



POST COVID-19: HOW TO AVOID  
RECESSION ... **PROF MAY NWOYE**



**THE FALL OF MAGU**

# NEWS PLATFORM

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## How Buhari Saved NDDC from Shutdown... IMC

- .... Current Crises tied to 2023 Campaign Funding
- .... Oshiomhole, Omo Agege, Akpabio Fight for Supremacy
- .... Amaechi, Dogara, Saraki, Indicted.





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# EDITORIAL NOTE



A lot has been happening under this Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari that has made many Nigerians to wonder if the President is actually in charge of his Administration. We have had many cases of government officials fighting each other in the Media, or the National Assembly fighting Ministers, even government Agencies fighting supposedly supervising Ministers among other, these are issues that would have been avoided if the President is in charge.

First complaint from the the wife of the President Aisha Buhari who complained recently that her security details had been withdrawn from her, calling for their reinstatement. This is an issue she would have reported to her husband, the President and the matter would have been resolved amicably before becoming a public issue.

There is this crisis between the Minister of State for Labour Festus Keyamu and the National Assembly over the control of the 774,000 Special Works Programme of the Federal Government. The President needed to have cleared the air before it got out of hand.

Not forgetting the raging war between the Minister of Labour Dr Chris Ngige and the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF). After the sacking of the former Management of the NSITF by the Minister the House of Representatives had to order that they resumed back to work. These are executive bodies and the Executive have the power to hire and fire and not the legislature.

The same thing is happening in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDCC) where the Executive is



**Publisher / Editor In Chief**

carrying out a forensic audit and the National Assembly is also carrying out its probe at the same time. Both the Minister of the Niger Delta Godswill Akpabio and the National Assembly are fighting each other and using the Media to reveal many fraud allegations against each other, some are real while many are fake allegations.

Then the Magu's case. The embarrassment created by the probe of the Chairman of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Ibrahim Magu has questioned the integrity and credibility of the government's anti corruption fight. EFCC is the arrowhead of the government's anti corruption fight. All these and many others would have been avoided if the President had taken charge of the Administration.

Another worrisome issue facing the country at the moment is the spate of insecurity across the country. Not just the happenings in the North East where Boko

Haram has continued to terrorise the people or the North West where Bandits continue to kill the people or the North Central and other parts of the country where herdsmen continue to kill, rape and maim.

This is talking about kidnappings and killings of travelers in and around Kogi state. This is worrisome because Kogi state is the gateway to the Northern parts of the country from the South. It is bounded by nine states namely Edo, Ekiti, Ondo, Enugu, Osun, Benue, Niger, Nasarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. RECENTLY about 108 passengers inside GUO Luxury bus were kidnapped and taking to the bush between Abaji and Lokoja. It is still not clear as at the time of writing this report if they have been rescued.

Less than one week after the kidnap of the luxury bus passengers, the wife and children of the former Speaker of the Edo state House of Assembly Zakawani Garba were kidnapped on their way to Auch for the burial of the former Speaker.

We call on the Authorities concerned to do something to save lives and properties of all Nigerians as the security of lives and properties are primary functions of government anywhere in the world.

As the world and the Nation battles COVID 19 Pandemic, there should be serious discussions on how to survive the post COVID 19 scourge both individually and the country at large. There has been talks of diversifying the Economy. One of the major targets of diversification is Agriculture. A situation where farmers cannot go to their farms because of the farmers/herders clash will not augur well for the country.





*- DR GODWIN MADUKA*





# 2021: WHY I WANT TO BE ANAMBRA GOVERNOR

**D**r. Godwin Maduka is a renowned medical doctor with a Specialty in Anesthesiology. He is the founder of the Las Vegas Pain Institute and Medical Centre in the United States, where he has received accolades for his expansive infrastructural and research work in medical science. Dr. Maduka is also an unrepentant philanthropist whose connection to the homeland is not lost. This has made him stretch personal resources to contribute to and develop his town, Umuchukwu, his state, Anambra State, and his Nation, Nigeria, in order to create a conducive landscape for generations. On the occasion of his birthday, Dr. Maduka engaged the media as he reflects on his journey and his newfound resoluteness on governance.

**Can you give us insight into your background, what growing up was like?**

I was born in 1959, before the civil war, I was a little boy during the war and it went a long way to shape me. If you survived the war, you will realize that fear, death, and uncertainty are no longer your enemies because we came face to face with them. After the war in 1970, I started primary one, I was around 11 years old, and so you can see that the civil war robbed part of my childhood. We lived in the village so there were no social amenities; we grew up using the lantern to see and read. The saying that "a responsible child makes a responsible adult" is true, you can not allow a child to play too long, if you do, it will get ingrained in his head, and he will never know how to take responsibility. We were taught how to take responsibilities; we had to get firewood, we fetched water, went to the farm before and after school. We read with lantern and sometimes we hunted for bush meat, and we were living with snakes and scorpions. The survival rate was low, so you saw young people dying of treatable ailments. We didn't have modern medication and 75% of adults in my community at that time were native doctors, including my father. We trekked to school because my town didn't have a

secondary school, except for a primary school, which I attended in my town. I continued with my secondary education at Nawfia Comprehensive School, which was too far and as a result, I had to come back to All Saints Grammar School, Umunze.

**What would you say are the remarkable things about your upbringing that shaped your personality?**

My father was one of the best native doctors around then, and people may not know that much of the drive to go into medicine, stemmed from watching my father's prowess as a dibia. He never ventured into juju or witchcraft, but he cured malaria, infections, and several kinds of ailments. And these are the things we do today as medical doctors. We give hope to the sick, but the only time we don't give them hope is when we know that the end is near, so we prepare them for their passage with a high level of consideration. I was close to my father, and I watched with keen interest all his ways, methods and realized that empathy was Germaine for humanity. I think that shaped me a lot.

**What is fascinating about your specialty, Pain Management, and how has medicine shaped your thoughts about life generally?**

We have a lot of people who suffer pain in the world today. Personally, as an anesthesiologist; I can relieve pain with surgical procedures, medicine, and by talking to my patients. It is a humane specialty. If you have never been in pain, you will not understand what people in pain go through. No matter how your partner loves you, they can never take away your pain. So that makes the sufferer a lonely person. I am well trained in it, and we are the pioneers of interventional pain management. We own six medical centers in the US, and in Las Vegas alone, I own more facilities in pro-health pain management than any other doctor. We are the largest in Nevada, and in terms of quality, we are still one of the best in the US, as well as the world.

**June 21 is your birthday, if you look back at where you started and now, what comes to your mind?**

Looking back, the journey, the sacrifices, it is amazing how a young village boy that was surrounded by hopelessness could attain this level of success; playing at a global stage. I am thankful and full of gratitude to God, but then I do not think we should rest on our oars, because so much hasn't been done yet. It is not yet Uhuru. I believe so much in the power of hope. I think I work harder now than I worked about 20 years ago, because so many still need to have access to medical care, so many need to receive qualitative education. As an African, a Nigerian in the diaspora, I believe we should triple our efforts to bring our country and continent at par with what is obtainable globally.

**We have witnessed all the works you did and the ones you are still doing in your town, Umuchukwu. What inspired you into philanthropy? How do you intend to extend this gesture to Anambra State?**



I think watching my father a great dibia then healing people and bringing relief to many, must have rubbed off on me. I guess I picked up that humane side of life from him because medicine, whether native or orthodox is primarily a humanitarian job. Most times, my father gave people treatment without charging a dime. Secondly, my father was a philanthropist, I remember he built three houses in our compound, one for us; his immediate family, another for our wares and belongings, and the third for any relative or indigene of my community who visited Umuchukwu but had no house of his own. Another remarkable event that instilled a kind heart in me, was how my brother sold off everything he had in his shop to raise about five thousand Naira, which was the amount I needed to travel to the US at that time. I told God that if my brother gave me all he had, that I will never relent in my act of kindness to humanity. I will always give my all.

**You built the tallest hospital in Africa which you envisioned to equip with state of the art facilities in your town; Umuchukwu. What motivated you to conceptualize that kind of structure for your town?**

I have lived in America for a long time; I have seen and experienced how the developed world functions. As a black man, I am always driven to replicate what I have seen and experienced here in the US. The 17 storey hospital in my home town; Umuchukwu, is beyond a physical structure, it is a functional replication. It is a symbol of hope, the power of possibilities. Just like the statue of liberty in America symbolizes freedom. It is an indication that if we put our minds and commit our resources in the building of our motherland, there is no limit to what we can achieve. All things are possible.

**What is your perception of Nigerian democracy and June 12 and how do you think we can improve our democracy for the good of the greater majority?**

Let me say that our democracy is still nascent and growing. If you compare Nigeria with a country like the US where I reside, you will realize that we are still in infancy; America's democracy is about 300 years old. Therefore, our democratic journey is still a process; there are so many learning curves. I see democracy as the journey of an entrepreneur...a lot of ups and downs, today you are moving forward, the next day you dive. However, it is still not an excuse for underperformance. We can do better. Coming to the June 12 incident, it is one of the potholes in our journey to nationhood. It is imperative that we learn from it and do better going forward. But then, beyond June 12, the Niger Delta issues, the Biafra agitation, the farmer-herder crisis in the middle belt, restructuring, and so on, are all questions begging for answers. With all these agitations, people are saying they are marginalized, we should be able to listen to these voices and summon the courage, and the political will to solve these problems. This will go a long way in helping us build a great nation of our dream.

**We have seen cases where philanthropists fail in leadership positions, is there any connection at all between philanthropy and leadership?**

What we see most times in this clime is what I call political philanthropy; when elections are getting closer, people begin to share rice and garri. I think we sometimes mistake politicians with philanthropists. We should be able to look at the pedigree of some people who parade themselves as philanthropists. For example, in my case, I have been giving back to my people for over 20 years now. It is a passion, it's purely a commitment; I never had it in mind that I was going to be a politician. If in my dream, an angel had appeared to me and told me I will be aspiring to be a governor in my state, I would have doubted the message of the angel. This is because it was never in my plan. If you see an individual distribute rice, share tricycles, and in the next 2-3 years shows interest in any political position, he was never a philanthropist. But then, philanthropy is somehow connected to leadership, in the sense that a good leader must have compassion and a charitable heart. However, leadership goes beyond philanthropy, it is about experience, pedigree, sound education, vision, accountability, good judgment, and integrity.

**Why do you want to contest for the Governorship position in Anambra State?**

Let me tell you something, I have never nursed any political ambition at all in my life. I have always wanted to retire a much fulfilled medical doctor. Something happened to me when I first came to Nigeria from the US, I had started working by then, so when I came to Umuchukwu, things were so bad. It was all about poverty, despair, and underdevelopment. I was so sad about that visit and I promised myself that I won't allow the village where I grew up to remain the same. It was out of "positive anger" that I decided to build a semblance of an American city. So if you go to Umuchukwu today, you'll see that that "anger" has paid off. I'm worried and sad again, not against anybody, but sad about poverty and underdevelopment. I have clarity of vision of the kind of development; I want to bring in Anambra state. Anambra people are very special people, we are like the heart of Igbo land, and when things are not going very well here, there's the possibility that other places in Igbo land will be affected. We need the best man for the job now. To be frank, the next couple

of years won't be so easy in Nigeria, so we need leaders who can think outside the box in their effort to provide solutions. I tell people always that people who approach leadership with that kind of angry disposition are always the best. Prof Dora Akunyili (God bless her soul) lost her sister as a result of fake drugs, and when she was made the DG of NAFDAC, she fought the circulation of fake drugs with such a ferocious determination. I call it "positive anger," the kind of anger that gives you the motivation to go the whole hog, not the one that encourages a person to harm, malign people for selfish reasons. It is not the kind of energy that pushes you towards brigandage or any dastardly acts. It should be a motivation to create new developmental imprints while consolidating and building upon the efforts of your predecessors.

**People believe that instead of contesting for the governorship position in Anambra state, you should be thinking of how to actualize the Igbo presidency project considering the fact that you are a highly successful professional in the diaspora, to them being a Governor will not add anything to your profile rather it will be a minus**

Public service is like community service; no one should be big enough to serve his people. That's why you can see the likes of Okonjo Iweala leave the comfort of her world bank job to come down to Nigeria and help fix the economy. I have seen a director at IMF; a Vice President at African Development Bank, being summoned by the people to serve his community as a traditional ruler, and he obliged. Therefore, I will never be ashamed to serve my people as a governor; I will rather be ashamed if I fail when the responsibility is given to me. Excelling in the job of a governor should be a stepping stone for a higher office. Friedrich Nietzsche said, "...he who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying."

**People complain that you're coming from the diaspora and may not have a full grasp on the terrain, what are you bringing to the table?**

Living in the US has exposed me to global best practices. I know how to manage institutions, human resources, creativity, and innovations; I possess the know-how of wealth creation. In a nutshell, I will bring immense capacity to governance. People shout about living in the diaspora as if it is a crime to do so, but it's not. Living in the diaspora should be an advantage because you have been exposed to how things are done right, and you will like to replicate that in your environment. For instance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala is from the diaspora and she did well as the finance minister. Mr. Peter Obi also came from the diaspora and he did well as a governor. Leadership is not about location, where you have been or not. Leadership and governance have a universal language, if you are doing well, you are doing well, but if you are not doing well, you are not doing well. Nevertheless, somebody could be living in the US and be so connected to his root, and another person may be living in Onitsha and be so alien to his roots.

**People believe that your philanthropy focused more only on your town Umuchukwu, how will you allay the fears that if you become a governor, you will not focus development in your town only?**

Yes, we indeed started from Umuchukwu, but then we have also done so much more beyond my community. We have contributed to a project in Ihite, we have done a road project in Owerri Ezukala and Ogbunka. We have gone as far as Mbano in Imo state and Nneato at Abia to execute projects. In Umunze, we have contributed to a project and in the next couple of years; we'll begin to develop a housing scheme to help reduce the housing deficiencies in that area. We have supported various dioceses both Anglican and Catholic, in Anambra. We shared palliatives to all the 182 communities in Anambra, and all the Bishops; both Anglican and Catholic, during the COVID19 total lockdown in Nigeria. Furthermore, those who have benefited from our healthcare intervention scheme at Annunciation Hospital Enugu are Anambrians across board. Our educational scholarship fund caters to many Nigerians all over the world. If you have been attentive in the course of this interview you will realize I have a global perspective. I am committed to the course of the black man. I always contribute to helping the black race find its place in the world stage.

