

A
White
Paper

FROM

THE
NIGERIA
SYMPOSIUM
FOR
YOUNG &
EMERGING
LEADERS

MAY 30TH, 2017

THEME:

OPEN GOVERNANCE:

IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

[#TFPOpenGov](#)

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

The Symposium is an exchange of ideas and knowledge which is driven by a leadership question that concerns emerging leaders.

To complement its media advocacy on www.YMonitor.org, The Future Project hosts a one-day youth-government symposium.

Transparency and accountability will begin with a simple concept of openly communicating to one another. Today, these concepts are thriving within a growing emphasis on developing an interactive dialog between governments and the people.

Transparency helps citizens quickly visualize and understand what the government is doing in the areas that are important to them. Taking transparency and accountability a step farther allows us to actively participate in shaping our communities. The strongest movement impacting our daily lives on a personal level is the rise of citizen engagement through social media and mobile devices.

The terms transparency and accountability have become part of the daily vernacular of governments and the citizens they serve. One might even suggest these words have become a new expectation of governing which we are lacking here in Nigeria. Today, these concepts are thriving within a growing emphasis on developing an interactive dialog between governments and the people.

In a democracy, the principle of accountability holds that government officials — whether elected or appointed by those who have been elected — are responsible to the citizenry for their decisions and actions. In order that officials may be held accountable, the principle of transparency requires that the decisions and actions of those in government are open to public scrutiny and the public has a right to access government information. Both concepts are central to the very idea of democratic governance. Without accountability and transparency, democracy is impossible. In their absence, voters are necessarily ignorant in their electoral choices; elections and the notion of the will of the people lose their meaning and government has the potential to become arbitrary and self-serving.

2017 THEME:

Open Governance: Improving Transparency and Accountability in government.

SINGLE OBJECTIVE:

To strengthen government and public relation by qualitatively assessing public participation in discussion on policy issues as well as government actions on these issues. This will be achieved championing the development of a new generation of leaders who are skilled, competent and morally upright. A new age of leaders who are engaging with government policies and policy makers across all levels.

The symposium which was streamed live via ymonitor.org/live also featured

1. Exchange of ideas and knowledge in a TED-talk format focused on leadership and governance and the challenge of involvement and influence.

2. Panel Sessions and discussions

This Symposium brought together leaders in politics, business, advocacy, media, and more – to engage and discuss the theme 'Open governance: Improving transparency and accountability in government'.

Speakers at the symposium included:

- Peter Obi, Former Governor, Anambra State
- Rotimi Amaechi, Minister for Transportation Represented by Alh. Sabiu Zakari, the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transport.
- Donald Duke, Former Governor of Cross River
- Femi Fani-Kayode, Former Minister Of Aviation
- Hon. Adbulmumin Jibrin, Member of The House Of Representative.
- Deji Adeyanju, Former PDP Social Media Director
- Demola Olarenwaju, Senior Project Manager, Courier Plus
- Japheth Omojuwa, Founder And Chief Strategist, Alpha Reach
- Seun Onigbinde, Co-Founder, Budgit
- Yemi Adamolekun, Executive Director, Eie Nigeria
- Seun Okinbaloye, Political Correspondent, Channels TV;
- Dayo Israel, Chairman Aspirant, Lagos Mainland. Rinsola Abiola, Special Assistant to the Speaker of the House of Representatives

