
Nigerian Governors' Forum
Abuja, Nigeria, August 2000



PRESS RELEASE

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Nigerian Governors Discuss Good Governance and Federalism

Abuja, August 26, 2000 – Twenty of Nigeria's 36 state governors met in the Nigerian capital of Abuja for a historic three-day conference from August 23-26, 2000 at the Abuja Sheraton Hotel, Abuja. Under the caption of "Building Today for Tomorrow," the conference sought to strengthen communication between the states and the Federal government and promote cooperation among Nigeria's diverse population especially at the state level.

The meeting builds upon the achievements of the first Governors' Forum held in April, 1999, where the then governors-elect met collectively for the first time to discuss matters of mutual interest, their roles and responsibilities as elected officials and common issues of concern to their constituents.

Attending the conference were International politicians and Nigerian experts including: Hon. Jim Florio, former Governor of New Jersey, USA; Hon. Carole Hillard, Lieutenant Governor of the State of South Dakota, USA; His Excellency V.K. Kapoor, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, India; Hon. Mathole Motsheka, former Premier of Gauteng Province, South Africa; and Hon. Gary Filmon, former Premier of Manitoba, Canada. Nigerian experts who participated included Ambassador Segun Olusola, Founder/President African Refugees Foundation and former Nigerian Ambassador to Ethiopia; Mr. Ray Ekpu, Chief Executive Officer of Newswatch Communications Limited; Dr. Kole Abayomi, Secretary,

Council of Legal Education and Director of Administration, Nigeria Law School, Abuja; Professor Justin Tseayo, Mr. Mohammed Haruna and Professor Elaigwu.

The participants shared their experiences with the Nigerian governors on a range of issues including federalism in practice; challenges of resource distribution and allocation; policy management in multi-ethnic and dynamic environment; civil society and democratic development at the state level; and the development of a permanent Governors' Association. They also made the following resolutions:

1. Entrenching Democratic Principles in Nigeria

The governors resolved to work together as a multi-partisan body to develop and entrench the democratic principles; encourage true federalism; and support national unity for the Nigerian people;

2. Fiscal Federalism/Revenue Allocation

The governors agreed that a new revenue allocation formula should be implemented by the federal government and that 40% of the Nigeria's revenue be channeled directly to state governments. The Governors called upon President Obasanjo to release a new allocation formula immediately;

3. Local government

The governors called upon the federal government to adhere to the constitutional provisions regarding local government affairs and to allow the state governments and state assemblies to fully play constitutional roles assigned to them by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria now in operation;

4. Legislative-Executive Relations

The governors expressed serious concern over the relationship between the Presidency and the national assembly and appealed to both sides for a spirit of reconciliation. The governors agreed to establish a special committee to meet with President Obasanjo, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representative and other leaders of the National Assembly to discuss this important national issue;

5. International Donor Agencies

The governors encouraged international donors to increase assistance at the state level;

6. Foreign Investment

The governors welcome the visit of President William Clinton to Nigeria and encourage the United States government to establish an investment tax credit that would encourage

US private investment in Nigeria.

The Forum was co-sponsored by the Nigerian Governors' Association; the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a Washington D.C. based nongovernmental organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide; and the Canadian based Forum of Federations, a nongovernmental organization that works with practitioners to share knowledge and exchange best practices in the field of federal governance around the world.
