

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE EXECUTIVE
GOVERNOR OF AKWA IBOM STATE, MR. UDOM
EMMANUEL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION
OF THE 2017 BUDGET PROPOSALS TO AKWA IBOM STATE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

The Honourable Speaker
Honourable Principal Officers
Honourable Members of Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly

INTRODUCTION

I have come to this Hallowed Chambers with great expectations and an abiding hope that we can, once again, renew our faith in the Akwa Ibom project, and erect lasting structures and institutions that will launch us on a path of enduring growth and prosperity.

I am not unaware that we live in a time of extreme economic challenges occasioned by the recession our nation is currently grappling with. But the anchor of the expectation with which I come to you today is based on the immortal words in the Holy book that assures us that when men shall say there is a casting down our testimony shall be that there is a lifting up.

Let us therefore draw strength from the compelling story in the Bible about the first crisis in the kingdom of Israel that occurred due to the death of Saul. It references the men of Issachar as men who had an understanding of the times and knew what Israel ought to do. Even though the times were confusing, but the men were not confused and knew what Israel ought to do.

I am happy today because we, like the men of Issachar, have an understanding of the times we live in and we know what Akwa Ibom State ought to do. Bearing this in mind, what I have come

to present to you today, is not only a budget but an economic plan and socio-political blueprint for actualizing our dream of a greater and more prosperous Akwa Ibom State.

These plans would be useless except we commit it into the hands of He who began a good work in us, and who this state is named after. As He was with us last year, He would certainly be with us this year and He would exceed our imaginations and expectations.

Permit me to pay a special tribute to this Great Assembly. You have exhibited great sense of patriotism and good conscience in handling the affairs of this Assembly. While other assemblies may be bedevilled by rancour and acrimony, while narrow and parochial interests may have trumped other pursuits of the common good with a number of assemblies elsewhere in the federation, you have been a picture of peace, of steady and people-oriented legislation, and on behalf of the Executive Arm, I want to salute you and thank you for the partnership in the service of our people. I know that this relationship will instead of ebbing, will wax stronger and stronger. The task of delivering democratic dividends is a joint effort and I know you stand ready to work with us on this mission. Permit me to pay special tribute to the Speaker of this great house, The Rt. Honourable (Barrister) Onofiok Luke, the Principal officers, and all the Honourable members for the great work they have done for our state. I salute you all.

Mr. Speaker, may I at this juncture, crave your kind indulgence to share with this Hallowed Chambers, the Vision, Policies, Programmes and Projects of my Administration and to present for your kind consideration and approval, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Akwa Ibom State Government for the 2017 Fiscal Year in accordance with the provision of Section

121(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Speaker and our dear Honourable House members, permit me to present the 2017 Budget Proposals, bearing in mind the cardinal objectives of my administration, as encapsulated in the Five-Point Agenda of: Job Creation, Poverty Alleviation, Wealth Creation, Economic and Political Inclusion, and Infrastructural Consolidation and Expansion to further transform the state into an industrialized entity.

REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF 2016 BUDGET

Please, permit me to review the performance of our 2016 Budget before dwelling on the 2017 proposals.

Mr. Speaker, a total of ~~₦~~423.000 billion was approved for 2016 fiscal year, made up as follows:

Recurrent Expenditure	-	₦ 94.964 billion
Capital Expenditure	-	₦ 243.000 billion
Consolidated Revenue Fund Charges	-	₦ 85.036 billion
Total	-	₦423.000 billion

As at September, 2016, the actual recurrent Revenue collected was ~~₦~~104.829 billion. This was 37% of the budgeted amount. A breakdown of Recurrent Revenue shows that

Internally Generated Revenue (IGR)	-	₦ 11.399 billion
Statutory Allocation	-	₦ 16.260 billion
Value Added Tax (VAT)	-	₦ 6.610 billion
Derivation	-	₦ 70.560 billion
Total	-	₦104.829 billion

In re-appraising expenditure, a total of ₦74.579 billion was spent on the recurrent services which include:

Personnel Costs	-	₦27.397 billion
Overhead Costs	-	₦15.659 billion
Consolidated Revenue Fund Charges	-	₦31.523 billion
Total	-	₦74.579 billion

In spite of dwindling resources due to the recession in our dear nation, we operated within the framework of the approved budget and the limits of available resources.

