ABIA @30: We shall take Abia to the promised land - Ikpeazu

Mass Retrenchment looms at ABSUTH, College of Health, Aba and HMB

Charter Of Equity Remains Instrument For Fulfilling Founding Fathers Dream - Ezikpe

Cause of Serial Leadership Failures and Fiascos in Abia State: The Parable of Pearl and Swine.
ABIA 2023: Abia North Stakeholders Meet, Vows To Produce Gov Ikpeazu’s Successor.

Stakeholders from Abia North, Abia Central and Abia South convened in Umuahia on Saturday 24th July 2021, to meet with prominent sons and daughters of Abia North. The meeting was held at the Isuakwato, Ohafia and Umunneochi—the five local governments that constitute Abia North senatorial zone of Abia state, to meet on the ongoing Abia North Forum. The group after their meeting held at Afri-Hotel, Abuja on Saturday 24th July 2021, that was well attended by prominent sons and daughters of Abia North, said in the communique which was signed by Mazi Johnzon Onwunarugwu, Chief Victor Ogbonna, Chief Ogbonnaya Okereke Abia North, Chief C.C. Iroha, Chief Paul Ibe, Engr Jerome Egwu and Engr Chinwuba Onyeika.

In the communique, the group stated that the unity of Abia North zone remains Sacrosanct and the quest for governorship come 2023 shall never be sacrificed in the alter of political dogmatism of few patriots of the zone, which some selfish power mongers in Abia South are leveraging on to hoodwink and undermine the zone of its bid ahead of 2023. The group also expresses its displeasure over those who misappropriate the money allocated to Abia North Forum in an anti-federal centripetal. It frowns at the centrifugal activities of some overzealous politicians and groups who are bent on distorting the order of rotation of Abia North for Governorship in the interest of the zone.

The Abia North Forum, in the said communique which was sent to ALL Facts Newspaper, also said that those converting for equity in Abia State on the trajectory of the repugnant regional arrangements of Old Abia State, Divisions, are not only being mischievous but labouring in vain to sow seeds of discord in the state. The group advises them to have a rethink on the realities that Abia State lies within a bigger state in the Federation and is currently fashioned on tripod arrangement of Senatorial district. The forum added that "Abia North did not lose consciousness when the zone ceded power to Abia Central in 2007 and supported Abia South to retain it from 2015 till date, therefore any attempt to deny zone Governorship seat come 2023 will be viewed as treachery and backstabbing by the other zones".

The Abia North stakeholders also called on all well-meaning Abians at home and in the diaspora to not jettison the intent and purpose of the Abia Charter of Equity but to which is anchored on brotherhood and politics of inclusion in the state. The forum said, it is soliciting for the support and commitment of other brothers and sisters from other senatorial zones as usual, towards political shift to Abia North.

The forum also appreciated Governor Okezie Victor Ikpeazu PhD for his developmental strides in the state, particularly for lifting ABA from Infrastructural dungeon to a new haven for business and SME growth. The forum added that the people of Abia North shall continue to support the existing political peace and stability in the state in which they say is pivotal for every sociopolitical advancement.

Mass Retrenchment Looms at ABSUTH, College of Health, Aba and HMB

By Suleiman Anyalewuchi

The boat of retrenchment, that began sailing from Abia State polytechnic Aba, is set to berth at Abia State University Teaching Hospital, College of Health, and Hospital management Board, all face the same wave of reduction in the state, authoritative revealed. It will be recalled that between August, 2019, and about two months ago, the authorities of Abia state polytechnic based on the directives of the Abia state Government, terminated the appointment of no fewer than 500 of its staffs.

Rationalizing the retrenchment exercise which cut across both the teaching and non-teaching staff, the institution's governing council chairman, Engr. John Nwangbogwua said, the indiscriminate staff reduction policy of the polytechnic has left it reeling under high monthly wage bill estimated at N2.4 million. The institution's governing council is in dire need of a government’s intervention in this regard.

All Facts gathered last week, that the Abia State Government is preparing to carry out a retrenchment exercise in all government’s parastatals and that the aforesaid institution are suffering the same fate as Abia State polytechnic, the Aba hospital and others to prune down their staff strength by at least 45 percent. Insider sources authoritative informed all Facts that all arrangements to this effect have reached an advanced stage with the would-be staff concerned set to be issued with their retrenchment letters in a matter of a few weeks.

According sources, some hawks within the Abia State Government, are blaming the woes of the instructions concerned on the past administration, in the state, namely the Orji, Kalu regime (1999-2007) and chief TA Orji administration (2007-2001) accusing them of them of saturating their workforce with people especially from a particular section of the state and have therefore advised the government to take all necessary steps to restructure the institutions. All Facts Newspaper was reliably informed that at the Abia State University teaching hospital ABSUTH the monthly wage bill stands of about 144 Million while those of Hospital management board HMB and College of health Aba hovers between 80 million and 90 million a development which the government is not ready to sustain in the face of dwindling revenue.

At the ABSUTH, those to be affected are both doctors, Nurses, and other general health workers. Although, the number of staff to be retrenched could not be ascertained at the time of reporting sources in the know stated that the institution's staff strength may be reduced by as much as 45 percent. The same goes for the college of health where both teaching and non-teaching staff will also be affected by the imminent retrenchment exercise. However, the Hospital Management HMB, the retrenchment exercise will mostly affect those in general health services and administrative staff, with specialized personnel accounting for the lowest number staff that will be affected.

All Facts further gathered that those billed to exit the employ of the institutions concerned are in three categories namely those to be compulsorily retired, those that will have their appointments terminated and others that will be dismissed out rightly. Those to be retired, are believed to be staff that have put in between 25 and 30 years in services; those whose appointments will be terminated are those believed to have been at it for less than 14 years; those whose appointments will be terminated are those with disciplinary records.

As at the time of filling this report, the state government had not requested, and collected the staff nominal roll of the institutions concerned and is said to be studying and compiling names of the staff that will be shown the exit door in the coming weeks. In the same way, the like the manpower counterparts from the Abia state polytechnic, the would-be affected staff will be leaving without their earned months' salary areas.

At ABSUTH, those to be sacked, will go without about 18 months salary arrears. While those from HMB and college of Health are set to leave without their 14 months and 13 months salary arrears respectively. Also it is highly doubtful that they will be paid their entitlements and gratuities as due them.

All facts gathered that like the case of Abia polytechnic, the retrenchment exercise at the College of Health and the HMB as well will be conducted without the involved staff being made aware of their appointments.

The Chief executives of the institutions, will only sign and issue the termination letters as approved by the state government.

Meanwhile all efforts to get the authenticities of the institutions to comment on the imminent development proved fruitless as at the time of reporting, just as the leadership of the workers unions evaded all enquiries, due to what a source described as a precautionary measure not to be caught in the web. Recall that at Abia State Polytechnic the workers union leaders were among the first set of staff members whose appointments were terminated for leading workers to demand for the payment of their backlog of salaries.

However, an authoritative source at ABSUTH told ALL Facts that the management led by DR Shedrack Offiah Ukonye is only presently
Charter Of Equity Remains Instrument For Fulfilling Founding Fathers' Dreams - Ezekpe

The Chairman, Abia State Advisory Council, Dr. Anagha Ezekpe has maintained that the Charter of Equity remains an outstanding instrument for the fulfillment of the Founding Fathers dream.

Ezekpe who is one of the pioneers in the creation of Abia state from old Imo state stated this on Thursday, August 19, during a press conference as the state prepares to celebrate her 30th year anniversary. The elder statesman stated this amidst the tussle between some members of Aba south and north senatorial zones on who should occupy the governorship position come 2023.

