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Editor's Notes

The 3rd Quarter is here and as usual, presents you with interesting events and programmes undertaken by TETFund as it maintains focus in the delivery of its mandate.

It was a harvest of awards for the tertiary education sub-sector as President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR presented National Honours to 437 deserving Nigerians, with five key players in the education sector making the revered list of awardees.

In the lead, expectedly, was the Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu who was conferred with the prestigious honour of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON).

TETFund also got a fair share of the awards in the tertiary education sub-sector as the former Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Alhaji Kashim Ibrahim-Imam, was conferred with the award of Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR), while the Executive Secretary, Arc Sonny S. T. Echono as well as his predecessor, Professor Elias Suleiman Bogoro were conferred with the awards of the Order of the Niger (OON).

The Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) was not left out as its Registrar, Professor Is-haq Oloyede got conferred with the award of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON).

It was double honour for Arc. Sonny Echono as he bagged another prestigious award as a Fellow of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEP) barely 24 hours after the national honours.

In ensuring the availability of relevant local textbooks for use, the Fund recently presented 10 published textbooks written by authors from various disciplines and fully sponsored by the Fund. The public presentation attracted stakeholders, including the Minister of State for Education, members of the National Assembly, representatives of Beneficiary Institutions, among others.

From outside the shores of Nigeria came a heart-warming commendation by the European Union Commission on the high level of commitment by TETFund to nation building. The Fund participated in a conference at EU Headquarters in Brussels aimed at strengthening partnership between the EU and selected African countries.

Accolades on the landmark achievements of TETFund also echoed from the Nigerian Ambassador to Egypt, Mr. Nura Abba Rimi when he played host to TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS) Monitoring team in Cairo University, Alexandra University and Mansoura University.

The quarter also witnessed the commissioning of high-quality projects worth billions of Naira at the Federal College of Education (FCE), Obudu, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi and Federal College of Education, Kano. These are just a few of the projects already lined up for commissioning in various institutions.

The Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom also played host to one of the illustrious sons of the state, Arc. Sonny Echono alongside other principal officers of Benue State University, at the Benue Peoples House, Makurdi. Governor Ortom expressed appreciation for the visible footprints of the Fund across institutions, describing TETFund as one of the best things to happen to Nigeria. Arc Echono also graced the Second Anniversary of the Federal University of Health Science, Otukpo, (FUHSO), Benue State with his presence, where he delivered a lecture, calling for Government assisted programmes that boosts human capital development and eliminate poverty, especially in the rural areas.

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BUHARI CONFERS NATIONAL HONOUR ON ADAMU, OTHERS IN EDUCATION SECTOR



WORDS: APREBO OTONBARA

It was a harvest of awards in the education sector as President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR recently conferred National Honours on 447 persons who have in various ways distinguished themselves in their respective professions and contributing to national development.

Prominent among those recognized during the conferment ceremony which took place at the International Conference Centre, Abuja was the Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, who was awarded the prestigious National Honour of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON).

Other key players, particularly at the tertiary education sub-sector level were also recognized for their various contributions towards the development of education in Nigeria with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) getting a fair share of the awards.

Former Chairman of the Board of Trustees of TETFund, Alhaji Kashim Ibrahim-Imam was conferred with the award of Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR) while the Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny S. T. Echono and his predecessor, Professor Suleiman Elias Bogoro were conferred with the award: Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON).

In addition, Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Professor Ishaq Oloyede was decorated with the award of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON). Also, Professor Afonja Olumuyiwa Adebayo (CON) and Professor Ayodele Desalu (CON).

Other recipients in the sector include: Professor Seddi Sebastian Maimako Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON), Ambassador Mary Lar (OON), Professor Ahmed Mohammed Wali (OON), Professor Sa'adiya Omar Bello (OON), Professor Akaneren Idem Essien (OON), Professor Oluwatoyin Ashiru (OON), Professor Maxwell Gidado (OON), Professor Francis Afolabi Fajemirokun (OON), Professor Doknan Decent Danjuma Shen (OON), His Royal Highness, Igwe Professor Onuora Nwuneli (OON), Professor Aminu Diyo Sheidu (OON).

Professor Sani Abubakar Lugga Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR), Mrs. Comfort Nwobu (MFR), Lady Eno Bassey (MFR), Professor Adebayo M.A Ninalowo (MFR), Dr. Mrs Ladi Mairo Sambo (MFR),

Professor Ahmed Modibbo Mohammed (MFR), Dr. Celestine Iweha Dureke (MFR), Professor Ferdinand A. Ofodile (MFR), Mallam Ibrahim Okposi, Member of the Order of the Niger (MON), Mallam Mukhtar Gulma (MON), Professor Toyin Omoyeni Falola (MON), Professor Bonn Obikwe Godwin Nwanolue, (MON).

Meanwhile, it was double honour for Arc. Sonny Echono as he was awarded with a Fellowship of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEP) barely 24 hours after receiving the national honours award.

At the investiture held in Abuja, the National President of NAEP, Professor Hauwa Imam stated that the award was in recognition of Arc. Echono's track record of excellent leadership in the education sector, quality assurance and service delivery in Nigeria.

In his acceptance speech, Arc. Echono described the fellowship as a worthy recognition of his efforts to restore a culture of planning in the general administration of the education sector.

He said, "The fellowship of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning is a worthy recognition of what one was able to play in the sector. We worked very hard to restore the culture of planning, not just in terms of our curriculum and delivery system but also in the general organization of the educational sector so that we can have a steady and synchronized relationship from both basic to secondary and to tertiary".



According to him, the new career path policy approved by the Federal Government has made it compulsory for those who aspire to be administrators of educational institutions to possess the necessary professional exposure and registration.

"We also believe that those entrusted with the responsibility for administering our institutions should not only have academic qualifications but also have professional knowledge and skills and continually develop themselves, hone those skills, imbibe good practices, improve accountability, prudence and judicious use of resources at their disposal" Echono further explained.



Words: Oluwatosin Ishowo

Photography: Zeal Eghove
Hyelkuzuku Nggada and
Farida Abbas



TETFund Unveils 10 Sponsored Textbooks by Nigerian Scholars

The determination of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to promote indigenous textbooks has continued to yield positive results with the unveiling of 10 TETFund-sponsored textbooks written by Nigerian scholars at the Federal Ministry of Education Abuja.

Performing the public presentation of the books, the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, who was represented by the Minister of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Goodluck Nanah Opiah congratulated TETFund on the landmark achievement in content creation and promotion of indigenous publication in higher institutions. He commended the Fund for its contributions as a government agency formulating and implementing policies crucial to nation-building.

Speaking at the event, the Chairman of TETFund's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for Book Development, Prof. O. Charles Aworh while giving a brief history of TAG, stated that the Group was first constituted in 2009 and its reconstitution in 2019 reenergized its efforts toward book development.

According to Prof. Aworh, the Committee considered 77 manuscripts for publication in 2020 despite the threats posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and apart from the ten 10 books presented at the event, 60 other books are in various publishing houses across the country.



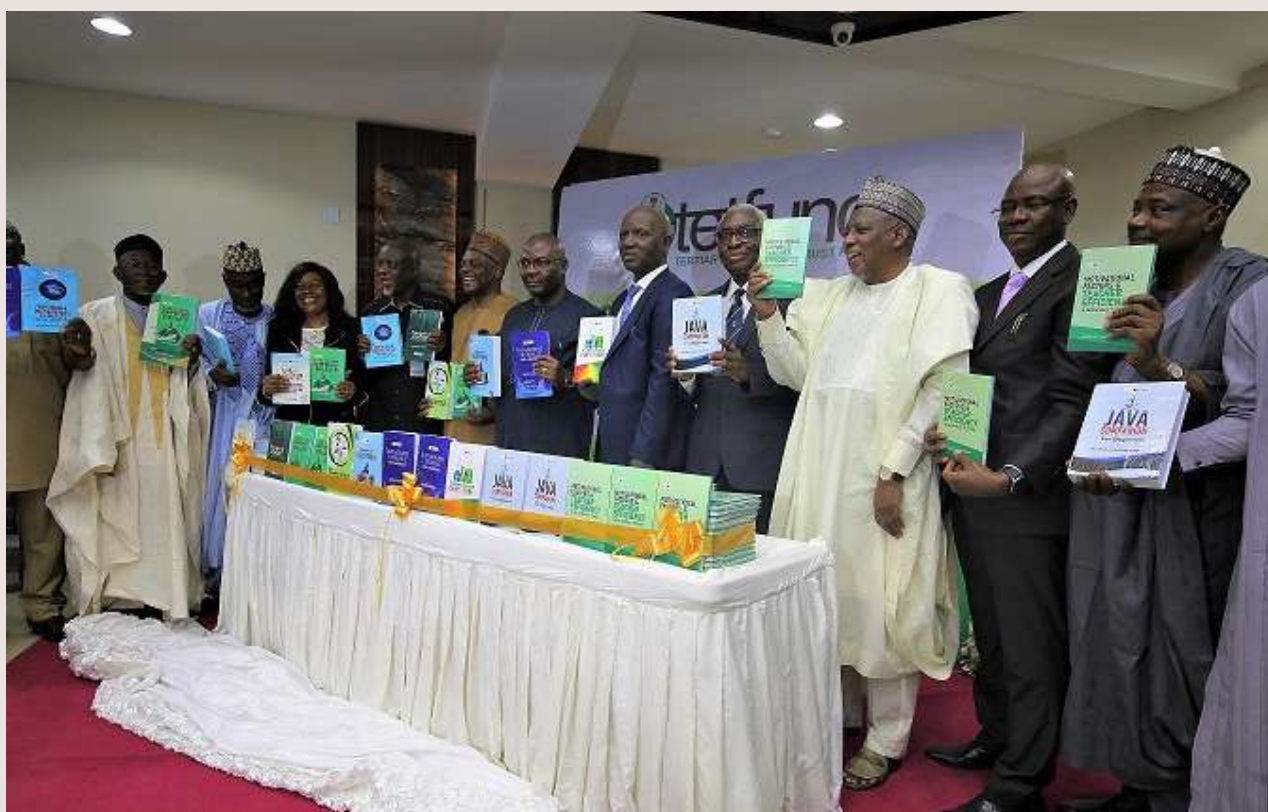
While noting that nurturing authors and developing quality manuscripts are essential in the education industry, he registered his satisfaction with TETFund's Academic Publishing Centres (APCs) built across the geographical zones of the country as being responsible for the publishing of 60% of the books.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono stated that the Fund has a target to publish 40 books this year, stressing that efforts are ongoing to increase it to 50 by the following year. He equally revealed that the seven Academic Publishing Centres of the Fund will be fully operational by September, 2022.