We recorded a remarkable breakthrough in achieving some of our key target capital projects and programmes. Some were commissioned and some are on-going. Besides this, we kept faith with our recurrent services. These included among others, the construction and commissioning of the State Secretariat Annex; construction of underground drainage in Uyo; construction of a second Runway at Akwa Ibom International Airport; Rehabilitation of Peacock Paints in Etinan; On-going construction of over 250km of Roads; 17 Bridges and infrastructural upgrades across the State; commencement of the Cocoa Maintenance Scheme; Training of Youth in pruning and shedding; construction of over 300 inter-ministerial rural intervention projects covering schools and electricity in the 31 Local Government Areas; Payment of subventions for running of primary and secondary schools; Ground breaking for the construction of a 132/33KV and 1.30MvA transmission sub-stations to boost and improve electricity and power supply in the state; Rehabilitation of water supply in Uyo Urban Area; Inauguration of Technical Committees on Foreign Direct Investment, Ibom Deep Seaport Project, and Agriculture and Food Sufficiency; ground breaking ceremonies of Automobile Assembly Plant at Itu, Low Energy Display Plant, Fertilizer Blending Plant and AIT Station; commencement of work at the electric metering manufacturing plant in Onna (with over 150 job opportunities); commencement of coconut plantation

and refinery, cocoa plantation and rice production; youth development and empowerment which witnessed training in various fields of skill acquisition; over 100 youths on oracle certificate programme, over 200 youths on power sector, 100 youths in special agricultural application in Israel, 329 youths in photography and film production, some of our youths have gained employment through Akwa Ibom Enterprise and Employment Scheme (AKEES), "Dakkada" philosophy has been internalized by our people and a new attitude and a mind-set of success developed. Today "Dakkada" has about 15,861 Ambassadors enlightening the people on the concept and benefits of partnering with Government. A key component of this is the Dakkada Business Forum (DBF) which provides entrepreneurial skills and economic linkages to our people and facilitates a 31-Dakkada Multi-purpose Cooperatives (DMC) in the 31 Local Government Areas. We have also embarked on the payment of 10 years arrears of pensions and gratuities to Local Government Employees; special intervention at St. Luke's Hospital, Anua, Uyo, intervention work on the gulley erosion on Calabar-Itu Road; Dominic Utuk Street, Abak Independence Hall area and Anua etc., ensuring that salaries and wages of Akwa Ibom State Workers are paid promptly. Also of great benefits to our people in this Administration is the pet project of our First Lady; The Family Empowerment and Youth Re-orientation Programme (FEYREP) has touched many lives and put smiles on the faces of our people again.

Our Capital Budget Expenditure is described in details in the Budget Implementation Report, which has been prepared to facilitate your consideration of the Draft 2017 budget.

THE 2017 BUDGET

Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members, we have christened the 2017 budget as the **Budget of Consolidation**. The 2016

Budget of Sustainable Development highlighted many developmental projects, some of which have been actualized and others are on-going with industrialization undertone by my administration. The 2017 Budget of Consolidation has been so named as it is our desire to make our people happy, prosperous, healthy, through the improvement, sustenance and continuity of the already actualized and on-going socio-economic programmes in Health, Education, Good Roads, Electricity, Water Supply, Agriculture, Information Technology, Capacity Building, Infrastructure, Housing, Commerce and Industry, General Administration, Political Posterity and Security, Industrialization, Legislature and Judiciary.

Already, our State has become the toast of both local and international tourists and investors. Akwa Ibom State has become the choice of most national conferences. Together with your support, we have achieved much and these tremendous achievements in various aspects of our corporate existence are come about because of the cooperation I have received from this Hallowed Chamber.

POLICY THRUST AND OBJECTIVES

The policy framework of 2017 Budget is predicated on the following underlining principles:

1. The developmental objectives and catalyst outlined in the State Medium Term Plan Document would be strictly adhered to in pursuing the Dakkada transformation agenda.
2. The actualization of the economic power base of the state through industrialization and sustainable public-private sector initiative that will open up opportunities for growth and improved living standard.

