

FG Should Boost MSMEs In Nigeria To Harness AfCFTA Opportunities

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) stands as one of the most significant economic initiatives for Africa, with the potential to reshape the economic fortunes of its member states. For

Nigeria, the reduction of tariffs on intra-African trade offers a unique opportunity, particularly for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which form the backbone of the nation's economy. However,

EDITORIAL

while the framework promises lower tariffs and expanded market access, the federal government

must take deliberate and strategic steps to ensure that MSMEs are positioned and encouraged to take full advantage of this opportunity.

The government must prioritise the simplification of export processes

for MSMEs. Current bureaucratic hurdles related to customs, export documentation and compliance are significant barriers for small businesses. It is not enough to

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Vice President Shettima Pioneers Nasarawa's Human Capital Development Revolution

● As Blueprint For National Advancement HCD Program Enters New Phase With HCD 2.0

In a crucial moment that highlights Nigeria's commitment to sustainable development, **Vice President Kashim Shettima** has spearheaded the unveiling of Nasarawa State's Human Capital Development Strategy Document and Gender Transformative Policy Framework. The event, recently held at the Aliyu Akwe Doma Banquet Hall in Lafia, Nasarawa State, highlights Nasarawa State's resolve to address critical challenges in education, healthcare, and workforce development, setting the stage for peer learning and national replication. **Enam Obiosio** takes a deeper look at the progress of the Human Capital Development Program so far.

In 2018, Nigeria embarked on a transformative journey with the launch of its National Human Capital Development (HCD) program, an initiative championed by the National Economic Council (NEC). The program's goal was simple yet ambitious: to address the root causes of poverty and unlock the vast potential of the nation's most valuable asset—its people.

As the country steps into the second phase of this initiative, HCD 2.0, under the leadership of Vice President Shettima and the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), the stakes have never



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Vice President Kashim Shettima at the unveiling of Nasarawa State's Human Capital Development Strategy Document and Gender Transformative Policy Framework recently held in Lafia.

...driving sustainable economic growth, boosting productivity and reducing poverty

Human Capital Development in Nigeria

Human Capital Development in Nigeria



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CBN Partners With DBN, BoI To Bridge N294bn Financing Gap For Women Entrepreneurs

By Kingsley Benson

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in partnership with the Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN) and the Bank of Industry (BoI), has taken a significant step towards addressing the N294 billion financing gap faced by women entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The three institutions recently signed the Women Entrepreneurs Finance (We-Fi) Code in Abuja, pledging their commitment to mobilising resources for women-led businesses.

According to CBN, the We-Fi Code, a global initiative, is designed to unite financial service providers (FSPs), regulators, and development banks in an effort to expand funding opportunities for women-owned micro, small, and medium enterprises (WMSMEs) worldwide.

Governor of CBN, Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, spoke at the signing event, highlighting the untapped potential of women entrepreneurs. He noted that over 400 million women globally have the ability to scale their businesses but are hindered by inadequate access to financing.

According to him, this represents a \$1.7 trillion growth opportunity for financial institutions and a potential \$5-6 trillion contribution to the global economy.

"In Nigeria, a Women's World Banking survey shows that women's entrepreneurial activity outpaces that of men by four percent. However, 75 percent of this market remains underserved, which equates to a N294 billion financing gap," Mr. Cardoso explained. He highlighted the We-Fi Code's importance in unlocking this potential, emphasising its role in fostering economic growth at the national level.

Mr. Cardoso also pointed out



Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, CBN Governor

that the CBN's National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS 3.0) identifies women, alongside youth, MSMEs, and rural communities - particularly in northern Nigeria - as some of the most financially excluded groups in the country.

Managing Director (MD) of the DBN, Dr. Tony Okpanachi, detailed the bank's efforts to support women-owned businesses. He revealed that DBN has disbursed over N187 billion through its Participating Finance Institutions (PFIs), with 72 percent of the funds going to support 357,000 women entrepreneurs.

Dr. Okpanachi commended the We-Fi Code as a "bold

commitment" to bridging the gender gap in financial access and pledged to appoint a senior leader within DBN to drive these initiatives.

MD of the BoI, Mr. Olasupo Olusi, also reiterated the bank's dedication to empowering women-led enterprises. He acknowledged the challenges that women in business face and stressed the need to provide both financial and non-financial resources to help them succeed.

In another development, the CBN reiterated its dedication to maintaining the stability of the nation's financial system, affirming that it regularly conducts stress

tests on Nigerian banks to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities.

This was disclosed in a recent release issued by the CBN's Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Mrs. Hakama Ali.

The statement assured Nigerians that their bank deposits are secure, emphasising that the CBN remains focused on safeguarding the resilience of the banking sector.

"The CBN understands the importance of public confidence in the banking system and would like to assure all Nigerians that the safety of deposits is paramount," the statement read.

According to the CBN, the regular stress tests form part of its ongoing strategy to protect depositors' funds and ensure the financial sector remains robust. These tests allow the central bank to detect risks early and take necessary actions to prevent them from affecting the stability of the financial system.

"Regular stress testing is crucial in identifying vulnerabilities in the financial sector, ensuring that Nigerian banks remain resilient even in challenging circumstances," the statement continued.

In addition to stress testing, the CBN has implemented early warning systems designed to detect potential threats to financial stability before they escalate. This allows for swift intervention by the CBN whenever risks are detected.

"The early warning systems help us proactively identify and mitigate emerging risks, ensuring timely responses to safeguard the financial sector," the statement stated.

The CBN's risk-based supervision approach focuses its regulatory efforts on institutions that pose the greatest potential risks, ensuring that its oversight remains effective while promoting the overall health of Nigeria's banking industry.

Moreover, the CBN has Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with countries where Nigerian banks have subsidiaries. This international cooperation enhances regulatory coordination, ensuring that Nigerian banks operate within safe frameworks, both locally and internationally.

The central bank reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a secure banking environment and reassured the public that it remains vigilant in monitoring the sector, continually adapting its strategies to protect the financial interests of Nigerians.

Bol Assigns GOPA Intec For Climate Finance Technical Assistance Program

By Jennete Ugo Anya

The Bank of Industry (BoI) has officially assigned GOPA Intec as the technical consultant for its 'Transforming Financial Systems for Climate' (TFSC) Program, following a significant €2.5 million grant from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

This appointment, recently revealed on the BoI's official website, marks a crucial step in Nigeria's efforts to transition towards a sustainable and climate-resilient economy.

According to the BOI, the TFSC program is designed to enhance the capacities of BoI and key financial sector players in Nigeria. It aims to enable them to effectively

manage climate finance, create climate-friendly financial products, and implement global best practices to achieve impactful results within the country. A critical aspect of the program is its emphasis on enhancing gender financing for businesses owned or led by women, facilitating the establishment of new strategic partnerships.

On GOPA, the bank says that over the next four years, GOPA Intec will provide essential technical assistance to BoI, focusing on mobilising climate finance for critical renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate-friendly projects across Nigeria. This initiative will encompass both mitigation and adaptation efforts, reinforcing Nigeria's commitment to sustainable



Dr. Olasupo Olusi, Managing Director/CEO of BOI

development and green economic growth.

The appointment of GOPA Intec as the technical consultant stresses Nigeria's dedication to advancing its climate finance strategy

as part of a broader global initiative. The TFSC program, accordint to the bank, is part of a €653 million global effort led by the AFD Group and the Green Climate Fund, aimed

at developing a market for climate finance in 17 countries across Africa and Latin America.

In Nigeria, the specific objectives of the TFSC program, the bank says, revolve around supporting financial institutions in adopting a robust climate finance strategy and associated tools. The program also seeks to promote green sustainable growth across various sectors by leveraging both public and private financing. Additionally, it focuses on consolidating the application of market-based instruments for environmental and climate-smart investments.

Furthermore, the initiative aims to enhance the competitiveness and growth of cleaner business opportunities, thereby generating job

creation. Developing new guiding principles and partnerships with international endowments and foundations to scale financing for women-led businesses is another key goal. Shedding more light, the BOI says that the program will also implement training and capacity-building programs for banks, clients, and key partners to bolster support for climate investments in Nigeria.