**What is your opinion about the zoning of Governorship position in Anambra state?**





When there are unanimous agreements by stakeholders, zoning can be a good policy, because it ensures equity and gives all and sundry a sense of belonging, but it doesn't mean competence should be sacrificed on the altar of zoning. I am not just coming out from the angle of people from Anambra South Senatorial Zone, but also on capacity. When you talk about zoning, we are there; if you talk about competence we are there as well.

**What do you consider to be your comparative advantage over other aspirants?**

I am not a trial and error aspirant. I am not coming to learn on the job, I am well prepared and I have a very clear vision of what I want to do in Anambra state. Umuchukwu is a perfect test run of what we want to do on a larger scale in Anambra; it is a progressive experiment. The other day, I was reading an article from someone who came to Umuchukwu to understudy the things we have done. He said that Umuchukwu is simply a replica of the Sustainable Development Goals. What more is governance if not Healthcare, Justice delivery system, Security, Housing, Education, Ease of doing business, and other little but outstanding innovations.

**Political parties sponsor candidates for elections, under which platform do you intend to contest the forthcoming election?**

I am a member of the PDP, but the most important thing now is to drive our message to the people. In a democracy, power resides with the people. Party is just a vehicle through which people get to power. Whatever symbol that your party displays, once the people accept your message, you are good to go.

**As a medical doctor, what prompted you to build a law court in your community?**

Law is the foundation of every society, a building block of every other area of human endeavor. Law is what controls the animalistic nature of man. Without the law, we will be back to the Hobbesian state of nature; it will be man eat man or survival of the fittest. I recall how my people travel as far as Ekwuluobia, Onitsha, and Awka in search of justice. Most times, when the poor and downtrodden calculate the cost implication of getting justice, they will naturally want to leave their fate in the hands of God.

**What is your concept of justice delivery?**

Justice should not be cash and carry; justice should not be delayed, because justice delayed is justice denied. I am an advocate of an independent judiciary because that will give the bench the freedom to deliver justice without interference or external pressure. Justice shouldn't be shaken by the status of the accused or the defendant. It should, in the same way, serve the rich and the poor.

# FIDELITY BANK

## APPOINTS CHIKE-Obi CHAIRMAN

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Fidelity Bank Plc has appointed Mustafa Chike-Obi as its new Chairman. He replaces Ernest Ebi, who has been serving as the bank's Chairman, Board of Directors.

Another member of the bank's board and Independent Non-Executive Director, Seni Adetu has also stepped down. Ebi and Adetu, have successfully completed their tenure in accordance with the Bank's internal governance policy.

Under the Chairmanship of Ebi, the bank recorded significant growth across key financial metrics with both Messrs Ebi and Adetu playing significant roles, complementing management effort in the delivery of these milestones; in service of the long term vision of the Bank. The Bank's market share position has also been materially strengthened over this period.

The Board is also pleased to announce that the retiring Chairman will be succeeded by Mustafa Chike-Obi who is currently the Executive Vice Chairman at Alpha African Advisory. He has over 40 years of experience in investment banking and the financial services sector, working with reputable global investment banking and asset management firms. He provides overall leadership at Alpha African Advisory and has direct oversight over the capital raising division.

Prior to joining Alpha African Advisory, he was the inaugural CEO, Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), a Federal Government backed institution, established to resolve the problem of non-performing loan assets of Nigerian banks after the 2008 global financial crisis. Mr. Chike-Obi was Founding President at Madison Advisors, a financial services advisory and consulting firm in New Jersey, specializing in hedge funds and private equity investment advice. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Lagos (First Class Honors) and an MBA from Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

The outgoing Chairman expressed pride in the results that the Bank achieved during his time as Chairman. 'I feel that the management team has consolidated on our plans to become one of the fastest-growing Banks in the country, strongly



I wish my successor,  
the management team,  
and the entire staff of  
Fidelity Bank the very  
best for continued  
success

rooted in technology only comparable with the best in the world. I am confident that my successor will continue on that path to take the Bank to its next stage of growth and advancement. I wish my successor, the management team, and the entire staff of Fidelity Bank the very best for continued success", he said.

Adetu, the outgoing Independent Non-Executive Director, said, "It has been an honor to be part of the Board over the last few years. Throughout this time, I have been humbled by the commitment and hard work of the Board and Management, and their passion for creating a truly global bank. I am very grateful to them, as I am to Fidelity Bank's many other stakeholders, with whom we have worked to build a long-term, sustainable business".

The Bank has also appointed Mrs. Nneka Onyeali-Ike as its new MD/CEO. The appointment has been approved by the Central bank of Nigeria.



# NNPC Announces Top-Management Level Appointments, Redeployments

**T**he Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has announced new appointments and redeployments in the National Oil Company, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen and reposition NNPC for greater efficiency, transparency and profitability in line with the Next Level Agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

Mr. Adokiye Tombomiyeye, the Group General Manager, Crude Oil Marketing Division (COMD), has been appointed the new Chief Operating Officer (COO), Upstream while Mr. Mohammed Abdulkabir Ahmed, the Managing Director of the Nigerian Gas Marketing Company (NGMC), has been appointed the new Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services, following the retirement of Engr. Farouk Garba Sa'id, last week.

A release by the corporation's Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs Division, Dr. Kennie Obateru, stated that the change witnessed the redeployment of Engr. Adeyemi Adetunji, the Chief Operating Officer, Upstream, to the Ventures & Business

Development Directorate as COO, a position left by Mr. Roland Onoriode Ewubare, who voluntarily retired last week.

The top-level staff movement also affected Sir. Billy Okoye who has been redeployed from the NNPC Downstream Company, NNPC Retail Limited, as Managing Director, to replace Mr. Tombomiyeye as the Group General Manager, Crude Oil Marketing Division; while Mrs. Elizabeth Aliyuda, the General Manager, Sales and Marketing NNPC Retail Limited, takes over from Sir Okoye as Managing Director.

Similarly, Mr. Usman Farouk, Executive Director Asset Management and Technical Services at the NGMC takes over from Mr. Ahmed as Managing Director.

The release also explained that President Buhari has accepted the resignation of Mr. Roland

Ewubare, who was the immediate past Chief Operating Officer, Ventures and New Business Directorate of the National Oil Company while the retirement of the immediate past Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services, Engr. Farouk Garba Sa'id had also received the approval of Mr. President who thanked the two former COOs for their meritorious service to the corporation.

Speaking on the development, Group Managing Director of the Corporation, Mallam Mele Kyari, said the new appointments would enable the corporation live up to the expectation of her shareholders, Nigerians, and give impetus to the ongoing restructuring within the Corporation, which, he said, was in line with the corporate vision of Transparency, Accountability & Performance Excellence (TAPE).

## Ndigbo should be grateful To Buhari --Arthur Eze

**T**he oil magnate, Prince Arthur Eze said Ndigbo should be grateful to president Muhammadu Buhari for what he called the massive provision of economic and infrastructural facilities to the South-East geopolitical zone.

According to him, Igbo benefitted more under his regime more than any other government in the country in the recent time.

He said Buhari had become a hero in the area for religiously executing projects like Akanu Ibiam International Airport and the 2nd Niger Bridge among others.

Arthur Eze added that with the creation of Zonal Police Headquarters (zone 13) at Ukpokwu in Anambra State, Buhari had shown exceptional love to the people of area.

He maintained that the establishment of those projects had endeared Buhari in the hearts of Ndigbo, saying that the people of the area owed him eternal gratitude.

He made this known in a statement by his media consultant, Mr. Oliver Okpala.

The statement read in part, "President Mohammed Buhari and the Inspector General of Police have demonstrated uncommon goodwill towards the

people of the South-East geopolitical zone and should now be rest assured of our unalloyed support and loyalty.

"The president has continued to endear himself in the hearts of Igbo through the massive provision of economic and infrastructural facilities to the zone.

"The modernisation and uplifting of the Akanu Ibiam airport to an international standard with modern runway and facilities that can compete favourably with any airport in any part of the world, is another step worthy of commendation.

"The concern of the South East zone in terms of security, protection of lives and property has been tackled head on by the President.

"Citing a new police zonal headquarters as zone 13 at Ukpokwu, in the Awka capital Territory of Anambra State is a feat that has shown clearly that the President is man of the moment for the Igbo and the entire South-East.

"This demonstration of good faith by the president which includes the appointment of notable Igbo sons and daughters into top positions in government are so legendary in the annals of the history of the Igbo race"

## Non release of N200 million Delays Covid-19 drugs Research - Health Minister

**T**he Minister of Health, Dr. Osage Ehanire has disclosed that, non release of funds affected a N200 million drugs related research framework developed by the ministry and its affiliate organs to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

The minister stated this while making a presentation before the House of Representatives Adhoc Committee on COVID-19 late Friday.

He appeared before the Committee alongside the heads of National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHDA), Nigeria Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD), Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and NAFDAC.

The Adhoc Committee conducted a One day investigative hearing on the "Need to investigate the Status of Medical Research in the Fight

Against Covid-19 and Other Diseases in Nigeria".

Ehanire informed that, the National Health Research Committee developed the N200 million COVID-19 research work plan for the year 2020.

The Minister disclosed that the research division of the Ministry is actively involved in Nigeria Covid-19 Research Consortium (NCRC), a conglomerate of research entities from the government, NCDC, the academia and private sector.

He said several research protocols are being reviewed by the NCRC for possible sponsorship.

In a remark, Chairman of the Committee Dr. Haruna Mshelia (APC, Borno) called for a multi-sectoral stakeholders engagement by the Health Ministry in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.





## NCDMB Raises Nigerian Content Fund To \$350m

**T**he Governing Council of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) has approved the expansion of the Nigerian Content Intervention Fund from US\$200 million to US\$350 million.

The enlargement of the Fund by US\$150 million was part of the decisions taken at the recent NCDMB Governing Council meeting, which held virtually on June 16, 2020. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, who is the Chairman of the Council.

The Council approved that US\$100 million from the additional funds would be deployed to boost the five existing loan products of the NCI Fund, which include manufacturing, asset acquisition, contract financing, loan refinancing and community contractor financing.

Similarly, the Council also approved that US\$20 million and US\$30 million respectively should be deployed to two newly developed loan product types – the Intervention Fund for Women in Oil & Gas and PETAN Products, which include Working Capital loans and Capacity Building loans for PETAN member companies.

The NCI Fund was instituted in 2017 as a US\$200 million Fund managed by the Bank of Industry (BoI), engaged to facilitate on-lending to qualified stakeholders in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry on five loan product types. The NCI Fund is a portion of the Nigerian Content

## Reps to investigate **CBN**, 24 banks, 14 oil coys over alleged \$30bn revenue leakage

**T**he Joint House of Representatives Committee on Finance and Banking and Currency will commence investigation of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and 24 commercial and non-commercial banks and 14 international oil companies (IOCs) over an alleged loss of over \$30 billion revenue annually due to leakages.

The investigation will be conducted by a joint committee, chaired by the joint committee headed by Abiodun James Faleke (APC, Lagos) and Victor Nwokolo (PDP, Delta).

It could be recalled that, the House had passed a resolution on March 5, 2020 following the adoption of a motion by Faleke and mandate the two committee on Finance and the Committee on Banking and Currency to jointly carry out the investigation.

The committees were also directed to investigate the

disbursement of foreign exchange by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and other agencies to determine the exact amount government may have lost in the process.

Officials of the banks and the IOCs as well as local Oil Companies will appear before the Committee for the investigative hearing, which commences on Monday.

It was learnt that, the investigative hearing will be conducted in phases and the first will last for three weeks with strict observance of COVID-19 protocols adopted by the House.

According to the joint committee, the banks and the oil companies are to explain their roles in the alleged over \$30bn revenue leakages arising from oil revenue interest payment on account of foreign currency dominated contracts by companies in engineering, procurement, construction, installation and marine transportations.



Development Fund (NCDF), aggregated from the one percent deduction from the value of contracts executed in the upstream sector of the oil and gas industry. About 94 percent of the NCI Funds has been disbursed to 27 beneficiaries as at May 2020. NCDMB has received new applications from 100 companies for nearly triple the size of the original fund.

Guidelines for the NCI Fund provide that beneficiaries of the Manufacturing Loan and Asset acquisition Loan can access a maximum of US\$10million respectively. Also, beneficiaries of Contract finance Loan can access US\$5million while beneficiaries of the Loan Re-financing package can access US\$10million, with beneficiaries of the Community Contractor Finance Scheme limited to N20million. The maximum tenure for all loan types is 5 years and applicants cannot have two different loans running simultaneously.

At the onset of the Fund, the applicable interest rate for the various loan types was pegged at eight (8) percent, except the Community Contractor Finance Scheme, which was five (5) percent.

However in April 2020 as part of NCDMB's response to mitigate economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the Governing Council approved reduction of the interest rate from eight (8) to six (6) percent per annum for all four of the loan products. The Board also extended the moratorium for all loan products.



## Reps summon **NNPC, NLNG** Over alleged \$1.05bn withdrawals from NLNG Dividends account

The House of Representatives has resolved to summon the management of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) over alleged withdrawals of \$1.05bn from the NLNG dividends accounts.

This was sequel to the adoption of a motion under Matters of Urgent Public Importance moved by the House Minority Leader, Ndudi Elumelu (PDP,Delta) during Plenary.

The house mandates its committee on public accounts to invite the managements of the NNPC as well as that of the NLNG to conduct a thorough investigation on activities that has taken place on the dividends account and report back to the house in four weeks.

Presenting the motion, Elumelu alleged that the NNPC who represents the government of Nigeria on the board of the NLNG had unilaterally tampered with the funds at the NLNG dividends account to the tune of \$1.05 billion dollars, thereby violating the nations appropriation law.



