

E X E C U T I V E W A T C H

**A Public Assessment Of President Olusegun Obasanjo's
Government Policy Statements And Actions**

Budget 2002 Not In Favour Of The Masses - Nigerians



December 2001

...promoting and protecting press freedom and freedom of expression

Executive Watch

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Government Policy Statements And Actions**

December 2001



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Other Publications by Media Rights Agenda (MRA)

- * *Media Rights Monitor* (Monthly Journal) published since 1995
- * Annual Reports on the state of the Nigerian Media
 - + *Sentenced to Silence* 1998
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 - + *Unshackling the Nigerian Media: An Agenda For Reform*, July 1997 (In collaboration with ARTICLE 19)
- * *Media Scorecard* (Report on the Print Media Coverage of the Political Transition Programme - six issues, from January - June 1999)
- * *Airwaves Scorecard* (Report on the Broadcast Media Coverage of the Political Transition Programme - six issues, from January - June 1999)
- * *Unlocking Nigeria's Closet of Secrecy*, August 2000 (A Report on the Campaign for a Freedom of Information Act in Nigeria)
- * *Broadcasting In Nigeria: Unlocking The Airwaves*, February 2001 (A Report on the Framework for Broadcasting and Telecommunications in Nigeria - In collaboration with ARTICLE 19)

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This report was written by **Osaro Odemwingie**, Publications Officer for Media Rights Agenda, while **Ademoyewa Johnson**, Campaign Officer at MRA, coordinated the research exercise for the report.

Mercy Epete Jones, Secretary/Receptionist at MRA, provided the secretarial support for the report.

The report was edited by **Tive Denedo**, MRA's Acting Executive Director, who supervised the project.

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INTRODUCTION / OBJECTIVES

The return of civil rule in Nigeria after more than 15 years of military rule came with promises of civil liberties, freedom, respect for rule of law as well as constitutional and participatory democracy. By its nature, democracy as a system of governance requires active participation and regular intervention through commentaries, questions, suggestions and debates by every section of the society.

But the constant interruption of the democratic process in Nigeria by successive military regimes eroded the culture of effective participation in governance in the country. Elected officers at the Federal, States and Local Government levels show, by their utterances, attitudes, and actions, the tendencies of military officers holding public office. With government's seeming disregard for interaction, there are fears of alienation by government, which portend grave danger for the new experiment at democratization.

Majority of the civil populace who are not consulted and are barely included in the scheme of governance are those mainly affected by the discrepancy between government policy plans and implementation. A common reaction is a feeling by the governed that there is no difference between military dictatorship and democracy as practised in Nigeria. Experiments on democracy have seen three unsuccessful models, all of which failed largely due to the lack of communication between the leaders and the governed.

However, for the current experiment to yield dividend, there has to be a way of measuring reactions from civil society. There need to be an established forum through which the people can effectively participate in the daily events that shape the present and define the future or, at the very least, be given an opportunity to have a say on such matters. The culture has to be developed as a way of giving assurance to civil society that democracy is indeed, a government of the people by the people and for the people, not merely by proclamation.

The Executive Watch is designed to open a communication line for civil society to effectively participate in the growth and sustenance of democracy. Through the Executive Watch project, Media Rights Agenda monitors the activities and policies of the Executive arm of Government, particularly the Presidency, to ascertain the popularity such activities and policies enjoy among a wide spectrum of Nigerians, the overall objectives being to ensure greater public participation in governance and create a feedback mechanism for the government to enable it gauge its popularity and the acceptance of its policies.

The specific objectives of the Executive Watch project are:

- * To regularly monitor and document the discrepancies in government's policies and actions and thereby provide a primary source of information on these for the local and international communities on public reactions and responses to them.
- * To provide a framework for the Nigerian government, its departments and agencies to assess their performance in relation to their policies and their implementation, and understand the public attitude to such policies and governmental action.
- * To provide the citizens a forum to respond to and highlight areas of distortions in government policies and their implementation and contribute to the effective management of these distortions and thereby participate in the governance process.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE TOPIC

On November 7, 2001, President Olusegun Obasanjo presented the year 2002 budget proposal, estimated at N844 billion, to a joint session of the National Assembly for approval. The breakdown of the budget proposal shows that Defense will receive the biggest share of N49.6 billion. Allocations to some other sectors are: Power and Steel, N38.5 billion; National Stadium, Abuja N38 billion; Presidency, N28.4 billion; Federal Capital Territory, N22 billion; Education, N17.7 billion; Health, N14.9 billion; National Identity Card Project, N10 billion and Agriculture, N3.87 billion.

