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HIS EXCELLENCY
ARC. DARIUS DICKSON ISHAKU
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR TARABA STATE

WELCOME TO TARABA STATE



NATURE'S GIFT TO AFRICA'S LARGEST MARKET

By Biodun Omojola, Economics & Business Editor, Africa Today

Located along the north-eastern part of resource-rich Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and its largest market, is Taraba state. Probably one of the most naturally endowed states in Nigeria, Taraba is the original Gateway State, if ever there was one in the country. Bounded in the north by Gombe and Bauchi states, in the north-west by Plateau state, in the north-east by Adamawa state while Nasarawa and Benue states straddles it to the west, it also shares an international boundary with the Republic of Cameroon to the south and south-east. It is the third largest state in Nigeria by land area, and it derives its name from one of the three major rivers that traverse it.

Taraba's inherent strength can be gleaned from its sobriquet: Nature's Gift to The Nation. It is the only state that enjoys all three vegetation types available in Nigeria: tropical zone with a vegetation of low forest in the south, grassland in the north and a temperate climate within the magnificent and scenic Mambilla Plateau area. If a state needs to be called a miniature Nigeria, that state is Taraba. Like Nigeria, it is blessed with abundant natural resources including solid minerals, fertile land, rivers and lakes, scenic sites etc. But equally like Nigeria, it is not very well developed. That was before Darius Dickson Ishaku became governor in 2015. Governor Ishaku knew that with the state's resources, driven by a well-thought out plan, Taraba will be well developed and its social-economic status enhanced.

His message was simple: Give me peace and I will give you development. At every fora, the significance of peace was preached with the governor highlighting the benefits, and happing on the message that without peace development and economic growth was not possible in the state

The state's level of development, prior to the Ishaku administration, was low. Infrastructure was not only grossly inadequate but in terrible shape. Healthcare services were in shambles with government hospitals barely functioning. Unemployment, especially youth and women unemployment, were in the high double digits with rural development almost non-existence as communities, far from the capital, Jalingo, hardly felt the impact of governance. The big towns too were not immune from government dysfunction. And insecurity was a big issue, a threat to development, economic wellbeing and prosperity. With the entire north-east a hot-bed of religious extremism, past administrations were devoid of plans on how to transform the state. That was the Taraba Darius Dickson Ishaku inherited.

The first step was to sort out the security challenge. His first action upon resuming office was to reachout to stakeholders and groups in the state, visiting and having discussions with community leaders, traditional rulers, political leaders and youth groups. His message was

simple: Give me peace and I will give you development. At every fora, the significance of peace was preached with the governor highlighting the benefits, and happing on the message that without peace development and economic growth was not possible in the state. The citizens recognized his peace message and with that began the first important step towards social development and economic prosperity.

Few months after being sworn-in, Governor Ishaku drew up a comprehensive rescue strategy called the Taraba Rescue Project which involved harnessing Taraba's many potentials towards a common goal – the development of the state. His plans, dreams and aspirations (the Rescue Agenda) for Taraba are encapsulated in a book, the Green Book, which showcased the state's resources and also revealed how to develop them to elevate Taraba to an enviable economic and social position within the north east region and indeed Nigeria within the shortest possible time. Launched in November 2015, the Rescue Agenda is hinged on five pillars: health, education, economic development, agriculture, peace and security. Today, the Rescue Agenda has witnessed two launches (2015 and 2019) and has remained relevant in the state's developmental journey.

With nature's gift and Ishaku's insight, various dormant sectors have been revived. Today, the state is on the path to achieving the main objective of the Taraba Rescue Project – that is to be an economic, social, cultural, and political powerhouse, ultimately becoming one of two leading economies within the north east by 2025. Within the lifespan of the Ishaku administration –it is in its sixth out of eight years – Taraba state has been transformed from a little known state tucked away in Nigeria's volatile northeast into a growing, prosperous and peaceful state with global aspirations. Taraba state is openand ready for business and Governor Ishaku is proud to showcase the



Governor Ishaku welcoming the Turkey Ambassador, exploring areas of cooperation.

state to local and international investors.