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

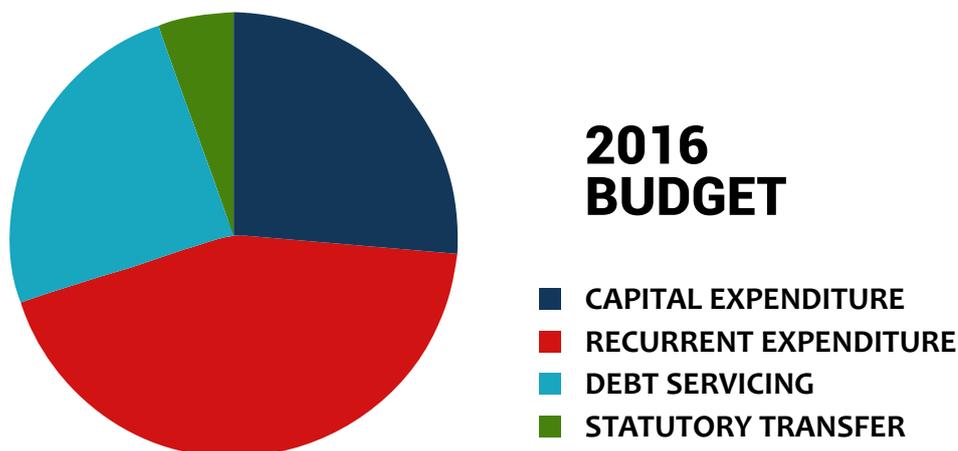
The last few years have seen a huge increase in public participation in politics and governance in Nigeria. ¹The rise of individuals and organizations demanding accountability, openness, and greater citizen power coupled with the ascendance of social media as a mobilization and demand tool has set the stage for large-scale public scrutiny of government policies and programs. ²The impact of the combination of popular interest with the media, especially new media, is best captured through a first-of-its-kind attendance of Social Media Week Lagos 2016, a conference that brings together top leaders, stakeholders and the public to explore different pertinent issues interacting with social media, by a senate president.

While cogent governance issues are brought to public consciousness through the activities of the media and other actors, it is common to observe a “transient public focus”: matters of serious public implications are only as worthy of discussion as the freshness of time of occurrence. Good governance requires ongoing vigilance from leaders to ensure effective accountability.

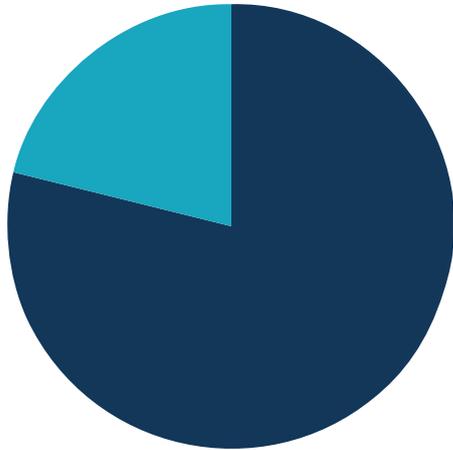
Take the recent “Gender Parity and Prohibition of Violence against Women” bill. Its rejection by the Nigerian senate has generated a lot of condemnation from the public. ³According to a Daily Trust Editorial on 25 March 2016, “if advocates of this bill really want to see its provisions become the law in Nigeria, they should quit hurling insults at senators and instead begin the serious work of garnering enough support to suitably amend the Constitution and remove the obstacles. We predict that this is a tall order.” It does not end there – very soon, conversations on the bill will stop and it will be forgotten.

This transient public focus hinders the development of concrete public responses to governance issues, leaving matters only for unproductive conversations and banter. It is to the end the symposium was created and have public officials be more responsive to the questions of the citizens.

The size of the 2016 budget for Nigeria is N6.06trillion. Capital expenditure has a share of N1.59tn; recurrent expenditure is N2.65tn; Debt servicing is N1.48tn; while statutory transfer is N351.4bn.



The 2016 budget was affected by late passage characterized by padding in the National Assembly; as at October budget performance. This is very difficult to verify because of the poor tradition of accountability and transparency in government. 2016, the federal government claimed that 58.7 per cent of funds needed to finance the N6.06 trillion budget has been approved; the Federal government also claimed that they recorded a 79 per cent



PERFORMANCE OF 2016 BUDGET

- BUDGET PERFORMANCE
- NON PERFORMANCE BUDGET

¹<http://www.macfound.org/press/from-field/macarthur-guarantees-support-nigerian-election/>

²<http://ynaija.com/bukola-saraki-social-media-week/>

³<http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/editorial/ill-fated-gender-and-equal-opportunities-bill/139452.html>

ISSUES ADDRESSED AND RESPONSES

The Symposium started with an opening from the Deputy Chief Operating officer of The Future Project, Bukonla Adebakin below are excerpts from the short speech

Good morning everybody and thanks for coming.

It is with great joy and a sense of responsibility that I welcome you to the third edition of the Nigeria Symposium for Young and Emerging Leaders.

Over two editions of this symposium we have gathered the best and brightest of Nigeria's young minds to speak, deliberate, and rub minds on the issues of leadership and governance as it relates to the twin imperative of transparency and accountability particularly.