As Nigeria embarks on this significant journey towards a sustainable economy, the collaboration between BoI and GOPA Intec is expected to pave the way for transformative impacts in the financial sector, fostering resilience and promoting innovative solutions to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Finance Minister Recommends Policy Alignment To Curb Inflation, Boost Economic Growth

● Says Increase Food Production Will Reduce Inflation, Stabilise Exchange Rate

By Musa Ibrahim

Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, has stressed the urgent need for greater alignment between fiscal and monetary policies to tackle inflation, attract investments, and foster sustainable economic development.

Speaking at a recent two-day workshop in Abuja, organised by the Federal Ministry of Finance in partnership with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Edun emphasised the critical role of fiscal-monetary coordination in achieving Nigeria's economic objectives.

The workshop, designed to enhance the federal government's technical capacity in macroeconomic management, focused on equipping policymakers with the tools needed to implement essential fiscal and monetary policies for the country's future growth.

Mr. Edun's remarks highlighted the significance of these policies in addressing current economic challenges and driving long-term recovery.

In a statement by Mr. Mohammed Manga, Director of Information and Public Relations at the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Edun, during his keynote address on 'Critical Priorities in Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy Coordination,' outlined the pressing fiscal challenges Nigeria faces, including inflationary pressures, foreign exchange volatility, and the need for investment in critical sectors.

He proposed innovative reforms aimed at stimulating growth and improving macroeconomic stability under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

According to Mr. Edun, aligning fiscal and monetary policies will be key to combating inflation, ensuring stable economic growth, and attracting both domestic and foreign investment. He noted that the government's commitment to economic recovery is unwavering, but effective policy implementation and global partnerships are crucial for driving Nigeria toward long-term stability.

The workshop, attended by top government officials and economic experts, featured sessions on various economic topics, including public-



Mr. Wale Edun, Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy

private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure development, strategies for managing foreign currency liabilities, and leveraging innovation and technology to boost Nigeria's global competitiveness.

Mr. Edun urged participants to take full advantage of the insights shared at the workshop to ensure that fiscal and monetary policies are aligned for maximum impact. He highlighted the importance of fostering international collaboration to help guide Nigeria through its current economic challenges and toward a path of sustainable growth.

The Honourable Minister's call for better policy alignment is seen as a strategic move to curb inflationary trends while setting the foundation for long-term economic development. In addressing fiscal policy gaps and enhancing coordination with monetary authorities, Nigeria, according to him, can create a more conducive environment for investments and economic expansion.

In another development, Mr. Edun highlighted the critical role of food production in driving economic growth and stabilising Nigeria's financial landscape.

Speaking at the recent Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ)-1 workshop in Abuja, he emphasised that food is a major driver of inflation and that making it more affordable can significantly reduce inflation rates and stabilise the exchange rate.

"Food constitutes 50 percent of the consumer price index, which makes it a core index. Currently, with inflation exceeding 30 percent, the successful outcomes of food production will play a crucial role in alleviating these pressures," Mr. Edun stated.

He noted that effective food production would lead to lower interest rates, thus providing a conducive environment for private sector investments.

Mr. Edun expressed confidence in the SAPZ program, stating it is designed to drive Nigeria's agro-industrial development while aligning with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's macroeconomic stabilisation efforts.

He equally noted: "Successful food production will not only allow for exports and support the trade balance but will also enhance our foreign exchange reserves. For now, our immediate focus is

on providing food at affordable prices."

Honourable Minister reiterated that as inflation decreases and economic growth returns, there will be a key shift toward growing the economy, with the SAPZ initiative at its core. This program is expected to create 400,000 direct jobs and 1.6 million indirect jobs, reflecting the government's commitment to revitalising the agricultural sector.

Also, Mr. Abubakar Kyari, Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, stated that the SAPZ initiative is anticipated to revolutionise the agriculture sector, stimulate job creation, and promote economic growth.

He emphasised that the program, using a design, build, and operate (DBO) model, aims to boost agricultural productivity and reduce post-harvest losses significantly.

"Staple crop yields are projected to increase by 50 percent to 100 percent, while post-harvest losses are expected to decrease from 45 percent to 20 percent," Mr. Kyari stated, asserting that these enhancements will contribute to national food security.

Dr. Abdul Kamara, the Director-General (DG) of the

Nigeria Country Department at AfDB, echoed these sentiments, calling for accelerated implementation of the SAPZ initiative. He highlighted the transformative potential of the program to bolster Nigeria's rural economy and promote industrialisation.

The AfDB is committed to financing the first phase of the program, which has garnered \$538 million in support. Dr. Kamara emphasised the focus on climate-resilient infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and job creation as vital components of the initiative.

As the government seeks to address food security and stabilise the economy, the SAPZ program emerges as a cornerstone of President Tinubu's agenda for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. The decisions made will determine the initiative's success and its impact on the lives of Nigerians.

The workshop was organised by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in collaboration with Development Financing Institutions (DFIs) such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Fund.

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merely reduce tariffs if MSMEs cannot navigate the complexities of cross-border trade. Therefore, a streamlined, digital-first approach to export documentation, specifically designed to meet the needs of MSMEs, is essential. We do see that in adopting technology-driven solutions, such as online portals for trade facilitation, the government can reduce administrative bottlenecks and make the process more efficient and accessible to smaller businesses.

It is our position that the government should continue to provide targeted and even more financial support to MSMEs that are export-ready or seeking to expand into new African markets and even beyond. While AfCFTA opens the door to lower tariffs, many MSMEs lack the capital required to scale their operations and compete regionally. A specialised export financing fund, managed by agencies like the Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM), bank of Industry, etc. could offer low-interest loans and grants to MSMEs. Additionally, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) could work in concert with commercial banks to create a tailored credit facility that supports small businesses in meeting the logistical and operational demands of export trade.

For us, another key area where the government's involvement is crucial is in ensuring product standardisation. MSMEs in Nigeria often face rejection of its products in regional markets due to non-compliance with international standards. To fully benefit from AfCFTA, we urge the federal government, through the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), to harmonise local standards with those required across African markets. In doing so, the government will not

only improve the quality of Nigerian products but also enhance its acceptance and competitiveness across the continent. We suggest that a national certification scheme for export-ready products could be introduced to support MSMEs in meeting these standards, while tax incentives should be sustained for businesses that achieve compliance.

Moreover, there is a pressing need for the government to invest in infrastructure that supports cross-border trade. We note that poor transportation networks, inadequate logistics, and limited access to storage facilities significantly hinder MSMEs growth. We believe government investment in roads, railways, and ports, as well as the expansion of air cargo capacity, would drastically improve the efficiency of moving goods across borders. This would not only benefit MSMEs but also strengthen Nigeria's position as a regional trade hub, ensuring the country captures a larger share of intra-African trade.

The socio-economic benefits of empowering MSMEs through AfCFTA are undeniable. Lower tariffs and increased export opportunities would lead to substantial job creation, as MSMEs expand its operations to meet growing demand. This is particularly important in Nigeria, where youth unemployment remains a critical issue. By facilitating access to new markets, the government would be fostering entrepreneurship and reducing poverty, especially in rural areas where many small businesses operate.

Additionally, promoting MSMEs participation in AfCFTA would help in diversifying Nigeria's economy, reducing its over-reliance on oil revenues. With MSMEs contributing to various sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing,

and services, Nigeria would experience a more balanced economic growth. Diversification is crucial in insulating the economy from global oil price fluctuations and in building a more resilient, sustainable economic model.