Some Nigerians have praised the presidency for allocating N38.5 billion to the Power and Steel sector, but frowned at the priority given to some other sectors including Defense, and in particular, the National Stadium Abuja and the National Identity Card Project (N10 billion), which they said are completely not in line with the present economic realities of the country.

Reacting further, Nigerians say sectors such as Education, Health, Agriculture and Security should have received greater preference, in view of their impact on the generality of the people, particularly in enhancing their welfare and improving their standard of living.

On the 2001 budget, Nigerians berated the government over what they described as its poor implementation, saying it did not meet their aspiration in terms of improving their conditions of living. They express doubts on the outcome of the proposed year 2002 budget, saying that since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule, no budget had been faithfully implemented.

The survey sought to determine the followings:

- Whether respondents think the priorities in the proposed budget clearly reflect the dire needs of Nigerians.
- Whether there is any fundamental difference between this budget and that of erstwhile military Heads of State.
- Whether respondents see a preference in the proposed budget for projects and programmes, meant to satisfy the greed of the ruling class.
- Determine which sector Nigerians feel ought to attract more funds in the proposed budget, and finally
- Determine whether or not Nigerians think budget implementation since 1999, have improved their standard of living.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Nigerians have criticised the year 2002 budget proposal presented by President Olusegun Obasanjo to a joint session of the National Assembly for approval recently. According to them, the priorities in the proposed budget do not reflect the dire needs of common Nigerians and the exercise has become a hallow ritual.

Criticising the Federal Government further, Nigerians said sadly, and particularly in this era of democracy, one cannot see any fundamental difference between the year 2002 budget proposal and that of a military head of state.

Scheming the budget on priorities in terms of which sector should attract more funds, Nigerians pin-pointed Education as deserving foremost priority, followed by Health, Agriculture and Security, respectively. Defense, which got the highest priority in the proposed budget, was, however, rated as not deserving such priority.

On budget implementation since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule, Nigerians said, in general terms, it has not met the aspiration of the common man in terms of improving their conditions of living.

Out of the 6,890 respondents polled in the survey, 5,002 (72.6%) said the priorities in the proposed year 2002 budget, do not reflect the dire needs of the ordinary Nigerians, while 1,809 (26.5%) others, said it did. Seventy-nine other respondents, representing 1.1%, were undecided.

On whether there is any fundamental difference between the proposed year 2002 budget and that of earstwhile military Heads of State, 2,411 (35%) said 'Yes', while 4,334 (63.6%) said 'No'. Ninety-five (1.4%) respondents, however, were undecided.

Asked whether respondents see a preference in the proposed budget for projects and programs meant to satisfy the greed of the ruling class, 5,016 (72.8%) said 'Yes', while 1,826 (26.5%) said 'No'. Forty-eight respondents representing .07% were undecided.

Asked which sector respondents feel ought to attract more funds in the proposed budget, 1,812 (26.3%) respondents said Education, while 1,804 (26.2%) said Health. Others are; Power supply, 1,681 (24.4%); Water supply, 40 (.6%) and Defense, 40 (.6%).

On the question whether budget implementation since when Nigeria returned to civil rule have improved the standard of living of the common man, 5,284 (76.7%) said 'No', it has not, while 1,561 (22.7%) said 'Yes' it has. However, 45 (.6%) respondents were undecided.

Responding to a question which asked whether respondents listen to or read budget speech by the President, 4,646 (67.4%) said 'Yes', they do, while 2,210 (32.1%) said 'No', they do not. Thirty-four (.5%) others were undecided.

One thousand three hundred and sixty four respondents, among those who said budget implementation in Nigeria since 1999 have not improved the standards of living of common Nigerians, blamed it on corruption on the part of public officers; 1,200 said lack of focus by the government, while 800 others said, lack of commitment to the implementation of the budgets. Seven hundred and twelve others, said misplaced priority, 538 said greed among public officers, 350 said missappropriation of public fund while 320 said mismanagement of public fund.

