

SOKOTO STATE

REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

This supplement to USA TODAY was produced by United World Ltd., Suite 179, 34 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0RH - Tel: +44 (0)20 7305 5678 - unitedworld@unitedworld-usa.com - www.unitedworld-usa.com

Determined action brings real change to Sokoto

Major changes introduced by the local government of Nigeria's northwestern Sokoto State are enhancing life and employment opportunities for citizens and readying it for international investment

Foreign investment in Africa is set to reach its highest levels this year since the 2008-09 global financial crisis, and the African Development Bank, the UN and the OECD are all painting a rosy outlook for the continent. Inflows of direct and portfolio investments are expected to hit \$84.3 billion in 2014 as major

institutions, such as Goldman Sachs and The Carlyle Group, and multinationals, including Nestlé and Unilever, are attracted to Africa's strong economic growth and improved governance. Singapore's sovereign wealth fund Temasek, for example, has also recently widened its footprint in Africa with investments in Tanzania and Nigeria.

"Nigeria is very unique with a lot of potential in agro-industry and minerals, and it has the right quality and quantity of human resources. The potential of the economy is vast and diverse," says Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, Governor of Nigeria's Sokoto State. "With the efforts we are making in the transformation of the nation,

we will soon be able to compete across the world."

Dr. Wamakko is heading the transformation that is sweeping through his home region. Located at the northwestern tip of the country, Sokoto State is reaping the benefits of electoral promises made real as the local government stays true to pre-election pledges to turn-around the state with massive

boost all sectors of society and the economy.

The state's capital, Sokoto City, is the seat of the former Sokoto Caliphate – an empire that grew during the 1800s to become one of largest and most economically successful in pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. It was led by the first Sultan of Sokoto, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, whose descendant Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III is the current Sultan and the highly revered representative of Nigeria's Muslim community.

The Sultan is also the head of the Nigerian National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, a role that has seen him help mediate interreligious relations between Nigeria's Muslim-majority north and Christian-majority south. Sokoto's people are proud of the peace and stability, as well as the emerging economic opportunities, it can offer the international community

Dr. Wamakko notes relations with the U.S. are "excellent". The governor says: "Sokoto is a place for investors. We appreciate investors and we are always looking forward to partnering with new potential investors and provide them with a welcoming environment for them to implant new business ventures. We have an independent Commissionaire of Investment, assigned with the job of basically ensuring investors can easily and quickly adapt to Sokoto's environment. We have good hotels for their comfort, and huge potential in minerals, agriculture and livestock."

"SOKOTO HAS EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., WHERE WE ENJOY A MUTUAL AND CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP"

Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, Governor of Sokoto State

investments in infrastructure, education, health and empowerment initiatives.

In the run-up to winning the 2007 governorship election, Dr. Wamakko said: "We have designed a blueprint aimed towards alleviating the terrible living conditions of the people of Sokoto State. The plans will revolve around the provision of a sustainable water supply and healthcare delivery services, enhancing the acquisition of both Islamic and Western education, restoring confidence in the minds of the people – most especially the youth – and restoring the esteem and prestige of our traditional, political and social institutions."

Since then, a raft of new schemes has been launched to

DID YOU KNOW? Facts about Sokoto

LOCATION

In the northwestern corner of Nigeria, sharing borders with the Republic of Niger to the north, Zamfara State to the east, and Kebbi State to the southwest



POPULATION

According to the latest population census (2006) Sokoto had a population of 3.7 million, with around 4.5 million people making it their home in 2013

CLIMATE

Tropical continental climate

RELIGION

Muslim state

ETHNIC GROUPS

Mainly Hausa and Fulani

LIVELIHOOD

Over 80% of inhabitants rely on farming

ACCESS

Four major all-weather roads link Sokoto to other states in Nigeria

HEALTH SERVICES

440 government health facilities and 33 private health clinics



A UNITED WORLD SUPPLEMENT PRODUCED BY:
Idil Demirel, Project Director,
and Jesús Álvarez García, Editorial Director

Cultural heritage and historic background

One of Nigeria's most influential states has a fascinating history of inspiring change for the greater good of its people

Delving into the history of Sokoto State reveals how it became one of Nigeria's most influential states, having made an indelible footprint on the country's cultural and religious development, and led by one of the most influential Muslims in the world. As a state it goes back to 1976, when it was created from the division of Nigeria's former North-Western State in two: Niger State and Sokoto State. However, as a region, Sokoto has an illustrious past that stretches back much further.