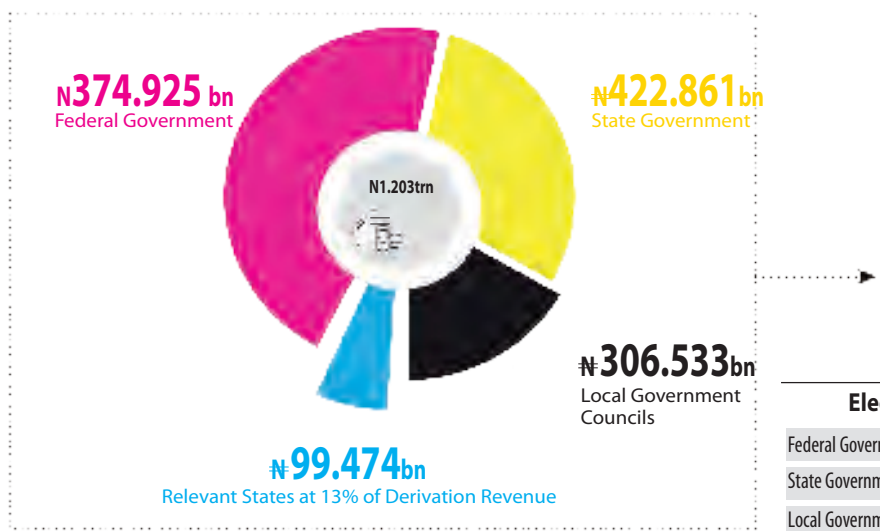
Increased export activity would also generate higher foreign exchange earnings, easing the pressure on Nigeria's currency and contributing to overall economic stability. MSMEs, through its involvement in intra-African trade, could play a crucial role in strengthening the naira and improving the country's trade balance.

From a broader perspective, Nigeria's enhanced participation in AfCFTA would elevate its standing as a leader in Africa's economic integration. We strongly believe that in actively supporting its MSMEs, the government would be positioning Nigeria to lead by example, driving intra-African trade while fostering stronger regional ties. Such leadership could translate into increased influence within the African Union (AU) and other regional organisations, further advancing Nigeria's geopolitical and economic interests on the continent.

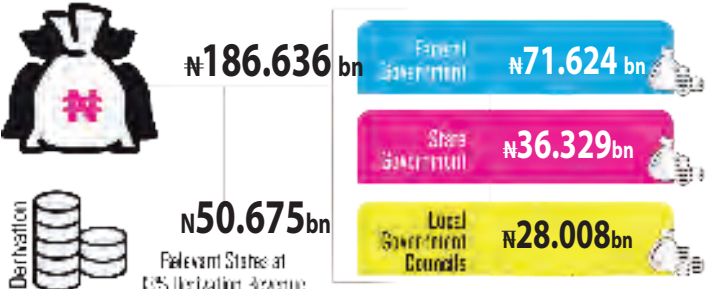
The federal government must take decisive action to enable MSMEs to benefit from lower tariffs under AfCFTA. Through simplifying export procedures, providing financial support, ensuring product standardisation, and investing in infrastructure, the government can create an environment where MSMEs thrive in the intra-African market. The socio-economic benefits of this would be far-reaching, including job creation, economic diversification, and enhanced regional influence. For Nigeria, this is not just an opportunity — it is an imperative for sustained economic growth and development.

FAAC Shares N1.203trn August 2024 Revenue To FG, States And LGCs

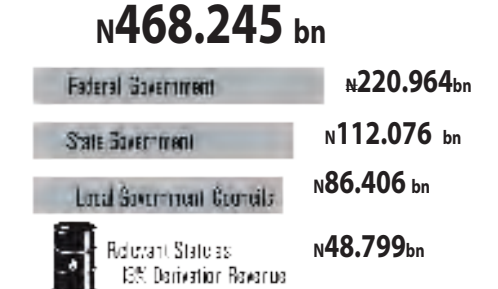
Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) Share:



Statutory Revenue Distribution

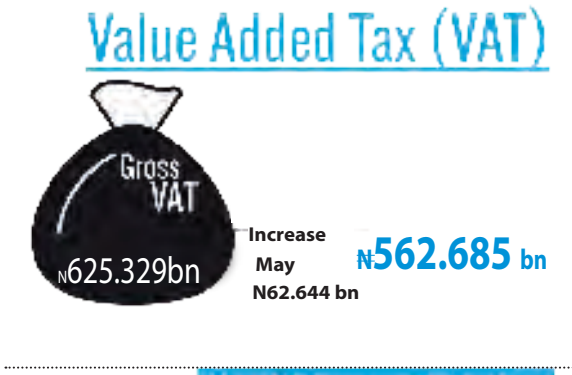


Exchange Difference Revenue



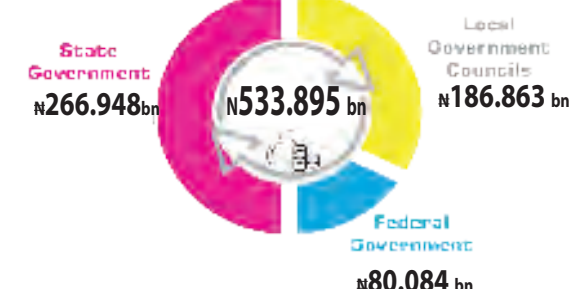
Balance in the Excess Crude Account
\$473,754.57

Transfers, Intervention, and Refunds
N109.816 bn



N99.756 bn Cost Of Revenue Allocation

Distributable Value Added Tax (VAT) Revenue



Despite the substantial revenue distributed, the communiqué revealed a general decline in key revenue sources compared to the previous month. August 2024 recorded decreases in oil and gas royalty, petroleum profit tax (PPT), VAT, import and excise duties, the electronic money transfer levy, CET Levies, and companies income tax (CIT).



Vice President Shettima Pioneers Nasarawa's Human Capital Development Revolution

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been higher.

A Renewed Commitment to Human Capital

HCD 2.0 represents a bold and forward-thinking approach to tackling the complex challenges Nigeria faces. While the country boasts the largest economy in Africa, it has long struggled with over-reliance on finite resources like oil, leading to calls for urgent economic diversification. But beyond economic diversification, the greatest resource Nigeria has—its people—remains largely underdeveloped.

“We are at a crucial moment in Nigeria’s development,” said Vice President Shettima during the inauguration of HCD 2.0. “The time to invest in our people is now. With the right policies and sustained commitment, we can transform Nigeria into a globally competitive economy.”

Human capital, as defined by the NEC, refers to the knowledge, skills, and health that individuals acquire throughout their lives—factors that are critical to both personal success and national productivity. In Nigeria, where over 44 percent of the population is under the age of 15, this is more than a demographic reality; it is an opportunity.

The Achievements of HCD 1.0

The first phase of the program, HCD 1.0, laid a strong foundation for the future. Its focus on health, education, and labour force participation—three pillars essential for building a “healthy, educated, and productive” population—was aligned with global goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By 2030, the program aims to create a more equitable and prosperous Nigeria through its human capital initiatives.

HCD 1.0 introduced six critical outcome areas, including reducing child and maternal mortality, improving nutrition, increasing school enrollment, and expanding opportunities for young people to enter the labour market. These ambitious targets were supported by 16 high-impact interventions, designed to improve health systems, enhance access to education, and create pathways for youth employment.

At the heart of HCD 1.0 was a collaborative effort between federal and state governments, with private sector partners also playing a vital role. Technical working groups were set up in each state, ensuring that the program’s impact was felt across the country. This multi-layered



Building on the momentum of HCD 1.0, the National Economic Council has now set the stage for HCD 2.0, a program that not only maintains the original focus areas but also tackles emerging challenges facing Nigeria today

approach created a strong foundation for a national effort that touched millions of lives.

The Bold Vision of HCD 2.0

Building on the momentum of HCD 1.0, the National Economic Council has now set the stage for HCD 2.0, a program that not only maintains the original focus areas but also tackles emerging challenges facing Nigeria today. Climate change, digital inclusion, and gender disparities are just a few of the issues that HCD 2.0 seeks to address in the 2024–2027 period.

The health component of HCD 2.0 aims to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare services by integrating digital healthcare platforms and climate-resilient practices. The education sector will benefit from efforts to build a functional and inclusive system that incorporates digital literacy, STEM education, and vocational training—skills critical for future industries. Labour force participation, meanwhile, will be boosted by initiatives designed to prepare Nigeria’s youth for the digital economy, foster gender equality, and promote financial inclusion.

“HCD 2.0 is not just a continuation of the first phase—it’s a response to the current realities facing our country,” Vice President Shettima emphasized. “By focusing on

digital inclusion, climate resilience, and gender equality, we are positioning Nigeria for long-term growth in a changing world.”

