

**MINUTES OF STAKEHOLDERS OF AKWA IBOM CITIZENS' BUDGET HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY, 2021 AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IBOM DEEP SEAPORT.**

AGENDA: Routine Stakeholders' Consultations and Proposed 2022 Budget.

**1.0 ATTENDANCE:**

S/No	NAME/ORGANISATION	S/No	NAME/ORGANISATION
1.	Mr. Effiong Ekpenyong, PS,MED&IDS	2.	Mrs Emeete F. Imuk, PS, MOF
3.	Mrs Enobong Okpongpong, Head,AKS DMO	4.	Nsebong U. Affiah, AG's Office
5.	Pastor Mfon Udoma, AG's Office	6.	Ottobong PSambo,, MED&IDS
7.	Dopse G. Sandy, Women Forum.	8.	Prince Akaninyene Isidore, JONAPWD
9.	Ebong Ekanem, Policy Alert.	10.	Mr Felix Remigus (Assoc.VillageYouths).
11.	Comrade Faith Paulinus, NANS,AKS.	12.	Imo Aniekan Udoh, CPD.
13.	Mr Xavier Essien, AKSDMO	14.	Joseph Otu Bassey, Youth Alive Fdn.
15.	Pastor Harry Udoh, STEP/AKSCSO Forum.	16.	Tijah Bolton-Akpan,PolicyAlert
17.	Udoma S. Akpan, MED&IDSP	18.	Victor Edet, DG,AKSFRB
19.	Ebong Ekanem, PolicyAlert	20.	Mfonobong Udoekong, ASCA
21.	Kingsley Atang, Youth Alive Foundation	22.	Emem A. Umoeette, AG's Office
23.	Drlboro Nelson, USAID, S2S	24.	Edward Nnakee, USAID, S2S
25.	Akaninyene Udoaka, MED&IDSP	26.	Sunday A. Dickson, IniLGA
27.	Inieke Umanah, Director Planning, MED, IDSP - Secretary	28.	Inyang J. Inyang, UyoLGA
29.	Godwin S. Effiong, ItuLGA	30.	Uwem  E. Okopedeme. IkaLGA
31.	Emmeti A. Udosen. OronLGA	32.	Mmanti Umoh, Purple Patch

**Apologies**

Mr. Akan Okon, Hon. Commissioner, MED&IDS -Chairman

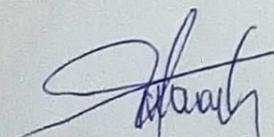
S/N	ACTIVITY	ACTION BY
2.0	<b>OPENING:</b>	
	The meeting commenced at 12:40pm with an opening prayer.	
3.0	<b>INTRODUCTION:</b>	
	Members of the high table and representatives of Civil Society Organisations were introduced by the Information Officer, Ruth Obot.	Information Officer
4.0	<b>READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:</b>	
	After reading the minutes of the previous meeting by the Desk Officer, Citizens' Budget, Mr Akaninyene Udoaka, the following observations were made: -The sentences in the minutes should be in past tense. -Item 7.4: "disabled citizens" is derogatory, should be replaced with persons with disabilities. -Item 7.4: Actionby should be corrected from Ottobong Sambo to Chairman. -Item 8.0: Ekaette should be corrected to Emeete. After the corrections, Mr Victor Edet moved the motion for adoption of the Minutes, while Mr Ebong Ekanem seconded.	Desk Officer