The alleged withdrawals are without the required consultations with states and mandatory appropriation from the national assembly.

# IBRAHIM MAGU

## Origin of Nigeria's Anti corruption Czar's clash With DSS.

**T**

he former Chairman of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Ibrahim Magu has it rough recently with the Directorate of State Services (DSS). For sometime now there has been no love between the EFCC under Ibrahim Magu and the DSS as both government Agencies had clashed on many occasions fueling speculations about power tussle in governance at the federal level and why the differences could not be resolved for a long time.

The first sign of the lack of cordial relationship between the EFCC under Magu and DSS started immediately Magu's name was submitted to the 8<sup>th</sup> Senate under the former Senate President Bukola Saraki for confirmation. The DSS under the then Director General Lawal Daura was said to have written to the then Senate not to confirm Magu's appointment, leveling so many allegations against him. The Senate then refused to confirm his appointment and he has been acting since then.

One important information that came up over DSS allegation against Magu was the suspicion that his appointment may not have been done by the President Muhammadu Buhari. They are of the view that if Buhari actually appointed Magu EFCC chairman and actually sent his name to the Senate

it would have amounted to disrespect to the President for the DSS to write the Senate not to confirm his appointment. The submission of his name to the Senate coincided with the President's trip to London on health ground.

Besides, the DSS and other Security Agencies ought to have cleared him before his name was submitted for confirmation. It was alleged that the National Leader of All Progressives Congress (APC) Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Vice President Professor Yemi Osinbajo might have smuggled his nomination to the Senate while the President was away.

Despite lack of confirmation by the Nigeria's Senate the President still retained him as acting Chairman of EFCC, thus becoming the first chairman of the commission that was not cleared by the National Assembly

He however fought back after surviving the plot against him.

First, He went after the then Senate President Bukola Saraki, accusing him of corruption, money laundering and illegal enrichment.

Some of Saraki's Property especially in Lagos has been seized by EFCC, while his political dynasty in Kwara State was dismantled under the operation "Otoqe"





Secondly, Magu's attempt to arrest and probe former DSS DG under former President Goodluck Jonathan, Ita Ekpeyong was said to have been blocked by the DSS.

Thirdly, the DG DSS who wrote damning petition to the Senate against Magu, Daura was later sacked by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo over allegations to invasion of National Assembly.

#### **ALLEGATION AGAINST MAGU**

However the latest onslaught against Magu occurred on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Magu was said to have been whisked away or arrested by the DSS as soon as he drove out of the EFCC premises in Abuja. He was taken to face a panel looking into the allegations leveled against him by the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Abubakar Malami (SAN).

The Panel is headed by Justice Isa Ayo Salami a retired President of the Court of Appeal. Magu spent

the night in detention after been quizzed by the panel.

He was whisked away from the Presidential Villa where he was interrogated by the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID).

Some of the allegation against Ibrahim Magu included:

- Alleged discrepancies in the reconciliation records of the EFCC and the Federal Ministry of Finance on recovered funds.

- Declaration of N539b as recovered funds instead of N504b earlier claimed.

- Alleged later action on the investigation of P & ID leading to legal dispute.

In the past a former minister of finance Mrs. Kemi Adeosun, had also asked Magu to clarify where the cash recovered from May 2015 to January 2018 were deposited and to provide accompanying evidence.

In a letter with reference number FM/HMF/EFCC/ S.EFCC.REC/2018.

Dated Feb 9, 2018 and entitled summary of EFCC recoveries from 2015 to 2018, the Minister said the clarification became necessary based on the information available to the office of the Accountant General of the federation.

The Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Malani has in addition accused Magu of insubordination, and diversion of seized looted properties.

#### **MAGU'S DEFENCE**

Ibrahim Magu also tried to respond to some of the allegations against him, in a letter to the Attorney General of the Federation dated 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 2016, Magu had written:

"It is true that my residence was searched on the orders of Mrs Farida Waziri, shortly after she succeeded Nuhu Ribadu as Chairman of EFCC and some documents relating to cases under investigation were found in my house. At the time of the raid, I was yet to formally hand over to my successor, Umar Sanda as head of the economic governance unit. My schedule at the time warranted that I work round the clock and it was impossible to conclude all assignments without working at home.

The documents found In my house were actually found In my office bag where I kept documents relating to investigations. I was In the process of handing over and it would be wrong to suggest that I willfully kept the commission file at home.

Nevertheless the incidence was thoroughly investigated by the Police as I was placed on suspension without pay for 20 months.

But in the end, I was reprimanded, recalled and promoted to Assistant Commissioner of Police".

He also claimed that those officers who worked under Nuhu Ribadu were victimised after his exit.

He also denied that he lived in a private house and that It was rented and furnished for him by Commodore Umar Mohammed (rtd), but that he live in official residence of the chairman of EFCC and that it was furnished by the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory through the Abuja Metropolitan Management Council under the safe house scheme.

He also denied Expensive Air Travels, High Profile dual lifestyle, mutual beneficial relationship with Commodore Mohammed Umar (rtd).

On the reluctance to arraign Vice Marshall Adesola Amosun, he said "the reason Amosun was not arraigned when the likes of Alex Badeh and Umar were arraigned was because he cooperated with the commission in terms of assisting the process of recovering the proceeds of crime. The commission recovered N2.835billion cash from him, aside from property worth N1.5b, \$2.1m and \$1m".

# Presidential Panel indicts Magu



A

prior presidential panel, which investigated the suspended acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes

Commission, Ibrahim Magu, indicted him, a report published by the News Agency of Nigeria has alleged.

The report, according to NAN, noted that the embattled EFCC boss had been unable to account for the interest generated from N550bn cash recovered from 2015 to 2020.

The panel is separate from the panel led by a former President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Ayo Salami, which is currently probing Magu and other top officials of the agency.

The chairman of the previous committee was Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim and the members were DIG Anthony Ogbizi; a member from Federal Ministry of Justice; Mualledi Dogondaji from the EFCC; Hassan Abdullahi from

the DSS; an unnamed member from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation; Chinedu Ifediora from the NFIU, while Mr Kazeem Attitebi served as the secretary.

The committee's report, it was learnt, became the basis for the setting up of the Salami-led panel.

The report titled, 'Final Report of the Presidential Investigation Committee on the EFCC Federal Government Recovered Assets and Finances from May 2015 to May 2020' was obtained by the Federal Government-owned News Agency of Nigeria.

The report read in part, "Failure to report on the interest on actual lodgements clearly establishes that the interest element of over N550bn has been re-looted relating to the period under review.

"This is an apparent case of manipulation of data in a very brazen and unprofessional manner and this has greatly eroded the public

confidence in the anti-corruption efforts."

The panel said it was quite disturbing that conflicting figures were being circulated in the public space by the EFCC as the amount of recovered funds.

It said these inconsistencies cast serious doubt on the accuracy of figures submitted by the EFCC.

The committee said it was of the view that the EFCC could not be said to have fully accounted for cash recoveries made by it, noting that there were discrepancies between what the embattled chairman reported and the lodgements the commission made.

It added, "It must be pointed out that the discrepancy of more than N31bn does not include interest accrued in this account since it was opened.

"It therefore cast serious doubt on the credibility of the figures and means



that substantial amount of money has not been accurately accounted for."

NAN observed that the report had also confirmed the concerns of the public about contradictory recovery figures emanating from Magu.

The Presidential Committee on Audit of Recovered Assets revealed how the investigative reports on EFCC's activities by the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit exposed acts of corruption and money laundering against some EFCC officials, including Magu.

The report added, "The NFIU reports established that the acting chairman has been using different sources to siphon money from the EFCC.

"The report has shown that a particular Bureau de Change, owned by Ahmed Shanono linked to the acting chairman based in Kaduna, has more than 158 accounts and has been receiving huge sums of funds."

The committee accused Magu of paying a prominent Lagos-based senior advocate N28m.

### **...alleges he acquired N573m Dubai property through pastor**

The panel accused the suspended EFCC boss of using one Pastor Omale to launder funds abroad.

Omale's name was uncovered through an investigative report on EFCC's activities by the NFIU.

According to the report, the unknown clergyman is alleged to have bought a property on behalf of Magu worth N573m in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

"As an unknown pastor, the NFIU's report showed the huge movement of funds ranging from

N573,228,040.41," the report said.

NAN also gathered that efforts had been intensified to expose the real identity of the pastor with a view to arraigning him for prosecution, if found culpable.

Meanwhile, efforts to reach the said pastor to get his reaction were not successful. Several calls made to his mobile phone were not answered while the text message sent to him had yet to be replied as of 12:52am.

The committee accused the suspended EFCC boss of mishandling the probe of a former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke.

The suspended EFCC boss was accused of failing to cooperate with authorities in the United Kingdom to facilitate effective prosecution of the case.

The report read in part, "In the Diezani Alison-Madueke case, the acting chairman is failing to further cooperate with the UK NCA (National Crime Agency) to enable them to charge the former minister to court in the UK.

"The acting chairman, despite his knowledge that Mrs Alison-Madueke will not be extradited to Nigeria until after her trial in the UK, has consistently been accusing the UK government on the pages of print and electronic media of not wanting to extradite her to Nigeria."

Magu was also accused of deliberately refusing to provide documentary evidence that would make the office of the Attorney-General to commence the extradition process of Diezani Madueke.

"This has strained the EFCC's relationship with Europe, our most strategic partner," the report further observed.

# Revelations from Magu's Probe will shock Nigerians ... Presidency

**T**he Presidency has asked Nigerians to prepare for surprises as the panel probing the suspended acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ibrahim Magu, gets ready to submit its report.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu, said this on Channels Television's 'Politics Today' programme recently.

Shehu said the Presidency had been receiving some little updates from the Justice Ayo Salami-led panel and the findings would surprise Nigerians.

He, therefore, asked Nigerians to ignore the outbursts of certain persons who have questioned the probe.

Responding to a question on claims by Magu's lawyers that the probe was a witch-hunt, Shehu said, "I guess this is a question for the Justice Ayo Salami panel and I must say that panel is composed of some of this country's most honoured people with integrity who will do the right thing.

"I am not going to pre-empt the panel investigation but I just advice Nigerians to hold their hearts in their hands. By the time they are done with this job and they come out with the reports prepare yourselves for surprises.

"I don't know what will come out but if the sense we are getting from what is being done over there is anything to go by, I think that Nigerians should not be confused by any outbursts by anybody."

The President's spokesman said the probe of Magu could cause temporary embarrassment to the President, Maj.Gen Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) but in the end, the government would be vindicated.

The panel led by Salami is investigating over 20 allegations levelled against Magu.

Among the many allegations brought against Magu is that he bought a house in Dubai worth over N550m while the interest accrued to N550bn recovered funds could not be accounted for.

The Presidency had suspended Magu and about 11 directors of the EFCC to allow for a seamless investigation.



## Probing Magu: How recovered funds were Re-looted in EFCC – Presidential Committee

**T**he suspended acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr Ibrahim Magu, may be facing fresh cases of alleged re-looting of funds recovered by the commission as well as bribery.

Magu is currently being interrogated by a presidential probe panel headed by retired Justice Ayo Salami over allegations of mismanagement and lack of transparency in managing recovered assets by the EFCC.

A final Report of the Presidential Investigation Committee on the EFCC Federal Government Recovered Assets and Finances from May, 2015, to May 2020, obtained by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) seriously indicted and implicated Magu on various allegations leveled against him.

The investigative committee terms of reference were to:

1. investigate, verify and review the recommendations of the Presidential

Committee on Audit of Recovered Assets as it relates to the EFCC, with a view to ascertaining the complicity or otherwise of the Ag. Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, in the mismanagement of the assets recovered by the Commission;

2. Identify Avenues through which the recovered assets are dissipated and seized, recovered, forfeited (Interim and Final) assets are valued, managed, disposed and/or mismanaged with a view to ascertain compliance or otherwise with extant laws, regulations, processes and procedures.

3. Review the existing procedures on the Management of the seized, recovered and Forfeited assets (interim and final) and proffer Standard Operational Procedures for the management of seized, recovered and forfeited assets.

4. Determine whether assets recovered during his tenure, whether locally in Nigeria or abroad, are being kept safely in a manner as to preserve their original value and determine:-

Whether all the assets could be

properly accounted for by the Ag. Chairman.

To confirm if any of the assets has been diverted to the benefit of the Ag. Chairman, his family, relation, friends or favoured staff. To recover any such diverted assets and return back to the EFCC or appropriate government agency.

The committee was also to investigate and report on corruption and money laundering allegations involving Magu and Bureau De Change operators, as well as some of his associates; as per the intelligence reports and petitions.

It was to audit the Assets and Finances of the EFCC as a legal entity from 2015-2020, with a view to establish compliance or otherwise with procurement procedures of the EFCC in line with the provisions of the Procurement Act.

However, new facts have emerged on how interest rates accruing from N550 billion recovered by the EFCC in the period under review were allegedly re-looted.

Magu is now expected to disclose the whereabouts of the missing interest



funds running into millions of naira.

NAN also observed that the Final Report of Presidential Committee on Audit of Recovered Assets (PCARA) that covered the period of May 29, 2015, to Nov. 22, 2018, had also confirmed the concerns of the public about contradictory recovery figures emanating from Magu.

"It is quite disturbing that conflicting figures are being circulated in the public space by EFCC as the amount of recovered funds.

"For Foreign currency recoveries, EFCC reported a total naira equivalent of N46,038,882,509.87, while the naira equivalent of the foreign currency lodgments were N37,533,764,195.66, representing a shortfall of N8,505,118,314.21.

"These inconsistencies cast a serious doubt on the accuracy of figures submitted by the EFCC. It is the committee's view that the EFCC cannot be said to have fully accounted for cash recoveries made by it.

"While EFCC reported total Naira recoveries of N504,154,184,744.04, the actual bank lodgments were N543,511,792,863.47. These discrepancies mean that EFCC's actual lodgment exceeded its reported recoveries by N39,357,608,119.43.

"It must be pointed out that the discrepancy of more than thirty nine billion naira does not include interest accrued in this account since it was opened.