Insecurity, the major challenge in 2015, is no longer an issue for the state. Taraba state is today an oasis of peace and tranquility in a region that, four years ago, was a bed of insecurity. It is to Governor Ishaku credit that various local and international investors have visited the state to look for investment opportunities and have actually taken firm investment decisions within his first term in office. Not only that, senior diplomatic officials have repeatedly visited the state, in a way, confirming that the state is peaceful and secure. Areas where investment opportunities exist include agriculture, solid minerals, tourism, power generation among others either as a stand-a-alone venture or through Public Private Partnership.

Taraba state is blessed with fertile soil thus making agriculture a viable venture all year round. Cash crops where the state has comparative advantage include tea, rice, maize, yam and palm oil among others. Given the massive investment made

by the state in agriculture, the state is turning out to be Nigeria's food basket. Aside from cash crops, the state is home to the biggest greenhouse installation in west Africa, one that produces different types of vegetables including eight types of pepper all year round for local consumption and export. In rice farming, the state has the capacity to produce over 10 million tonnes of rice per annum – enough to feed the country and for export too – a figure that can double with additional investments. In addition, Taraba has one of the biggest palm oil plantations outside any palm-oil growing states in Nigeria and its revived oil mill produces about 520 million liters per annum. Tea planting has been successfully revived and the tea plantations on the Mambilla Plateau have led to the reviving of the state's tea industry. Aliko Dangote, Africa richest man, is a proud investor in the state, investing in a sugar plantation and factory. One thing that stands Taraba out in the agricultural sector is the successful marriage of technology and nature.

Taraba state is the only Nigerian

state that has the largest collection of valuable solid minerals lying under ground. So resource-rich is the state that it has been suggested, by an international consultant to the governor, that it makes economic sense to develop that sector than any other sector in the short to medium term. Before now the quantity and quality of minerals available were determined by guesswork. But technology has made the quantity and quality of what lies underground known. The state has 56 different types of solid minerals, many of them of high grade and in commercial quantities. They include azurite, used for the production of copper, chromite (special steel), columbite (alloys rockets and aircrafts) and palladium (jewelrys, dental alloys etc.). Others are pyrite (gunpowder), barite (drilling crude oil), bauxite (aluminum metal) and limestone (cement etc.), blue sapphire among others. But the state hardly gets revenue from this sector and that has since changed.

The Ishaku administration through the state's ministry of environment has developed a strategy to make that sector investor friendly. Investing in the sector is now easier. For one, the state has documented all available solid minerals and made two government agencies – the ministry of environment and Taraba Investments and Properties Limited – available to prospective investors as partners for the exploration of minerals. It equally identified the needs of the partnership so that prospective investors know what is required of them immediately interest is shown. This is a win-win situation for the state and investing public.

Governor Ishaku, as the state's chief salesman, has been showcasing the sector and indeed the state globally. Nowhere was this role more pronounced than during his visit to the Conference of Mineral Mining Countries in Frankfurt, Germany. There, as Chairman of the African Roundtable, he made a case for African countries to set up an

African Lobby Group to sell Africa's potentials to the world. While there, he also debunked the widely held but untrue assertion that Taraba state was unsafe for investors.

Taraba is a peaceful state with various tourist attractions that are bothering on the exotic. Under Governor Ishaku, it is fast becoming one of the hottest in-demand holiday destinations in Nigeria. Although situated at the far end of Nigeria, Taraba state is just an hour flight away from Abuja, the federal capital. It is in tourism that its sobriquet – Nature's Gift to The Nation – is best appreciated as it has various uncommon tourist locations, sites and over 80 festivals. They include various mountainous formations, the highest peak in Nigeria and the Gashaka Gumti National park, a nature reserve good for bird watching enthusiasts and nature lovers. For history buffs, there are vestiges of World War 2, including the German cemetery and symmetric man-made forests planted by them. However, the Jewel of the Crown is the Mambilla Plateau, one of the highest mountain points in Nigeria and West Africa.

Standing at an impressive 1,830 metres above sea level, the Mambilla Plateau is made up of various mountain chains including Adamawa, Shebshi and Atlantika and extends into Obudu in Cross River state. Taraba is already accessible by air from Abuja and there are plans to construct a heli-pad at the Mambilla Plateau. There are also plans to transform it into a first-class destination with a three-star hotel and first-class chef to take advantage of the region's temperate climate. Presently, Mambilla has moderate lodging facilities at the tea plantation. There are plans for a cable car and an 18-hole golf course. International investors are already looking at its potential with Turkish investors at the vanguard through the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA).

