



Fiscal Responsibility: AIAE urges action by State Governments

African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE) has rekindled the hope of Nigerians on having fiscal discipline entrenched in the nation's economic life at it brought stakeholders together on 22nd February, 2010 in Transcorp Hilton Abuja to rub minds on how the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007 (FRA) could be implemented to checkmate fiscal rascality at all levels of government. Such evidence-based stakeholders' policy dialogue is one of the major operational approaches through which the Institute connects key stakeholders from across government, private sector and civil society to discuss government's policy thrusts and proffer answers to topical economic questions.

The Policy Seminar titled, "Progress and Implementation Challenges of Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007," was chaired by Honourable Esemey Eyibo, member of the Federal House of Representatives and Chairman, House Committee on Media and Publicity, and was attended by 75 participants drawn from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) including journalists from both print and electronic media. Also

in attendance were Policy Analysis and Research Project (PARP), National Assembly, represented by Dr Patterson Ekeocha, while Dr. Usman Okpanachi represented Dr. Ladi Hamalai, the Country Director/Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nigeria.

Hon. Eyibo commended AIAE for organising the Seminar, stating that leadership recruitment process in Nigeria was hampering the achievement of fiscal responsibility and public accountability. While welcoming the participants to the event, the Executive Director of AIAE, Professor Eric Eboh, noted that the Policy Seminar was an element of AIAE's ongoing initiatives in

research-policy linkages, aimed at contributing to evidence-based public policies, in line with its institutional mission. Prof. Eboh said the need for fiscal responsibility, accountability and transparency in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, adding that government's fiscal and budget system is a powerful mechanism for driving productivity, growth and prosperity. He said though macroeconomic and fiscal policies had improved over the past 6 years, poor budget and public expenditure management remains a vicious drag on government effectiveness.

He noted that most state govern-

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Participants at the Policy Seminar on the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007, held at Transcorp Hilton in Abuja

AIAE begins Research on Cost-Effective Agric Funding

In the bid to find ways through which agricultural operations in the country can be effectively funded, the African Institute for Applied Economics, (AIAE) is putting in place research programmes on cost-effective agricultural growth options for poverty reduction. The Institute will consult relevant government stakeholders and obtain their inputs to make the research more relevant and useful to policy making and programme planning.

The disclosure was made by the Executive Director, AIAE, Prof. Eric Eboh on 26th January, 2010 in Valencia Hotel in Abuja at a seminar to herald the programme. At the event attended by stakeholders from Federal Universities, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Federal government parastatals, National Planning Commission

(NPC), International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), USAID, and others, Eboh stated that agriculture sector has a critical role to play in poverty reduction in Nigeria, adding that seven out of ten farming households in Nigeria are living below the national poverty line and six out of ten poor households are farmers.

According to him, poverty reduction is both a legitimate and necessary social and economic imperative and a key developmental goal as reflected by Millennium

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Group photograph of participants at a workshop on Research on Agricultural Funding in Abuja

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AIAE inaugurates Policy Think Group

African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), on 29th January, 2010 in Enugu inaugurated a Policy Think Group (PTG), devoted to intellectual analysis and public dissemination of all sectors of the economy. The intent is to advance evidence-based decision making by stakeholders including government, private sector, civil society and the entire development community with the objective of contributing sound analytic perspectives that can inform and guide public discourse of topical economic policy matters.

PTG is an “independent think platform” constituted by experts and practitioners, whose primary motivation is to contribute ideas for the common good. Though the Group is facilitated by the African Institute for Applied Economics, the opinions of individual members of the

Group and the entire Group do not necessarily reflect official policy of the Institute.

PTG, at this maiden meeting, had a brainstorming session on the challenges and implications of federal government budget proposal for 2010 especially on key issues including rationality for assumptions and targets, links of resource allocation priorities of the government as given by the Seven-Point Agenda, fiscal balance, adequacy of budget documentation, balance of capital-recurrent allocations, alignment of allocations to service delivery and alignment and global best fiscal and budget management principles and practices. The summary of the observations and recommendations of the Group was widely reported in the media.



Members of the PTG pose for a group photograph

Members of the Group are Eric Eboh, Ukwu I. Ukwu, Nkechi Mbanefoh, Onyukwu E. Onyukwu, Chukwuma Agu, Oliver Ujah, Oby Nwankwo, Stan Ukeje, Kalu Oji, Friday Ohuche, John Okoye, Frank Amagwu, Anthonia Ifeyinwa Achike, Ralph Ndigwe, Moses Oduh, Kanayo Ogujiuba, Chidiebere Ibe, Emeka Nzeh and Ubah Chiuwike. The coordinator of the group is Uzochukwu Amakom while Sola Oluwadare is the secretary.