"It therefore cast serious doubt on the credibility of the figures and means that substantial amount of money has not been

accurately accounted for.

"Failure to report on the interest on actual lodgments clearly establishes that interest element of over N550 billion has been re-looted relating to the period under review.

"This is an apparent case of manipulation of data in a very brazen and unprofessional manner and this has greatly eroded the public confidence in the anti-corruption efforts," the report stated in part.

NAN also reports that the PCARA revealed how the investigative reports on EFCC's activities by the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) exposed acts of corruption and money laundering against some EFCC officials, including Magu.

"The NFIU reports established that the Acting Chairman has been using different sources to siphon money from the EFCC, and in some cases collecting bribes from suspects.

"The report has shown that a particular Bureau de Change, owned by Ahmed Ibrahim Shanono linked to the Acting Chairman based in Kaduna has more than 158 accounts and has been receiving huge sums of funds.

"The link to Magu was also established by the payment of N28 million to FALANA who is a close associate and ally of the Acting Chairman," the PCARA report further revealed.

NAN reports that the Salami probe panel is expected to continue sitting on Monday while Magu's lawyer, Mr Oluwatosin Ojaomo, had on Friday applied for an administrative bail for his client, who is facing corruption and other charges before the panel.







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## POST COVID 19: WHAT NIGERIA MUST DO TO AVOID RECESSION

... PROF. MAY NWOYE

### HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF POST COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON NIGERIAN ECONOMY

The COVID 19 pandemic is likely to have long-lasting consequences on economic and social liberties of the people, stemming from the direct and indirect effects of the illness, prevention efforts, and government spread-control policies. Advanced countries governments on their part are scrambling to contain the economic impact of the pandemic.

For us here in Africa and Nigeria, the problem is rather complex. The first channel is the pressure on government budgets from the public health crisis. The social distancing necessary to mitigate the contamination and spread has already led to economic shutdown in the states across the country, affecting the businesses. So the sharp decline in economic activities has contributed to the existing flood of unemployment. The pressure on government budgets is a serious cause for concern. Indeed, there is fear that millions of people will fall into poverty, and face hunger and permanent job loss, unless government provides effective long-term economic and social direction. In fact let me put it like this: This pandemic is threatening to increase and entrench permanent poverty and further economic inequality.

Indeed, the economic consequences from the pandemic shock are still mounting and increasingly difficult to predict the final outcome. But from the look of things, there are clear indications that things will get much worse for developing economies like ours before they get better.

### HOW DO YOU RATE THE GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES TOWARDS PALLIATIVE /INTERVENTION FOR THE POOR

Yes, in Nigeria the government has taken some steps to mitigate the economic fallout, but there are concerns as efforts so far have not sufficiently or adequately protected those who are at risk. There are a lot of grumblings or unconfirmed rumors that distributors have adopted policies that provide assistance exclusively to certain groups, or tying palliatives to specific [geographic](#) areas, or participation level in the formal economy. Such practices have left many people, a large share them women, with limited access to health services and social protection, contributing to their risk of tumbling into deeper poverty. You know, there are consequences for letting poverty run unabated. The longer poverty lasts, the deeper it sinks.

The Government (at all levels) is required to uphold the right to an adequate standard of living, among other human standards, and that requirement should be at the center of the economic response to Covid-19.

I believe that our government has the capacity to do more and I trust they will.

### WHAT ADVICE WILL YOU GIVE TO THE ORGANISED PRIVATE SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY IN TACKLING THE PANDEMIC CRISIS

Dealing with the present crisis requires the combined efforts of multiple stakeholders.



The private sector can play a vital role in supporting the country to manage this pandemic. Companies in Nigeria that have liquidity should also consider contributing. They should explore joining forces with the government and with each other.

In many countries of the world, the private sector has almost always been willing to provide in-kind and cash donations in times of crisis.

Companies are re-strategize, take a second look at their mission and objectives, leveraging on their comparative advantages and resource-strength to help plug gaps in the major areas of need.

It will also validate how all companies, not just those in the healthcare industry, are doing their part to address COVID-19 problems. . Companies can also lend their voice to encourage multilateral responses that increase the resources required to tackle the outbreak of pandemic in various communities. The pandemic may also present an opportunity for companies to re-configure global movement and supply chains, and for example explore local purchasing opportunities to support the economy. Donations help countries, particularly those with the weakest health systems, to effectively prepare and respond to the pandemic. Acting on the principle of collective responsibility and the need for Nigerians to benefit from one other's experiences coordinating public and private sector. As a matter of fact all stakeholders should, according to their capacity, contribute to this action in fighting COVID-19.

I call on every company can advocate for the importance of supporting their host communities, vulnerable states, local governments or even the villages beyond social responsibility

### **IF YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF NIGERIA'S ECONOMY OR FINANCE, WHAT WILL BE YOUR PRIORITY AS AT NOW?**

The COVID-19 pandemic is already having significant effects on economies in several countries as trade, tourism, remittances, financial markets, and consumer and business sentiment are all disrupted.

The financial turmoil from this crisis has already triggered sharp currency devaluation of Naira, which will make servicing external debts and paying for necessary imports for industrial activity far more burdensome. The outcome of these current crises will inflict much more economic damage than anyone has envisaged in the early days of the pandemic.

Drop in oil prices which is a key source of foreign exchange earnings contributed to a significant decline in GDP growth.

Decline in export revenues has led to depreciations of local currencies. These exchange rate depreciations will push up local inflation and trigger monetary policy and financial tightening.

Aside from financial injections to keep the financial institutions and corporate balance

sheets on relatively stable footing, the critical measures to avert further shrinkages of economic activities should include government spending, and cash transfers.

But more importantly, every Nigerian should have it at the back of their mind that economic diversification is a key element of economic development in which a country moves to a more diverse production and trade structure. If we had gone beyond rhetoric to determination to diversify the economy as the danger of mono-product economy had been staring in our face for over a decade now, the situation we are heading to could have been averted.

Rapid urbanization and industrialization are keys that are driving demand for solutions in areas such as e-commerce, cybernetics and Internet-of-things.

If you notice this is the area where young Nigerian graduates hold expertise and control, but because no one is guiding them, as well as lack of resources to support them, they channel this energy to 419 and cybercrime activities.

Industrial policy-making must address the pursuit of innovation as a prime mover in economic development to put in perspective the importance of innovation in entrepreneurship Eco-system.

A lack of economic diversification is often associated with increased vulnerability to external shocks that can undermine prospects for longer-term economic growth. The current crises have collapsed the functionality of the entire world's system, economic, social and political convention.

The post-pandemic requires a lot of social and economic repairs. Every country is affected so will start their internal repairs.

This is a new beginning for us to start looking inwards to diversify our economy. Stop looking for foreign aid. Soon enough you will not find any. Any claim of foreign aid you will see now is what I call prelude to economic colonization.

Entrepreneurship is the key word here. Let us build-up and fortify the Entrepreneurial Eco-system.

We have the manpower and we have the capacity. All that is lacking is determination and strategic plan.

Every Nigerian should have it at the back of their mind that Economic diversification is a key element of

economic development in which a country moves to a more diverse production of needed goods and services and trade structure.

### **IN WHAT WAYS WILL THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS BAILOUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR?**

In a mixed economy, such as we have in Nigeria the private sector constitutes the largest segment of the economy.

What is needed right now is a situation where the Private Sector, Government and Higher educational institutions must come together to collaborate, coordinate, share lessons learned, and assist each other to combat the predicament.

Private sector should join efforts to attract major multinationals and foreign investors, as well as partnerships with companies able to impart skills and share technology.

The regulatory role of the government involves formulating and implementing various direct and indirect measures to monitor and regulate the economic activities of the private sector

Government should listen to the private sector and adjust to their expectations in terms of industrial and licensing policies, policies related to taxation and monetary and credit policies, as well as import and export policies including foreign exchange policies.

The government policies should be analysed by finding out the impact of its policies, not just for the existing private sector but also the start-ups and on the society as a whole.

Another area of note is the effort at increasing the total purchasing power of individuals in an economy, because that will simultaneously increase the demand of goods and services by the individuals

Governments can help, for example, provide incentives that promote investments, including tax breaks. Again is the fostering the growth of entrepreneurial ecosystems

The country urgently needs action in several thematic fields such as health and pharmaceuticals, agribusiness, manufacturing and logistics, as well as engage financial institutions, start-ups and innovation technology.

More importantly, critical infrastructure projects in power, roads, and rail across the country, as well as direct investments in people to boost skills and talents.



## Edo election: We'll isolate Gov Wike, humiliate Obaseki – Gov Ganduje

**G**overnor of Kano State, Alhaji Abdullahi Umar Gabduje has predicted the humiliation of Edo State governor, Godwin Obaseki come September 19 when the state governorship election will take place.

He also promised that the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, who is heading

Obaseki's re-election, will be isolated.

Ganduje, while addressing the press said the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is only interested in the Edo State treasury, hence the support for Obaseki.

He said, "Governor Obaseki will be humiliated and Governor Wike isolated."

The Kano State Governor spoke with newsmen shortly after his 49-member campaign council was inaugurated by the National Chairman of the Caretaker/Extra-Ordinary National Convention Planning Committee (CEONCPC) Governor Mai Mala Buni at the National Secretariat of the party in Abuja, vowed to secure

victory for APC at the poll.

Following his disqualification, by the APC, Obaseki resigned from the ruling party

He later joined the PDP where he participated in the party's primary election and emerged as the party's sole candidate for the September 2020 governorship election



## APC Members and leaders Dump Party for PDP

**T**he Special Adviser to Governor Obaseki on Community Development, Hon. Newman

Ugiagbe today lead Government Appointees and APC Members who have dumped the party from the 12

Wards Of Orhionmwon to meet with their PDP counterparts as they familiarize with each other.

The meeting held at Abudu, the administrative Headquarter of Orhionmwon was called to enable the All Progressive Congress members who have dumped the party to Familiarize, and also plan on when to receive other APC members who have recently indicated strong interest to join the PDP.

Hon. Newman Ugiagbe, in his address, described the PDP as a family United by the unbroken Bond of love and hunger for Development of the State. He Appreciated the party for whole heartedly accommodating the decampees and their resolve to win the September 19th Governorship Election.

Adding that victory is sure at the polls. According to him, only what is needed is to ensure the votes are protected from the unit level to the Collation Centers, Stressing that elections are either won or lost at the polling units.

In his words, "We shall Resist vehemently all plans by the APC to Rig the Upcoming Governorship Election in the State. We must ensure our

votes are protected no matter the intimidations.

The Collective will of Edo people will never be Circumvented by Greedy Few" he Concluded.

Responding, Barrister Akhimien (SAN), a PDP leader in The LGA expressed joy at the caliber of persons who have joined the party, saying that he is very confident and convinced beyond doubt that the PDP is heading for victory come September 19th. He therefore pleaded with all and sundry to be United and build on the love which is currently prevalent within the PDP family.

Also, the PDP leader called on all Party faithfuls to ensure PDP flag remains in Osadebey Avenue beyond September 19th, saying that all hands must be on deck to deliver Godwin Obaseki.

Present at the meeting are, The Council Chairman, Hon. Sylvester Okoro, Hon. Asoro Roland, the Council Secretary, Mr Okankan Sunday, Hon. Sunday Iyamu.

Others are, Barrister Akhimien (SAN), Lady Uwa, Hon. Friday Ogierhikhi and many others.



## Edo 2020: Obaseki, PDP laughed out of court, Denied expert motion to block Ize-Iyamu

**T**he People's Democratic Party and its Candidate, Governor Godwin Obaseki, were subjects of mockery in court today after the presiding judge agreed with the APC's legal representatives that their motion challenging the emergence of Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu as the APC candidate was an overreach and a baseless suit with no standing.

The PDP had applied for an expert motion seeking to block Ize-Iyamu by contending the

decisions of the APC NEC where Ize-Iyamu's candidacy was ratified by the national leadership of the party.

The judge however told the PDP and Godwin Obaseki that the issues of NEC and its convening is a partisan affair that cannot be disputed or dictated by an external party.

Laughter broke out in court when the colloquial term of "busy body" was used to describe the actions of the PDP

to which the Judge agreed, describing the filed motion as an illegal attempt by interlopers to pry into the affairs of another political party before denying the request.

One of the lawyers in court who reacted to the judgement said: "This matter is a waste of everyone's time. The PDP has no case here. You cannot tell another political party how to conduct its affairs. Except they are afraid of facing Ize-Iyamu in

the election, I see no other way to explain this charade of clutching at straws where the position of the law is plainly obvious."

Others political observers in Edo who commented echoed the same sentiment, stating that Godwin Obaseki, being no match for Ize-Iyamu politically, is desperately trying to seek a back-door means to win the election.

## BURSTED, EDO 2020: Obaseki, PDP to continue Old order of deceit

**H**aven failed woefully to carry out major and most popular electioneering campaign promises, Edo state Governor Godwin Obaseki has been advised by his new party PDP to quickly mobilize Caterpillars to places where urgent government attention is needed in Benin and various parts of the state in fake portrayal that work is about to commence in such area

While the PDP understands that there is little or no possibility for the Governor to meet up with construction or achieving any of these promises he has promised Edo people in 2016, he has concluded to employ the deceit approach of mobilising Work equipments to bad roads in the state.

A dissatisfied member of the

party who spoke to newsmen said the Governor seems to have very few Project's on ground to campaign with, so he has concluded plans to mobilize working equipments to roads in dilapidated roads in state without no intention to work but to cajole the people's attention and give a fake impression that he intends to begin work in those areas

The Governor and it's contractors have before now began to evacuate all working equipments it has on uncompleted roads.

It is in line with the PDP ways of deceit Godwin Obaseki has rented quite a number of Caterpillars for this task of deceiving the people to get votes, the recent place where Obaseki's Caterpillars has landed, is the Benin- Abraka



road where the Governor has since failed woefully in constructing, even after promising the people of Orhionmwon some years ago that he will construct the road before his first tenure elapses.

If not for deceitful gains, One begin to wonder how the Governor intends to construct such a lengthy Benin-Abraka 109 Kilometres road, even as his tenure is bid to expire in few months time.



