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COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN ENUGU STATE AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE MEASURES: A FIELD REPORT

Sam UGWUOZOR¹ and Chibuiké E. MADUBUEGWU²

¹Research and Documentation Unit, Government House, Enugu State, NIGERIA

²Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, NIGERIA

Executive Summary

This report focused on the response measures of the Enugu State Government to the novel coronavirus pandemic under the administration of Lawrence Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi. The objectives were to illuminate the measures initiated by the Enugu State government in response to the coronavirus pandemic and identify the challenges militating against the measures. Besides, the report further explored the optimal performance of the inter-ministerial and sectoral measures initiated by the administration in deference to the plights and expectations of its citizens. The report employed a qualitative methodological approach and used observational procedure and interviews to collect relevant data. In this regard, the researchers were engaged with the process as non-participant observers for a specific period of twenty-two weeks (March 15 to August 29). Employing unstructured interviews among government officials, representatives of tricycle riders union, Ogbommanu, health workers, petty traders union, civil society, and advocacy groups gained insight into public values, plights, and citizens expectations of government under the health emergency. Secondary data were drawn from the state Ministry of Health, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Budget and Planning, Board of Internal Revenue Service including media scripts and journal articles to add value to the analysis. To be sure, the data collected were content-analyzed to appreciate the government's efforts and people's expectations in a health emergency. The report revealed the drivers of the government's responses in health, advocacy, infrastructures, restriction, socio-economic interventions, and education remedial measures to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. Also, it identifies the institutional and attitudinal constraints militating against measures initiated by the state government. It, therefore, suggests a multi-sectoral blueprint, institutional proactiveness, advocacy, and informal sector policy initiative to improve the social welfare and economy of the Enugu state under the pandemic.

Introduction

The novel coronavirus disease is a recent global public health challenge. So far, it has recorded over a million fatalities globally. The virus belongs to the family of RNA viruses that infect birds and many mammals including humans. The virus causes an illness that ranges from a common cold to a more severe respiratory disease. Specifically, coronavirus (COVID-19) is caused by a new strain novel in humans that belongs to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), that Zoonotic in transmission, that is the person-to-person transmission (Nkereuwem, *e tal*, 2020:29). The intensity and spread of the COVID-19 have impacted development through the heavy loss of human lives and

enormous adverse effects on governance and the economy. The pandemic has reversed social values development with the prohibition of social gatherings to contain the spread of the virus. This was exemplified in the closure of churches, mosques, and synagogue including entertainment and sporting activities (Madubuegwu, 2020: 2). Nigeria in West Africa is currently plagued with the pandemic as seen in cases and fatalities across the 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT). As a federation, the Enugu state is one of the federating states. The state is a highland area and the name Enugu (e`nugwu`), meaning top of the hill, derives from this geographical feature. The landmass area of the state is 2, 942, 97 square miles and 7,534 square kilometers (Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation, 2012: 91). In the same vein, the Enugu state shares common borders with Kogi and Benue states in the North, Abia state in the South, Anambra state in the West, and Ebonyi state in the East. Demographically, Enugu state has a population of 3,267,837 (1,596,042 male and 1,671,795 female according to the Report of 2006 National Population Census, and projected demographic figure of 4, 411, 119 in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017:7). Enugu is a homogenous state of Igbo ethnic nationality (one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria's over 350 ethnic nationalities). Furthermore, the indigenous population of the state is linguistically and socio-culturally referred to as "Wawa people" accentuating the affinity of tradition and dialect. The state is administrated at two levels of governance – the state and local municipal levels of administration. Hence, the state's three structures of governance – the Enugu State Executive Council, Enugu State House of Assembly, and Enugu State Judiciary were constitutionally entrusted with the roles of policy formulation and administration, legislation and representation, and adjudication (Madubuegwu e tal, 2020:37). The Enugu State Health Care System is decentralized in structure and clinical services to the citizens of the state. With the outbreak of COVID-19, it was intensely engaged with the response to the pandemic.

