

**A REPORT OF THE ONE-DAY BUDGET BRIEFING/PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2020 BUDGET ORGANIZED BY THE AKWA IBOM STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE HELD ON MONDAY OCTOBER 21, 2019.**

**1.0 PREAMBLE**

In a constitutional Democracy such as ours, public budgeting requires citizenship participation in the budget process. Such participation by stakeholders and constituents not only facilitates the identification and assessment of needs and priorities, but also motivates them to be involved in undertaking oversights and monitoring the implementation of the budget.

Inputs from both the formal and informal sectors of the economy are sought, obtained, collated, evaluated and incorporated into the governmental annual budgets. Such participatory approach makes the budget people-oriented and results in effective implementation and better outcomes.

To achieve this objective, the Appropriations and Finance Committee on October 21, 2019, organized a public hearing to garner inputs and ensure participation of all citizens, stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the 2020 Akwa Ibom State budget process. The Akwa Ibom State 2020 Budget, christened "*Budget of Industrialization and Poverty Alleviation*" (Phase II), had been presented by Governor Udom Emmanuel to the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The Public Hearing, which was attended by the Speaker and members of the State House of Assembly, Hon. Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries, the Judiciary, Heads of Extra-Ministerial Departments, Traditional Rulers, Chambers of Commerce, CSOs, Professional Bodies, Religious Bodies, Student Associations, Civil Servants and well-meaning Akwa Ibomites, was declared open by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Aniekan Bassey.

**2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the public hearing were:

- i. To provide a forum where the people of the State would be fully briefed on the 2020 Budget Proposals.
- ii. To provide a forum where different shades of opinion from the people of the State (such as individuals, organized groups, etc) would be contributed and collated, for the State to achieve its objectives of rapid transformation into a

- prosperous, fully industrialized, highly educated and technology-driven, pace-setting entity within the Nigerian Federation.
- iii. To provide opportunity for stakeholders from within and outside government to impact on the 2020 budget via their inputs.

### 3.0 CONTRIBUTIONS

After the presentations of the budget highlights made by the Honourable Commissioner of Finance as well as that of Economic Development and Ibom Deep Seaport, the members of the public were given ample opportunity to make oral presentations, and also submit copies of the presentations to the House Committee. The Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations and Finance urged participants to make their inputs as these inputs will be taken into consideration by the committee while deliberating on the budget. Some of the groups who presented contributions were:

- a) Policy Alert
- b) Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria
- c) Nigeria Labour Congress
- d) Nigerian Union of Teachers
- e) Nigerian Medical Association
- f) Nigerian Bar Association
- g) National Association of Nigerian Students
- h) Youth Alive Foundation, etc.

Some of the contributions made are as follows:

- i. That source of revenue for the 2020 budget should not be limited to revenues from crude oil, but an expansion of revenue sources should be made through diversification into other sectors of the State's economy.
- ii. That as one of the very much untapped sources of IGR, the Inland Revenue Service should make conscious effort towards bringing the informal sector into the tax net, as well apply presumptive tax regime to collect Personal Income Tax from those affected, as required by law (Personal Income Tax Management Act).
- iii. That the House of Assembly should ensure that budget implementation reports are produced quarterly by MDAs to facilitate budget oversight and monitoring.
- iv. That MDAs should be made more alive to their responsibilities with respect to IGR, especially given the present economic realities of the nation.
- v. That the cost of governance be reduced, by a reduction of the recurrent expenditure and the savings made ploughed back into financing capital programmes.

- vi. That the Legislature should step up its budget oversight of the MDAs to ensure transparency, accountability and effective service delivery.
- vii. That the allocations made in the 2020 Budget be stepped up for health, education and other social services to ensure that the desired impact of governance is positively felt by the people of the State.
- viii. That government should make adequate provision for the prompt payment of pensions and gratuities including all arrears in this respect, for the welfare of Akwa Ibom "senior" Citizens.
- ix. That government should provide incentives for SMEs and infant industries in the State through appropriate tax and other fiscal policies.
- x. Government should seriously work on its vision to reduce morbidity and mortality to the barest minimum, and significantly increase the life expectancy and quality of life of the people of Akwa Ibom State.
- xi. Government should increase the funding for the development of rural communities, with emphasis on basic social amenities and services. They should also provide economic opportunities for the rural dwellers and invest in rural infrastructure, health and education.
- xii. Akwa Ibom State fire service is currently in a comatose state as there is no functioning fire truck in the state. Efforts should be made by appropriate authorities to ensure speedy release of funds to the Fire Service Department, for proper functioning.
- xiii. The Office of the State Auditor General should be properly funded and granted operational and administrative autonomy to empower it to effectively perform its statutory function.
- xiv. The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) should not be a secret document, and Fiscal Responsibility Bill should be signed into law.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations and Finance thanked all participants for their useful contributions and promised to incorporate the contributions during deliberations.

  
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