A National Effort

A key element of HCD 2.0’s success is its robust governance structure. The HCD Steering Committee, chaired by Vice President Shettima, includes representatives from the NGF, thematic ministries, and private sector leaders. This high-level committee will guide policy decisions, oversee implementation, and ensure accountability throughout the program’s lifespan.

The collaboration doesn’t stop at the federal level. Each state has appointed focal points and established HCD councils, chaired by deputy governors, to provide oversight and strategic direction. The Core Working Group, comprising government and development partners, will coordinate efforts across the states, ensuring that local needs align with national goals.

Sustainable funding is another crucial aspect of HCD 2.0. Recognizing the need for consistent investment in human capital, the program is working to establish a dedicated funding mechanism. This fund will draw resources from federal and state governments, the private sector, and development partners, ensuring that HCD initiatives can be scaled and sustained over the long term.

Collective Action for a Brighter Future

The success of HCD 2.0 will ultimately depend on the collective action of all stakeholders—from the government and private sector to civil society and development partners. For Nigeria to achieve its human capital development goals, the commitment to investing in people must remain unwavering.

As Nigeria moves forward with HCD 2.0, the potential rewards are immense. By focusing on health, education, and workforce participation, the country can unlock the full potential of its young and growing population, transforming human capital into a driver of national prosperity.

The path to a healthier, educated, and more productive Nigeria is clear. Through continued collaboration, sustainable investment, and an unwavering commitment to the future, Nigeria is positioning itself to become a resilient, inclusive, and globally competitive economy—one that is built on the strength of its greatest asset: its people.



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HCD Program

...building a healthy, educated & productive Nigeria



Rukaiya el-Rufai Rallies Stakeholders To Accelerate Human Capital Development For Nigeria's Future **PG 15**

Governor Sule Presents Nasarawa State's Vision For Growth, Inclusivity Through HCD **PG 14**



Vice President Shettima Calls On Core Working Group To Drive Nigeria's Human Capital Development Strategy Forward **PG 9**



Vice President Kashim Shettima addressing the audience at the launch.

Nasarawa State Celebrates Human Capital Development Milestone With Launch Of Strategic Blueprint **PG 10**



...boosting productivity and reducing poverty

Vice President Shettima Calls On Core Working Group To Drive Nigeria's Human Capital Development Strategy Forward



Vice President Kashim Shettima; Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State, and others at the launch.

By Jennete Ugo Anya

The federal government through Vice President Kashim Shettima had inaugurated the National Economic Council (NEC) Human Capital Development (HCD) Steering Committee.

In his remarks, Vice President Shettima, while delivering a strong and motivating message to the Core Working Group (CWG) just a few months ago, outlined the critical role the group will play in the successful implementation of Nigeria's HCD program, calling on the members of the group to bring their technical expertise to bear on what is considered one of the most important initiatives for the future of the nation.

As he opened the session, he stated: "Now that we have set the ball rolling, I am confident that I can count on the technical expertise that each of you brings to this critical program."

He highlighted the essential role of the CWG in shaping and implementing strategies that address Nigeria's pressing human capital challenges, which include high maternal and infant mortality rates, inadequate access to education, and soaring unemployment figures among youth.

The Vice President recognised that these issues not only affect individuals and families but also hinder the country's overall progress and development.

He emphasised the collective responsibility of the CWG, stating: "This is not just that of the government - it is the collective burden of our entire nation."

He reminded the group that millions of Nigerians are looking to them for innovative solutions and effective implementation. Their expertise and commitment to excellence are crucial for devising strategies that lead to meaningful outcomes. The Vice President's acknowledgment of the group's role as crucial reinforces the importance of their contributions in addressing the multifaceted challenges that Nigeria faces today.

As he laid out the roadmap ahead, he highlighted the urgent need for actionable strategies. He declared: "The task ahead is immense, and so are the stakes high." The implementation phase of the HCD program requires practical, on-the-ground expertise, and the CWG is expected to leverage data-driven approaches and innovative solutions.

Vice President Shettima articulated the ambitious goal of adding 24 million healthy, educated, and productive Nigerians to the population, a target that highlights the scale of the challenge ahead. He reiterated that achieving this goal necessitates a coordinated and well-organised effort that transcends traditional bureaucratic boundaries.

His call to action was clear: "We are tasked with ensuring that our targets are not just met, but exceeded." He urged the group to adopt a proactive mind set, focusing on the unique needs and contexts

“

The task ahead is immense, and so are the stakes high." The implementation phase of the HCD program requires practical, on-the-ground expertise, and the CWG is expected to leverage data-driven approaches and innovative solutions

of Nigeria's diverse regions. The necessity for localized solutions that can effectively address the specific challenges faced by various states was a recurring theme in his address.

He stressed that while the national framework provides direction, the success of the HCD program will largely depend on the CWG's ability to adapt strategies to fit local realities.

Vice President Shettima offered words of encouragement and support. "I wish you the best in this national task to bring the vision and strategy of Nigeria's HCD program to life," he said, expressing confidence in the group's capacity to deliver on the ambitious objectives set before them.

He stressed the importance of collaboration among stakeholders at all levels, emphasising that the success of the HCD initiative will hinge on the effective engagement and commitment of both the federal and sub-national governments.

Vice President Shettima's address at the CWG inauguration serves as a powerful reminder of the potential for positive change within Nigeria's human capital landscape. With the CWG's expertise and the Vice President's leadership, the nation stands poised to make significant strides in improving health, education, and workforce development.

As the implementation phase unfolds, the collaborative efforts of the CWG will undoubtedly shape the future of Nigeria, ensuring that the vision of a healthier, more educated, and productive population becomes a reality for all citizens.

At this moment for Nigeria, the stakes have never been higher, and the responsibility of the CWG has never been greater. With a clear mandate and unwavering support from the Vice President, the path forward is illuminated, and the promise of a better tomorrow for millions of Nigerians is within reach. The journey toward a transformed human capital landscape is set to begin, guided by expertise, innovation, and a shared commitment to excellence.



Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State.

Nasarawa State Celebrates Human Capital Development Milestone With Launch Of Strategic Blueprint

By Anita Dennis

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Your continued commitment is key to achieving even greater success in the future,” she said, spotlighting the importance of teamwork in overcoming challenges and delivering on the state’s HCD vision

The stakeholders gathered to witness a historic moment as Nasarawa State launched its comprehensive Human Capital Development Strategy.

The recent event, a culmination of months of diligent effort, marks a new chapter in the state’s journey toward becoming a leader in human capital development.

At the forefront of this occasion was, Mrs. Habiba Balarabe Suleiman, Director-General (DG) of the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Agency (NSHCDA), who reiterated the critical role that human capital plays in the growth and progress of any society.

Reflecting on the importance of the event, Mrs. Suleiman declared: “Our presence here today is a testament to the shared conviction that human capital development is the most valuable asset any society can possess.”

She stressed that the success of Nasarawa’s development relies on the ability to unlock the potential of every citizen, a goal that lies at the heart of the newly launched strategic document.

She stated that the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Strategy is not just a compilation of policies and programs; it is a transformational blueprint that sets the course for addressing key challenges and fostering sustainable growth across the state.

According to Mrs. Suleiman, this document represents the state’s firm commitment to creating a future where “every citizen has the opportunity to realize their full potential, thereby contributing to the collective prosperity of our state and by extension, our dear nation.”

Mrs. Suleiman extended her profound gratitude to Vice President Kashim Shettima, for choosing Nasarawa State for his first Human Capital Development (HCD) engagement.

“Your decision to engage with us as your first HCD initiative demonstrates your unwavering commitment to advancing human capital development across the nation,” she said.

She also lauded Nasarawa’s own ‘Superman Governor,’ His Excellency Engineer Abdullahi Sule, for his visionary leadership and support in establishing the Human Capital Development Agency. She proudly acknowledged that Nasarawa remains the only state in Nigeria with an agency

solely dedicated to HCD, a testament to Governor Sule’s forward-thinking approach to governance.

Mrs. Suleiman acknowledged Governor Sule’s continued dedication to human capital, remarking: “Your Excellency, thank you for your support in the establishment of the agency and the commitment and dedication you have shown. You have given us the tools to propel Nasarawa forward.”