OUTLINE OF FINDINGS

Five thousand and two (72.6%) Nigerians, out of 6890 Nigerians in the survey, said the priorities in the proposed year 2002 budget, do not reflect the dire needs of common Nigerians, while 1809 (26.5%) others, said the proposed budget reflects the needs of common Nigerians. Seventy-nine (1.1%) others were undecided.

On a city-by-city response, the survey showed that majority of respondents in the cities polled agreed that the proposed budget does not reflect the dire needs of Nigerians. However, majority of respondents in Abuja, the only exception, said the proposed budget reflects the needs of Nigerians.

Specifically, the response pattern showed that in Abuja, 544 (55.1%) said the proposed budget clearly reflects the dire need of Nigerians, while 443 (44.8%) said it does not. One respondents was undecided. In Benin, 90 (13.7%) respondents said it does, 558 (85.1%) said it does not. Eight respondents (1.2%) were undecided; Enugu, 179 (18.1%) said it does, 812 (81.9%) said it does not; Ibadan, 218 (27.2%) said it does, 564 (70.5%) said it does not; Kaduna, 240 (24.7%) said it does, 678 (69.9%) said it does not; Kano, 298 (31.2%) said it does, 502 (62.8%) said it does not; Lagos, 240 (31.4%) said it does, 525 (68.6%) said it does not; Port-Harcourt, 920 representing all the respondents polled said it does not.

On whether, there is any fundamental difference between the proposed budget and that of earstwhile military Heads of State; 2411 (35%) respondents said 'Yes', while 4334 (63.6%) said 'No'. Ninety-Five (1.4%) others were, however, undecided.

On a city-by-city pattern, the poll showed that majority of respondents in the cities polled said there is no fundamental difference between the proposed budget and that of earstwhile military Heads of State. The exception is in Abuja, where majority of respondents said there are fundamental differences in the budget and that of former military Heads of State.

The response is as follows: Abuja, 539 (54.6%) respondents said there is fundamental difference in the year 2002 proposed budget and that of former military Heads of State, while 448 (45.3%) said there is no fundamental difference.

In Benin, 86 (13.1%) respondents said there is a difference, while, 560 (85.4%) said there is no difference. One respondent was undecided. In Enugu, 343 (34.6%) said there is a difference, 648 (65.4%), said there is none; Ibadan, 324 (40.5%) said there is a difference, 476 (59.5%) said there is none; Kaduna, 288 (29.7%) said there is a difference, 598 (61.6%) said there is none. Eighty-four (87%) were undecided. In Kano, 199 (24.9%) said there is a difference, 601 (75.1%) said there is none; Lagos, 287 (37.5%) said there is a difference, 478 (62.5%) said there is none; Port-Harcourt, 345 (37.5%) said there is a difference, 575 (62.5%) said there is none.

Asked whether respondents see a preference in the proposed budget for projects and programmes, meant to satisfy the greed of the ruling class, 5016 (72.8%) said 'Yes', while 1826 (26.5%) said 'No'. Forty-eight others, representing .07%, were undecided

On a city-by-City basis, the survey indicated that majority of respondents in all the cities polled, said 'Yes,' there is preference in the proposed budget for projects and programmes, meant to satisfy the greed of the ruling class.

For instance in Abuja, 679 (68.7%) said ‘Yes’, there is, while 307 (31.1%) said ‘No’, there is none. Two respondents (0.2%) were undecided. In Benin, 562 (85.7%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 86 (13.1%) said ‘No’, there is none. Eight (1.2%) others were undecided; Enugu, 652 (65.8%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 339 (34.2%), said ‘No’, there is none; Ibadan, 562 (70.3%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 238 (29.7%) said ‘No’, there is none; Kaduna, 701 (72.3%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 231 (23.8%) said ‘No’, there is none. Thirty eight others (3.9%) were undecided. In Kano, 558 (69.8%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 242 (30.2%) said ‘No’, there is none; Lagos, 465 (60.8%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 300 (39.2%) said ‘No’, there is none; Port-Harcourt, 837 (86.5%) said ‘Yes’, there is, 83 (8.5%) said ‘No’, there is none.