# Before We Forget Governor Obaseki's \$2m (N900m) Laundering Debacle

By Erasmus Ikhide

**I**T'S exactly 10-months now that Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State barely escaped INTERPOL's arrest and detention with humongous state's taxpayers' money amounting to \$2m (N900m) allegedly squandered in far away France in a single trip. His Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Tourism, Mr. Osaze Osemwingie-Ero who walked side-by-side with the Governor on the said trip with foreign currency neatly stuffed in briefcases wasn't so lucky!

The trifling and absconding Governor Obaseki has since been declared a persona non grata in France, America and the rest European countries for laundering illicit and dirty money meant for the development and wellbeing of Edo citizens. Money laundering offence, as it were, is the illegal process of concealing the origins of money obtained illegally by passing it through a complex sequence of banking transfers or commercial transactions or outright hauling of physical cash into a foreign land, as is the case with Governor Obaseki and Mr. Osaze Osemwingie-Ero.

The detained and abandoned Mr. Osaze is said to be one of Governor Obaseki's several channels of corruption through which the Governor funnels Edo State Common Wealth into Europe and America to sustain his numerous business interests. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) have severally been invited to investigate Governor Obaseki's fraudulent and MOUs administration for money laundering. That call has yet to provoke the needed probe of the

Governor by the anti-corruption agencies, even when it was alleged that Mr. Obaseki actually opened the state resources for PDP to have a field day as "Tax Collectors"!

Nigerians who have little or no faith in President Muhammadu Buhari's capability in retooling the anti-corruption war are further disappointed at EFCC's tardiness to intervene in Governor Obaseki's laundering case. The anti-corruption agencies have a duty to save Nigeria and President Muhammad Buhari's administration from looming international embarrassment since major national and international newspapers already reported the discovery of the dirty \$2m (N900m).

On top of this crisis of money laundering charges against Governor Obaseki, there are two additional concerns for a pessimist generation of Edo youths who deliberately avert their gaze away from the documented fraud against the state governor. First, the government has been unable to fix its solvency problems which Governor Obaseki created by borrowing too much money from foreign financial institutions. The Governor has been round tripping with the dollars for personal profits at the expense of the general public. Second, these loans have failed to stimulate the economy of the state since the interest rates are beyond normal and the details of the loans are shrouded in secrecy.

There's no better or appropriate timing than now to investigate Mr. Obaseki's litany of corruption cases and maladministration in order to save the country from

international embarrassment following the arrest of his Commissioner and the Governor's subsequent banishment from stepping his foot on the shores of Europe and America. The Governor's shameful outing did not only damage his poor governance structure and his MOUs-induced administration but also destroyed the public trust vested and invested in him, going forward.

The haphazard response from the Edo State Government over the money laundering scandal and the attempt to conceal the dirty money while also denying and abandoning Mr. Osaze Osemwingie-Ero in France further indicted Governor Godwin Obaseki's malfeasance as he inadvertently owned up to the crime.

Now the conundrums: will Governor Obaseki be allowed to

## Remember Who Your Three Fingers Are Pointing To.

**I** have sat to ponder what the PDP social media warlords are driving at by humping on the alleged N700m money laundering charges brought by the EFCC against the APC candidate, Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu, PDP former State chairman and current South - South Deputy National chairman, Chief Dan Orbih, PDP current state chairman, Dr Anthony Azegbemi and two others. It amazes me that the PDP has turned this into a major pillar of their campaigns against the candidature of Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu.

I could remember when some of us raised this as a basis for not supporting Dr Anthony Azegbemi for the position of State chairman of PDP. the same PDP leaders told us that these men of honour were being persecuted by the APC because they stood for the party. PDP local government party chairmen were brought to attest to the fact that the money was shared to all the local governments and even

praised Pastor Ize-Iyamu, Chief Dan Orbih and Dr Azegbemi for being prudent in the disbursements. Dr Anthony Azegbemi was later elected by the state congress as the state chairman of the PDP. This was a vote of confidence by the PDP.

Why the change of story now? I am waiting anxiously to see either Chief Dan Orbih or Dr Anthony Azegbemi, climb the stage during the campaigns to accuse Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu of laundering N700m. That will make an interesting scenario. Remember who your three fingers are pointing to whenever you point an accusing finger at someone.

Till then, I advise the PDP social media warlords to embark on issues based campaigns.

Tony Okonigene, former PDP stalwart, writes from Irrua, Edo state.



escape the wrath of the law even when his accomplice rots away in prison in France? How did we get to this sorry state of absolute absorbent and state of unshockability to the extent that criminals in government have become heroes of our youths? How can we extricate ourselves from the shackles of political minds manipulators?

The Governor and his minders, as expected, have been clutching stoically at the straws, hiding behind broom stick of immunity for the governor while committing financial crimes with reckless abandon to evade arrest, not knowing that the anti-corruption agencies are obligated, constitutionally to investigate and bring under scrutiny the financial records

and dealings of any state governments who violate their oaths of office to administer states resources for the greater good of everyone.

But even with these obvious fraud cases of deliberate looting of the state's treasury by the Governor, the populace seems stock with frivolities and fantasy as against reality and amateurish propaganda by the Governor's internet madrassas. It's needless Mr. Obaseki is bailed out by the people and his criminal government or rewarded with a second term in office – like old-line retailers. To do so would merely create “zombies,” out of the people, ultimately limiting dynamism and growth, as perfectly outlined by Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu in his Simple Agenda manifesto.

The Governor's folly, foolishness and political naivety has costs the state government several billions of naira he squandered to purchase the PDP's governorship ticket, thereby paving the way for the state to decay in all fronts. For instance, the Governor couldn't raise the money to pay the COVID-19 front line health workers who daily protest non-payment of their salaries and allowances even though the Federal Government's more than N6billion COVID-19 palliatives has been received by the Governor.

It's obvious from the sudden rot and rust in Benin City and its environs that Governor Godwin Obaseki has abdicated and jettisoned governance in the state. Any wonder the state is

practically submerged under water each time it rains. As we speak, most parts of the ancient city is overtaken by garbage dump; schools overgrown with weeds and taken over by reptiles amidst preparation for school resumption, markets around Benin metropolis burnt down with midnight infernos without fire-fighting equipments.

This is the moment of truth. Governor Godwin Obaseki has walked himself unto the crucifix. He has led himself to his own political Golgotha like a notorious sacrificial lamb. As we say in my own part of the world “Ovbiukhor yase eguaikute chie”. Loosely translated to mean that the He Goat does not retreat from the shrine's slaughter slab.

## Question Time For CEO Of MOU Godwin Obaseki.

1. What has happened to the much talked about Gelelele Seaport where Edo tax payers money running into several billions of naira has been committed? MOU.

2. Where is the much talked about Edo Industrial Park and Dry Land Port? MOU

3. For 3 years now the CBN fully funded Edo Agripreneur programs has become a mirage as no one millionaire has been made as widely projected and painted by GO and his administration. MOU

4. The 200,000 jobs which was a major cardinal campaign has also gone the same way of MOU as only one person was employed in Esan Central Local under this program and the person is in EDTMA. MOU

5. Where is the One senatorial Industrial hub? Another MOU, as Edo Central is yet to know the site or location. MOU!

6. What has Edo benefited from the annual ritual and conduit pipe Seminar called Alaghodalo where billions of

Edo fund has been stupendously wasted?. MOU!

7. I learnt it cost Edo people #200,000,000 ( Two hundred million Naira) to write one MOU, can Edo State government tell Edo people how many MOU it has written in the last three and half years and what is the outcome of one of the MOU?

8. In sport, Edo state government promised one stadium per LGA. where is the sites in the five LGAs in Edo Central. MOU!

9. Furthermore, can Obaseki show us the people of Edo Central two roads roads plus the Ekpoma township reduced road constructed by his administration in Edo Central? MOU!

10. Can GO who claim to so much love Esan tell us why he refused to appoint an Esan man as SSG or Chief of Staff, so that the people from the Central Senatorial zone can have a rally point in Osadebe Avenue even after the resignation of his former CoS



Akerere, is it that there are no qualified hands or trusted friends among those who claim to be close friends of the Governor from Edo Central? or Esan people are only good for voting and not good in government house with GO?

These are some fundamental issues and obvious questions begging for answers from Edo electorates. Though we have memorandumly Understand that this MOU Governor is not re- electable.

# PROBE

## Why Nunieh Was Sacked As Acting NDDC MD ...Says Akpabio



**T**he embattled minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio, has given reasons for the sack of the former acting Managing Director of the Interim Management Committee of the Niger Delta Development Commission, Joy Nunieh.

Akpabio said the former NDDC boss was sacked for insubordination and failing to respond to several queries by the supervising ministry.

The minister stated this in an interview with Arise News following the allegation leveled against him by Nunieh at the National Assembly investigation into the alleged financial

recklessness in the interventionist agency.

The former Akwa Ibom State governor, who denied corruption allegation leveled against him by the former acting NDDC MD, said Nunieh was fired following petitions against her by an anti-corruption group.

"She (Nunieh) wasn't relieved of her appointment because of corruption. She was relieved of her appointment because of insubordination. My ministry that supervised her wrote seven letters to her and never responded to one.

"And of course, she said she was bigger than the minister of Niger Delta.

"After that, the then

Chief of Staff (to President Muhammadu Buhari, Abba Kyari) sent a petition from an anti-corruption agency insisting that she does not have the required qualification to work as Acting Managing Director of the Commission", the minister said.

The former Senate minority leader alleged further that a letter from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) indicated that it had no record of the former NDDC chief of her involvement with the scheme hence her removal as MD.

According to him, "She was removed after the findings. If something comes up that you were not aware of that the person

occupying a position just like the former minister of finance that does not have NYSC certificate...what do you do? You know our laws. It's either the certificate or exception letter."

Nunieh had on Friday while appearing before the National Assembly joint committee on Niger Delta accused Akpabio of allegedly awarding 30 water hyacinth contracts as well as insisting that approval must come from him before any payment by NDDC.

The former NDDC boss also accused the minister of corrupt practices including trying to force her to take oath to do his bidding as the Managing Director of the agency.





## Akpabio never administered fetish oath On Members of the IMC of NDDC – Nagbo

**M**ember of the Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Evangelist Caroline Nagbo, on Friday disclosed that, there was never a time, the Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio, administered fetish Oath them as members of the IMC of the NDDC, just as she advised the sacked former Acting chairman of the Commission, Ms Joi Nunieh, to address the deficiencies in her certificates, rather than crying wolves where there is none.

Speaking with newsmen shortly after her appearance before the Senate, Nagbo said, "I came here to tell you people that as a member of the IMC, the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio, didn't administer any fetish oath on me nor any other member of the IMC, anything to the contrary is pure fallacy and propaganda."

According to her, "I took Oath of Allegiance, using the Holy Bible, as required by the constitution of Nigeria, before I started work as a member of the IMC. It was not only administered on me, it was to all of us who were given

appointments as required by the constitution"

"I don't know of any controversial oath they are talking about, that you have to take a juju oath before you work in NDDC. I don't know about that. I am an Evangelist by Ordination and I am a politician, as the Secretary General of all state's Women Leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC). We are not known for any fetish oath

taking. We know there is an Oath of Allegiance that everybody take when you are given an appointment or coming to make a submission as we have just done in the Senate today", she said.

Speaking further, the APC women leader stressed that, "if people have issues and try to cover it up with propaganda, as a woman of God that I am, I will not come to mislead the public. There

is no other oath given to us as members of the IMC and I stand to be disputed and anybody who has anything to the contrary, should come and let us discuss, adding, I stand to be faulted because anything concerning Secret Oath by anybody concerning Senator Akpabio is a lie and a big lie".

Nagbo noted that, "the truth of the matter is that if people have issues with certificate falsifications, and that led to a problem they had, the public should be well told than to scream to the social media.

I have my NYSC discharge certificate and other certifications and documentations, adding, we were all asked to present them before we started the job. Anybody who has issues with certificate falsifications or deficiencies, should come out to say that was why he or she was asked to step aside, and outside that, I don't like malicious allegations, I don't like falsifications.

There are documents and proofs in the institutions we all attended including NYSC and all others. To cover up the issue of certificate deficiency with fetishism is unacceptable and it is malicious".



## Omo Agege behind Current Crises In NDDC – Ojoughboh

**T**he Acting Executive Director Project (EDP) of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), has accused the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege of masterminding the current crises of financial recklessness rocking the NDDC board.

Ojoughboh who made this known during a programme on Channels Television (Sunday Politics) alleged that Omo-Agege is fuelling the crises in the NDDC just because his anointed candidate for the NDDC Managing Director's job, Chief Bernard Okumagba was dropped.

He said: "all these hullabaloo about NDDC money is all about one individual, the Deputy Senate President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Just because he was denied the right to nominate, appoint the MD of NDDC, so he must fight.

"If NDDC still have a mace he would have carried it. What does he want to achieve, to cause problem in the NDDC so that Mr. President and the society will say the problem with NDDC is too much, so the IMC should be sacked.

"If Omo-Agege is very sure of what he is saying, he could have brought someone who is verse in the affairs of the country, not Mrs. Joy



Nunieh, a neophyte ust to disgrace me. You (Channels) could have investigated properly to know whether what Nunieh said was true before playing the video.

"If you want to become the governor of Delta state, nobody is stopping you, go ahead and be, must you use NDDC to actualize it. You are the Deputy Senate President, you have oversight function over the senate, you have oversight function over the NDDC, must you produce the NDDC MD before you can be

governor

It is an issue that nobody want to allow to happen. They found out that if he was allowed to nominate the MD, he (Omo-Agege) will not be able to properly exercise his oversight function and that was why Chief Bernard Okumagba that he nominated was dropped. It was also discovered that it was not the turn of Delta to produce the MD of the NDDC.

On the allegations of the immediate past MD of

NDDC, he said they are laughable, revealing that she was even the one that brought Nwaoboshi files and gave to them. "Today she claims she was forced to implicate Senator Peter Nwaoboshi. The facts are there, investigation will surely reveal them.