The first index case of coronavirus disease was reported in Nigeria on 27th February 2020 when an unnamed Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus. Enugu State confirmed its first case of the virus disease on March 28, 2020. It was a case of a couple from Isi-Uzo Local Government Area (who returned from London), showed mild symptoms of the virus, and samples collected were later diagnosed which indicated positive. They were later isolated, treated, and discharged. As a global health challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic has inextricably prompted governments across the world to initiate measures and expedite actions to contain its spread.

On 23rd March 2020, the president of Nigeria addressed the nation on the COVID-19 pandemic. The president called for synergy between the Federal government and State government to coordinate policies and actions to respond efficiently to the scourges of the pandemic. This clarion call engendered the Enugu state government's intervention to stem the tides of the pandemic in the state. Therefore, this report harnesses and analyses the efforts of the Enugu state government to the pandemic. However, it is important to state that the report is by no means exhaustive due to the dynamic nature of the government's response to the health emergency. It is, therefore, structured into five sections, namely, the executive summary, this introduction, measures of the Enugu state government on the pandemic, the lockdown and its challenges, and conclusion/recommendations.

Measures of Enugu State Government on the Coronavirus Pandemic

As earlier stated, the first case of the COVID-19 was reported by the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) in February 2020. The reported case in Lagos **Page 146**

Enugu state government to activate modalities and processes to deal with the spread of the virus. Thus, when the first case of the virus was reported in the state on March 16, 2020, the government was not overwhelmed but strategically responded. Some of the measures taken are highlighted below:

i. Medical Response Measures

Before March 2020, the State Ministry of Health (SMOH) under the directive of the Governor earlier established the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) which was activated to monitor the spread of the virus in states (like Lagos and Ogun) and conduct risk assessment exercise. It was this Center that provided an expert template and direction for subsequent actions of the state government. Also, the State Ministry of Health commenced immediate training of medical personnel on the clinical profile, transmission, treatment, fatality, and prevention of COVID-19. In the area of clinical governance, the state government took the following immediate measures before the first case was reported on March 28, 2020.

- On March 15, 2020, the Enugu State government set up a Multi-Sectoral Rapid Response Team on COVID-19 which comprised representatives from the state MDAs, local and international Partners such as NCDC, World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to provide specialized and coordinated responses to the pandemic. The Multi-Sectoral Rapid Response Team on COVID-19 was coordinated by the SMOH.
- On March 16, 2020, NCDC confirmed that a suspected COVID-19 patient in Enugu State had tested negative after samples were collected and diagnosed.
- On March 18, 2020, the Enugu State Executive Council at an emergency meeting under the directive of the Governor approved and released N330 million to strengthen state response to the pandemic. The fund was for key expenditure as follows: (a) N150 million for the purchase of Ambulances, Incident Vehicles, Personal Equipment, upgrade of State Infection Disease Isolation Center, training of Health workers (in primary and secondary health centers), advocacy, and enlightenment on COVID-19. (b) N 80 million for the restocking of the state Drug Revolving Scheme (c) N 100 million for unforeseen public health challenges or exigencies.
- On March 20, 2020, SMOH under the directive of the Governor created the COVID-19 Response Team and commenced training of personnel who were subsequently deployed to the 17 local government areas of the state. The Ministry under further directive deployed a Clinical Surge Team from the African Center for Disease Control, Nigerian Field of Epidemiology, Laboratory Training Programme for effective coordinative efforts. Also, the State Ministry of Health commenced training of staff in the 52 Secondary Health Centers and over 450 Primary Health Care facilities in line with NCDC. Also, the Enugu SMOH on the directive of the Governor commenced immediate recruitment and training of personnel to handle contact tracing of persons who come in contact with persons showing symptoms of COVID-19.

- On March 24, 2020, the Governor addressed the people of the state on coronavirus pandemic and directed the closure of all educational institutions, markets, clubs, and bars, and civil servants were directed to work from home.
- On March 28, 2020, the Enugu state reported its first case of coronavirus disease.

