Daily InfoNews Bulletin

A Publication of the Cross River State Ministry of Information & Orientation, Calabar

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Gov. Otu Hails Army's Immortalization of General Attahiru at Akim Barracks



Daily InfoNews...

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DailyNews Bulletin is a daily publication of the Cross River State Ministry of Information and Orientation for the Entertainment and Education of Cross Riverians and the General Public about the daily events, activities and programmes of government and the private sector operating in all parts of the State.

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Daily InfoNews Bulletin

A Publication of the Cross River State Ministry of Information & Orientation, Calabar

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Gov. Otu Commends Nigerian Army for Renaming Akim Barracks After Late General Attahiru



Cross River State Governor, Senator Prince Bassey Otu, has commended the Nigerian Army for honouring the late Lieutenant General Ibrahim Attahiru (CFR), the 21st Chief of Army Staff, through the renaming of Akim Barracks, Calabar, as Ibrahim Attahiru Barracks.

The Governor, represented by his Deputy, Rt. Hon. Dr Peter Odey, gave the commendation while serving as Special Guest of Honour at the ceremony held in Calabar on Tuesday.

He described the renaming as a thoughtful and historic initiative that appropriately immortalises a distinguished military officer whose life was defined by courage, patriotism, selfless service and an unwavering commitment to the defence of Nigeria.

Otu noted that the renaming goes beyond a change of identity for a military installation, representing a solemn national obligation to preserve the memory of fallen heroes and recognise their sacrifices in the service of the country. He added that although General Attahiru's tenure as Chief of Army Staff was tragically brief, his



contributions to the Nigerian Army, particularly his efforts to strengthen strategic direction, discipline and operational effectiveness, left an enduring legacy.

The Governor particularly commended the leadership of the Nigerian Army, under the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu, for the initiative, describing it as a fitting recognition of General Attahiru's contributions to the military and the nation. He expressed confidence that the newly renamed barracks, home to the 13 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, would serve as an enduring symbol of service, sacrifice, courage and national unity. He also charged officers and soldiers to uphold the ideals exemplified by the late General, including professionalism, discipline, loyalty and dedication to duty.

Otu reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting the welfare, training, equipping and operational readiness of the Armed Forces, assuring that the government would continue to provide the necessary support and enabling environment for security agencies to discharge their constitutional responsibilities. He further conveyed the nation's appreciation to the family of the late General Attahiru, assuring them that his service and ultimate sacrifice would remain indelible in the nation's consciousness.

In a documentary eulogy presented earlier at the ceremony, Lieutenant General Ibrahim Attahiru was described as a distinguished military officer who served as Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff from January 26 to May 21, 2021, when he died in a tragic air crash alongside ten other officers

and personnel of the Nigerian Armed Forces. Admitted into the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) in 1984 as a member of the 35th Regular Course, General Attahiru held several command positions during his military career, including Commanding Officer of the 146 Battalion, Nigerian Army, under Operation HARMONY IV in the Bakassi Peninsula, and Commander of the 13 Brigade at Akim Barracks, Calabar. His previous service at the barracks gives the renaming added historical significance, connecting his legacy to the military installation where he once served and commanded.

In his remarks, the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu, described the renaming as a deliberate act of remembrance and a tribute to the distinguished service of a soldier whose life exemplified the finest traditions of the Nigerian Army. He noted that General Attahiru demonstrated remarkable courage, professional competence, discipline and commitment to duty, adding that his contributions to the military and the nation deserved enduring recognition despite his brief tenure as Chief of Army Staff.

Shaibu charged the Commander of the 13 Brigade and all officers and soldiers under the command to ensure that the values associated with the late General Attahiru are reflected in their leadership, discipline, professionalism and relationship with the communities they serve.

He also acknowledged the family of the late military chief, assuring them that his sacrifices and contributions to national service would remain deeply cherished by the Nigerian Army, while urging personnel to uphold the institution's traditions of courage, accountability and selfless service.

In her vote of thanks, the wife of the late Lieutenant General Ibrahim Attahiru, Mrs Fatima Attahiru, expressed profound gratitude to the Nigerian Army for honouring her late husband through the renaming of Akim Barracks as Ibrahim Attahiru Barracks. She recalled his strong attachment to the barracks, where he served as Commanding Officer and later as Commander, highlighting his commitment to the welfare of young people, including the establishment of a youth ICT centre to promote learning and access to technology.

She also highlighted his enduring legacy through a scholarship initiative supporting dependants of military personnel, which has provided university education opportunities to over 200 beneficiaries. Mrs Attahiru thanked the Chief of Army Staff and the Nigerian Army for preserving her husband's memory, describing the honour as deeply meaningful to her family. She also called for continued recognition and support for military personnel and their families.

The highlight of the ceremony was the unveiling of a commemorative plaque, the presentation of a recognition award to the wife of the late Chief of Army Staff, Mrs Fatima Attahiru, and the presentation of a souvenir to the Special Guest of Honour, the Governor's representative, Rt. Hon. Peter Odey.


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Otu Woos Investors, Highlights Blue Economy Opportunities



Cross River State Governor, Senator Bassey Otu, on Sunday, intensified his administration's drive to attract private-sector investments into the state, unveiling strategic opportunities in maritime infrastructure, logistics, agriculture, hospitality and commerce.

Governor Otu spoke at the 2026 Governor's Ball held at Peregrino Hall, Government House, Calabar, where captains of industry, business leaders, investors, statesmen and other distinguished guests from within and outside Nigeria gathered to celebrate his leadership and political journey.

The Governor, who described the occasion as a rare privilege, expressed appreciation to the convener and organizers for the honour, noting that his political journey has spanned over 30 years. He commended the young people behind the initiative, describing them as a reflection of the bright future of Cross River State.

He said: "For people to come both from within and outside the state to sponsor a ball like this in my honour, I want to tell you that I remain ever indebted. I am very glad and happy that there was a day like this."

Otu stressed that governance requires collective ideas, consultations and shared responsibility, adding, "There is no monopoly of knowledge. We share and make sure that everything is brought to a melting pot so that from there we can advance."

He noted that Cross River's vast geographical spread and unique development challenges require deliberate planning and sustained investment, assuring investors that his administration was determined to remove bureaucratic bottlenecks and provide necessary support for businesses to thrive.