According to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, there is general satisfaction with the published books, as they have been adjudged to be of international standard, with the Fund also making concerted efforts to digitalize them.

The event was graced by notable players in the education sector including the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Mr. David Adejo; Registrar, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Is-haq Oloyede; Executive Secretary, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Prof. Paulinus Okwelle and Executive Secretary, Universal Basic Education commission (UBEC), Dr. Hamid Bobboyi.

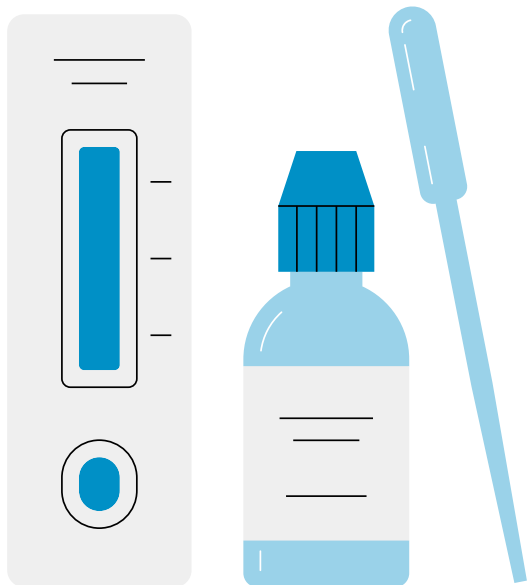
Also present were representatives of National Universities Commission (NUC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) amongst others.



Major Breakthrough as TETFund-Sponsored COVID-19 Vaccine Ready for Trial in November

Words: Aprebo Otonbara

Photography: Micheal Agu



The Vaccine Development efforts of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has started yielding visible results as the COVID-19 vaccine project sponsored by the Fund will be ready for first clinical trial in November this year.

The project, which is a mega research grant intervention tagged 'Accelerated Development of COVID-19 Vaccines Using Innovative Technological Approach' is a collaborative effort involving cluster researchers from five different institutions to consolidate problem-solving research and promote innovation in Nigeria.

It would be recalled that TETFund awarded a total of N1,250,000,000.00 (One Billion, Two Hundred and Fifty Million) Naira, distributed to four clusters of researchers. One of the clusters, which is the Vaccine Production Cluster, got a total grant of N450 Million (Four Hundred and Fifty Million) Naira.

The Vaccine Production Cluster is made up of researchers from the National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Jos, Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, Lagos and National Research Institute for Chemical Technology, Zaria.

Vice Chancellor of Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Professor Lawal Suleiman Bilbis, who led the team of researchers to brief the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono on the progress so far, explained that they were able to make the breakthrough through the maximum support of the Fund.

He recalled how the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged and unleashed untold hardship on humanity globally, noting that Nigeria was only saved by divine intervention, since the nation was not prepared for such eventuality.

He said, "TETFund believed in us and supported us to get to where we are now. That is why we have come to give a firsthand report on the progress made so far".

A presentation by Dr. Bashir Muhammad Bello of Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto revealed that it has become a matter of urgency for Africa to join the rest of the world in the production of its own vaccine, as it was estimated that the continent currently imports 99 per cent of its vaccines and consumes 25 per cent of global vaccine supply.

He explained that this gave rise to the team coming together to form a consortium and put up a strong proposal with which they approached TETFund for sponsorship under its research and development intervention.

He said, "We graciously got the support of TETFund not only in COVID-19 but also in Lassa Fever and other infectious diseases, because whether we like it or not, diseases will continue to emerge.

They don't have international boundaries and that is why they are called pandemic"

"That was when we realized that we really need to sit up. Those producing these vaccines abroad are mostly Nigerians after all, so why can't we do it here. That is why we decided to form a consortium and TETFund was magnanimous to release N225 million for the first tranche, he added"

He noted that the team was meticulous in their research by ensuring that all the factors responsible for the reemergence of different COVID-19 variants were considered to make sure they don't manifest in future.

Responding, Arc. Echono, lauded the team for the great feat achieved within a time limit to make the country proud with the progress recorded in the vaccine production.

He explained that it is a national project, and as such, it has become a national pride, assuring that TETFund would continue to assist the cross-cutting efforts of the researchers to ensure the desired goal is achieved.



Senate Committee Advocates 3% Increase in Education Tax, As TETFund Seeks House Committee Support on Increase

Words: Ijeoma Obiakor and Anne Igah

Photography: H yelkuzuku Nggada

The Senate committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFund has advocated an increase in Education Tax from 2.5 to 3% to enable the Fund increase its investments in Research and Development for the development of the country.

The Committee made the proposal during a visit to the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently, to ascertain the level of performance of its 2021/ 2022 Budget.

The committee stated that the 2.5 percent Education Tax with which the Fund has been carrying out its interventions has had massive and sustained impact on improving tertiary education in Nigeria through several intervention programmes and an upward review would make the effects of the interventions even more impactful.

Speaking during the visit, the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Ahmed Babba Kaita stated that the oversight visit was in compliance with the resolution of the Senate directing committees to embark on oversight of Ministries, Departments and Agencies under their jurisdiction.

Senator Kaita described the visit to TETFund as 'home coming' having had the opportunity of working with the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono while he was permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education.

"We are very delighted to embark on this oversight function. For us it is home coming as you were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and we know him to be a performer extraordinaire and we want to believe that the same energy, mission and character that he showed as Permanent Secretary will be replicated here," he said.

He stated that the need for the increase in Education Tax to three percent to improve research and development as education and health are two critical sectors that drive development.





In his remarks, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed appreciation to the Committee for the support it has rendered to the Fund over the years.

“We are indeed honoured to receive such a highly distinguished delegation from the Senate of the Federal Republic. We would like to seize this opportunity to express our profound appreciation for the level of support and cooperation received over the years through the committee.

“Indeed, we are always proud to say the harmony between the National Assembly and the education sector is largely responsible for most of the achievements recorded in the sector in the last seven years,” he said.

He also expressed appreciation to the National Assembly for passing the 2021 Finance Act which raised the Education Tax from 2 to 2.5 percent.

According to Arc. Echono, “the bloodline for our interventions is based on the two percent tax imposed on companies and we express our gratitude to the National Assembly for passing the 2021 Finance Act thereby raising the education tax from two percent to 2.5 percent.

“We are grateful for their magnanimity, and we say it was done based on consultation and sheer acceptance of the need to increase funding and investment in education,” he added.