Apart from the foregoing, the following measures were taken to create awareness among the people on the prolife, transmission, symptoms, fatality, treatment, and prevention of the COVID-19, the state media channels were agog with information on COVID-19 provided by SMOH and coordinated by both the State Ministry of Information and SMOH. The information contained the following advisory:

- Stay at home as much as you can
- Use a clean cloth mask daily if you have to go out. Do not touch the front of the mask while wearing it.
- Remove your face mask only from both ears at the same time.
- Wash your cloth mask, dry and iron it every day.
- Maintain respiratory hygiene when you have to cough or sneeze.
- Maintain social/physical distancing protocol.
- Wash your hands as often as you can with soap and running water. When soap and water are not available then use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

On June 22, 2020, the state government inaugurated the Adhoc Expert Medical Advisory Committee on COVID-19 led by Consultant Cardiologist and Professor of Medicine, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu, Emmanuel Ejimas with the mandate to engage constructively with Ndi Enugu as individuals, institutions, and corporate groups through advocacy on measures to de-escalate the spread of the contagious virus as a result of the upsurge in cases and fatality witnessed in early June 2020. In a statement by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof Uchenna Ortuanya, the committee would engage with various leaders of Religious Group, Market Associations, Professional Associations, Labour Unions, National Union of Road Transport Workers, organized private sector and relevant stakeholders in Enugu on effective measures to de-escalate the transmission of COVID-19 with regards to NCDC protocols. The state government also instructed the President Generals, PGs of Town Unions across the 17 local government areas to ensure advocacy among youths, elderly, and women in their respective communities on the transmission, symptoms, and prevention of COVID-19. The PGs were further directed to interface with Enugu State Multi-Sectoral Rapid Response Team through the Enugu State Ministry of Health to collect Pamphlets on Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) on COVID-19 for public awareness. All local government chairmen were to mobilize their environmental and community health workers to complement and sustain advocacy on COVID-19 health protocols. In addition, the state government approved and released N 22.8 million as a Special Support Fund to 456 autonomous communities across the 17 local government areas in the state to aid their advocacy efforts. It also launched the Wash Programme (WP) campaign to educate the public on the essence of hand hygiene as a preventive measure to COVID-19.

On the Clinical Support Service and Infrastructure, the state government took the following measures to boast state medic response to the pandemic of the virus

- On March 17, 2020, the state government through the SMOH established the State COVID-19 Isolation and Treatment Center within the premises of Enugu State University of Science and Technology Teaching Hospital Parklane and supplied the Center with Ambulances, Personal Protective Equipment, and necessary logistics for optimal performance.
- Designation of Enugu Medical Diagnostic Facility as additional COVID-19 Isolation and Treatment Centre. Hence, 100 modern hospital beds with mattresses, pillows, and beddings including 100 drip stands, 100 bedside lockers, 100 over bed tables, and 100 TV screens were supplied to the Centre.
- On May 5, 2020, the Governor unveiled second Isolation and Treatment facilities at the State Diagnostic Center, Enugu.
- On April 30, 2020, the State Executive Council under the directive of His Excellency issued a directive for the immediate rehabilitation and upgrade of Enugu Colliery Hospital as Enugu State Infection Disease Center.
- On May 8, 2020, the Governor inspected the progress of work at the Colliery Hospital Enugu which under massive reconstruction for its take-off as Infectious Disease and Treatment Center.
- The state government, in collaboration with the 17 local government councils, identifies and designates Community, Isolation, and Treatment Centers in readiness for the upsurge in the spread of the virus through community transmission. Also, additional Ambulances and other clinical logistics were supplied to boost the community preparedness.

On June 11, 2020, the State Executive Council held its meeting and took the following resolutions towards revamping state medical infrastructures for optimal clinical services:

- Awarded contract for the immediate construction of 7 Units of Type 3 Primary Health Care Centres in Ezeagu, Nkanu East, Igbo Etiti, Igbo-Eze South, Isi Uzo, Udenu, and Uzo Uwani local government areas of the state. Contractors handling the construction were directed to ensure they were completed in 90 days as stipulated in the terms of the contract.
- Approved renovation works, rehabilitation of facilities, and provision of essential supplies in 34 Health Facilities across the 17 local government areas to facilitate linked services and preparedness against community spread of the virus. iii. approval for the upgrade of infrastructure and rehabilitation of the General Hospital, Ogrute, Enugu-Ezike in Igbo-Eze North local government area of Enugu state.
- Approved the upgrade of infrastructure and renovation works at Nsukka District Hospital to include the construction of borehole with 10,000 litre capacity overhead tank and reticulation of water to all existing structures and correction works, external works /landscaping of new Hospital building.