“Thirty years ago on the 27th August, 1991 at the promulgation of the Constitution (Creation and Transactional Provisions) of the new State. Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, then Federal Military Government governor, had made representations to the Abia State House of Assembly for enactment of the provision of the charter of Equity into law. Without success. We plead that proactive steps be taken to promulgate this Charter of Equity into law for completion of the aims, objectives and dreams of the Founding Fathers. Describing “Abia” as divinely approved, he said;

“With the name ABIA divinely inspired and conceived by the Founding Fathers encapsulating the first alphabets of the Old Administrative Divisions of Aba, Bendel, Akpko and Isuikwuato District of old Okgwe Division of former Imo state from which Abia state was carved out.

At a thanksgiving service on the 26th of April, 1992, the first civilian governor of Abia State Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu was divinely inspired inspired to pronounce Abia state as: God’s Own State” by which Abia state has been known locally and internationally.

The current and incumbent Governor, Dr Okezie Victor Ikpeazu, being the fourth civilian governor, has also been divinely inspired and motivated to add “ukwe Abia” – Abia Anthem, emphasizing the uniqueness of Abia state.

He lauded Governor Ikpeazu for the noticeable advancement made in various areas of governmental activities, especially the relative calm and peace prevailing in the state” adding that;

“Hereby today also salute all the military Administrators and Governors who with courage and zeal, have piloted and tackled the myriad problems associated in the path of the growth and development of the state in the past 30 years. This situation also goes to the functionaries who assisted in the growth of the state.”

Mass Retrenchment looms at ABSUTH, College of Health, Aba and HMB

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Concerned about how to rescue the institution from its current quagmire occasions by the teaching and non-teaching staff of salaries, which in turn has brought about incessant strike action, especially by the Resident doctors of the institutions.

As of the time of reporting, the Residents doctors were still observing and industrial action embarked upon for the past one month. And any hope of calling it off soon was further dimmed by the decision of the national body of the residents doctors which last week after an executive council meeting in Umunah directed its members nationwide to proceed on an indefinite strike in protest against federal government failure to honour its agreement with its members as reached a few months back.” you see this strike actions are negatively affecting the institution. Some people are trying to kill these institutions, which is one of the two teaching hospitals in the south east. It is second only to the University Teaching Hospital Enugu. We are worried that some people are bent on killing the institution and when that happens it is we the south Easterners that will suffer it the most” the source lamented.

All Facts was informed that the institution was notified by the Resident Doctors, has stalled the conclusion of the examination of the institutions final year students, who are said cannot take their practical examinations due to lack of patients required for such practical examinations. Since the commencement of the strike, the residents doctors have had to abandon the institution for other hospital. Sources at the institution revealed that the Resident Doctors made representations to the striking due to the state government failure to honor the agreement entered into with the National body of the Resident Doctors when it visit the governor Dr. OKEZIE IKPEAZU a few months back over the back log of salaries being owed the institution’s workers, including the doctors.

Sources at the meeting held at the Government House Umunah, revealed that at the meeting, the Governor told the National body of the Doctors that out of the 18 months’ salary areas, being owed the workers his administration, will pay only 11 months, as the other 7 months were inherited from the past administration.

The life of the body of the Doctors union was said to have agreed and thereafter demanded that he the governor should pay the 11 months. To underscore its seriousness about the payment of the salary areas the National body was said to have urged the governor to add money to the N80 million earlier earmarked to be released to the ABSUTH management for the accreditation of about 8 departments at the institution and pay the salaries of the workers. Furthermore, members of the visiting National body were also said to have equally rejected about N1.5million allegedly given to them as public Relations, demanding that the money should be joined in paying the workers’ salaries.

The Resident Doctors were said to have proceed on strike, when the government paid only three months out of the agreed 11 months.

At the college of Health Aba, the Rector of the institution, Professor Lawrence Chigbu rejected a request for an interview with All Facts, insisting that the institution's Public Relations officer P.R.O should be present before speaking. However, the interview could not also be granted even when All Facts made spirited efforts through the P.R.O but some of the workers of the college, while claiming ignorance of plans to downsize the workforce, added that they will not be surprised if it eventually happens. One of the workers, who spoke, to All Facts under the condition of anonymity, put the situation succinctly thus “we know that ever since the development at Abia state polytechnic, that it is just a matter of time before attention is turned to this place. We will not be surprised if they decide to sack at the college. In fact, what will surprise us will be, if they don't sack. But before doing that, they should pay us our arrears of salaries. If they can pay us our backlog of salaries, most of us will willingly seek pastures elsewhere because the system has been irredeemably battered".
Residents of Agwu, Akpu roads cry out over erosion menace

ABSTRACT

In a petition written and signed by six Legislative councilors, and made available to All Facts Newspapers on condition of anonymity, they have alleged that the council as a result of the Chairman’s attitude, it is clear that the Council is still embroiled in crisis. This, political observers have said will make the deliverance of the democratic dividends to the people by the ruling party impossible.

Seven Legislative Councilors of the LGA have laid various allegations of fraudulant activities, selfish, deceptive and clamant approach to governance among others against the Chairman.

In their petition to Hon. Simon Etene, a Major stakeholder in Aba South Local Government Council, dated May 19, 2021, the councilors said that they were writing to Hon. Etene because of his numerous acknowledgment roles in Aba South development.

“We write to bring to your officialy that things are not well in Aba South Local Government. It is time for us to change the narrative,” they said.

They recalled that the Council was the first to be inaugurated on December 22, 2020, being the same day that the Chairman was sworn in by the Executive Governor, but decried that “Up till date, for reasons which cannot be best described as canter, we’ve just once on February 8, 2021.

Many attempts to get the leader of the Legislative Council, Hon. Chinenye Onwuube of ward 14 to convene a sitting was always pushed aside, on the excuses that the Council Chamber was not ready, or that he had no reason for us to sit."

They expressed that shock that they came on Monday, May 10, and surprisingly saw the Chairman in the company of Ndi Eze, Aba South, holding off the Reconstruction of the Council hall, without following the processes by which such things are done.

“Approached the Chairman to know why he should award a contract of that magnitude, without a tender, bill of quantity or any other legal backing to the multi-million naira contract not being flagged off, but got no answer.

Even his deputy denied knowledge of the actions of the Chairman, and in the same evening, there was announcement on Radio that he had suspended indefinitely some of the actions, including the alleged rejecting of the flag off the project.

Those he allegedly suspended are Hon. Fidelis Obiagu, Charles Ubani and Eninyanya Ogbonna of Ward 6, 12 and 9 respectively.

“The obvious glaring division in Aba South Government today is voided by the Executive Chairman for his selfish and clamant desires, aimed ultimately to deceive and be in total control without minding the many negative effects of his actions and or inactions to the progress lane which our leaders in the state, led by the Governor has struggled to put our dear party in the lane of victory in Aba as exemplified in all our all round victory in the recent election of Aba North and South Federal Constituency”, they stated in the petition.

“Worthy of mentioning here are some of the many divisive and condemnable actions of the Chairman, namely aiding the establishment of the House Principal officers without recourse to the very urban and metropolitian nature of Aba South. The 6 principal officers installed are all from a section of the state thereby making the Old Bendel axis feeling left out in PDF. Aba South Government despite finding no fault in them having four councilors and one out of the 4 is a ranking senior officer.

Other allegations leveled in the petition include spending millions of Council fund without legislative backing, sexual harassment of female workers of the Council, including the deputy chairman and SECOLG, instigating unlawful suspension of elected councilors without recourse to House sitting, instigation of public intimidation against the councilors and others operating as a sole administrator in running the LGC.

