

**REPORT OF A ONE-DAY PUBLIC CONSULTATION
ON
CITIZENS' ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT BASED ON AKWA IBOM
STATE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS/REPORTS FOR 2020
FINANCIAL YEAR HELD AT ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL'S ICT HALL ON
TUESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2021**

1. Opening

The event commenced at about 10:00am with the National and State anthems. Opening prayer was rendered by Pastor Umoh Bassey and government dignitaries were introduced and ushered to the high table. Other dignitaries were recognized and properly accommodated. A list of attendees was compiled for the occasion at the Registration point to the event hall as is attached to this report.

2. Welcome Address by the State Auditor-General

The State Auditor-General, Dr. Monday D. Akpan welcomed everyone to the occasion and mentioned that it was a maiden edition of such an event in the State. He thanked the State Governor, Mr. Udom Emmanuel for providing the State with laws on Public Procurement, Fiscal Responsibility, Audit Law, and related areas, which are meant to encourage accountability in the state. He applauded the State Accountant-General, Pastor Uwem Andrew Essien and his team for co-hosting the event and wished everyone well as they participate fully in the consultation.

3. Governor's Address

The State Governor, Mr. Udom Gabriel Emmanuel, was represented at the event by the Commissioner for finance, Dr. Linus Nkan. He appreciated the audience for coming out, even at short notice to grace the occasion adding that the citizens' response was an indication of their avowed commitment to the progress of the State. He employed the Citizens to further demonstrate such commitment by commending government efforts when necessary rather than being continuously critical. The Governor also thanked the State Auditor-General and his team for providing a report that will be acceptable by the World Bank.

He admonished all present to sit back and follow the event with keen interest to be able to understand the dynamics of the State's financial report which is now reduced to pictorials and graphics, and to make necessary input. He concluded by declaring the event open for the day's business.

4. Goodwill Messages

Goodwill messages were presented by the State Accountant-General, Pastor Uwem Andrew-Essien, and the Chairman, Public Accounts Committee of Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly, Dr. Charity Ido.

In his speech, the Accountant-General stressed that his Office was at the centre of the preparation of the State's financial report that was being presented for consultation to the Citizens. He enjoined everyone to be active participants so as to make useful inputs at the appropriate time. The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, who also represented the Speaker of the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly at the occasion, spoke in supportive terms about the initiative. She emphasized that the Public Accounts Committee, and indeed the entire House of Assembly were appreciative of every efforts meant to further the frontiers of accountability and transparency by the State's government, of which the Citizen Accountability Report (CAR) is one. She emphasized the need for Citizens to sustain the interest they have shown by coming out in good member for the consultation.

5. Closing of Part I

The first part of the event was brought to a close with the National Anthem. A group photograph was organised for members of the high table with the Governor's representative.

6. Presentation of the CAR

The Director, PRS, Office of the State Auditor-General, Elder, Isaiah R. Ntekim took the floor to present the CAR to the citizens.

He presented the CAR in the following order

- State the requirements of the World Bank in respect of the CAR;
- States the objectives of the consultation
- Provides a specific definition of key terms as used in the report.
- Provides synopsis of the Akwa Ibom State CAR as contained in the Executive summary of the report.
- Summarised the contents of the CAR and emphasised on the objectives of each of the nine (9) section of the report.
- Explained each of the sections with explanatory charts and graphs.
- Concluded by requesting Citizens to make comments or ask questions. He also advised citizens who wish to make written inputs to do so and forward same to his office.

7. **Feed Back**

Reactions were entertained from the Citizens as follows:

7.1 **Mr. Iboro Ibara** (Representative of the Chairman/Nigeria Labour Congress).

- Mr. Ibara expressed gratitude at the pace of open governance demonstrated by the State Government in recent times.
- Regretted that the document should have been made available to the Citizens long before the consultation proper.
- Expressed worries over the increasing debt profile of the State, which he said has to be checked.
- Expressed the NLC's willingness to provide a written input to the CAR in a short time.

7.2 **Mrs. Manti Umoh (Community Stakeholders)**

This Citizen was also worried that the CAR document ought to have been circulated prior to the consultation to give room for proper study before the presentation. She regretted that she cannot provide any input instantly as she could not even follow the presentation properly.

7.3 **Mr. Mfon Gabriel (Policy Alert)**

Mr. Gabriel thanked the organisers for the initiative since it was the first of its kind in the State.

He was however, quick to make the following reservations:

- (i) That the presentation was not Citizen friendly as more details ought to have been provided
- (ii) That the capital expenditure on paper was not in tandem with what is physically on ground.
- (iii) That releases in favour of capital projects were a far-cry from the approved budgetary provisions.
- (iv) The social service sector was worst affected in favour of top government entities such as the government house, Ministry of Special Duties, Office of the Accountant-General and so on. In other words, he complained that the concerns of the Citizens were not given priority.
- (v) That Audit should be concerned with not only the figures but on the impact and efficiency of government expenditure.

7.4 **Mr. Akpan Umoh (Chairman, CITN, Uyo)**

This citizen thanked the Akwa Ibom State Internal Revenue Service for surpassing their revenue target. However, he observed that revenue profiles for hospitals, and some parastatals in the State were not show cased, for proper evaluation.

7.5 **Dr. Mfon Jeremiah (University of Uyo)**

Dr. Jeremiah expressed concerns about the contract management procedure, which the public are not privileged to assess. He opined that it was necessary to properly monitor the contracting process to ensure that wastages are minimised.

7.6 **Barrister Christopher Ekpo (CLO)**

This citizen who is the Secretary of Civil Liberty Organisation spoke on behalf of Organisation applauded the CAR project as a step forward towards openness to the public. He recommended that adequate budgetary provision to the Judiciary was necessary to ensure that Justice is not only done but seen to be done. This according to him will instill confidence of potential investors in the State.

8. **Response by the State Auditor-General:**

In response to the comments by citizens, the State Auditor-General, Dr. Monday Akpan applauded them for their comments and. He assured them that all the comments would be acted upon for the good of all citizens in particular and the state in general.

The presenter, Mr. Isaiah Ntekim also reacted to the citizens' comments by asking that written inputs are welcomed from those who could not make theirs during the event.

8. **Closing:**

The event came to an end at about 2pm after the closing prayers were said by Elder Offiong E. Eduongo.



30/09/2021

**Comrade Franklyn Isong
Ntekim**

Chairman
Civil Liberty Organization



Mr. Isaiah R.

Director (Audit)
Secretary