

**PRESS BRIEFING BY THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER FOR
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, DR. (MRS.) VERONICA EFE OGBUAGU,
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MINISTRY**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,
All protocols observed.

Introduction

As you are already aware, the Ministry of Education as we all know it has recently been split into two Ministries namely, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education. In addition to this, the Scholarship Board, which used to be a Parastatal of the Ministry, has been constituted into the Ministry of Students' Affairs and Scholarships- a full fledged Ministry headed by a Commissioner.

My own Ministry, the Ministry of Primly and Secondary Education, is the most challenging of the Ministries as its services touch virtually every home in the State. The Ministry is charged with the responsibility of formulating Educational Policies with regards to Primary and Secondary Education and ensuring effective implementation of all government policies and programmes in Basic and Secondary Education. In a nutshell, it has the following statutory responsibilities viz;-

- (i) Implementation of Educational Policies in the State.
- (ii) School Curriculum.
- (iii) Examinations and Standards/Continuous Assessment
- (iv) Educational Services
- (v) Management and Supervision of Educational Institutions atnursery, primary and secondary level.
- (vi) Educational Planning, Research and Statistics
- (vii) Primary & Secondary Schools Sports
- (viii) Educational Guidance and Counselling
- (ix) Book Review
- (x) Special Education
- (xi) Promotion of Arts and Culture in Schools.

The Ministry carries out these onerous responsibilities through the underlisted Departments, Units and Parastatals

- (a) Planning Research & Statistics Department
- (b) Science, Vocational & Technical Education Department
- (c) Examinations and Standards Department
- (d) Schools Department
- (e) Inspectorate Department
- (f) Administration and Supplies
- (g) Finance and Accounts
- (h) Women Education Centre (WEC)
- (i) Post Primary Education Board (PPEB)

(j) State Primary Education Board (SPEB) soon to give way to the State Universal, Basic Education Board (SUBEB)

In addition, the Ministry has a field office in each of the 25 Local Government Areas, headed by a Chief Inspector of Education who should be an officer not less than salary grade level 15. Apart from ensuring that Government's educational policies are implemented at the grass roots level, they inspect all educational institutions under them to ensure learning is taking place in the schools.

NO OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IN DELTA STATE

S/N	L.G.A.	NO OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS	NO. OF PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS	TOTAL
1.	Aniocha North	39	08	47
2.	Anicha South	54	27	81
3.	Bomadi	12	03	15
4.	Burutu	64	02	66
5.	Ethiope East	64	13	77
6.	Ethiope West	56	12	68
7.	Ika North South	61	27	88
8.	Ika South	58	25	83
9.	Isoko North	41	10	51
10.	Isoko South	44	-	44
11.	Ndokwa East	72	5	77
12.	Ndokwa East	52	13	65
13.	Okpe	40	12	52
14.	Oshimili North	27	20	47
15.	Oshimili South	30	44	74
16.	Patani	18	-	18
17.	Sapele	51	64	115
18.	Udu	34	53	87
19.	Ughelli North	88	84	172
20.	Ughelli South	57	9	66
21.	Ukwuani	31	13	44
22.	Uvwie	25	175	200
23.	Warri North	37	-	37
24.	Warri South	54	113	167
25.	Warri South West	37	-	37
	TOTAL	1146	732	1878

2 PRIMARY EDUCATION

One of the areas where the Ibori's Administration made the greatest impact in the lives of Deltans is in Education. Before his coming to office, the education sector was neglected

to the extent that there was massive exodus of pupils and students from Government owned schools to the poorly managed private ones. Structures such as classrooms and laboratories were in various states of disrepair. But since the inception of the Ibori Administration in the State in 1999, giant strides have been taken to improve the situation. A total of five hundred (500) dilapidated schools building were renovated including block wall fencing of over one thousand (1,000) Primary Schools. For example, the number of primary schools in the State increased from 1,004 in 1999 to 1,146 in 2005. Also, the number of children in the primary schools increased from 328,381 in 1999 to 364,647 in 2005.

(I) The number of teaching staff increased from 14,795 in 1999 to 15,779 in 2005. Out of this number, 1,508 are graduates with B. Ed. in various fields of Education; 10,211 are N.C.E. holders and 4,060 are TC II Certificate holders, These are made up of 4,782 males and 10,997 females.