They commended Hon. Chinenye Onwuube, the member representing Aba North and South in the National Assembly, and for the support of the state party chairman, Rt. Hon. Allwell Asioro Okere at the party office on Monday, May 17, 2021 shows that he is only interested in what is good for the electorate and not the deceptive clamant selfish and divisive approach to governance in Aba south personalization.

In an investigation, the six councilors, Honorable Fidelis Obiagu, Eninyanya Ogbonna, Ezenwokwu Igbenwe, Chima Williams, Mrs Ngozi Abel and Charles Ubani prayed the party leadership to save the party from the plot and to prevent the present government from the shame of losing elections again in Aba South by correction by the anomaly created in Aba South Governance by the Chairman of the Council”.

Residents of Agwu, Akpu roads cry out over erosion menace
Brief History Of Abia State

Abia State with the slogan 'God's Own State' is one of the five states that make up the eastern part of Nigeria having Umuahia as the capital.

The state which is known for her rich arts and culture, vast human resources, technology, industry, entrepreneurship, trade, among others, has one of the biggest commercial hubs in Nigeria – Aba the commercial city of the state.

Abia state was carved out from the old Imo state on August 27, 1991. The state which currently have over 4 million citizens is bordered by the states of Enugu and Ebonyi to the north, Akwa Ibom to the east and southeast, Rivers to the south and southwest, Imo and Anambra to the west.

Abia which is an oil producing state is also known for its agricultural strength as it produces; palm fruits/oil, corn, rice (Osikapa Abia), Cassava, vegetables of all sort, and fruits.

The commercial city, Aba is known for, among other things, textile manufacturing, plastic, foot-ware (Aba shoe factory).

Seventeen (17) Local Government Areas make up the state. They are:

- Aba North
- Aba South
- Arochukwu
- Bende
- Ikwunado
- Isiala Ngwa North
- Isiala Ngwa South
- Isiukwuato
- Obi Ngwa
- Ohaifia
- Osisioma Ngwa
- Uguwu Ngbo
- Ukwa East
- Ukwa West
- Umuahia North
- Umuahia South
- Umunneochi

Administrators and Governors of Abia State from 1991-2021, include;

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The Office Man In Abia Deputy Governor

By Iyke Ogbonnaya

The Deputy Governor, Abia State Rt. Hon. Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, (Ph.D) is a towering and fitting symbol of the widely held consensus that, “private sector orientation and exposure will always to a great extent, overshadow the behavioural outputs of its beneficiaries, irrespective of the environment where duty calls.”

I am persuaded to reason in that regard, having studied the background of Abia Deputy Governor, covertly which unveiled a stunning and awe-inspiring revelation bothering on a meteoric rise in accountancy, chattering in the line of duty, to bullishly run an Accounting Firm and ultimately becoming a Doctorate Degree holder in Finance.

The Public and Political enclave of Abia State is evidently the beneficiary of the Deputy Governor’s private sector experience, following from his result oriented and pragmatic flair as a loyal and dependable ally of Governor Okezie Victor Ikerueazu (Ph.D).

I have to observe that his charismatic devotion to work and innumerable availability to duty even at the eleventh hour during which he has clinically tidied up unscheduled events which usually erupts like a volcano, has consistently distinguished him, while comparatively widening his milage, when juxtaposed with his other less busy colleagues. This high sense of responsibility to duty, rationalizes the Governor’s confidence in him and has been demonstrated through constant extension of other critical State functions to the Deputy Governor for execution.

As bonded gladiators and servant leaders, who were divinely paired, Governor Okezie Ikerueazu in league with the Deputy, Ude Oko Chukwu have selflessly become pathfinders which has beyond constitutional call of duty, made the Deputy Governor’s office more eventful.

Given the precarious and fragile economic outlook prevalent in Nigeria, the Governor rightly responded by detailing the Deputy, an accounting apostle to financially keep the State well.

Leveraging the instrumentality of a revenue council, being superintended by the Deputy Governor, Abia has not dwelt deeply in financial woods. Practical implementation of the council’s recommendations, ceiling of revenue leakages, yielded the upping of internally generated revenue previously hovering in the neighbourhood of four hundred million Naira monthly to one billion Naira and above monthly. A news worthy development which motivated the Governor’s can do new target of four billion Naira monthly. “Where there is a will they say, there will always be a way.”

The new face of revenue regime in Abia State has significantly reduced the crude and unorthodox approach of hounding tax payers, outing and brigandage in revenue generation.

A retrospective incursion into what seemed like a jinxed and interactable inauguration of Abia dry port conceived on the template of public private partnership, dates back to 2006. However, the fanfare which followed its proposed establishment has since evaporated into a feeling of despair, especially from our import oriented business men and women, who had expected its quick realization.

I can emphatically note that hope has however, been rekindled, arising from the Governor’s recent and bold mandate being conscientiously implemented by the Deputy Governor.

All basic and mandatory protocols bothering on compensation to land owners has been complied with, while contractors are being mobilized to site for perimeter fencing and critical site services.

With the completion of geotechnical investigation of the soil content at Ntigha (designated site of the Abia Dry Port) Eastgate, the project driver is set to secure government nod for erection of site plan viz: Architectural, mechanical, electrical drawings and bill of quantity. Billed to be delivered in record time, the project will strategically launch the State into the league of dry port destination for the much expected ease in container clearance.

The destiny decimating effect of hard and illicit drugs currently ravaging our society has given a frightening rise to multiplicity of tragedies. It has cancerously taken a grip on many vibrant sociological age stratas of our society.

To stem the tide arising from the horrific effect of drugs in our once serendipitous society, the Deputy Governor, Abia State is chairing the State Drug Abuse Control Committee which is collaboratively attaining breakthroughs with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency. The committee’s tenacious devotion to duty, has seen to the inclusion of drug education in secondary school curriculum and pilot teachers, whose curriculum will center in that regard are being engaged to beat the ground running.

Players in the hospitality industry have had quality and result yielding interface with the workaholic Deputy Governor’s committee which culminated in the strategically placed signage of “No use of drugs” in hotels and relevant public places.

A landmark achievement in drug control worthy of note and spanning the creation of the Agency, is the recent celebrated exhibition and destruction of over eleven tons of drugs carried out by the committee in league with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency.

Drawing from constitutional latitude, the Deputy Governor and Chairman, Abia State Cocoa Transformation Committee has been blazing the trail. His ceaseless injection of the relevant ideas, has significantly contributed in the enviable position Abia is currently occupying.

It was at the Deputy Governor’s instance that the State powered the hosting of “Cocoa Round Table Conference” towards the expiration of 2020. The meeting facilitated the collapse of unhealthy rivalries and provided the much expected vista for cross-fertilization of ideas among cocoa growers.

Precisely on the 17th of June 2021, the Deputy Governor flagged-off the distribution of new hybrid of cocoa seedlings to cocoa farmers in the State. At the last count, over ten thousand seedlings of the minimal disease and pest prove seedlings have been distributed.

The Deputy Governor’s celebrated disposition to ‘law-jaw’ and interface with neighbouring States rather than ‘war-war’ has ideologically stood him out in his adjudication of boundary matters. His diplomatic recipe in approaching inter and intra boundary disputes has strategically calmed frayed nerves and engendered conviviality in the existence of boundary communities.

It was masterfully deployed in managing the unwarranted provocation meted on Isu community in Arochukwu Local Government Area by the people of Biase in Cross River State. This show of understanding has significantly helped in managing boundary disputes in areas like Ikwo and Akirika-Obu all bounded with communities in Akwa Ibom State while delineation has been initiated in areas where mutual understanding on boundary lines has been established.