"No government can move without the private sector," he said, promising that investors would not face unnecessary delays in accessing government support.

The Governor disclosed that his administration has put structures and strategies in place to reposition the state's economy, expressing confidence that ongoing efforts would transform Cross River into a major investment destination. He cited the appreciation in property values, noting that land previously sold for about ₦9 million per plot now attracts as much as ₦45 million.

He also highlighted opportunities in the technology and outsourcing sector, disclosing that more than 700 people have been trained, with over 600 already earning regular salaries denominated in foreign currencies.

He urged Cross River youths to rediscover their abilities, remain resilient and take advantage of emerging opportunities, declaring, "Life is about rising. What determines the future is your resilience to pass through these encumbrances and make sure you achieve."

Otu commended business leaders and other stakeholders for contributing ideas towards the state's development, stressing that the responsibility of building Cross River rests on everyone, not government alone. He assured local and international investors that the state remains open for business, particularly in the blue economy, and welcomed partnerships capable of driving sustainable economic growth.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Cross River State Internal Revenue Service, Prince Edwin Okon, disclosed that about 46 companies previously considered inactive in the state's business records have indicated interest in resuming operations, while several others approached the Service in 2026 to register as taxpayers. He described the development as evidence of renewed confidence in the state's business environment.

Okon urged investors to take advantage of tax incentives, waivers and reliefs available under the state's tax framework, disclosing that about 16

companies benefited from various tax waivers in October. He explained that the state has harmonized several taxes and levies to reduce the burden on businesses and eliminate multiple, independent demands for payment by government ministries.

He added that the harmonization policy was already benefiting companies, including Wilmar, while the Service is expanding automation to improve revenue administration and transparency. He advised investors to pay taxes directly into government accounts rather than to individuals to strengthen accountability and revenue generation.

Also speaking, the Managing Director of Tenaris Global Services, Mrs. Rosario Osabose, said investment decisions are increasingly driven by confidence rather than natural resources or potential.

"Investment doesn't flow or follow potential. Investment follows confidence. Many places have potential; few create confidence," she said.

Osabose commended the Cross River State Government for its efforts to attract investors, describing the hosting of the Sixth African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network Investment Conference as an opportunity to showcase the state's ambition, readiness and commitment to economic growth.

She identified infrastructure, particularly the proposed Bakassi Deep Seaport, as a strategic project capable of transforming the state's economic prospects through improved logistics, industrialization and job creation.

She also urged the state to explore opportunities across the energy sector value chain, including skills development, manufacturing, logistics and industrial services. She disclosed that her company has invested about $10 million in a thermal insulation coating facility, which she described as the only plant of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, recently commissioned by the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources.

The business executive stressed the importance of developing local talent and creating opportunities for women and young people, insisting that removing barriers to participation was both an economic necessity and a social responsibility.

"Excellence has no gender. Talent has no gender. Ambition has no gender, and opportunities should not either," she declared, calling for stronger collaboration between government and private investors to build an economy where young people can realize their ambitions without leaving the state.

C'River Scrap Regulatory Agency Bill Scales Second Reading

By David Asu



The Cross River State House of Assembly has passed for second reading a Bill seeking to repeal the Cross River State Scrap Regulatory Agency Law No. 5 of 2017, as amended, and re-enact a new law to strengthen the regulation of scrap activities and related matters in the state.

Leading the debate on the general principles of the Bill, its sponsor, Hon. Stanley Nsemo (Calabar Municipality), said the re-enactment had become necessary to strengthen regulatory mechanisms, address existing loopholes and reposition the scrap sector for improved

efficiency, public safety and revenue generation.

He explained that the Bill seeks to establish clear procedures for the purchase, sale and use of ferrous and non-ferrous metals and scrap materials; introduce radiation and nuclear safety standards in scrap procurement; and prescribe conditions for the licensing of individuals and corporate organisations engaged in scrap-related businesses in the state.

Hon. Nsemo observed that unregulated scrap dealings had become a source of environmental hazards, security threats and revenue leakages, stressing the need for a more comprehensive legal framework to address the situation.

Contributing to the debate, members commended the sponsor for the initiative, describing the Bill as timely and critical to the socio-economic development and security of the state.

They noted that the proposed law would promote accountability, ensure proper documentation of revenue accruing to government and curb the increasing cases of theft and vandalism of public infrastructure, including manhole covers, transformers, streetlights and private property across the state.

Members further stressed that the licensing and proper profiling of scrap dealers and scavengers would enable government to distinguish legitimate operators from criminal elements who exploit the business to perpetrate unlawful activities.

In his remarks, the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Elvert Ayambem, commended the sponsor but expressed concern over the activities of scavengers in the state, noting that their operations had not met expected standards.

The Speaker called for the compulsory licensing of all scrap dealers and scavengers as a priority, emphasising the need for an effective monitoring and tracking system to regulate their activities.

He also advocated stiff penalties, including imprisonment, for offences involving vandalism, theft and illegal handling of hazardous scrap materials to ensure effective enforcement and deter offenders.

Following extensive deliberations, the House, in accordance with its Rules, put the Bill to a voice vote. It was subsequently read for the second time and referred to the House Committee on Environment for further legislative consideration and public hearing.

Our Ref: GO/HOS/4/VOL.III/366

November 6, 2026

The Hon. Speaker
The Hon. Chief Judge
All Commissioners/Special Advisers
The Secretary to the State Government
The Chief of Staff
All Chairmen of Commissions & Boards
All Chairmen of Local Government Councils
All Permanent Secretaries/Special Assistants
The Vice Chancellors (UNICROSS/UEE)
The Clerk of the House/Chief Registrars
The Accountant-General/Auditor-General (State/Local Govt)
The Head of Personal Staff to the Deputy Governor
All Heads of Extra-Ministerial Departments/Parastatals

SUBJECT: SUSPENSION OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE STATE-WIDE PERSONNEL AUDIT/VERIFICATION EXERCISE

I am directed to refer to Head of Service Circular No. 18/2026 (Ref. GO/HOS/4/VOL.III/364) of October 14, 2026, on the commencement of the Second Phase of the State-Wide Personnel Audit/Verification Exercise.

2. The Office of the Head of Service wishes to inform all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), State parastatals, Local Government Councils, Primary Health Care facilities, Local Government Education Authorities, and State and Local Government Pensioners that the exercise is **hereby suspended with immediate effect**.

