

\$110 Urban- development funds: World Bank commends ODSG over commitment to community development projects

For its commitments to the transformation of the urban slums into livable cities, the World Bank task team leader for the Community-Based and Urban Development Programme in Nigeria, Mr Hassan Kida at the weekend scored the Ondo State government high saying it has surpassed the expectations of the World Bank.

Under the Scheme, the World Bank had budgeted \$110million to upgrade the living standard of the residents of slums in the selected eight states under the first phase of the programme. Specifically, Mr. Kida who led members of his team to the State commended what he termed the sensitivity of the Dr Olusegun Mimiko's administration to the plights of the people of the state within its two years in office. He enthused that the government's effective utilization of the World Bank assisted loan to transform the slums in Akure the state capital was highly commendable and worthy of emulation by other States.

The World Bank team leader was in Akure with members of his team for an assessment tour of some projects being executed in the capital city under the scheme. At the end of their tour, Kida expressed satisfaction by what they saw and disclosed that the Ondo state government had surpassed the expectation of the World Bank through the prompt payment of its counterpart contribution. He equally commended it for even contributing above the mandatory 5% stipulated by the World Bank, a development which he noted was gratifying and commendable.

The team had inspected road construction works in Owode, Ayedun, Akure High School, Oke-ljebu and Edo Lodge areas among others and water ducts and mains behind Plaza Motel in Oke-ljebu where he commended the state government for the initiative, which he said had transformed the socio-economic landscape of the areas.

According to him, the programme was put in place to upgrade the living standard of the residents of slums in the selected eight states under the first phase of the programme, disclosing that about \$110million had been provided for the projects.

His words: "The aim of this programme is to see how we can upgrade the standard of living in slum areas in the urban cities. Ondo State has selected Akure as one of the urban cities that we should look into. It is the sole responsibility of the state government to decide what to do in the urban slum.

"Ondo state has come up to say we need improvement in roads; we need improvement in water supply; we need improvement on sanitation, we need improvement on drainage. Today, we are going round to see what has been done and we are very pleased with the activities that have been done. Most of them have not been handed over to the state government and the contractors are still responsible for the operating and maintenance of these services.

"So we give kudos to the state government, having realized that there are a lot of impacts, you can see the type of transformation within these areas, we've reduced flooding and a lot of improvements in the economic activities of these areas and a lot of things have happened. Indeed we are very happy. I have to thank the state government for providing more than they

are expected to provide under this project. The normal agreement was that they will provide 5% and Ondo State has provided more than that, even now they have about N500 million in their coffers which the state has just provided. We love that and we are happy with it” said Kida.

The Commissioner in charge of Multi-Lateral and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Mrs Bukola Tenabe disclosed that about 40 kilometers of road were constructed with the financial commitment of about \$14million. She noted that the programme has transformed the living standard of the people in the areas as they now reside and transact their businesses in conducive environment. She added that the state government had transformed the lives of the people in the rural areas of the state through the intervention of the state community and social development agency. She said “If you knew what Ayedun Quarters used to be, you will really appreciate the quantum of work that had been done. You will not say that was part of the city. So this project is addressing the urban slum, people really living in slums. That is the area they are addressing. They’ve just turned around the life of the people”.