By the late 1700s, many Muslim scholars, teachers and cler-

ics (mallams) in the region had become disillusioned by the insecurity that characterized the Hausa States (which were predominantly spread across what is today's southern Niger and northern Nigeria). The largely pastoral Fulani people were increasingly the victims of Hausa taxation, land control and other discriminatory and repressive practices, and some were beginning to consider a revolution was needed to overthrow the existing authorities.

One of numerous traveling Islamic scholars through the Hausa kingdoms became increasingly popular through his preaching and reformist ideas. Based in Gobir, a leading city-state, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio was an urbanized ethnic Fulani and a leader of the Maliki school of Islam. The prominent, radical mallam was an outspoken advocate of action against

the repressive authorities and called for religious reforms. He was eventually forced into exile

THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF NIGERIAN MUSLIMS, THE CURRENT SULTAN OF SOKOTO, ALHAJI MUHAMMADU SA'AD ABUBAKAR III IS A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF REVOLUTIONARY SHEIKH USMAN DAN FODIO

in 1802, where – joined by his followers – he began planning a social and political revolution that would inspire a series of other jihads in West Africa in the first half of the 19th century.

He led the Fulani Jihad, or holy war, which lasted from 1804 until 1808 and overthrew

the ruling dynasties controlling the states of Katsina, Daura, Kano and Gobir. The new empire was founded in 1809 and was known as the Sokoto Caliphate. Dan Fodio's son, Muhammad Bello, transformed the semi-permanent camp of Sokoto into its capital city.

The Sokoto Caliphate was an economic success and steadily expanded to put Dan Fodio, and later his son, at the head one of the largest and most powerful empires in sub-Saharan Africa. It began to collapse in the latter half of the 1800s due to pressure from European colonialism, until finally the British conquest in 1903 of Kano and Sokoto brought the caliphate to an end, becoming part of the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria until Nigeria's independence in 1960.

Today, the city of Sokoto remains the center of Nige-

rian Islam and has a huge mosque opposite the Sultan's palace. The current Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, is a direct descendant of Usman Dan Fodio and is one of the most respected a n d



influential Muslims in the world. Considered the spiritual leader of Nigeria's Muslims, who represent 50% of the country's population, the Sultan is an active proponent of discourse and harmony among communities around the world.



Major projects and accomplishments reshaping the region



Sokoto State University

Inaugurated in October 2013, the new Sokoto State University (SSU) instills an enormous sense of pride in the Wamakko administration and heralds a new era in education access and skills development in the state. Designed since its inception in 2008 to incubate and develop Sokoto's indigenous talent, SSU gives priority, but not exclusive, consideration to local applicants over those from other parts of Nigeria. SSU benefits from being a completely new institution with new buildings constructed from scratch and fitted out with modern amenities and facilities. Its opening created a great deal of anticipation in the sector and the university has attracted applications from some of the state's best teaching and support staff looking to form its faculty. SSU joins other institutions in the state's tertiary offer such as the College of Agriculture in Wumo, the College of Legal and Islamic Studies in Wamakko, and the Usmanu Danfodiyo University and School of Development Studies, both in Sokoto. Sweeping changes to the education system introduced shortly after the Wamakko administration entered office in 2007, including the abolition of tuition fees for primary and secondary levels, and the establishment of centers targeting skills acquisition and women's education, will increase the demand for higher education as more students make their way up the education system and Sokoto-trained professionals enter the workplace.



Asare water project

The successful efforts of state governor Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko to supply clean water to the city of Sokoto were typified by the inauguration of the N2.6 billion (\$15.8 million) Asare water project in August last year. Of vital importance to the people of Sokoto, the Asare water tanks currently provide 20 million gallons of water per day to the city and its environs. The project was made possible thanks to investment by a Chinese company and complements the existing supply of 32 million gallons per day. So there is now a constant supply of 52 million gallons of clean water available 24 hours per day to the city. For Governor Wamakko, the Asare water scheme has been one of his proudest achievements to date. But there is still work to do: with the current demand for 80 million gallons per day in Sokoto City, it was announced in December 2013 – just four months after its inauguration – that the Asare water project would be expanded to provide an additional 40 million gallons of water per day. The upgrade will cost a further N5.7 billion, over double the initial project cost. Once completed it will provide water to areas such as Mana, Runjin Sambo, Mabera, Rugar-Wauru and other parts of the city. With this additional daily demand will be more than covered, leaving around 12 million gallons to spare that could be used to supply nearby rural areas. Aside from the Asare upgrade, the state is investing a further N1.9 billion for the rehabilitation of water treatment plants in the Sokoto metropolitan area, including the old waterworks, a bi-water project, a new extension treatment plant and a new water scheme. The state government has also earmarked funds to provide much-needed potable water to the rural areas of Sokoto.