As Nigeria's youth population continues to grow restless and more demanding, and the political atmosphere gets ready to pick up steam, we need to be reminded once again about the importance of open government. In the words of journalist, author, and political analyst, Glenn Greenwald: "Secrecy is the lynchpin of abuse of power... its enabling force, and transparency is the only real antidote."

This year's theme, 'Open Governance: Improving Transparency and Accountability in Government' is rather profound because it is central to the sustenance and success of any democracy. That is why we have brought together a stellar group of distinguished speakers and panelists - those who continue to blaze the trail and lead the charge for a better functioning democratic system - one that not only works for us, but also works for generations to come.

Powered by the National Endowment for Democracy and The Future Project we have no doubt that the people here gathered will break through the clutter and proffer viable and sustainable solutions to the issues and challenges of open governance we face in Nigeria.

Ladies and gentlemen, once again, I say welcome.

¹<http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-glenn-greenwald-20140513-story.html>

Open Budget & Government Spending

Government expenditure occurs at every level of government, from local to the federal level. Government intervention in resource allocation arose due to the failure of the market mechanism to effectively and efficiently allocate these resources. The Nigeria economy operates a mixed economy, which is the combination of both the capitalist and socialist system, that is, the interaction between the private and public sector in an economy. With expectations that public's resources will be used to meet the public's needs, It is important that the citizens have access to information on budget allocation, this will allow citizens be the judge of whether or not their government officials are good stewards of public funds.

Panelists:

- Mr Peter Obi, former Governor of Anambra State
- Seun Onigbinde, the Lead partner at BudgIT
- Mr Salau Zakari, the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transport
- Activist, Blogger and Social Commentator, Japheth J. Omojuwa.
- *MODERATOR: SEUN OKINBALOYE- POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, CHANNELS TV.*

Response:

Moderated by Channels TV political news presenter, Seun Okinbaloye, the discourse on Open Budget and Government spending focused on how imperative it is for Governments at all levels to have the deliberate will to cut down on the cost of Governance.

According to Mr Obi, in a brief opening statement before the panel discussion proper, the present situation of Governance, spending and deficits may continue and get worse if we continue to navigate the way we are at the moment. He explained that our economic problems had to with our low reserves which were a consequence of the failure to save in the rainy days. He made comparisons between the economic state of Nigeria and seven (7) other emerging economies (Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, Thailand, South Africa and the Philippines) which have high GDP values, large market Capitalization of their exchange markets and low inflation rates. He ended this introduction to the panel discussion by stating that countries are to be marketed as brands, in order to attract the confidence and interest of foreign investors.

The discussion proper began with the moderator, Seun Okinbaloye, asking if open Governance and Accountability was supposed to be a privilege which Government offers to the people. Seun Onigbinde of BudgIT, in his response, stated that despite the availability of the Budget at the Executive level, there were still over 300 agencies whose Budgets are still not publicly available. From the newly revealed National Assembly Budget, he stated find that the National Assembly spends almost ten (10) times what an Average University spends, and about fifteen (15) times the budget of an average Teaching Hospital. According to Seun Onigbinde, the Datathon organized by the EiENigeria and BudgIT showed that the National Assembly does not need a budget of more than N52bn.

In his deposition on the question of Accountability as privilege, Mr Zakari, the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transport, said that everyone has the right to ask questions about activities going on in every Ministry, Department and Agency of Government. In his defense on the existence of transparency in Government, he emphasized that the Budgets of all Agencies of the Federation are published on the website of the Budget Office of the Federation. He made effort to relate that there have been improvements as far as the transparency of Government agencies is concerned, explaining that the lack of awareness on the part of citizens of the due process involved in Government could be the main hindrance in understanding and following Government actions.

Social commentator, Japheth Omojuwa, answered the question of transparency, from the perspective that, being a country still under transition, “Transparency is not part of our culture”. However, he did say that there should be a place for shame if elected officials had to be forced to perform the duties for which they were elected. He recommended that Nigeria must be perceived and packaged as an economic entity and not just a political entity. Furthering the discussion, Mr Peter Obi blamed the lack of transparency in our society, not on culture, but on the fact that our Governments are more “transactional not transformational”. In agreement, Seun Onigbinde added that the Nigerian Political class has never tried to be transformational. “If we want to fight corruption pro-actively”, he said, “put down transparency”.