3. The creation and maintenance of a conducive and enabling environment where the tenets of democratic governance shall thrive and dividends of democracy dispensed for the betterment of all.
4. Ensuring the security of lives and property of the people at all times, while adhering to the principle of the rule of law, thereby ensuring equity, justice and fair play.
5. The promotion of unity and oneness across the state, as well as ensuring due respect for traditional institutions and elders of our society which is an essential ingredient for the achievement of a peaceful and prosperous state.
6. The continuous development, mobilization and promotion of youth and women empowerment programmes via planned and well-articulated welfare packages and capacity building programmes.
7. Giving all Akwa Ibom persons (both within Nigeria and the Diaspora) a proud sense of belonging; building on good governance, economic advancement and due respect for the fundamental Human Rights of all.
8. Pursuance of the task of rural development and integration with vigor, bring all the benefits and dividends of our democratic governance to every nook and cranny in the state, and provide basic amenities of life to all.
9. Ensuring accountability and transparency in government by fighting and tackling corruption in all facets of our administration.
10. Promotion of trade, commerce, and tourism between Akwa Ibom State, our country and the rest of the world.

11. Fostering the development and maintenance of good working relationships with both the Legislative and Judiciary arms of Government in the State as well as ensuring effective local government administration for grassroots development, mobilization and empowerment.

12. The attraction of required federal projects to Akwa Ibom State, by developing and sustaining a harmonious and very cordial relationship with the Federal Government.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

We shall adopt the following measures and strategies to achieve the above objectives:

- i. Build a strong fiscal regime through the expansion of our revenue base and the elimination of wastages and leakages in our expenditure profile;
- ii. Build on the current foundation so far laid and consolidate on the gains of a world class infrastructural development by employing effective public private partnership strategy;
- iii. Increase the viability of Akwa Ibom Maritime, air space, airport facilities and expansion of our road infrastructure;
- iv. Re-invigorate Agriculture and Agro-allied industries by making the sector attractive and responsive to national requirements. To make government subsidies reach end-users and generate output to ensure a sustainable food supply for consumption as well as provide raw materials;
- v. Sustain women and youth empowerment through capacity building and elimination of gender discrimination practices against women and enforcing the Child's Right Law;
- vi. Develop the tourism potentials in the state in order to expand our revenue base and enhance employment opportunities;
- vii. Build an efficient security network around the state that is proactive to minimise crime and make the state more peaceful thereby encouraging investment.

viii. Make the Public Service more efficient and effective to meet the challenges of good governance.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2017 BUDGET

The 2017 Budget is predicated on an oil benchmark of \$35:00 per barrel at a production rate of 1.0 million barrels per day. The price benchmark envisioned here is based on:

- The current decline in global price of crude oil; and
- The production level which is below OPEC quota could serve a dual purpose – to accommodate disruptions in local production and further inherent decline in global price of crude oil.

BUDGET SIZE:

Government has proposed a total budgetary outlay of **₦365.251 billion** for the **2017** financial year as against **₦423.000 billion of 2016.**

This is made up of:

Recurrent Expenditure	- ₦ 88.425 billion
Capital Expenditure	- ₦193.956 billion
Consolidated Revenue Fund Charges	- ₦ 82.870 billion
Total	- ₦365.251 billion

REVENUE:

The total projected Recurrent Revenue for 2017 is estimated at **₦175.000 billion** as against **₦284.666 billion** for 2016. The breakdown is as follows:

Internally Generated Revenue (IGR)	-	₦27.684 billion
Statutory Allocation	-	₦15.000 billion
Derivation Fund	-	₦120.000 billion
Retained Revenue from Parastatals	-	₦2.316 billion
Value Added Tax (VAT)	-	₦10.000 billion
Total	-	₦175.000 billion

RECURRENT EXPENDITURE:

For the 2017 fiscal year, Recurrent Expenditure is proposed at **₦171.295 billion**, made up of:

Personnel Costs	-	₦50.489 billion
Overhead Costs	-	₦37.936 billion
Consolidated Revenue Fund Charges	-	₦82.870 billion
(including pensions, gratuities and public debts.)		
Total	-	₦171.295 billion

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE:

The total Capital Receipts and Expenditure for the year 2017 is estimated at **₦193.956 billion** as against **₦243.000 billion for 2016**. A total projected capital receipt shows that **₦3.706 billion** will be transferred from the consolidated revenue fund while the balance of **₦190.250 billion** is to be realized as follows:

Opening Balance from 2016 account	-	₦ 6.250 billion
Internal/External Loans	-	₦128.000 billion
Grants	-	₦ 3.000 billion
Ecological Funds	-	₦ 2.000 billion
Re-imburement from Federal Government on Road	-	₦ 50.000 billion
Dividends from Government Investment	-	₦ 1.000 billion

SECTORAL ALLOCATION

The sectoral allocation of the total estimated Capital Expenditure outlay of **₦193.956 billion** for the year 2017 is presented as follows:

S/NO.	SECTOR	ALLOCATION ₦(BILLION)	PERCENTAGE OF ALLOCATION
1.	Administration	42.204	21.8
2.	Economic	128.021	66.0
3.	Law and Justice	2.978	1.5
4.	Regional	0.800	0.4
5.	Social	19.953	10.3
	Total	193.956	100.0

Analysis of the sectoral allocation above shows that priority is given to projects and programmes under the Economic sector.