I do know that before she was relieved of her position, one Ude of Pointblank News published an article that myself, the minister and one Uduaghan wanted to kill her, so a meeting was called and in that meeting, the issue of that tweet was discussed, if that was the meeting she was asked to take an oath then it is unfortunate. As EDP I was never asked to take the oath because nobody can intimidate me to lie.

"Omo-Agege want to use the chambers of the National Assembly to intimidate the IMC so that they can be removed from office. They want the IMC to be indicted so that it can no longer hold office for one year but God is with us.

I can assure you that after the session with the Senate, it was obvious that the money they alleged were squandered, contracts were paid from it, they were contracts we didn't award, recurrent payments were made, nobody has said that Cairo Ojoughboh or MD embezzled the money. The question they are asking is why were these payments



# OF NDDC



made, these payments were made from the regulatory patterns we met on ground.

"And apart from that the MD was asked why was this payment made and he said it was to protect people of the Niger Delta. As we speak, 11 persons are in incarceration, the commission is looking for money to bail them from kidnappers.

What led to creation of NDDC was because there was crisis in the Niger Delta and a lot of youths became militants and rebels, so NDDC was a means of trying to calm them. So when you say N1.6 billion was used, it was not used to bribe anybody.

"It was not paid into my account or minister's account. It was paid across board for people to go back to their constituencies to work. It is on record that since the IMC came on board, there had never been any riot or disruption of all activities.

"Because the IMC has stopped looting and leakages, we have a commitment of three trillion naira debt against the NDDC and out of it confirmed debt of 1.6 billion naira and because the commission has to continue, people who genuinely did their job were paid. Otherwise the activities of the commission will fail. If we have paid according to what we met we could have paid up to N150 billion.

"Then we said no that we will scrutinize the

payments, while the forensic audit is going on. Why are they fighting us, basically because we have embraced the forensic audit. And Joy Nunieh said it, she didn't accuse the minister of stealing money, she said the minister wanted her to use the money from the commission to pay for forensic audit and that is the truth.

"NDDC has paid the first tranche to the forensic auditors, and forensic audit is ongoing and as I earlier said, the solution to problem of the NDDC is forensic audit, when that is done a lot of the chairmen of the National Assembly will run away. Contractors that have not done their jobs and are fighting us will run away.

"The people who seat in their proxy offices in Abuja and share in proceeds from contracts in the Niger Delta will no longer have it. So these are the people who are fighting us.

"On the Lassa fever project, payment of 3.6 billion naira was made on Lassa fever and medical equipments and I was not aware, yet I am the EDP. The minister was not also aware of it. And she is saying that there is no payment in the NDDC without the minister's approval. She paid 2.9 billion naira for Lassa fever without the approval of the minister.

"The memo that led to the payment of the Lassa fever equipment and others didn't pass through due process but yet she went ahead to pay", he reiterated.

## Former NDDC Boss Says Akpabio's 'Oath Of Secrecy' Would Have Sent Her To Prison

**T**he former Acting Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the immediate past Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Barrister Joy Nunieh has broken silence on the circumstances that led to her abrupt quit as NDDC boss.

Speaking at the venue of the Senate Ad-hoc Committee on financial recklessness in the Niger Delta Development Commission, Mrs Nunieh disclosed that the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio wanted to administer oath of loyalty on her, but she resisted.

She said, if she had agreed, she would have been used to siphon the NDDC funds without being able to resist as a result of the oath placed on her.

The former NDDC boss explained that Akpabio pressured her three times to place her under oath to the extent that they took the matter to the Villa, but refused.

She feared that she would go to five years imprisonment if under Godswill Akpabio's oath she commits infraction on the Public Procurement

Act and wasn't able to speak out, while he will be going about a free man.

She said: "He told me to take an oath. Though he denied that, he told me, three times until we had a reconciliation at the Villa in the office of Mr Abba who is the S.A. to the President on domestics.

"In that meeting was Alhaji Maikano and he said the only condition is when I take the oath and I didn't take the oath and will never take it.

After that, he said, he was going to remove me and he started the campaign of calumny against me. I didn't even answer him because the fact will speak for itself.

On the procurement process, I refuse to go with him to the FEC meeting to deceive Mr. President and the reason is because the law says if I contravene a section of the procurement Act, it's five years imprisonment without an option of fine.

"So if I had gone with him to deceive Mr. President I would have been in trouble because they said it's 2020 budget, but Akpabio went and got approval when the budget was not ready.

# Buhari Urged to Save NDDC

**A**

n appeal has gone to President Muhammadu Buhari to take over the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

and save the commission as well as the Region from another rounds of crisis.

This appeal has become necessary as some All Progressives Party (APC) party leaders are trying to hijack the commission for selfish interests.

A visit to the media team of the commission confirmed that anti graft agency had invited principal officers of the commission for interrogation on some of the petitions against it. The Media officer who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed to Newsplatform Magazine that EFCC actually interrogated some officials of the commission but that there was nothing wrong with that. He said it was normal.

We gathered that the crisis in the NDDC may not be unconnected with plans by Leadership of APC to take over the commission. This is due to the huge amount of money in the commission.

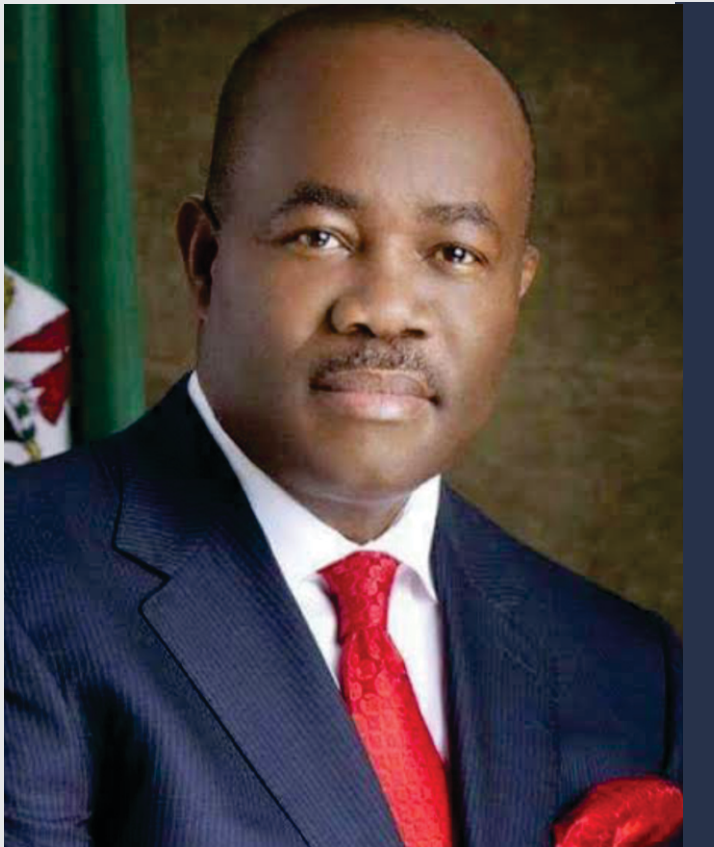
The former leadership of the commission headed by Prof. Nelson Bambaifa is loyal to Transport Minister Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi. Other party Leaders like Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the National Chairman of the party Adams Oshiomhole are also interested in controlling the Commission. This is because of their perceived 2023 Presidential ambition and their control of the commission will give them huge funding at their disposal. This rivalry



“

There has been complaints and petitions flying around by some stakeholders against the activities of the Board of the commission. This has led to the Economic And Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) storming the place and investigate its activities





probably explained why the appointment of the new Board of the commission headed by Professor Nelson Bambaifa was not confirmed until they were sacked

All these is going on at the expense of development programmes of the Niger Delta Region for which the Commission was created.

In an interview a former acting Managing Director of NDDC Professor Bambaifa said "We are incapacitated by the current financial state of the commission. The Federal Government is owing NDDC about N1.9 trillion and that is slowing the pace of the ongoing infrastructural development in the area. We appeal to the Federal Government to release part of the fund so that we can accomplish our set-out goals and fulfill our obligations to the Niger Delta people, which we believe will go a long way to achieve a whole lot in reducing the poverty rate in the region.'

**A question was asked on the pressing challenges facing the commission and how he intend to solve them?**

The MD said 'Poor exploitation of agriculture/Aquaculture for economic gains, socio-political challenge, and environmental degradation due to oil spillage; these are

some of the challenges facing the Niger Delta. After years of oil exploration and exploitation, the environment has witnessed pollution and consequent degradation.

Besides pollution occasioned by oil and gas business, we also face seasonal and constant erosion, silting, and flooding, as well as poor control of refuse, sewage and municipal solid waste. These challenges have combined to make the Niger Delta a very poor region. '

Despite all these problems, politicians especially outside the Region continue to feed fat on the commission rendering the people poorer.

It will be recalled that a former acting Managing Director of NDDC Professor Nelson Bambaifa had earlier this year few months after his appointment said President Muhammadu Buhari mean well for the people of the Niger Delta ' Professor Bambaifa commended President Muhammadu Buhari for demonstrating an enduring love for the people of the Niger Delta Region '

The Chief Executive Officer of the interventionist Agency who spoke during the inaugural meeting of the new management, Directors and staff of the commission at the commission's headquarter in Port Harcourt.





## INTERVIEW **WITH** *Prof.* **NELSON** **BRAMBAIFA** **FORMER NDDC MD**

**You assumed office in February this year as the Acting Managing Director of the NDDC, what is your vision as it concerns the Niger Delta region?**

To answer this question, we must first look at the principles, objectives, definition and imperatives of sustainable development and offer an equally credible vision for necessary intervention and regional development. In so doing, we will arrive at two very important truths which are; to make the Niger Delta a better place, we must be willing and brave to foster a new narrative and support the change agenda enunciated by the Federal Government, and this is the essence of my mandate.

The sum of my vision is for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region. We must do all that we must to work within the prescriptions and with appropriate strategies for the effectiveness of NDDC to give the Niger Delta a lift.

As a commission, we intend to harness the goodwill, cooperation and partnership with the people to build a better region that will bring about true and sustainable development, which I define as one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We cannot afford to fail the Niger Delta.

**The security issues in the country and oil bunkering have no doubt affected oil companies in the Niger Delta. How is NDDC contributing to abate these issues?**

Just to take you down memory lane, after the report of the commission that identified the Niger Delta as a special area, the Federal Government decided to start curbing the security challenges by collaborating with intervention and security agencies which was not enough, but was increased to a maximum number.

I am a classroom lecturer, but I have left lecturing to come



Commission (NDDC) has expressed determination to turn the commission around but says that they are incapacitated by the commission's current financial state due to the N1.9 trillion owed by the Federal Government.



here by virtue of my appointment to ensure that mandate is fulfilled. We have started in the area of infrastructural development and the commission is doing its best with the resources they have. Since we came on board, we have improved on the road network within this short space of time. We have more mega-projects and we hope we will be given enough time to continue the work we have started and accomplish our goals.

We have embarked on a massive renovation of rural roads in the area, and we are very sure that with these improved road networks, there will be no hiding place for these criminals.

**Some communities in the Niger Delta still complain about neglect in terms of job employment and rural development, do you think NDDC has done enough in these areas?**

We have procedures of employment in NDDC, we do not just employ anyhow. There must be vacancy before you employ, there must a reason and need for an employment. Part of my vision is wealth creation and poverty reduction, which we must achieve.

Job creation is a paramount necessity in Niger Delta. When adequate jobs are created, of course poverty would be reduced and that would also lead to reduction of hunger. It is said that 'a hungry man is an angry man,' and crimes are reduced at least to a minimal level too. There is no way you cannot find crime, but it will be reduced. It is only an idle man that becomes the devil's tool. When people are busy with their jobs, there won't be any reason to be involved in crime, so our goal is to do what we can.

**As a Professor of Pharmacology who has achieved numerous international merit awards, what are your thoughts about the health sector in Niger Delta and what better ways will you recommend to achieve and improve health care services?**

The major basics of any concerned administration should be primary health care, which means taking health care to the grassroots and this should be one of the topmost priorities of the government. The health condition of the Niger Delta is a pathetic situation. The government and ministry of health need to improve on health care delivery as it will get to the people. Taking patients to the maternity wards in the region is a major challenge; we have cottage hospitals all over the place, yet they are inaccessible by those at the grassroots.

In the meantime, we are trying to get centers, we just had an MOU with the center in Cross-River State, and we intend to take it to all nine states of the Niger Delta. We have referrals where we could carry patients from the cottage hospitals that are in the grassroots. We have begun renovating the hospitals in these rural areas and equipping them with drugs and medical facilities.

We have doctors who go there to carry out minor surgeries and we have optometrists who specialise in performing eye surgeries and we give out prescribed free glasses. It is my duty to ensure that the services are strictly given out free of charge.

**Given the capacity of funding in recent times, would you say you have enough finance to execute key projects?**

We are incapacitated by the current financial state of the commission. The Federal Government is owing NDDC about N1.9 trillion and that is slowing the pace of the ongoing infrastructural development in the area. We appeal to the Federal Government to release part of the fund so that we can accomplish our set-out goals and fulfill our obligations to the

Niger Delta people, which we believe will go a long way to achieve a whole lot in reducing the poverty rate in the region.

**What are those key projects that would be regarded as legacies by the commission?**

I call it capacity building, in other words the scholarship scheme. We recently launched one. We signed Memorandums of Understanding with some international universities and right now, we only offer post graduate scholarships to designated universities in Europe, America and Canada. Based on our budget, we have given scholarships to 200 and 55 million in the areas of engineering, and medicine.

Again, it's not all about giving scholarships; we also provide them job placements when they return. In my short stay of six months, I have gone to the universities in person and interacted with the students who expressed happiness. The second batch will be leaving by September this year which we just concluded the admission exercise. So when I talk about human capacity, this will be one of the key projects which will be considered legacy projects in generations to come due to its impact.

**What are the pressing challenges facing the commission and how do you intend to solve them?**

Poor exploitation of agriculture/Aquaculture for economic gains, socio-political challenge, and environmental degradation due to oil spillage; these are some of the challenges facing the Niger Delta. After years of oil exploration and exploitation, the environment has witnessed pollution and consequent degradation.