New hospital developments

An N800-million (\$4.9m) investment by the Sokoto State Government has finally brought construction of the state's Murtala Mohammad Specialist Hospital to completion. Launched in 1991 but stalled for years by previous administrations, Governor Wamakko has also approved the upgrading of the 600-bed facility to serve as a teaching hospital for the State University. Believing a society's wealth relies on its health, the government has rejuvenated the health sector, committing more than N4 billion to its development since 2007 to renovate, expand and re-equip existing general hospitals, deploy over 30 well-equipped mobile clinics, upgrade pharmacies, train medical personnel, provide new ambulances, and inaugurate at least 23 general hospitals across the state in recent years. It has also partnered with the new, ultra-modern and privately owned Wamakko Orthopaedic Hospital to make international-standard private healthcare more affordable and create a blueprint for further ventures with the private sector.



Housing boost

On assuming the state governorship in 2007, Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko made it clear from the start that boosting the availability of decent housing for the people of Sokoto was one of the primary tasks to be taken in hand. Remaining true to his pledge, Dr. Wamakko's administration has so far constructed in excess of 3,000 houses across the state, creating entirely new neighborhoods in areas such as Mana, Kalambaina and Bado. In 2010, serious flooding caused the displacement of many communities in the state, prompting Dr. Wamakko to arrange for temporary accommodation to be provided and quickly award contracts for 1,000 new permanent housing units to be built at the three most affected areas. Over the following years, the local governments of Goronyo, Gada and Silame have since received 400, 350 and 300 new houses respectively, along with their related utilities. In 2014, the housebuilding drive continues apace, with another 500 three and four-bedroom apartments in the Wamakko local government area being rubber-stamped in May. At a cost of N7.8 billion (\$47.6 million), the project will also create the infrastructure necessary for the new development that will include roads, clinics, electricity and schools, among other amenities. According to Dr. Wamakko, "Housing has been universally accepted as the second most important human need. It is a basic need for human survival and an essential component to the advancement of the quality of life of the citizenry."



Independent power project

In 2008, the Sokoto State Government signed an agreement with Vulcan Capital Energy of the U.S., via its Abuja-based subsidiary Vulcan Elvation Limited, to build an independent power plant (IPP) at a cost of N3.8 billion (\$23.2 million). Located in the Arkilla area of the Sokoto metropolis, the new IPP is intended to boost the low power supplies, of around 15MW, the state receives from the Nigerian national grid, by contributing an extra 30-38MW to Sokoto's power mix. Security of energy supplies is essential to attracting businesses and industry to the region, which could profitably process the state's abundant raw materials to generate employment and thereby build up the momentum of its socioeconomic growth. As such, despite the project being subject to various setbacks along the way, including delays in receiving letters of credit and deliveries of heavy-duty equipment from abroad – around 95% of the components at the plant are foreign – the government has been determined throughout to bring this project to fruition and insists its completion is within sight. In addition to the IPP, Governor of Sokoto State Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko is also keen to attract investors who could maximize the state's potential to harness its natural sources of energy, such as opportunities for hydroelectricity generation at Goronyo Dam and its abundant solar power potential. According to the governor, in 2012 his administration spent around N818 million on providing solar street lightening in selected areas in the Sokoto metropolis and Gwadabawa local government area.





Vast natural resources infuse a rich landscape of investment potential

The government is pulling out all the stops to modernize the agriculture sector, the indisputable mainstay of the state's economy and primary source of employment for its people, with new initiatives and foreign partnerships, all the while highlighting other areas of the economy that hold great investment opportunities and are wide open for development

The state government is going to great lengths to encourage local and foreign entrepreneurs to invest in the social and industrial advancement of the region by paying more than just lip service to the notion of widespread socioeconomic development. It is creating training centers to raise the state's human capital and working with foreign entities to build capacity. It has also put in place several policies and incentives to attract foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships, and it is investing heavily to increase efficiency and expand its key industries.