Rt. Hon. Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, (Ph.D), a well established office man, is undoubtedly well schooled in the complementary role of a Deputy Governor and has been zealously utilized same in reducing the burden of governance for his boss, Okezie Victor Ikerueazu (Ph.D).
We Shall take Abia to the promised land - Ikpeazu

Among Abia founding Fathers, who are your role models? Certainly Abia is a land of great people. Looking back at some of the early leaders, I always alluded to it, I painted a picture of our past in glorious light. I wanted us to see if we can draw inspiration and strength from the feats of our forefathers and the founding fathers of this state. This State has produced people like Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi who was a foremost Soldier and Patriot, who was committed to peace to keep Nigeria United. This State also produced M. I. Okpara, who ran the entire Eastern Region, in such a way that the region became the fastest growing economy in the world and his footprints especially in the area of Agriculture are very bold and golden. In contemporary times, Abia state has had some people like Anagha Ezirike, late Eze Enweremedu, Kalu Iddika Kalu, Jaja Nwachukwu, Chief Urnurka, etc. This place is Blessed with very brilliant, worthy Statesmen, hardworking and resilient people especially in the area of trade, commerce, SME, even in public service. So, I have a whole lot of people, founding fathers, that we can draw inspirations and hope from for us to do better as their grandchildren and children.

Okay Sir, many people have praised you especially on infrastructure, what other infrastructure are you promising Abians, we are talking about buildings.

Yes, I love to bequeath a one stop shop in terms of health with special emphasis on kidney and heart diseases. We have set up a pediatric specialist hospital for mother and child and I am happy to announce to you that we have waited for almost a year to take delivery of the equipment because of COVID; two containers just arrived yesterday. We are expecting delivery of two more from America and with that I can say that before the end of this year, we will have our ultramodern pediatric hospital. We will also like to put in place an ultramodern laboratory in Abia North which will be sited at Isukwuato General Hospital to cover all the medical needs of those in the entire area of Abia North senatorial district. The strategy is to make sure that our diagnostic capacity is enough to handle the medical needs in the entire five local government areas of Abia North. We want to make sure that our diagnostic backbone is strong enough to support modern day clinical diagnosis so that clinical intervention will not be scarce and our people will be healthier. We will also bequeath a new government house. We will complete that government house and probably before the first quarter of next year we would finish it and are hopeful for all our projects. So, I am happy to acknowledge the great signs that our interventions have delivered in the area of small and medium scale enterprises (SME). I remember between 2015 and 2016, I shared my vision that I wanted Abia to be a repository of skilled manpower for small and medium enterprises especially in the leather and garment sub-sector. I am very happy and proud to say today we have recorded some success. SMEs have been offered appointments and in fact, some of them have started leaving the shores of Nigeria to work in shoe factories in Dubai, courtesy of footwear academy and our interventions in the ENASCO Enyimba Automated shoe factory. And I am also happy to say that the Enyimba Automated Garment Factory will also come on stream by the special grace of God before the end of this year. It is going to be one of the biggest garment factories in this country. About two hundred and fifty pieces of machinery which means that it will employ nearly five hundred young tailors and garment makers here. We have also received proposals from individuals who want to open a made in Abia shop in the UK, so our narrative has completely changed, and I am happy to inform us that we will continue to work in this trajectory and in no distant time, Abia and Abians will be known for what we do with our hands.

SIR, the Indigenous Peoples of Biara said there is going to be total lockdown in the South East on Monday, what is your submission to that?

I want to say that for the first time since this agitation started, the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo, which is the leading Pan-Igbo socio-Cultural group, has expressed serious interest in making sure that Mazi Nnadi Kanu gets fair judgement.

I want to say that for the first time since this agitation started, the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo, which is the leading Pan-Igbo socio-Cultural group, has expressed serious interest in making sure that Mazi Nnadi Kanu gets fair judgement. My party, the APC, will also behave and do what we believe, which is Equity and justice. Are you worried that Ebubeagu is yet to take off in the south east?

No, I think it has taken off in most states. The problem is that anytime Abia or Abians say that there is political overrun, all the political brand have come up with stereotypes and expectations, which according to them are not being met and therefore expecting a completely different thing. Having said that, why you have not heard something so much about it is because the counterpoint called Ebubeagu is designed to respond according to the peculiar circumstances of every state. Abia State Ebubeagu cannot reflect Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra or Imo Ebubeagu because our security challenges are not the same both in diagnosis and outlook. They are different. But we converge at a point where we want to share intelligence so that the identified criminals in those States are same. We can deploy economies of scale so that we can procure pieces of equipment that can serve our geopolitical zone without having to replicate expenditure in all the states. Let me embellish my comments in this regards with what is happening in Abia, Just a few days ago we officially inaugurated our Ebubeagu but we played down the relevance in the media because based on the strategic role envisaged for Ebubeagu the location is in the forest, and inside the bushes in our various communities. Their strategic...
It is my pleasure to convey my warm felicitations to Your Excellency Governor Okezie Chibuike Ikpeazu as well as the good people of Abia State on the occasion of the celebration of the creation of Abia State.

There is no doubt that Your Excellency has redefined governance process and political engagement in the State through your economic, infrastructural, environmental and security initiatives that has improved and enhanced the economic and overall welfare of Abians.

Your disposition to listen and accommodate all shades of opinion irrespective of political or religious leaning stands you out as an exceptional and altruistic Leader.

Congratulations, accept the assurances of my esteemed regards.

Congratulations!

Uche Aguoru
Chairman ASEPA OHUHU ZONE
We celebrate with Governor Okezie Ikpeazu and the good people of Abia State today as our state continues to march forward in peace and prosperity.

May the good people of Abia state achieve all the developmental objectives of our founding fathers.
We shall take Abia to the promised land - Ikpeazu

from page 7

Response is to provide the various security units with intelligence, so, I will not because I want to please my spectators and begin to dance naked in the market. The spectators include those who want my survival and those who don’t. Those who expected us to bring out fierce looking people clad in lion skin and dance in the market square will not see such a thing. But they have gone to work, all of them have android phones, we have mobilized them, they are highly mobile, and we have worked out a communication channel to monitor every inch of our forests. We will continue to adjust until such a time when we can say we are happy the deed has been done. But I want to encourage you by saying, if the essence of Ebubeagu is to ensure peace and tranquility, ensure safety of lives and properties, then it is time that we rise to protect Abia because we have peace, tranquility and people are going about their businesses. Our Ebubeagu is working, if you want to see them, we will make them available for you to see but they will not dance naked in the market.

The State owned football team, Enyimba, added to its list yesterday coming from a distant position to land a Continental ticket: does it say anything about Abia spirit?

I congratulate Enyimba and Abia Warriors for the wonderful feat. When I go to talk to them privately, I will tell them they could have moved up their position long before now. Three unfortunate slips at home not good for Enyimba. We were busy concentrating on winning our matches away. I think Enyimba ended up with the best away record in the league this time, which is good but such record is important, relative to the log, if you win your home matches as well. If we had won all our home matches, that would have been a great success. The third thing I would love to add is, we need to score more goals. When the chips are down and you have two three teams contending same position, at the top, goal differences begin to count. We have to go back to our scoring ways so that we know we are among the three four players contending for the highest goal scorer from the team in the national league.

Having said that, I am proud of their performance in the league, it could have been worse. I want to encourage by saying that with their pedigree as champions, we know they would need to work hard to remain on top because people are taking aim and firing at them from every angle. Every club in Nigeria wants to beat Enyimba, it’s a thing of pride. In fact some clubs will prefer to beat Enyimba and be relegated. It’s not a mean feat to be a champion. The best of champions are those who remain on top there.