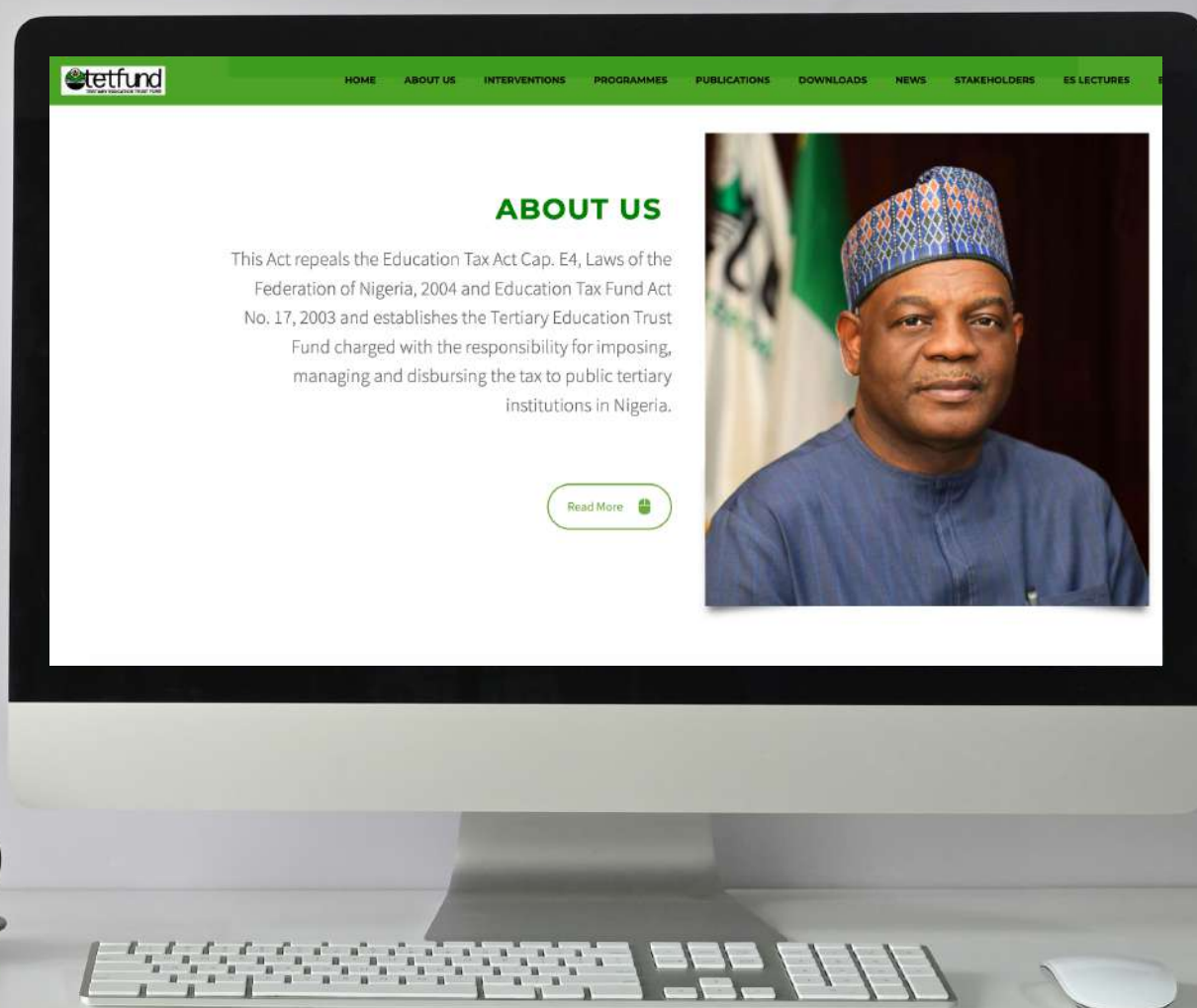
In a related development, the Fund has also sought the support of the House Committee on Tertiary Education and Services on the increase of Education Tax to 3%.

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Continuing from Page 10

The support was sought when members of the Committee led by Hon. Aminu Suleiman, paid an oversight visit to the Fund. Speaking during the visit, Arc. Echono noted that given President Muhammadu Buhari's commitment on increased funding for education, as well as the usual support of the National Assembly, the tax rate last year was increased from 2 to 2.5%.

According to the Executive Secretary, "the target is that before the end of this administration, it will increase to three per cent, which is a commitment that the President has already given to the Global Partnership for Education."

Echono further commended the level of support and cooperation the Fund has enjoyed from the committee and the National Assembly, while seeking its support in effecting the amendment of the education tax law.

In his remarks, Hon. Suleiman assured the Fund of its continued support and cooperation to ensure that the system continues to work stronger.

"We congratulate you and we assure you of our support, without prejudice to the fact that sometimes we can agree to disagree;





"Even when you were the Permanent Secretary, there were times we disagreed entirely with the ministry, but not predicated on any personal motive; and in most cases, we actually arrived at the surface."

"I have no doubt that our relationship will continue here. The essence is for us, like I said, to better the system."

He said the visit was a legislative requirement on any legislature through various committees that oversight must be conducted and the periodic reports submitted to the House through the culinary bureaus to discuss matters, particularly challenges facing agencies of government.





TETFund Ready to Partner NIDCOM to Boost Contributions of Nigerians in Diaspora - Echono

*Words:
Aprebo
Otonbara*

*Photography:
Musa Musa*

The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono says the Fund is ready to partner with the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) in the areas of Research, Exchange, Innovation Centers and Impact Assessment.

Arc. Echono made this known when the Chairman/CEO of NIDCOM, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa paid a courtesy visit to the Fund at its Headquarters in Abuja recently.

He stated that Nigeria was ripe to begin the exploitation of the huge potentials that the diaspora community has brought to all facets of the country's development, with education being the most important sector.

The Executive Secretary expressed belief that Nigerians in diaspora could help fill in the gaps in revenue challenges, not only through remittances, but in driving the necessary transformation factors needed to stabilize and project the country in the direction of growth.

While recalling that the Fund has trained over 35,000 academic staff over the years and a little over two-third of the trainings are done abroad, Arc. Echono stated that it is always heartwarming getting positive feedbacks about the performance of the scholars in the institutions.



He expressed appreciation to Hon. Dabiri-Erewa and management of NIDCOM for their continuous support to government and commitment to the country through harnessing potentials of Nigerians in diaspora for national development.

In her remarks, Hon. Dabiri-Erewa highlighted the high rate of successful Nigerians in diaspora from different fields, outlining their exceptional performance all over the world, with the biggest challenge being how these Nigerians in diaspora will give back to the Nation.

In view of TETFund's strong focus on Research, she sought collaboration for creation of the Diaspora Resource and Research Centre proposed to be sited in University of Ibadan, urging the Fund to commit resources into the Centre, which she believes would be a huge intellectual base for Nigerian intellectuals in diaspora.

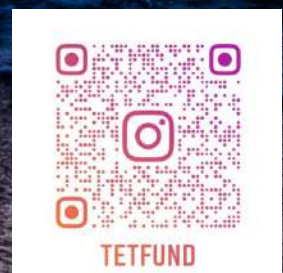
While expressing appreciation to TETFund Management for the partnership opportunity, she expressed the Commission's readiness to build along with the Fund, a purposeful structure and an enduring institution in the Centre.



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Echono Advocates Harnessing Resources to Boost Tertiary Education Funding

Words: Oluwatosin Ishowo

In an effort to reposition tertiary education in the country, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono has advocated for harnessing available resources in the country to drive the country's tertiary education sector forward.

The Executive Secretary made the call during the presentation ceremony of Ahmadu Bello University Alumni Association's 5th Annual Publication tagged "Icons of Global Excellence", wherein he was recognized for his immense contributions towards nation building.

Arc. Echono applauded the framework and arrangements that has aided the University's alumni association to function effectively after it was formed in Lagos in the 1960s, noting that the body has grown in stature and expanded beyond imaginations, serving as a solid chain of networking for graduates of the institution.

In his paper titled "Funding Public Tertiary Education: Role of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Its Future for Sustainable Development", which was presented virtually, the Executive Secretary spoke on the state of public tertiary education funding in the country and prospects for the future, while advocating that all relevant stakeholders must ensure all resources are harnessed for the total benefit of the country.

While revealing that government was making necessary efforts to meet the goal of universal basic education and also improve the quality of secondary and tertiary educational programmes, he stated that developing nations such as Nigeria are confronted with serious revenue constraints which the outbreak of Covid-19 further escalated.

Stressing the importance of tertiary education, Echono intimated that education benefits not just the individual but the society as a whole. He expressed that those who have access to tertiary education are capable of exhibiting healthier habits and improved civic participation.

While lamenting numerous issues militating against funding of education in the country, the TETFund boss stated that TETFund has been doing well in filling the gaps that may hold the country to ransom and threatening its collective existence.

Noting the crucial role ICT plays in innovation and drive for growth, Arc. Echono stated that infusion of technology into education would be of great benefit to the country.

"ICT has come to occupy an important place in teaching and learning. However, ICT facilities are lacking in most of the tertiary institutions in the country. For the nation's tertiary institutions to meet up with global standards and best practices, ICT facilities must be made available with ubiquitous broadband penetration to all institutions," he said.

The TETFund boss informed the audience about the Fund's efforts in supporting Research and Development, academic staff training and development, physical infrastructure, book publication amongst others in public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria.

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A close-up, angled view of a smartphone screen displaying the Twitter app's welcome page. The screen is blue with the white Twitter bird logo in the top left. The text "Welcome to Twitter" is prominently displayed in white. Below it, the tagline "See what's happening in the world right now" is visible. At the bottom, there are two white buttons: "Sign up" and "Log in". The phone is resting on a dark surface, and a portion of a laptop keyboard is visible in the top right corner.