On the inquiry by the moderator on whether Nigerians have come to a tipping point for the issue of open Governance to amount to a disaster waiting to happen, Mr Omojuwa regretted that the bulk of Nigerians have not come to that tipping point, with divided factions still fixated on the fallouts of the 2015 elections. It is necessary, according to him, to begin to have the conversation revolve around the things we want as a country, as against emphasis on the things we don't want. He decried the tendency to accuse persons of ambition when they seem to be making efforts at good performance in Government.

In concluding the first panel discussion, Former Governor Peter Obi reiterated the need for Government Budgets to be explicitly published, with specified prices of line items stated clearly for citizens to be able to make comparisons with market prices, to avoid inflated figures in Budgets. He noted that the role of leadership is crucial; “if the leader is not stealing, you reduce (stealing) by 75%”. Mr Onigbinde advocated for the need for active citizens to make more demands of the Government. In his words, “Transparency has to be comprehensive, actionable, timely, and accurate. At BudgIT, we have been requesting for a Budget from the Ministry of Transportation and had been denied severally”.

SECOND SESSION

TedTalk opening by His Excellency, Gov. Peter Obi to precede the 1st panel session – Open Budget and Government Spending. He addressed the issue on the present situation of Governance in Nigeria. “Spending and deficits may continue and get worse if we continue to navigate the way we are at the moment” he said. He further explained that the economic problems had to do with our low reserves which were a consequence of the failure to save in the rainy days. He made comparisons between the economic state of Nigeria and seven (7) other emerging economies (Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, Thailand, South Africa and the Philippines) which have high GDP values, large market Capitalization of their exchange markets and low inflation rates. He ended his talk by stating that countries are to be marketed as brands, in order to attract the confidence and interest of foreign investors.

Beginning with an opening statement, Governor Duke sought to draw the attention of the young minds in the audience to the need to make a difference in the prime years of their lives. The process of making this difference, he said, was not going to be handed over, but must be demanded. According to him, “There is virtue in Youth, once the Youth is schooled right”. He mentioned that the advanced age of most of the leaders as compared with the high proportion of the youth, which form the overwhelming majority in the country, amounted to disequilibrium

Office of the Citizen

The Nigerian citizens over the years may not have functioned in their official post fully because of ignorance of their constitutional right and this is because her leaders have plundered the common wealth beyond the reach of her citizens to a level that leaves the citizens preoccupied with the cross of survival. This mantra remains a fiddle log laboriously hand-twisting men to submit to the chronicles of survival. The office of the citizen is that long neglected arm of government called the civil society. In modern democracy the arms of government spills a new classification, which is the executive, legislative, judiciary and the civil society group. Governance really is about the people and this social contract is laid down in the constitution of Nigeria. Section 14 subsections 2 a-c of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria as amended, provides that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through the constitution derives all its power and authority, that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of governance and the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. We have an office in this government. We have a right to call for the books and demand that things be done rightly. If we stand up for our right the power brokers will soon find out that it is no longer business as usual.

Panelists:

- Former Governor of Cross-Rivers State, Donald Duke
- Chairmanship aspirant for Lagos Mainland Local Government, Dayo Israel
- Rinsola Abiola, a Special Assistant to the Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Moderated by Arit Okpo

Response:

Beginning the discussion, the moderator, Arit Okpo, asked if the knowledge of the political process was important for young citizens when making demands of Government. Governor Duke, in his affirmative response, said that while citizens are presently asking questions, they were not making demands. For the few who do, he condemned the “beggarly manner” with which the demands are made. He regretted the inability to check our leaders with consequences for every action they undertake or fail to, which leads to a situation where anything goes.

In her contribution, Ms Abiola opined that reforms in the Electoral processes across Party lines were necessary to get young people more involved in the political process. This way, it will be possible to tackle the structure from which elected officials emerge with the input of the Youth. She explained some of the efforts made so far in moving the 'Not Too Young To Run' bill forward in the National Assembly, in order to get a legislative backbone for the Youth to take pro-active actions in their parties. Dayo Israel, complained of the apathy of most young people for the political process, sighting an example of the low number of persons willing to attend and sit through the tedium and boredom of weekly or bi-weekly ward meetings. However, he blamed the insistence on running with established parties, and not giving unhindered freedom for Independence candidacy.

In agreement, Governor Duke offered his support for Independent Candidacy, referring to the Constitutional provision for Freedom of Association as the supporting legislation. Reacting to the apathy and cynicism towards the political process, he shared the principle on which he made his attempt at the Governorship of Cross-River State in 1998, against the tide of the established order at the time: “if you run, you might lose, but if you don't run, you are guaranteed to lose”.