In a recent interview, you said you would be neutral in the search for your successor, considering that some governors would like to put their successor, some would like to put someone behind, why did you choose to be neutral?

I have said time and again that I dare to be different in many respects. My position in this particular instance is that all those who influenced the emergence of their successor, no matter of them are not happy. My faith in God has revealed to me that power is important and crucial that God cannot leave it entirely in the hands of men. So, why would I want to do that which God would ordinarily want to do? Those are my comments for now. But I want to say that these months, these remaining months, as far as I am concerned are as important as my first month in office. I need to focus and work hard for the remaining months of my tenure. I don’t want to abridge my tenure because I am expecting anybody to come. Let the person who wants to take over and carry his cross, he doesn’t carry anybody’s cross for him. Yesterday, as late as 11pm I was monitoring what was happening at Obihe road in Abia. My contract is that every person in my position would have loved to do so many things that money or circumstances couldn’t allow them to do. I am in serious prayer about our Dry port project. It’s a project after my Heart and I am believing God to make it happen. If you recall, I demonstrated preference for that dry port project because we have about 6 airports that are 30 minutes to one hour away from Abia. What do we do not have in this region is a dry port and my people are importers. I want to give my people what they need and not what the elites want. 90% of our traders would rather have a dry port, a ceramic industry, and raw palm oil which we cannot get from China and all over the world and they clear it in our state here. So, that is what my Prayers are. So, I want to say that Abia has moved forward seriously irrespective of what the naysayers are saying. I will give you some instance; whoever is going to be Governor after me in 2023 will not go back to the roads we have done. We are building roads that will outlive us, for the first time in many years. We are going to have a geometrical rise in the road stock of our infrastructure, meaning that if I do 250 roads the next person will continue from there, and so on…. So, by the time we see one or two more administration of 8 years, we will find it difficult to see bad roads in the entire state and I want to be remembered as the person who started that course of event by ensuring deployment of rigid pavement technology with drainage systems on all our roads. That’s the way to go. I will also love to see our people embrace in greater number, our Abia Telehealth Initiative where you can sit at the comfort of your home leveraging the advantages of Tele density to access advanced Medicare. That innovative project was published on August 20, 2021 in the UK as an ingenious intervention. Yet, our people are looking for good Medicare in Sokoto whereas it is in their backyard. Our people should leverage it.

There are rumors of the Cancellation of Niger Delta Flood mediation Project, what do you have to say?

There is nothing like cancellation of Niger Delta Flood mediation project. I can say in the first place that this government has spent a lot of time to open up our state for intervention with the World Bank. Incidentally World Bank intervention comes with some conditions including fiscal responsibility, transparency, sufficiently open Government etc. the whole Niger Delta story started in 2015 when I personally led a team of relevant government officials to the World Bank to say to them, you can come and see how we keep our books so that we can align with global best practices. They came and worked with us for 8 months. Since that time, not only we have engaged the World Bank through NEWMAP, AFRICAN Development Bank, IFC, all this funding agencies are either collaborating with us in Enyimba Economic City or in or our infrastructure renewal agenda. We are happy to say that the NEWMAP project in our state is in its full swing.

In World Bank’s experience, the challenge of that project is that the NEWMAP intervention project in Nigeria that was designed to last for 22 months, which was supposedly to be officially closed in July, but all of us (states) went to World Bank, Me and other Governors, to appeal to them to extend the project time and it was extended by 11 months, and they are now reviewing the projects, project by project. They now found out that Abia State projects being the biggest in Nigeria, is at a point now where we may not be able to conclude all the components of the projects in the scope or work within the 11 months that is remaining. And the components of the project that is being threatened to has to do with tunneling beneath buildings in Ndigboro area of about 5.2 kilometers. It’s a massive project and requires a machine called Tunnel Borin machine (TBM) that is being manufactured for us in Dubai. This TBM machines are produced project specific as against mass production. There are engineering specifications. The TBM machines used in South Africa may not completely fit the purpose of the one they want to use at Ndigboro. We needed them to use this particular machine to avoid bringing down many buildings and it takes about 6 months to deal with. If you add 3 months for shipping and clearing, that would be about 9 months, and we just have 4 months in the NEWMAP timeline for all Nigeria projects. What the World Bank is asking is, can we in 4 months, assuming everything works at the snap of a finger now, do the 5.2 kilometers boring and Tunneling beneath houses at Ndigboro, from Umunagbazie to waterside? I have my fears regarding whether that can happen. But we are working with World Bank to deploy other options. One of the option is for us to now go to surface or open drainage and move Storm water from Ndigboro because the problem is for us to do critical roads and take water away from Ndigboro area. The other option is to agree with the World Bank and combine with them to see how much of a work we can do within the 11 months and see what is left. Sincerely speaking, as the leader of this state, I think, if you give me 11 months and part of the money that World Bank has mapped out for the project, it is possible to do Ndigboro, Ikpeazu, Obutu, Aluu, and Akwa. If you think of this is possible to do Ndigboro, Port Harcourt, Obuhu, Ohankwu roads, and also use surface drain to take water away from Ndigboro which I can achieve in eleven months than to wait, for the company in Dubai to manufacture the machine so I can begin to go underground to do tunneling. So it’s a decision that all of us must take. So those who are shou ring and saying that the world bank has withdrawn, my question is, what did they do to attract the World Bank in the First place? The answer is nothing. Have they shown concern for Ndigboro people threatened by flood every year? The answer is nothing. Their prayer and wish every day that World Bank withdraws is to pass a bigger problem to the people at Ndigboro, so, they are the most unpatriotic people on earth. When this kind of thing happen, every right thinking Abian that has empathy should begin to pray to God for us to find a way to deal with Niger Delta matter and I have demonstrated sufficient concern and empathy as a leader by doing projects that have not been done since the past 60 years in that area and also bringing the World Bank into the Process. So, he who shoots at the sky will shoot farther than he who shoots at the bush. I will continue to aim at the sky.
How Aba South Chairman handpicked loyalists as principal officers of the legislative council - Ubani.

In an exclusive interview with All Facts Newspaper, Hon. Charles Ubani, the Honorable Councilor representing Aba Town hall, ward 12 at the Aba South local council of Abia state. There are allegations that the Council Chairman, Hon. Clinton Emmanuell Ebere awarded contract for the reconstruction of the LGA council's secretariat, burned down during the anti-SARS protest to the tune of about N168 million, without following due process. As a member of the legislative council, what is your reaction?

Yes, it is true that, a large part of the Council secretariat was badly damaged, during the anti-SARS protest. And I am also of the position that everything should be done to put back the secretariat in a good shape. However, in doing so, I strongly believe that due process should be followed. Now as a Counselor representing Aba Town hall, ward 12, which incidentally is the ward hosting the secretariat of the council, I am not aware of the award or any contract. I am not also aware that the legislative council approved such contract as required by law.

Everybody knows that, before such a huge contract, could be awarded by the Executive; it has to pass through the legislative council. The legislative council has to be briefed on the details of the contract, how it is going to be funded; where the money is going to come from: if it is going to be funded through loan, and or through internally generated revenue or allocation from the federal account if it is through loan the legislative council has to be told, how the loan will be repaid. But as I speak, the legislative council, of which I am a member has never been told or consulted as far as the issue of the award is concerned. For the reconstruction of the council secretariat is concerned.

All we saw, was that in May, this year, the Council Chairman, performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the reconstruction of the secretariat, much to the surprise of most of us - the legislators and the whole thing generated and has continued to generate controversies and disagreement.