(ii) The State has a total of 2,715 non-teaching staff, made up of 1,774 males and 941 females

(iii) A total of 11, 238 primary school teachers and staff of Local Education Authorities were promoted during the 2004/2005 fiscal year with financial implication of N235,427, 242.54 out of which N119,793,813.54 has been paid leaving a balance of N115,633,429.00 standing as arrears arising from these promotions. Besides, The monthly financial implication for the implementation of the promotion is N38,072,349.73. It is pertinent to inform you that efforts are being made by the Board to clear these arrears.

(iv) The State has a total of 8,599 classrooms in use and requires additional 6,137 in the public primary schools. To meet up with the required number of classrooms, the State has made a provision of N200 million in this year's budget for the first phase of an accelerated programme of primary school renovation/rehabilitation. Also, seventy (70) primary schools have been identified for renovation/rehabilitation made up of 27 in the Delta South Senatorial District; 26 in the Delta Central Senatorial District; and 17 in the Delta North Senatorial District

(v) There were no furniture in the classrooms and staff rooms and pupils were made to carry benches and chairs to schools from their homes when this Administration took over. To tackle the problem of shortage of furniture in primary schools, the State Government has embarked upon fast tracking the production of furniture through reputable furniture Companies in the State instead of road side Carpenters. In the first phase of the programme, a total of 23,549 2-seater desks have been earmarked for construction/distribution to primary schools across the State amounting to N299,990,800.00.

3 COMPULSORY UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

The Federal Government has come up with a nine - year free and compulsory basic education known as Universal Basic Education (UBE). The Programme embodies a free, compulsory and uninterrupted nine (9)-year school programme comprising primary education and Junior Secondary Education. This implies that Common Entrance Examination to Junior Secondary Schools shall be abolished with effect from the next academic session beginning in September, 2006. Similarly, the Primary school Leaving Certificate Examination shall be abolished as there shall be 100% transition from primary to Junior Secondary schools. In its place, we will now have Universal Basic Certificate Examination at the end of the UBE Programme in JS

!!!. As you are probably aware, we are yet to implement the UBE programme in Delta State. A Bill has been passed by the House of Assembly, which is currently undergoing the necessary scrutiny by His Excellency, for necessary improvements before assenting to it. It is hoped that when the Bill is assented to, Delta State will be able to access the funds which other States are already enjoying. The delay is informed by the need to exercise utmost caution in arriving at an administrative framework that will ensure effective management and judicious application of funds. Under the UBE scheme, every parents shall ensure that his child/ward receive and completes Primary Education and Junior Secondary Education. The implementation of the Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education Programme shall be financed from:

(i) Funds allocated to the Board by the Universal Basic Education Commission from the bloc grant accruing and allocated to it from the consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federal Government.

(ii) Budgetary allocations by the State Government which shall be not less than 15% of the Local Government contribution to basic Education and released regularly to the Board for running cost, provision of infrastructures in schools and general development of UBE in the State.

(iii) Annual budgetary allocations by the Local Government of not less than 45% of the total revenue accruing to them from Federal and State Governments.

4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

At present, there is a total of 385 secondary schools with a total enrolment of 200,384 students. The Junior Secondary Schools have a total student enrolment of 115,875 made up of 58,793 males and 57,082 females. On the other hand, the senior Secondary Schools have a total student enrolment of 84,509 comprising 44,061 males and 40,448 females. The State has a total of 11,256 teachers in Public Secondary Schools, out of which 5,838 have professional (B.Ed.) degrees, 858 are degree holders without professional

qualifications, 4,261 are N.C.E. holders; while 299 are HND holders. Of the 11,256 teachers, 4,912 are males while 6,344 are females. The State has a total of 3,574 classrooms in use, and requires additional 2,987 in its Public Secondary Schools. The State has a total of 3,055 non- teaching staff comprising 2,146 males and 909 females.