3. The suspension is to enable the Consultant to resolve the technical issues affecting the smooth conduct of the exercise.

4. Accordingly, no personnel are required to report to any verification venue until further notice. The verification schedule published in Circular No. 18/2026 is suspended, and a revised schedule will be issued when the technical issues have been resolved and the exercise is ready to resume.

5. Permanent Secretaries, Heads of MDAs and Heads of Parastatals are to bring this circular to the attention of all personnel under their supervision.

6. The inconvenience this may cause is regretted.

Mrs. Lucy Bassey Enakirerhi Esq - Member
Permanent Secretary (Career Management Office)
For: Head of Service

C'River Assembly Scrutinises N987.8bn 2027 Budget Proposal



The Cross River State House of Assembly Committee on Finance and Appropriation has engaged the State Economic Team on the proposed ₦987.81 billion 2027 budget, ahead of the commencement of budget defence by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The interactive session, held at the Assembly Complex, Calabar, provided an opportunity for lawmakers to examine the economic assumptions, fiscal priorities and policy direction underpinning the proposed budget.

The State Economic Team was led by the Commissioner for Finance, Dr. Michael Odere, while the Committee was chaired by Hon. Cyril James Omini, representing Yakurr I State Constituency.

In his opening remarks, Omini explained that the engagement was intended to give members of the Committee a clearer understanding of the economic framework and considerations informing the 2027 budget before the detailed examination of individual MDA proposals.

He emphasised the importance of full participation by all MDAs in the forthcoming budget defence, stressing that the Committee would subject their submissions to rigorous legislative scrutiny to ensure prudent resource allocation, value for money and alignment with the People First agenda of Governor Bassey Edet Otu.

During the session, lawmakers sought clarifications on the implementation and performance of the 2026 budget, strategies for attracting foreign investment, the state's revenue generation drive, debt management framework and the progress of ongoing capital projects.

In his response, the Commissioner for Finance, Dr. Michael Odere, described the 2027 budget proposal as a strategic fiscal instrument designed to expand the state's economy, sustain ongoing development programmes and consolidate the achievements of the present administration.

He reaffirmed Governor Otu's commitment to expanding the state's revenue base, strengthening human capital development and pursuing policies aimed at building a prosperous, peaceful and resilient Cross River State.

Odere put the proposed 2027 budget at ₦987.81 billion, comprising ₦708.43 billion, representing 71.72 per cent, for capital expenditure, and ₦279.38 billion, representing 28.28 per cent, for recurrent expenditure.

He explained that the proposal represents a significant increase over the 2026 budget, expressing confidence in the state's economic outlook and prospects for improved fiscal stability and growth.

Also contributing, the Chairman of the Cross River State Internal Revenue Service, Mr. Edwin Okon, the Special Adviser on Budget and the State Economic Adviser explained that the proposed budget was anchored on the theme of consolidation for sustainable growth and development, with emphasis on delivering measurable improvements in the lives of residents.

They described the fiscal proposal as realistic and expressed optimism that improved revenue performance and cash inflows in 2027 would strengthen the state's capacity to finance its development priorities.

The engagement precedes the detailed budget defence by MDAs, during which the Assembly Committee is expected to examine proposed allocations, assess their justification and evaluate their consistency with the state's development objectives.

C'River Auditors-General, Head of Service Partner to Tackle Payroll Irregularities

By Kera Okem and Anastasia Ekuma



The Auditors-General for State and Local Government in Cross River State have pledged stronger institutional collaboration with the Office of the Head of Service to address administrative challenges, strengthen payroll management and promote transparency and accountability in the public service.

The commitment was made on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, when a delegation of the Commission, led by its Chairman, Mr. Christopher Nyong, paid a courtesy visit to the Head of Service, Barr. Orok Bassey Okon, at his office.

The visit provided an opportunity for both institutions to explore areas of cooperation, particularly in tackling operational challenges and strengthening administrative processes for improved public sector performance.

Receiving the delegation, Okon described the visit as



a welcome development, noting that closer cooperation among government institutions was essential to building an efficient, transparent and accountable public service.

He identified irregularities in the state's payroll system as one of the major challenges requiring attention, disclosing that his office was intensifying efforts to sanitise the system through comprehensive online and physical verification exercises covering civil servants and pensioners.

According to him, the verification exercises are designed to identify discrepancies, eliminate irregularities and ensure that government funds are paid only to legitimate beneficiaries.

The Head of Service expressed his readiness to work with the Commission in identifying and correcting anomalies in the payroll system, stressing that information sharing and coordinated interventions would strengthen the credibility of government records and improve accountability.

He said, "We must work together to identify and address the challenges within the system. Effective collaboration and timely exchange of information are necessary to ensure that government resources are properly managed and directed towards legitimate beneficiaries."

In his remarks, the Auditor-General for Local Government, Mr. Abam Eko, disclosed that all outstanding payments relating to irregular promotions had been reversed.

Eko reaffirmed his office's commitment to supporting institutional reforms and working with relevant government agencies to strengthen financial discipline, accountability and effective service delivery across the state.

The meeting was attended by senior directors from the Office of the Head of Service, including the Director, Public Service Office, Mr. Edem Eyo; Director of Accounts, Mr. Martins Atu; Director of Planning, Research and Statistics, Mr. Stephen Akini; and Mr. Joseph Okem.





Flood Prevention: CR-SEMA Hails SSDC for Clearing C'River Drainage Channels

By David Asu



The Cross River State Emergency Management Agency (CR-SEMA) has commended the South-South Development Commission (SSDC) for supporting the clearance of drainage channels in the state, describing the exercise as a significant intervention towards improving water flow and reducing the risk of flooding.

The Director-General of CR-SEMA, Mr. Efa Nyong, gave the commendation during an inspection of the recently cleared drainage channels, which were worked on with the support of the SSDC through the deployment of a swamp buggy.

Nyong praised the Cross River State Government, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the SSDC, Miss Usoro Offiong Akpabio, and the engineers involved in the exercise for their contributions to the successful clearance of the channels.

He noted that removing accumulated sand and other obstructions would



improve the drainage system's capacity to convey stormwater, particularly during heavy rainfall.

According to him, the intervention would help minimise flooding risks and protect communities and property from possible flood-related damage.