Collaboration and Partnership: Key to Progress

Mrs. Suleiman asserted the importance of collaboration in ensuring the success of the state’s HCD initiatives. She acknowledged the invaluable contributions of development partners, particularly the African Human Capital Development Plus and ECOWAS, whose collaboration has been instrumental in shaping Nasarawa’s human capital development framework.

“Your partnership has been indispensable, and we look forward to continuing this journey together,” she noted, highlighting the crucial role of regional and international support in achieving long-term growth and development.

To all the stakeholders and staff of the NSHCDA, Mrs. Suleiman expressed her gratitude, describing their hard work and dedication as the driving force behind the agency’s successes.

“Your continued commitment is key to achieving even greater success in the future,” she said, spotlighting the importance of teamwork in overcoming challenges and delivering on the state’s HCD vision.

As the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Strategy moves into its next phase, Mrs. Suleiman called on all stakeholders to redouble their efforts and reaffirm their commitment to the HCD agenda. She extended her thanks to the Co-Working Group (CWG) of HCD, whose support has been steadfast since 2019. Special recognition was given to Ms. Rukaiya El-Rufai, the Special Advisor to the President on NEC, who has injected new energy into HCD 2.0.

“Thank you, Madam Climate Change,” Mrs. Suleiman quipped, acknowledging El-Rufai’s innovative contributions to the program.

Mrs. Suleiman also expressed her deep appreciation to everyone involved, stating: “Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to the cause of human capital development in Nasarawa State. Together, we will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible and build a brighter future for all.”

Nasarawa State Unveils Bold Human Capital Development Strategy for Sustainable Growth

By Jennete Ugo Anya

In a transformative stride towards socio-economic advancement, Nasarawa State has officially launched its comprehensive Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy Document titled 'Accelerating Growth and Development'.

The launched which took place recently at Alh. Aliyu Akwe Doma Banquet Hall, Government House, Lafia, Nasarawa State, outlines an ambitious vision for the years 2024 to 2030, establishing human capital development as a fundamental pillar for enhancing the well-being of its citizens and ensuring long-term prosperity within the state.

The initiative stresses the Nasarawa State Government's unwavering commitment to investing in its most valuable resource - its people.

Recognising that human capital is key to the socioeconomic growth and sustainable development of Nasarawa State, the new strategic plan aligns seamlessly with the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) Document.

It aims to address the urgent need for a more educated, skilled, and healthy population capable of driving innovation, productivity, and inclusive growth. As the state navigates the complexities of modern economic challenges, this strategic roadmap is designed to respond proactively to the evolving needs of its citizens.

The Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Agency's strategic plan focuses on six critical thematic areas. These include Health & Nutrition, Education, Labour Force Participation, Youth Development, Social Development, and Local Government & Community Development. Each thematic area has been meticulously crafted to enhance key sectors vital to the socioeconomic fabric of Nasarawa State, creating a robust framework that promises to uplift the community as a whole.

The Health & Nutrition thematic area prioritizes the improvement of general healthcare service delivery. In ensuring that best practices are followed and building the capacity of healthcare workers, the plan aims to operationalise key initiatives such as the State Policy on Food and Nutrition and the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF). Through these efforts, the Nasarawa State government seeks to guarantee access to essential health



R-L: Senator Ahmed Wadada, representing Nasarawa West; Gov. Abdullahi Sule; Vice President Kashim Shettima; Ms. Rukaiya el-Rufai, Ag. Coordinator, HCD program 2.0, and other dignitaries at the launch in Nasarawa State recently.

services for all citizens. The strategic plan also introduces innovative financial mechanisms to support healthcare initiatives and includes a commitment to launching a free family planning program, demonstrating a comprehensive effort to bolster healthcare infrastructure and services across the state.

Recognizing the transformative power of education, the strategic plan aims to improve educational outcomes while ensuring accessibility and affordability for all. It places a special emphasis on empowering the girl-child and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning for underserved boys, ensuring that qualitative education is achieved to foster improved productivity in the long term. The strategic approach includes targeted investments in early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling, and technical and vocational training. By prioritizing educational access, Nasarawa State is taking significant strides toward creating a well-educated workforce equipped to meet the demands of the 21st century.

The Labour Force Participation thematic area is dedicated to invigorating the workforce and stimulating economic expansion through a multifaceted approach. This involves enhancing the civil service for better productivity and providing skills training for the unskilled labour force. By promoting vocational education and improving access to vital information, the plan aims to equip the population with the necessary skills to thrive in an evolving job market. The focus on labour force participation not only empowers individuals but also positions Nasarawa State for increased economic competitiveness.

Youth development is a cornerstone of the strategic plan, which focuses on creating a robust agenda for skills acquisition, access to funding opportunities, and active youth participation in governance. By harnessing the talents, knowledge, and potential of young people, Nasarawa State aims to create a more productive and less restive youth population. The strategic plan includes initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, leadership development, and civic engagement, empowering the youth to become active contributors to the socio-economic growth of the state.

The Social Development thematic area aims to provide equal opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals in society. With a special focus on women, people living with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, this aspect of the strategic plan emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive environment. Through addressing systemic barriers to access and participation, Nasarawa State seeks to ensure that all citizens benefit from human capital development initiatives and contribute to

the overall progress of the state.

The Local Government & Community Development thematic area addresses the critical issues undermining community growth and development. As a result of proposing impactful solutions in the form of interventions designed to accelerate growth, this segment of the strategic plan aims to bridge gaps in service delivery and infrastructure. By enhancing community engagement and collaboration between local governments and citizens, Nasarawa State aspires to create resilient and thriving communities.

The overarching vision of the Nasarawa State HCD Strategy is to accelerate growth and development through human capital, positioning the state among the ten most competitive economies in Nigeria. This ambitious goal reflects a commitment to building a healthier and better-educated citizenry by the year 2030. The strategic plan is a bold declaration that investing in human capital is not merely an option but an essential pathway to sustainable development.

Integral to the successful implementation of this strategic plan is the commitment to fostering partnerships among government, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and international development partners. By creating an environment of collaboration and shared responsibility, Nasarawa State aims to mobilize the necessary resources and expertise required to achieve its ambitious goals. The plan highlights the need for effective governance, data-driven decision-making, and sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of human capital development initiatives.

