



A Strategic Development Plan For a Greater Benue



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
Executive Summary	-	-	-	-	-	-	02
Vision & Mission	-	-	-	-	-	-	09
Previous Efforts	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Notable Challenges	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Development Potentials	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Fr. Alia, Fit for the Job	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Approaches to Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
The Strategic Development Plan for a Greater Benue							23
Security of Lives & Property	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
Agriculture & Rural Development	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
Commerce & Industry	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Human Capital & Social Development	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
Infrastructure & Environment	-	-	-	-	-	-	44
Information & Communications Technology (ICT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
Political & Economic Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
Annexure	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
Committee Members	-	-	-	-	-	-	59



A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR A GREATER BENUE



By

REV. FR. DR. HYACINTH IORMEM ALIA
(Gubernatorial Candidate)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Benue State was created on February 3rd, 1976, under the military regime of General Murtala Ramat Mohammed, during the state creation exercise that increased the number of states in Nigeria from twelve (12) to nineteen (19). From its creation in 1976 to date, the state has grown significantly from the four (4) local government areas of Katsina-Ala, Gboko, Makurdi, and Otukpo to twenty-three (23) local government areas comprising Vandeikya, Gwer, Kwande, Oju, and Okpokwu (created in 1976); Konshisha, Ushongo, and Ado (created in 1989); Buruku, Gwer-West, Ukum, Ogbadibo, and Apa (created in 1991); Tarka, Logo, Obi, Ohimini, and Agatu (created in 1996).

The state takes its name after the River Benue, the second longest river in Nigeria, with Makurdi as the state capital. Located in Nigeria's North Central geo-political zone, Benue state has an estimated population of over 7,000,000 people (forecast from 4,253,641 in the 2006 population census figures using a 3.23% growth rate).

The resourcefulness and resilience of this population have significantly added impetus to the extant human capital resources for development. This human capital is consistently produced and refined through the numerous primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions in the state.

The state is blessed with abundant agricultural resources of high quality and multiple varieties, which makes Benue State known and acknowledged as the "Food Basket of the Nation." The existence of the Benue Trough holds the potential for gas and oil exploration and eventual exploitation when the accumulation reaches the required commercial quantity.

Other mineral resources such as limestone, gold, lead, kaolin, baryte, gypsum, feldspar, wolframite, mineral salts, gemstones, river sand, and granite that can propel the needed mining and industrialization are in abundance. Additionally, there are rivers and fadama land that can boost irrigated agriculture. The state can also boast of enormous economic potential in tourism and hospitality, to name a few examples.

Since it was created over forty-five (45) years ago, Benue State has been ruled by both military and civilian regimes. It is pertinent to acknowledge that the political and economic vision of Aper Aku, the first civilian governor, who laid the foundation for the sustainable development of Benue State, was subsequently abandoned. For instance, all his industrial establishments, such as Taraku Mills, Benue Breweries, Otukpo Burnt Bricks, and partly Benue Cement Company, were abandoned and, in some cases, privatized. Today, about 50% of the popular Makurdi Modern Market is burned. In the same vein, most public primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions have been poorly funded. This has allowed for the proliferation of private schools, putting a significant financial burden on Benue parents.

The Benue Civil Service, which was the pride of governance in implementing government policies and programmes, has suffered from intensive decay, neglect, and unnecessary political incursions. The Benue State Secretariat Complex, which was adjudged one of the best on the entire African continent, has been neglected to the extent that there have been incursions on the land. Since its construction, the complex has never received the needed renovation or expansion. Again, it has not been properly equipped with befitting facilities.

The Board of Internal Revenue (BIRS) was established with an enabling law. However, it has all along been operated as a contractual revenue organization, with abysmal performance in terms of revenue generation and remittances. Meanwhile, internally generated revenue in other states has improved exponentially.

To further compound the problems of our people, the state government is unable to determine with certainty the wage bill of civil servants in the state. Another problem is the irregular payment of pensions as well as the "ghost worker" syndrome in the civil service. There is also the issue of outstanding salary arrears for state and local government civil servants in the state.

At this juncture, a very genuine and proactive intervention to rescue Benue State has become a necessity. This, no doubt, requires a unique, reputable, and sincere personality with the capabilities of harnessing and transforming the state's economic potentials into a robust reality for the common good of all the people of Benue State. It is on this premise that the choice of Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia has become increasingly justifiable for an immediate rescue of the lost fortunes of Benue State.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia is a priest in the Order of Melchizedek, a spiritualist and healer, a builder and manager, a technocrat, an administrator par excellence, and an educator of national and international repute. He is poised with a genuine desire to protect, stabilize, and propel the wheels of Benue State onto the path of sustainable economic growth and development.



The Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia's Strategic Development Team undertook a comprehensive review of some past and on-going international, national, and state economic policy documents. They include the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Seven-Point Agenda, the Benue Advance Plan, the Benue State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS), Our Benue, Our Future, and Our Collective Vision for a New Benue, vis-à-vis the security and economic realities of the time. These have formed the basis for this policy document: **A Strategic Development Plan for a Greater Benue.**

The document is structured around seven priority pillars, with the acronym SACHIIP, which are as follows:

- 1) Security of Lives and Property**
- 2) Agriculture and Rural Development**
- 3) Commerce and Industry**
- 4) Human Capital and Social Development**
- 5) Infrastructure and Environment**
- 6) Information & Communications Technology (ICT)**
- 7) Political and Economic Governance**

Every sector of the Benue State economy requires a peculiar intervention, but the selected sectors are prioritized based on their relative importance and overbearing influence on other economic sectors.