- Approved the construction of additional Doctors Residential Quarters at Nsukka Isolation and Treatment Center and the purchase of 200 units of ultra-modern automated hand washing machine and hand sanitizer produced by the Institute of Management and Technology, IMT Enugu for immediate distribution to 17 local government areas, major Markets, schools and designated public places to encourage hand hygiene in line with the health protocols of the NCDC.
- The state government through the Ministry of Health established four functional COVID-19 treatment centers, engaged and trained over a hundred medical personnel currently providing clinical services in these Isolation and Treatment Centers across the state. The state government also established a fully-equipped and functional laboratory centre for COVID-19 sample collection and testing.
- On April 2nd, 2020, the Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) mechanism of the SMOH in collaboration with the State Fire Service Agency conducted a decontamination and fumigation exercise in public institutions and roads of Enugu in compliance with NCDC protocols of COVID-19 preventive measure. It is important to note that the exercise was conducted in four phases that stretched from April to August 2020.
- On June 15, 2020, the Governor paid an unscheduled visit to
- General Hospital, Agani, and gave further directives for rehabilitation.
- On June 16 the Governor inspected the facility of Basic School of Mid-Wifery, Agwu including the General Hospital, and gave a further directive for their rehabilitation.
- On June 21, 2020, the Governor also inspected facilities at the General Hospital Oji River and gave further directives for rehabilitation.

On the welfare of Health personnel, the Enugu state government considered the state health workers as front liners in response to the pandemic. Earlier in April, the state government approved an attractive Hazard Allowance package for the state health workers to further motivate their industry and drive in their service to ensure the adequacy of public health safety. Hence, the state government also paid COVID-19 allowance to all health workers representing 25% of their basic salaries. Remarkably on May 25, 2020, the Governor approved the immediate implementation of Group Life/ Group Personal Accident Assurance Policy for the following categories of public servants in the state:

- All Doctors in Enugu State Ministry of Health
- All other Health workers
- Fire Personnel
- The staff of Enugu State Emergency Management Agency
- All those involved in other essential services.

ii. Restriction Measures

Restriction measures were taken by the State Government to curb the spread of the COVID-19 in synergy with the Federal government directive to slow down the rate of infection. The central authorities had announced a restriction on movements in Lagos, Ogun, and the FCT for 14 days with effect from 11 pm on Monday, March 30, 2020. All citizens were advised to stay at home. Travel from one state to other states should be postponed and all businesses and offices in the locations were to be closed within the period. Taking a cue, the state government announced that, "with effect from 6 pm on March 31st, 2020, that all educational institutions and markets in the state are hereby closed". Though, the "closure order" exempted persons or groups in the enterprise of food commodities, pharmaceutical and medic products, Hospital logistics, and domestic items. However, the exempted persons were strictly advised to observe health protocols as contained in NCDC guidelines as preventive measures against the transmission of the virus. Also, the state government instructed:

- All public officers/civil servants in the state were to work from home till further notice. Public servants exempted from this directive include Health Workers, Forest Guards, Neighbourhood Watch personnel, Water Corporation Staff, officials of Waste Management operation, Staff of the Enugu State Emergency Management Agency, Fire Service, and persons involved in essential services. The exempted public servants were further advised to observe NCDC health protocols of physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- Suspension of all cultural and social gathering including the following:
 - (a) Marriage Ceremonies.
 - (b) Masquerade festivals.
 - (c) Burial ceremony.
 - (d) Night Clubs.
 - (e) Sporting and Recreational activities in the state.
- Public commercial Transport operators in the state were also directed to observe the following rules in compliance to NCDC health protocol of physical distancing:
 - (a) Tricycle riders were not permitted to carry more than two (2) passengers.
 - (b) Commuter Buses were not permitted to carry more than two (2) passengers per seat.
 - (c) City-Cabs were not permitted to carry more than three (3) passengers.