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Twitter

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right now

Sign up

Log in

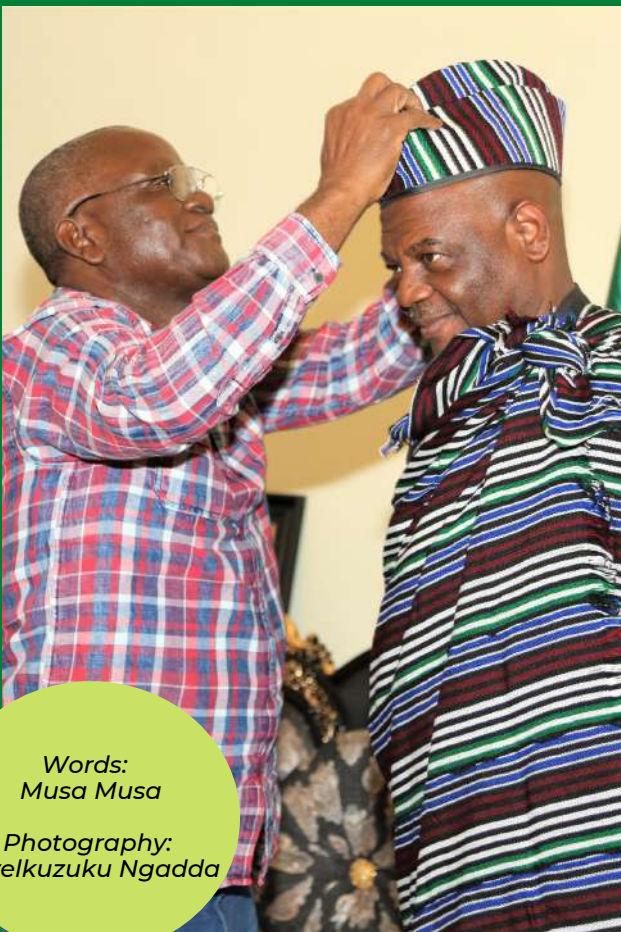
Scan the Q.R Code and get tweet'ng



Gov. Ortom Lauds TETFund's Giant Strides

The Executive Governor of Benue State, Mr. Samuel Ortom has lauded the giant strides recorded by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), which he said has transformed the landscape of Nigeria's tertiary education subsector.

Governor Ortom disclosed this when he played host to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono, the Vice Chancellor Benue State University, Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu and other principal officers who paid him a courtesy call at the Benue Peoples House, Makurdi.



Words:
Musa Musa

Photography:
Hyelkuzuku Ngadda

He further stated that he is impressed with the laudable achievements of TETFund as an agency of the Federal Government pointing out that the footprints of the Fund were visible in all public tertiary educational institutions across the country.

Ortom was of the view that if Nigeria could adopt the model of TETFund in running all its affairs, the issue of insecurity ravaging the country would have become a thing of the past.

According to the Governor, "One institution that I can attest that the Federal Government got right is TETFund. When you visit Federal and State tertiary educational institutions, you can see the footprints of TETFund".

He stated that the Federal Government should understudy the setup and management of TETFund if it can be replicated in the security architecture of the country, infrastructural development, and other areas of critical need.

Governor Ortom prayed for the success of Arc. Echono stating that from his appointment as Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry, President, Nigerian Institute of Architects and currently the Executive Secretary of TETFund, the Government and people of Benue State remain proud of his accomplishments.

In his remarks, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed appreciation to the Governor for his support and the goodwill he has continued to enjoy from the people of the State.

He pledged to use his platform to help re-establish Benue as a state which has comparative advantage in the area of human capital development.

While in the State, the TETFund Boss also visited the Benue State University and Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University on an inspection tour of ongoing TETFund Projects.

Govt Must Support Programmes that Aid Human Development

Words: Daniel Ochekepe

Photography:
Zeal Eghove

Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has expressed the need for government at all levels to facilitate programmes that boost human capital development and eliminate poverty, especially in rural areas.

Arc. Echono stated this recently while delivering a lecture at the Second Anniversary of the Federal University of Health Science, Otukpo, (FUHSO), Benue State.

According to him, such programmes directed at equal opportunities to access quality education, healthcare facilities and improved agricultural practices would go a long way to improving the livelihood of the people.

He said, "Government at all levels must pay attention to programmes that improve the lot of the people, aimed at eradicate poverty, promote employment and provide opportunities for people.

The programmes should aid rural and agricultural development so that the population is well fed on good nutrition and healthy habits.



"Government must continue to play a critical role in infrastructural development in rural areas, reduce the inequality that exists in the distribution of educational and health facilities which are necessary in the reduction of poverty.

"Tertiary education according to reports is a pre-requisite for innovation and growth and creates opportunities for employment and earning higher incomes thereby raising the standard of living of many individuals and families. Improvements in education and healthcare depend on available resources and the provision of access to all," he stated.

The Executive Secretary emphasized that economic emancipation affects the growth of a nation, noting that "at the center of economic emancipation is human capital development which remains a pre-requisite to nation building and development in general."

He enumerated the three main objectives of development to include raising the standard of living of people, creating conditions conducive for growth, and establishment of social, economic and political systems that promote dignity and increase people's freedom of choice by enlarging their options.

Arc Echono urged Benue communities within the proximity of various educational and healthcare institutions to take the advantage presented to them, not only for employment prospects, but more importantly, for the opportunities for development of human capital for the state and export to the rest of the country and indeed the world.

In his address, the Vice Chancellor of FUHSO, Professor Innocent Ujah announced that with TETFund's commitment of N3 billion, construction of infrastructure at the permanent site of the institution has commenced and he was confident that the university would move to the permanent site by 2023.

He expressed appreciation that FUSHO was selected as one of TETFund's Centres of Excellence, with specialization on infectious diseases for the study of Ebola, Lassa Fever, Covid-19 and other emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases, noting that some academics have started benefitting from TETFund's research grants.



Echono Has Exhibited Professionalism at TETFund - NIM

Words: Ijeoma Obiakor
Photography: Zeal Eghove

The Council of Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) has extolled the high level of professionalism demonstrated by the Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono in running the affairs of the agency.

Vice President of the Council, Dr. (Mrs.) Christy Atako, who also represented the Chairman and President of the Council, Major-General Abdullahi Muraina (Rtd), made the observation when she led a team of Council members on a courtesy visit to TETFund's headquarters in Abuja.

Dr. (Mrs.) Atako described Arc Echono's appointment as befitting and well deserved, adding that it is a reward for the managerial pedigree he displayed in previous assignments he was saddled with.

She said, "I am happy to note that TETFund has not disappointed since the inception of this administration and you have played a vital role in helping President Muhammadu Buhari in achieving the set objective of moving the nation forward through sound national planning policy. You have equally exhibited professionalism in governance and management of the affairs of TETFund".

Dr (Mrs.) Atako informed the Executive Secretary of the Institute's contributions to nation building and called for collaboration with TETFund for mutual benefits and national development.

Director, Executive Secretary's Office, Arc. Uchendu Wogu who spoke on behalf of the Executive Secretary, described TETFund as a Management

Organization, as the functions of the Fund's Board of Trustees centers on management of funds.

According to him, any organization that aims at achieving its objectives, mission and vision, must embrace sound management principles and practices.

On the call for collaboration, Arc. Nwogu informed the delegation that TETFund has opened a window for partnership in Research for non-public institutions through the National Research Fund (NRF) Intervention and the Institute could explore the possibilities therein.

He advocated for continuous support for staff of the Fund in the area of professional training by the Institute.



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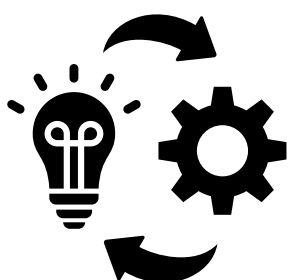
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PLANNING PL

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Plan Ahead for Speedy Projects Implementation, TETFund Enjoins Beneficiary Institutions

Words: Habiba Rabi

Beneficiary Institutions of TETFund have been advised to imbibe a culture of planning as a necessary measure to guard against delays and consequent price variations in the cost of projects implementation.

Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono gave the charge when the Committee of Provosts, led by its Chairman, Mr. Amos Bulus Cirfat, paid a courtesy visit to the Agency recently.

Arc Echono stated that the rising cost of materials has affected not only TETFund projects but every aspect of economic life of the country and must be tackled with proper planning, even prior to release of allocations to the institutions.

He reiterated that since projects emanate from beneficiary institutions, they should have a clear roadmap to executing the projects even before the allocations are communicated to them.

Arc Echono said; "In an atmosphere where there is manifest instability in the building materials and equipment market, it is difficult to hold down the prices of goods and services of contracts and we must become extremely nimble on how we manage those contracts to mitigate the adverse impact; which is why we are emphasising the issue of timeliness. We want to encourage all our beneficiary institutions to ensure that as soon as allocations are made to you, you act speedily in identifying and committing your projects".

"Every institution must have a master plan.

You must have a projection of your growth over five, ten or even thirty years and accompanying those broad projections are areas about your academic development - how many courses do you want to run, how many are you adding, how many are you elevating and the accompanying infrastructure needs.