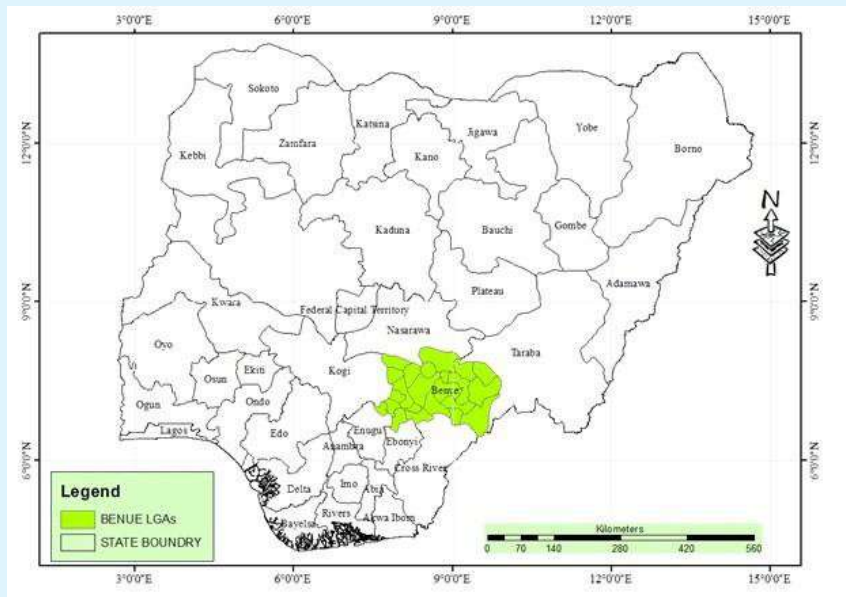
VISION & MISSION

VISION

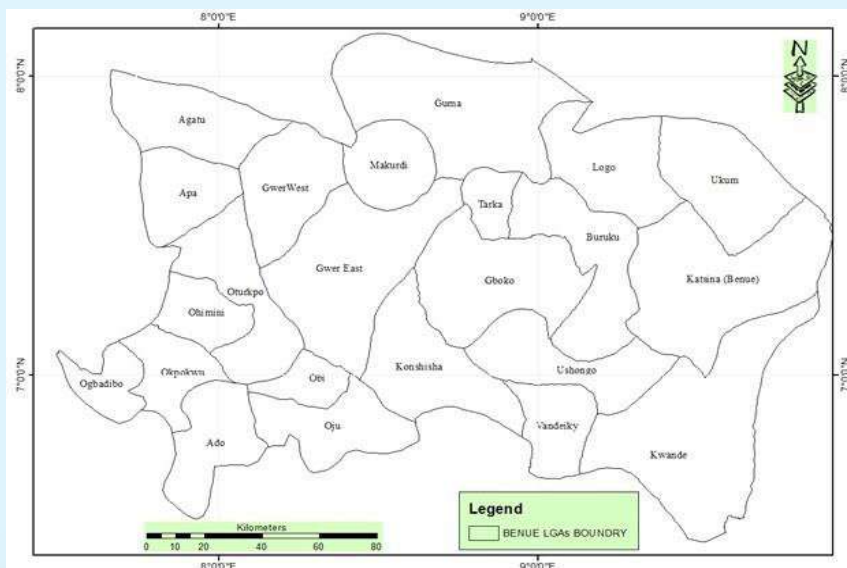
To build an economy based on functional education, employment generation, agricultural development and growth with a focus on food production and processing in a secured environment that ensures food security, wealth creation and poverty reduction

MISSION

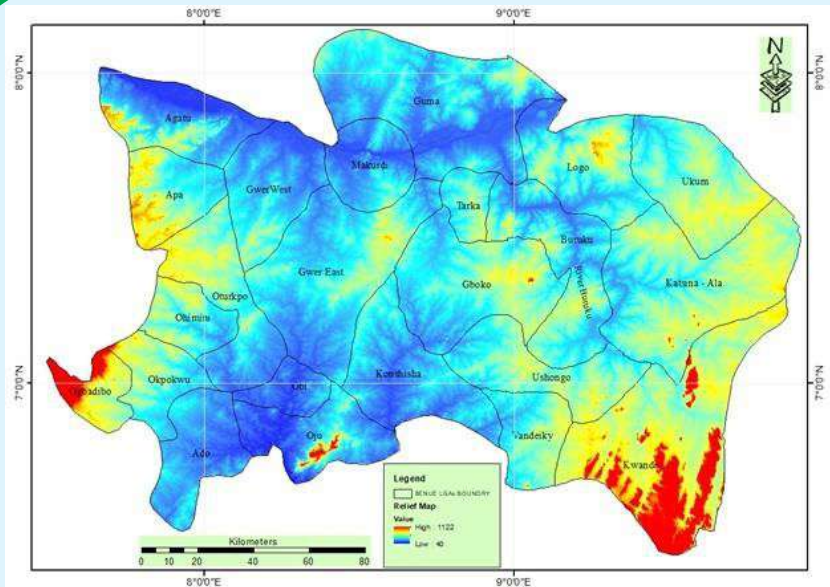
To render effective and efficient services to the people of Benue State, in line with the core values of human capital development, accountability, inter- and intra-governmental cooperation, industry, integrity, character, trust and moral courage that adds value to governance



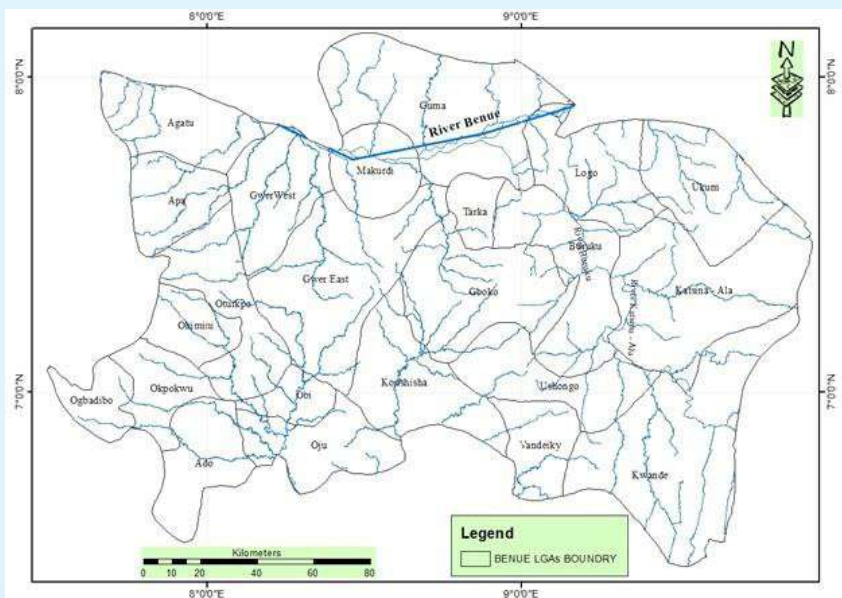
Administrative Map of Nigeria showing Benue State