Rinsola Abiola differed on the accusation that young activists tend to abandon advocacy when they gain political appointments. She said that it remained possible to work from different ends of the pole, with the same ideals and goals, without “selling out”. She encouraged all to be disruptive in the positive way, whether in political positions or as young independent advocates.

The conversation, which flowed organically and with thoughtful points made, came to a close with a challenge to the youth, by the former Governor of Cross-River State, Donald Duke: “Things don't happen, people make things happen. You have the numbers, make it happen!”

Breaking the Ice: How Can The Youths Get Involved

The discussion was on the 'Office of the Citizen' and was moderated by Ayo Thompson of Nigeria Info and Wazobia MAX.

The aim of this symposium is to champion the development of a new generation of leaders who are skilled, competent and morally upright. A new age of leaders who are engaging with government policies and policy makers across all levels.

The importance of having youth leaders engage with policies and policy makers in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as the impact it has on the improvement of our country's governmental system on the short and long term is massive. Recognizing and involving youth in decision-making processes is more than just engaging young people for the sake of inclusiveness. It's about recognizing the benefits youth such as you have to offer to their country as a whole.

Granting youth control over decisions affecting their lives builds capacity in young people to take ownership for their lives and their communities. Through this symposium we hope to hear from you on how we will be able to ensure the development of youth leaders who would be key players in the agitation for greater accountability in government. Also proffer solutions on how we can equip them with knowledge to achieve tangible accountability outcomes.

Panelists:

- Prince Deji Adeyanju, a former PDP social media strategist
- Japheth Omojuwa
- Demola Olarewaju
- Abisoye Akinfolarin.

Response:

The moderator set the tone for the conversation with a quote from Chude Jideonwo: “The citizen is always right. The citizen has always been right. As long as democracy endures, the citizen will always be right.” After this, the question of the roles and responsibilities of the citizen was asked.

In his opening statement, Deji Adeyanju responded that the office of the citizen is the greatest office in the land, exceeding those of the President, Vice President and State Governors. In his words, “Until citizens realize Obasanjo has just one vote, IBB [Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida] has just one vote, Abdusalami [Abubakar] has just one vote, [President Muhammadu] Buhari has just one vote – he doesn't have the 12 million votes he usually gets, they are not his votes, they are the votes of the people – until we realize this, we'll continue going round in circles”. He noted that citizens were not yet fully aware of how powerful their office is. Deji added that the Offices of the Elected people is too far from the Office of the Citizen, and that until both are connected, we will not have progress.

Omojuwa, following from Deji's statements, remarked that “the citizen is the essence of Democracy”. He stated that while the majority of citizens suppose their duties to end after elections, our responsibilities go beyond elections. In his words, “our main responsibility should be that we put elected people on their toes”. He emphasized the force of pro-activeness that comes with the mass of Nigerian coming together in one voice to achieve a cause, sighting examples of the deadlocked situation of the ill-health of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua in April 2010, when Nigerians demanded and got a transfer of Powers to then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, the botched third-term bid of former President Olusegun Obasanjo and the 2015 General Elections.

However, Omojuwa noted that it is not sufficient that the citizens only came together for electoral matters, calling for similar collective movements to be aggregated towards pushing for matters of daily matters of Governance and provision of infrastructure, such as water or access to electricity. He called for our conversations to transcend “consequentiality” and “escapist” mindset which only looks towards kicking out leaders at the next elections.

Demola Olarewaju took up the discourse from a historical viewpoint, describing the Roman origin of the idea and ideals of citizenship. In his deposition, he made the relation between citizenship and ownership; in other words, a citizen was one who owned something, and that this ownership was determined by the price paid and the understanding of the value and worth of that which is to be owned. According to Demola, “Far too many Nigerians are ready to trade the value of their Nigerian citizenship because they don't understand the worth of it; you won't buy something if you do not feel that it has any value, no matter how much it is worth”.

Demola noted that persons of the older generation who seem to lay greater claim to the ownership of the Country do so on account of the belief that they have gone through some battles for the country, making reference to participation in the Civil War by some past leaders. In other words, the Youth, if they claim to own the Country, must also be ready to “pay their dues” by enduring potential detentions.