Tourism, and indeed economic

development, is successful when it works well with other sectors. Security, the hospitality industry, health services, infrastructure, transportation, among other sectors are well serviced under the Rescue Agenda. Infrastructure development has been, from the onset, on the front page of the Ishaku administration and the initiative includes urban beautification, restoration of state landmarks, provision of solar power streetlights, erosion control in erosion-prone areas and rural electrification. Infrastructure development has changed the state holistically, with Jalingo, the capital, already a transformed metropolis with solar powered street lights, well-tarred roads edged by drainages and beautifully decorated roundabouts. However, it is in roads that the intervention is felt more. New township roads, with effective drainage systems, now dot the states and the network of roads – incorporating new and upgraded old roads – across the state is impressive. Road development is not limited to the urban areas as various rural roads have also been built or otherwise upgraded. As at the last count, over N29 billion has been spent on roads only and the results are impressive.

Power is, perhaps, one of biggest challenges holding back Nigeria from realising its great potentials. However, Taraba state is ready to step into that void by contributing additional power into the national grid with its numerous power projects. The state is host to various on-going hydro-power projects with some already commissioned and in use. That includes the 400KW Tunga dam hydro power plant located at the Mambilla Plateau whose commissioning has brought 24-hour electricity to the community and help revitalized the Mambilla Beverages Ltd, makers of Highland Tea. Taraba state also has two massive dams to offer – the Kashimbila Dam, capable of generating over 400 megawatts and supplying 60,000 cubic meters of water and the 3.5 gigawatts



Governor Darius Ishaku, with his deputy Haruna Manu with Africa's richest man Aliko Dangote who has invested in a sugar factory in Taraba State

Mambilla hydropower project, Nigeria's biggest power plant, capable of producing 4.7 billion Kw of electricity yearly.

Governor Ishaku is upbeat about the Mambilla plateau power supply and the state's other power potentials. Even with the yet unfinished mega dams, Governor Ishaku says the state is one of the most powered states in Nigeria. In fact, he says the rustic communities on the Mambilla enjoy more electricity than many of the country's urban areas including Abuja, the capital! With its more than adequate power supply, Taraba is a good site for manufacturing and food processing companies. The available raw materials, especially for the food processing industry, and easy access to local and international markets – it shares borders with six Nigerian states and an international border with Cameroon – makes the state more appealing.

Taraba state's more enduring capital is in human resources. Investing in education, either through

Taraba state also has two massive dams to offer - the Kashimbila Dam, capable of generating over 400 megawatts and supplying 60,000 cubic meters of water and the 3.5 gigawatts Mambilla hydropower project, Nigeria's biggest power plant, capable of producing 4.7 billion Kw of electricity yearly.

establishing or upgrading of institutions, has made Taraba overcome challenges in its educational sector and produce competent graduates for the local labour market. Institutions available in the state include the Taraba State University, the College of Education, the College of Nursing and Midwifery, the School of Health Technology, the College of Agriculture and the Taraba State Polytechnic. Inheriting a huge population of unemployed youth, Governor Ishaku has transformed the state's army of unemployed

youth including women, into professionals via the skill empowerment programme. So far thousands of youth including women have been trained, made self-sufficient and introduced into the labour market either through employment or self-employment. Investors now have competent labour to choose from. Governor Ishaku, an advocate of Public Private Partnership (PPP), believes that government's role in business is to provide the enabling environment for businesses to grow and thrive and not to be a player. That is why he is providing that enabling environment through provision of adequate security, infrastructure development, identifying sectors where investment is needed and giving incentives like tax holidays and easy access to land for prospective investors. In addition, he is inviting partners - local and international - to partner with it on government businesses.

For investment with a peace of mind, look to Taraba state, nature's gift to Africa's largest market.