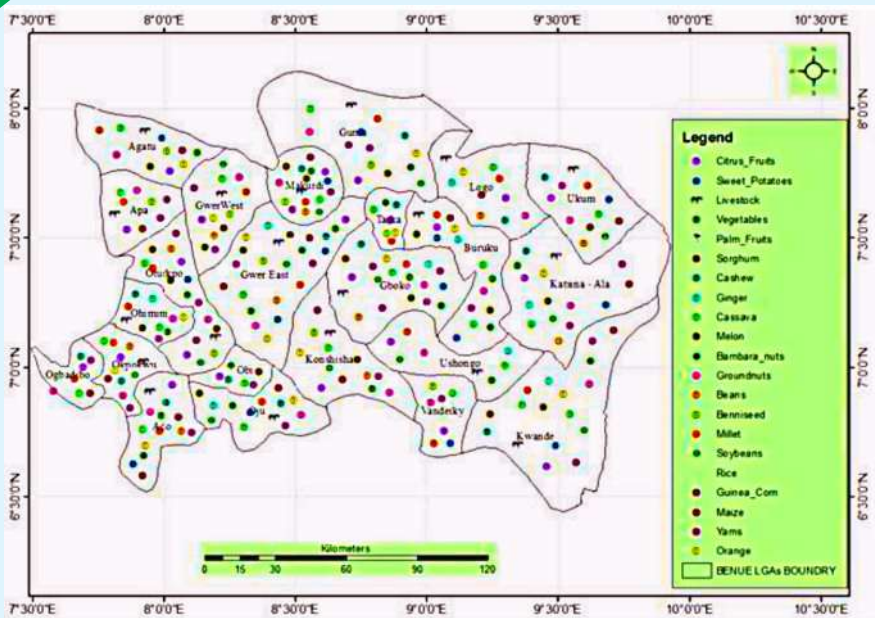
Administrative Map of Benue State Showing Local Government Areas



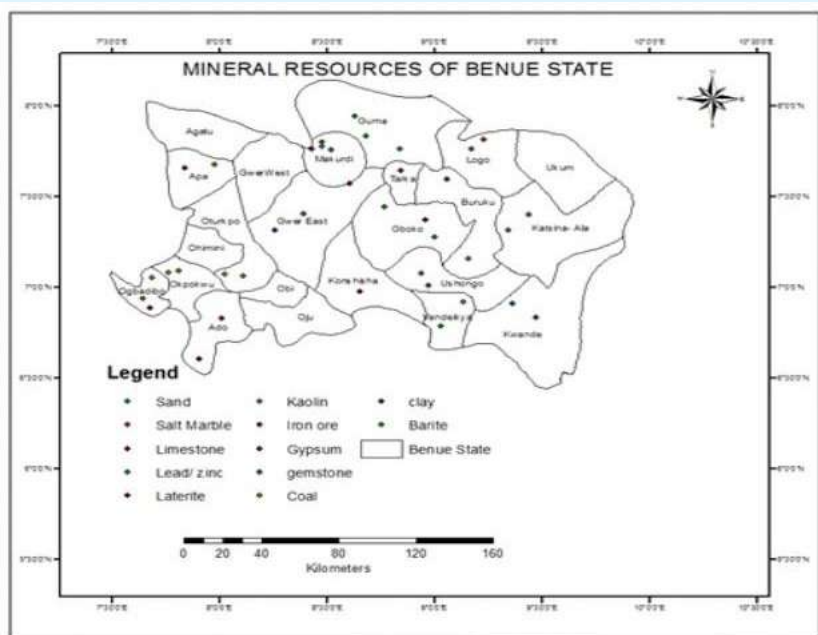
Relief Map of Benue State



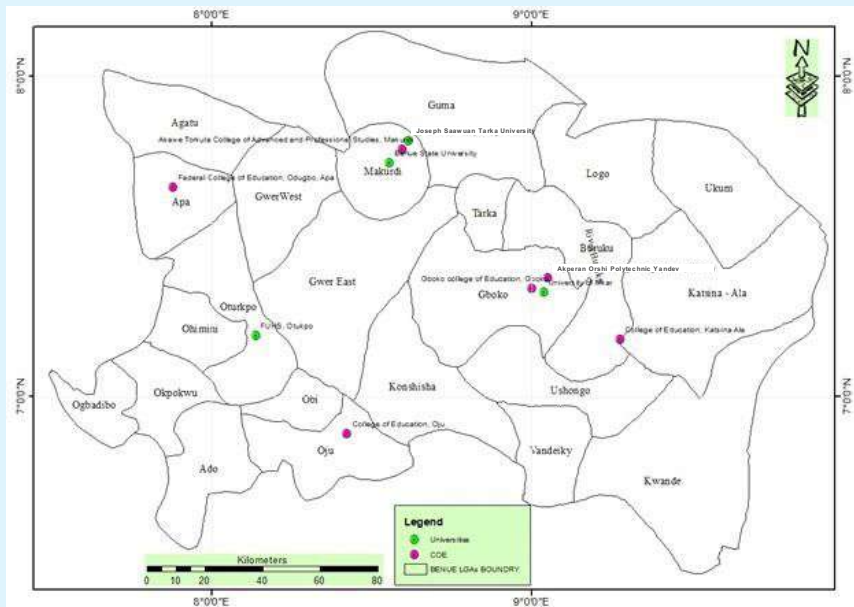
Drainage Map of Benue State



Agricultural Crops of Benue State



Mineral Resources of Benue State.



SomeMajor Higher Educational Institutions in Benue State



The Nigerian Court of Arm

Military Administrators of Benue State

S/No	Name	Period	Status
1	Colonel Abdullahi Shelleng	March 1976 - July 1978	Governor
2	Group Captain Adebayo H. Lawal	July 1978 – October 1979	Governor
3	Brigadier-General John Atom Kpera	January 1984 – August 1985	Governor
4	Air Commodore Jonah David Jang	August 1985 – August 1986	Governor
5	Colonel Yohanna Anteyan Madaki	August 1986 – Sept. 1986	Governor
6	Lt. Colonel Ishaya Bakut	September 1986 – 1987	Governor
7	Colonel Idris Garba	1987 – 1987	Governor
9	Lt. Colonel Fidelis Makka	Dec. 1987 – January 1992	Governor
9	Group Captain Joshua Obademi	Dec. 1993 – August 1996	Administrator
10	Colonel Aminu Isa Kontagora	August 1996 – August 1998	Administrator
11	Brigadier-General Dominic O. Oneya	August 1998 – May 1999	Administrator

Source: Benue State Archives

Civilian Governors of Benue State

S/No	Name	Time Period	Status
1	Mr. Aper Apollos Aku	1979-1983	Governor
2	Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu	1991-1993	Governor
3	Dr. George Akume	1999-2007	Governor
4	Rt. Hon. Gabriel Torwua Suswam	2007-2015	Governor
5	Mr. Samuel Ortom	2015-2023	Governor

Source: Benue State Archives

Previous Efforts

Since the establishment of Benue State over four decades ago, all the previous military and democratic regimes gave their dedicated attention to her development by laying the needed critical development structures via:

- ✓ Establishment of some educational institutions
- ✓ Building of some health institutions
- ✓ Investment in some economic infrastructure
- ✓ Agricultural diversification and rural development
- ✓ Establishment of some cottage industries
- ✓ Promotion of commerce and transport
- ✓ Environmental protection
- ✓ Human capital development
- ✓ Sports development
- ✓ Promotion of Arts, Culture and Tourism
- ✓ Chieftaincy reforms