"This is so that at each point in time, if you are told that this is the money to intervene in your school, all you need to adjust would just be the quantities because of the volatility in the markets. We want you to do the same thing with the management of your projects. You must do everything possible to discourage delays",

he emphasized.

Responding to the request for a waiver on Teaching Practice for the newly established Colleges of Education, TETFund assured the Committee that the Fund is already in the process of making necessary adjustments and reviews, which would be rolled out soon for implementation.

In his remarks, Mr Cirfat extolled the passion of the Executive Secretary of TETFund to education, stating that he has contributed immensely giant strides that TETFund is making towards improving the tertiary education sector of the nation.

While congratulating Echono on his appointment, Mr Cirfat outlined several areas of concern that needed the attention of the TETFund boss.

Among the requests made by the Committee to the Executive Secretary are the provision of waivers for newly established Colleges of Education regarding allocations for Teaching Practice to a further date when students are more readily available, insurance policy in Colleges of Education, provision of security for TETFund funded laboratories and workshops and variation in the cost of materials.



TETFund to Commence Construction of North-Central Office in January 2023

**Words:
Anne Igah**



The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) will commence the construction of its North-Central Zonal Office in Nasarawa State in January 2023, following the allocation of a land by the State Government to the Fund.

This was disclosed by the Executive Secretary of the Fund, Arc. Sonny Echono when he played host to Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State at the TETFund Headquarters in Abuja.

Arc. Echono expressed appreciation to the Governor for allocating the land for the construction, saying that the Zonal Office would bring beneficiary institutions in the North-Central region closer to the Fund.

“We are pleased that his Excellency graciously approved and allocated land to TETFund to use for its North Central Zonal office. We believe that coordinating activities in the North-Central Zone from Lafia will afford us the opportunity to be closer to beneficiary institutions and Nasarawa State has proved to be a worthy host for that,” he said.

While acknowledging giant strides recorded over the years by beneficiary institutions through TETFund support, the Executive Secretary expressed the Fund’s commitment towards improving on the achievements.

Arc. Echono expressed appreciation to President Muhammadu Buhari for his continued support for the Fund, which gave rise to the upward review of Education Tax from 2 to 2.5 percent.

“We also express our profound appreciation to the President for the wonderful support he has been giving to TETFund. With effect from this year, TETFund now gets two and a half percent, not two percent as the Education Tax; and the President has assured us that before the end of his administration, it would be increased to three percent,” he said.

Speaking earlier, Governor Sule commended TETFund for the various intervention projects in public tertiary educational institutions in the state; lauding Arc. Echono and his predecessor, Professor Suleiman Elias Bogoro, for their efforts in ensuring that the university benefited from the High Impact Intervention.

“After my assumption of office as the Governor, I visited and I told TETFund that I wanted to introduce the faculties of Engineering and Medicine at the Nasarawa State University, but we didn’t have the money. We got the approval and we were able to set up the faculties. So, I thank the management of TETFund for the support we received,” he said.

The Governor added that through the intervention of TETFund, the Nasarawa State Polytechnic, renamed Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic, Lafia, now have four technical courses that have been fully accredited.

He said having worked in the private sector, he now more than ever appreciates the Education Tax paid by businesses and could only wish for an upward review to aid the facilitation of TETFund’s activities.

DIGITIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE:

BPSR and TETFund to Collaborate

Words: Oluwatosin Ishowo

Photography:

Chidozie Nwangwu

In line with the ongoing efforts of the Federal Government to reduce cost of governance, boost efficiency and ensure quality service delivery via digitalization; the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have begun collaborative moves on strengthening public service reforms.

This was revealed when the Director-General of BPSR, Dr. Rabi'u Arabi paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono in the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

In his presentation to the management Staff of TETFund, the DG disclosed that BPSR collaborates with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) for effective service delivery and to reposition the public service.

According to Dr. Rabi'u, Nigeria aspires to be among the top twenty leading public service in the world by the year 2025, stressing that TETFund is one of the agencies capable of ensuring that the aspiration is attained by keying into the Bureau's programme.

He further revealed that the Bureau equally promotes digitization of government activities, transparency, fight corruption, unemployment and encourage quality service delivery among civil servants in Nigeria.

In his remarks, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed appreciation to the DG and his team for the visit, noting that since his assumption of office, efforts have been made at the Fund on internal reforms which are consistent with the goals of the Bureau.

While describing the Bureau of Public Service Reforms as a wonderful initiative of the Federal Government, the TETFund boss stressed that with the increasing population of Nigeria and changing demography, public service must deploy necessary tools that sustain excellence and quality service delivery. He noted that TETFund has a robust framework designed to accommodate these needs for staff to function effectively and the Fund extends same to Beneficiary Institutions.

Speaking on digitization of TETFund activities, the Executive Secretary disclosed that the Fund has digitalized the mode of accessing some of its interventions such as Academic Staff Training and Development; expressing that efforts are underway to ensure other lines of intervention follow suit.

Noting that TETFund is known for its culture of service delivery and commitment to attain excellence, Arc. Sonny Echono assured the visiting team of his commitment to collaborate with relevant stakeholders in areas that will ensure the Fund delivers its mandate more effectively.







TETFund Boss Applauds NIALS' Commitment to Excellence

The Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Arc. Sonny Echono has applauded the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS) for the remarkable service and commitment to excellence in the Nation's affairs over the years.

Arc Echono expressed the view when he played host to a delegation from the NIALS who paid a courtesy visit to the Fund recently.

The Executive Secretary intimated the delegation of his relationship with the body and how TETFund has been a strategic partner with the Institute and others who share mutual aspiration with the Fund in sustaining the culture of excellence at every level.

While speaking on the law establishing TETFund which limits beneficiaries of the Fund's interventions to public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education,

Arc. Echono acknowledged that the Fund has seen so many opportunities for partnerships and collaborations which had become manifest especially in the area of Research and Development.

Words:
Aprebo Otonbara

Photography:
Hyelkuzuku Nggada

He added that since Research is one of the core mandates of NIALS and given the pre-eminence shown by the Institute, it is a window the Fund might explore as part of efforts to enthrone a culture of research and advancing frontiers of knowledge.

The Executive Secretary expressed delight at the Institute's affiliation with the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, urging the management to lean on the collaboration with the university which is the only window of opportunity offered by the Fund for non-beneficiary institutions to benefit from its research grants.

Earlier in his remarks, Director-General of NIALS, Professor Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan thanked the Executive Secretary for receiving his team and commended the Fund on the delivery of its mandate.

He gave a detailed insight into the programmes and activities of the Institute and also solicited for TETFund support on infrastructural development and possible ways of collaboration in the areas of research.

Nigeria Institute of Architect Seeks Collaboration with TETFund on Quality Architectural Designs

Words: Michelle Imasuen

Photography: Hyelkuzuku
Nggada

The Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA) and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have commenced collaborative efforts in sustaining excellence in architectural designs and project execution by professionals.

This came to limelight when the President of the Institute, Arc. Enyi Ben-Eboh paid a courtesy visit to Arc. Sonny Echono, the Executive Secretary of TETFund in Abuja recently.

Speaking during the visit, Arc. Ben-Eboh congratulated Arc. Echono on his appointment as the Executive Secretary of TETFund, describing him as a reputable member of the Institute who has made the body proud, having also served as President of NIA.

While commending TETFund for its impactful intervention programmes, he stressed that more needed to be done to ensure that Nigerian tertiary institutions live up to their billings as citadels of learning. He therefore, expressed the NIA's readiness to collaborate with the Fund to ensure that quality delivery of projects and excellence are sustained.

The NIA President expressed belief that the collaboration with TETFund will strengthen the intervention outcomes of tertiary institutions and institutionalize competition which is crucial to the drive for excellence in architectural designs.

In his remarks, Arc. Echono expressed appreciation to the NIA President and his team for the visit, noting that the efforts of the Institute are not unnoticed in areas of excellent architectural delivery.

While acknowledging that the best hands are needed for quality delivery of TETFund-sponsored projects, the Executive Secretary expressed the Fund's willingness to collaborate with the Institute in areas of architectural designs, noting that the Fund remains committed to raising the bar and would always embrace quality designs.

He also assured that as part of TETFund's mandate to promote professional associations' journals, the Fund would support the publication of the Institute's journal.



ICAN Charged To Institute Reforms Against Leakages

Words: Ijeoma Obiakor

Photography: Philips Adebayo

Nigeria's foremost professional accountancy body, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) have been advised to bring their professional prowess to bear through the institution of urgent reforms that would not only entrench transparency, but stop the persistent leakage in every sector of the economy.

Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono who made this call also reiterated that roles of accountants also include helping the country devise systems, establish guidelines, enforce internal controls and framework to ensure that the scarce resources available to the country are harnessed and properly deployed to addressing the urgencies of the nation.

Echono spoke when members of ICAN led by the 58th President, Alhaji Tijani Musa Isa paid a visit to the Executive Secretary in Abuja.

"We believe that entrenching professionalism in every aspect will assist in repositioning this country in reforming our systems and processes and re-establishing those values and principles that led us before, during and immediately after independence, with a trajectory of propriety and accountability. Every day we hear of leakages within the system, at a time where we can least afford them.