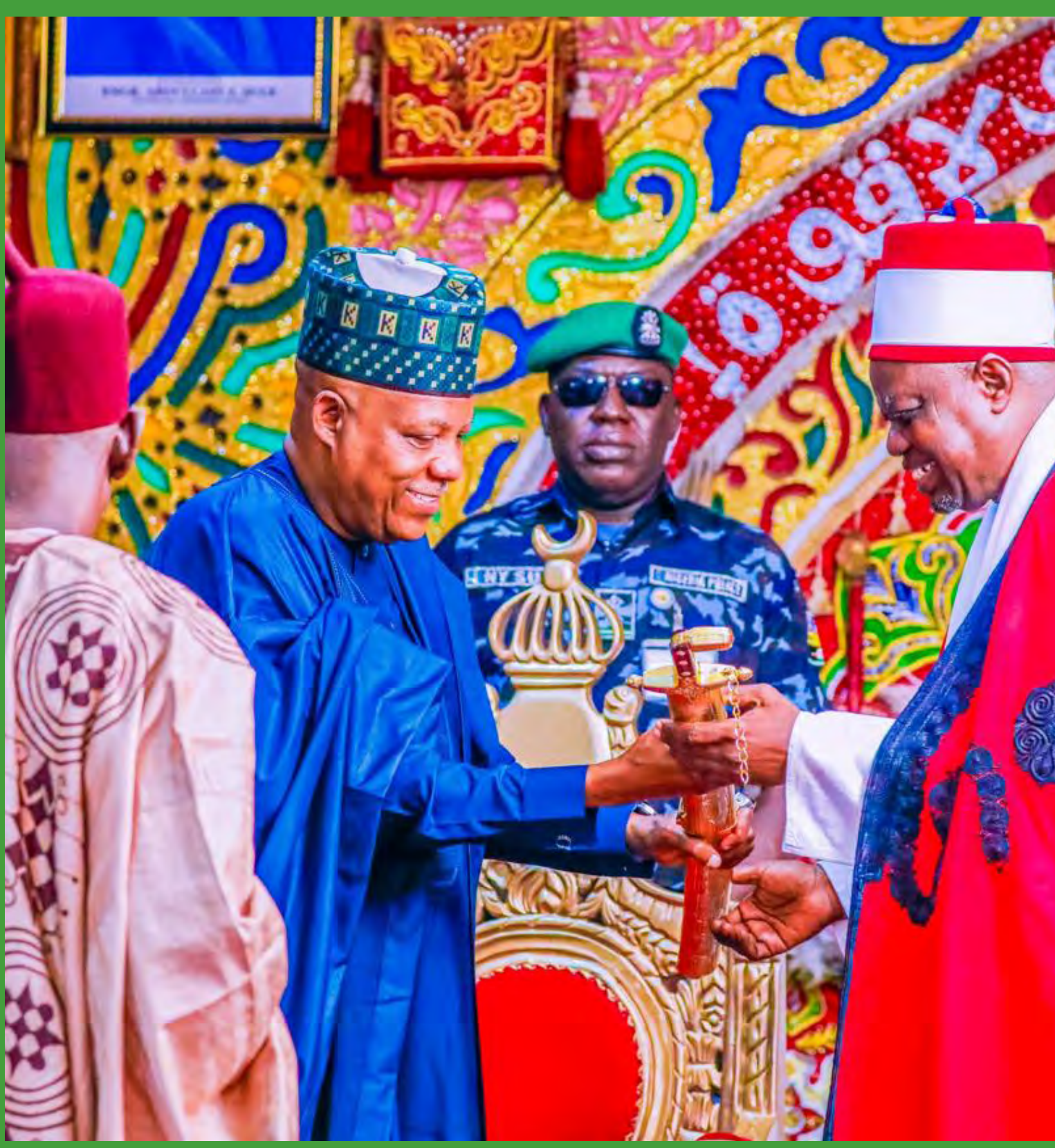
As Nasarawa State positions itself as a leader in human capital development, the newly launched strategic plan serves as a vital tool guiding the state's efforts to build a resilient, prosperous, and equitable society for all its citizens. The comprehensive approach taken by the Nasarawa State Government reflects a deep understanding of the intricate link between human capital investment and long-term socio-economic growth.

The launch of the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Strategy Document represents a significant commitment to fostering an empowered and educated populace capable of driving sustainable development. As the state embarks on this ambitious journey, the commitment to human capital investment promises to yield dividends that will not only benefit the present generation but also pave the way for future prosperity. With clear objectives and a comprehensive roadmap in place, Nasarawa State is well-positioned to become a beacon of growth and development in Nigeria, setting a precedent for other states to follow in the pursuit of human capital excellence.

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The overarching vision of the Nasarawa State HCD Strategy is to accelerate growth and development through human capital, positioning the state among the ten most competitive economies in Nigeria

PHOTO GALLERY

Vice President Kashim Shettima; Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State, and others at the launch of the state's comprehensive Human Capital Development Strategy Document for 2024 to 2030, alongside the Gender Transformative Human Capital Development Policy Framework.



Governor Sule Presents Nasarawa State's Vision For Growth, Inclusivity Through HCD

By Edmond Martins

In a historic and forward-thinking move, Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State has officially launched the state's comprehensive Human Capital Development Strategy Document for 2024 to 2030, alongside the Gender Transformative Human Capital Development Policy Framework.

These documents, unveiled recently at Aliyu Akwe Doma Banquet Hall, Government House, Lafia, Nasarawa State, signal Nasarawa's strong commitment to accelerating socioeconomic growth, enhancing human capital, promoting gender equity across all sectors of the economy.

Speaking at the event, Governor Sule addressed stakeholders, including Vice President Kashim Shettima, traditional rulers, development partners, and key government officials, stressing the importance of a collective vision for the state's development.

Governor Sule expressed his appreciation for the presence of eminent personalities such as former Governor Senator Tanko Al-Makura and the state's first Executive Governor, Abdullahi Adamu. Their continued support for his administration, the Governor said, was a testament to their shared dedication to providing purposeful leadership and fostering socio-economic development for the people of Nasarawa State.

He reflected on the progress made since his administration took office in 2019, particularly with the creation of the Nasarawa State Investment and Economic Advisory Council, chaired by Professor Kony Ajayi. This council, he noted, played a crucial role in developing the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) document, which has since guided the state's policy direction and yielded numerous successful projects.

"The recommendations of that committee culminated in the development of the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy Document, which continues to define our policy and direction, resulting in the execution of various projects that have been recorded so far," Governor Sule stated.

He further highlighted the establishment of the Nasarawa State Investment and Development Agency as a key vehicle for attracting investors into various sectors of the state's economy. The agency, he explained, is integral to Nasarawa's ongoing efforts to create a business-friendly environment and stimulate economic growth.

The core of Governor Sule's speech was the unveiling of the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Strategy Document, an actionable roadmap designed to guide the state's development over the next six years.

The document, titled 'Accelerating Growth and Development', integrates advanced planning tools and performance metrics to ensure that each initiative is data-driven and result-oriented. It focuses on critical areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic empowerment, which are essential for building a prosperous future for the people of Nasarawa State.

"The Human Capital Development Strategy Document is not just a policy on paper; it is a comprehensive plan that will guide our interventions in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic empowerment. It represents our shared vision for the future and our commitment to delivering measurable and sustainable results," the Governor said.

Governor Sule also pointed out that the strategy is built on the belief that governance must be about creating systems that work for the people. He explained that the document is the result of rigorous analysis and extensive consultations with stakeholders, including youth groups, civil society, and development partners.

"We engaged in a thorough process of consultations and analysis to come up with these documents, ensuring that they address the unique needs and challenges of our



Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State.

people," he stated.

A significant portion of the Governor's speech was dedicated to highlighting the state's commitment to youth development and inclusivity. With a sense of humour and a nod to the vibrancy of Nasarawa's youth, Governor Sule referenced the popular soap opera 'The Young and the Restless', likening the energetic youth of Nasarawa to the characters in the show.

"If you have seen the youth of Nasarawa, you know we have our own 'Young and the Restless' here," he quipped, highlighting the importance of youth engagement in the state's development agenda.

“We engaged in a thorough process of consultations and analysis to come up with these documents, ensuring that they address the unique needs and challenges of our people”

Governor Sule assured the audience that the Human Capital Development Strategy would not be left to gather dust.

"We believe in what we are doing, and we have implemented many of the initiatives outlined in our previous development strategy. This document will be no different - it is a blueprint for action," he stated.

The Governor also reiterated the administration's focus on gender equity as a cornerstone of sustainable development. The launch of the Nasarawa State Gender Transformative Human Capital Development Policy Framework was described as a critical step toward addressing gender disparities and empowering women to participate meaningfully in the state's socioeconomic progress.

"Our administration has recognised that addressing gender disparities is not merely a social responsibility but an economic imperative. Women's empowerment leads to significant gains in economic growth, poverty reduction, and social cohesion," Governor Sule declared.

He explained that the framework would provide the necessary structural and policy support to dismantle barriers to women's participation in leadership and economic activities, creating a more inclusive environment for all citizens.

As Nasarawa State moves toward 2030, Governor Sule emphasised the importance of flexibility and adaptability in the face of global challenges. He explained that the state's strategic plan is designed to respond to emerging trends and global dynamics, ensuring that Nasarawa remains

competitive in an evolving economic landscape.

"We are committed to diversifying our economy, optimising our natural resources, and fostering an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. This plan is not just about human capital and infrastructure - it is about strengthening governance mechanisms and ensuring accountability, transparency, and efficiency in the use of public resources," Governor Sule said.

The Governor also highlighted Nasarawa's potential in sectors such as agriculture, natural resources, and digital transformation, all of which are key components of the state's long-term growth strategy. He called on stakeholders, including government institutions, development partners, civil society organisations, and the private sector, to collaborate with the state in implementing these strategic initiatives.

Governor Sule further expressed his gratitude to the development partners, sponsors, and stakeholders who contributed to the formulation of the strategic documents. He singled out the Africa Human Capital Development Plus and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for their unwavering support, which he said was instrumental in bringing the documents to fruition.