"Sokoto is a place where investors can come and enjoy a friendly environment and government," says Governor Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko. "They can enjoy the benefits of a place that is certainly well endowed in solid minerals, in agro-allied matters, and many more areas. It is a place where people can come to visit, and enjoy a very secure environment, one in which investors can come and develop their business without any interference."

Essentially an agricultural state, with more than 80% of the population reliant on farming-related activities, agriculture is the mainstay of the state economy. As Sokoto State lies in the dry Sahel region, the general dryness of the area sees millet perhaps being the most abundant of crops, complemented by rice, corn, other cereals and beans. Therefore the rich alluvial soils in the floodplains of the Sokoto-Rima river system form the region's lifeline for growing a variety of key crops.

Efforts are under way to greatly improve the performance and output of the agriculture sector, as yields have stayed low due to various factors, including outmoded farming methods, unavailability of modern fertilizers and seeds, and the predominance of small subsistence holdings. In fact, Dr. Wamakko's first major initiative after becoming state governor in 2007 was to provide rural farmers with fertilizers via credit lines payable after harvest.

Partnerships with other countries, particularly in Europe and Argentina, are enabling the government to see how it can improve the state's productivity as it embarks on a massive campaign to employ modern agriculture and livestock rearing methods. "We produce so many crops, but there is a lack of proper packaging and processing procedures," says Governor Wamakko. "That is one reason why we are trying to partner with other countries that have the capacity to help us develop our own capacity and improve our investment in agriculture. We are getting there."

Earlier this year, the governor confirmed that his administration had secured a N4.5-billion (\$27.7-million) loan package for farmers to boost food production and will pay the N143.5 million interest on the loans on behalf of the farmers. Under the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme dry season rice and tomato farmers will benefit from a total of N2.5 billion in loans, with another N2 billion to be distributed among 7,000 cassava farmers. According to Dr. Wamakko, the gesture is intended to encourage more people to go into



farming and to ensure food security, generate employment, reduce poverty and arrest the increasing rural-urban drift of the population.

Agro-investment opportunities abound for entrepreneurs as the government moves to resolve any obstacles to maximizing the state's agro-potential. Potentially viable industries include tomatoes, peppers and onion processing; sugar extraction and refining; fertilizer production; groundnut oil processing; mills processing millet, sor-

"OUR DOORS ARE OPEN FOR ALL OF THOSE THAT WANT TO INVEST IN A PLACE WITH PROSPEROUS RETURNS AND AT THE SAME TIME FEEL COMFORTABLE AND SECURE"

Governor Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko

ghum, maize, wheat and rice; and setting up Gum Arabic plantations.

In addition to its agricultural wealth, Sokoto State is believed to be home to Nigeria's third largest livestock population, with current estimates putting levels at 2.5 million cattle, 3.1 million sheep, 4.3 million goats and 100,000 camels, as well as significant poultry stocks. As such, great potential lies in dairy, leather, poultry and fish processing and packaging. Below the surface, the state is steeped in mineral resources that are yet to be tapped.

"There are so many investment aspects in which we can create partnerships," says Dr.

Wamakko. "For example, we have considerable potential in limestone for the creation of cement, as well as in our many and varied examples of solid minerals."

Large, commercially viable deposits of high quality industrial minerals infuse Sokoto's soils. Limestone, a key mineral in great demand by various industries such as construction, agriculture and steel production, is the most studied mineral in the state. A geological review of Nigeria points to reserves of 100 million tons in Kalambaina, west of the state capital, alone. Sokoto's other mineral riches include kaolin, gypsum, phosphate and clay. Uranium and gold deposits have also been reported and are worthy of greater exploration.

Furthermore, preliminary explorations in the Sokoto-Rima basin suggest substantial hydrocarbon deposits and, backed by the geological history of the state, more intensive investigations for oil and gas would be of interest to oil producers.

Ensuring a steady, reliable power supply is vital for adding momentum to a nation's socioeconomic development and so the Federal and Sokoto State Governments are keen to partner with investors to explore the potential of developing hydroelectricity at the Goronyo Dam, as well as developing thermal-driven power station and tapping the vast potential in solar energy.

Dr. Wamakko affirms: "Our doors are open for all of those that want to invest in a place with prosperous returns and at the same time feel comfortable and secure."