"The clearance of these drainage channels is commendable because it will improve water flow and reduce the possibility of flooding, especially during periods of heavy rainfall," Nyong said.

While applauding the intervention, the CR-SEMA boss called for additional structural measures to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the drainage channels.

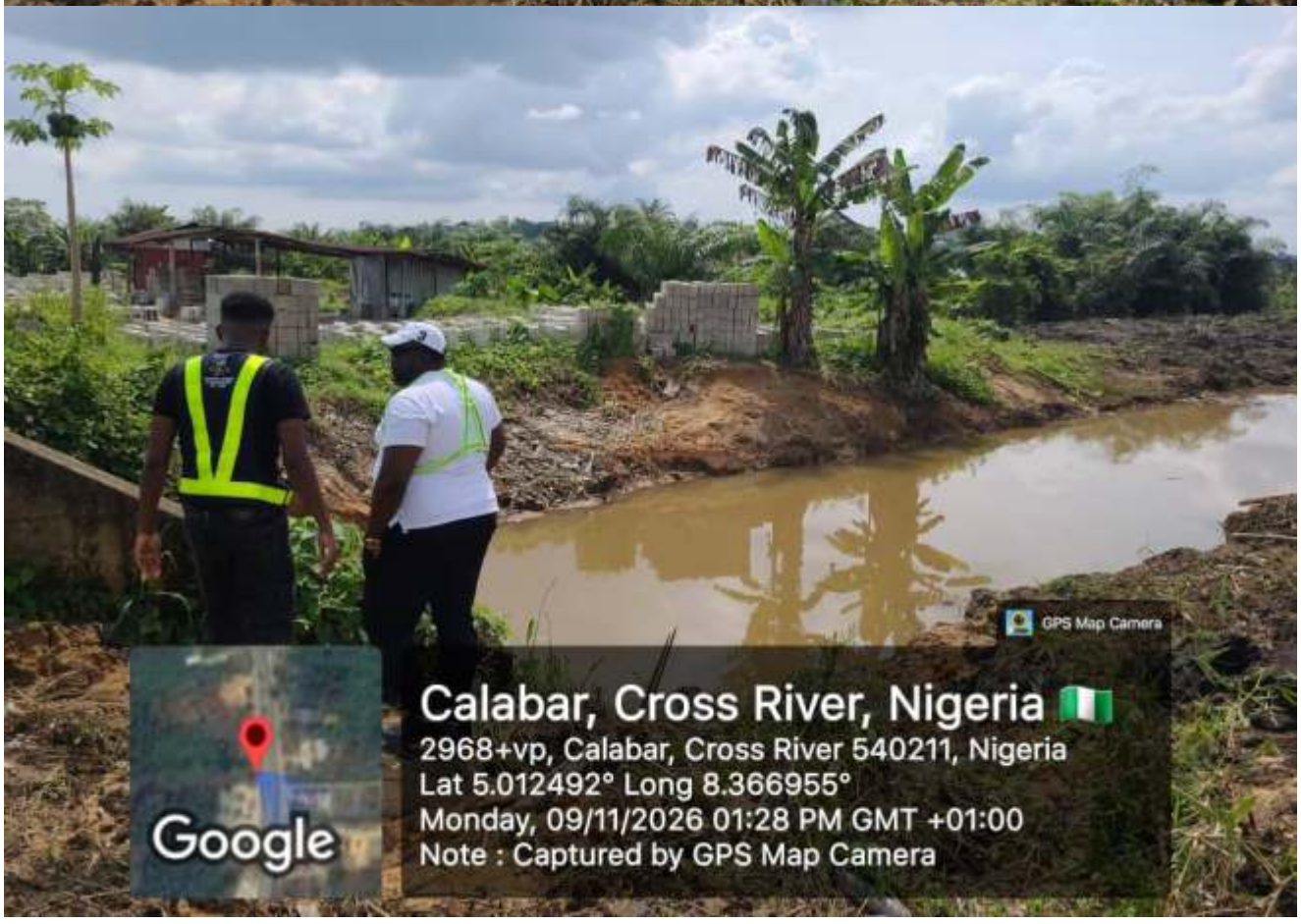
He recommended the construction of concrete linings along the channels to prevent soil erosion and the accumulation of sand, which could gradually obstruct water flow and undermine the gains of the clearance exercise.

"Beyond clearing the channels, there is a need to provide concrete linings to protect their sides from erosion and prevent the continuous accumulation of sand. This will help maintain the channels and ensure that water flows freely," he advised.

Nyong stressed that effective flood management required not only regular drainage maintenance but also durable infrastructure capable of withstanding the impact of heavy rainfall.

He expressed appreciation to the SSDC and other stakeholders for supporting interventions aimed at improving environmental safety and strengthening the state's preparedness against flooding.


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SPAR Mall Fire: Otu Extends Relief to 22 More Affected Businesses

By David Asu



The Cross River State Government has extended its relief intervention to 22 additional businesses affected by the SPAR Mall fire incident in Calabar, reaffirming its commitment to helping operators rebuild their businesses, restore livelihoods and sustain employment.

The assurance was given during a meeting convened in Calabar on Friday, November 6, 2026, by the Special Adviser to the Governor on General Duties, Barr. Ekpenyong Akiba, in collaboration with the Cross River State Emergency Management Agency (CR-SEMA).

The meeting brought together representatives of the 22 businesses whose goods, equipment and other business assets were destroyed or looted during the incident but were not covered by the initial relief intervention provided to businesses that suffered total losses.

Speaking at the meeting, Akiba recalled the



devastating impact of the fire outbreak on businesses, property and livelihoods, noting that the incident also threatened jobs and disrupted economic activities within the affected establishments.

He explained that following Governor Bassey Edet Otu's engagement with the Federal Government, an initial intervention was secured for 18 businesses that suffered total losses, while the state government subsequently made additional provisions to accommodate other affected operators.

Akiba disclosed that the state government had committed over ₦100 million towards supporting the affected businesses, with individual payments determined by the extent of losses incurred.

He said some beneficiaries had already received their payments, adding that the meeting was convened to reassure the remaining operators of the government's determination to ensure that all eligible businesses affected by the incident received assistance.

The Special Adviser stressed that the government's intervention would extend beyond immediate financial relief, explaining that further discussions would focus on supporting the full recovery of the businesses and encouraging improved insurance arrangements to protect operators against future losses.