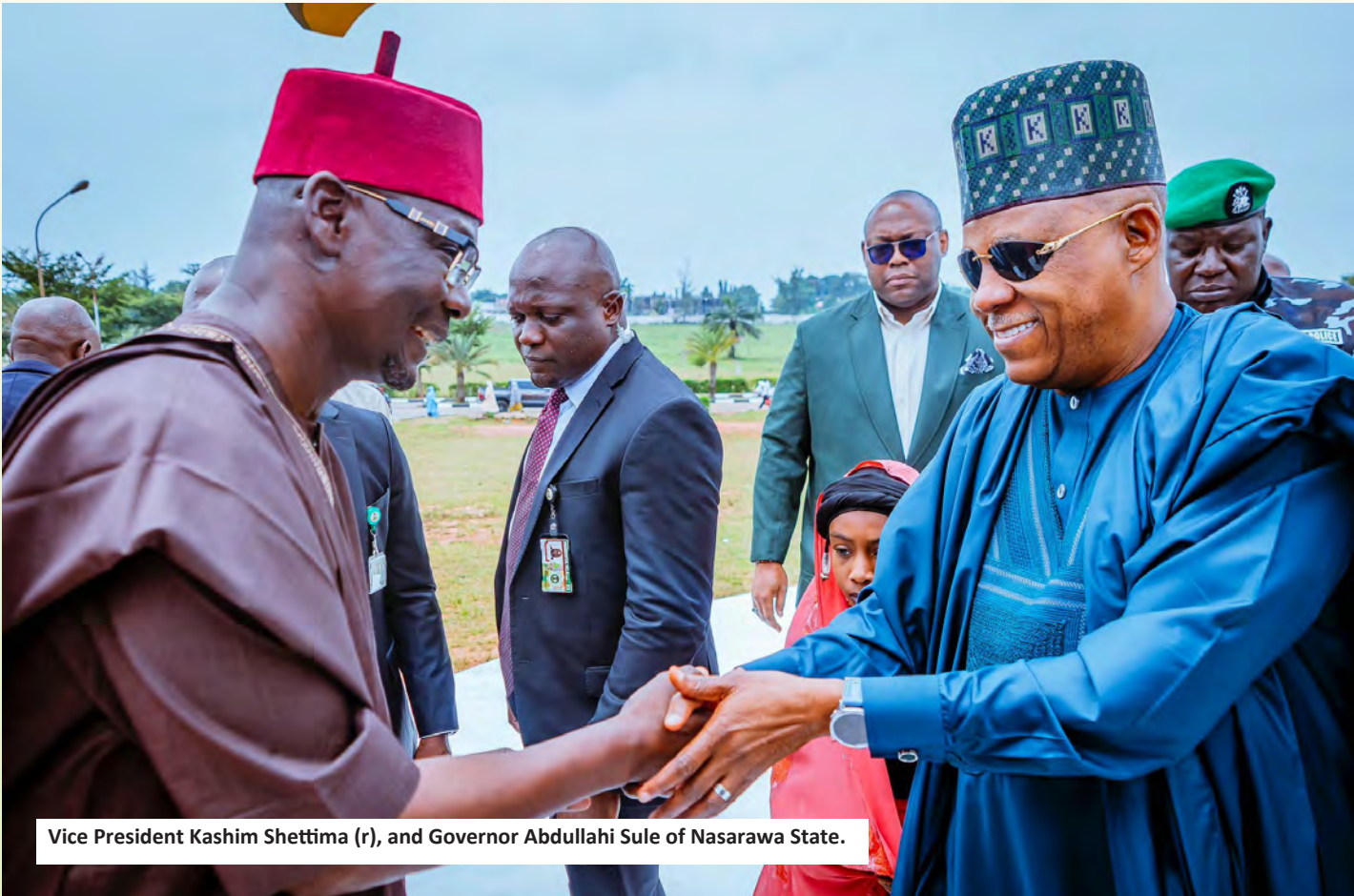
He also extended a special appreciation to Mrs. Habiba Balarabe Suleiman, Director-General (DG)/ Focal Person of Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Agenda, whom he commended for her exceptional work in supporting the development agenda.

"As we launch these strategic documents today, I call on all stakeholders to collaborate with us on this journey that requires synergy and shared commitment to the prosperity of the people," the Governor stated.

Governor Sule's speech was a rallying call for action, urging all sectors of society to unite in the effort to accelerate growth and development in Nasarawa State. With a clear vision for the future, backed by robust strategies and a commitment to inclusivity, Nasarawa is well on its way to becoming a leader in human capital development in Nigeria.

As the Governor warmly welcomed Vice President Kashim Shettima to the event, he left the audience with a strong message of optimism: "We are all here because of our belief in human capital, skill acquisition, and the prosperity of society. Together, we will build a Nasarawa State that is ready to compete on the national and global stage."

Vice President Shettima Urges Unity, Investment In Human Capital For Nasarawa State's Development



Vice President Kashim Shettima (r), and Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State.

By Jennete Ugo Anya

At the recent unveiling of the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Strategy Document and Policy Framework, Vice President Kashim Shettima delivered an inspiring address emphasising the need for unity, strategic investment, and collaboration to unlock the full potential of Nasarawa State and, by extension, Nigeria.

Speaking to dignitaries, government officials, traditional rulers, and stakeholders, the Vice President outlined the critical importance of human capital development as a national priority, stressing that the success of each state directly impacts the future of the nation.

In his opening remarks, Vice President Shettima reflected on his extensive travels across the country and highlighted the interconnectedness of Nigeria's states.

"The truest pulse of our federation is found in the actions taken in each part. Every state depends on the other, and as one thrives, so does the nation. Equally, when one falters, we all feel the strain," he stated.

This sentiment laid the foundation for his message that Nigeria's collective future lies in its ability to address regional challenges through tailored, state-specific solutions.

Nasarawa's Commitment to Human Capital Development

Highlighting Nasarawa State's commitment to the Human Capital Development (HCD) Program, Vice President

Shettima commended the state's leadership for recognising the urgency of reversing negative trends that have long plagued the region. He pointed to alarming statistics such as high fertility rates, low life expectancy, poor education outcomes, and limited labour force participation as key challenges that need immediate attention.

"Enough is enough," Vice Shettima declared, noting that it is time to break the cycles of underdevelopment and missed opportunities.

He further explained that the HCD program, initiated under the mandate of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, seeks to address these challenges by focusing on education, health, and workforce development.

"For so long, at the National Economic Council (NEC), we have debated the ideal nation we wish to build and the paths to achieve it. At the heart of this national search for solutions is the HCD program," Vice President Shettima remarked, stressing that Nasarawa State's participation in the program signals a strong commitment to advancing these goals.

Education and Health as Pillars of Progress

Education and healthcare, Vice President Shettima stressed, are the twin pillars on which human capital development must be built. He outlined the importance of prioritising enrollment and completion rates in schools, especially at the secondary level, through targeted interventions such as expanding social welfare programs, improving school infrastructure, and strengthening

teacher recruitment and training.

"We must ensure that no child is left behind in the quest for a brighter future," he said, stressing the need for a holistic approach that addresses both access to education and the quality of learning.

On the healthcare front, Vice President Shettima underlined the need for adequate government expenditure to guarantee equitable access to vital services, including maternal care, immunisation, and nutrition programs.

"It is through this investment in health that we can assure the longevity and productivity of our population," he noted, stating that improved health outcomes are directly linked to increased workforce productivity and economic growth.

Youth Empowerment and Global Competitiveness

Vice President Shettima also highlighted the need for Nigeria's youth to be equipped with employable skills that can be leveraged both locally and globally. He cited a global talent deficit projection, noting that by 2035, countries like the United States, Russia, and Brazil will suffer significant talent shortages, creating opportunities for Nigeria to step into this gap.

"We aim to empower our youth to export their skills globally, competing at the highest levels of the international marketplace," he said.

The Vice President equally pointed to Nigeria's young population - an average age of 16.9 years - and the country's proficiency in English as key assets in this endeavour. He asserted that Nigeria's proximity to

Europe, coupled with its linguistic advantage, positions the country to capitalise on global outsourcing opportunities.