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ments have not undertaken enduring fiscal responsibility reforms, as evidenced in the fact that only few state governments have enacted equivalents of the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007. Prof. Eric Eboh therefore urged actions by state and local governments to institute appropriate legal and institutional frameworks for fiscal responsibility and public financial management. This, he said, is crucial because of the increased share of state and local governments in national public spending

The Chairman of Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC), Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Jibril Yelwa, who was also at the Seminar, traced the challenge of fiscal responsibility in Nigeria to the emergence of oil as the dominant source of fiscal revenue since early 1970s.

It was a consensus at the Seminar that fiscal responsibility must be enthroned also in the states and local governments, enlightenment and education of the citizens particularly the stakeholders should be intensified, there is need for increase in the monitoring and enforcement efforts to ensure that the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), budgets, audited financial accounts, and other reports are prepared and published as and when due and more rigour should be introduced into investigating infractions and reporting of same to the Attorney-General for possible prosecutions and that corruption in

United Nations Environment Programme: Sustainable Resource Management

The Executive Director, Prof. Eric Eboh attended the meeting of the Sustainable Water Management Working Group of the International Resource Panel for Sustainable Resource Management of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The scientific meeting held from 28-29 March 2010 at Nairobi, Kenya, was designed to finalise the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Sustainable Water Management working group. The 'Resource Panel' was launched by UNEP in 2007, with the objective of providing independent, coherent and authoritative assessments of policy relevance on the sustainable use of natural resources and in particular their environmental impacts over the full life cycle. It also seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

The meeting was also attended by Prof. Walter A. Pengue, Universidad de General Sarmiento, Argentina, Dr. Guido Sonnemann, Programme Officer UNEP, Mr. George C Varughese, President, Development Alternative, India and Dr. Kevin Urama, African Technology Policy Studies Network, Kenya and others.



Prof. Eric Eboh at the Working meeting of the Panel in Nairobi

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Development Goal one (MDGs1), noting that “funding constraints necessitate judicious allocation of funds between competing agriculture sector programs”.

AIAE's Executive Director averred that the study, among others, would rank agriculture commodities according to their cost-effectiveness in reducing poverty in each zone, saying presently, such information appears not to be available or utilized in the planning of agriculture programmes. He said knowledge guide for policymaking and programming results will help the Planning, Policy Analysis and Statistics (PPAS) department, the Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA), the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) and international organizations involved in planning agriculture sector programmes to make the greatest impacts using their limited funds.

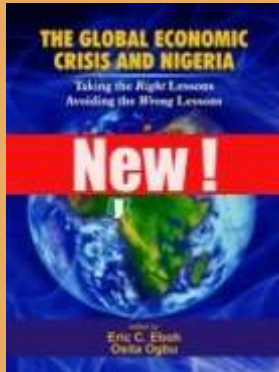
He disclosed that the research would be most relevant if given required support in providing needed output, yield, expenditure and cost data, utilisation of the findings of the study by the relevant government agencies, communicating results and promoting their use and sustenance of lines of communication and collaboration with relevant staff.

New Publication

“Global Economic Crisis: Taking the Right Lessons, Avoiding the Wrong Lessons”

Edited by Eric C. Eboh and Osita Ogbu

The book is designed to enlighten government and private sector managers, civil society actors and development practitioners on the global economic crisis as it affects Nigeria. It also sensitises stakeholders towards advocating for analysis-based responses to crisis. As one of the few organised analyses on the global economic crisis and Nigeria, this book will enhance the quality of public discourse on the appropriate policy responses.



AIAE Peer Learning

The 2010 AIAE Peer Learning Series kicked off in March with discussion on the theme: MDGs Costing in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects with a presentation by Mr. Barth T. Feese, Head, Costing Unit, Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Millennium Development Goal on 17th March, 2010 at AIAE Conference Room. Participants were taken through how the country had demonstrated its commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by taking practical steps towards implementing an MDG-based planning approach in its development policy, strategies and reform programme.



Participants at the March Peer Learning Seminar

Good News at AIAE

It was a downpour of blessings for the Institute recently as God blessed Mr. and Mrs. Umunah Oha, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Ujah, Dr. and Mrs. Uzochukwu Amakom and Mr. and Mrs. Emeka Celestine Nzeh with bouncing baby girls and boy.

Dr. Moses Oduh, the Databank Coordinator, also bid farewell to bachelorhood by hooking formerly Miss Maryann Ukaeme in Holy Matrimony on 27th December, 2009.

