

## Mimiko in the past one year

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Editorial

IN a few days it will be 365 days since Olusegun Mimiko, medical doctor by training and politician by calling, took over as Governor of Ondo State, South West Nigeria. Not many would have forgotten that he came in as Governor after more than 22 months of post election litigations. Not a few would remember that he contested and won the April 17 election in Ondo State but was denied access to the post until the Courts cut short the reign of the locusts in Ondo State.

Come February 23, it will be exactly a year since the final decision that put paid to the lack-lustre tenure of Dr Olusegun Agagu. And the next day will mark the first anniversary of the man many refer to as Iroko.

The news from Akure is that an elaborate ceremony is in the offing. Elaborate, feelers say, not in the sense of hollow rituals, paper achievements and senseless self praise, but in the area of commissioning finished projects and flagging-off new ones. The news about Mimiko's Ondo State is that things are being done and in the right way.

It started quite early with the Ogbese portion of the Akure-Owo Highway. With the bad portion becoming a reason for human and vehicular chaos on regular basis, only the uncaring or the unfeeling would look away being in government position without acting. Obviously, Mimiko could not be said to be either. He awarded the contract to the consternation of the new opposition, who must have been sulking for their lack of foresight, or at least presence of mind while still holding sway.

Before our very eyes, the sore that was on that part of the road and many others along the Owo to the Osun State end of the road have benefited from the redemptive intervention of the Mimiko government. This as we have now been able to ascertain was just a tip of the iceberg.

Between February 24, 2009 and now, the Mimiko government has conceived, drawn the plan, laid the foundation and equipped a new and novel initiative aimed at specifically and in scalable terms arresting what was then an appalling record of maternal and child mortality and morbidity in the South West.

The huge and imposing Mother and Child Hospital in Akure, one of many to come, is to serve as, first an Hospital of first instance for mothers and children of age zero to five, and then as a referral facility for those from other health facilities. With State of the art equipment and capable human resources thrown into the works, the Mother and Child Hospital will deal a big blow to the infant mortality rate in Ondo State.

Yet it has also been complemented, we are told, by a state-wide 'Abiye' project that comes with several novel and modern accoutrements. The Abiye Project, according to legends, involves capturing the data of all pregnant women in the state for effective and informed monitoring. Each registered mother is then connected in practical terms and through the aid of a free, toll-free GSM to health care providers like nurses, midwives and doctors.

More than these, they also have access to tricycle ambulances to convey them should the need arise to health facilities where complex life-saving surgeries could be done. All these are to at no cost to the expectant mother or her family. With the success recorded thus far in the pilot local

government of Ifedore, the Abiye project is to be replicated with needed modifications in all the 18 Local Government Areas of the state. Only that this time it is with the assistance of the National Health Insurance Scheme and other institutional partners.

If the Abiye project drew from the old precept of caring for the pregnant in order to have surviving children, the *3is* initiative of the Mimiko government and its application to community development is an ingenious improvement on the communal spirit in us all. It is also a refreshing change in the intervention paradigm in governance.

The community development effort of the administration which in its first year has resulted into 80 projects in 80 communities across three local government areas of the state is an example of what community-driven intervention should be.

Government through well-trained personnel not only went through the communities to help them through the process of identifying their priority projects but went ahead to get them actualised.

Through with the quick-wins, as such projects are termed, the government of Olusegun Mimiko is also out to strengthen local institutions through modernisation and empowerment so that they could effect other community-determined but independent changes.

In the education sector, Governor Mimiko is building new primary schools that will each have at least a thousand pupils. The schools designed to have Computer Laboratories, Multi purpose sports facilities, internet access and the right ambience for unencumbered learning are to provide equal if not better opportunities for those who could not afford the huge cost that comes with private primary education. To set the tone, he had earlier approved the 271/2 percent increase in teachers' salaries in the state.

In Mimiko's Ondo State, an International Cultural and Events Centre is to be constructed; a Gani Fawehinmi Diagnostic Centre is to be built; other modern and Child Hospitals are to be built, the Mare Festival in Idanre is to have an en-core with a bigger and more prestigious scope, and Akure, the State Capital, is undergoing unprecedented facelift that will lead to improved aesthetic, reduce traffic bottle necks and so become more attractive to business. Two New Markets have been built first to accommodate those who will be moved from illegal spots across the capital city and then to make shopping easier.

All these and many more, it must be said, happened in a year that Mimiko and his team had to run a budget prepared by the Dr Olusegun Agagu government. Also, these achievements came in a setting in which the opposition party has majority of the seats in the House of Assembly.

What it then portends is that in the years ahead and with his own budget in place, the possibilities for the Mimiko government are limitless. If therefore it is just to highlight the landmarks recorded in the last one year and roll out the lofty targets of the current fiscal year, Governor Olusegun Mimiko, his cabinet and the good people of Ondo State ought to be joined in celebrating a year of fresh breadth, of obvious joy and liberation from fear. These indeed were the truth about the last one year.

So, let the drums roll.