Contributing to the roles of citizens, Abisoye Akinfolarin re-iterated the importance of citizens to know their rights, matters of Budgets and following up the Government. “When things are not going right” Abisoye said, “we are meant to have a voice. We are meant to speak out”.

On the moderator's question about the need to have platforms with which citizens can hold the leaders accountable, Omojuwa mentioned the need for communities but decried the lack of it. In his words, “you cannot build a movement outside of a community”. On the conduct of ordinary citizens on matters of state in comparison with the 'owners of Nigera', Omojuwa drew the attention of the audience to the fact that citizens spend the majority of their time defending or arguing about the politicians, making issues not about Nigeria as a collective but on issues bothering on individual politicians, who eventually know how to come together and agree when they have common interests. Furthering the conversation, Deji Adeyanju stated that “every Nigerian who collects money to vote does not deserve good leadership, does not deserve the dividends of democracy'. In stating this, he related that citizens should seek to effect change in the country but cannot do so with hands tied to the politicians table, with no tangible input from the citizen. Abisoye added that citizens needed to have a voice in their immediate environments to be able to have a voice in the greater public, and that this voice is worth more than any bribe that can be given.

On the matter of the possibility of a Youth President, Demola agreed to the possibility of a Young President but placed the ability to unify the country above the criteria of Youth. Omojuwa, following up on Demola, did not see the problem of lack of Youth participation in political systems as a consequence of the lack of laws. In his view, there should be a focus on understanding that the political process is a

marathon, which requires preparation, persistence, energy, and potential bruises. He emphasized that “youth is not the currency of leadership”, sighting the example of the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole, who in his opinion, did not do anything obviously outstanding. He called for a focus on the advantage the Youth have at the moment which is about the large number which can be aggregated for effective actions, rather than being fixated on laws and upcoming elections.

The conversation drew to a close after the last round of questions from the audience were answered by the panelists, with the main theme being that citizens should pay more attention to the ideologies of persons who come seeking for electoral positions and should not vote or offer support to people based on sentimental and material factors such as age, popularity or number of followers.

CONCLUSION

Nigerians need to demand for transparency all the time. The government serves the people, not the other way round. Nigeria is our collective responsibility, and as true citizens of this country, we need to find our voices.

It is high time Nigerian adopt the independent candidacy. Dayo Israel a chairman for Lagos state said while speaking that “A system that consciously subverts merit, competence, ability, capacity and hard work cannot progress. This is the tragedy of the Nigerian system and if our democracy must grow, we must ensure internal democracy and independent candidacy forms a part of our electoral process. Africa must open its space to Emerging Leaders”.

Former Governor of Anambra state, Peter Obi in his concluding speech talked about the cost of governance in Nigeria stating that Nigeria needs a broad, comprehensive approach to address issues of budget inflation and corruption among public servants.

"The present cost of governance in Nigeria is totally unacceptable", Obi said. "Expenses of running the government in Nigeria is at the detriment of the citizens. Most Nigerians have no knowledge of the Chairman of their local government, so how do you expect to keep them accountable?"

In conclusion Seun Onigbinde, Co-founder, BudgIT, affirmed that citizens need to demand answers from elected officials at all levels.

NEXT STEPS & IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

BudgIT; an organization that believes it is the right of every citizen to have access and also understand public budgets, has been requesting for the Budget from the Ministry of Transportation and had been denied initially but their request was just confirmed after the symposium with the release of the budget.

ABOUT Y MONITOR



Ymonitor is an initiative of The Future Project which highlights crucial accountability and governance issues at the State and Federal level.

The online site track and monitor issues happening across government level and provides citizens with the information needed to take action toward demanding good governance at all level of the government.

Objectives:

1. To highlight and track Policies/law/bill passed with accountability and transparency through the site.
2. To deliver information that ensures adequate coverage, exposure, and response to any matter that has real implications for public wellbeing.
3. The project will get key players in government and public stakeholders to make a commitment on major issues, narrow conversations, and debates to actionable products, and ultimately strengthen democratic ideas, accountability, and transparency.

ABOUT THE FUTURE PROJECT



The Future Project has a simple mandate - to build empowered citizens across Africa, through (inclusive) enterprise and (active) citizenship. This focus on Human Capital Development is informed by our value proposition: Africa's growth needs a generation of young people who are gainfully employed and able to demand better leadership.