New infrastructure smoothes the road to economic growth



The drive for major change in the state's infrastructure is helping its transformation gain pace as new roads, bridges and civil engineering projects continue to reshape its landscape

Rural communities are being connected by unprecedented road-building projects across the 23 local government areas of the state. The subsequent improvement and ease in the mobility of commodities, services and people is thereby spurring accelerated economic activity and social development.

More than 70% of the population lives in rural areas and the focus on opening up the most difficult and inac-

cessible areas of the state over the past seven years with greater interconnectivity has resulted in the construction of over 3,775 miles of roads and other key infrastructure. Farmers with faster, easier access to major markets are obtaining better prices for their produce, and the knock-on economic effects of increased mobility between towns and villages are enabling benefits to spread.

New and rehabilitated bridges bringing dozens of communities closer together include those at Silame, Wurno-Huchi, Isa-Bafarawa, Tambuwal-Kebbe, and also Sabon-Birni. Plus, the N1.9-billion (\$11.5-million) rehabilitation of the Sokoto-Illela road is almost complete. The 85km highway links numerous villages and towns with Illela, an important market

town sharing a border with the Republic of Niger to the north.

The Wamakko administration takes great pride in its achievements in Sokoto City, having dualized, expanded or repaired almost all major thoroughfares in the state capital. A N1.5-billion flyover has eased traffic flows and also become a local landmark.

The city's eastern and western bypasses have recently been rehabilitated and had extra lanes added. Earlier this year, officials at the Sokoto State House of Assembly called on the state government to name the two roads after the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar, in honor of his "unrelenting efforts to sustain peace, unity and religious harmony in Nigeria and beyond."

State governors urged to replicate success of Sokoto's new farming skills acquisition centers



Targeting women and young people in particular, modern farming techniques are being taught at three new facilities launched by the state government

The new skills acquisition centers opening their doors in Sokoto State represent a tangible realization of the government's belief in the old saying: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." The sentiment particularly holds water when Sokoto's all-important agriculture sector is brought into consideration, as developing its citizens' agro-industrial skills from the ground up is vital for widespread socioeconomic progress.

At least 3,000 people every year will be trained at three new skills acquisition centers to develop key skills in poultry, fish farming, animal

husbandry and modern agricultural practices to improve food production.

At the inauguration last September of the Farming Skills Acquisition Center in Milgoma, Bodinga, Nigeria's former president (1985-

AT LEAST 3,000 PEOPLE EVERY YEAR WILL BE TRAINED AT THE THREE NEW CENTERS TO DEVELOP KEY SKILLS IN POULTRY, FISH FARMING, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND CONTEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

1993) General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (retired) commended the efforts of Governor Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko on his people-oriented projects, saying: "All the projects the

governor has been executing directly affect the masses and this laudable gesture should be sustained." He also urged other state governors to likewise give agriculture its due attention and emulate the efforts being made in Sokoto to develop the sector and train people in the latest techniques.

In addition to helping empower women, increase human capital development in the state's youth and reduce poverty through job creation, the skills acquisition centers are also playing their part in reducing the population drift from rural to urban areas by creating economic and educational opportunities in country communities.

"We will continue to ensure that all forms of farming activities in the state are bolstered," says the governor. "We should go back to the farms as they hold the key to the transformation and revitalization of our personal and national socioeconomic development."



A legacy of proactive transformation

A revolution in education and social empowerment is under way in the northernmost state in Nigeria's northwest, with an emphasis on openness and equal opportunity

Great strides have been made on the path to socioeconomic betterment in Sokoto State in the seven years since the administration led by Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko assumed office on May 29, 2007. In his new capacity as state governor, Dr. Wamakko pledged to transform Sokoto, with poverty and illiteracy reduction, wealth creation, and wider access to education providing the catalysts for sustainable development and empowerment. He affirmed their objectives could be achieved not by expecting hand-outs or external controls, but by harnessing the talent and potential he knew to be inherent in the state and by applying good governance with astute resource management.

True to the governor's word, the new administration quickly declared a state emergency in the

education sector, initially allocating 22% of the state budget to it and embarking on an infrastructure development program to create a more conducive learning environment.

The state government has since spent more than N3 billion (\$18.4 million) on the construction, rehabilitation and expansion of most primary and secondary schools in the state. It also abolished education fees and increased the feeding allowance of its students by 100%, thereby encouraging poorer families to send their children to school.