In his remarks, the Director-General of CR-SEMA, Mr. Efa Nyong, represented by the Agency's Disaster Management Officer, Mr. Agbor Okim, commended the affected business operators for their patience and understanding throughout the engagement with the government.

He described the intervention as evidence of the state government's commitment to supporting residents affected by disasters, while emphasising the need to strengthen emergency preparedness and



response capacity across the state.

Nyong disclosed that the Agency was collaborating with the South-South Development Commission to improve its operational capacity, including the provision of a firefighting truck and an ambulance expected to arrive before December.

He added that arrangements were underway to train qualified personnel to operate the firefighting equipment and strengthen the Agency's capacity to respond promptly and effectively to emergencies.

The CR-SEMA Director-General urged the beneficiaries to utilise the financial assistance as a foundation for rebuilding their businesses, while appreciating them for their patience throughout the intervention process.

Also speaking, the Manager of SPAR Mall, Mr. Oluwagbenga Ewarawon, thanked the state government for its support, noting that the intervention would help affected businesses recover and preserve the jobs of employees who depended on them for their livelihoods.

He explained that while some shops within the mall employed between three and four persons, larger business outlets had workforces exceeding 50, stressing that the recovery of the affected businesses would also help protect jobs and sustain commercial activities.

One of the beneficiaries, Ms. Rose Nwadike, who represented her employer, Mr. Ibeto Henry of Black and White Salon, also expressed appreciation to the Federal and State Governments for the assistance, describing the intervention as helpful in enabling affected businesses to recover and resume operations.

C'River Takes World Science Day Celebration to Ogoja, Inspires Young Innovators

By Orok Orok



The Cross River State Government has taken its 2026 World Science Day celebration to Ogoja in the northern senatorial district, engaging students in practical science education, technology demonstrations and innovation challenges to stimulate creativity, scientific curiosity and problem-solving skills among young people.

Organised by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MSTI), the event featured interactive science education, practical experiments, innovation exhibitions and hands-on training in emerging technology fields, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), coding, hardware and software development. In an opening address, the Commissioner for Science, Technology and Innovation, Associate Professor Justin Beshel, represented by the Ministry's ICT Manager, Mrs. Mary Leo, welcomed participants to the celebration themed "Common Ground Through Science."

Beshel described science as more than a subject



taught in classrooms, noting that it provides the knowledge and tools needed to understand the world, solve societal problems, improve livelihoods and create opportunities. “Science is more than a subject taught in classrooms; it is a tool for understanding our world, solving problems, improving livelihoods and creating opportunities. Our young people must be encouraged to see themselves as active participants in scientific discovery and innovation,” he said.

He explained that the theme emphasised how people, irrespective of their backgrounds, geographical locations and differences, could find common solutions to shared challenges through scientific inquiry, collaboration and innovation. The Commissioner said the decision to host this year’s celebration in Ogoja was informed by the Ministry’s commitment to ensuring that every child, regardless of location, has the opportunity to explore, experiment, ask questions, develop ideas and discover their potential.

“Our decision to take this year’s celebration to Ogoja reflects our commitment to ensuring that every child, irrespective of geographical location, has access to opportunities to explore, experiment, develop ideas and discover their potential,” Beshel stated. He reaffirmed the Ministry’s commitment to inclusive science education and described young people as important contributors to present-day innovation,



adding that the programme was designed to complement classroom theories with practical experiences. He also highlighted the state's efforts to expand digital literacy, strengthen technological capacity, encourage innovation and improve access to digital opportunities.

In his goodwill message, the Chairman of Ogoja Local Government Area, represented by the Supervisor for Health, Mr. David Ilom, appreciated the state government and the Ministries of Science, Technology and Innovation and Education for bringing the celebration to the northern part of the state. He urged the students to take the programme seriously and maximise the learning opportunities provided. "We appreciate the state government for bringing this important programme to our students. I encourage the beneficiaries to take the lessons seriously and make good use of the opportunities provided," Ilom said, while recommending that future editions should rotate among different parts of the state to ensure wider participation.

A major highlight of the celebration was a science presentation by the Ministry's Chief Scientist, Mr. Edwin Adie, titled "From Stream to Smart Borehole." The presentation examined the evolution of water access and delivery systems, showing how scientific discoveries, engineering and technological advancements have improved access to potable water over the years. Adie traced the progression from traditional methods of fetching water from streams and rivers to the use of wells, boreholes and electrically powered water-pumping systems.

More than eight participating schools showcased their scientific knowledge, creativity and innovative ideas through mini science exhibitions.

At the end of the exhibition, Government Technical College (GTC), Ogoja, emerged first, while Federal Science College, Ogoja, secured second position and Bendi Technical College, Obanliku, came third. The



three outstanding schools received cash prizes in recognition of their creativity, innovation and participation.

The students also participated in practical training sessions covering Artificial Intelligence, hardware, coding and software development. The Ministry's ICT team demonstrated experiments involving hydrogen gas and a water fountain, providing participants with hands-on exposure to scientific processes and encouraging them to develop greater interest in science, technology and innovation.

The technical demonstrations further exposed the students to computer systems, CPU connections and basic computer repair techniques, equipping them with practical knowledge of hardware operations and maintenance. These activities provided opportunities for participants to connect scientific theories with real-life applications and explore possible areas of technological innovation.

As part of the celebration, scientific souvenirs were presented to participating schools and students as educational materials to support their studies and encourage continued interest in science. The three best-performing schools also received cash awards for their outstanding contributions to the science exhibition, while the programme provided a platform for students to demonstrate their talents and appreciate the practical value of scientific knowledge.

The event attracted several dignitaries, including the Education Secretary of Ogoja Local Government Area, Mr. Ernest Otung, and the Principal of Government Technical College, Atakpa, Ogoja, Mr. Mobu John. The celebration formed part of the Ministry's efforts to promote inclusive science education, expand practical learning opportunities and inspire young people across Cross River State to embrace science, technology and innovation as tools for solving societal challenges.

Odey Tasks Education Agencies on Accountability, Improved Performance

By Patricia Ogbeche



The Cross River State Commissioner for Education, Senator Professor Stephen Odey, has charged heads of agencies and parastatals under the Ministry to strengthen communication with the Ministry through regular updates on their activities, achievements and ongoing programmes.