TARABA is beau-TEA-ful



That's why we make one of the best teas in the world

The Mambilla Beverages Production Company would have remained on the brink of extinction but for the strategic intervention of Governor Ishaku who brought it back to life. Since then, Highland Tea, the major brand from the stable of the company has quickly gained the reputation as one of the best teas in the world, supplying the vast Nigerian market and selling across borders to many West and Central African countries. Creating over 2000 jobs with an estimated income of N300 million yearly, Highland Tea is putting Taraba State on the global stage, and for good reasons, too.

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TARABA is BOUNTI-ful



INFRASTRUCTURE

Taraba State has once again earned its name as nature's gift to the nation. With a bold ambition to take full advantage of all nature's resources, Governor Darius Ishaku is embarking on Nigeria's first and largest multidimensional surface water reservoir ever to be built in West Africa.

With three surface tanks with the combined capacity of 400,000 metric tonnes of water, this massive project will, upon completion, provide portable drinking water for over 3 million people simultaneously, which, when combined with other water projects in Taraba State, will be more than enough for the residents of Taraba state with some left over for other surrounding states.

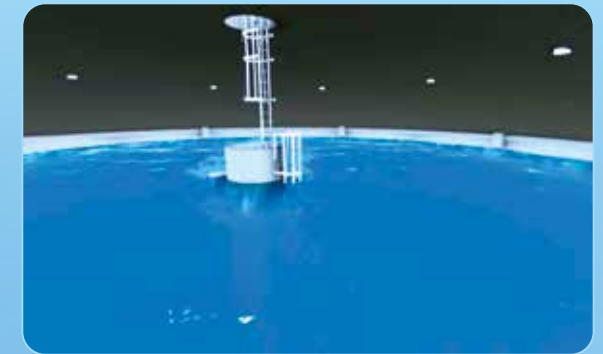
Beyond the design, engineering, procurement & construction aspects of the project which will provide over 5,000 direct jobs and cater to over 50,000 households, the project will also promote tourism and generate additional revenue streams from the multi-level lofts, recreational areas, restaurants, parks, and breath-taking observatory. Truly, a visit to

Taraba State without touching base at this bountiful wonder would be incomplete.

Located in Jalingo, the Taraba State reservoir is an ambitious water project aiming to address the enormous water demand in Taraba state following the state's increasing growth, development and population. As a strategic project, it will enhance Taraba's water security while providing high-quality service in accordance with the highest international and local standards. Also, it will promote Taraba State's sustainable advancement ensuring harmony between economic, social and environmental development.

Testing and commissioning of the three reinforced concrete potable water tanks is scheduled for 2022.

Governor Darius Ishaku remains committed to the sustainable development of Taraba State and this is yet another proof of his administration's bountiful contribution to achieving that vision.



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TARABA is PEACE-ful



That's why our doors are open to the world

As a trusted team player and tested servant leader, Governor Darius Dickson Ishaku continues to lead by example. His ability to align with the overall economic agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, and work seamlessly across social, political, religious and cultural lines make him an amiable contributor to Nigeria's polity. He has consistently displayed this through his cordial working relationship with the Federal Government, especially in ensuring peace and security, not just in Taraba State, but across the entire country.

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TARABA is PLENTY-ful



That's why our water projects quench thirst in many homes

Water is life! And for many in Taraba State, their lives were threatened due to inadequate access to water. Thankfully, Governor Ishaku took the bull by the horn, tackled the water deficit by drilling and installing hand pump boreholes round the state, thereby bringing joy to Tarabans. Governor Ishaku remains relentless in ensuring that water supply is in abundant supply as God intended it, free and for all, before his second term is over.

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TARABA is POWER-ful



That's why we're building more dams to generate more energy

Nigeria's current power generation deficit is about to receive a major boost, thanks to dam projects in Taraba State. The Kashimbila Dam, a federal government project, which was initiated when Governor Darius Ishaku was Minister of State on Power, will generate 400 megawatts of power, while its water treatment plant will potentially supply 60,000 cubic meters of water. In addition, the dam also boasts of a 2,000 in-built irrigation facility and an airstrip. The Federal Government is also investing in the construction of the 3.05GW Mambilla hydropower project. The \$5.8Billion project will be Nigeria's biggest power plant, producing approximately 4.7 billion kWh of electricity a year. It is being developed on the Donga River, near Baruf, in Kakara Village. It will generate about 50,000 local jobs during the construction phase. When these dams are completed, they will provide more pipe-borne water, electricity, fishery, irrigation and serve as tourist attractions for Taraba State.