Security Agencies were further directed to ensure strict compliance with the order. On April 13, 2020, the state government limited the operation time of Tricycle riders from 6 am to 7 pm. They were further advised to comply strictly with the NCDC health protocols of wearing a facemask, maintain physical distancing and refrain from carrying more than two passengers.

Again, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari on 27th April 2020 announced new measures designed to ease the restrictions that included the opening of selected business and offices can open from 9 am to ; overnight curfew from 8pm to 6pm, except those on essential services; ban on inter-state passenger travels until further notice; and partial and controlled inter-state movement of goods and services. Taking a cue from the federal government, the state Governor addressed the state and issued Regulatory Executive Order 1 on COVID-19 containment on April 29, 2020. The Executive Order included the following directives, namely, restriction of inter-state movement Page 154

mobilisation by council chairmen of all Development Centres, Administrators, Councilors, Traditional Rulers and President General (PGs) as well as Neighborhood Watch Group and Youth Leaders within their jurisdiction to man the borders of their local government council areas contiguous with other states. Besides, local government council chairmen were to liaise with the members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Association of Tricycle Riders Union and the Motorcycle Riders Union within their jurisdiction to ensure those intending passengers beyond the Enugu state were not allowed to board vehicles in motor parks within their jurisdiction. Also, they were to ensure that passengers conveyed from outside the state are not allowed to disembark within their local government councils areas. The vehicles of erring operators were to be impounded and handed over to the law enforcement agents for appropriate action while intensifying border control activities in all local government council areas in the state, sharing boundaries with other states. Violators were to be handed over to the security agencies for prosecution.

On May 8, 2020, the Governor addressed the people on the need to comply with all precautionary and restriction measures to contain the spread of the virus. The Governor further directed all markets to open from 7 am and close by 4 pm while Ogbete, a major market in the state would open from 8 am to 2p m in strict observance of the NCDC health protocols. This appeal was also re-echoed by South-East Governors Forum on May 24, 2020, at Government House, Enugu. It directed all Igbo residents in and outside South East to abide by subsisting orders on COVID-19 prevention. Specifically, Engr. Engr Dave Umahi, the Governor of Ebonyi State and the chairman of the forum, appealed to the Ndigbo to observe the restriction guidelines stipulated by the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 and the health protocols of NCDC. The regional appeal further reinforced measures initiated by the state government to contain the spread of the virus.

However, the state Governor went further to inspect the observance of the rules on COVID-19 and found that there were violations of the restrictions including that on border lockdown. For instance, at the Enugu-Ebonyi border, the Governor met over 150 vehicles queued at the Enugu axis of the boundary, attempting to enter the state. This led to intense surveillance of borders between the state and other neighboring states the state officials. About 100 vehicles with no essential goods were turned back to Ebonyi state. The restriction measures initiated yielded positive developments regarding public compliance to established NCDC guidelines on COVID-19. It is important to note that the level of compliance within the state was impressive amid isolated cases of infractions, especially at the borders.

iii. Humanitarian, Economic and Education Response Measures

The COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown undoubtedly created panic and anxiety among Nigerians. The socio-economic effects of the restriction were severe particularly for those in the informal sector. It was in this deplorable situation that socio-economic measures such as the distribution of palliatives to the citizens of the state became imperative to ameliorate their hardship. The World Health Organisation (2020), defined palliative care as an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with a life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering through early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychological and spiritual. However, the approach adopted by the federal and state governments in the context of COVID-19 palliative care or measure was liberal and broad-based.

beyond WHO's definitional ambit to take into account, not only the patients and their families but all those who may have been affected directly or indirectly by the life-threatening virus. Truly, both the federal and states governments had acknowledged the devastating impact that COVID-19 on the food and livelihood, especially in the formal and informal sectors. The informal sector engages more than 80 percent of Nigerians who work as street traders, taxi drivers, trackmen and artisans, food vendors, and hair dressers. In particular, the Enugu State government demonstrated its sensitivity to the yearnings and worries of its people under the health emergency. On April 16, 2020, the COVID-19 Emergency and Palliative Committee led by the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo and, the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Rt Hon. Edward Ubosi as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The committee was responsible for the distribution of palliatives to the people across the 17 local government areas of the state. On April 29, 2020, the committee got a boost from Her Excellency, Mrs. Monica Ugwuanyi, the wife of the Governor, who in partnership with Unilever gave out of palliative items to thousands of women and youths of Enugu.