Odey gave the charge on Monday during a meeting with heads of agencies and parastatals, where he stressed the importance of effective coordination, accountability and compliance with established administrative procedures to enhance the Ministry's supervisory and reporting functions.

The Commissioner reminded the agency heads of the Ministry's supervisory authority, urging them to ensure that official correspondences follow established administrative channels and that developments within their respective establishments are promptly communicated to his office.

He explained that regular updates would enable the



Ministry to maintain accurate records, assess the performance of its agencies and provide comprehensive reports on their activities and achievements.

Odey also encouraged the heads of agencies to invite him on supervisory visits to their establishments, noting that such engagements would provide opportunities to assess their operations, identify challenges and make appropriate representations to Governor Bassey Otu for necessary interventions.

He called for mutual respect, unity and peaceful coexistence among the heads of agencies, emphasising that competence, honesty, hard work and commitment to public service should guide their professional relationships.

The Commissioner assured them of the Ministry's readiness to provide the necessary leadership, guidance and institutional support to enable them discharge their responsibilities effectively.

He further urged the agency heads to work collectively towards the success of the Otu administration, reminding them of their responsibility to support the government's political aspirations ahead of the 2027 general elections.

In his response, the Vice Chairman of Heads of Agencies, Prof. Patrick Asuquo, thanked the Commissioner for convening the meeting and providing an opportunity for engagement and improved collaboration.

Asuquo assured him of the agency heads' readiness to cooperate with the Ministry, comply with established administrative procedures and strengthen institutional relationships in advancing the state's education sector.





NACA, CR-SACA Push for Stronger Enforcement of HIV Anti-Discrimination Law

By Asari Eso



The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), in collaboration with the Cross River State Agency for the Control of AIDS (CR-SACA), has intensified efforts to strengthen the enforcement of the state's HIV Anti-Discrimination Law.

This was disclosed during a two-day State-Level Oversight, Monitoring and Stakeholder Review Meeting on the Implementation of the State Anti-Discrimination Law, supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, held in Calabar on Monday.

The meeting, which brought together representatives of government institutions, legal and human rights organisations, civil society groups, development partners and networks of people living with HIV, was convened to assess existing legal protections, identify implementation gaps and explore practical measures for strengthening compliance and access to justice.

In a welcome address delivered by Mr. Nasir Sanusi on behalf of the Director-General of NACA, Dr. Temitope Ilori, stressed that achieving Nigeria's HIV response targets requires more than sustained investment in prevention, testing, treatment and care, noting that effective legal protection remains essential to eliminating discrimination and ensuring equitable access to healthcare.

She observed that despite



progress in the HIV response, institutional practices, social exclusion and inadequate protection of fundamental rights continue to undermine public confidence in health services and discourage affected individuals from seeking medical attention.

According to her, the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation is an important milestone, but its effectiveness depends on the extent to which institutions understand their responsibilities, implement its provisions and provide meaningful remedies for victims of discrimination.

Dr. Ilori expressed concern that fear of unauthorised disclosure of HIV status, denial of healthcare, employment discrimination and other forms of social exclusion could deter individuals from accessing testing and treatment services, thereby weakening efforts to achieve sustained viral suppression.

She emphasised the need to assess existing complaint, reporting, referral and redress mechanisms to determine whether persons experiencing HIV-related discrimination can safely report violations, obtain appropriate legal assistance and secure timely remedies without fear of retaliation.

The NACA Director-General further called for stronger institutional coordination and clearly defined accountability structures, stressing that effective implementation of the law requires the collective commitment of



government agencies, healthcare institutions, legal practitioners, civil society organisations and affected communities.

She also acknowledged the Global Fund's continued support for interventions aimed at addressing structural and human rights barriers to HIV services in Nigeria.

In his remarks, the Director-General of Cross River SACA, Dr. Charles Iwara, described the review as timely and critical to sustaining progress in HIV service delivery, strengthening ownership and promoting the integration of HIV interventions into broader healthcare programmes.

He noted that more than four decades into the global response to HIV, stigma, discrimination and human rights abuses remain persistent challenges, despite the existence of legal frameworks designed to protect affected populations.

Dr. Iwara expressed concern over gaps in existing anti-discrimination legislation, particularly the absence of clearly defined enforcement procedures and accessible mechanisms for reporting violations and seeking legal remedies.

He maintained that reviewing the implementation of the law would provide an opportunity to address these shortcomings and establish more effective pathways through which affected individuals could seek redress and perpetrators of discriminatory practices could be held accountable



in accordance with the law.

The Director-General also drew attention to the need for greater inclusion of key populations, observing that certain vulnerable groups were not adequately considered in earlier legal provisions.

He stressed that strengthening the state's legal framework must involve a more inclusive approach that recognises the rights and experiences of all populations affected by HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

Dr. Iwara further emphasised the importance of multisectoral collaboration, noting that the HIV response extends beyond the health sector to include justice, human rights, social welfare and community-based interventions.

He urged participants to contribute meaningfully to the deliberations, explaining that their recommendations would be instrumental in shaping the next phase of the state's HIV response and advancing efforts towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Providing technical guidance, consultant and facilitator, Clement Igata, led presentations on the HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act, 2014, and the legal provisions governing the protection of people living with HIV.

His presentations examined the scope of the legislation, the rights and obligations of individuals and institutions, prohibited discriminatory practices

and the legal consequences of violations.

The sessions highlighted fundamental protections relating to privacy, confidentiality, access to healthcare, employment, education and other essential services, while examining the responsibilities of employers, healthcare providers and public institutions in preventing discriminatory treatment.

Particular attention was given to practices such as denial of employment or medical services on the basis of HIV status, unlawful disclosure of confidential health information and exclusion from educational institutions or public facilities.

The facilitator also examined provisions relating to workplace HIV policies, occupational safety, welfare benefits and penalties prescribed under the national anti-discrimination framework.

A review of the status of HIV anti-discrimination legislation across Nigeria identified Cross River State among states with existing legal provisions, having enacted its law in 2010.

The presentations underscored the need to move beyond the existence of legislation to ensure practical implementation, institutional compliance and accessible mechanisms for enforcing the rights guaranteed under the law.

The meeting also provided a platform for examining the roles of relevant institutions in addressing HIV-related discrimination, particularly in complaint documentation, investigation, referral, prosecution and access to legal remedies.