Some of us are still wondering how, the council chairman could go ahead to award such a multi-million Naira contract without seeking the approval of the legislative council. For that amount to a flagrant abuse of due process and we are studying the situation with a view to taking action against the chairman if necessary. This is because there is no way you will be spending the people's money without the approval of the people, through their elected representatives. For me, the chairman, has done a very clear case of misappropriation of the council's funds.

Do you have a budget for the year, in place and if there is, was the contract for the reconstruction captured in the budget?

A: As I speak with you, we the legislative council members have not seen any annual budget from anywhere, not to talk about approving any. And when some of us are agitating and insisting that things should be done the right way, the chairman and his aides will be seeing us as trouble makers.

It is a known fact that, there should be an annual budget Proposal prepared by the executive and presented to the legislative council for deliberation and possible approval. It is this budget proposal as approved by the legislative council that will guide all spending within the council. But the truth is that, up till now, we don't have any budget proposal before us and yet the chairman is busy spending including his contentious awards for the reconstruction of the council secretariat.

But the law is clear on the spending limit for all the executive at the three-tier of government for instance there is a certain limit of money that could be spent, by the executive without recourse to the legislative or the executive council. In this case, N 150 Million is clearly above that sum. What is your next line of action? you see; we keep on hearing about so many amounts and figures, such as N 47 Million, N 70 Million, N 150 Million and all that. That's not the issue.

At the end of the day, he the chairman succeeded in hand picking his perceived loyalists as principal officers of the legislative councils. From that point, because some of us vehemently insisted that things should be done the right way, he has come to see us as enemies. Well, the whole thing began on May 22, 2020 the same day that elected council chairmen were inaugurated in the state by Governor Okorocha. After the swearing in ceremony in Umuahia, we all returned to Aba to celebrate together. However, all of a sudden the chairman, proceeded to the legislative council chamber and he is now standing in that old hour and inside darkness. It was torch light he used. My brother what happened that day saddened most of us. At the end of the day, the chairman succeeded in hand picking his perceived loyalists as principal officers of the legislative councils. From that point, because some of us vehemently insisted that things should be done the right way, he has come to see us as enemies. He has been siding us in the running battle, but the chairman has been saying he (chairman) will make sure that we leave the council empty handed. Not just us alone, he has sidelined many, including his deputy, secretary to the council, and host of others just because we insist that things should be done in line with due process.

Besides the issue of contract for the reconstruction of the secretariat, which, the chairman single-handedly awarded, there is the issue of revenue, how much it spends: how much comes from the federation account and all that. It is only the chairman, working with a few people that know. Many people cannot tell you that the council is worth so and so in terms of revenue. My brother, the situation is really bad and I don't think we will continue like that. Like I said, earlier we may be forced to explore all constitutional avenues to this gross reign of impunity at the council. What is going at the council is not what the good people of Aba South had in mind when they were electing us into office.

The Chairman has been undermining democracy in the council. He is in the process of speeding its downfall. This is going to engulf the inhabitants of Aba South LGA and the state. What can we do to save the council before it goes under?

The Council Chairman is no longer a member of the council. He was expelled for flagrant abuse of power. He is no longer a member of the council.
Abia: Ikpeazu Administration molding Abia Into A Garden of Possibilities

By Uche Aguoru

W hen governor Okezie Ikpeazu took over the reign of governance in Abia state, he was faced with a cacophony of election litigations that went on for the better part of his first four years as governor. One thing that stood out during this long legal battle was his courage and focus on inclusive economic and infrastructural development of the state.

Despite the battery of political, economic, and infrastructural challenges that greeted his ascension to the seat of governance, Dr. Ikpeazu kept his focus and worked assiduously hard towards the possibility of sustained infrastructural and economic growth in God’s Own State.

Yes, there were concerns from valid interests and also from opposition quarters as to whether the governor will live up to the expectations of the people because of not only our political trajectory but also the infrastructural and economic challenges facing him upon assumption of office.

The Nigerian political system, known for its drama and intrigues, has been alien to innovation, consistency, and dedication to tangible development. But the administration of Gov. Okezie Ikpeazu to every sincere political analyst changed that perception by working hard to meet up its own set objectives and has redefined service delivery through focused, sincere, and prudent governance strategy. Truth is, no other government since the creation of the state has brought Abia to global recognition than the Ikpeazu administration.

Dr. Ikpeazu has through consistent strategy and aggressive campaigning and promotion, made Aba a popular international destination for finished leather and garment products. The volume of trade between Aba and the rest of West and Central Africa is at an all-time high, truckloads of manufactured goods depart the commercial city to the ports for onward export to Cameroon, Ghana, Togo, Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa Republic, and other African countries, the manufacturers are also receiving orders in Dollar ($) exchange from across Europe, America, Asia, and Arab countries.

Permit me to describe Dr. Ikpeazu as aggressively modern in his infrastructural and economic developmental policy. Approach, having strategically revived the industrial and entrepreneurial spirit of the average Aba resident and is moulding Aba into a garden of possibilities.

With focus on infrastructural development, Dr. Ikpeazu’s administration has built and reconstructed schools, equipped hospitals, constructed health centers, reconstructed the Enyimba International Stadium, constructed roads with standard drainages across the 17 local governments.

Though the state has infrastructural challenges especially within Aba due to its peculiar topographical nature, the Ikpeazu government is tackling the challenges successfully and aggressively and today so many roads hitherto impassable have been reclaimed with standard and world-class construction and design, stabilized and built to last.

Dr. Ikpeazu has not made infrastructural development its singular goal. His administration is approaching the development of the state through a multifaceted approach, there have also been projects and government-level actions aimed at boosting Abia’s economic growth and evolution.

The Ikpeazu administration has also shown remarkable innovation and creativity in its ever-growing list of ways to boost the state’s economy. His unique outlook on development, relentless focus on growth, and the evolution of Aba are a product of smart thinking, prudence, innovative and creative governance, preparedness, focus, and insistence on excellence and quality leadership.

This administration has a clear vision and is determined on its accomplishment, but one thing is clear, Dr Ikpeazu has his eyes on the ball and will leave behind an Abia we all will be proud of.

Cause of Serial Leadership Failures and Fiascos in Abia State: The Parable of Pearl and Swine.

By Polemics

I t is politically, logically wise and inevitable that 2023 general polls in Abia State, form critical frame of reference in this analysis. Though, 2023 polls, is not the central or primary focus of this analysis and review of the contemporary political leadership circumstances prevalent in Abia State, as critical elements. Notwithstanding, 2023 polls, can help salvage in rewriting positively, the leadership anomalies and quirk absurdities, in terms of leadership paralysis or crisis that has undeniable and ominously plagued Abia State, based on public assessments or perceptions. The critical essence or relevance of 2023 polls in these important contexts, stem from the beliefs and optimism of standing on the thresholds of fresh electoral opportunities in 2023 to redress the critical political leadership misfortunes of Abia State, dating back to 30 years of existence, following the creation of Abia State on August 27, 1991.

Thus, only certified clairvoyants, can declare with accuracy or exactness the final outcomes of 2023 general elections, in terms of effective leadership contexts or perspectives; beyond the rituals of routine general elections. Or, in the same token, only a clairvoyant, can even risk to dare any attempts to declare accurately the exact personal identities of the ultimate winners of political parties primaries elections tickets in 2023; for example, amongst teeming prospective governance aspirants in Abia North Zone; or other geopolitical zones.

Only such winners, thus, shall be qualified to contest the governorship position, based on the stipulations of extant electoral laws and provisos. Lucky tickets winners, barring any disputation, which is highly unlikely, based on insights of past events, shall be cloaked in the highly coveted toga of flag bearers on the platforms of competing political parties. Especially, APC, APGA, and PDP, as the dominant parties in the vanguard of Abia State political electoral contests, presently.