**It's Time
for a
Greater Benue!**



Notable Challenges

Increased internal and external insecurity across the state
Over-reliance on federal statutory allocation
A distorted agricultural value chain
Abandonment and privatization of government industrial establishments and properties
Lack of transparency and accountability in the generation and management of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR)
Depleted civil service, weak bureaucracy and lack of incentives
Ghost workers' syndrome in the civil service
Poor review and payment of pension to pensioners
Collapsed economic infrastructure
Massive diversion of state finances for personal gains
Lack of clearly defined inter-state boundaries between Benue and the neighbouring states
Depletion of forest reserves and threats of climate change
Lack of agricultural extension services
A dysfunctional local government system
Poor funding of education and health sectors



Development Potentials

Huge human capital from a growing and educated population
Large and fertile land mass across the state
Abundant agricultural resources
Availability of mineral resources
Great potentials for oil and gas exploration
Existence of rivers
Massive capacity for industrialization
Existence of reputable educational institutions in the state
Existence of immense economic potentials in tourism and hospitality
Existence of indigenous knowledge systems



Fr. Alia

Fit for the Job

Born on 15th May, 1966 in Mbangur, Mbade, Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State, Middle Belt region, Nigeria

Has attained the highest intellectual and academic qualifications, with a focus on Biomedical Ethics

Has international professional experience in educational management and health care administration

An expert in developmental goals and budget coordination, assessment, and planning of health care services and programmes for the short and long term

An expert in community development and cultural diversity and sensitivity

A strict disciplinarian, a detribalized priest with huge spirituality and a high moral standard

Has pastoral experience that traverses many local communities in Benue State

An associate of the downtrodden, the sick, the weary, and the rejected or abandoned in society



An exorcist priest of national and international repute

A unifying factor among tribal political agitators in Benue State

Exceptional skills

Aggressive Mobilization and Prudent Management of Funds

By all standards, Fr. Alia remains the only candidate with very pragmatic and sincere skills in the mobilization of stimulus funds needed for the state.

He has no single business entity of his own, no in-laws, and no biological children except the welfare of Benue State to tackle. He is simply people-oriented in the management of scarce resources, as demonstrated at the church project at St. Thomas Mission, Anum, Makurdi.

He recently applied same limited resources in executing quality infrastructure at the proposed Catholic University Vandeikya, by the Catholic Diocese of Gboko.

Popularity and Uniformity

Fr. Alia is the most popular gubernatorial candidate in Benue State and Nigeria at large for the 2023 elections. Even without holding any political office before in the state, his support base and acceptability is seen as a strong hope for effective political leadership in Benue State.

Approaches **TO GOVERNANCE**

i. Securing the Lives and Properties of Benue:

To evolve a viable state security architecture in synergy with the relevant institutions, to address the security challenges in Benue State

ii. Rebuilding the Benue Economy:

To develop an agriculture-driven economy through agro-processing and small and medium-level manufacturing

iii. Economic Partnerships for a Greater Benue:

To undertake aggressive investment in critical infrastructure and allow for development-oriented partnership investments

iv. Building a Future for Vulnerable Groups:

To develop human capacity to drive productivity and protect the vulnerable (women, youths, and the differently challenged), through functional science and technical education

v. Urban Renewal

Building 21st century towns or smart cities for increased commercial activities, evolving urban renewal policies, and incorporating community markets with modern facilities and standards

vi. Building Team Work

Evolve schemes for citizen participation in economic and political activities via an inclusive government.



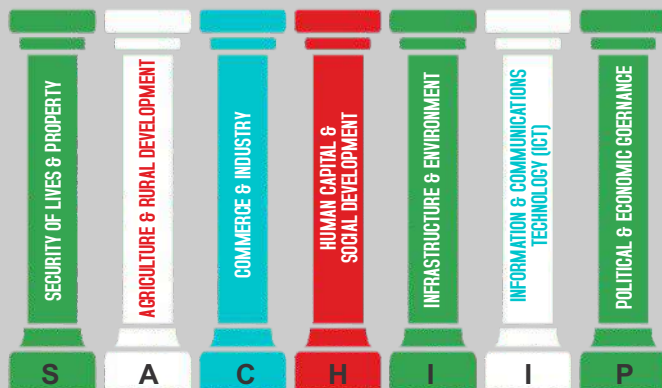


Our citizens' participation and inclusion in governance entails

- Instituting initiatives, incentives, and systems for rewarding lawful acts and, in the same manner, penalizing deliberate deviants
- Seeking to understand the recurring needs of Benue people and developing appropriately sound policy interventions
- Creating a feedback mechanism with the people in their respective groups, villages, communities, etc.
- Timely responses to policy issues and other emanating emergencies
- Creating the necessary consultative forums for economic, health, education, agriculture, security, and other issues affecting the Benue people for immediate response

The Strategic Development Plan for a Greater Benue

The Strategic Development Plan is built upon
Seven (7) pillars:



- I. Security of Lives and Property
- ii. Agriculture and Rural Development
- iii. Commerce and Industry
- iv. Human Capital and Social Development
- v. Infrastructure and Environment
- vi. Information & Communications Technology (ICT)
- vii. Political and Economic Governance

"I am running for governor to effect a significant transformation in the social, economic, and political landscape of our dear state. I am committed to ensuring that a better and greater Benue emerges in my dispensation as governor. I need your collective support to make this dream a reality."

- Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia

1

SECURITY OF LIVES & PROPERTY

SECURITY OF LIVES & PROPERTY

S

To establish Permanent Integrated Forward Operation Bases for security men at all the flash points where there have been cases of armed attacks and displacement of people

Evolve a policy for the rehabilitation and resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs)

To establish emergency toll-free call centers and short codes

To strengthen the implementation of the Anti-Open Grazing Law for enhanced security, economic growth, and the development of Benue State

To strengthen the operational capacity of existing security organizations in the state

To reconcile all lingering land crises between communities and individuals to pave the way for peaceful coexistence and development in the state

Ensure effective security cooperation and partnership between the traditional institutions and security agencies on the one hand, and between the traditional institutions and the political leadership on the other

Collaborate with the National Boundary Commission (NBC) to demarcate the actual boundaries between Benue and her neighboring states of Taraba, Nasarawa, Cross River, Ebonyi, and Enugu

To construct roads at boundary points that pose security threats to Benue State and also enhance proper monitoring by security operatives

To discourage political thuggery and militia gangsterism

To offer the most comprehensive and reliable amnesty programs across Benue State by facilitating employment, training, grant of scholarships, and entrepreneurship among militia converts in the state

Introduce the use of automated systems such as surveillance cameras, GPS, and military drones to detect and clear all criminal hideouts in the state



2

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A

Empower ministries, departments and agencies to propel an independent development of the state as an agrarian society, with capacity for food security and self-sufficiency

Give priority attention to the timely supply of subsidized farm inputs, especially fertilizer and quality seeds, to farmers through the revamped Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA) in the state

Create partnership with the federal government, private sector, and local cooperatives

Increase the capacity of the state's strategic grain reserves and establish public modern warehousing facilities with cold storage (for perishable farm products) where local farmers and cottage industries can store finished products and raw materials

Evolve effective land development reforms in the state

Collaborate with the Benue State University Center for Food Technology and Research (CEFTR) on post-harvest handling of farm produce to reduce waste.