Stakeholders from the Ministry of Justice, National Human Rights Commission, Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Bar Association, civil society organisations and networks of people living with HIV participated in discussions on institutional responsibilities and the protection of affected populations.

The programme featured group exercises and stakeholder consultations aimed at identifying implementation challenges, reviewing existing reporting mechanisms and developing recommendations for improved coordination, accountability and enforcement.

The engagement reflects growing recognition that HIV-related stigma and discrimination remain significant obstacles to effective prevention, treatment and care, particularly where affected individuals lack adequate information about their rights or access to appropriate channels for seeking redress.

Through the review process, NACA and Cross River SACA are seeking to strengthen collaboration among implementing institutions, address gaps in existing legal protections and promote a more responsive framework for safeguarding the dignity and fundamental rights of people living with HIV.

The initiative is expected to contribute to efforts aimed at improving legal awareness, institutional accountability and equitable access to HIV services, in line with Nigeria’s commitment to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Religious Leaders Endorse Gov. Otu for Second Term

By Nakanda Iyadim



Religious leaders across the Christian and Muslim divide in Cross River State have endorsed Governor Bassey Edet Otu for a second term in office, citing his performance and inclusive style of governance.

The endorsement was made at the Cross River State Religious Leaders Political Summit 2026, with the theme, “When the Righteous Rule,” held in Calabar.

The summit brought together clergymen, Islamic leaders and faith-based stakeholders to deliberate on the role of the Church and the Mosque in governance.

The motion for endorsement was moved by Archbishop Josef Bassey shortly after delivering his lecture titled, “Supporting the Righteous in Authority in Cross River State.”

Speaking on behalf of the Muslim community, Chairman of the Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Imam Kabir Olowolagemo, said the Otu administration is a government of religious people and has given unprecedented recognition to Muslims in the state.

“For the first time in history, you have an Imam as Chairman of the Pilgrims Welfare Board. It has never happened. This is the government of religious people,” he said.

Speaking as an Imam and a national Islamic leader, he declared the Muslim community’s total support for the Governor beyond Cross River State.

“By the authority given to me, not just as an Imam but as a judge, I confirm that the whole Muslim community is with him. Prince Bassey Otu is not just a product for Cross River State. We are all



crossing over to where he is because it is sweet here. We join you all to sing Hosanna come 2027. We endorse Prince Otu," he said.

Seconding the motion on behalf of the Christian community, the State Overseer of the Charismatic Bishops Conference of Nigeria and Adviser to the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) in Cross River State, Bishop Frank Obase, described the Governor as a "very productive, God-performing, successful man."

"His actions can be seen. His performance is very visible. They are not hidden in all sectors: health, education and all sectors where humanity should be impacted," he said. "This is the very first time I can see a Bible preacher who preaches in church and is in Government House. So this is our government."

In his goodwill message, the State President of the PFN and Acting Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Dr. Trinity Ogar, charged religious leaders to move beyond prayer and get involved in politics.

"There is politics everywhere. There is politics in the house. If you are a pastor and you must survive as a good pastor, you must understand politics," he said.

He dismissed the notion that politics is dirty, arguing that such a mindset has kept righteous people away from power.

"When you begin to feel that politics is dirty, who is going to clean it up? If politics is dirty, we will put dirty people into power to rule us in dirtiness. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. We should galvanize and find our way to authority," he said.

He called on pastors, bishops, archbishops and imams to seek elective positions, join political parties and take part in the processes that produce candidates, noting that leaders listen only to those who contributed to their emergence.



"Our job is not only to pray. Our job is also to be involved. Politics is not demonic. Politics is not ungodly. Politics is not dirty. It is how you play it," he added.

Earlier, in a lecture titled, "The Role of Religious Institutions in Promoting Peaceful Election and Democratic Stability in Cross River State," the Vice President of PFN (South-South), Archbishop (Dr.) Emmah Isong, said individual destinies are tied to corporate destiny. When a territory fails corporately, he said, individuals struggle, while corporate victory eases individual struggles.

He said God thinks in terms of territories, citing Jerusalem and its collective destiny with the Jews, and challenged listeners to consider what it means to be a Cross Riverian and what divine mandate rests on the state.

He argued that the primary business of the Church is territorial governance, and that God will hold the Church, not just government, responsible for what happens in a territory. He added that God allows leaders to emerge for different purposes , sometimes to punish or teach a people until they learn and that when He decides to heal a land in response to prayer, He raises the right leaders.

In his welcome address, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Religious Matters, Apostle Frank Umo, said the summit was designed to strengthen the role of religious leaders in a democratic society beyond the pulpit, and to promote good governance, justice, accountability and moral direction.

He challenged the notion that politics is dirty, asking whether righteous people had simply abandoned the political space. He cited Daniel and Joseph of Arimathea as biblical examples of faith and public service coexisting.

Apostle Umo thanked the Governor, whom he described as the only Governor in Nigeria who is an Apostle, for approving the summit, and praised him as God-fearing and committed to advancing the Kingdom of God. Noting that "one good term deserves another," he said

religious leaders have a duty to pray for leaders, offer wise counsel and speak truth, citing Proverbs 29:2: “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.”

He urged participants to take the message back to their churches and mosques and lay a moral foundation for leadership, since elected officials are members of their congregations.

Responding on behalf of the Governor after the ceremony, the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Pastor Ekpenyong Cobham, thanked Christian and Muslim leaders for the endorsement, describing it as historic and spiritually significant.

“I receive this endorsement with a deep sense of humility and responsibility. To have both the Church and the Mosque speak with one voice in support of this administration is not something to take for granted. It shows that God is at the centre of what we are doing,” Governor Otu said.

He said his administration deliberately made religious inclusion a pillar of governance, leading to the appointment of a Special Adviser on Religious Matters, the inclusion of clergymen and faith leaders in government and, for the first time in the state’s history, the appointment of an Imam as Chairman of the Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board.

“This is your government. It is a People First government. A government that recognises that power comes from God and that without God, we can do nothing. We have tried to ensure that no faith, no denomination, no group is left behind,” he said.

The Governor assured the faith leaders that the endorsement would spur his administration to do more in security, education, healthcare, infrastructure, youth empowerment and religious harmony.