ADMINISTRATION SECTOR

For an efficient and effective Public/Civil Service, Government will keep training and retraining its workforce, and undertake specialized recruitment to fill essential vacancies and digitization of most government offices to boost the administrative sector. To this end, Government will intensify efforts in internal generation of revenue and tax administration. Administration has been allotted **₦42.204 billion** in the 2017 budget.

ECONOMIC SECTOR

This vital and crucial sector will generate revenue to government through effective planning and managing same in order to achieve sustainable socio-economic growth and development vis-à-vis capital projects.

The sum of **N128.021** billion has been estimated to boost this sector.

LAW AND JUSTICE SECTOR

Government will continue to maintain peace, law and order, and justice with the utmost sense of responsibility. Every applicable law will be used to dispense justice to (and enforce the constitutional right of) both Government and the governed. Public enlightenment on the different law issues as they affect the citizenry will be embarked upon. A total of **N2.978 billion** has been budgeted for law and justice.

REGIONAL SECTOR

Government is determined to turn the fortunes of rural dwellers around by focusing on rapid transformation to give them a new lease of life. Rural electrification; rehabilitation/maintenance of rural farm/feeder roads; tarring of slippery hills; provision of mini water schemes, renovating community schools and many community empowerment and poverty alleviation programmes have been on course and this administration will do its best to ensure that more of such services are executed and sustained. This sector will gulp the sum of **N0.800** billion for the actualization of these projects.

SOCIAL SECTOR

The social fabric of our society needs much attention in terms of education, information, sports, health care, women and youth empowerment, and traditional institutions. Also our environment needs aesthetic touches for beautification. My administration will do all it can to give the social life of our state a meaningful and rewarding status. To this end, the sum of **₦19.953 billion** has been estimated for socials.

GENERAL CHARTER OF THE 2017 BUDGET

The belief which drives our vision is anchored on the fact that Akwa Ibom State can and must be a better place for all Akwa Ibom people born and unborn. This article of faith inspired our commitment to the Akwa Ibom project and desire to leave it better than we met it by providing it with an effective and efficient administration anchored on people-oriented goals.

Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members, my administration preaches consolidation and continuity. Consequently, we intend to make the welfare of the Akwa Ibom person the centerpiece of all our developmental efforts and actions as a government. We will pursue sustainability in all facets of our endeavour.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, paramount in the heart of this administration is industrialization of the state. This particular ambition accounts for our general policy direction within this short period of our administration; we have committed ourselves to completing all viable abandoned projects and reviving ailing viable industries. We are committed to leaving no uncompleted project. Our objectives and effort may sound radical, but that is so, because we approach issues outside of the box of conventional wisdom. When the passion is right nothing

shall be impossible. Industrialization will create employment opportunities for our teeming youths and lift people from dependency to self-sustenance.

EDUCATION

Education remains a core social sector of our economy. It is a pivot on which every human capital development revolves. This administration places a high premium on education and skills development. In order to consolidate on our widely – acclaimed gains in this sector, we will continue to provide the basic facilities like libraries, science laboratories, instructional materials, workshop equipment etc. for distribution to our school children in public school system. Renovation and construction of more classroom and academic blocks, securing full accreditation of academic programmes, ensuring effective and efficient capacity building, recruitment of teachers, payment of bursary and scholarship to our students and providing boarding facilities to ensure a controlled and disciplined learning environment will be a continuous affair. To realize these objectives in education, the 2017 budget earmarks the sum of ₦8.620 billion.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In positioning the state to compete favourably with her counterparts in Science and Technology anywhere in the world, the state government will continue to bolster her efforts in making our economy science-and Technology-driven through the following:

- Establishment of Research and Development Laboratory
- Technology Workshop
- Provision of Human resources in science, engineering and technology
- Promotion of ICT programmes and activities

- Establishment of save city project which aims at assisting crime detection in the state;
- E-governance which aims at moving government from manual to electronic level, and
- E-Library project maintenance and updating of faculties/equipment for continuous functioning of the library.