NO OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS. PUBLIC & PRIVATE IN DELTA STATE

S/N	L.G.A	NO OF SCHOOLS			TOTAL
		PUBLIC	PRIVATE	I.C.E	
1.	ANIOCHA NORTH	17	4	-	21
2.	ANIOCHA SOUTH	17	21	1	39
3.	BOMADI	8	-	-	8
4.	BURUTU	15	-	-	15
5.	ETHIOPE EAST	21	16	1	38
6.	ETHIOPE WEST	11	7	2	20
7.	IKA NORTH EAST	20	17	-	37
8.	IKA SOUTH	18	13	2	33
9.	ISOKO NORTH	17	11	1	29
10.	ISOKO SOUTH	16	8	1	27
11.	NDOKWA EAST	19	3	-	19
12.	NDOKWA WEST	10	10	-	29
13.	OKPE	10	8	-	18
14.	OSHIMILI NORTH	10	11	-	21
15.	OSHIMILI SOUTH	12	12	1	25
16.	PATANI	7	-	-	7
17.	SAPELE	21	31	31	53
18.	UDU	6	26	26	33
19.	UKWUANI	11	10	10	22
20.	UGHELLI NORTH	35	49	49	87
21.	UGHELLI SOUTH	16	4	4	20
22.	UVWIE	15	75	75	90
23.	WARRI NORTH	6	-	-	6
24.	WARRI SOUTH	20	65	65	86
25.	WARRI SOUTH WEST	4	-	-	4
	TOTAL	370	401	17	788

5. SPECIAL EDUCATION

There are 8 (eight) schools for the Handicapped in the State. They are:-

- (i) School for the physically handicapped, Asaba
- (ii) Special Education Unit, Issele-Uku
- (iii) Special Education Centre, Agbor

- (iv) Special Education Unit, Kwale
- (v) Special Education Unit, Oleh
- (vi) Special Education Centre, Ozoro
- Special Education Centre, Ughelli
- Alderstown School for the Deaf, Warri

The Ministry recently made a proposal for the establishment of a secondary school for the handicapped to be located in the State capital with full boarding facilities. I am happy to inform you that this proposal has been approved by the State Government, and that a budgetary allocation of N150 million has been earmarked in this year's approved budget for the first phase of the project.

However, having just been advised that there is a National Policy on Special Education that discourages the establishment of secondary schools for the Handicapped, to enable them to integrate with normal persons at the secondary school level, the Ministry is seriously thinking of converting it to a boarding Special Basic Educational Institution (for the Handicapped). The school will be staffed with professionals like Audiologists, Speech Therapists, etc. It is our intention to make it a leader among such schools in other parts of the Country.

6. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

As you may be aware, we have 745 private primary schools and 401 private secondary schools. However, some of the private primary schools were in very bad shape and conducive to teaching and learning. Some were sharing premises with residential buildings, business centres and workshops. Some were terribly dilapidated and ramshackled. Minimum standards for establishment of the private schools were not adhered to, despite repeated warnings and follow ups. Some were not even registered at all and were operating illegally.

Consequently, in September, 2005, my Ministry embarked on the exercise of closing down such schools. Altogether, 360 of them were closed down. Of this number, 12 of them were recently re-opened after they had complied with the Ministry's stipulated guidelines as regards facilities and infrastructure.

7. RE-OPENING OF CLOSED DOWN SCHOOLS

You may wish to know that during the Military era, precisely 1984, many Government schools were closed down but as soon as this Administration came on board in 1999, the affected Communities inundated the Ministry with requests to re-open their schools.

The Executive Council in her wisdom gave approval for the reopening of 51 of the affected schools. Out of this number, 12 were re-opened in 2003, another 11 in 2004 and 15 in 2006.

. So, altogether, 38 of the schools have been re-opened. The remaining 13 will be re-opened in the years ahead when conditions are right for doing so.

8. RENOVATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There is no gainsaying the fact that a lot has been achieved in this regard in the last seven (7) years. This Administration inherited unspeakable infrastructural decay in 1999. So far, over N9 billion has been expended on renovation/rehabilitation of schools. In 2005 alone, about 451 contracts were awarded amounting to N2.5 billion. The interesting aspect of this renovation exercise is the provision of water and toilet facilities in a number of schools- facilities which were almost forgotten in our school system.

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS

During my unscheduled visits to public secondary schools, I observed, to my dismay that several schools, especially those in the urban areas were overpopulated, thereby, overstressing the available human resources and physical facilities. It is against this background that my Ministry has decided to embark on the establishment of a new secondary school in Asaba. Meanwhile, one has been approved for Ekpan and another one has been proposed for Effurun to be known as Urhobo College III. The sum of N120 million has been earmarked for these projects in the 2006 approved budget.