Table 1: ENUGU STATE GOVERNMENT PALLIATIVE DISTRIBUTION

Recipients /Beneficiaries	Category	Palliative Received
Vulnerable Persons and Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Aged 2) Bishop Retirement Home 3) Cheshire Home 4) Red Cross Motherless 5) Mother of Christ Babies 6) Rehabilitation Centre 7) Mother of Lousia Home 8) Enugu State Government Orphanage at FSP, GRA, Enugu. 9) Home of Needy 10) Spinal Cord Association, Orthopedic Hospital, Enugu. 11) People living with disabilities, PLWD. 12) Divine Wound Orphanage and Needy Home. 	Food Items and Cash
Hospitals and Religious Institutions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13). Ntasi Obi Ndi no n'afufu Hospital. 14) Mother of Christ Hospital. 15) Annunciation Hospital 16) Park-lane Hospital 17) Orthopedic Hospital 18) UNTH 19) Bishop Shanahan, Nsukka. 20) Catholic Church 21) Catholic Women 22) Anglican Church 23) Anglican Women 24) Methodist Followership 25) Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim. 26) Pentecostal Followership of Nigeria. 27) Ascension Church 28) PFN women 29) Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN. 30) Muslim Community 	Food Items and Cash.

<p>Workers in the Informal Sector</p>	<p>31) Keke Riders Association of Enugu Metroplis NURTW. 32) Okada and Keke Riders Association, NURTW in Enugu East Senatorial District. 33) Okada and KekeRidders Association, NURTW in Enugu West Senatorial District. 34) Okada and Keke Riders Association, NURTW in Enugu North Senatorial District. 35) Coal City Cabs/Taxi Operator’s Union. 36) PMAN 37) Actors Guild 38) Ogbo Mmanu</p>	<p>Food Items and Cash</p>
<p>Security and Sister Agencies.</p>	<p>39) The Nigeria Police Force, Enugu Commmand. 40) Nigeria Military, Enugu 41) Nigerian Correctional Service, Enugu. 42) NSCDC, Enugu. 43) Immigration Service, Enugu.</p>	

Source: Authors’ Field Report, 2020.

Beyond the food palliatives offered by the Government, it also distributed one million free units of fabric facemasks to the people across the 17 local government areas of the state to curb the spread of covid-19 on May 8, 2020. It is important to note that the state government adopted and implemented expedient fiscal policy measures to mitigate harsh socio-economic realities of the pandemic and sustain productivity and growth. The government on June, 23, 2020 granted tax relief and incentives to tax-payers in the State. The scope of the relief included the extension of the deadline for the submission of “form A” for employees and Annual Returns following section 41 (3) and 8 (121-3) of the Personal Income Tax Act (PITA) 2011 as amended for companies and institutions operating in Enugu State to 30th July, 2020; grant of a waiver of penalty and interest charged for late remittance of Pay as You Earn (PAYE) deductions from January to December 2020 for all sectors; a 50 percent discount on all assessed Capital Gain Tax (CGT) from June till December 2020; a 50 discount on all Personal Income Tax Assessment issued to owners of school and hotels for year 2020; a 50 percent discount on all assessed land use charge payment for year 2020. The discount expires on 31st of December, 2020; a waiver of penalty and interest on land use charge for years 2018 and 2019 once payment is made before December, 2020; and advise to all esteemed tax-payers are advised to obtain their Enugu State Benefit Number (ESBN) as it remains the unique identity prerequisite for obtaining electronic Tax Clearance Certificate (e-TCC). And, ESBN is free for collection(Enugu State Internal Revenue Service, 2020: 2). All these happened within the wider scope of a budget review (Enugu State Internal Revenue Service, 2020: 2).