Promote the use of organic fertilizer

Reactivate facilities like irrigation, storage, and agricultural service centers

Liaise with private entrepreneurs through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to establish processing zones and deploy post-harvest storage facilities across the state to cater for the needs of farmers

Revamp the Agricultural Training Institutes across Benue State to facilitate the training of agricultural manpower.

Create an Agricultural Master Plan for Benue State

Engage the services of agricultural and economic experts to maximize the benefits emanating from the Federal Government's numerous agricultural schemes, like Contract Farming and the Anchor Borrowers' Scheme

Key into all federal government economic initiatives to facilitate the growth of agro-processing factories in the state

Encourage the participation of NGOs and faith-based organizations in agricultural extension activities in the state

Encourage the formation of vibrant agricultural cooperative societies in the state to help support agricultural marketing, loans, and linkage with the off-takers

Engage in the construction of rural access roads to facilitate the evacuation of farm produce from production to marketing and consumption points



Establish commodity marketing boards to counteract the negative market forces and middlemen syndrome that currently prevent farmers from receiving the full value of their farm products in the state

Provide adequate funds and other necessary assistance for improved livestock farming, fisheries, and plantation agriculture

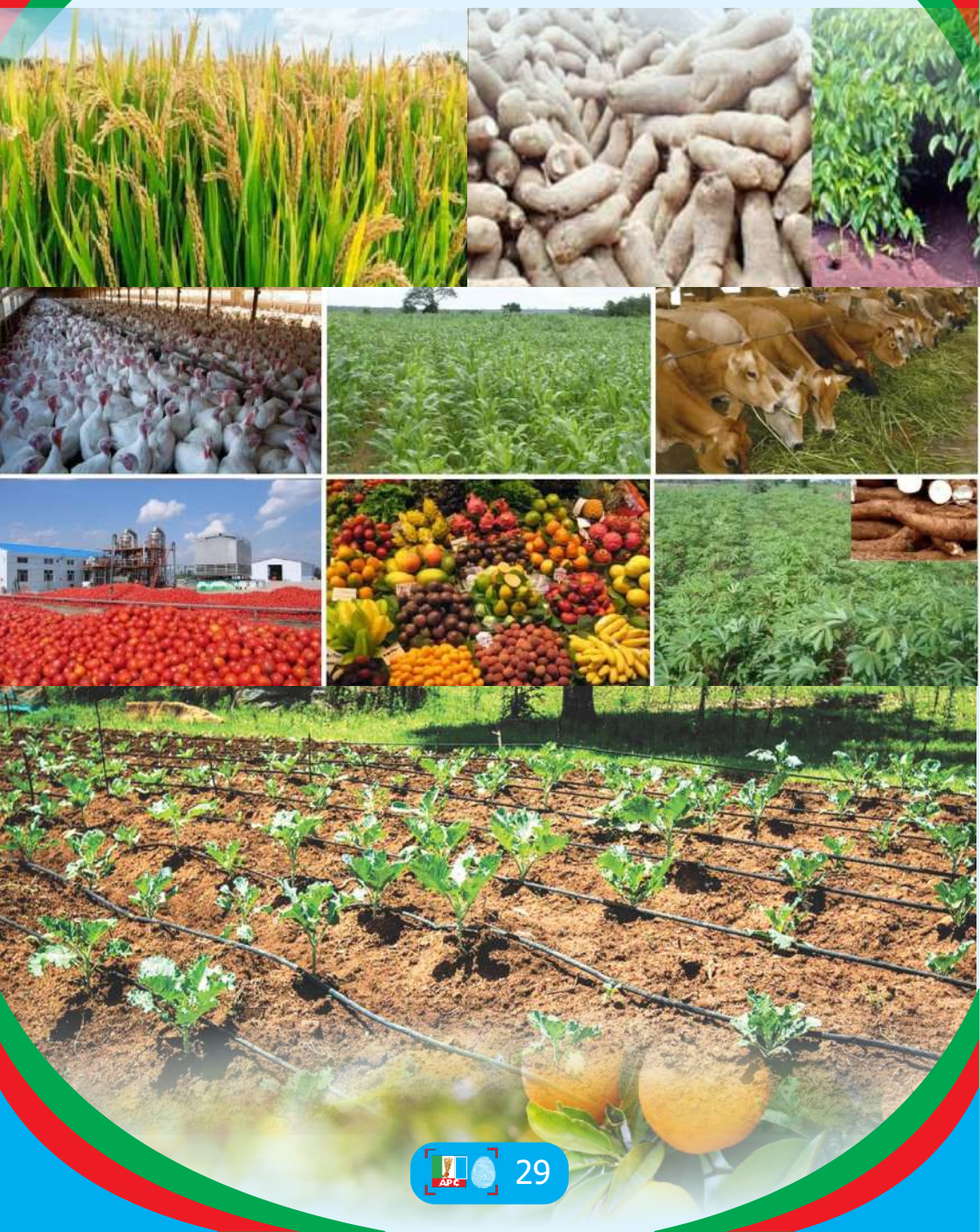
Ensure the revival of the fisheries department under the Ministry of Agriculture, alongside all the important fishing festivals in Benue State

Facilitate access for Benue farmers to agricultural loan facilities at low interest rates

Upgrade the general rural infrastructure for sustainable development

To resuscitate state government agricultural agencies like Benue Agricultural Development Company (BADC), Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA), and Benue Tractor Hiring Agency (BENTHA) to encourage modernized agricultural practices in the state

Evolve effective agricultural land development reforms



Promote the establishment of companies for the processing of agricultural products in the state

Partner with the FG to commence the dredging of the River Benue to facilitate commercial activities

Facilitate the establishment of a river port in Makurdi to pave the way for ship operations in Benue by the indigenes

Domesticate the law establishing a debt management office

Reassess the state's tax regime through the Benue Internal Revenue Service (BIRS) to make the state more investment friendly

Encourage the Benue Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (BECCIMA) to continue exposing the state's enormous agricultural potential to prospective external investors

Partner with the Federal Government to encourage private investors to secure licenses for mining solid minerals

Encourage financial institutions to actively provide the needed capital, especially to qualified Benue indigenes who are interested in investing in the state