Similarly, only a twenty-first century political Nostradamus, can effortlessly, replying on prescient gifts or powers, prefigure or pinpoint with precision, the anticipated winners of parties primaries elections, in 2023 general polls. Likewise, pundits, priestly prophets, and far-sighted seers, possibly with the aid of heavenly prophetic discernments or supernatural sensory abilities, only possessed by prophets or seers, may be able to peep into what the future holds in store; or risk to foresee and resolve these acute political riddles or puzzles.

Given the increase in the number of aborted or failed proffesies associated with majority of contemporary time prophets and seers, only tiny fractions of people shall consider with scientifia of seriousness any prophetic bulls or decrees minted and issued by prophets or seers, as purveyors of the dynamic national political cauldrons and events.

Notwithstanding, litany of prophecies and legions of prayers warriors, in addition to countless analytical or speculative forecasts and predictions, are bound to compete for attentions, in the days, weeks, and months ahead, as the magical year 2023 zooms majestically closer, with promises of glad tiding and hope.

Though the sketch of the total picture, in terms of the political gladiators to cross swords in the governorship tickets contests remains mostly blurred and faint at the moment; some notable personalities have begun to emerge conspicuously out of the shadows, into limelights. Sample profiles of these personalities include, essentially; veteran political gladiators; business tycoons; icons of academia and educationists; financial experts and banking gurus; tested and trusted veteran security experts; distinguished ex-military leaders; serial entrepreneurs; and philanthropists.

Throughout its entire lengths and breadths, for instance, Abia North geopolitical zone, is crowned with rich depositories and reservoirs of valuable human capital resource. Abia North Zone, is home of prominent professional elite and renowned technocrats, whose influences penetrate beyond the boundaries and confines of Abia State, but extend to different parts of the globe, respectively.

Similarly, Abia Central and South Zones, are endowed as treasure base and groves of jewels, in terms of the eminent presence of arrays of highly accomplished and continue on page 14
ABIA @30: Celebrating Two Years of Legislative Excellence under the Leadership of Engr. Chinedum Orji

It was exactly two years on June 10, 2021, since the result-oriented 7th Abia State House of Assembly under the Speakership of Rt Hon Chinedum Eninyema Orji MNSE was inaugurated. From then on till now, the House comprising people of established excellent characters has been working to see to the peace, unity, progress, prosperity and the general well being of Abians through timely and effective legislative interventions using such instruments as Motions, Bills, Summons, Investigations, Constituency Projects among others, and a well-documented impecable interdependent relationship especially between the Executive and the Legislative Arms of Government, without compromising their respective independence, to achieve this. So it is not for nothing that the Assembly Members, both as individuals and as a group, have regularly gone through the good and for the good of the people. This is in line with the Multiple Award Winning Speaker’s avowal in his inauguration speech when he said, “This 7th Abia State House of Assembly shall be vibrant and result-oriented. We are the House of the people, by the people and for the people and we shall endeavor to make the people the centre-point of all our actions and decisions. We are therefore committed to the enactment of sound laws and legislation that will help in uplifting the lives and well-being of Ndi Abia”. So, as the State marks 30 years of its creation on August 27, 2021, it is important to note the invaluable contributions and vision of the Chinedum Orji-led 7th Abia State House of Assembly as it signposts the importance of the legislature in the journey of a State like Abia towards growth and development since her creation.

This vision has been the pedestal upon which all the Members have been standing to perform their duties. The effusive accolades they receive almost on a daily basis from people from all walks of life are a copious testimony to how they ensured that they are to the people for whom they pass impactful motions and make sound laws.

Such laws passed include but not limited to:

10. H.A.B. 41. Abia State Audit Law

Apart from a plethora of Motions that have been passed and which are too numerous to mention here, there are several other Bills that have sailed through the Reading stages awaiting passage into Law.

Let it be emphasized that Abia State House of Assembly is one of the few States that have passed the State House of Assembly Service Commission Law. It is also the first, and remains the only State House of Assembly to date that has passed the Diaspora Commission Law for which even the Presidency commended them severally. While the Abia State House of Assembly Service Commission Law further strengthens the image of the Legislature at State level as it is expected to be a fully democratic society, the Abia State Diaspora Commission Law gives the necessary legislative backing and a legal platform for the numerous contributions and investments of Abians in the Diaspora to supporting the growth in the growth and development of the State. The Law also sets up a Commission to coordinate the affairs of Abians in the Diaspora and inspire confidence in them as they think home.

These feats have been achieved within the short period of time the House has had to work considering that 2020 was a year the world almost came to a standstill and activities put on hold. So, while the House was inaugurated two years ago, it has had only one year or even less to achieve the many feats it has recorded, given also that the nationwide strike action of the Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN), Body of the civil servants working at State Houses of Assembly, had paralyzed activities at the Houses for close to three months this year. Despite this, Members of the Abia State House of Assembly are not relenting in their commitment to the people as they keep on providing dividends of democracy in terms of sound people-oriented legislation and physical infrastructure.

For example, the Speaker himself has embarked on the construction of nine mini-stadiums across his constituency and beyond. The stadiums which are at different levels of construction stage are located in Isieke community, St Stephen's Primary School, Umuahia, Ezelle Community Primary School, Ututu, Abaka, Ikwunado, Okokoro, and Ohuhu communities respectively.

The Speaker has also at one time or the other, provided potable water, electricity transformers, renovation of schools, health centres and such other facilities to communities.

Through his esteemed interventions, citizens of the State have been given employment in both public and private sectors; he has given startup capital/equipment to numerous MSMEs, organized health outreachs, sponsored certificate ICT Training/empowerment programmes for youths, granted scholarships to indigent students, intervened in the provision of facilities to both primary and secondary schools among other dividends to the people.

Of particular interest among these interventions by the Speaker is his ICT training/empowerment in which close to 200 Abia youths are beneficiaries. The ongoing free training/empowerment programme which was flagged off on April 15 by the Speaker has the beneficiaries trained free of charge in the following areas:

1. Computer Appreciation
2. Graphics Design
3. Web Development
4. Digital Marketing

This is particularly delightful given that ICT is the new crude of the world in this age and those knowledgeable in it have the possibility of gaining an edge in a highly competitive world.

The Abia Speaker’s youth-focused and people-oriented programmes as this one keep empowering Abia youths to make them independent entrepreneurs, wealth creators and employers of labour thereby leading to a society of youths with less vices and greater prosperity. The good news is that this is just the first phase as more youths are set to benefit from the next phase that will be released.

The same people oriented services are rendered to their constituents by all Members of the House who have worked in harmony not only as Lawmakers and colleagues, but also as brothers, irrespective of political affiliations, with a common vision of improving the welfare of the people.

While we hear of chaotic relationships between the Executive and the Legislature in other places, the synergy between the Executive and Legislative Arms of Government in Abia State has been top notch and it rubs off positively on the people as the Governor’s ever progressive actions are given accelerated legislative backings and consideration in order for him to deliver on his goals without any encumbrances, hence, in our modern democracy, the Abia State House of Assembly has passed the 2020 and 2021 Budget in record time and making implementation possible right from January 1 of the concerned years, despite putting in painstaking efforts at ensuring they dot all the necessary i’s and cross the appropriate t’s.

Furthermore, to demonstrate its undiluted commitment to the peace, progress and prosperity of Abia, the State House of Assembly had on October 30, 2019, hosted Federal Lawmakers of Abia origin, irrespective of party affiliations, to an interactive session on how Lawmakers at different levels needed to close ranks and work together for the good of the State. And the result has been excellent.