10. TECHNICAL COLLEGES

As you are aware, there are six (6) functional Technical Colleges in Delta State today. Since the Ibori Administration, a lot of progress has been made in the area of Science and Technology. This includes the following

- (i) Construction/Renovation of Science Laboratories and workshops in all the 6 Technical Colleges.
- (ii) Purchase and distribution of Science and Technology equipment to all 6 Technical Colleges and Secondary Schools in the 25 Local government Areas of the State.
- (iii) organizing regular Science Fairs/Quiz competitions and Exhibitions in the State and participation in such competitions at the National Levels. The State in 2003 participated in Science and Technology Exhibition in South Africa featuring projects on Soya beans and Garri processing machines for Poverty eradication.
- (iv) Delta State also hosted the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) conference in 2004.
- (v) 123 Secondary schools were supplied with a set of computer and accessories each in 2005
- (vi) Scholarships have been awarded for Technical Education in the past 3 years.

11. TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES

As you are probably aware, there are two (2) Teacher Training College awarding teachers Grade II Certificates in the State. They are Agbon Teachers College at Isiokolo in Ethiope East Local Government Area and Esenaebe Teachers College Bomadi in Bomadi Local Government Area. These Colleges produce teachers for primary schools. However, the National Council on Education, in keeping with the National Policy on Education, has made NCE the minimum qualification for teachers in Nigeria. Consequently, the TC II Certificate has been phased out in some States of the Federation. Delta State will soon phase out the Grade II Teachers Colleges probably with effect from 2006/2007 academic session.

12. ETF PROJECTS

Apart from the effort being made by the State Government in the development of infrastructure in schools, other bodies such as ETF, NDDC, Shell, Chevron. MPP3. PTAs and Private individuals have assisted in providing basic facilities to schools- Of particular note, is the contribution being made by ETF. Within the past two years, ETF has spent over N72 million in constructing classroom blocks, furniture, libraries and procuring an 18 seater Air-Conditioned Bus including Television sets and other instructional materials for the Alderstown School For the Deaf, Warri.

13. SCHOOLS IN THE RIVERINE AREAS

To solve the problem of neglect in Riverine Areas, a sub-head, with a provision of N50 million, has been created in the 2006 budget specifically for Riverine Areas aimed at building staff quarters to accommodate teachers in areas with difficult terrain. This is to enable them settle down to work in their duty stations. Another Sub-head, with a provision of N100 million was also created for the renovation of classroom blocks in Riverine Schools.

AKPEJA NOMADIC EDUCATION

On the need to provide proper education for the children of the fishing Communities in the State, this Ministry has concluded plans for the establishment of (Akpeja) Nomadic Education for such Communities. To this end, efforts are being made to construct schools on boats for four (4) distinct riverine Communities spread across the State. It is believed that when fully established, with the Universal Basic Education Programme in place, more children will have access to basic education.

15. RETURN OF SCHOOLS TO MISSIONS

I am sure you are aware of the problems associated with the return of schools to their former owners. Past administrations have examined the issue of return of schools to their former owners but each could not effect it. In Delta State in particular, when it was to be effected, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) called out the Teachers on strike. Their fears were that there are not enough schools in the State to accommodate the teachers and children that would be displaced from the Mission schools by the return.

Experience from other states showed that they first of all built new schools almost equal in number to the ones to be returned and also in the same vicinity. In line with this thinking, His Excellency has recently approved a new school in Ekpan. Two (2) new secondary schools are also being planned for Asaba and Effurun to be located in West End Asaba and Urhobo College respectively. In this manner, the Missions and private individuals are called upon to come forward to establish new schools particularly in urban areas so that the fear of the general public over this matter, particularly NUT, will be allayed.

16. ACTIVITIES OF EXAMINATIONS & STANDARDS DEPARTMENT

The Examinations and Standards Department of the Ministry of Education, is charged with the responsibility of conducting, supervising and monitoring all school examinations (Primary, Secondary and Teachers Training Colleges). It also conducts some Certificate Examinations.

The Department also conducts the Compulsory Examinations for Administrative and Executive Officers in the State Civil and Local Government Services. The Department handles all matters affecting Certificate evaluation and Standards. In addition the Department has since 1990 assisted in enhancing the crusade against examination malpractice in the State by making elaborate arrangement for the monitoring of all examinations in all the nooks and crannies of the State.