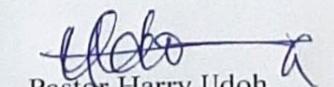
S/N	ACTIVITY	ACTION BY
<b>5.0</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING:</b>	
5.1	<p>The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Ibom Deep Seaport, Mr. Effiong Ekpenyong, solicited the participants to speak out their minds and feelings on any pertinent issue:</p> <p>Mr Inieke Umanah, State Director, Economic Planning: insisted that this is a first level meeting which marked his debut appearance as the Secretary of the Committee. He asserted that in subsequent meetings, more milestones will be covered. With regards to the budget, he explained that as at March, 2021, most of the MDAs were yet to access their budgetary allocation, but he was hopeful that by mid-year, there will be some improvement. He further stressed that both the Agric and Aviation sectors had performed creditably in the State. He also gave the State Government pass mark in road construction. As for 2022 budget, he submitted that Fiscal Restructuring was under consideration, with an objective of swaying contracts from Inter-ministerial Committee to cognate MDAs in order to strengthen these Institutions and imbue them with capacities to offer jobs on small lots to youths. This, according to him will go a long way in combating prevalent youth employment Issues in the state. Additionally, he besought the CSOs to tell the progress of budget performance from their perspective since Government representatives on the committee are narrating from Government perspective.</p>	Permanent Secretary, MED&IDS
5.2	Mr Effiong Ekpenyong, Permanent Secretary, MED&IDS: reiterated That the main essence of the gathering was to sit as citizens to brainstorm and gather inputs for 2022 budget. He referred to the simplified form of 2021 budget that was circulated and suggested that that should serve as a guide for the deliberations of the day.	
5.3	Mr Ebong Ekanem, Policy Alert: asserted that where Government has performed creditably, the CSOs will commend and where lapses are spotted in public policies, appropriate moves are made to call Government attention to such. Subsequently, made two observations: that the State's budget is not derived from MTEF and that the Joint Project Monitoring Committee of the State has not been active. He held that sectors such as Education, health and WASH ought to have more allocation because there are the sectors that are nearer to the people and recommended that more should be allocated in 2022 budget to these sectors. He faulted the disproportionate allocation of over 80% of votes for youths in the budget to sports and wondered what happens to areas such as entrepreneurship & ICT.	
5.4	Mr Ottobong Sambo, Director Programme Monitoring: appreciated the State Governor for laudable achievements recorded inspite of the harsh effect of COVID-19 on the State's finance. He reassured that based on his monitoring inspection, he had sighted over 1,800km of completed State roads; the 300- bed hospital and announced that progress has been made incompleteness of left-over projects inherited from previous administration. He further lauded the attraction of 20 investor-driven projects to the State and promised to reel out detailed information in	

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5.5	<p>Subsequent meetings.</p> <p>Mr Effiong Ekpenyong, Permanent Secretary, MED &amp;IDS: was optimistic that the Governor was bent on completing all ongoing projects of this administration. He singled out the applaudable school fencing projects and the enrolment into World Bank poverty alleviation programs in partnership with Federal Government such as NG-CARES. He was persuaded that the State would bounce back economically in spite of the adverse effect of COVID-19.</p>	
5.6	<p>Pastor Harry, Chairman CSO Forum: stressed that anytime Citizens' Budget meet, there ought to be seen progress made from previous discussions. He cited the recent Citizens' Budget leaflet as still being too elitist. He stressed that the concept of Citizens' Budget was all about engendering participation, with provision to carry along the lower rung of the society. He praised the Ebonyi State government for simplification of budget into audio budget (9 minutes). For 2022 budget, he acknowledged that though it is a 1<sup>st</sup> level meeting, he was looking forward to constituency-level meeting in order to harvest citizens input into the budget on subsequent level meetings. With regards to MTEF, he opined that MTEF for the State ought to be put in place in line with the legal dictates of Fiscal Responsibility Act of the State. He concluded that reforms ought to allow for the maximization of benefits the resources of the State.</p>	
5.7	<p>Mr Tijah-Bolton(PolicyAlert): asserted that Citizens Budget is not an event but rather a process. He acknowledged that in the past 2-3 years there had been some acknowledgeable reforms, but it still leaves room to determine whether the reforms are merely inducement motivated or it enables citizens take effective ownership of the projects. He canvassed for deliberate quality participation of citizens to assure the durability of projects of the community. On the website, he decried the absence of central repository for information about fiscal documents. He recommended that MDAs liaise with Ministry of Information for centralization of information for ease of accessibility. Moreover, he recommended that call circular for budget should be extended to CSOs to enable CSOs appraise Government thoughts and philosophy. MTEF is a must, he insisted, otherwise budget becomes illegal. He was uncomfortable about extremely paltry allocation to Accountability Institutions such as the Office of Auditor General over the years. He was baffled that inspite of the significance of the Public Procurement Board, there was no release from the dismal budgetary allocation of N125m for last year.</p>	
5.8	<p>Mr Victor Edet (DG,Fiscal Responsibility Board): in response to the Cry for State's adoption of Open Government Partnership(OGP) stated that the State Government had sponsored cognate officials for training on Open Governance. Furthermore, he listed some of the progress made in response to the demands of CSOs were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recurrent items have been moved from Capital Estimates to Recurrent.</li> <li>-Fiscal Responsibility Act has been passed by the House of Assembly.</li> </ul>	

