

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF TOWN HALL MEETINGS ON CITIZENS' BUDGET ORGANIZED BY NASARAWA STATE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, BUDGET AND PLANNING ACROSS THE THREE SENATORIAL ZONES HELD ON 13<sup>TH</sup>, 27<sup>TH</sup> AND 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2021**

**Background**

The citizens' budget town hall meetings in the three senatorial zones of the state had participants drawn from various groups of interest including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Youth Associations, Market Women, Farmers' Union and the Media.

The meetings were declared open by the Hon. Commissioner for Finance, Budget and Planning, Hon. Haruna Adamu Ogbole, CNA. He enjoined participants to contribute to the preparation and planning of the 2022 budget by identifying projects of priority in their respective communities as well ensuring that they participate at all levels of the budget processes and implementation.

The Permanent Secretary, Mr. Emmanuel M. Alidzi, FCE, highlighted clearly the objectives of the citizens' budget stressing that the number of participants were reduced considerably in compliance with the COVID-19 pandemic protocols. He noted that plans are under way to widen the citizens' budget to ensure active participation of the people at the grassroots in the governance of the State in the spirit of transparency, accountability and good governance.

The town hall meetings were held at Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic, Lafia (Nasarawa South Senatorial zone), Nasarawa State University, Keffi (Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone) and College of Education, Akwanga (Nasarawa North Senatorial zone) respectively with the theme: "Social Pact with the People: The Way Forward for Greater Development".

**Objectives:**

The main objectives of the Citizens' budget are:

- Understand citizens' budget participation
- Promote accessibility and transparency in government
- Improve, share learning and experiences among citizens
- Promote inclusive people decision about citizens' budget processes and projects

- Encourage and empower individuals and communities to participate in governance
- Promote direct involvement of communities particularly in budget decisions
- Recognize and remove barriers to full and effective participation in governance in Nasarawa State
- Have sustainable, transparent, accountable and good governance that is people centered.

#### **Commendation**

1. Participants commended the Nasarawa State government for organizing the town hall meeting on Citizens' budget to engage the citizens meaningfully in the planning and implementation of the state budget
2. Participants, especially in the Nasarawa West and Nasarawa North Senatorial zones said they were experiencing such engagement for the first time and passed a vote of confidence in the State governor, Eng. Abdullahi A. Sule, Commissioner for Finance, Budget and Planning, Hon. Haruna Adamu Ogbole, CNA, Accountant General of the State, Mr. Yakubu Zakka, FCA, Permanent Secretary, SMOFB&P, Mr. Emmanuel M. Alidzi, FCE and Director Budget, Mr. Akolo Peters Ataka, NSA, for their commitment to good governance, transparency and accountability.
3. Participants further commended the state government for making the budget visible through the internet for the people of the state.

- A.** In Nasarawa North Senatorial Zone which comprised of five (5) Local Government Areas including Lafia, Doma, Obi, Keana and Awe, the citizens' budget participation town hall meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 at Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic, Lafia. In view of the prevailing challenges faced by people of the zone, the following observations and recommendations were made:

#### **Observations/Recommendations**

1. That government should make provision for the engagement of more health care personnel especially in rural communities to address the health needs of people at the grassroots.

2. That government should make provision for the training and retraining of health care workers for effective service delivery.
3. That government should create budget line to support the creative industry in the state to curb youth restiveness in the state.
4. That government should make provisions for sustainability of Save One Million Lives Programme in the state.
5. That government should expedite action towards the implementation of its revenue harmonization Law in order to block leakages in the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR).
6. That the various MDAs in the state are not engaging NGOs/CSOs well in their planning processes, thereby limiting citizens' participation, ownership for good governance.
7. That the State House of Assembly has not been conducting public hearing session where NGOs/CSOs and other stakeholders could participate enough. This negates the principle of true practice of democracy in the state.
8. That there is great need for participatory development of Monitoring and Evaluation tools and Implementation plan with clear indicators of measuring success against 2022 budget as this would simplify quarterly reviews and feedback on budget performance.

#### **B. In Nasarawa West Senatorial Zone**

Nasarawa West Senatorial zone comprised of five (5) LGAs including Keffi, Karu, Kokona, Nasarawa and Toto. The town hall meeting which drawn participants from all the local government areas in compliance with Covid-19 protocols was held on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 at the 1000 seat auditorium of Nasarawa State University, Keffi.