There has also been a massive increase in the provision of textbooks, science equipment, and other teaching and learning-related materials are being provided to schools across the state. In December 2013, media reports stated that the administration has also approved a N46-million 'one-laptop-per-child' pilot program that will introduce students to the world of ICT.

Dr. Wamakko, a former teacher and head teacher before moving to the U.S. in 1977 to study, understands that investing in human capital is also key and that a qualified and motivated teaching force is essential

"MY FIRST DEGREE STUDIES IN PENNSYLVANIA, AT PITTSBURG UNIVERSITY, GAVE ME MY FIRST EXPOSURE TO THE WORLD; THE EXPERIENCE IS STILL PART OF MY THINKING AND LIVING. THE U.S. IS A COUNTRY WHERE I FIRST UNDERSTOOD WHAT IS CALLED 'FREEDOM'"

Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, Governor of Sokoto State

for effective reform. His administration has provided at least 1,000 new teachers in the primary and secondary education sectors each, as well as 300 teachers for Arabic and Islamic boards and more than 200 lecturers and support staff for the Shehu Shagari College of Education and the Polytechnic of Sokoto State.

"With careful planning and prudent management of resources, the nation and the state will be able to achieve a lot," says Dr. Wamakko. "We have been able to increase enrolment by over 40%, and the number of girls registered at schools by over 40%. We have been able to increase enrolment in universities and tertiary education by over 700%. We now allocate 27-30% of our budget towards education every year and this strategy and investment is showing results. I have been personally going to schools to try and establish what we can do to make up for the shortfalls here and there, and continually improve our education system."

Many women in the state married young and at the expense of completing their secondary education. This has prompted the creation of women education centers, one in each of the state's three senatorial districts, where women are encouraged to resume their secondary education, which in turn will qualify them for tertiary-level education. It is giving married women a renewed opportunity to acquire Western-standard education. Now, there are women who passed through this scheme and are graduating with their first or higher degrees, and competing favorably with younger generations in pursuit of a career.

On October 29, 2013, one of the governor's proudest achievements opened its doors: Sokoto State University. At its inauguration, Dr. Wamakko described the new institution as a legacy to the educational culture of the Caliphate that would beam its light to other parts of the country and beyond. There is also a push to strike national and international alliances between the university and other tertiary-level seats of learning.

Other landmark achievements that instill immense pride in the governor include the Asare water project, empowerment initiatives, targeting the state's youth and women, and advancing the modernization of the extremely important agriculture sector.

"I want to leave three fundamental legacies," says Dr. Wamakko. "I want to be remembered for all the good work that I was able to do in education, health, agriculture, youth employment, trade, transport and numerous other sectors. In addition, I want to be remembered as a governor who during his tenure was the people's servant, and not vice versa. Thirdly, I want to be remembered as a governor who during his tenure was connected with the people."

The governor is a staunch proponent of ensuring an open, equitable society in Sokoto and it forms another of his administration's fundamental beliefs. "I lived in the U.S. when I was younger. My first degree studies in Pennsylvania, at Pittsburg University, gave me my first exposure to the world; the experience is still part of my thinking and living. The U.S. is a country where I first understood what is called 'freedom'. Sokoto has excellent relations with the U.S., where we enjoy a mutual and cordial friendship," says Dr. Wamakko.

Sokoto State Government is keen to convey internationally that it is the most open state in Nigeria, with equal rights and privileges for everyone. The governor explains: "Based on our history as a capital of an old empire, which extends for thousand of kilometers, the objective is to be as open as before, and to show love, independent of where you come from, or your dynasty, religion, etc. We welcome everyone. People from all over the world and all over Nigeria want to come and live in Sokoto because they are given equal treatment; they are loved and respected and they feel at home. That was the heritage of our ancestors, and in 2007 when I became governor, I said that 'any Nigerian no matter where they come from is welcome to work and live here.'"

A GOVERNOR'S PRIDE: TOP FOUR NEW PROJECTS

SOKOTO STATE UNIVERSITY

Widespread changes in the education system were crowned last year by the inauguration of the state's first university. It is tangible evidence of the governor's unwavering conviction that socioeconomic advancement is best achieved through universal access to education and will create a new generation of talent.