So, as the Abia State House of Assembly enters its third year of existence, Abians should be assured of even a more responsive, innovative, service and result oriented House that has already written its name in gold as the Best Assembly Abia has ever had, having also bequeathed to the State what is arguably the best House of Assembly Complex East of the Niger!

So, as Abia State marks 30 years of her existence, her history of progress and strive towards prosperity cannot be complete without the sterling roles and contributions of the 7th Abia State House of Assembly under the leadership of Rt Hon Chinedum Eninyema Orji taking a prominent space. No wonder he was recently voted and honoured during the Press Freedom Awards of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) as Speaker of the Year at a colorful ceremony held at the prestigious Ladi Kwali Hall of the Abuja Sheraton Hotels & Towers, Abuja, on May 5, 2021.
As Abia state clocks 30 years today, I want to deeply appreciate the founding fathers, for their contribution in bringing to reality their dream.

In the same vein, I will equally thank our past and present leaders for all their selfless service in moving this great state forward.

My special appreciation goes to His Excellency, Gov. Okezie Ikpeazu for his kinetic Leadership that is making Ndi Abia experience kinetic infrastructural development in all ramifications.

For my Isiala Ngwa North / South Federal Constitution constituents, keep your faith high for more dividends of democracy is coming.

Finally, the chance of Abia State becoming greater is in our hands, let’s work together.

#WeMove

Rt. Hon. Darlington Nwokocha
Member – Representing Isiala Ngwa North/South Federal Constituency

Cause of Serial Leadership Failures and Fiascos in Abia State:

_The Parable of Pearl and Swine._

Unfortunately, Abia State, despite the abundance of rich human capital resource, has curiously remained in the tight clutches or grips of noticeable paralysis, in the contexts of classic sense of the dearth of enviable leaders and role models; measured by the indices of respective performances of the political personalities who have served in the strategic office and capacities of state chief executives, as governors.

The outstanding but unfortunate reasons responsible for the tight grips of leadership continue on next edition.


“When I purchased the new one somebody who saw the zeal in me, a student came and asked me to give him the old one so that he would be doing account for me and we agreed on terms and I gave him instead of selling it off. He was driving and I was also driving and making my own money, and at the end of every week, he would make account of about N50,000. He told me in additional to what I had made with my own and I started saving it. This was happening in 2015, during my 200 level. That was how I started, but it was a small start. I had saved the money and school management banned Okada from driving inside the school because of the negative attitudes of some Okada riders and I almost became strangled but then I was able to make some determination in me to stay aloof. They seized many of the Okadas and took them to security office and it was as if I had crashed from my pinnacle of struggle to survive. By then I had saved about N180,000. From the business of the two Okadas. The school then introduced tricycle, Keke Napep, which then cost around N600,000 to purchase. Then I had to look for a way of getting a tricycle, I had no money for a new one so I travelled to Aba, and visited a place I usually carry cement to make some pocket money. I used to load and off load cement, road block and off load so that I could make some money. I was doing this before I even got admission into university. Loading and off-loading block then was N5 each. It was through that exercise that I used in paying my first school fees because my parents did not have money and I knew it. When I came to school, I was bothered because I only depended on my parents for welfare, and knowing that they did not have much I started looking for what to do for me to start generating income. I am not from a wealthy family because my Daddy was not really ok and my Mom was not doing anything. As a matter of fact my father was one of those people that load passengers at the main park in Aba, so you can see that whatever that was coming in for our welfare was really meager. While I was looking for what to do, many ideas came into my mind, but because I needed a car, I had a car, so I had to do something that a small capital could handle even when I had none. I thought about the problems facing us in the school then as students and staff how I could offer solution to some challenges. I tried to bring to reality some of the things I thought about and some of them failed, some did not go the way I expected.

One of them was how to package egusi seed, that is used for soup in a nylon bag, just the way some ground nut oil are packaged now, and left it to stay a long time to see if it could stay fresh, but it never came to that. I was disappointed. Secondly, the capital needed for that line of business ventures was not what I could afford as at then. I went to NAPFAC for certification and the amount of money that I was asked for to do a simple amount of business was difficult for me to come to terms with.

I thought of what I could start with small capital, because I never had any, I thought about driving bike in school as a student and because I needed what to do that would not really affect my academic life and pursuit, I wanted something that can balance the two. So I thought about riding Okada (Motor Cycle) for transport inside the school, believing that it is one thing I can do after the lecturers.

But I never had fund to buy Okada, then something happened, I had a friend who stays in the hostel, in my 200 level, my parents gathered the little they could, about N40,000, and gave to me to continue and pay for hostel accommodation.

I used the amount, with the little savings of about N20,000, I had and deposited for it an old Okada, promising to pay the balance once I start making money. I collected the Okada which I never knew how to ride then, it was my roommate that came with me to help me take delivery of it. But within me, I had this sense of determination and readiness to start up something because I do read a lot of books, I know the people weade through storms of life and it has really opened my understanding that unless you do something, other things may remain undone.

I started learning how to ride the bike after lectures and in no distant time, I started riding. Then after lectures, I would be at the Okada for business, ferrying people inside and outside the campus. At the end of some days exercise, I would sometimes make N2,000 to N3,000. And I would save it because I had a debt to pay and would not want to be embarrassed or distrusted for meeting up with my premise. As old as I was paying serious attention to it so that it would not break down, and that means that it was taking me to mechanics for repairs regularly. It did not take long and I paid off the debt and purchased a brand new Okada, fixing it so many things so that it can be on the road. The money was not there, but the man who saw the zeal in me decided to help me. After everything the man drove the Keke to the school and taught me little on how to drive because I did not even know how to drive. He just moved like two limbs from where I was to hostel and hostel to gate and said that I should continue in what I had shown me. He then travelled back and I had about N50,000 recharge to my phone, having deposited the N180, 000, 000 I owed him.

My two bikes were still seized by the school security and I started driving the Keke glance. Even then, they didn’t really accept the keke for runs, but did not know what I was passing through. I told them how the keke would stop students on the road, I kept begging and he accepted and gave me no. 34.

That was how I started, it was one of the problems I had been having. I was weak, but it had stayed for about 3 years before I bought it. I was always in the mechanic to fix one thing or the other, I started studying in the machine shed to write my exams. I would sit inside one of the abandoned keke to do assignments, and other school works. Even when it was raining, I would be inside the Keke reading. If I had exam at 3 o’clock, I would be in the mechanic trying to fix it because it was so bad.

Somebody advised me to go for a hire purchase arrangement and the challenge became getting someone that would sign for me as guarantor. I did not have anybody in the town, I was just somebody that came to school. I knew that I had to study. The Lecturers, may like you as a person but they would not like to get involved in the hire purchase arrangement because their involvement through, kept complaining on stake, so it became a problem for me to weather through the storm.

The first person I paid for hire purchase held my money(N50,000) for about three months and at the end did not provide Keke for me. It was the person who took me to him that ran around to recover my money for me to look somewhere.

Then one of the Keke riders inside school took me to where he got his own and I promised the man everything that I would deliver and at the end of the day, he agreed that I would be paying him N15,000 per week and that the boy would sign for me if anything happened, he would hold me responsible and he did and we started.

But before then, I prayed and fasted, called on God to intervene, I even parked the little property I had sold and sold as seed to the altar of God in the church for God to step into my situation and help me. And after one month, the man called me to follow him to a place, where they sell keke, told me to make a choice and I did and he paid for it, we wrote the agreement. That was how I started. We agreed that I would be paying N18,000. But I was paying N20,000. And I actually paid N18,000 per week, one week. I even paid upfront, and with time, I became his best customer... That was how I started.