N169, 557, 658, 300.00 to 146.3 billion. The revised budget focused on consolidating the 8-Point Development Agenda of the incumbent administration which include:

- Poverty reduction/wealth creation.
- Healthy and productive citizens with the right attitude, aptitude and values.
- Highly educated and technically ready work-force
- Youth empowerment /employment
- Urban/city renewals
- Peace and security
- Responsive, inclusive, and accountable governance
- Fiscal sustainability and accountable governance.

Innovatively, the government launched a programme titled, “Enugu School on Radio” in collaboration with Coal City FM, 92.9 Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) to keep students and pupils intellectually busy with a daily subject lesson on Radio during the period of national lockdown. Thus, the programme ran from April 20, 2020 to September 2020. Secondary School Classes on all the subject came on air from 5 pm to 6 pm (Monday to Friday) and the Primary School Classes on all subjects came on air from 11 am to noon (Monday to Friday). Indeed, the measure received widespread commendations from parents of these students and pupils.

Gradual Ease of Lockdown and Challenges

Precisely, the COVID-19 national lockdown began to ease from July, 2020. The Nigerian government on June 29, 2020, extended the phase of eased inter-state movement outside curfew hours with effect from July 1st, 2020. On July 27, 2020, the Federal Government of Nigeria extended the second phase of eased lockdown by an additional one week. Then, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF and Chairman of the PTF on COVID-19 announced the extension of the second phase of the eased lockdown by another four (4) weeks (ACAP: Thematic Report, 2020:3, Oyekami, 2020:1 and Izunna, 2020:6) cited in Madubuegwu (2020:9).

However, following the ease of lockdown, the state government took steps to reopen the economy, schools and public service in strict observance of NCDC health protocols.

- On July 29, 2020, the Enugu state government issued a public service announcement directing all civil servants in the state public service to resume work on Monday, August 3, 2020 with the observance of all necessary health protocols issued by NCDC for the containment of the spread of COVID-19, such as hand washing with soap, use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser, compulsory use of face shield or mask and ensuring social distancing.
- On 31st July 2020, the state government flagged off the fourth phase of decontamination and fumigation of schools ahead of school reopening and resumption of academic activities.
- On August, 17, 2020, the state government reviewed business operations in the state, and among the businesses reviewed were tricycle operators, restaurant, and bars. Night clubs were shut indefinitely.

- On August 19, 2020, the Enugu state government re-affirmed its directive that all Markets in the state with no exception should operate from 6 am to 6 pm daily. And, traders in these markets should adhere strictly to NCDC protocols on COVID-19.
- On August 28, 2020, the Enugu state government issued a directive for transfer of Nurses, Pharmacists, Lab Scientists and, other health workers to newly constructed Enugu State Infectious Disease Hospital. And the State Universal Basic Education and Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) in collaboration with Enugu State College of Education, Technical organised two weeks intensive workshop beginning from 31st of August of 2020 for Heads of Primary and Secondary Schools on measures to take in the management of teachers and students in compliance to NCDC health protocols in anticipation of school resumption in September.

A cursory review of the preceding sections of this report would undoubtedly show that the Enugu state government has performed optimally in its strategic response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also evinced reasonable drive, capacity and responsibility to the plights of the citizens of the state in an era of uncertainties. However, there were obvious gaps despite of the commendable efforts of the state government that include the non-visibility of the State House of Assembly in the policy drive and actions of the executive arm of the state government to respond to the realities of the pandemic. The intermittent industrial actions in April and May 2020 by the resident Doctors in Enugu State University of Science and Technology Teaching Hospital Parklane was a clog in the wheels of progress. Despite Enugu state government interventions in the welfare of Medical Doctors and other health workers, the industrial actions held due to unresolved issues in ways that affected response to COVID-19. In most communities in the state, many rural dwellers were reluctant to observe NCDC protocols such as wearing of facemask in public, maintaining social distancing while some persons flouted the government restriction order on ceremonies like funeral rites. Also, the culture of nonchalant attitude to NCDC's health protocols was widespread in markets within the Enugu Metropolis. Notably, there was the absence of professional enforcement of the rules and regulations on the part Enugu State Police Command. Tricycles riders and other commercial buses violated restriction orders on movement within and interstate. It was alleged that police officers collect between N5000.00 (five thousand naira) to N10, 000. 00 (ten thousand naria) from infracting Transporters in the state. Unabated food inflation plagued the state during the lockdown. Basic food commodities such as rice, *garri*, beans, yam, palm oil, vegetables, fish, and tomatoes among others became unaffordable. `above all, the food palliatives were not effectively distributed. There were allegations to the effect that some local government officials and politicians diverted the palliative items for private use contrary to the state government directives.

