

# TARABA STATE



**Geographical Profile:** Taraba State was carved out of the former Gongola State on 27th August 1991 by the then Federal Military Government under General Ibrahim Babangida (Rtd). Taraba State is named after the Taraba River which traverses the southern part of the state. Taraba's capital is Jalingo. The Population is estimated to be 2,300,736. There are sixteen Local Governments in the State: Ardo-Kola, Lau, Bali, Gashaka, Takum, Wukari, Ibbi, Kurmi, Karim Lamido, Yorro, Zing, Gassol, Sardauna Ussa, Donga and Jalingo

Situated in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, the State occupies 54,473 square kilometers. Taraba state is bounded in the West by Plateau, Nassarawa state and Benue state to the south, on the eastern border by Adamawa State and the Republic of Cameroon; and on the northern border by Gombe State. Geographically, the state lies largely within the middle of Nigeria and consists of undulating landscape dotted with a few mountainous features. These include the scenic and prominent Mambilla Plateau and mountainous areas of the Mummuye Communities which lies to the East of the state. The state lies largely within the tropical zone and has a vegetation of low forest in the southern part and grassland in the northern part. The Mambilla Plateau with an altitude of 1,800 meters (6000 ft) above sea level has a temperate climate all the year round. Rivers Benue, Donga, Taraba and Ibi are the main rivers and rise from the Cameroon Mountains, straining almost the entire length of the state in the North and South direction to link up with the River Niger. The present ruling party in the state is People

Democratic Party (PDP). The State House of Assembly is comprised of twenty four members (24) The present government came into power on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

**Economy:** The major occupation of the people of Taraba State is agriculture. Cash crops produced in the state include coffee, tea, groundnuts and cotton. Crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, and yam are also produced in commercial quantity. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Mambilla Plateau, and along the Benue and Taraba valleys. Similarly, the people undertake other livestock production activities like poultry production, rabbit breeding and pig farming in fairly large scale. Taraba State is among the leading states in the production of livestock with its dairy farms at Jalingo, Gembu and Nguorje. Communities living on the banks of River Benue, River Taraba, River Donga and Ibi engage in fishing all year round. Other occupational activities such as pottery, cloth-weaving, dyeing, mat-making, carving, embroidery and blacksmithing are also carried out in various parts of the state.

Taraba State is richly endowed with potentials for the development of tourism, and mineral resources and that include recently discovering of uranium in huge quantities in the state. In recognition of this, the government has made concerted efforts to improve areas of tourist attractions like Mambilla Tourist Center, Gumpti Park and game reserve in Gashaka, the Nwunyu Fishing festival in Ibi which usually holds in April of each year where activities such as canoe racing, swimming competition and cultural dances were held. Effort is been made to attract foreign investors by the state government to go and invest in the natural resources that abound in the state. Other festivals are Purma of the Chamba in Donga, Takum and Bali, the Puje of Jukuns, Kuchecheb of Kutebs in Takum and Ussa, Kati of the Mambilla and host of others. Taraba is called "Nature's gift to the nation" as the state is rich and have many ethnic groups, including Fulani, Jukun, Mumuyes, Yandang, Chamba, the Mambila, Wurkums, Jenjo Kuteb, Ichen, Tiv and Ngoro among others.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Public Access to budget documents**

Taraba state scores 37 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Call Circular and State Budget Appropriation Law are publicly available on request. The remaining documents are produced, but not publicly available. The Citizen's Budget, Quarterly Reports, and Mid-Year Review are not produced.

### **Public participation in the budget**

Citizens and CSOs in Taraba state have limited spaces to be involved in the budget process with a score of 25 out of 100. Citizens and CSOs have minimal access to the **budget formulation** process. The Taraba State House of Assembly opens all committee hearings to the public during the **budget approval** stage. The government publishes a list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans and other targeted spending from MDAs during the **budget execution** process. Meanwhile, the **auditing** process is closed off to the public.

### **Public access to procurement information**

With a score of 67 out of 100, citizens have moderate access to procurement information in Taraba state. The Public Procurement Law of 2012 regulates the procurement process and established the State Bureau for Public Procurement. All bidding guidance documents are available from the Bureau. Tenders are opened immediately after the bidding process is closed. Awarded contracts are available on the notice boards of MDAs procuring the service.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

CIRDDOC recommends the following to improve budget transparency, public participation in the budget process, and transparency in the procurement process:

### **Budget Transparency**

The government can easily improve budget transparency in Taraba state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- State Draft Budget Estimates along with the Medium Term Sector Strategy
- State Accountant-General's Report
- State Auditor-General's Report

The Taraba State Ministry of Finance, Budget, And Economic Planning should do the following:

- partner with CSOs in the state to develop a Citizen's Budget.
- produce and publish Quarterly Reports and Mid-Year Review.

### **Public Participation**

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government of Taraba state should do the following:

- open the budget formulation process to all constituencies; establish effective mechanisms to solicit the public's inputs on what should be included in the State Draft Estimates; and clearly articulate what the government expects to do with these inputs.
- improve the detail of the list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans and other targeted spending from MDAs.
- establish practical mechanisms for the public to provide inputs on how the budget is being implemented along with reports on how these inputs are used.

Similarly, the Taraba State House of Assembly should do the following:

- publish reports on committee hearings.
- open the hearings on the Auditor-General's Report to the public.

Lastly, the Auditor-General should do the following:

- establish practical mechanisms for the public to submit inputs on what should be audited.

### **Procurement Process**

To improve the entire procurement processes, the following should be done:

- the State Bureau for Public Procurement should establish a procurement complaint board that manages an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- this State Bureau for Public Procurement should publish all procurement decisions along with their justifications and for all community projects.

### **Access to Information**

To improve access to information in the state, the government should do the following:

1. Domesticate the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2011.
2. Establish Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency in the state