

Coalition for Issues-Based Politics and Good Governance
Gubernatorial Candidates' Lagos Town Hall Meeting 1st April 2007

(Gubernatorial Candidates Present:

HA Gbajabiamila Alliance for Democracy (AD)

Toks Afikuyomi - All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP)

Femi Pedro - Labor Party (LP)

Jimi Agbaje - Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA)

Babatunde Fashola - Action Congress –(AC)

Remi Adiukwu-Bakare-Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA)

2. Welcome speech given by Mrs Adeola Asabia (Metamorphosis) as follows:

“Good evening, Your Excellency, Deputy Governor of Lagos state, Gubernatorial candidates, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, members of the press. I would like to welcome you all to the gubernatorial aspirant's town hall meeting being held this evening at the civic centre. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to those viewing by telecast and to numerous others listening on the radio. The forum today is being organized by CIPOGG, Lagos which stands for Coalition for Issue Based Politics and Good Governance. The Coalition evolved out of the Governance and Institution Policy Commission spearheaded by the Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG).

CIPOGG is a coalition of stakeholders drawn from civil society, NGOs, media, academia, opinion leaders, labour, the organized private sector and faith based organizations. The Coalition was formed to ensure issues based interactions during the forth coming elections and beyond; towards influencing an emerging political class and technocrats, by giving them a platform to engage in the direction of key policy and reform issues.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, on the 14th of April, the people of Lagos State will be asked to come out of their homes to cast their vote to elect a new administration to govern them for the next 4 years. If you will agree with me, electing the right type of leadership plays a critical role in the development of any nation. To help the citizens of Lagos State in particular to cast their vote wisely, CIPOGG conducted a poll which was drawn from 20 local govt areas in Lagos.

The purpose of the poll was to find out a basket of issues that people in Lagos want the incoming administration to address if voted into govt. The result of the survey captured in essence sectors and areas of governance they want addressed to improve their present living standards. The result of the survey have been made available to our gubernatorial aspirants here with us today and this was done prior to this event. The findings of the poll will form part of the basis of our discussions this evening. Interestingly enough, we found that various local govt areas had different expectations they wanted be met. So soon, we will be hearing the yearnings of what the people from areas such as Mushin, Kosofe, Alimosho, Somolu, Ibeju-lekki, Lagos Island, Eti-Osa local govt and the rest of the Local govt areas.

This evening we will be asking our aspirants to share their party policies and reform programmes with respect to the issues raised today. The candidates will in addition be required to inform the people of Lagos on how they plan to address these challenges if voted into govt. Questions on values will also be directed at them as we believe that values will also determine the suitability of the candidate to hold such an office.

I would like to state further that part of CIPOGG's post election activities include engaging whoever emerges as Governor after the elections. The purpose of the engagement will be twofold and they are as follows: firstly, to hold the governor elect accountable to the promises he or she makes at the town hall meeting today and secondly, more importantly, to work in partnership with the new administration by sharing best practices to assist them before and during periods of implementation of policies and programmes. CIPOGG as a coalition is made up of experts working in their chosen field, whose area of expertise will prove invaluable to the incoming govt. It has been tried and tested to know that multi-sectoral collaboration is a vital and effective strategy towards the attainment of socio-political and economic development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the facilitators and sponsors of this programme, they are Nigeria Economic Summit group and DFID.

In closing we wish all our candidates fruitful deliberations as they interact with our audience here.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Thank you for listening.”

(3) The **Moderators** - Adekunle Olumide and Tokunbo Ajala explain about CIPOGG and the Statewide Survey conducted by CIPOGG. Also rules of discussion were laid out for candidates.

An introductory 2 minutes was given for each candidate to briefly present their manifesto:

Pedro: 8yrs to fulfilment of MDGs Lagos State is faced with problems- I offer quick response initiatives, leadership with character, compassionate, honest and transparent. I offer Lagos the chance to enjoy basic qualitative education etc. I have been a banker for 20yrs and Deputy Governor for 4 yrs.

Fashola: I will focus on eradication of poverty – programs targeted at providing jobs, free and sustainable education and health care, Lagos that works at night, lack of power to be tackled, I offer a beautiful Lagos, ‘greening’ of Lagos, zero tolerance to converting open spaces, development of Badagry and Epe.

Afikuyomi: I have served longer politically than other contestants, served in the House of Representatives, Senator and re-elected as Senator, I will defend interest of Lagos as Governor, I have integrity and character. Problems are only challenges of governance and leadership. I will focus on 4 items – 1.health, 2.education, 3.security of life and property and 4.eradication of poverty.