Table 2: JUNE 26, 2020 ENUGU STATE COVID-19 UPDATES

New Laboratory –Confirmed COVID-19 Cases	28
Total Laboratory- Confirmed COVID-19 Cases	202
Number of COVID-19 Cases on Treatment	154

Number of COVID-19 Cases Discharged	43
Number of COVID-19 deaths	5
Number of Health Care Workers Infected	72

Source: Enugu State Ministry of Health, 2020.

Table 3: AUGUST 13, 2020 ENUGU STATE COVID-19 UPDATES

New Laboratory –Confirmed COVID-19 Cases	7
Total Laboratory- Confirmed COVID-19 Cases	976
Number of COVID-19 Cases on Treatment	307
Number of COVID-19 Cases Discharged	650
Number of COVID-19 deaths	19

Source: Enugu State Ministry of Health, 2020.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The coronavirus pandemic has induced unprecedented public health challenge since its outbreak. In the foregoing, response measures of the state government have been presented. Also, its shortcomings in responding to the health emergency have been accentuated. This section, therefore, presents some recommendations as follows:

- The state government should inaugurate a multi-sectoral committee assigned with the responsibility to develop Enugu State Post- Pandemic Recovery Plan(ESPPRP) that connects to its 8-point agenda. The policy framework shall serve as a sectoral mandate in Economy, Health, Education, Security, Information, and Service Delivery among others for strategic and coordinated policy actions for improved Enugu state at the exit of the pandemic.
- Enugu State House of Assembly should be more proactive in its constitutional responsibilities to complement the policy administration of the Executive arm of government. Enugu people expect relevant and stimulating legislations and oversights in response to challenges of a difficult time.
- The current stable atmosphere in the Health Sector of the state should be sustained against intermittent industrial actions that undermine the efforts of the state government. It is expected that irreconcilable differences on issues of welfare of Medical Doctors and Health workers should be resolved through policies and legislations. Also, Medical Practitioners should look for more engaging alternative platforms to resolve amicable contradictions within the health in the interest of all stakeholders.
- Intense advocacy on NCDC health protocols on COVID-19. More efforts are needed from the Traditional rulers, Churches and Rural Development Unions in our communities to enlighten the rural people of the state on the hazard of COVID-19 and the preventive measures. The advocacy drive should incorporate the market and traders’ union leaders for effective results.
- The Enugu State Police Command should be more proactive in monitoring the officers deployed on roads and borders between Enugu and neighbouring states to guide against the infractions identified. Also, the state Forest Guards

and Neighbourhood Security Vigilante especially in border communities should be more vigilant in their service.

- Enugu state government through its appropriate Price Regulative Mechanisms should develop modalities to stem the tide of food inflation. Also, the state Ministry of Agriculture should explore its plausible policy options for food sufficiency and affordability in Enugu.
- There is need for prudence in the management and distribution of palliatives. It is therefore suggested that the responsibility of palliative management should be assigned to a statutory institution, Enugu State Emergency Management Agency for a professional approach to it for the benefit of Enugu indigenes and residents.
- The government should in collaboration with Central Bank of Nigeria and Bank of Industry develop an empowerment policy initiative to reach across to the artisans and small-scale enterprises in the informal sector of the state economy. This measure is intended to empower the category of persons affected by the pandemic and enhance productivity and growth.

The pandemic has yet to go away, we believe that some of the recommendations made above would be useful in curbing the danger posed to public health by COVID-19.

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Biographical Note

Sam UGWUOZOR, *PhD*, is the Director of Research and Documentation Unit, Governor's Office, Government House, Enugu, NIGERIA.

Chibuike E. MADUBUEGWU is a doctoral candidate in Government at the Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, NIGERIA. Email address: totlechi@gmail.com.