To meet these needs, 2017 Budget proposed the sum of ₦1.000 billion.

AGRICULTURE

The major activities carried out in the agricultural sub-sector within the fiscal year with remarkable achievements include the training of 450 youths on special cocoa best management practices to ensure improvement of yields from 300kg/ha to 2,000kg/ha over a three-year period. We also embarked on the distribution of improved oil palm and cocoa seedlings to farmers in the state; participated in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Rice Anchor Borrowers scheme with about 4,920 registered rice farmers for empowerment; commissioned 1,000,000 day-old-chicks (DOCS)/per month Capacity Poultry Hatchery complex at Mbiaya Uruan through public private partnership (PPP); Mobilization of poultry farmers to off-take the product of the poultry hatchery at Mbiaya Uruan; Establishment of out-take the product of the poultry hatchery at Mbiaya Uruan; establishment of out-growers scheme for the hatchery and training scheme of poultry farmers; extension and technical advisory services to about 350 fish farms in the State and identification of water reservoirs for inland fisheries programme; data collection and collation from fishing settlement and farms for enhanced fisheries policies, collaboration with Skye Bank and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on Anchor Borrowers Scheme for cassava farmers and mobilization of 5,000 cassava farmers for the

scheme as well as creation of 5,000 jobs (downstream) and about 15,000 jobs (upstream) through the value addition, collaboration with Sky Bank and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Anchor Borrowers Scheme for cat fish farmers and mobilization of 2,000 cat fish farmers for the scheme as well as creation of 6,000 jobs (downstream) and 18,000 (upstream) through value addition.

In view of all these achievements, the policy thrust of the present administration is to grow agriculture as a business and not as a developmental project or past time or a subsistent vocation.

Government, therefore, intends to sustain the tempo and level of agricultural activities currently going on in the state by using the dynamics of technology in the sector. The Integrated Farmers Scheme (IFS), FADAMA III Programme, Rice Project, Women Agro-Entrepreneurship Programme (WAEP), Community Plantation Development Scheme (CPDS) and the Rural Community Farms Development Scheme among other programmes of the ministry to pursue vigorously sustainable development and food sufficiency in the state. To realize this aspiration, the sum of ₦6.831 billion is earmarked in 2017 Budget.

LAND, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Housing is universally accepted as the second most important human need after food. Therefore, the provision of accessible and affordable housing shall remain the focal objective of the State Government. In pursuance of the above objective, the State Government in 2016 was able to continue in the development of 300 units of 3-bedroom flat at Ikot Ekpene and 500 units of 3-bedroom flat in Uyo, and these houses have been put on sale. Also, through this sector, the State Government has

carried out renovation/construction of government buildings and upgrading of Ikot Ekpene urban area.

In 2017, the following housing needs would be pursued by the State Government, the construction of befitting worship centres in Uyo, the renovation of the Governor's Lodge, Government Guest Houses, Liaison Offices Complex, and some strategic Local Government Headquarters, rehabilitation of decaying buildings at the State Secretariat, Construction of an office complex at both State Secretariat and former Akwa Ibom Transport Company (AKTC) premises, construction of the Legislators' quarters, relocation of both the Federal Prison and Police Barracks along Wellington Basseway to a more befitting place, acquisition and installation of a digital studio for the Ministry and providing necessary infrastructures to the intended Unity Luxury Estate to be located along airport road with a view to providing a high-rise accommodation for the high net worth Akwaibomites in the Diaspora and captains of industries who would be doing business in the State.

To achieve these noble objectives, the sum of ₦16.089 billion is earmarked in 2017 budget.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Government is poised to consolidate the gains already made in this sector by opening up more rural communities through the provision of basic social and economic infrastructure – rural electrification, tarring of roads, mini- water scheme, empowerment of rural community development etc. The sum of **₦0.800 billion** has been estimated for these projects.

ENVIRONMENT AND MINERAL RESOURCES

One major commitment of my administration has been that of safeguarding the environment for the healthy living of our

people. Government has consequently embarked on various programmes and activities in this area and will continue to gear efforts towards improving them especially in flood control, collection and evacuation of wastes in Uyo Metropolis, landscaping and mapping of Uyo and maintaining the aesthetics beauty of our streets. The sum of **₦2.000** billion has been allocated for this sector.