Gbajabiamila: I served for 7 years in outgoing administration, first as GM Lagos Tourism and later as Commissioner for Physical Planning. I will face issue of poverty, following the welfarist policy of AD, human capital development, free, qualitative education, roads, housing, to take 80% of Lagosians out of poverty - to get area boys off the street.

Jimi Agbaje: Governance is about improving the lives of the people, plans are beautiful, but not only on paper, a new way of thinking needed. Leadership is needed to make Lagos a city state of well educated, skilled and educated people. A skilled force needed for new opportunities for our youth, infrastructure to be looked at to improve our economy

Adiukwu-Bakare: I am actually the oldest at this game. Lagos is the most populated with insecurity etc, human capital development to be looked at by my admin. I was the Commissioner for Local Govt in Lagos State. Moral values to be taught in our schools.

Section for Candidates to Address what the People are saying in the survey

(A) Education

Olumide -Data from the 2006 Household survey of the Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning & Budget indicate that:

- 46% of Heads of Households have Secondary education
- 15% of Heads of Households have University education
- 5% of Heads of Households have Vocational certificates
- 9% of Heads of Households have diploma certificates.

It is obvious from the above statistics that vocational and technical training is in very short supply in the economy. In this respect vocational education, skill acquisition and technical training are critical for economic empowerment and economic growth.

What strategies do you have to promote vocational and technical education bearing in mind their positive effect on employment and economic growth?

Adiukwu-Bakare- We need to train people, even the university graduates need to be trained in vocational skills. We need to look at our curricula in schools. We must de-emphasise University education. Look at polytechnics and technical schools - there should be counselling at the schools. Educational policies must change accordingly. Heads of households can be retrained. I have personally trained over 1,000 people in hat making. I am a teacher and know about counselling. I know about counselling – this is lacking in Nigeria. Children need to be counselled to know what career they will do

Olumide-The 2006 survey shows that if you take out Apapa, Epe and Ibeju lekki, only 24% of the households are sending send their children to Govt secondary schools in the community. His indicates that the schools are there but no adequate usage. The survey shows a lot are sending their wards to private schools.

How would you go about diagnosing why these schools are not being used and what remedial action will you take to reverse this trend?

Agbaje – 70% of children do not bother to go to school at all – according to the Federal Bureau of statistics. 65% of the population of Lagos State are living below the poverty line. Enrolment will be a problem because of poverty. Schools in bad shape, teachers are not looked after. 64% of urban youth are unemployed. Enrolment is connected with poverty. Schools need labs, teachers, and curriculum relevant to today's world. Only the 35% above poverty line are sending their children to school.

Questions from participants

Biodun Falor (Guardian Newspapers) – There is a govt policy to phase out polytechnics – what effect on education?

Yemisi Ransome Kuti (NNNGO) – How can we partner with private sector and universities in this IT age? The private sector needs to help in this regard.

Adiukwu-Bakare- It is not fair to phase out polytechnics and my govt will encourage such technical schools. My govt will support partnerships and NGOs.

Agbaje – Govt must show leadership in vocational training – for example, ship building – Nigerian ships should be made here. Mechanics, welders etc, standards must be raised by government.

(B) Electricity

Ajala-The provision of stable power is critical for private sector growth and competitiveness as well as social development. The incumbent government ameliorated the perilous state of electricity in the state through the Lagos Independent Power Project

What new policy initiatives will you introduce to improve the power deficiency in the state? Any role for the private sector?

Gbajabiamila – PSP is possible to put energy into the national grid. Chevron is coming on board at Egbin with 800 megawatts. We shall bring in 1000 megawatts in 2 years by IPP arrangement. Transmission is also a problem - we shall look at Private Sector Partnership. Power catchments arrangement will be developed where power will be generated for Ikeja. 100 megawatts will be generated for Ikeja industries.

Ajala- The usage of other sources of energy supply is not common in Lagos State. According to the 2006 Household Survey: 10% of Lagos households use solar/generator as their primary source of energy, 14% used candles, 18% used paraffin/kerosene, 3% used battery, while 1% used gas and wood. However, the magnitude and frequency of power interruptions have made the majority of households - 62% to be willing to pay a third party for power for reliable electricity service.

What strategy will you adopt to take account of this reality and who will implement it?

Afikuyomi: All IPP talk of National Grid and Gas. We need to be more creative. Problems of transmission are paramount otherwise there will be no effect. We should see what other countries are doing. We will do a survey, we need to have alternative sources of energy – solar, wind etc. that do not go into the national grid.

Questions from participants

Remi Ajayi (NICE)– Street lighting - how do communities get educated about its importance of security.

Dede Kadiri (DIN)– How do you move from National Grid to renewable or sustainable energy

Esho- Are there specifically any areas where Power catchment areas has worked? What role would private sector play if your govt comes in to power?