Provide industrial parks in each senatorial district with the necessary facilities

To encourage public-private partnership (PPP) in reviving some of our moribund industries and also establish new ones for massive industrialization of the state

Strengthen the operations of the Benue State Procurement Commission

Restructure and reform the Benue Investment Property Company (BIPC) and also appoint qualified professionals to its board

Encourage Benue State indigenes to receive appropriate technical training for industrial employment and management

Support the revival and promotion of creative industries and indigenous technology to expand the commercial profile of the state

Support commercial cultivation of ginger and cotton in selected locations of the state

Support commercial dry-season farming along major rivers in the state



Primary and Secondary Education

Ensure the effective implementation of compulsory free primary education throughout the state

Engage and train adequate teachers for public schools with an emphasis on science, computer, technical, and mathematics teachers to re-ignite public trust in public schools

Sustain the school feeding programme to encourage school enrollment and reduce issues that distract children from learning

Restore and establish technical/skills acquisition schools and centers in the state's three (3) senatorial districts

Help Colleges of Education (COE) in Katsina-Ala and Oju, as well as Benue State University (BSU), expand teacher training programmes in order to enroll more teacher trainees

Ensure adequate and timely payment of counterpart funding to attract the needed number of construction and renovation projects at the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEC)

Renovate and equip selected primary and secondary schools yearly in each local government area in the state

Assist the education ministry in modifying the extant curriculum to capture the major indigenous languages in the state, viz., Tiv, Idoma, and Igede

Provide adequate and timely motivation to teachers through enhanced emoluments, training, and a conducive work environment

Support the Benue State Scholarship Board to liaise with scholarship awarding institutions such as Common Wealth, Bilateral Scholarship, and the Federal Ministry of Education to attract scholarships to deserving Benue indigenes

To reinvigorate school supervision by the Benue State Ministry of Education for effective service delivery

To stop the menace of "ghost teachers" in public primary and secondary schools, by deploying a mechanism wherein head teachers and education officers will be made responsible for screening teachers under them

Tertiary Education

Improve funding for all state-owned tertiary institutions in the state for effective service delivery

Increase the bursary allowance for all indigent students

Expand the infrastructural facilities and manpower base of all tertiary institutions in the state

Support gifted Benue State indigent students with national and international scholarships in peculiar areas of need for the state

Give priority attention to the funding of infrastructure and accreditation exercises at the Benue State University
Expand existing research facilities and institute a special research grant at Benue State University
Decongest the Benue State University via Satellite Campuses

Health

- To domesticate the Residency Training Act, to encourage our resident doctors to stay and also perform optimally
- Sponsor Benue indigenes for further studies in the health care sector via a bond scheme to prevent brain drain
- Strengthen all health institutions in the state to deliver efficient pro-poor health services
- To partner with UNICEF and other organizations for free treatment of VVF
- Introduce biometric data capture for attendance at work in all the health institutions in the state as an aspect of e-governance to ensure dedication to duty



- Facilitate the procurement and installation of functional ventilators in all health institutions, especially general hospitals
- Upgrade or renovate building facilities at all general hospitals to ensure that doctors are present in the quarters for duty calls
- Strengthen the College of Health Sciences of Benue State University through the recruitment of high-level staff, equipment, and consumables
- To make healthcare services affordable and accessible by strengthening the Contributory Health Insurance Scheme (CHIS), which shall cover civil servants, businessmen and women, as well as farmers
- Provide an ultra-modern laboratory with quality equipment, facilities, and technology at BSU Teaching Hospital
- Revive the Dialysis Center at the BSU Teaching Hospital
- Establishment of at least a functional diagnostic laboratory in each senatorial district of Benue State
- Upgrade and equip all Primary Health Centers (PHCs) via the Primary Healthcare Board in the council wards
- Upgrade the status of the School of Health Technology, Agasha, to that of a college
- Accelerate the training of young doctors and other health workers in specialized areas
- Return the process of registering and licensing all healthcare service providers in the state to the Ministry of Health, and ensure continuous monitoring

- Support the Anti-Quackery Committee in monitoring health care activities to fish out quacks
- Respond accordingly by procuring adequate vaccines for medical emergencies
- Pursue vigorously public enlightenment and advocacy on HIV/AIDS and increase access to free anti-retroviral drugs, as well as preventive measures for dreaded diseases
- Introduce free ante-natal and normal delivery services to pregnant women in all public health centers and facilities across the state
- Encourage the development of drug management systems, as well as the outsourcing of drug management services to pharmaceutical companies
- Encourage the outsourcing of specialized health services and operations



Women

Ensure adequate women's representation in all appointments, both at the state and local government levels

Empower women to effectively engage in income-generating activities for their improved standard of living

Encourage women to form and operate cooperative societies to facilitate easy access to business capital

Combat the menace of gender-based violence in the state

Encourage girl-child education in the state

To evolve financial empowerment schemes for widows and their dependents in the state

Youths

Promote youth participation in governance both at the state and local government levels

Promote the establishment of youth recreational centers in the three senatorial districts in the state.

Establish the Benue Youth Volunteer Corps (BYVC) to provide service, skill development, and leadership development to our teeming, youthful population

Promote youth participation and employment in agro-processing industries strategically located across the three senatorial districts of the state

Facilitate employment, training, scholarship awards, and entrepreneurship programmes for militia converts in the state



Train young doctors, engineers, ICT experts, lawyers, and other needed professionals to enhance the human capacity of Benue State

Re-orientation of the youth for effective patriotism, discipline, honesty, integrity, and selflessness in youthful society

Generally, improve youth employment through efficient commerce, industries, and agriculture

Social Welfare

Develop capacity-building and participation strategies for the differently challenged groups in the state

Prudent application of funds from the federal government meant for social investment programmes

Upgrade the Juvenile Reform Center at Gboko and establish one in each senatorial district

Revise strategies for emergency relief

Domestication of the Benue State Commission for Vulnerable and Disabled People in Benue State to harmonize all rehabilitation centers

Sports

Sponsorship of an executive bill to legalize and encourage sponsorship of sporting activities by private and public organizations

Establishment of sports academies in the state
Develop modalities for full commercialization of sports for revenue generation in the state

Complete all outstanding renovation work and further expand the capacity of the Aper Aku Stadium, Makurdi, to international standard

Re-introduce the All-Primary and Secondary School Games to harness local talents in the state

Equally, promote regular inter-local government and national sports competitions

Increase funding and provide more facilities for sports development in the state

Support the development of mini-stadiums in all the local government headquarters

Transportation

Domesticate the National Transportation Policy to make Benue State an integrated multi-modal transportation and logistics hub in Nigeria