Besides pollution occasioned by oil and gas business, we also face seasonal and constant erosion, silting, and flooding, as well as poor control of refuse, sewage and municipal solid waste. These challenges have combined to make the Niger Delta a very poor region. We are currently working according to the master plan and in synergy with consultants and stakeholders to achieve the mandate of a sustainable development in Niger Delta.

**Apart from the stated goals, what are other priorities of the NNDC and how does it foster development in the rural area?**

NDDC is also committed to doing more to revive not just socio-economic activities and improve the livelihoods of the people, but we are determined to revive the hopes of the people in our capacity and willingness to intervene in their lives. Our objectives have remained the same, which is to bridge the gap in the management of the oil and gas sector of the Niger Delta region, to prepare our youths for leadership and management positions in the oil and gas sector, and to produce skilled graduate beneficiaries who can match international standards and take over the leadership of the oil and gas sector in the nearest future.

**As an academic, do you have any future political ambition and are you confident that you have the competence to run for political office?**

Yes I do and that is based on my academic achievements as a Professor and my leadership contributions to the society which also earned me global merit awards and international recognition. I desire to serve and advocate for the people, especially in furtherance with my mandate which is based on human development.

**What are your expectations from the Federal Government in terms of supporting the NNDC to achieve its mandate and what are areas in the NDDC that require the immediate intervention of the Federal Government?**

All we ask of is the support of the Federal government to achieve our vision to enable us carry out our mandate which will also be for the betterment of Nigerian citizens.

# HOW BUHARI SAVED NDDC FROM SHUTDOWN ...MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.



**Ibim Seminatari**



**Nsima Ekere**



**Brambaifa**



**Pondei**

**T**he Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the NDDC had explained how President Muhammadu Buhari saved the commission from been shutdown.

It said President Muhammadu Buhari saved the Niger Delta Development Committee (NDDC) from been shut down due to over trading, bloated contracts and other sharp practices in the commission.

At a Press Conference in Port Harcourt recently acting Executive Director, Projects, Dr Cairo Ojougboh said the commission was sinking and would have been 'killed and buried' but for the intervention of the President.

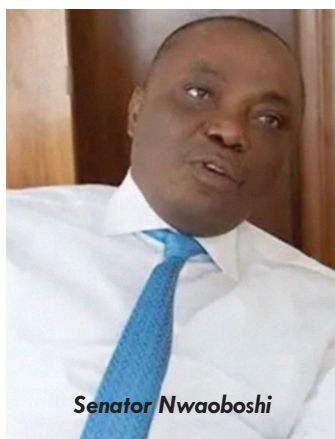
Dr Ojougboh who is the chairman of the Verification Committee said the forensic exercise would among other things establish the true position of the emergency contracts regime between 2016 and 2019 in the commission.

He said in 2017 the NDDC awarded a total 201 emergency contracts valued at N100b, in 2018 a total of 1,057 emergency contracts valued at N162b, were awarded and in just seven months of 2019 it awarded a total of 1,921 emergency contracts valued at over one trillion naira.

'we are talking about a total of over N1.3 trn in less than three



**Tunji Ojo**



**Senator Nwaoboshi**

years. The yearly budget of NDDC is hardly above N400b and a situation where contracts do not qualify for emergency contracts were fraudulently awarded to cover one trillion naira valued in less than one year amount to not only stealing from public pulpit but stealing the entire pulpit'.

It would be recalled that between 2016 and 2019 about four Managing Directors had been appointed for the commission and two Federal Ministers and Ministers of State for the Niger Delta Ministry. All were recommended by various party leaders of the ruling party to protect their interest.

The four Managing Directors included Ibim Seminatari, nominated by the Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi,

Nsima Ekere, Nelson Brambaifa and currently Kemebradikumo Pondei.

The reports also indicted Chairman of the Senate Committee on NDDC Senator Peter Nwaoboshi who also accused Godswill Akpabio of inserting a N500m project in NDDC in 2017 budget. As at that time Godswill Akpabio was the Minority leader in the Senate. It also indicted the chairman of the House Committee on the Niger Delta Hon Tunji Ojo. Both of them recused themselves during the National Assembly public hearing.

The Interim Management Committee also said the indicted Legislatures also named the entire National Assembly and its leadership of collaborations. They include

former Speaker Yakubu Dogara and former Senate President Bukola Saraki.

The Management Committee said The Chairman of the House Committee brought out emergency training programme for N6.4 b claiming the job belonged to the Speaker and said the Commission should pay N3.7b but we refused, between 2016 and 2019 emergency contracts of over N2trn were awarded by the NDDC under the supervision of both chambers of the National Assembly. We have faced so much pressure from some members of the National Assembly to pay for 132 jobs which has no proof of execution. We have refused to pay N6.4b for these jobs. A company called CONDOUR owned by a serving Senator claimed they initiated statutory payments from Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), in the letter they collected \$28m and exchanged the money at N360 to \$1 at a time Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was exchanging for N225 to \$1. They were also paid 20% OF \$28m. A consulting firm that was contracted to collect money from International Oil companied (IOCs) on behalf of NDDC was been paid N1 b monthly. NDDC awarded two projects to run from 2017 to 2019. They are Water Hyacinth emergency N800m was budgeted but N10b was spent also Desilty N2b was budgeted but N37b was spent."



# DELTA GOVT HAS ATTRACTED OVER N50B DIRECT FOREIGN INVESTMENTS-NMAH

Delta State Government has recorded a lot of achievements from the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with investors, Chairman, Delta State Investment Development Agency (DIDA), Mr Paul Nmah has said.



that Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's determination to partner with investors to develop the State has attracted billions of direct foreign investments to the State.

According to Nmah who also doubles as Executive Assistant to the Governor on Investment and Promotion, one of the greatest attractions was the \$20 million Umutu Gas Plant at Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

"Since I came on board, we have attracted many investments to

mah, in an interview with Journalists at the Agency's office in Asaba, disclosed

the state; and as we speak today, many of them are near completion, some are completed and others are waiting to be inaugurated.

"One of such projects that are waiting to be inaugurated is the Umutu Gas Plant; we were able to attract a foreign investor into that project where they signed GSPA with Platform Petroleum to erect a gas plant for the purpose of transporting compressed gas to industries in Delta State which we were lacking even with the high gas deposit in the state.

"The closest place to get compressed natural gas deport was Edo or Enugu States; that gave rise gas to high cost of gas in Delta than these places.

"The Umutu Gas Plant has solved that problem because, the project has been completed and it

has started processing gas and feeding a lot of companies in Delta with gas at a lower cost.

"That project cost \$20 million; it is completed and its inauguration was held up because of COVID-19 pandemic.

"Over 600 Deltans have been employed there; they are working and earning a living and many more were engaged at different levels of the construction stage of the project.

"During my inspection visit last week to the plant, they were working out a plan with Keke riders in Delta to make them use Compressed Natural Gas as fuel which is cheaper compared to the PMS they are using.

"This is also another huge investment to the state, because,

they are going to set up gas fuel station where the Keke can refill their gas.

"We are also discussing with Tanker Drivers in Warri to also key into this project which will also reduce the cost on fuel," Nmah said.

He added that other key ongoing projects attracted by the agency include; Mechanic Village along the express worth N5.6Billion, Warri Tanker Park which cost N10billion and others which are near completion.

He stated further that currently, these projects have created over 2000 direct and indirect jobs for the youths in the state and by the time they all come on-stream, it will have a multiplying chain effect on the economy of Delta State.





“

He commended the efforts of the two governors towards peace and development in the Niger Delta region, urging them to help sustain the drive for economic and political growth of the south south states.





# Declare State Of Emergency On 'Niger Delta Infrastructure', King Ayemi-Botu Tells FG



National Chairman of Association of Traditional Rulers of Oil and Gas Producing States of Nigeria

(TROMPCON) and Paramount Ruler of Seimbiri Kingdom in Burutu local government area of Delta State, King Charles Ayemi- Botu has appealed to the federal government to declare a 'state emergency' on infrastructural development in the Niger Delta region.

The revered monarch noted that the intervention agencies including the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has failed to meet the developmental yearning of the region thus the President Muhammadu Buhari should quickly declare a 'state of emergency' to address the lopsided development against the region.

King Ayemi-Botu stated this in separate remarks when he paid thank-you visit to some communities in Delta and Bayelsa States over their active participation in his 25th coronation anniversary and launch of his biography.

A statement issued by his media office, a copy of it made available to WARRI TODAY on Tuesday, said much was expected from the government towards fast-tracking the development of the oil-rich region which he described as the livewire of the nation's economy.

The Monarch said urgent steps were needed to address the absence of basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, shore protection and reclamation as well as tackle the perennial flooding in the Niger Delta region, particularly in Ijaw communities to avoid looming

natural disasters.

According to the Ijaw monarch, "Nature has been very benevolent to the oil bearing coastal communities which invariably is the economic live-wire of the country, from extinction as a result of age long neglect by successive governments.

"The development has exposed the communities to untold hardships such as floods, acid rains from perpetual gas flaring, water and airborne diseases, deaths through oil exploitation and exploration by insensitive multinationals whose stock-in-trade is to cart away our wealth without plunging back part of it to develop the affected communities.

"The duo of federal government and the oil majors should act with urgent dispatch to address these anomalies in order to forestall avoidable tension in the Niger Delta Region."



**The duo of federal gov. and the oil majors should act with urgent dispatch to address these anomalies in order to forestall avoidable tension in the Niger Delta Region.**





# World Bank: 96 Million Nigerians Will Be Living in Poverty by 2022



The COVID-19 Pandemic is predicted to drive up the poverty rate in Nigeria, pushing almost 6 million additional people into poverty by 2022, The World Bank has said.

In a report released last week, the bank predicted that there would be 95.7 million Nigerians living below the poverty line by 2022.

The bank stated that without the virus, 90 million Nigerians were projected to be in poverty by 2022. However, the virus would add about 6 million to that figure in two years.

The report stated that: "With real per capita GDP growth forecast to be negative in all sectors in 2020, poverty will deepen for the current poor, while those households that were just above the poverty line prior to the COVID-19 crisis will fall into poverty.

"Were the crisis not to have hit (the counterfactual scenario), the poverty headcount rate would be forecast to remain virtually unchanged, with the number of poor people set to rise from 82.9 million today to 85.2 million in 2020 and 90.0 million in 2022 due to natural population growth.

"Given the effects of the crisis, however, the national poverty headcount rate is instead forecast to jump from 40.1 percent today to 42.5 percent in 2020 and 42.9 percent in 2022, implying that the number of poor people will be 90.2 million in 2020 and 95.7 million in 2022.

"Thus, taking the difference between these two scenarios, the crisis alone is forecast to drive an additional 4.9 million people into poverty this year, with an additional 5.7 million people living in poverty by 2022."

The report stated that a disproportionate share of those pushed into poverty by the COVID-19 crisis would likely be those living in urban areas and earning income from services.

The bank further predicted that: "More than one-third of the additional people forecast to be pushed into poverty by the COVID-19 crisis are expected to be in urban areas, while just 15.9 percent of the current poor are urban dwellers.

"Only 13.1 percent of the additional poor people in 2022 are predicted to be in households where the head works primarily in agriculture, while, today, 56.0 percent of poor Nigerians live in agricultural households.

"Many Nigerians who are not poor today are vulnerable to falling below the poverty line during the COVID-19 crisis. People living only just above the poverty line are more susceptible to becoming poor when shocks occur. Those with consumption levels between the poverty line and 1.5 times the poverty line may be defined as 'vulnerable'."

According to the bank nationally, 40.1 percent of Nigerians (82.9 million people) live below the poverty line, while another 25.4 percent (52.6 million people) are vulnerable by this definition.

It noted that in rural areas, more than three-quarters of the population were either poor or vulnerable, yet even in urban areas—where the poverty headcount rate was far lower at 18.0 percent—around a quarter of the population would be vulnerable to shocks.



# NIDCOM boss Partners Anambra To woo Diaspora Investors



**T**he Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa has promised to make good her desire to attract Foreign Direct Investment into the Country by strongly engaging Nigerians in the Diaspora.

The NIDCOM Boss stated this when she received the Anambra state Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, Culture and Tourism Hon. Christian Madubuko in Abuja.

Hon Dabiri-Erewa maintains that Anambra State is blessed with a lot of tourism potentials that the Diaspora Community can tap into.

The NIDCOM Boss said the Commission has a lot of activities that will be of interest to Anambra State.

For instance the Annual Badagry Festival: Door of Return, which provides a Spiritual, cultural, social, economic and political reconnection process.

She urged the delegation to open up its doors for Diaspora investment into the State.

The Chairman/CEO NIDCOM, commended the State Governor for being the first to appoint a Commissioner for Diaspora

## COVID-19: NDBDA Acquires 84 Hactres of land for farming

**T**he Niger Delta Basin Development Authority, NDBDA, says that it has acquired 84 hactres of land for farming as part of it's food security to cushion the effect of post COVID-19 pandemic in it's catchment areas.

It said the measure is part of the Authority's food security and job creation to cushion the harsh effect of post COVID-19 pandemic.

The Authority said it was working in line with the policy of President Mohammadu Buhari in the area of food security, job and wealth creation for the teeming population of the youths of the Niger Delta region and by extension the generality of Nigerians.

Disclosing this during a media tour of some of the ongoing

projects of the Basin Authority in Kpon community of Khana local government area of Rivers state at the weekend, the project manager of the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority, Mr. Kobo Nekabari Marklin said that at the completion of the massive farm projects going on in the area, thousands of jobs would be created and sufficient food provided for the region's sustenance.

Marklin explained that the 84 hectares of farmland will be used to cultivate palm oil, hybrid citrus, hybrid dwarf mango, plantain and pawpaw plantations as well as poultry, fish ponds and other agricultural products.

"He said that the irrigation farm project in Kpon community, the biggest in the state and by extension the Niger Delta, is a

complete farm settlement with solar power station and residential quarters for staff and also provides a ready market for both the local community and the outsiders for patronage.