Participants in making input based on challenges facing people of the Western Senatorial Zone made the following observations and recommendations:

1. That facilities in Karu, near the FCT are over stretched due to the influx of people and workers from the FCT, Abuja hence attention should be given to;
  - i. Rehabilitation of existing roads
  - ii. Construction of new roads
  - iii. Rehabilitation of existing public health facilities

iv. Provision of portable water supply

2. That Karu Science Secondary School should be equipped with laboratory facilities and the entire school rehabilitated to meet up with modern science school standard;
3. That Fadama Agricultural scheme should be resuscitated to engage more youth meaningfully in farming activities in Karu Local Government Area;
4. That market women should be empowered economically through grants to enable women to engage in small and large scale businesses;
5. That the northern part of Keffi Local Government Area should be given priority in the 2022 budget to address challenges of inadequate or in some cases lack of basic social amenities in the area such as scarcity of water, poor road network and health facilities;
6. That security votes of the state should be clearly budgeted for separately to enable the citizens to track effect of the budget implementation;
7. That funds should be allocated for the implementation of Keffi Master Plan to enhance socio-economic development of the LGA;
8. That Toto Campus of the Nasarawa State College of Education, Akwanga be established in Toto Local Government Area to bring education closer to the people at the grassroots;
9. That adequate funding should be provided for education to ensure that more qualified teachers are engaged as most of the rural communities in the Western Senatorial zone are lacking not only qualified teachers but teachers who will teach in their primary schools.
10. That attention should be given to Adadu-Sardauna, Gadabuke-Katakpa, Ugya-Katakpa, Kanyehu-Utta-Umuashia-Igwa nati Road.
11. That Gadabuke Health centre be upgraded to General Hospital. Ugya and Umaisha should be given a Comprehensive Health Centre.
12. That Local government Chairmen should come up with their budget to enable citizens to know and how local government projects are executed and can also be tracked for effective development.

13. That the road from Keffi Local Government Area to Toto Local Government Areas needed to be reconstructed.
14. That more religion Instructors be recruited into schools to enable children know more about God for future generation.
15. That money budgeted for water should really be used for the water projects in the State. That it should not be taken for a different project.
16. That since the government want to carry everybody along, then there is need for the State Government to control price in the market.
17. That allocation for each of the Local Government Council from the federation account should be made public monthly.

#### **C. In Nasarawa North Senatorial Zone**

The participants who were at the town hall meeting on citizens' budget participation made the following observations and recommendations:

1. That grant should be given to women farmers to boost productivity.
2. That the 2021 budget allocation to agriculture and health sectors were below the 10% and 15% standard.
3. That more primary school teacher should be employed to provide quality education for people of the zone.
4. That government should make provisions for the employment of more persons with disability to enable them to contribute their quarter to the development of the society.
5. That government should put more efforts toward payment of pension and gratuity.
6. That Youth Centers across the zone should be rehabilitated to engage more youth meaningfully.
7. That government should reconstruct Nasarawa/Eggon- Mada station Road to ease transportation of people and goods in the area.
8. That government should construct Mada station –Borum-Borum Roads to link Doma town.
9. That government should make provision for more classes, chairs and instructional materials for Kagbu-Erro Primary School.

10. That government should ensure that the internet facilities in all the E-Libraries across the Zones are functional for students and researchers to use.

11. That government should ensure effective supervision of road projects in the zone.

#### Conclusion

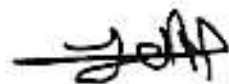
Participants at the meetings expressed the hope that if the state government adopt the recommendations at the town hall meetings and implement same in the 2022 budgets, the state would be able to achieve the set objectives of the citizens' budget which is anchored on promoting transparency, accountability and good governance.

#### Members of the Communique Drafting Committee are:

1. Mr. Isaac Ukpoju	- 08060907722	Chairman
2. Mr. Kalu I. Idika	- 08039372010	Member
3. Mrs. Hauwa Yakubu	- 08081080853	Member
4. Mr. Salisu Ibrahim	- 08038830494	Member
5. Mr. Ajegena Bernard	- 08033794761	Member
6. Mrs. Fatima Muhammed	- 08069262476	Member
7. Mrs. Nuratu Nasiru	- 08100578888	Member
8. Eng. Haruna Sani	- 07039308056	Member
9. Mr. Habila Yusuf	- 0805933304	Member
10. Mr. Kuje Awayi	- 08065775099	Member
11. Mr. Ekombi Adigizi Anzaku	- 08067248434	Member
12. Mrs. Altine M. Ubangari	- 08039669468	Member
13. Rev. Jonah Istifanus	- 08036279102	Member
14. Mr. Yerima A. Esson	- 09033467527	Secretary



**Mr. Isaac Ukpoju**  
Chairman



**Mr. Yerima Esson**  
Secretary