INVESTMENT, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

My administration has sustained its support for, and promoted vocational arts and skilled manpower in the state. The available raw materials identified in the different local government areas would be tapped to create wealth for the respective local government areas and the state. We have also pursued the industrialization of the State via attraction of Foreign Direct Investment, FDI, and promotion of Public Private Partnership, PPP.

We are also developing the requisite human capital to drive the industrial and commercial activities, thus creating wealth and employment opportunities. Government has also developed a working plan to guide the State's industrial efforts even as it has introduced a Micro Credit Scheme for small-scale industries and Small and Medium Enterprises, SMES. These will require **₦2.830 billion** of the budget.

CULTURE AND TOURISM

Tourism is one of the greatest revenue earners in the world today. Therefore, in order to boost tourism and increase revenue generation in this sub-sector, government has undertaken the following.

- Expansion work at Le Meridian Ibom 5-Star Hotel and Golf Resort.

- Completion of a multi-billion Naira Ibom Tropicana Entertainment Centre, complete with Cineplex, galleria, malls, dry and wet parks, hotels and convention centre. Work is currently in progress
- Sponsorship of the State Arts and Culture troupe to arts and culture festivals in foreign countries.
- Sponsorship of a children's culture troupe.
- Development of Ibom Unity Park in Uyo
- Provision of enabling environment for private ownership of over 50 standard hotels in Uyo, the State Capital. We intend to spend **₦0.700 billion** on this for continuous achievements.

HEALTH

In health sector, the following achievements have been recorded, these include the repair and maintenance of State Vaccine Cold Store, distribution of new vaccine and support of routine immunization, surveillance for Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and documentations which contributed to the certification of Nigeria as a Polio free Country, provision of office equipment provision of health services to the aged, evacuation of unclaimed corpses at Immanuel General Hospital, Eket. Also, the State embarked reconstruction of dilapidated General Hospitals in the three senatorial districts on awareness creation and sensitization campaign on prevention and control of the Lassa Fever disease, and the Infectious Disease Hospitals at Ikot Ekpene was restructured to serve as an emergency Operation Center (EOC) to contain Lassa Fever outbreak, immunization of our children

and mothers, free Healthcare Programme and Malaria Elimination Programme (MEP) were pursued with success. HIV/AIDs reduction also recorded progress as government showed commitment in this respect.

In 2017, the policy thrust of government is to ensure that the people of Akwa Ibom state continue to enjoy the highest standard of healthcare within the framework of planned programmes through improving free Healthcare for pregnant women, children under the age of 5yrs and the elderly, 65 years and above, improving maternal, newborn and child health, scaling up HIV/AIDs, malaria and TB control programmes, and improvement in infrastructure and service delivery, etc. To meet these health needs for our people, the sum of **₦5.750 billion** estimated in 2017 Budget.

ROAD WORKS AND TRANSPORT

The importance and necessity of good roads and an efficient transportation system in the lives of the citizenry and the attraction of investors to the state cannot be over-stressed. To this end, my administration has embarked on massive construction/rehabilitation of roads/bridges, improvement/maintenance of standard urban electricity supply, installation and reactivation of street lights along major roads/streets as well as fire prevention and protection.

The transport sector has witnessed the process of setting up machinery of activating the Oron-Calabar ferry service and introducing Le Meridian-Tinapa ferry services to boost tourism. We have commenced preparation for the establishment of a driving Institute to regulate the activities of driving School in the state; commenced process of constructing landing jetties, waiting halls and development of sea beaches to aid maritime transportation; and we have embarked on procurement

processes of watercraft. Also the transport sector has witnessed free traffic flow in Uyo and biometrics data capture of owners and operators of vehicles and tricycles in the state. These have led to these persons operating successfully in the state.

In 2017, the transport sector intends to decorate the roads within and outside the state capital with model city taxis, reflectors, signs; model parks/bus stops, elevated pedestrian crossing and ultra-modern state truck parks among other initiatives, put in place Akwa Ibom Road Traffic Management Authority (ATMA), and draw up Akwa Ibom Road Master-Plan for effective and efficient transport operations. To cater for these crucial needs, the sum of ₦94.864 billion is estimated in 2017 Budget.

INFORMATION, SPORTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Information management and sensitization of the people on the policies and programmes of government is important. Government intends to build on the gains already made by continued provision of basic information and communication infrastructure to enable media professionals operate optimally.

