

A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2022 CONSULTATIVE FORUM ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET MONITORING AND EVALUATION, GOVERNOR’S OFFICE AT CROSS RIVER GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AGENCY’S CONFERENCE ROOM, CALABAR ON 24TH AUGUST 2021.

PREAMBLE

As a process in Budget preparation, the consultative Forum signals the commencement of the preliminary stage of another budget circle, after call circular. In Cross River State the 2022 Consultative Forum was organised as a statutory function, by the Department of Budget Monitoring and Evaluation, Governor’s Office on the 24th of August, 2021.

The Forum was declared opened by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Budget Matters, Mr. Otu Otu-Ita at exactly 10.08am, after an opening prayers said by Mrs. Nsaha Inyang Eyo. A keynote address was then delivered by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance Mr. Gabriel Ikang on behalf of the Commissioner for Finance, Hon. Asuquo Ekpenyong Junior on government stake for 2022 budget.

3. IN ATTENDANCE

- i. The Special Adviser, State Planning Commission, Mr. Teo Afu Inyang
- ii. The Commissioner for Health, Hon. (Dr.) Mrs. Beta Edu represented by Mr. Sylvester Ugbang (Director of Accounts)
- iii. The Chairman, Cross River internal Revenue Service (CRIRS) represented by Mr. Patrick Ayandi (Director of Planning Research and Statistics).
- iv. Mr. Kingsley Eworo (The Executive Secretary – BTAN).
- v. The Commissioner for Education, Hon. (Dr.) G. E. Amanke represented by Mrs. Caroline Asikpo Edet (Director of Planning Research and Statistics).
- vi. HRH. Muri Eyo Effiong Okon V, Clan Head of Efut Akani Esuk Clan/Secretary-General of Efut Abua and Efut Ekondo Combine Council.

2. PRESENTATION DURING THE FORUM

The Chief Executive of MDAs, Civil Society and Traditional Rulers took turn to deliver their presentations. This prompted questions, reactions and response in that forum.

Among them were:

- i. The Special Adviser, State Planning Commission, Mr. Teo Afu Inyang
- ii. The Commissioner for Health, Hon. (Dr.) Mrs. Beta Edu represented by the Director Account, Mr. Sylvester Ugbang (Director of Accounts)
- iii. The Chairman, Cross River internal Revenue Service (CRIRS) represented by the Director of Planning Research and Statistics, Mr. Patrick Ayandi.
- iv. The Executive Secretary (BTAN) Mr. Kingsley Eworo
- v. The Commissioner for Education, Hon. (Dr.) G. E. Amanke represented by the Director of Planning Research and Statistics, Mrs. Caroline Asikpo Edet.
- vi. HRH. Muri Eyo Effiong Okon V, Clan Head of Efut Akani Esuk Clan/Secretary-General of Efut Abua and Efut Ekondo Combine Council.

3. **ISSUES RAISED AT THE FORUM**

- * Participants expressed worries on what will become of the other health sectors, since the presentation by the Commissioner for Health focused only on COVID-19 as its budget proposal for 2022 Budget.
- * That Security issues in the state especially as it concerns Calabar South are often not mentioned in the State Budget, Why?
- * Participants also observed that sexually abused of children occasioned by incessant lock down is on the increase. What is the state government doing to stop such unholy act in our society?
- * They also notice that MDAs inputs into the State Budget for close to 8 years are not being guided by Action Plans, why?
- * Participants asked to know why some MDAs are not allowed to generate revenue (2) why are others that are generating revenue allowed to engage consultants for revenue drive?
- * What is the state government doing to address the perennial shortage in public water supply in the state, and its billing method by estimation instead of pay as you consume?

- * The issue of counterpart funding was also raised as participants asked to know why the state government have not been paying their counterpart funding as at when due?
- * Issue also raised in that forum was that of youth inability to access subvention from Ministry of Youth.

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

At the end of the forum, participants made the following recommendations:

- * That the State Government should as a matter of culture make it mandatory for all MDAs to submit their MTSS to the appropriate authority for action plan to be developed for them. This, according to the participants, will enable the MDAs prepare their budget proposals in line with their action plan and to encourage a realistic budgetary inputs for the preparation of the State Budget.
- * That MDAs should be allowed to generate revenue through their staff to justify the salaries being paid them, as well as to avoid wasteful spending on the consultants. That most of the consultants do fall back on the Civil Servants for solutions.
- * That citizens should be sensitized on the 30 years state growth and development strategy, among other budget documents, by the appropriate MDA and Civil Societies for proper understanding and for effective participation in the Budget Process.
- * That the government should also ensure that security budgetary provisions is captured in 2022 Budget to show spread, evenly attention and transparency on security matters across the state.
- * That because the state stands to gain more in the area of infrastructure and human development payment of counterpart fund for the projects should be prioritized in her 2022 budget.
- * That the State Government should ensure that sufficient provision for the youth are made or provided for in her 2022 Budget. Because 2022 will

witness a lot of political and social activities which are often seen to be executed by the youth.

5. **COMMENDATION**

The 2022 budget forum was tagged the best and the only forum ever organised in the state with digital colouration, and with greater participation of the citizenry within and outside the State. They thanked His Excellency, the Governor of Cross River State, Senator (Prof). Ben Ayade for his foresight to have appointed Mr. Otu Otu-Ita as his Special Adviser on Budget Matters.

The Special Adviser, Budget Matters and other members of the Budget Committee were also commended for a Job well done and thanked them for the timely preparation of the 2022 State Budget

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6. **COMMUNIQUE DRAFTING COMMITTEE:**

1. Barr. Leo Moffi	Chairman
2. Obeten Obasesam	YNN
3. Kingsly Agim	Media
4. HRH Muri Eyo E. Okon	Clan Head
5. Okwejie Veronica Ntem	Student
6. Kingsley Eworo	Secretary