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TARABA is BLISS-ful



That's why our mountains are a tourist's dream come true

Looking for some peace and calm away from the congestion of city life? The Mambilla Plateau is the perfect destination for tranquil meditation and soulful rejuvenation. The view from 1,600 metres above sea level is indescribable, resplendent with endless vistas of trees, mountains, flora and fauna. This breath-taking sight is the reason why Taraba State has earned its stripes as nature's gift to the nation and Governor Darius Ishaku is at the vanguard of preserving this legacy.

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TARABA is FRUIT-ful



That's why our agricultural produce can feed more homes

With close to 200 million mouths to feed in Nigeria and millions more across West Africa, Taraba State is poised to bridge the food security gap with its vast farmlands and technologically enabled value chain. Home to the largest green house in West Africa, Taraba State produces fresh vegetables sufficient for Nigeria and other West African countries, while creating jobs for young entrepreneurs, a resourceful research ecosystem for the university community and grabbing the attention of the Presidency. The size of cucumbers says a lot about how fruitful Taraba farms are. No wonder our governor has earned the name BABA CUCUMBER!

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TARABA is CARE-ful



That's why we're on a rescue mission to deliver healthcare for all

The state of Taraba's health system was bordering on collapse. Getting any decent medical attention was a near impossibility as the state had only one Specialist Hospital which wasn't even operating at optimal levels, not to mention the other dilapidated general hospitals. Something had to be done. On assuming office, Governor Darius Ishaku declared a state of emergency on the health sector and went full swing in revamping the whole value chain. With funding as a major issue, the only viable and most cost-effective option was to take one hospital in each of the three senatorial districts and revive them resulting in the rehabilitation hospital projects in Wukari and Bambur. Today, the hospital renovation project in Wukari has been completed with state-of-the-art medical equipment and full operations. The hospitals in Gembu and Bambur are nearing completion and will soon be commissioned. The state has also taken delivery of two of its three C-T Scans ordered to aid healthcare delivery in Taraba State. Governor Ishaku is on a rescue mission to deliver optimal healthcare services to Taraba State. Little wonder Taraba was rated second best out of the 36 states of Nigeria in the control and management of the spread of COVID-19. Thankfully, no death was recorded in Taraba State.

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TARABA is RESOURCE-ful



That's why our youths
are empowered with skills to own their businesses

Meet Aishastu Ali-Sese, one of the beneficiaries of Governor Ishaku's Skills Acquisition Programme in Taraba State. With an initial investment of two sewing machines Aishastu has been able to establish her own business, pass that skill on to interns and create her own path to success. Like Aishastu, thousands of youths have benefitted from the Skills Acquisition Programme of the Governor Ishaku's administration. In Taraba State, there are no excuses, just opportunities and resources.

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TARABA is HOPE-ful



That's why we're building the future of our dreams

Taraba State is work in progress. Under the visionary leadership of Governor Darius Ishaku, and bringing to bear his corporate experience as an architect, there have been notable construction projects in Taraba State. Some of them include the ongoing dualisation of the road linking the two city gates in Jalingo, with a fly-over at the ever-busy road block area of the state capital, the Marraba-Baissa-Along-Kan Iyaka Road; the commissioned Magami Road network in Jalingo, Takum township roads, Takum-Katsina Ala Road as well as the ongoing Yorro-Kpantisawa Road, Wukari-Tsokundi Road, among others; provision of pipe borne water to over 300 communities, construction of the Taraba Vegetable Company (Green House) which has considerably increased the internally-generated revenue of the state as well as host of other projects. Governor Ishaku is committed to making Taraba State conducive enough for everyone to live, work and invest

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TARABA is MIND-ful



That's why our governor puts his people first

Meet Madam Rebecca Adolf, a diligent 80- year-old coffee farmer and native of Taraba State. Fortune smiled on her enterprise as she caught Governor Darius Ishaku's attention who then rewarded her financially and with a brand-new coffee grinding machine. Today, her story has changed for the better and that's just one of several thousand beneficiaries of Governor Darius Ishaku's down-to-earth, mindful and benevolent leadership streak.

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TARABA is WONDER-ful



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