Sporting activities will continue to receive a boost as the World Class Sport Centers were commissioned and delivered to the people. Government will continue to promote the development/protection of women, children, and the elderly and other socially disadvantaged persons through relevant agencies.

We will not relent our efforts in promoting peaceful understanding and cooperation between the government and the governed as well as political interest groups.

Government believes in a peaceful labour and industrial atmosphere in the State and so, will endeavor to keep the friendly relationship intact.

Cooperative activities and development will continue to be vigorously pursued to help our people undertake meaningful economic activities for their mutual benefits

Government also intends to carry out tax awareness/enlightenment programmes/campaigns in order to enhance higher productivity and increase the revenue base of the state.

It is also the desire of government to ensure prompt settlement of any inter and intra-state boundary/land dispute for peaceful co-existence of border communities and give attention to effective disaster management in the state.

JUSTICE

My administration will use its legal agencies to provide effective legal services to the Government and people of Akwa Ibom State. Consequently there will be:

- Prompt prosecution of criminal and civil matters.
- Prompt and accurate drafting of relevant Bills; (Memoranda of Understanding – MoUs) for the State Government and its MDAs/Potential Foreign Investors.
- Provision of Revised Edition of the Laws of Akwa Ibom State.
- Provision of books for/furnishing of the Law Library.
- Establishment of two area offices of Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR) in Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial Districts.
- Construction and renovation of Judge's and Magistrate's

- Quarters where none existed.
- Construction of a High Court Complex to accommodate High Courts, Magistrate Courts, and Administrative blocks with Health Centre/Recreational Grounds.
- Construction of High Court building across the state and Customary Court of Appeal Complex.

SECURITY

The enviable position we have occupied as a safe and peaceful state in the Nation must be maintained at all cost. This, we see as the only way to attract the much-needed investors with the multiplier effect of employment and increasing wealth for our people. It will be encouraged and sustained. Therefore, we will deliberately put in all efforts to tackle holistically the challenges of insecurity in the state. Government has achieved much in this area and will continue to do more.

THE PUBLIC AND CIVIL SERVICE

My administration places high premium on the proficiency of the work force of the state. Therefore, Government will continue to ensure recognition for high productivity, payment of salaries, pensions and gratuities of workers in the public service as well as providing appropriate training and retraining in line with our policy of human capacity development thereby making the public service efficient and effective to meet the challenges of good governance.

THE EXECUTIVE, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND JUDICIARY

I believe that unity among the three arms of government is needed for sustainable development. We will continue to pursue

these layers of unity, bearing in the mind, the constitutional boundaries of the principles of separation of power. It is evident in our success stories the harmonious relationship among these arms has deepened and we intend to keep it that way. My administration will continue to work in close cooperation with the legislative and judiciary arms to deliver good governance to the good people of Akwa Ibom State. All the necessary support to enable them work effectively would be given by my administration.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, thank you very much for your attention. Let us pause and celebrate God's goodness and mercies to us as a people and as a state. It is by His tender mercies that we have achieved all that we have so far done in spite of the lean economic times we are currently experiencing. It is by His mercies that we have stepped into this era of superior performance. It is by His Mercies that this Budget of Sustainability will be judiciously implemented to achieve the lofty ideals of a greater Akwa Ibom State and take it to more enviable heights.

I therefore, crave your approval of these estimates and your support for the implementation. We promise a faithful implementation of the budget for the general good and happiness of our people. Our resolve to alleviate poverty and restore hope, create wealth, generate employment, stimulate agriculture and industrial development and maximize the overall well-being of our people is inflexible. Our people have 'dakkada' and will never look back.

I beseech you therefore, to expeditiously consider and approve the 2017 budget proposals. The relevant details will be provided by the Hon. Commissioner for Finance.

Finally, let me once again salute the State House of Assembly and the good people of Akwa Ibom State for the tremendous goodwill and overwhelming support you have extended to my administration since I assumed office. Together let us step out in faith and rewrite the Akwa Ibom story knowing full well that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. The Akwa Abasi Ibom people have decided to 'dakkada' and it is with this new spirit, that our march to greatness will be shaped and defined in the new conversations and narratives about our state.

As I end this address, I wish you good health, divine guidance and protection, joy and happiness. Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2017 to you and all Akwa Ibom people. It is well with Akwa Abasi Ibom State, it is well with Nigeria and it is well with us all

Thank you and God bless. Akwa Ibom Dakkada, Ami, mmedakkada.