Construct a multipurpose airport in Makurdi through a PPP or BOT arrangement

Restructure and strengthen the operational capacity of Benue Links through the appointment of efficient management, procurement of new vehicles at a subsidized rate and other inputs required for smooth operations at the company

Encourage private participation in the transportation business in Benue State and across Nigeria

Introduce the compulsory establishment of parks for trailers and heavy-duty vehicles in strategic local governments in the state

Work in partnership with the Federal Government to ensure the commencement of the dredging of the River Benue and the establishment of an inland river port in Makurdi

Partner with the Federal Government and the states in the South-East, North Central, and North East to ensure that the NNPC depots within these zones are resuscitated, the old pipelines are replaced, and that a gas pipeline similar to the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano pipeline is also built from Port Harcourt through Benue State to the North East to power the industries within these zones

Create partnerships with the private sector (vehicle assembly plants in Nigeria, the banks, and Benue young and enterprising youths) under the PPP arrangements in road haulage businesses so that food from the farm gate in Benue State can be transported quickly to consumers anywhere

Work with the Federal Government and all other states that stand to benefit directly from the rehabilitation of the narrow gauge eastern railway line from Port Harcourt to Maiduguri and lobby for the construction of standard gauge lines such as the Lagos-Kano rail line

Constitute a transportation committee to supervise, regulate, and harmonize all issues of transportation in the state and appropriately sanction deviants



Culture and Tourism

Ensure the formulation of cultural policy for Benue State
Establish a Museum of Cultural History and Ethnography
Re-engineer the activities of the Benue State Arts Council
Facilitate private participation (via PPP and BOP) in the development of tourism in the state



Resuscitate wildlife parks at Ikyogen, Ikwe, Lobi, Raav, and other strategic locations in the state

Provide general improvements in tourism infrastructure across the state

Support cultural artifact production and partner with the private sector in establishing craft markets in the state

Support private sector initiatives in the development of beaches at Makurdi, Buruku, Katsina Ala, and Gbajimba

Facilitate the linkages to the national tourism board and the International Ecotourism Society

Promote the developmental interests of creative industry practitioners

Water/Sanitation

Commercialize solid waste management for efficiency and revenue generation

Properly fund the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment and its parastatals for effective water supply

Complete all on-going government water projects in the state

Provide water to five (5) rural communities in each local government area per year

Phased reticulation of Makurdi and other selected towns in the state

Partner with the Federal Government and other relevant multilateral development agencies to revive the Gboko and Otukpo water supply schemes

Cooperate with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other relevant agencies to improve borehole development in the state

Electricity

Develop an independent waste-to-energy (WtE) facility or hydropower generation and distribution plant in Benue State

Provide electricity to at least five (5) rural communities in each local government area per year

Promote the supply of solar power in rural areas of the state

Create a conducive environment for the private sector to invest in power generation in the state

Roads

- Prioritization of the Wurukum roundabout decongestion with the construction of a grade separated intersection (flyover)
- Creation of satellite towns to further decongest the state capital and other selected towns in the state
- Construction of overhead pedestrian bridges in selected locations in Makurdi and other selected towns in the state
- Implement a comprehensive development of township roads across the state
- Implement a comprehensive development of rural roads across the state for improved agriculture and security
- Lobby for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of federal roads in the state
- Establish materials testing laboratories for construction and quality control
- Establish some sites for construction materials across the state to facilitate the construction of roads



Housing

Strengthen the modernization of BENGIS for effective service delivery

Partner with individuals, real estate companies, and financial institutions to increase affordable housing in the state using the PPP and BOT strategies

Environment

Reorganize and fund the Urban Development Board and Benue State Environmental Sanitation Agency for optimum urban and rural sanitation in the state

Proper funding of the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment and its parastatals to undertake erosion control projects in the state

Expand the construction of drainages throughout the state to mitigate the effects of flooding

Place an embargo on deforestation and encourage afforestation and horticulture

Regulate all mining and industrial activities through appropriate legislation

Make judicious use of the Ecological Fund to construct drainages and waterways in Makurdi and selected locations that require urgent attention

Strengthen the environmental legislation in the state for proactive and sustainable environmental protection

Reorganize and strengthen the operations of the Department of Forestry in the state

Embark on urban regeneration and renewal

Introduce e-governance into all the operations of government ministries, departments, and agencies

Create an official website for government interaction with the people

Digitalize security systems for optimum intelligence gathering

Install CCTV cameras and military drones in sensitive areas of the state for effective surveillance

Encourage e-learning in all educational institutions in the state and government libraries

Digitalize the use of files and staff records in all ministries, departments, and agencies of government

Integrate digital literacy and skill development into the curriculum of schools in Benue State to fulfill the present and future demands of the digital economy.

Facilitate the establishment of an ICT village in the state to equip our youth with 1–3 self-sufficiency skills.

Explore the digital and creative economies and ensure 75% digital literacy within the next four years

Promote the provision of ICT infrastructure in all schools across the state

Propose guidelines, frameworks, and regulations to enhance the digital economy in Benue State

Establish digital data generation and storage facilities for use in the state

Deploy the use of human managers' technology for head counts in all ministries, departments, and agencies

Deploy the appropriate integrated payroll and personnel information system in the state

Issuance of electronic ID cards to all classes of state and local government workers



7

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

Structure of Government

Restructure government ministries and agencies in line with the priorities and focus of the government

Appoint commissioners, special advisers, special assistants, senior special assistants, and personal assistants based on their areas of expertise and the priorities of the state

Evolve modern ways of cutting down government expenditure

Establish the office of Adviser on Social Groups and the Diaspora and appoint an adviser of cabinet rank

Media and Communication

Upgrade the requisite equipment at Radio Benue, the Benue Publishing and Printing Company, the Government Printing Department, and the Mobile Film Unit

Reposition the Benue State Television Corporation for full digital transmission

Upgrade the Benue State Library and stock it with e-library facilities

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

P

Inter-Governmental Relations and Traditional Institutions

Appoint a commissioner in the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in the state
Encourage all LGAs to develop and implement development plans that are in line with state policy

Support the local government in the generation of internally generated revenue (IGR)

Restructure the local government administration in the state in line with the constitution

Create a database to aid in the administration of local government

Re-engineer a functional budget system in the local government system

Continue to implement new regimes of emoluments, allowances, and other necessary logistics for the traditional rulers

Support the traditional institutions in the task of maintaining intra- and inter-state peace and security in their domains by involving them in security and conflict resolution

Civil Service

- Prompt payment of salaries, allowances, claims, pensions, and gratuities
- Periodic review of workers' welfare to keep pace with economic realities
- Undertake general recruitment in the state civil service from time to time
- Undertake training and re-training of all civil servants for optimum service delivery