This crusade, which was intensified in the Ibori Administration, has gone a long way to restore ethics to our examinations in the school system. A major aspect of the fight against Examination malpractice is the Annual Award which has been introduced for those who have risked their lives in the fight. I must say that our humble efforts in this crusade are gaining recognition nation-wide. For example, recently His Excellency, the Governor, Chief James Onanefe Ibori was presented with the prestigious award of the Best Examination Ethics Governor in the South -South Geo-political Region by the Chairman, Examination Ethics Project, Abuja.

Also, my humble self was given the Role Model Award by the same body. Today, Examination Malpractice is no longer in vogue as the use of Examination Marshals in the monitoring of examinations and enlightenment campaigns have diminished the menace to a

level of insignificance, and the students still given to the obnoxious practice are drifting to other States to write examinations to further help curb Examination malpractice, the State Government has embarked on building of

Examination Halls, to create conducive sitting arrangements during Examinations. In addition, Libraries and Laboratory Facilities are being expanded in almost all the schools.

17. SPORTS

Since 1999, this Administration has procured various items of sports equipment and distributed them to schools. These include hurdles, shot-put, etc. In addition, games like Volleyball, Basketball and Chess have been introduced in all secondary schools in the State. The Ministry has made provision for the construction of Basketball Courts in some selected schools as well as purchase of Hurdles for schools.

I am happy to note that Delta State has dominated school sports for the past six (6) years. In the year 2005, the State a. Won 2nd position in the male category of Nestle Milo National Basketball Championship for Secondary Schools. b. Emerged 4th position in the All-Nigeria Primary School Games held at Oshoabo, Ekiti State; c. Emerged 1st overall position in the All Nigeria Secondary School Games held at Makurdi, Benue State; d. Represented Nigeria in World Schools Basketball Championship in Argentina and won 1st position;

18 UTS STAFF DEPLOYMENT

This is a thorny issue that has lingered for almost a decade. We thank God that the issue has been laid to rest with the intervention of His Excellency and members of the State Executive Council. As at now, 169 UTS (Unified Teaching Service) staff have been returned to their employer- the Post Primary Education Board- with the exception of 19, for which special cases have been made. Machinery is already in motion to facilitate the proper deployment of interested UTS staff to the Ministry by the Civil Service Commission.

19. PROJECT MONITORING

To forestall the incessant abandonment, of schools projects, delay in the completion of jobs and the use of substandard materials, the Ministry has embarked on serious monitoring of her projects on monthly basis. This together with the Ministry of Economic Planning Monitoring exercises, and those of the Local Government Projects Monitors, will go a long way to ensure that contracts are executed to specification.

20. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Our concern is how to improve the quality of teaching. For some time, emphasis has been placed on capacity building of Teachers, Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Students, etc in the State. To this end, a special Head known as Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building was created with a provision of N50 million in 2004 approved budget, N75 million in 2005 and N200 million in 2006 to organize Seminars/Workshops for pupils, students, Teachers, Principals and Heads of Primary Schools. Several workshops/seminars have been organized, among which are (i) Cultism in Schools; (ii) Effective study habits in Secondary Schools; (iii) Computer Training for Secretaries/Typists;

(iv) Sensitization Seminar for newly recruited Officers; (v) Workshop on the generation of Test Items; (vi) Workshop on Continuous Assessment for Teachers in Primary and Post-primary Institutions;

(vii) Workshop on Teaching Methodology in Public Schools; (viii) Workshop on Record Keeping in Schools; and (ix) Workshop on the Teaching of Moral Instructions in Schools

21. CONSTRAINTS

At the inception of the Civilian; Administration, the State Government inherited an education industry that was near total collapse. infrastructural facilities were in ruins while the personnel were demoralized.. Within these past five years, government has made spirited efforts to improve the system through infrastructural rehabilitation/renovation and construction of new ones, provision of teaching/learning facilities and personnel motivation and development. But because of too many years of neglect, there are still very many areas yet to be covered. The major constraints in the way of progress include:

!t is hoped that this Ministry will surmount the problems above through contributions of well-meaning individuals, Community Leaders and stakeholders in the Education Industry.

22. CONCLUSION

Government is encouraged by the fact that governance becomes easier in an enlightened society than in an ignorant one. It is for these reasons that the present administration is irrevocably committed to the provision of quality education at all levels in the State. It is believed that with increased financial resources, the State Government will be able to meet the target of 26% budgetary allocation to education as is recommended by the United Nations Organization.

Thank you and God bless. Amen.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
(Headquarters)
Asaba.