"Opportunities abound, and this is why I am here - because Governor Abdullahi Sule understands the language of development and digital transformation," he said, reiterating the importance of partnerships between the government and the private sector in driving human capital development.

Nasarawa's Leadership in Human Capital Development

Commending Nasarawa State's leadership under Governor Abdullahi Sule, Vice President Shettima noted that the launch of the Human Capital Development Strategy Document and Policy Framework is evidence of the state's forward-thinking approach to governance.

"Nasarawa's entry at this crucial stage is a promising sign of progress," he said, stating that the state has already exceeded the international benchmark by allocating more than 15 percent of its budget to education - a monumental step toward translating strategy into tangible outcomes.

Vice President Shettima pointed out that no government can function in isolation, and the progress made in the HCD program is a result of collaboration, partnership, and a shared commitment to success.

"The success of every idea and policy rests on partnerships like the one we are witnessing today," he remarked, calling attention to the contributions of private sector partners such as the Tolaram Group, Flour Mills of Nigeria, and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons. These partners, he noted, have played a critical role in accelerating the implementation of the HCD program by providing essential tools and resources across various fields.

The Role of Peace in Sustainable Development

In his remark, Vice President Shettima offered a powerful reminder of the importance of peace in ensuring sustainable development. He accentuated that Nasarawa State, blessed with natural resources and agricultural potential, can only realise its full potential in an atmosphere of peace and unity.

"There can never be peace without development, and there can never be development without peace," Vice President Shettima stated.

He urged the people of Nasarawa to rally behind their leadership, work together to maintain peace, and continue building on the progress made through initiatives like the HCD program.

The Vice President's message was clear: Nasarawa State has the potential to become a shining example of human capital development, not just for the North Central region but for the entire nation. Through strategic investment in education, health, and youth empowerment, supported by strong partnerships and a commitment to peace, Nasarawa can lead the way in transforming Nigeria's future.

As the nation looks ahead, the Human Capital Development Program remains a cornerstone of Nigeria's efforts to build a more prosperous, inclusive, and competitive economy. With Nasarawa State as a committed partner, the path forward is bright.

Rukaiya el-Rufai Rallies Stakeholders To Accelerate Human Capital Development For Nigeria's Future

By Anita Dennis

In a compelling and visionary presentation, the Acting Coordinator of Nigeria's Human Capital Development (HCD) 2.0 program, Ms. Rukaiya el-Rufai, has laid out a roadmap for the program's next phase, emphasizing the essential role of health, education, and labour force participation in driving Nigeria's economic growth and social stability.

Her presentation was a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities ahead, highlighting the need for collaboration between government, private sector partners, and stakeholders to mobilize resources, enhance capacity, and scale up impactful interventions.

She highlighted the achievements of HCD 1.0 while offering an updated strategy that addresses emerging realities such as climate

change, digital economy inclusion, and gender equality. She made it clear that the HCD 2.0 program's success lies in its ability to foster collaboration at both the federal and state levels, with a focus on peer learning and technical assistance.

Calling for the federal government and stakeholders to commit to the vision of "A healthy and inclusive Nigeria with an educated workforce," the Coordinator stressed

that accelerating program implementation, fostering innovative financing, and ensuring robust monitoring are key to realizing HCD 2.0's ambitious goals, including reaching a Human Capital Index score of 0.6 by 2030.

Her work marks a significant milestone as Nigeria seeks to transform its economy through strategic human capital investments, signalling a brighter future for generations to come.

Vice President Shettima: Championing Nigeria's Future Through HCD

In a time of profound economic challenges, Nigeria is fortunate to have a leader like Vice President Kashim Shettima, a visionary who understands that the key to unlocking Nigeria's true potential lies not in its oil reserves or natural resources, but in its people.

Through his steadfast leadership of the Human Capital Development (HCD) 2.0 initiative, Vice President Shettima is proving himself to be a transformative figure, championing a bold and far-reaching strategy that places the health, education, and skills of Nigerians at the forefront of the nation's path to prosperity.

From the moment he assumed his role in 2023, he has shown a deep commitment to addressing the root causes of Nigeria's socio-economic challenges. He has recognized that no nation can truly thrive without first investing in its human capital—its most valuable asset. With HCD 2.0, a program that he leads with passion and precision, Vice President Shettima has put forth a vision that will empower Nigeria's workforce, improve lives, and accelerate the country's journey to global competitiveness.

One of the defining characteristics of his leadership is his clarity of vision. HCD 2.0 is not just another policy initiative—it is a comprehensive, future-oriented strategy aimed at ensuring Nigeria's long-term economic success. Under his guidance, the program focuses on three critical areas: education, healthcare, and workforce participation—each an essential pillar of sustainable growth.

His leadership in HCD 2.0 reflects a deep understanding of the challenges Nigeria faces and the need for innovative solutions. He knows that education is the bedrock of national development. He has made it his mission to address the educational gaps that have long plagued Nigeria. By prioritizing investments in digital literacy, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, and vocational training, Vice President Shettima is laying the groundwork for a future workforce that will be equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global economy.

Under his watchful eye, HCD 2.0 is setting Nigeria's youth on a path toward success. He understands that the nation's strength lies in its young, dynamic population, and through his focus on education, he is ensuring that this generation—and those to come—will be ready to lead Nigeria into a brighter future.

Vice President Shettima's leadership goes beyond education. He recognizes that a nation cannot progress without a healthy population, and this is why he has made healthcare a cornerstone of HCD 2.0. Under his guidance, the program aims to ensure that Nigerians—

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Vice President Kashim Shettima

regardless of their background—have access to quality healthcare services.

From maternal and child health to nutrition and immunization programs, his vision is one where every Nigerian has the opportunity to lead a healthy, productive life. He knows that a healthy workforce is a productive workforce, and his commitment to expanding healthcare access is a testament to his understanding of what it takes to drive

economic growth.

Through his leadership, HCD 2.0 is not just improving health outcomes but also creating a more capable and resilient workforce. His dedication to healthcare reform is setting Nigeria on a path toward reducing preventable diseases, boosting productivity, and fostering long-term prosperity.

Another aspect of Vice President Shettima's remarkable leadership is

his unyielding commitment to gender equality. Under his stewardship, HCD 2.0 places a strong emphasis on closing the gender gap, recognizing that empowering women is not just a moral imperative, but an economic one. He understands that women's participation in the workforce is key to driving national growth, and his policies reflect this conviction.

By advocating for equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women, Vice President Shettima is fostering an environment where every Nigerian, regardless of gender, can contribute fully to the nation's progress. His leadership is driving the kind of systemic change that will allow Nigeria to harness the full potential of its people—both men and women—ensuring that the country's growth is inclusive and sustainable.

Vice President Shettima also knows that the government cannot drive development alone. His emphasis on private sector partnerships is a testament to his pragmatic leadership style. Under HCD 2.0, he has created an enabling environment for businesses to invest in human capital development, recognizing that the private sector's resources and expertise are vital to scaling the program's impact.

By fostering strong collaborations between the government and private enterprises, he is ensuring that HCD 2.0 reaches every corner of Nigeria. His ability to engage the private sector in areas like education, healthcare, and workforce development demonstrates his forward-thinking approach to governance—one that leverages the full spectrum of national resources to accelerate progress.

Vice President Shettima's leadership of HCD 2.0 is nothing short of transformative. In a country where many have lost faith in leadership, he is proving that dedicated, visionary leadership can make a difference. His commitment to human capital development, his focus on health and education, and his determination to close the gender gap all speak to a leader who is deeply invested in the future of Nigeria.

As we look toward 2030 and beyond, it is clear that Vice President Shettima's impact will be felt for generations to come. His leadership of HCD 2.0 has laid the foundation for a more prosperous, inclusive, and competitive Nigeria. By prioritizing the development of its people, he is ensuring that Nigeria's greatest resource—its human capital—is nurtured and empowered to drive the nation's future success.

Vice President Kashim Shettima has proven that he is not only a leader for today but a visionary for tomorrow. Through HCD 2.0, he is positioning Nigeria to rise above its challenges, harness the power of its people, and take its rightful place on the global stage.

From the moment he assumed his role in 2023, he has shown a deep commitment to addressing the root causes of Nigeria's socio-economic challenges