

BAD FEDERAL ROADS: HAND OVER TO STATES, MIMIKO TELLS FG

Worried by the seeming inability of the Federal Government to cope with the workload of fixing the numerous bad federal roads across the country, the Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko has advised the Federal Government to, as one of the measures to redress the current situation, hand over more of its roads to States Governments through which such roads pass fix them.

But Governor Mimiko, Governor Mimiko, himself a former Minister of Housing and Urban Development provided a proviso for this panacea to work: the Federal Government must give the state governments strong financial backing to fix the roads, saying that if this was done, it would reduce the burden of the Federal Government and ensure regular maintenance of the roads unlike the current situation where roads had to become so bad before rehabilitation works are carried out on them.

Mimiko's earlier stand is coming two weeks after he blasted the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) for ineptitude and branded it a failure owing to its incapability at fixing all the major roads in the nation in spite of billions of naira voted for the agency, a development which he noted had led to countless death of innocent Nigerians and cost the nation untold loss of revenues.

The Governor, who was interacting with members of the Senate Committee on Works at the Government House in Akure at the weekend, noted that in addition to this step, the Federal Government should urgently formulate a sustainable road maintenance policy. In his opinion, quick actions should be taken to fix the roads in order to alleviate the annual travelers' sufferings during the yuletide.

Mimiko who disclosed that Ondo State was being owed about N10 billion by the federal government for its financial commitment to rehabilitation and construction of federal roads in the state including the access road to the Olokola Free Trade Zone, added that the state government was spending about N500m to rehabilitate a portion at the entrance of Ondo town due to incessant erosion problem, which had destroyed properties worth millions of naira.

His words 'There are hardly any of the roads that pass through Ondo State that is federal government that is a good state. And in a way, we are gate way to Abuja all these heavy trucks, the bone of it is that once the federal roads are not passable, traffic get diverted to our state roads, they get destroyed'.

'For example as you are coming in from Ore as you are entering into Ondo town along the main federal road erosion has destroyed that road and we are spending almost N500m to reconstruct the bridge and channelization there, so traffic has been diverted into the town almost in the last one and half month all the internal road of the town has been destroyed by these heavy trucks country because of the fact that Ondo State is a gateway to the North'.

"In order to encourage the state governments that are repairing and reconstructing Federal roads to do more, you our distinguished lawmakers should make budgetary provisions to enable the Federal government to return the fund to all the states that have invested on its roads across this country.

On the state government's efforts at fixing some of the roads, the governor told the lawmakers that his administration is currently working on 52 different roads, some of which have been completed while others are at various stages of completion.

He appealed to the committee to intensify effort to ensure the realization of the initial plan for the dualization of Ibadan- Ife-Akure-Oluku junction road, which according to him was a link between the South and the North, pointing out that the road was terminated at Iloko-Ijesa junction.

Earlier in his speech, chairman of the committee Senator Bode Ola said they were in the state on the inspection of the on-going federal roads which were embarked upon by both the Federal Ministry of Works and the Federal Emergency Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA).

Among the roads to be inspected according to Senator Ola included Ipele-Isua junction road and Sagamu-Ajebamidele- Ore high way.

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Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Ondo State, Governor's Office. Akure, Ondo State