said budget was a critical process of governance and therefore the Ebira Youth Congress was delighted to be part of the process. He articulated the request of the people thus;

1. Water: He said water had been a major issue in Ebira land despite the fact that it was surrounded by two major bodies of water. He expressed concern that what was needed was deliberate human efforts to see to the actualization of potable water across Ebiraland.

2. Rural Feeder Roads: The President General informed the stakeholders, that Ebiraland was essentially Agrarian. He decried a situation in which quality man-hours were wasted in trying to transport their produce to the market.

3. Education: The youth leader said the number of schools in Ebiraland were too few and called for the establishment of quality schools in order to curb social vices such as cultism, thug activities, armed robbery, etc.

4. Sports and Recreational Facilities: He also called for the creation of recreational facility such as stadium and renovate/upgrade the existing ones

CONTRIBUTION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OHINOYI OF EBIRA, HIS ROYAL MAJESTY ADO IBRAHIM

His Royal Highness Alhaji Hamza Ajimogo, the Taru Ozidu Aniku, who represented the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland, His Royal Majesty, Alh. Ado Ibrahim, conveyed the special appreciation of the Ohinoyi to the meeting. He, however, expressed concern on the

low turnout. He called on his subjects to take Budget issues seriously because it had direct impact on the quality of life. According to the Royal father planning was key to the welfare of the people, which was what the budget was all about.

Alhaji Hamza thanked the State Government for this new initiative of consultation with the people through this meeting in the Central Senatorial zone, saying he agreed totally with request put forward by the President General of Ebira Youth Congress. He also added that Government should concentrate more on the following areas;

1. Health: He said Government had invested on health care but more needed to be done by building and equipping hospitals and primary health care centers.

2. Agriculture: Government should provide the necessary agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, improved seedling, herbicides, access to finance etc.

In his response, the Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Hon. P.Z Maiwada said Government was aware of the fact that, water was a critical area of need in Ebira land and Government. Based on this, Government had signed an MOU to provide portable water to the Central Senatorial Zone from Osara Dam, saying the project would be delivered by 2020. He said Government was constructing rural feeder roads to open up rural areas for improved socio-economic activities in the area.

The Commissioner assured the community of the commitment of the State Government to strengthen the provision of health care in the area, saying hospitals were being renovated and medical doctors were being recruited to the delivery of health care to the people. On education, the Commissioner explained that new schools were being constructed and old ones renovated while qualified teachers were being recruited to improve the quality of education in the area. He concluded by assuring farmers of a bumper harvest in the coming years because Government's plan to supply fertilizer all year round.

In his contribution, HRH Siyaka. A. Momoh said that the community should always be involved in Budget implementation in the same manner that Government was involving them in the formulation process. He suggested that the Ministry should constitute a committee, comprising the community to supervise and monitor projects. He also advised that Government should prioritize projects so that only the ones that have direct bearing on the community should be implemented. He

concluded by advocating for Government support in the fight against corruption which can only be won by investing in education.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Planning, Mr. P.O Stephen said that though the Ministry was saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and supervising projects, the community in which the project was sited should own it, saying these projects should not just be seen as Government projects but as community projects.

In response to earlier comments, the President General of Ebira Youth Congress, Comrade Baba Rasak gave an assurance that the congress would synergize with the Traditional Council and pledged to contribute to the development of the community. Equally, one of the Royal Fathers, HRH Sunday Lawal pleaded on behalf of the pensioners in the community, saying Government should address take concrete steps to address the issue of Local Government pensioners, so as to alleviate the suffering in the community

The Director of Budget, Sanni H.M, informed the meeting that representatives of key big spending Ministries were invited to be part of this meeting, to enable them throw light on the activities of their Ministries as might be required by the communities. He gave the list of the affected MDAs as Ministry of Works, Ministry of Education, Ministry of health, Ministry of Agric., Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Rural Development. He advised the communities to relate with relevant MDAs and submit their requirement for inclusion in the annual Budget proposals. He further advised the traditional rulers to encourage the youths in the communities to engage in productive ventures.

In his contribution, Mr. Usman Mohammed Obaje, representing the Ministry of Rural Development, informed the meeting that, all projects sited in the communities had the active participation and support of the community members. He observed that the main problem was that communities were not being carried along by their representatives and promised to do more in the future to ensure better inclusion of community members.

The immediate past President General of Ebira Youth Congress, Alh. Sheik Mamman, expressed appreciation to Government for providing an enabling environment for the people to contribute to the Budget process, describing it as a worthy innovation and prayed it would be sustained. He also commended the

Ministry of Budget and Planning, for driving the process. He appealed to the State government to pay serious attention to what he called professionalization of begging in the community. He said it was deeply disturbing that able bodied people would take to begging for livelihood, saying if the situation was not checked by Government, it had the capacity to further worsen the already bad socio-economic situation of the people. He advised the establishment of cottage industry- especially the traditional weaving industry and skill acquisition in the Annual Budget to cater for such categories of people.

A representative from Ogori-Magongo LGA, Mr. Damisa James Ojo, appealed to Government not centralize projects in the Central Senatorial District, due to the tendency to marginalize weaker section of the zone. He advocated for projects to be localized, to have spread that would benefit every section.

A participant, Alhaji Sule Yunusa from the Ohinoyi's palace expressed dismay on the scanty number of participant's. He observed that critical stakeholders who should have been present would prefer to be present at political rallies. He appealed to the President of Ebira Youth Congress, to ensure greater mobilization of critical stakeholders in subsequent engagements.

Mr. Aiyesimi John Omasayin representing the Ministry of Water Resources stated that the Ministry of Water Resources in conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs was working on a project to provide portable drinking water to communities in the Central Senatorial Zone.

A representative of the Ministry of Health, Mr. Aiyedogbon Johnson, informed the meeting that Government had a lot of programmes to cater for the health needs of the communities, saying one of which was the recruitment of health personnel. On the issues of social challenges like the spate of mad persons on the streets, Mr. Johnson stated that plans were in the pipeline to establish a psychiatric department to help mitigate the situation.

In her brief comment, the representative of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Mrs. Shaibu Mercy.A. stated that most of the issues discussed on Education had already been captured in the year 2020 Budget.

CLOSING REMARKS

In his vote of thanks, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Planning, Mr. P.O Stephen, on behalf of the Ministry of Budget and Planning, expressed appreciation to Ebira Traditional Council for sending high powered representatives from the Ohinoyi's palace. He thanked the Guest Speaker, representatives from MDA's, Members of the press and all participants. He promised that next year's meetings would be better organized that would ensure the maximum realization of the intended objectives. The meeting closed at 1:29PM with a prayer by a representative of the Ministry of Works and Urban Development, Mr.Ekpa .M. Joseph



HON. P.Z MAIWADA

*Commissioner for Budget
and Planning*

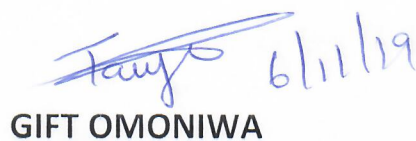
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HAMZA ALIYU

Initiative for Grassroots Advancement

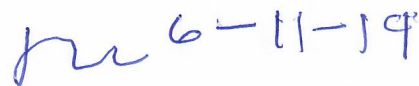
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GIFT OMONIWA

search for common ground

(REP. CSO)



ALH. SHEIK MAMMAN

(REP OF COMMUNITY)



SANNI H.M

Ag. Director Budget

(SECRETARY)