

IMPLEMENTATION OF TAX COMPLIANCE RELIEF PROGRAMMES FOR INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS AND BUSINESSES IN OYO STATE

The Chairman of the Oyo State Board of Internal Revenue,
Our dear tax stakeholders here present,
Ladies & Gentlemen of the Press,

Good morning and I welcome you all to this press briefing.

As you are aware, the Oyo State Government under the leadership of His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Oyo State, Engr. Seyi Makinde, is deeply concerned about the plight of Oyo citizens especially in this season of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is no longer news that throughout the globe, the pandemic has caused thousands of deaths, posed health risks, business & cashflow challenges, production shutdown, market and revenue losses, reduced productivity, logistical nightmares which has sadly led to companies struggling for survival, several job cuts and people out of pocket.

As a responsible Government in Oyo State, we have refused to fold our arms and watch on as this horrible pandemic continues to take its toll on us and our people. The present economic situation requires urgent Government intervention with a view to cushioning the effects of the pandemic on tax stakeholders in Oyo State. This present reality is what has informed some of actions over the past few months.

Ladies & Gentlemen, you will agree that since the onset of this pandemic, this administration has taken a structured and intentional approach towards fighting the coronavirus. These steps include:

1. Constituting a Covid-19 task force comprising of Government representatives in different sectors including health, security and other professionals all ably led by His Excellency, Governor Seyi Makinde.
2. Initiating a partial lockdown as opposed to a total lockdown to ensure that the economy remained stimulated and continued to function for the benefit of citizens.
3. Specifically upgrading and equipping our primary healthcare centres into isolation centres to ensure that these facilities remain functional and fit for purpose after the pandemic is over.
4. Strengthening our security operatives by providing them with operational vehicles to enhance State wide surveillance and improve border protection.
5. Payment of hazard allowances to our dedicated healthcare workers who remain on the frontlines.
6. Complete closure of all schools in the State and a planned structured opening for our children who are preparing for final exams.

7. Awareness campaigns on the compulsory use of face masks in all public spaces in Oyo State, social distancing protocols and general hygiene recommendations.

These decisions were taken with the guidance of health professionals and to ensure that the economy of the State was not adversely impacted whilst also guaranteeing security of lives and property. In addition, the Government commenced distribution of palliatives, relief materials and various food items to the indigent amongst us across all the zones and towns in Oyo State. We have also ensured the prompt payment of workers' salaries before and during this Covid-19 pandemic.

I must confess that our Government is also feeling the impact of this coronavirus especially because of the hardship on individuals and businesses and thereby leading to their inability to respond to their basic civic responsibilities to the Government. Tax revenues have been significantly affected on a monthly basis particularly during the months of the lockdown. Our monthly FAAC allocation has significantly reduced, our IGR has also been impacted, yet we still have responsibilities to the people which we would never take for granted. Despite the foregoing, we are committed to advance the course of good governance to tax paying individuals and businesses. This is to ensure we mitigate the harsh impacts of the pandemic and equally encourage voluntary compliance in the payments and remittances of taxes, fees, rates, levies and charges.

Having critically studied the effects of the coronavirus on the formal and informal sectors of our economy, we have recommended some measures which we believe would be of significant benefit to the people and businesses in Oyo State and the people's Governor, Governor Seyi Makinde has graciously approved the following tax incentives and reliefs for tax payers in Oyo State:

1. Extension of the deadline for filing of annual returns for individual tax-payers, including self-employed persons, for five months from 1 April to 31 August, 2020.
2. Extension of the deadline for filing of annual returns of Employees by the Employers of Labour, for six (6) months from 1 March to 31 August, 2020.
3. Waivers of penalties and interest for employers in the primary sector of the economy (agriculture, fishing, transportation and mining) who file tax returns on or before 31 August 2020.
4. Fifty percent (50%) reduction in penalties and interests for employers in the secondary sector of the economy such as food processing, beverages, sachet and bottle water producers etc. who file tax returns on or before 31 August 2020.
5. Seventy five percent (75%) reduction in penalties and interests for the service sector employers which includes hotels, educational institutions, tourist centres etc. who file tax returns on or before 31 August 2020.

6. The Tax Agents are allowed to remit the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax to the extent of the staff strength that are paid in each month that Covid-19 has affected them.
7. Grant of twenty five (25%) reduction in undisputed bill/assessment served or to be served by means of harmonised billing system of Oyo State Government to any business which intends to pay their bill on or before 30 September 2020.
8. Twenty Five percent (25%) reduction in the Signage Mobile Sticker of Oyo State Signage and Advertisement Agency.
9. The Tax Agents or their consultants who, because of interstate restriction, cannot attend tax audit reconciliation meeting with Oyo State Internal Revenue Service are allowed to choose virtual meetings or seek postponement.
10. Other reductions are as contained in the Home Owners' Charter land programme of Oyo State Government which enables home owners across the State who, hitherto, have no approved and official land documents to apply and be granted a certificate of occupancy within sixty (60) days of application by paying less than 20% of the regular charges and levies.

All the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Oyo State Government have been duly informed of the implementation of the tax compliance incentives as listed above and approved by His Excellency, The Executive Governor.

We therefore implore all taxpayers and businesses to take advantage of these tax reliefs by voluntarily attending to their civic responsibilities and paying all taxes, rates, fees, levies and charges to the bank accounts of Oyo State Government in any of the revenue collecting banks.

We enjoin you to please continue to stay safe by maintaining social distance rules, ensure the mandatory use of face masks, washing of hands with soap and running water, applying hand sanitizers and the other safety protocols advised by the Government. We would beat this scourge together

Kindly take advantage of the applicable tax reliefs as announced today, 27 July 2020.

Thank you for your time, attendance and attention.

Akinola Ojo

Honorable Commissioner for Finance, Oyo State

27 July, 2020