- Upgrade the necessary infrastructure at all government ministries and departments
- Empower the Staff Development Center for effective service delivery
- Introduce smart attendance and a management register to enhance supervision of staff in the state
- Review and implement the Pension Reform Act of Benue State
- Amend the Pension Law for effective performance in the State
- Evolve a deliberate scheme to clear all the accumulated arrears of salaries and pensions in the state

Internal Revenue Generation

Review the legal status of BIRS and make it a reputable revenue-generation organization for the state

Diversify and maximize other revenue sources in Benue State

Increase the computerization of the operations of BIRS and employ more professional personnel

Review and implement all other legislation relating to revenue collection and remittances in the state

Public Expenditure Management

Ensure that a budget call circular is issued by the first week of June of the year, prior to implementation

Ensure the Ministry of Finance and Benue State Commission issue early-year budget guidelines in May of every year

Ensure that budget estimates go to the State Executive Council by the 1st week of September and to the Benue State House of Assembly (BSHA) by the 1st week of November

Adequately recruit and train staff in the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Benue State Planning Commission

Re-engage with UNDP, DFID, UNICEF, etc., in making concrete and appropriate efforts to attract foreign funds for development

Disaster Management

Reposition the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BENSEMA) for effective disaster management

Create awareness campaigns throughout the state on disaster-prone issues

Justice Administration and Legislature

Furnish the Judiciary and Ministry of Justice with adequate modern equipment

Improve management capacity in justice sector institutions

Revamp the State Law Reform Commission

Sponsor the review and re-enactment of the laws of Benue State, Nigeria

Reform the Benue State Judiciary to create room for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Provide funding for the training and continuing education of staff of the Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary

Fully equip the BSHA Complex with broad-band information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and other important logistics

Engage and train all the support staff of the Benue State House of Assembly Service Commission for improved performance

Debt Management

- To dialogue with the debt management agencies of government, including the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Debt Management Office, and the Federal Ministry of Finance, to ascertain the actual debt burden of the state
- To evolve modern strategies in the management of debt burdens
- To adopt debt prioritization. That is imbibing an inward-looking culture that de-emphasizes external borrowing for social elephant projects





FINANCIAL PLAN AND POLICY ASSUMPTIONS

Sources of Funding the Plan

- i. There shall be a tremendous improvement in the internally generated revenue (IGR) in the state
- ii. There shall be Improved profit from government investments and business organizations
- iii. Funds expected from bilateral cooperation with international development agencies, foreign governments, and donors
- iv. Credit Facilities obtained from the Capital Market and Foreign Loans
- v. Finances from the Private Sector Participation via Outsourcing, PPP, and the Base of the Pyramid (BOP).
- vi. Statutory Allocation from the Federation Account

Critical Economic Policy Assumptions

- i. Benue State shall progressively and professionally increase her internally generated
- ii. Benue State shall operate stringent fiscal operations to avoid overdependence on borrowing
- iii. Benue State shall show more commitment to servicing local and foreign debts to avert the negative burden on future generations
- i. Benue State shall maximize capital budgeting while reducing extra budgetary and recurrent expenditure

- ii. Benue State shall expect that excess crude as a source of inflow will stagger and eventually decrease in the longer term
- iii. Short-term funds and bonds shall be relied upon to fund important economic emergencies
- iv. Disasters such as the financial crisis, the economic recession, and pandemics are likely to thwart the economic fortunes of our state



THE HAND OF UNITY AND HOPE



ANNEXURE

In developing this policy document, several individuals and organizations were consulted. Those that actually gave out their valuable and genuine inputs are hereby acknowledged as follows:

i. Organizations

1. Nature's Masterpiece Limited, Makurdi
2. Forward Ever Foundation, Benue State
3. Aper Akurian Initiative, Kebbi
4. Sustainable Agricultural Development Intervention Programme (SADIP)
5. Future Benue

ii. Individuals

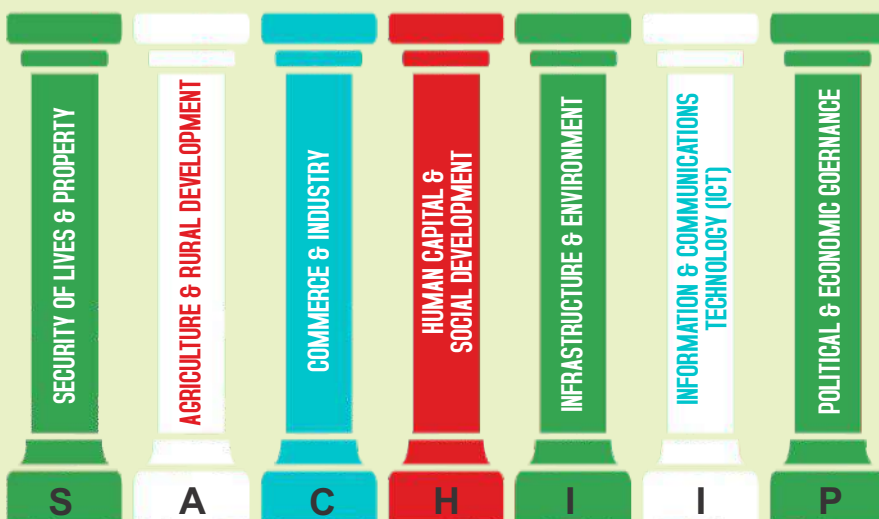
1. Mr. Michael Abuku
2. Mr. Dickson I. Akaaiyoo
3. Dr. Bem Vangerwua
4. Engr. Jude Jirgba
5. Mr. Chris Aondoakaa
6. Mr. Benedict Akombo
7. Mr. Ferdinard Shinyi
8. Mr. Sixtus D. Agbanyi
9. Dr Ekoja Godwin Adakole
10. Dr David A. Udugh
11. Mr. Iormom Bruce
12. Mr. John Kpetsum
13. Mr. Terungwa Maikyur
14. Dr. Barr .Vershima Akaayar
15. Elder Amough Abenga
16. Mr. Thaddy I. Aondoakaa
17. Arc. Simon Gusah
18. Mrs. Margaret Puughur
19. Mr. Christian Atule
20. Comrade Angula Reuben Msughter

iii. Committee Members

1.	Engr . Prof. Gabriel D. Akpen	-	Chairman
2.	Dr. Vincent I. Gisaor	-	Secretary
3.	Mr. Solomon Luga	-	Member
4.	Dr . Bernard T. Udugh	-	Member
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7.	Prof. Felix Ugesse	-	Member
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11.	Lady Mrs. Susan Achiaga	-	Member
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14.	Dr. Chris Orngu	-	Member
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16.	Hon. Dennis Dzawua	-	Member
17.	Comrade Angula Reuben M.	-	Member



Thank you



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