"We have a situation where our expenditure profile far exceeds our revenue receipts; and for the foreseeable future, this is going to subsist, unless we take urgent measures to change focus for the productive sector of our economy. We must make haste to minimize those destructive tendencies that got us here. So, I want to encourage ICAN to lead this because you have the membership, you have the experience and you can have the stature and reach in this country to make that change".

"I want to commend you for what you have been able to establish in this country. There are no doubts that Nigeria stands very tall in the accounting comity across the entire globe. Our accountants are well respected globally because we have instituted systems," he said.

Responding to the requests for TETFund's participation in the upcoming international and local conferences, he assured the visitors that the Fund would be adequately represented to ensure staff are exposed to international best practices.



Speaking during the visit, Alhaji Tijani Musa Isa, who is a former member of TETFund's Board of Trustees revealed that several of ICAN members in academics have benefitted from TETFund's Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D) funding provided in a bid to expand the frontiers of knowledge in accounting and finance.

He explained that the scheduled ICAN conference is designed for knowledge exchange among academics as well as mentoring of graduates of Accounting.

We will commence an annual international academic conference for Accounting and Finance as a forum for sharing knowledge and ideas of contemporary literature in the profession.

The Institute will greatly appreciate it if TETFund will collaborate with us in the 8th edition of the conference slated for February 2023," he implored.



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FOOD SECURITY: TETFUND COMMITTED TO NATION BUILDING - EU COMMISSION

Words: Tenni Abiru

The Research and Innovation Department of European Union (EU) has commended the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for its commitment towards the actualization of the objectives of the partnership between Nigeria and the Commission.

Deputy Head of Unit of the Department, Miss Fadila Boughanemi gave the commendation during a conference organized by the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), titled “Imaging a New Euro-African Scientific Partnership” in Brussels.

The conference which had the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono and some management staff in attendance was aimed at bringing together a large Euro-African community of institutional and scientific actors to launch a reflection on the development of good practices and new modes of cooperation, based on equitable and sustainable collaborations in research between the two continents



Some of the issues discussed during the conference included devising necessary tools for an equitable and sustainable cooperation, mobility of researchers as a crucial issue for science, implementation of an active policy for establishing sustainable partnership network, the place of women in research in Africa and Europe and challenges facing scientific research and innovation with regard to the global issues of 21st century.

Miss Boughanemi applauded the TETFund team for representing the country, pointing out that the timing could not be better since Nigeria happens to be among the six African countries identified by the EU to strengthen its long-standing bilateral relationships.

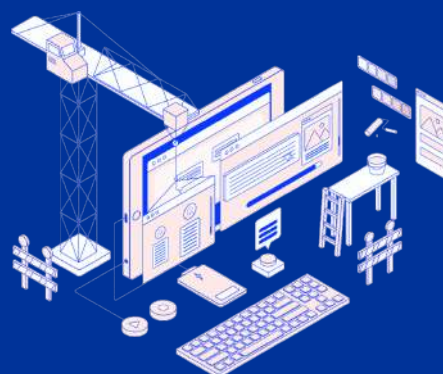
She expressed the EU's commitment towards the actualization of a productive partnership, noting that the meeting was a sign of the Fund's commitment and contribution to nation building.

Also speaking at the event, Arc. Echono reiterated the Fund's unwavering commitment towards promoting research that is focused on Food Security and Technology, Food Production, Animal Husbandry and Breeding, in addition to exploring opportunities in the evolution of Agriculture for year-round farming.

The collaboration, he disclosed, aims at improving academic knowledge, especially in areas of Research, Development and Innovation, accessing grant, linkages, ensuring efficiency in administration, sustainability and establishment for the new TETFund Centres of Excellence.

The Executive Secretary explained that the Fund's 24 Centres of Excellence would serve as hubs that would provide support and linkages for the success of the initiative.

"A collaboration between the EU and the Fund will provide mentorship and support, that will ensure that interventions in Research and Development yield tangible results by attracting significant funding for Nigerian researchers' projects and exposing scholars to the competitive global economy," he stated.





President Buhari Commissions TETFund Sponsored Projects At FCE Obudu

Words:
Abdulmalik Adio

Photography:
Musa Musa



President Muhammadu Buhari has commissioned two projects sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) under its 2015-2018 (Merged) Intervention programme at the Federal College of Education, Obudu, Cross River State.

The projects commissioned include the Science Complex and Social Sciences Blocks of classrooms, all 2015-2018 (Merged) intervention projects.

President Muhammadu Buhari who was represented by the Minister of State for Power, Hon. Goddy Jedy Agba (OFR) at the event, expressed satisfaction at the high quality of projects commissioned, adding that such would add a lot of values to teaching and learning in the institution.

Hon. Goddy Jedy Agba thanked the team involved in the projects from conception to execution, including TETFund and the College Management for putting to good use funds from taxpayers for intervention at the institution and promised to convey his satisfaction to Mr. President, while pleading for more funds to be released as they are being adequately utilized.

He also urged the College Management, staff, and students to put to good use the projects to propagate effective learning in the college.

In his welcome address, the Provost of the College, Dr. Richard Ugbaha Utubaku thanked President Muhammadu Buhari and TETFund for addressing the yearnings of students and the College community by providing a comfortable and serene environment to enable effective teaching and learning take place, hence improving the academic standards and performance of the College.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono who was represented by the Director, Monitoring and Evaluation, Arc. Babatunde Olajide equally expressed satisfaction with the quality of work of the projects at FCE Obudu and assured the Provost that more projects would be channelled to the institution to take care of the infrastructural needs of the institution.

In the same vein, Hon. Godwin Amanke, the Cross River State Commissioner for Education who represented Governor Ben Ayade, thanked TETFund for the numerous intervention projects dotting the various state-owned tertiary institutions namely the University of Cross River State (UNICROSS), College of Education Akamkpa and the Institute of Management Technology (IMT) Ugep.

An Allegory of The Cave

Words: Ishowo Oluwatosin.

In a faraway land, at the backyard of a certain Mr. Toyin Ishola, there exists a small community of cats, pet cats and stray cats. They hold important meetings and share their respective experience in the hands of their masters. Among these cats, there exist two top cats namely Fred and Spiff who rose to the admiration of many other innocent and ordinary cats, whose sole dream was to put food on their table and live a happy life. The dreams of these cats were clear and simple. Fred is the first to lead these cats, but his decisions meet criticisms from Spiff and his sympathizers, who feel because Fred is a stray cat, he doesn't have the right and legitimacy to rule over other cats who have masters. Yet, all Fred ever wants is a peaceful and prosperous relationship amidst creatures of his kind. All he wants, so desperately, is to lead them to the kind of life they want to live. He knows and understands that liberty is not given but gained; he is desperately searching for a new land where his kind will be safe and free. He believes his job is to take them where they ought to be, not where they want to be.



However, those dreams are not collectively shared among his people: they are the tool to usurp him and assassinate those passionate and genuine dreams. His power is similar to that of a consul in the old Roman republic, in fact, very close to that of Julius Caesar, he is all in all except a King because he has a way of inspiring passion and commitment, and some people genuinely love and adore him, but that is not enough, the people are recruited against him. Fred, a cat whom revolutionary thoughts and ideas that ask the question, what is liberty? and there is Spiff who promised to create a better world where everyone will be equal where the one man doesn't have to make all decisions on behalf of many larger parts of the cat's population key into this dream how wonderful would a world where their voice determines the action of their leader? Such thought is provoking and inspiring.

Piece



The problem isn't Fred or Spiff, it is the other cats that don't know what they truly want and now that there are cat hunters in town. Here is Spiff, a leader whose only wits is how to stay in power and even if other cats are dying, food must get to the leader's table, no matter what happens, the business of government must continue. Fred is deep in the forest, blaming himself for believing that people are to be followed and not led, and here is Spiff whose belief is premised on people are to be led not followed. The followed and the led are the other cats, which one do they truly want? No one knows. However, Fred is consoled while reading Allegory of the Cave written by Plato. It was gifted to him by his father; therein, he discovers that when a particular person finds greater knowledge outside the cave of human understanding and seeks to share it as his duty, the foolishness of those who would ignore him is championed by the belief that they themselves are educated enough.

On a sunny afternoon, Spiff leads a group of rebels who fell out of favour with Fred and passionate citizens who are conned to believe in the kind of world Spiff intends to create. The community is seized, Fred is successfully overthrown and ran deep into the forest with his family for safety and the humiliation of a leader, nearly a King living among the commoners. He is not to be seen except for a few who knew where he lives deep in the forest, he can no longer trust anybody. He is dispirited and lacked motivation. The world has changed, Spiff is now in power. Yet, everything has changed except the people, who still reminisce about the era of Fred, the kind of liberty they enjoyed, the type of dream Fred had, his burning passion for prosperity. They soon realised that Spiff isn't truly about the people, it is all about using the situation to justify his ambition to be King, even Spiff himself doesn't know or understand how a better world is built. Unfortunately, he was equally long prepared for the disgrace of being labelled a tyrant by his people.