ASARE WATER PROJECT

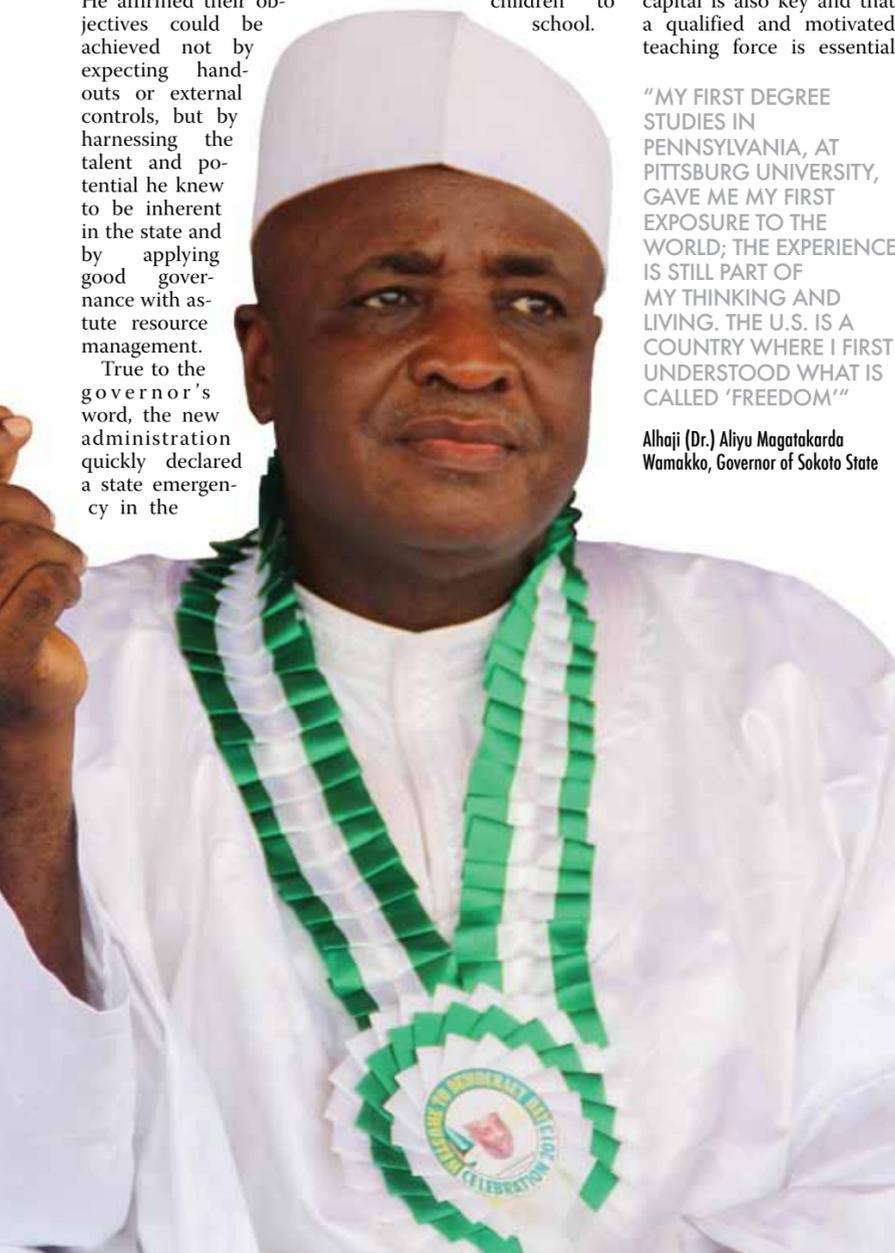
Massive water tanks at the N2.6 billion (\$15.8 million) Asare water project, which was completed last year, boosted the supply of fresh drinking water to Sokoto City by 20 million gallons to reach 52 million gallons daily. A phase two expansion will add another 40 million gallons to that, with any excess available being redistributed to

YOUTH & EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Encouraging women to complete and further their education, and schemes targeting youth empowerment through job creation and skills and training acquisition, are at the core of the governor's social inclusion drive, which aims to ensure all of society is aware of the equal opportunities available for the taking.

AGRICULTURE

Greater efficiency and output in the state's most important industry is being targeted by initiatives to advance and expand the sector. Easier access to credit and fertilizers for farmers, as well as learning up-to-date agricultural techniques, are helping modernize the lifeline for four out of every five people and take it to the next level.