He said the summit was timely, as it aligns with his administration’s belief that governance must be built on righteousness, justice and equity.

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. That scripture remains the compass of this administration. We will continue to create an enabling environment for the Church to grow, for the Mosque to grow, and for all Cross Riverians to worship freely and prosper,” he said.

He urged religious leaders to continue praying for the peace and prosperity of the state and Nigeria, and to preach tolerance, unity and active citizenship.

“Politics is not dirty. It is a platform for service. I encourage our fathers in faith to continue to encourage their members not only to pray, but to participate in the process of choosing leaders. Ensure your PVC is ready and use it on that day. That is how we build the Cross River of our dreams,” he said.

“By the grace of God, we will not disappoint you. Come 2027, with your prayers and support, we will finish what we started and take Cross River to greater heights.”

The summit cited the Special Adviser on Religious Matters, the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, and the State Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Pastor Patrick Asikpo Otu, all clergymen, as examples of the administration’s faith-friendly disposition.

The interfaith leaders pledged to mobilise their congregations and networks across the state to ensure the continuity of the Otu administration beyond 2027.







CROSS RIVER STATE GOVERNMENT

PRESENTS

RELIGIOUS LEADERS POLITICAL SUMMIT 2026

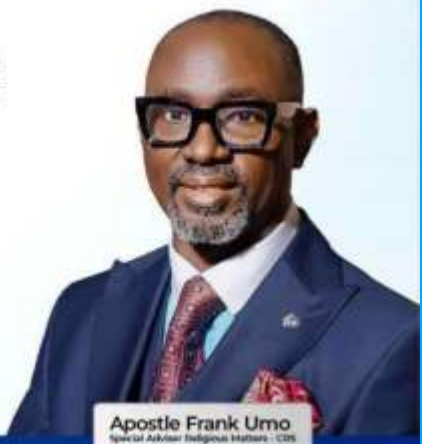
THEME:

WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS RULE



THEIR EXCELLENCIES
Sen. Apst. Dr. Prince Bassey Otu &
Bishop Dr. Mrs. Eyoawan Bassey Otu
Governor/First Lady - CRS

RT. HON.
Peter Odey
Deputy Governor of
Cross River State



Apostle Frank Umo
Special Adviser Religious Matters - CRS

DATE/TIME:
MON. 9TH NOV. 2026
9:00AM

VENUE:
HOGIS ROYALE
6 Bishop Moynagh Avenue
State Housing, Calabar

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THEME:
RETHINKING OUR COLLECTIVE DESTINY

Gov. Otu Begins N50,000 Cash Transfers to Vulnerable Residents Across C'River

By Kingsley Agim



The Cross River State Government has commenced the disbursement of N50,000 each to thousands of vulnerable residents across the state under Governor Bassey Otu's social investment programme.

The State Coordinator of the Social Investment Programme, Dr Edem Okokon Effiom, disclosed this on Saturday in Calabar, stating that the payment exercise began about five days earlier and was still ongoing.

Effiom said the programme was designed to reach 150 beneficiaries in each of the state's 196 wards, bringing the total number of prospective beneficiaries to approximately 29,400.

He explained that each ward's allocation comprised 100 beneficiaries under the Conditional Cash Transfer component and 50 skilled persons who require financial assistance to establish their businesses or trades.

According to him, the intervention is designed to provide financial relief to vulnerable households while empowering skilled individuals who have the capacity to earn a living but lack the start-up capital to put their skills to productive use.

"Why we called you here is



to let the whole world know that the long-awaited social investment impact of His Excellency, Senator Bassey Otu, has started taking effect," he said.

The coordinator disclosed that the beneficiary register had been compiled since June, with deliberate efforts to accommodate people from different social and economic backgrounds in line with the governor's directive to ensure inclusivity.

He said the selection process covered vulnerable members of religious and traditional institutions, women and youth groups, as well as other identifiable segments of society, noting that vulnerability cuts across all sections of the population.

"We segmented our beneficiaries into several segments. We talked about the church, the vulnerable members of our churches, and our traditional institutions, because vulnerability is not peculiar to any particular group; it is spread all over," Effiom stated.

He explained that the media briefing was organised partly to address confusion arising from a similar cash transfer programme circulating on Facebook, which had prompted some residents to question the authenticity of the N50,000 payments.

"For clarification, those who have received their N50,000, it is coming from the Cross River State Government, courtesy of the benevolence of our governor, His Excellency, Senator Bassey Otu," he clarified.

Effiom acknowledged that the beneficiary register was not yet exhaustive, explaining that the government had begun the process of developing a comprehensive database of vulnerable residents and others in genuine need of assistance.

He further disclosed that officials were working to resolve complaints from residents who were yet to receive their payments, with most of the challenges linked to discrepancies in bank account details and Bank Verification Numbers (BVN).

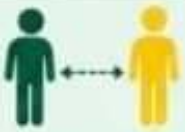
The coordinator assured affected beneficiaries that efforts were ongoing to address the issues and facilitate the payment of their entitlements. He added that the government remained committed to strengthening the programme and expanding its impact.

"Some may say it is small, but little by little, we are making progress. We are hoping that as the government proceeds, and as you all give us the necessary support, we will strengthen the social investment programme and definitely improve on it," he added.

IPC measures for Ebola and Marburg disease

Key recommendations

NCDC
NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

	Best practice
 **IPC ring approach**	Use the IPC ring approach in health-care facilities and communities when a case is identified.
 **Hand hygiene**	Use alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and running water (if currently using chlorine, then implement a strategy to change to ABHR).
 **Screening**	Everyone should be screened using a no-touch technique at the first point of contact.
 **Patient placement**	Patients should be isolated in a single room and their well-being and visitors made a priority as safely as possible.
 **Personal protective equipment**	PPE should be selected based on risk of activity being performed.
 **Spraying health and care workers**	**Do not** spray health and care workers during PPE removal.
 **Health and care worker exposures**	Exposed health and care workers should be assessed and managed according to risk of exposure.
 **Waste management**	All waste generated should be treated as infectious waste, including heavily soiled linen.
 **Environmental cleaning and disinfection**	Clean and disinfect surfaces/environment by wiping in patient care areas.
 **Safe management of dead bodies**	**Do not** disinfect dead bodies.

Adapted from: World Health Organization. *IPC measures for Ebola and Marburg disease: past and present.*

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