TETFund Applauded as President Buhari Inaugurates Projects at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University

Words: Maria Joseph
Photography: Helkuzuku Nggada

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has been applauded for high performance as President Muhammadu Buhari recently inaugurated four TETFund-sponsored projects at the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State.

The President who was represented by the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Tertiary Education and Services, Hon. Aminu Suleiman Goro commended TETFund for its commitment to the discharge of its mandate stating that the Fund has performed exceedingly well in the provision of physical infrastructure, academic staff development, book publication, research and development among other intervention projects.

Highlighting some of the commitment of the Federal Government to the university through TETFund, Hon. Goro stated that over 40 impactful projects worth above N8 Billion have been executed at the institution to date.

In addition, he said the Fund has also sponsored 197 lecturers from the University for Ph.D degrees, 85 for Masters degrees, 13 on benchwork, all to the tune of over N1.7 Billion, while 430 staff have been sponsored for conferences at the cost of over N200 Million.

He admonished the University to take advantage of the facilities for educational and vocational advancement of the students, as this would liberate the society from poverty, unemployment and engender industry.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono commended the University for the excellent job done, especially with the Entrepreneurship Development Centre which he said was very personal to him and the Fund as TETFund is working towards employability of graduates as well as making entrepreneurs of our graduate.

While assuring that the Fund will continue to play its part in repositioning Nigerian public educational institutions for global competitiveness, he urged the management and students of the University to embrace the development trend and utilize the facilities effectively for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

In his remarks, the Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Richard Anande Kimbir commended the Fund for effective discharge of its mandate while also expressing appreciation for its support to the University.

The four projects commissioned include the fully furnished Academic Office Building of the College of Agronomy, fully equipped Entrepreneurship Development Centre as well as male and female hostels.



NIGERIAN ENVOY TO EGYPT COMMENDS TETFund FOR ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT ...AS TETFund SCHOLARS URGED TO REMAIN FOCUSED

By: Stella Nwankwo

Nigerian Ambassador to Egypt, Mr. Nura Abba Rimi has commended the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for continuing to make the country proud through the numerous landmark achievements recorded in the nation's tertiary education sector.

Mr. Rimi gave the commendation when a team of TETFund staff, led by the Ag. Director of ICT, Mr. Joseph Odo paid him a working visit during the Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D) monitoring exercise for the Fund's scholars studying at various universities in Egypt.

The visit created an opportunity for the TETFund team and the Embassy officials to deliberate on working out modalities to obtain visas and making documentation processes less cumbersome for Nigerian students willing to study in Egypt.

He expressed commitment towards making TETFund scholars' stay in the country more comfortable adding that he has been working with Egyptian officials to sort out some of the issues raised.

The Nigerian Envoy expressed appreciation for the visit, noting that the exercise is highly commendable,

having put in so much financial investments to build the capacity of the scholars.

"I am happy to receive this delegation because TETFund is one of the good stories of Nigeria. We have so many MDAs, but the Fund has remained outstanding. What you are doing with the exercise is very commendable," he stated.

Also speaking, the TETFund team lead, Mr. Odo stated that the exercise was designed to interact with the scholars, monitor their progress, listen to their challenges and ensure that the purpose for their scholarships were achieved.

He lamented that some of the scholars unfortunately landed on a wrong footing with the issue of wrong mode of visa entry permit, while a few were bedeviled with difficulties in getting Certificate of Equivalence and Security Clearance.

The Ag Director implored the Ambassador to assist the Fund in this regard by facilitating the processes involved with a view to minimizing loss of time and resources by the scholars, as being witnessed by some of them.

He admonished the TETFund scholars to remain focused in their studies by eliminating some of the issues generating distractions such as deploying sharp practices in visa application, doctoring invoices and other relevant documents while applying for scholarships.



Words:
Chibogu Emodi

Photography:
Micheal Agu



TERTIARY EDUCATION FUNDING: SOLUDO EXTOLS TETFUND FOR FILLING GAP IN INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Anambra State Governor, Prof. Charles Chukwuma Soludo has extolled the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for filling the gap in infrastructural development in public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, thereby alleviating the funding challenges of government.

Prof. Soludo also commended the Fund's efforts in other critical areas of need including Research and Development (R&D), adding that the state has also embarked on designing a framework for education aimed at national development with focus on R&D.

The Governor said when he paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

While expressing concern over the growing number of institutions in the country, the former Central Bank Governor stated that the country would at some point have questions to

ask on government's capacity to fully fund tertiary education in the future or the mechanisms for delivery.

"With the tertiary institutions going the way they are now, there are still questions and issues; we are not asking those questions but at some point we are going to ask whether or how the government will be able to fund or adequately fund the number or the plethora of institutions or the mechanism of our delivery, especially with the brick and mortar system that we have, there will be questions.

"But in the interim, before we get there, TETFund has been filling the gap in terms of infrastructure in our tertiary institutions," he said.

Speaking on his mission at the Fund, the Governor stated that the state was desirous of going into a strategic partnership with TETFund towards providing critical intervention projects for the development of tertiary educational institutions in Anambra.

While acknowledging the intervention efforts of TETFund in the development of public tertiary educational institutions in the country over the years, the Governor stated that the state-owned institutions, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra Polytechnic Mgbakwu and College of Education, Nsugbe were also desirous of the Fund's support for robust impact.

We have a big dream, a big agenda to partner with you and other critical stakeholders.

"The Federal Government is a critical player in this field. Education, we know, is on the concurrent list in the 1999 Constitution where the Federal and State governments work together. The only way we can make it work for ourselves is to work together through co-laboration, co-ordination and co-operation.

"I will like us to work together in a lot of areas we are interested in; and in a few years to come, we will be able to say that we were able to deliver with the TETFund partnership," he said.

Responding, Arc. Echono expressed appreciation to Governor Soludo for the visit noting that Anambra State was blessed to have someone of his calibre as governor.

While stating that a lot of TETFund intervention projects could be found in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, he added that there was need to do more at the level of state institutions.

Arc. Echono stated that in the last 11 years, the Fund sponsored over 35,000 academic staff in Masters and Ph.Ds and the Fund has also commenced sponsorship for post-doctorate programmes, all geared towards national development, curriculum delivery, academic excellence and utilization of acquired knowledge and exposure in addressing local problems.

He further stated that the Fund has put mechanisms in place through specialized training to ensure Nigerian graduates are easily employable by linking institutions with industries.



We Will Consider Peculiarity of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in ICT Intervention - Echono Promises

Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has stated that the Fund will take into consideration, the peculiarity of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in the delivery of the Fund's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Intervention.

Arc Echono disclosed this when the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Olufemi Peters paid him a courtesy call at the TETFund Headquarters in Abuja recently.

The Executive Secretary explained that the university delivers education services to students mostly through the ICT components and as such, requires adequate intervention funds to carry out its duties more effectively.

Responding to the series of requests by the visitors, Echono emphasized the need to prioritize completion of already existing projects by making them truly functional, so they do not remain as ongoing projects.

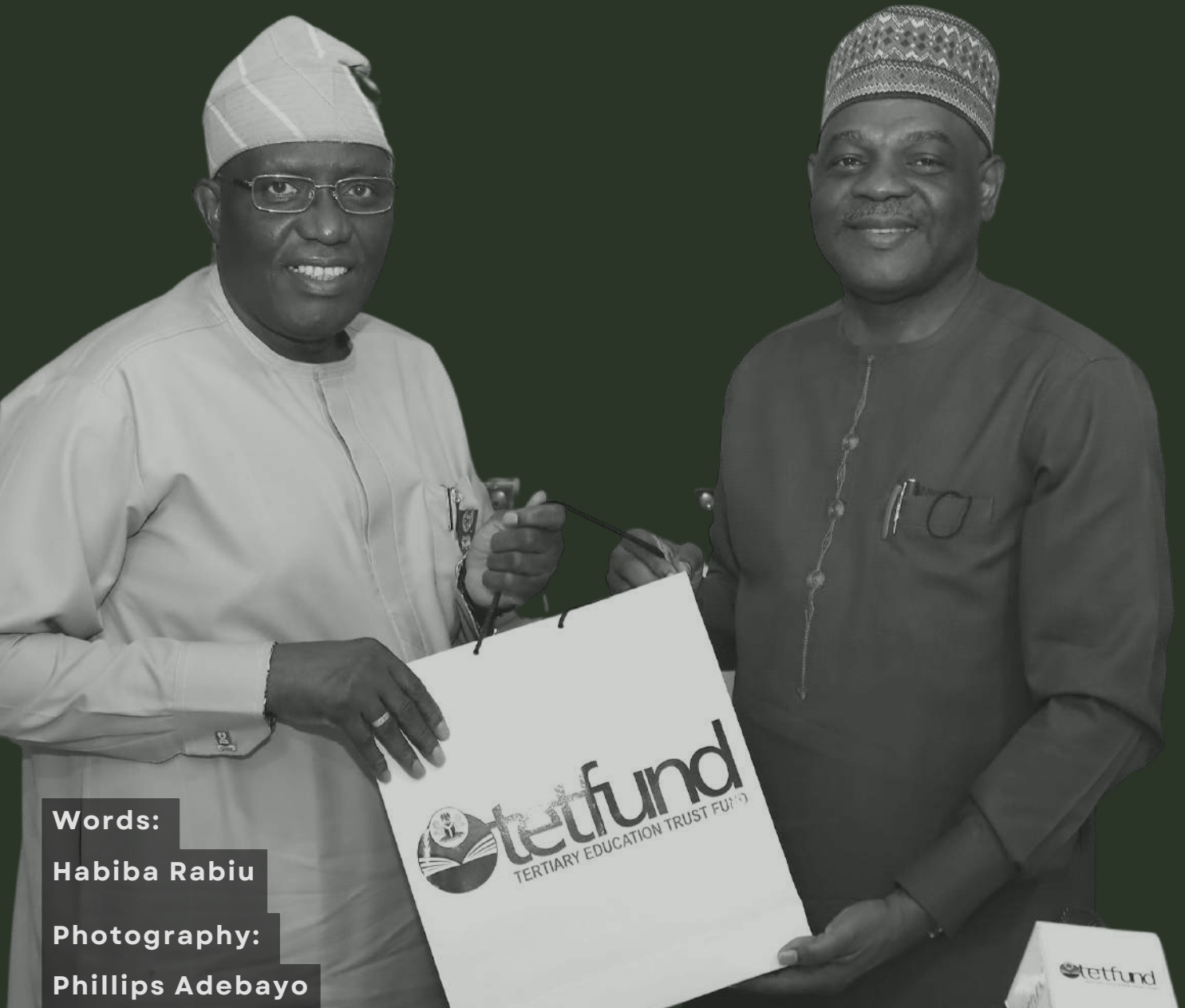
"If you complete them to a stage where they can be used, they can actually become study centres to the communities that they belong".