Tourism digs into rich heritage

From ancient ruins and fossil-packed rock forms to encroaching sand dunes and antiquity-packed modern museums, Sokoto State has the potential to exploit its historical and cultural heritage

The Federal Government's ongoing push to diversify the Nigerian economy and pull focus away from its mighty oil and gas industry continues to spark interest in what else the West African country has to offer investors. Its travel and tourism sector, for example, has performed well over the past five years in terms of tourist volumes and expenditures. In 2013, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to the nation's GDP was N757.3 billion (\$4.6 billion), or 1.6% of its total GDP. In 2014, this is expected to rise to N776.5 billion (equivalent to 2.5% of GDP) and subsequently continue expanding at 5.8% per annum to reach N1.366 trillion by 2024, as major hotel chains, airlines and travel agents look to enter untapped markets.

The national focus on tourism as a revenue and employment-generating sector is mirrored by local governments' enthusiasm for both investors and tourists alike to come and discover the heritage, culture and beauty in



ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS, SUCH AS TERRACOTTA HEADS FROM 200-600BC, ARE ON DISPLAY INTERNATIONALLY AND ARE TYPICAL OF SOKOTO'S HISTORICAL WEALTH, AND MANY SITES OF INTEREST ARE CLOSE TO THE CAPITAL

each of the country's 36 states. Visitors to Sokoto State will find an array of culturally and historically significant sites both within the capital city and its environs.

The Sultan Saddik Abubakar Airport serves as the major domestic link between northwest Nigeria and the rest of the country and the world. Arrivals land just six miles from the south of So-

koto City, where they will find numerous culturally and historically significant sites to discover and eight gateways to the ancient city.

The Sultan of Sokoto's Palace features interesting modern architecture and is protected by palace guards in their multi-colored regalia. However its importance goes beyond cultural and artistic merit; it is also a cohesive and guiding symbol for Nigeria's Muslim community. Built by Sultan Bello in 1817, it is only just a couple of kilometers away from Hubbare – the official residence of the Sultans of Sokoto and one of the most important historical monuments in the state, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. Also near the Sultan's Palace is the Sultan Bello Mosque, which dates back to 1808.

The Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau Museum

in Sokoto has been a rich resource center for researchers, students and scholars since 1973 and contains more than half a million assorted materials and historical treasures. It has also been linking with organizations overseas such as the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington and the British Museum in London.

A major attraction, and advantage, of Sokoto State's tourist sites is that they are mostly located within a 60-mile radius of its capital. Visitors to the city do not have to venture far to experience a variety of places of interest that make ideal day trips from the city, such as the sweeping Saharan sand dunes at Gidan Kaura, ancient fossil-rich Gilbadi Rocks in Gada, and impressive sedimentary rock formations at Goronyo, which is also home to one of the largest dams in the West African sub-region.

Tourism in Sokoto State, one of Nigeria's most open and secure states, provides ample investment opportunities in hotel development and management, the creation of leisure and hospitality infrastructure, and the enhancement of its many sites of interest to international standards, which the local government is keen to achieve through foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships looking to maximize high-growth markets.



Hotels raise the hospitality bar

Hotels with international standards of comfort, service and convenience provide both business travelers and vacationers with a warm welcome and reflect the state's rising aspirations and efforts to attract visitors

Set in landscaped gardens in the Guili area of Sokoto City and appointed to match the high standards set by international hotel chains, the Giginya Coral Hotel provides visitors with the warmest of welcomes and is tangible evidence of how the state is on the rise. Opened in 2011, the modern, 269-room, 26-suite hotel prides itself on its attentive 24-hour service and range of facilities on offer. All rooms are equipped with services such as satellite TV, mini-fridge, WiFi Internet, private bathrooms, and air-conditioning. In addition, each room in the four-wing hotel features an open-air balcony, affording great

views of the outdoor pool, gardens, city or golf course next to the hotel.

Its Lavender restaurant serves both traditional Nigerian and continental cuisine, and its banqueting hall caters for up to 300 people, while its meeting room can hold up to 80 conventioners.

A sister hotel, the Shukura Coral Hotel, opened a year earlier on Kano Road, also in the Guili district of the capital. It too offers equally impressive facilities and a mix of chalet, room and suite accommodation of the same high standard.

As Sokoto develops both its business and tourism offerings, demand for such accommodation will undoubtedly continue to grow.