Gbajamiala – Niger Delta is an issue which we can deal it. Gas must be used effectively and we are doing that.

Afikuyomi – Street lights can be solar powered. Batteries can be buried under street lights. Computers can be powered by batteries that have long life span like with laptops. Also inverters can be used that do not need diesel etc. We are going to pursue alternative, renewable clean sources of energy.

Olumide (Comment) – Policy of FG to make Yaba College of Technology and Kaduna Polytechnic to be degree awarding is not a good policy. Polytechnics are supposed to be practical oriented.

(C) SMEs

Ajala- Given that SMEs and the Informal Sector form the larger categories of employment generation in Lagos, what strategy would you use to harness this potential?

Fashola – SMEs are important but for now it is CBN directed. The way to go is to provide private sector funding e.g. -micro credit with less obstacles. Access to mortgages, with mortgages you get credit. Every acre of land is to be titled in Lagos for easy access to credit.

(D) Employment

Ajala- The phenomenon of the so-called “area boys” is a symptom of the growing menace of unemployment among the youths. What steps will you take to create unemployment and how do you intend to partner with the private sector in this crusade?

Pedro – I have studied area boys – many are homeless and jobless and go into intimidation etc, I will educate them, I will take data analysis for them, temporary accommodation and feeding and medical care. They will be given six months to sign up and start a new life we are providing, equip them and set up crime fighting work. They will have job and place to live. After that six months period, I will go after those who do not take advantage as hardened criminals. Lagos will be safe and clean

Tajudeen-How in practical terms to help the unemployed graduates in Lagos?

Ndidi Nwuneli (LEAP)– LGAs - what will your govt do to manage affairs at the LGA and the discrimination against non indigenous entrepreneurs in Lagos State.

Akinkubi – Where will your government get money from for the SMEs?

Fashola – Money still available from taxes. Multiple taxation is because of Federal structure. I will employ more people into govt and govt agencies. Like KAI, Highway managers etc. Micro credit facilities will be made available for unemployed graduates.

Pedro – Job creation is the primary responsibility of the private sector – land policy must be liberalised. Land grant will be made free of charge if one can employ 1000 people. New vocational institutions will be established as well as an entertainment centre in Epe for Nollywood. My Government will partner with NGOs to get funding for young graduates.

(D)Health

Olumide-According to LASEEDS (2005-2007) key health indicators in Lagos state is infant mortality (80 out of 1000 live births), maternal mortality (650/100,000) 55 yrs life expectancy (55 years) – one slightly better than the national average. Nonetheless, the health conditions in the state leaves much to be desired.

If you become the next Governor what strategies will you adopt to improve the health indicators in the state.

Adiukwu-Bakare – We need to have health care centres in every ward in Lagos state equipped to take of infant and maternal care. (Re-Multiple taxation - we need to harmonise the taxes in Lagos state it is stunting the growth of SMEs and publish them.) Zero tolerance for my govt health care centres for avoidable mortality

Questions from Participants

Ifeanyi Peters (JDPC)- Will you be willing to put a bill to the house of assembly that no public officer would use a private health centre?

Adiukwu-Bakare – New initiatives are capacity building of the nurses and health workers, training and training them. Environmental cleanliness is necessary for preventive medical care.

(E) Security and Safety

Ajala – It is common knowledge that in most urban centres in the country, especially in Lagos, life is bedevilled by the heinous activities of armed robbers and other criminal gangs. What policy measures you will put in place to curb the menace of the criminal elements in the society, bearing in mind the widespread unemployment in the polity?

Agbaje – Good governance – we must find jobs for our youth. Massive construction projects will be undertaken, because that creates jobs. We must encourage the police to do their jobs; housing projects must be established etc. We must look at some kind of state policing. An overstretched Federal police do not have the capacity to fight many crimes.

Ajala- Some commentators have argued that it is incongruous and impractical for the Governor to be the Chief Security Officer of the State, while the Police owes allegiance to, and are ultimately responsible to the Inspector-General and other Federal Authorities. Do you support the decentralisation of the Nigeria Police to enable the State Police Commands to be wholly responsible to the Governor?

Gbajabiamila- I believe in state police, Federal has its own role to play. As Governor I will encourage state police.

Ajala – There are certain high risk areas due to huge population and the commercial nature. Note in particular, Okokomaiko in Ojo, Iyana-Ipaja, Oshodi Oke, Ikotun, Mile12 and Shomolu. What rapid security and safety measures do you have in mind for such high risk areas?

Afikuyomi – I will abolish Ministry of Local Government and make it the Ministry of Homeland Security. I will do ‘spy policing.’ They will disguise as ordinary citizens and when they are attacked by criminals, the criminals will be dealt with. If you lighten up the place with street lights criminals will run away. Cameras will be on the streets and criminals will be advertised on TV etc.

