

500 Beds Hospital and Vehicles Abandoned in Bayelsa

By Deborah Phillips

Situated at Ingbi Road, Yenagoa of Bayelsa State is Melford Okilo Memeorial Hospital. It is a 500 beds hospital started by the administration of the former Governor Timipre Silva of Bayelsa State but was abandoned after his tenure. The hospital was a cottage hospital before Governor Timipre Silva took over and upgraded it to a 500 beds hospital and also renamed it Melford Okilo memorial hospital in memory of the former Governor of Rivers State Chief Melford Okilo.

According to some sources, the contract of the hospital was given by the previous administration at the cost of #25bn. Equipments were purchased and stocked in a warehouse but were never installed also vehicles and ambulances were purchased but were never used or returned but are being left to rot away or be stolen. The structures are dilapidated with some doors and windows broken. Bushes have taken over the whole environment.

Governor Henry Seriake Dickson on assumption of office promised that the hospital will be remodeled to a 350 bed hospital and put in proper use but till date nothing has been done. A visit to the hospital on the 8th September, 2018 showed that the hospital is still not in use despite the promise of the present administration except for the malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDs Research center that is in use and the resident Doctors quarters that is still under construction.

On Tuesday the 13th of December, 2016 the Governor signed a memorandum of understanding at the government house Yenagoa, where he said “his administration has already made relevant investments in the health sector, in addition he said the 350 bed Melford Okilo Memorial Hospital and other ongoing health projects in the state will be completed and put to use before the end of next year (2017), in addition to the state health care insurance scheme. We are in December 2017 waiting for the promise to be fulfilled”.

A source from Teru-Ebeni town in Sagbama local government area of Bayelsa state who pleaded anonymity said, “The contract of this hospital was awarded by Governor Timipre Silva and has been abandoned by the present administration. You know Nigerian politicians lack the spirit of continuity. Once they are sworn in they will want to start a new project that will bear their names

instead of continuing from where their predecessors stopped. This is just a waste of our resources.”

Obviously, it is saddening seeing such a huge amount of money go down the drain. This is a hospital that if well managed could save so many lives of the Bayelsans and Nigerians in general. It can also serve as a means of generating revenue for the state. It will be good enough if Governor Seriake Dickson keeps to his promises of reviving the hospital for the sake of posterity.

Deborah Phillips
Wrote in from the department of mass communication
Bayero University, Kano
Email: debbiephils@ymail.com