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5.9	<p>-Citizens' Budget has been posted on the website of Ministry of Economic Development with the pamphlets/printed and circulated. He reiterated the importance of commendation for efforts so far done by the State Government. On the 2022 Call Circular, he assured that it will be posted online to accommodate wider interests. With the competence obtained by Government officers after training, he was confident that before month-end, the State will come out with MTEF.</p> <p>Mr Felix Remigus (AKS Association of Village Youths) suggested CSDP approach of true community-based consultations to the State Government because citizens take personal interest in such projects. This consultative based approach to budgeting should be extended to the Local Government Councils for adoption, he added. Also, he recommended that constructive youth engagement be accorded priority in 2022 budget because such holds potential for arresting youth restiveness by meaning fully engaging this cross-section of the society members that has the highest tendency for unwholesome social conducts.</p>	
5.10	<p>Mr Mfonobong Etim (Akwa Mfon Sustainable Community Association): Suggested that the modality for assessing the performance of this forum should be premised on input-output mechanism. he referred to the chairman's assurance at the last meeting that digital platforms would be made available and opined that he was not aware of such platforms. Also, he called for attention to be paid to informal education. He was also of the opinion that Government alone cannot industrialize that State, thus the need for complimentary private sector efforts to ginger up the process. Lastly, he advocated for a befitting domain name for Ministry of Economic Development website to end with .gov.ng and not .com.</p>	
5.11	<p>Dopsie Sunday (VoiceofAkwaIbomWomen): Canvassed for the translation of Citizens' Budget to local languages for more effective communication with the local folks.</p>	
5.12	<p>Prince Isidore (JNAPLD): decried that whereas in 2019, provision was made for training of visually impaired but not implemented. However, he said, they said training was eventually implemented in 2021 and he is commending the Government for that. He deplored the recent recruitment of teachers exercise whereby none of persons with disability who passed the qualifying examinations were taken in spite of his association spirited efforts. Similarly, he advocated for scholarships and creation of small-scale industries for persons with disability.</p>	
5.13	<p>Joseph Otu Bassey (Youth Alive Foundation): said that the Akwa Ibom State Youth Development Billon the desk of the Governor should be assented to. He emphasized the need for proper communication as a process not a product. Accordingly, he added, there ought to be a feedback mechanism to gauge the pulse of the citizens.</p>	
5.14	<p><b>Mr Effiong Ekpenyong, Permanent Secretary, MED&amp;IDS:</b> in response, assured that all contribution in the course of the meeting had been well noted and will be subsequently put into consideration. He confirmed</p>	

