

**REPORT OF ABIA STATE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP CITIZENS
ENGAGEMENT ON 2020 BUDGET REVIEW, HELD ON 5TH JUNE, 2020
THROUGH ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

IN ATTENDANCE

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1) Mr. Amaechi Chukwu | - | Abia OGP /SFTAS Focal Person |
| 2) Mr, Chima Chukwu | - | Focal Person, PforR |
| 3) Mr. Eme Kalu | - | Director Budget |
| 4) Mr. Chibuike Obasi | - | President General Ibinaukwu Igbere
Improvement Union, Bende LGA |
| 5) Eze Chima K. Njoke | - | Umuogor Osoke Amaise |
| 6) Anucha Okechukwu | - | Umuogor Osoke Amaise |
| 7) Mr. Richard Okoro | - | |
| 8) Mr. Laurence Obeweh | - | Lead Technical Director, Citizens Voice for
Accountability & Progress |
| 9) Emeuche Nwankwere | - | Umuogele Ntigha |
| 10)Ugoeze Gloria Sunday | - | Umuogor Osoke Aut. Comm., Aba North |
| 11)Mr. Nwosu Onyebuchi | - | Rehabilitation Foundation |
| 12) Kelvin Eke | - | OGP Desk Officer |

OPENING

The meeting started at 1:15pm with an opening prayer said by Kelvin Eke.

Opening Remarks by the OGP Desk Officer/SFTAS Focal Person

Mr. Amaechi Chukwu OGP Focal Person Abia Stated welcomed all participants present. He stated that this platform, if works well, will be sustained to aid subsequent meetings as for ease and meet up with the Covid 19 compliance. Although, he noted that most of the remote communities may not be able to easily join the platform but with time, the meeting platform will get better. The FP stated that the meeting is scheduled to engage the grassroot citizens to review the 2020 Budget amidst in Covid 19 pandemic.

Introduction of Participants

Participants duly introduced themselves in the chat room identifying their name, community, gender, phone number and email address.

Reason for the meeting

The FP, Mr. Amaechi Chukwu stated the reason of the meeting is to continue in the tradition of consulting with the citizens in the budget process, having done that for about two years now without hitches. He equally informed the participants that if the virtual meeting become successful as expected, the platform will henceforth become veritable tool in reaching and interacting with the citizens on regular basis. He further stated that the previously selected projects should be reviewed by community citizens. Mr. Eme Orji Kalu, Director of Budget, Abia State recalled that in 2019, some randomly selected communities came up with three priority projects to be included in the 2020 budget. He however, made the communities understand that considering the inflow from the Federal Allocation Account and Internally Generated Revenue the state 2020 budget cannot be implemented as passed, it is therefore pertinent to review the budget based on COVID-19 pandemic. He stated that the meeting is further to sensitize the community citizens based on situation. Mr. Eme informed the participants that at beginning of the fiscal year, three Projects were submitted by the communities for inclusion in the budget but considering the economic situation due to the pandemic, that may not be realistic to complete the three projects in all selected communities. He although assured that any of the projects that will eventually be retained in the revised budget will be implemented.

Mr. Amaechi stated that in as much as the Budget Review may only be able to accommodate one project from the selected three, the other two will not be left out but subsequently considered in due course.

Reflections on the Previously Selected projects and Key Decisions for the Budget

Mr. Emmanuel from Azunchayi, Amanchayi Aut. Community in Ikwuano LGA submitted that if government can make the existing Primary Health Centre in the community work, instead of going into other projects as submitted earlier by the community, that will be better. He said that the health center needs adequate facilities to operate fully and pleaded that it be completed.

Mr. Emeuche Nwankwere from Umuogele Ntigha asked that the projects selected in 2018 should be given priority in implementation rather than merging all the projects which would probably make the implementation difficult.

Mr. Chima clarified that the Citizens engagement in the budget process done in 2018 was captured in 2019 Budget, and that conducted in 2019 is captured in the 2020 budget.

Mr. Richard Okoro suggested that every project be given professional standard consideration. He submitted that the Primary Health Care Centers be given priority attention to be executed to their best standards. He further asked that the projects captured in 2019 be given priority treatment or both projects as captured in the 2019 and 2020 budgets be reviewed and priority considered.

Mr, Nwankwere from Umuogele Ntigha asked that the Primary Health Centre in his community remain a priority consideration.

The Director of Budget mentioned that the State has a Citizens response website and any feedback from Communities can be uploaded on the site. Mr. Chima Chukwu called out the website as abiastate.gov.ng. All were directed to communicate their concerns via the feedback mechanism in the website.

Conclusion

In closing comments, Mr. Nwanwere asked when the projects are expected to kick start. Mr. Amaechi responded that because of the compelling need of the State to revise the Budget and considering the process of this revision, the projects should be ready for implementation by the end of August based on availability of resources.

Mr. Lawrence Obeweh in his closing remarks, commended the initiative of the state OGP Secretariat by consulting citizen's and eliciting their inputs in the process of revision of the state budget. He urged that communities should participate fully. He further asked that information dissemination strategy should be set up to reach out to communities in remote areas. Mr. Eme responded that there are Community Development Officers (CDOs) across the LGA that disseminate information to the

communities and whatever information the government has for the communities will reach them adequately.

Closing

The closing prayer was said at about 2:15pm by Mr. Nwosu Onyebuchi.