Marklin explained that with sufficient funding and patronage, the Kpon irrigation farm would absorbed over 10,000 direct and indirect labor and make an annual profit of over N100million. "That is besides the auxiliary benefits by the community people who see the project as their major source of livelihood," he said.

"With adequate funding and patronage, we are very sure of creating thousands of jobs and making millions of naira in profit when the project operates in full capacity. We have massive projects going on here. The biggest farm project in the Niger Delta region. We need more funds to inject into the project

to meet up the President Mohammadu Buhari's policy of food sufficiency and security for Nigerians

"Between now and the end of the year 2020, some of these projects will begin to function maximally. Virtually, everything will be produced here. We pray for good government policy and favorable economic environment. We plan to have palm oil mill, fish pond, we have poultry farm already and a lot more

"We have ambitious plans for hybrid mango, pawpaw, plantain, palm tree and citrus plantations. When they are fully mature, obviously, we can feed the entire Niger Delta region and by extension Nigeria as a whole. The project is massive and the present management of the NDBDA is poised at achieving this objective within the shortest possible time", he said.



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## PRINCE LAWRENCE EZEH CONGRATULATES CHIEF DAN ORBIH, AS HE ASSUMES OFFICE AS PDP NATIONAL VICE-CHAIRMAN, SOUTH-SOUTH

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**E**zeh, who contested in the 2019 Senatorial elections for Enugu East, was present at the party secretariat, where he expressed hope that the party will take over leadership in the country.

Congratulating the new South-South boss of the party, Ezeh said his capable leadership of the party in Edo State led to the weakening and eventual splitting

of the opposition party in the state.

He also expressed optimism that the party will grow, not just in the geopolitical zone, but across the country as a result of Orbih's fighting spirit.

Those in attendance include the Akwa Ibom and Cross River states Chairmen of the party, as well as numerous other stakeholders in the zone.



# FG Flags off Recruitment of 774,000 Unskilled Workers for 3 Months at N20,000/month Salary

**T**he Federal Government says it will recruit 1,000 itinerant, unskilled workers in each of the 774 Local Government Areas (LGA), in the country from October to December for roads rehabilitation, construction, sanitation, among others.

Mr Festus Keyamo, Minister of State for Labour and Employment, said this during the inauguration of the States' Selection Committees for the Extended Special Public Works Programme on Monday in Abuja.

Keyamo said that the programme was approved by President Muhammadu Buhari and aimed principally at recruiting 774,000 itinerant and unskilled Nigerians.

According to him, the 1,000 persons that the committee will recruit per LGA will be engaged by the Federal Government between October and December this year.

"This is for the workers to carry out public works that are peculiar to each Local Government Area.

"They would be paid a total of N60,000 each, that is, N20, 000 per month.

"They would be engaged in roads rehabilitation and social housing construction, urban and rural sanitation, health extension and other critical services.

"Depending on how successful the programme is or how buoyant the Federal Government's purse is, this programme may either be extended or repeated every year.

"There are also various suggestions on some exit strategies for this programme, one of which is to move these workers to some agriculture projects, but nothing is concrete yet," he said.

The minister, therefore, charged members of the committees to ensure that the task was taken seriously and with patriotism.

Keyamo added that the programme could rightly be described as one of President Buhari's many star programmes for the lowly, weak and vulnerable people in the society.

"We are already running out of time on the execution of this programme. This is because a lot has to be done before the various works begin in October.

"After the selection of those to be engaged, they still have to be captured by some selected banks," he said.

The minister noted that the government was discussing with some banks for the capturing to

enable the workers to have their Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs).

"This is because Mr President has directed that everyone must be paid through their BVNs to eliminate fraud in the programme. With this measure, no single person can be paid twice," he explained.

He, therefore, directed all States' Selection Committees to within three weeks complete the selection processes and return names of those selected for further processing by the banks.

"We are hereby releasing immediately all names and phone numbers of every member of the various committees in the entire country for easy access by Nigerians to make case for their inclusion.

"Members of the committee, in turn will also reach out to various sectors of their different states to recruit eligible Nigerians.

"The finer details of how these would be done will be communicate to the committees through their various Chairmen and Secretaries.

"These would be ready in the next few days in the form of guidelines for the Operation of the States' Selection Committees," he said.

The minister also directed that all meetings by the committees should be done in the various states' offices of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), or at neutral venues to avoid undue influence.

Keyamo urged the committees to adhere to the guidelines given to them as they were bound to achieve the targets set by the President to reach 774,000 Nigerians who are largely indigent workers.

He, however, added that the Federal Government would not hesitate to replace any committee member who failed to adhere strictly to the guidelines given or whose actions were not in line with the programmes objectives.

Mr Afolabi Joseph, who responded on behalf of the committees, commended President Buhari for the opportunity given to them to serve on the laudable initiative.

"We believe that it is an opportunity to impact the lives of a lot of Nigerians and we believe the programme will be successful with our support.

"We will also ensure that all guidelines that will be released soon will be followed accordingly, for us to deliver in line with the expectations of the minister," he

said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), recalls that an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Extended Special Public Works Programme, headed by the Director-General of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), was inaugurated on April 29.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee, drawn from eight ministries, was to recommend on ways and means of executing the programme.

It was from the recommendations of the inter-ministerial committee that the States' Selection Committees emerged.

The States' Selection Committees was saddled with the responsibility of identifying the public works to be executed in each LGA in the states and also to identify and recruit those to be engaged under the programme.

## Court reinstates 4 lecturers Demoted In Otuoke Federal Versity

**T**he National Industrial Court of Nigeria sitting in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state has ordered the reinstatement of four out of seven lecturers demoted by the management of the Federal University, Otuoke, in Ogbia local council area of the state and awarded N20 million fine to the school as damages to affected lecturers.

The University management had in 2018 demoted a Professor and 6 other lecturers with doctorate degrees over what it termed as "lack of requisite scholarship"

Those affected are; Dr. Steve Nwabuzor, who was downgraded from the rank of Professor to Lecturer 1; Dr. Leonard K Shilgba, downgraded from the rank of Professor to Senior Lecturer; Dr. Timothy Falade Obalade, downgraded from the rank of Associate Professor to Senior Lecturer; Dr. Felina Nwadike, downgraded from Associate Professor to Senior Lecturer.

Others were; Dr. Sepribo Lawson-Jack, downgraded from the rank of Associate Professor to Lecturer 1; Dr. Marcellina Offoha, downgraded from the rank of Associate Professor to Lecturer 1; and Dr. Evans Eze, downgraded from the rank of Associate Professor to Lecturer 2.

Dissatisfied with the institution's authority decision, four out of seven of the affected lecturers filed a suit at the National Industrial Court of Nigeria sitting in Yenagoa on 2019, with a suit number; NICN/YENO1/2019.

Delivering the judgement on the dispute on the Presiding Judge, Justice Bashiru Alkali ruled that claimants be reinstated to their full status, privileges and entitlements by the institution.

Justice Alkali also mandated the

institution management to pay each claimant N5 million for defamation and two hundred thousand each for cost of litigation.

We gathered that all the litigants had returned from the Diaspora to serve in the institution upon the establishment of the Federal University, in 2011 by Goodluck Jonathan administration.

The University management had in 2018 offered reasons why the seven lecturers were demoted and six non-teaching staff sacked over "lack of requisite scholarship and absconding from the school."

The Registrar, Mr. Iruo Yousoo, in a statement then, stated that the Governing Council of Federal University, Otuoke at its 10th meeting made key decisions involving appointments and discipline including the resolution to sanitise the system in order to take the university to the greater height.

According to him, "Consequently, the Governing Council of the Federal University Otuoke have re-classified some academic appointments by downgrading seven teaching staff appointments to lower ranks for lack of requisite scholarship."

Reacting to the judgement, the counsel to the claimants, Barr Okoko Mark, expressed happiness that the justice has been done to the affected lecturers, noting that the court had granted all their relieves.

He said: "The judgement has been delivered in favour of the claimants, ordering for their reinstatement and awarded damages to them. The judgement is to be complied with within the next 30 days."

# PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

## NEW DECADE. NEW DIRECTION.

**A**s we approach the governorship elections scheduled for September 19, 2020, it is our responsibility to let Edo people know the choices before them.

Our program is a clear roadmap of where we want to arrive together. It is not a wish-list, it's not a simple agenda but a realistic programme built on our vision for growth and development.

Our roadmap will be well

costed and realistic. It will certainly not just be a vote catching exercise.

We will build and improve on some programs while reviewing others that haven't performed so well. We will change what needs to be changed. We will deal with them. Challenges in government are complex and not simple. To deal with them takes hard work, complex research and deep thinking. Governor Godwin Obaseki possesses these

attributes!

But above all, we want to ensure inclusivity and that everyone has an equal chance of contributing towards the success of our State.

Because Edo is for all.

Edo does not belong to some exclusive group, a politician or party. That is the past.

This is what We promise you. That your State will be yours.

If you are young we will offer you all the

opportunities to further your studies and succeed, to achieve your full potential.

If you are a worker we will make sure that you have a job that you deserve.

If you are in business, we will give the space to grow and thrive successfully.

This is what PDP stands for... Making Edo People Matter!

...Resetting Edo for a Better and Brighter Tomorrow

## President Buhari Signs 2020 Revised Budget into Law



**P**resident Muhammadu Buhari in order to keep strictly with the

January – December budget cycle, on Friday signed into law, the revised N10.8 trillion budget for

the year 2020 passed by the National Assembly in June.

He said the budget had to be revised because of the effect of coronavirus disease on the nation's economy.

He said the ministries, departments and agencies will be given 15 percent of their capital allocation by the end of this month, July, 2020.

The signing ceremony took place inside the Council Chambers of the State House, Abuja.

The Vice-President, Yemi Osinbajo, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, Chief of Staff to the President, Ibrahim Gambari witnessed the signing.

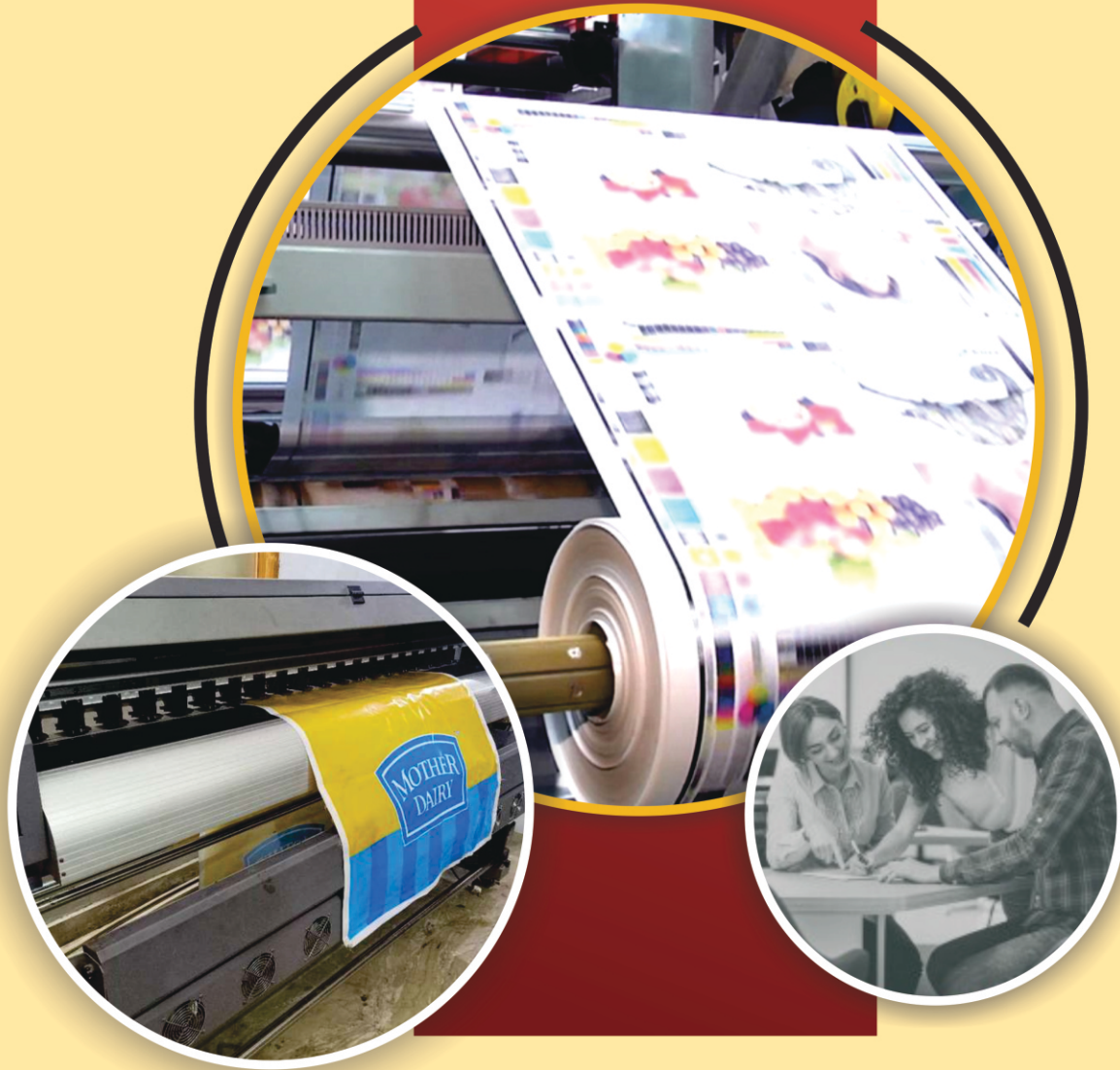
Senate President,

Ahmed Lawan, Speaker Femi Gbajabiamila and other principal officers witnessed the signing.

The Ministers Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed; Minister of State Finance, Clement Agba, Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Godwin Emefiele and Director General Budget, Ben Akabueze. At 11:03 Senator Babajide Omoworare, Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to President on National Assembly Matters (Senate) and Hon. Hon Umar El Yakub, on National Assembly Matters (House of Representatives) presented the budget to the President, while the Osinbajo, Lawan, and Gbajamila joined him to witness the signing the budget at exactly 11:06



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