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5.15	<p>the 2022 budget will be fully participatory. He also revealed that all Local Government Areas' budget are currently vetted by his Ministry and in subsequent level meetings, arrangement will be made to hold consultations at the Senatorial and Federal Constituency Levels together inputs for 2022 budget. He clarified that the Ministry's website is properly anchored. He referred to page 11 of the 2021 Citizens' Budget for further details about the social media handles of the Ministry. Addressing the question of translation of budget to vernacular, he stated that the Committee will look into it. With regards to MTEF, He said that work is in progress with support of USAID. He assured that it will be ready in a matter of weeks. He emphasized that the Ministry is open for inputs from any channel of communication, consequently, he demanded for citizens' inputs for 2022 budget be sent to the social media handles of the Ministry.</p> <p><b>Mrs Enobong Okpongkong (Sec, Debt Management Board):</b> requested for timeline for feedback for enquiries. In response, it was agreed that 2 weeks' timeline is suitable.</p>	
5.16	<p><b>Dr Ibora Nelson (USAID, State to State):</b> suggested that the CSOs should show the corresponding Ministry of their interest, their inputs for 2022 budget for proper harmonization and inclusion.</p>	
5.17	<p><b>Pastor Mfon Udoma,</b> persuaded that the rule is that all inputs by the CSOs for inclusion in the budget ought to be published.</p>	
5.18	<p><b>Pastor Harry Udoh,</b> explaining further, said that CSOs budget inputs be sent to Ministries housing their thematic areas and as well to the Forum</p>	
6.0	<p><b>REMARK BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FINANCE:</b></p>	
	<p>Mrs Emeete F. Imuk, (PS, Ministry of Finance): appreciated all participants for turning up at the meeting. She applauded the CSOs for constant reminder as obtained in SFTAS as a mark of true collaboration that she is looking forward to see in this forum. Consequently, she called for avenues for reminders to ensure deadlines are met. Equally, she observed that the meeting was without biases and commended speakers for being outspoken.</p>	Mrs Emeete F. Imuk
7.0	<p><b>VOTE OF THANKS:</b></p>	
	<p>Pastor Mfon Udoma, praised the participants for the impressive attendance and the various speakers for their vibrant suggestions and contributions</p>	Pastor Mfon Udoma
8.0	<p><b>CLOSING:</b></p>	
	<p>Pastor Mfon Udoma, led the closing prayers and the meeting closed by 02:45pm.</p>	Pastor Mfon Udoma

  
 Mr. Inieke Umanah  
 Secretary

  
 Pastor Harry Udoh  
 Chairman, AKSCSOs' Forum

## ATTENDANCE SHEET

2022 CITIZENS' BUDGET PREPARATION  
STAKEHOLDERS MEETING 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY, 2021

VENUE: CONFERENCE ROOM, MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IBOM DEEP SEAPORT, UYO

S/N	NAME	ORGANIZATION	E-MAIL	PHONE NUMBER	SIGN
1					
2					
3	Anthony E. Ekpenyong	MED & IDSP	anthony.ekpenyong@yahoo.com	08028345931	
4	Mrs Emerete Iniek	Min of Finance	emryiniek@yahoo.com	08023143595	
5	PASTOR Mfon J. Udoma	AG's office	mfon.udoma@live.com	08036717130	
6	Nseobong Uwem Affiat	AG's office	clbriff@yahoo.com	08034060700	
7	PRINCE AKANIN/EKE/SWORE	Tomap WD AKS-	akaninyekeistd@gmail.com	08059933596	
8	Mrs DOPSE G. Sandy	women forum	dpsy4geddy@yahoo.com	08026197871	
9	Ebang Ekanein E.	Policy Alert	ebang.ekanein@policyalert.org	08134412886	
10	Felix Remegius Okon	Asso of village youths	felixremy.2020@gmail.com	08064637778	
11	Comrade Faith Pauline	NANS Akwa Ibom State	officialfaithpauline@gmail.com	05064103583	
12	imo Aniekan Uduh	Community Builders for Development	Compadnig@yahoo.com	08039210580	
13	XAVIER ESSIED	AKS Debt Mgt Office	xavier_essie@yahoo.com	08063683720	
14	Joseph Otu Basse	Youth Alive Foundation	joseph@yafnet.org	08034988496	
15	PASTOR HARRY UDOK	STEP/AKS CSD Forum	harryudok@gmail.com	08023333259	
16	Othobong Peter Samba	Min & Econ Dev / IDS	Sambottoobong@gmail.com	08027382453	
17	Tijah Bolton-Akpan	Policy Alert	tijah.bolton@policyalert.org	08034984063	
18	Udoma Sunday Akpan	MED & ID	Edymaludoma@gmail.com	08139283396	
19	Mfonobong Udeokong	Akwamfon Sustainable Community Association	akwamfon@gmail.com	08039452074	
20	VICTOR OKON EBEI	AKS Fiscal Resp. Board	nsabaiifa@yahoo.com	08023613363	
21	Enobong Okpong/pong, Mrs.	AKS Debt Mgt Office	enkay_2007@yahoo.com	07033441080	

