

FG TAKES STOCK OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

The Federal Government has taken stock of its achievements in the education sector in the last six years, scoring itself high, even as it admits that there are challenges in the coming years.

Rolling out its achievements at this year's 65th National Council on Education holding in Jalingo, Taraba State, Education Minister, Adamu Adamu, said the Buhari administration has put in place, the Better Education Service Delivery For All, (BESDA) in 17 Pilot states resulting in the drastic reduction of the number of Out - of-School children from 10.1 million in 2019 to 6.9 million in 2020, thereby promoting access to quality education.

In the same vein, the Minister who was represented at the occasion by the Minister of State for Education, Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba, said, the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment,(AGILE) programme is another government initiative designed to ensure that adolescent girls who are out of school or have never been in school are trained and financially empowered to enable them live normal and quality lives.

According to the Minister, the Federal Government has frontally approached the programme by developing a curriculum in basic literacy and numeracy in the three major Nigerian languages and English.

He emphasized that government has also developed a code of conduct for learning centres for adults and non-formal education.

Additionally, the development of literacy and numeracy primers for teaching arithmetic as well as facilitating guide in English and the three major Nigerian Languages has been finalised .

The Minister also revealed that the National Commission for Nomadic Education, (NCNE) which has developed three training manuals for the operations of nomadic education in the country has also trained 100 Nomadic Extension Agents on Nomadic Extension Services to ensure that the children of the Nomads under go some kind of learning while going about their businesses .

Similarly, the Minister said government's engagement with the National Association of Proprietors and School Owners in Nigeria, (NAPSON), has successfully taken over one million Out-of-School children off the streets by requesting that each private school sponsors at least, five pupils.

Furthermore, the Minister said the Muhammadu Buhari- led administration has approved the establishment of the National Senior Secondary Education Commission, (Nssec) to regulate secondary education in the country with the establishment of additional six Unity Colleges, bringing the total to 110 Unity Colleges in the country

On Teacher Quality and Motivation, Adamu Adamu said the present administration has taken measures to motivate teachers including the approval of allowances for teachers in

hard- to- reach areas namely; timely promotion to eliminate stagnation and prompt payment of salaries and the review of the retirement age of teachers from 60 to 65 years while years of service have now been moved from 35 to 40 years to encourage more graduates to join the teaching profession.

The Minister reiterated that government has put in place a number of professional examinations including Professional Qualifying Examinations, (PQE), Professional Qualifying Examination Integrated, (PQEI), online examination for prospective diaspora teachers, online induction of graduating students of Teacher Education Institutes and Faculties of Education in the country, all in a measure to ensure quality teachers in the nation's educational system.

Adamu Adamu also said government has constituted high powered Visitation Panels to Federal Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education to access the institutions' activities for the past ten years(2011-2020) adding that the exercise has been completed and the reports are ready for consideration.

In the same vein, the Governing Councils of Federal Universities and Inter-university centres were inaugurated and Chancellors appointed in an effort to strengthen the institutions to enhance governance for effective service delivery, national development, and global competitiveness.

This administration the Minister said, has provided funding intervention through TETFUND for the completion of the National Library and enable all public Tertiary Education Institutions to develop ICT infrastructure and support the migration to e-learning, maintaining that ICT support intervention has recorded the successful completion of eleven websites, upgrade of projects and the training of a total of 12,873 staff in tertiary institutions nationwide.

Adamu Adamu revealed that the President, in its quest to increase access to Tertiary Education, approved the establishment of six new Federal Colleges of Education, eight Federal Polytechnics, two new Universities of Technology and upgraded four existing Universities of Technology.

The Minister informed that two specialized universities for Health, Nutrition and Medical sciences in Azare, Bauchi State and Ila-orangun in Osun state have been established.

He also revealed that the sum of Five Billion Naira(N5, 000,000,000.00) has been provided for the take-off of the two new universities of Technology and upgrade of the existing four universities.

Arrangement for the establishment of a National Institute for Technology, (NIT) Abuja is underway, the Minister reiterated.

The Minister fingered economic hardship, insurgency, and the rapidly growing population as some of the challenges bedevilling the education sector, adding that government will not rest on its oars until every child is brought on board.

Speaking at the occasion, the Executive Governor of Taraba State, His Excellency, Arc. Darius Ishaku, while commending the Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, for reducing the number of Out- of- School children from 10.1 million to 6.9 million however warned that efforts must be made by all stakeholders to sustain the momentum so that the country does not slide back into a hub of vulnerable children with no access to quality education.

The Governor who was represented at the occasion by his Deputy, said the government of Taraba state is engaging critical stakeholders in ensuring prompt and sustained funding for secondary education, payment of Registration fees of WAEC and NECO as well as supporting students with special needs.

The state government is also making provision for UBEC and UNICEF counterpart funding, in addition to the recruitment of 3000 teachers, the Governor disclosed.

The State has also ensured the establishment of remedial programmes for secondary school leavers as well as boosted efforts at e-learning in the state.

According to the Governor, these efforts have yielded spectacular results, including students' performance in WAEC and other National examinations.

Signed:

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