



Text of the Welcome Address By
His Excellency
Mr. Biodun Oyebanji
Governor, Ekiti State
at the

**TOWNHALL MEETING WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON NIGERIA COVID-19
ACTION RECOVERY AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS (NG-CARES)
PROGRAMME**

Conference Hall, Governor's Office,

Ado-Ekiti | Ekiti State | Monday | June 05, 2023.

PROTOCOLS:

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's NG-CARES stakeholders' engagement meeting. Today's meeting is in furtherance of our commitment to advance inclusive governance and maintain constant touch with our people.
 2. As you are aware, the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) Programme is an intervention scheme which among others, is aimed at stimulating the nation's economy at micro level after the post-COVID pandemic and its overreaching destructive impact on the socioeconomic situation of the individuals, communities and government.
 3. Because of the urgency of the intervention and the need to ensure that the scheme took off on time, the use of existing platforms was adopted to drive the initiative. As a State, we did not delay to immediately signified interest in being part of this laudable programme because of our commitment to the uplift of the most vulnerable in our State, many of whom lost their basic means of livelihood during the pandemic.
 4. Prior to the commencement of the programme, we had ensured that all requirements and institutional guidelines as outlined in the implementation manual, including office accommodation and staffing among others, were quickly put in place for easy take off. This was to guarantee a conducive
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atmosphere for the implementing agencies to operate and deliver results as expected.

5. As the Secretary to the Government in the immediate past administration, I was deeply involved in the processes that led to the commencement of the project in our dear State, right from the reception of the assessment team on behalf of the State Government, and the subsequent debriefing sessions that followed.
6. So, I have been part of the conceptualization, foundation laying and implementation of the programme at different levels in our State. In many other instances, I have had the privilege of listening to the assessment of the steering team, which has helped me to fully appreciate the programme and its potential benefits to our people. Indeed, to make the programme work for our people effectively, the previous administration set up a 10-member State CARES Steering Committee (**SCSC**) in May 2021 with the responsibility of providing oversight function and policy guidelines for the programme. Although the tenure of the Committee has now elapsed with the last administration, we will soon come up with a new steering committee.
7. I want to commend all the implementing agencies such as the World Bank Office, Federal Coordinating Office, EK-CARES Coordinating Unit, implementing MDAs, Local Government and Community leaders and other critical stakeholders for their commitment to the overall success of the projects. I am particularly grateful to the different agencies of Government in Ekiti that are responsible for the implementation of the different aspects of the NG-CARES, for a job well done. Just about a couple of days ago, I presented cheques to some communities to undertake planned community development projects as part of the NG-CARES palliatives that target communities.
8. Therefore, I am using this platform to appreciate the efforts of the World Bank and the Federal CARES Support Unit for their support for Ekiti State. We are not also taking for granted the commitment and dedication of the State officials who are active players in the implementation and delivery of desirable results.
9. Ekiti has developed a profile of excellence in the implementation of the projects. We are also leading in the managing and delivering of outcomes. We



are committed to be the best State in the implementation of the NG-CARES programmes.

10. For example, the first Independent Verification Agent (IVA) Assessment Report for the State already shows that we are doing fantastically well. We are fully committed to sustaining and surpassing the current milestones. To this end, a sum of **₦1, 394, 161, 400.00** has been disbursed to the Delivery Units for implementation activities towards the second Verification Assessment which, I am aware, would come up any moment from now.
11. Among other things, today's meeting was organized primarily to showcase some of the successes recorded so far in the implementation of the programme and to get feedbacks on the challenges that might have been encountered and suggestions on how to deal with the identified challenges. We believe that the beneficiaries' testimonies will further strengthen our commitment towards supporting the poor and vulnerable households, farmers and firms affected by the COVID - 19 pandemic in the State.
12. While congratulating the beneficiaries, I also wish to advise that you should make good use of the benefits derived from the programme for personal development and that of the State as a whole. This will help in the recovery of social-economic loss occasioned by the effect of COVID - 19 pandemic.
13. On this note, it is my pleasure to welcome you once again to this meeting and to wish you happy deliberations.

Thank you and God bless.

Biodun Oyebanji

Governor

June 05, 2023 | Ado-Ekiti