

**A SPEECH PRESENTED BY THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER, BENUE STATE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HON. SAAWUAN TARNONGU, PhD. ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMISSIONING OF BENUE STATE e-LEARNING/VIRTUAL EDUCATION ICT RESOURCE CENTRE (BESEVIC) ON TUESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2022 AT BESEVIC OFFICE COMPLEX, MAKURDI.**

**Protocol**

I am indeed elated as history has conferred on me the singular privilege to be the one addressing this august gathering on this auspicious occasion of the official commissioning of the Benue State e-Learning/Virtual Education ICT Resource Centre (BESEVIC) and by extension the celebration of the accomplishments of His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Benue State, Dr Samuel Ortom in education as he yet attains another milestone in the annals of the state history by this commissioning.

Your Excellency, this event is particularly important to me because you may recall that this is coming barely a month after my appointment and subsequent swearing in as the Honourable Commissioner for Education in Benue State. I consider it indeed a sign of greater things to come to the education sector in the state.

Distinguished guests, technology has provided the world systems with better alternatives of doing things. We have come to the realization in education that, information and communication technologies (ICT) can be employed to enhance education service delivery hence, the desire to incorporate ICT and other classroom technologies to better our education systems in the state.

BESEVIC is therefore, established basically to provide educational institutions and Stakeholders in the State an alternative solution to reposition our education into modern-day and global education standards using ICT software and hardware infrastructure. The provision is made with state government support and intervention in line with the National Policy on ICT in Education 2019. This is also in response to the vision of His Excellency, Dr. Samuel Ortom to revolutionize the IT industry in the State through digital knowledge and human capital development for self-reliance. Teachers and

Lecturers are, therefore, expected to be computer compliant in order to fit into today's global education.

It is imperative that all Head Teachers, Principals, Heads of Departments and school owners comply with this new order to move Benue education system forward. Benue State Government has provided BESEVIC with needed interventions and support to assist any School that desires intervention on any software and hardware infrastructure on ICT in Education.

The approval of the State Executive Council on the 5th of August 2020 and the inauguration of BESEVIC today, has made Benue State the first State in the country to have established a “Special Intervention Agency on ICT in Education” for the digitalization of education content. The basis is to transform learning, improve digital literacy, and extend the knowledge economy through TVET, Software infrastructure, service infrastructure and hardware infrastructure for all educational institutions and stakeholders in order to provide a strong organizational structure with technical composition. The Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative is an emergent trend globally adopted for implementing government programmes in strategic sectors like education. It is in view of the foregoing therefore, that the engagement of Gamint Corporate Ltd by the State Government as a partner on this programme is apt and timely.

Your Excellency Sir, it may interest you to know that BESEVIC has gained national and global recognition for delivering on the mandate for education content digitalization. The Federal Ministry of Education, UNICEF and the Technical Assistant to the Honourable Minister of Education conducted an on the spot assessment of BESEVIC activities and commended the state government for embarking on such a viable project. Consequent upon the visit, the team made a strong recommendation to other states to understudy the Benue State e-Learning Model which is in line with the specifications of UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Education for adoption in their various states.

As a follow up to the recommendation, many states have indicated interest to visit Benue in order to gain firsthand knowledge of the operations of BESEVIC. One of such states

is the Nasarawa State Government whose Honourable Commissioner for Education personally called to commend the state for the giant stride in revolutionalising education through the use of ICT and also sent a delegation to the state with a view to adopting our model.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is imperative to mention the fact that, the mandate to develop Benue Education IT ecosystem is huge and we call on all stakeholders to come onboard, take advantage of the State Government policy and intervention to secure a better education future for the Benue child.

Thank you and God bless you all.