Questions from Participants

Kadiri (MAN) – Relationship between FG and Lagos State may not change. Jungle justice being practised - what do you do to solve these issues?

Paul Okafor- You politicians use area boys -what do you do about them?

Shina Loremikan (CDHR) – Issue of Corruption what is your solution?

Agbaje – We must show leadership. We must open ourselves to international rating as an economic hub. Community policing is what we need. We must support FG for now because of the laws of the land.

Gbajabiamila – Transparency and accountability will be the order of the day. Local Government today is not functioning. State is using LG revenues for its own purposes.

Afikuyomi – *Agberos* – we must modernise our parks and markets and then there will be no *agberos*.

(F) Infrastructure / Road Network

Olumide- Infrastructure-road network is the backbone of an enabling economic environment for economic growth and its constant maintenance, regular upgrading and expansion is key to sustainable development. What measures will you take to maintain/upgrade existing roads and

build new strategic road network especially the envisaged 4th mainland bridge and the Lekki coastal road.

Fashola – Lagos needs more rural roads and local government roads. Each year 150 kilometres of roads will be constructed. For high capacity roads PPP will be used like Lekki - Epe and 4th Mainland Bridge. N80b needed for roads in Lagos. Therefore we must go to the waterways and provide ferries for mass transportation in Lagos.

Questions from Participants

Dada Alamutu (Lagos Megacity Project)– What is your commitment to Megacity project? Lagos, Victoria Island, Apapa and Ikeja -these four major employment areas are the cause of heavy traffic etc in Lagos - there is a recommendation to decentralise the employment centres into 28 areas.

Fashola – I remain committed to the Lagos Megacity project. We need to open up more roads and rural communities, build more hospitals in areas so they do not have to travel for health and employment.

(G) Special Interest Issues

Olumide – The multiplicity of taxes, levies and fees in the state especially in the various Local Governments constitute a disincentive to investment in the state as it has unduly increased the cost of doing business. The incumbent Governor directed the Local governments to discontinue the practice without avail. What will you do to eliminate the menace if elected Governor?

Pedro- We will abolish sales tax. Only taxes that are constitutionally approved for Local Governments will be allowed. The Land Use Charge of 2001-were too exorbitant and private businesses went to court. Property taxes fund roads, sewage. Tenement rates very few people are paying – my admin will call a summit of property owners and business to harmonise the property rates.

Olumide – In 2002 UN Habitat, the focal United Nations Agency on sustainable settlements development programme, commenting about Lagos Megacity stated as follows: “ ...a situation where one city is segmented amongst several local councils without a metropolitan authority which is to coordinate the delivery of services may prove counter-productive.”

What is your view? Do you support the creation of an intermediate metropolitan authority between the state and local governments to coordinate the otherwise segregated local governments in Metropolitan Lagos? In short do you support a Mayoral system for Lagos as was the case in pre and early post colonial era?

Adiukwu-Bakare – We have a constitution and cannot create outside the system. Local Government should be alive to have impact.

Olumide – Pervasive corruption has stunted the economic growth in Nigeria as no country can develop on the basis of embezzlement of public funds, reckless inflation of contracts, lack of transparency and accountability in governance etc. At present Nigeria does not have a holistic National Plan against corruption, thus the anti-corruption drive has been sporadic, disjointed and ineffective.

What constructive and imaginative measures will you put in place to eliminate the cankerworm of corruption, especially in the public sector where a greater damage is done to our patrimony? What action plan will you devise in Lagos? Do you think that the UN Convention against Corruption and the African Union Convention for Prevention and Combating Corruption will assist in the crusade against corruption?

Agbaje – As an economic hub, we must have more judges. We must partner with FG and its Anti Corruption Agencies. We must build those institutions and partner with them. We do not have time to attain the MDGs

Olumide – It is generally recognised that weak and inefficient budget implementation constitutes the overriding bane of socio-economic development in the country, including Lagos State.

What measures will you adopt to ensure the faithful implementation of Lagos State annual budgets? How will you partner with electoral stakeholders – civil society, organised private sector, labour, academia etc in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of economic policies and budgets?

Gbajabiamila – To be accountable and transparent we must open our books to the public we must bring the stakeholders to help in monitoring the budget on a regular basis.

Olumide – How do you intend to protect your votes and the votes of your supporters?

Afikuyomi- I have skill in mandate defence. NGOs should move from election monitoring to mandate defence.

Concluding Remarks

Fashola, Pedro, Adiukwu-Bakare, Agbaje, Gbajabiamila and Afikuyomi respectively all made brief concluding appeals for the voters in Lagos State to vote for them at the April 14 electoral polls.