The Institute's Administrative Secretary, Mrs. Beatrice Ndibe, the Librarian, Miss Queeneth Anyanwu, and Office Assistant, Mr. Kingsley Udonsek turned a year older on 17th February, 2010, 5th March, 2010 and 8th March, 2010 respectively.

An Associate Fellow, Prof. E.M. Igbokwe, became the Director, Centre for Rural Development and Cooperatives, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in August, 2009 while Dr. Vincent

Onodugo, also an Associate Fellow has been elevated to the position of Associate Dean (Students Affairs) University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus; effective from September, 2009.



The newly married couple, Dr. and Mrs. Moses Oduh pose for a photograph after the ceremony

AIAE, ATPS strengthen ties ... collaborate on IAPMA

Members of the technical team on Innovative Alternatives to Prosperity Metrics in Africa, (IAPMA) drawn from African Institute for Applied Economics, Nigeria, (AIAE) and African Technology Policy Studies Network, Kenya, (ATPS) on March 10, 2010 met in Nairobi to discuss and propose the rationale, objectives, methods, activities and expected impact of the project. Prosperity Metrics currently relies heavily on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) indices as the determinant for critical policy decisions in Africa.

IAPMA is a collaborative project being initiated by AIAE and ATPS. The collaborative project is as a result of the deepening institutional relationship between the two bodies. It is also the continuation of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between AIAE and ATPS to improve mutually benefiting capacities and networking resources. The duo had, in November 2009, held an International conference on the theme, "Africa's Response to Global Challenges through Science, Technology and Innovation", in Abuja Nigeria.

Speaking at the IAPMA inaugural meeting, the Executive Director of AIAE, Prof Eric Eboh emphasised the need to start from the known and establish to what extent the current thought has influenced the policy paradigm by interrogating the existing African wide approaches in terms of how compliant they are based on certain bench marks.

His counterpart in ATPS, Dr. Kevin Urama noted that IAPMA initiative was timely for African Governments, adding that, "For a long time Africa has been on the receiving end of development and innovation and this is an opportunity for Africa to take leadership in greening its economy." He noted that the integrated systems approach was enshrined in all facets of ATPS and its programmes.

The meeting resolved that the two organizations would work together towards organizing a roundtable consultative forum for key African Institutions under the theme "Innovative Alternatives to Prosperity Measures." The forum will serve as an entry point for the broader initiative, foster buy-in and promote visibility of the initiative. The round table will aim to provide a better understanding of the

economy as an inclusive system that interacts with the society and the environment, and present emerging green alternatives to brown economies.

The initiative aims to provide a better understanding of the economy as an inclusive system that interacts with the society and the environment. Present at the meeting were Prof. Eric Eboh (Executive Director, AIAE), Dr. Kevin Urama (Executive Director, ATPS), Dr. Nicholas Ozor (Research Officer Post Doc, ATPS), Ms Wairimu Mwangi (Research Officer, ATPS) and Dr. Olumuyiwa Alaba (Senior Research Officer, ATPS).



Members of the AIAE and ATPS teams at the meeting in Nairobi

IDRC: AIAE, 23 others meet on Monitoring and Evaluation

African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE) participated in the First Think Tank Initiative Learning Event/Workshop tagged "Strengthening Organizational Learning and Performance of Policy Research Institutions through Monitoring and Evaluation," between March 8-10, 2010. The workshop was organized by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) at the Nairobi Serena Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya, for all the 24 grantee institutions in East and West Africa. AIAE was represented by Prof. Eric Eboh (Executive Director) and Mr. Oliver C. Ujah (Deputy Research Coordinator).

The learning event proper was preceded with a welcome cocktail for all participants hosted by the Think Tank Initiative (TTI). This cocktail programme started by 17.00 hours on the 7th of March, 2010, and was aimed at familiarization of the participants (48), facilitators and the resource persons with one another.

The learning event which spanned three days comprised of seven sessions, group work/discussions and group lunches and dinner.



Prof Eboh and Mr. Oliver Ujah and two other participants at the M & E Workshop in Nairobi

Press Clips

The Inauguration of the AIAE Policy Think Tank Group was reported in Vanguard (February 17, 2010), BusinessDay (February 18, 2010) and Nigerian Tribune (February 23, 2010).

The Seminar on Cost-Effective Agricultural Growth Options for Poverty Reduction which was held in Abuja was reported in the Financial Standard (February 19, 2010) and Compass (February 22, 2010).

The Policy Seminar on Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) 2007, which held in Abuja on February 22, 2010 was reported in the Nigerian Tribune (February 25, 2010), Guardian (February 24, 2010), Daily Independent (February 21, 2010), The Sun (February 25, 2010), The Nation (February 23, 2010), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (February 24, 2010), and Ray Power FM (February 24, 2010).