"I will also advice that you do a mapping of the various locations of these institutions and relate it to issues of population demand so you can feed that into your own prioritization scheme;

so it informs which offers you accept and where you think there are existing gaps that you will want to fund for the establishment of new centres," he pointed out.

The TETFund boss hailed the NOUN Vice-Chancellor for the vital role the institution is playing in the education sector, as well as the unique role of carrying education to the doorstep of Nigerians, thereby widening opportunity for affordable education in the country.

Earlier, Prof. Peters acknowledged that TETFund has been a dependable intervention agency that has lifted the university with provision of various needs ranging from infrastructure, academic training and equipment amongst others.



Words:

Habiba Rabi

Photography:

Phillips Adebayo

He briefed the Executive Secretary on the ongoing TETFund projects within his institution and solicited for the Fund's intervention on establishment of more NOUN study centres as well as completing on-going study centre projects in various communities.

He explained that NOUN has to a great extent been able to deliver on its mandate by ensuring that those who could not afford the conventional universities are now reached even in their remote environments through the study centres.

The Vice Chancellor also revealed that 1,900 inmates in various correctional centres have graduated from NOUN, not only through the efforts of the university, but also as a result of what TETFund has been providing to the institution.



TETFund Hailed as PMB Commissions Iconic TETFund Projects at FCE Kano.

WORDS: HABIBA RABIU

PHOTOGRAPHY:
HYELKUZUKU NGGADA

The mantra by beneficiary institutions, “but for TETFund” was re-echoed on a large scale by stakeholders as President Muhammadu Buhari recently commissioned four iconic projects at the Federal College of Education (FCE), Kano.

The President was represented by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriation, Senator Barau Jibrin who expressed delight at the giant strides being recorded by the Fund in

infrastructural development in public tertiary educational institutions across the country.

Senator Jibrin who noted that the projects were meant to assist students in carrying out research, teaching and learning in their pursuit of academic excellence commended President Buhari for the support extended to TETFund to carry out its statutory functions and approvals granted, which led to the commencement and completion of the projects as planned.

"A very big kudos to the President and commendation to TETFund under the leadership of the Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny Echono, for the foresight and wonderful job.

"We can see the quality of the infrastructure and well-designed architectural work," he said.

In his remarks at the event, Arc. Sonny Echono, who was represented by the Director, Monitoring and Evaluation of TETFund, Arc. Babatunde Olajide disclosed that the four buildings completed in 2022 were executed under the Years 2015/2018 Merged Annual Intervention at a total cost of N759.53 Million.

He commended the Management and Governing Board of the College for ensuring effective and quality delivery of the projects. 'I would like to use this opportunity to commend the Management and Governing Board of FCE Kano for ensuring effective delivery and quality of the projects and complying substantially to the terms of delivery by the bond.

"It is for these reasons that we are here to cut the tapes to signal the commencement of their use.

Let me urge that the buildings should be put to their proper usage in order to acquire teaching and learning of skills in this institution".

"TETFund as an intervention agency has ensured equity in the allocation of funds to the three tiers of its beneficiaries in line with the enabling laws governing the activities of the Agency. Considering the large volume of such infrastructure, the Fund thought it best to showcase the achievements of this government through the commissioning of iconic projects being completed by our beneficiary institutions, as an attestation to the commitment of the government at ensuring that our institutions attain high global ranking in the delivery of academic content within a conducive environment," he said.

Earlier, the Chairman Governing Council of the Institution, Alhaji Abdulmalik Mahmoud expressed appreciation at the efforts of all the stakeholders who devoted their time and energy in actualising the successful commissioning of the projects.

The projects commissioned include the Acculturation Centre; Expansion of the School of Secondary Arts and Social Sciences; Mathematics and Computer Science Department and the School of Adult, Special and Non Formal Education Building.



TETFund DELOYS PLANS TO CURB CORRUPTION, TRAINS BENEFICIARY INSTITUTIONS ON PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Words:
Oluwatosin Ishowow

Photography:
Micheal Agu

In line with the efforts of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to improve procurement standard, curb corruption and scale up the quality of interventions to tertiary institutions, the Fund has in conjunction with the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) organized a capacity building workshop on public procurement processes for its beneficiary institutions.

The first leg of the 3-day workshop scheduled to hold in three centres namely Kano, Lagos and Enugu. The first took place in Kano recently for institutions from the North-East and North-West geo-political zones.

Speaking in Kano, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono stated that the programme was designed to reposition public procurement in the country.

He explained that the Federal Government introduced public procurement reforms in 1999 after a World Bank report established links between poor public procurement procedures and corruption in the country, which hampered the nation's development; adding that Government has come up with new policies and processes aimed at minimizing open abuses of standing rules, processes and procedures as well as standards in the award and execution of public sector contracts.

"Several officials of our public tertiary institutions are not fully conversant with the laid down procedures, standard and processes with regards to the award and execution of public contracts in line with the Public Procurement Act.

Such ignorance many times has led to avoidable problems that hinder smooth and timely execution of TETFund intervention projects in tertiary institutions across the country.

“Familiarity with the public procurement laws remain a national priority and is tied to the achievement of the national interest and objective of development through the eradication of irregular practices in the awarding and execution of public contracts,” he said.

The Executive Secretary lamented the World Bank report which stated that an average of 10 billion dollars is lost yearly to fraudulent practices in the award and execution of public contracts through inflation of cost, lack of procurement plans, poor project prioritization, poor budgeting, lack of competition and value for money and other methods that influence procurement and contract award processes.

While reinforcing the commitment of TETFund to being a world-class intervention agency with the determination to deliver projects that would survive decades, he charged that the nation's interest must supersede personal interest.

He emphasized that the country is at a critical stage in its nation building efforts and stakeholders must never compromise their responsibilities, reiterating that the desire to have projects that will outlive key actors in education must be collectively shared by strengthening the procurement process in the country.

Arc. Echono expressed optimism that the training would assist the reform efforts of the Fund, help in the fight against corruption and promote quality and on-time service delivery.

Speaking at the event, the Director-General of BPP; Mr. Mamman Ahmadu commended the collaboration with TETFund, noting that bringing together people who play active role in policy and project implementation is a step forward in raising the standard of procurement processes in the country.

He revealed that key officers involved in the procurement value chain of Nigeria's tertiary institutions tend to avoid the use of open competitive bidding for their procurements.

The BPP boss further stated that the problems associated with procurement processes include the adoption of weak evaluation criteria, which threatens procurement processes by breeding unqualified bidders participating in bidding processes and consequently recommended for awarding and project execution. This, he said, is more peculiar to construction and building projects.

Mr. Mamman also disclosed that some tertiary institutions even engage contractors who do not possess Manufacturers' Authorization, saying the training is directed at addressing the enormous challenges faced in procurement process in the country.



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TETFund Zone





INTRODUCING: TETFund PUZZLE ZONE

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BRAIN TEASER

The Executive Secretary is scheduled for a meeting by 8am + 8 hours, what time is the meeting?



CLUES FOR THE WORD PUZZLE

ECHONO
COLLEGE
SCHOLAR
SUNDAY
UNIABUJA
UNILAG
POLYTECHNIC
CENTRE
TAX
EDUCATION
ACADEMY
MINISTRY