Asked which sector respondents believe should attract more funds in the proposed 2002 budget, 1812 (26.3%) respondents said Education, 1804 (26.2%) said Health and 1681 (24.4%) said Power supply. Others are Water supply 40 (.6%) and Defense 40 (.6%).

On a city-by-city pattern, the response is as follows,

Cities	Abuja	Benin	Enugu	Ibadan	Kaduna	Kano	Lagos	P/H	Total
Nos of Respondents	988	656	991	800	970	800	765	920	6,890
Education	237 24%	202 30.8%	239 24.1%	181 22.6%	223 23%	250 31.3%	100 13.1%	380 41.3%	1,812 26.3%
Health	258 26.1%	124 18.9%	310 31.3%	219 27.3%	220 22.7%	203 25.3%	150 19.6%	320 34.8%	1,804 26.2%
Agriculture	293 29.7%	180 27.4%	139 14%	252 31.5%	287 29.6%	230 28.8%	213 27.8%	87 9.4%	1,681 24.4%
Security	110 11.1%	130 19.8%	120 12.1%	98 12.3%	240 24.7%	106 13.3%	207 27.1%	102 11.1%	1,113 16.1%
Power Supply	39 4%	17 26.6%	183 18.5%	50 6.3%			80 10.4%	31 3.4%	400 5.8%
Water Supply	25 2.5%						15 2%		40 .6%
Defence	26 2.6%	3 0.5%				11 1.3%			40 0.6%

On the question whether budget implementation since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule have improved the standards of living of the average Nigerian, 5,284 (76.7%) said ‘No’, it has not, while 1,561 (22.7%) said ‘Yes’, it has. However, 45 (.6%) respondents were undecided.

The responses are as follows: Abuja, 649 (65.7%) said ‘No, it hasn’t, while 337 (34.1%) said ‘Yes’, it has. Two respondents were undecided. In Benin, 422 (64.3%) said ‘No’, it hasn’t, 228 (34.8%) said ‘Yes’, it has. Six others were undecided. Enugu, 895 (90.3%) said ‘No’, it hasn’t, 59 (6%), said ‘Yes’, it has. Thirty-seven respondents were undecided; Ibadan, 553 (69.1%) said ‘No’, it hasn’t, 247 (30.9%) said ‘Yes’, it has;

Kaduna, 748 (77.1%) said 'No', it hasn't, 222 (22.9%) said 'Yes', it has. In Kano, 763 (95.4%) said 'No', it hasn't, 37 (4.6%) said 'Yes', it has; Lagos, 465 (60.8%) said 'No', it hasn't, 300 (39.2%) said 'Yes', it has; Port-Harcourt, 789 (81.5%) said 'No', it hasn't, 131 (13.5%) said 'Yes', it has.

Responding to a question which asked whether respondents listen to or read budget speeches by the President, 4,646 (67.4%) said 'Yes', they do, while 2210 (32.1%) said 'No', they do not. Thirty four (.5%) others were undecided.

Broken down on a city-by-city basis, the result showed that except in Kaduna and Kano, where majority of the respondents said they do not read or listen to budget speeches by the President, majority of others in the rest of the cities polled said they do.

Further analysis showed that in Abuja, 745 (75.4%) said 'Yes', they read and listen to budget speeches, while 239 (24.2%) said 'No', indicating that they do not read or listen to budget speeches. Four other respondents (.4%) were undecided. In Benin, 600 (71.5%) said 'Yes', they do, 56 (8.6%) said 'No', they do not. Six respondents (0.9%) were undecided. In Enugu, 927 (93.5%) said 'Yes', they do, while 64 (6.5%), said 'No', they do not; Ibadan 525 (65.6%) said 'Yes', they do, while 251 (31.4%) said 'No', they do not. Twenty four others were undecided. In Kaduna, 588 (60.6%) said 'No', they do not, while 382 (39.4%) said 'Yes', they do; Kano, 480 (60%) said 'No', they do not, 320 (40%) said 'Yes', they do; Lagos, 425 (55.6%) said 'Yes,' they do, 342 (44.4%) said 'No', they do not; Port-Harcourt, 722 (74.6%) said 'Yes', they do, 198 (20.4%) said 'No', they do not.

One thousand three hundred and sixty four respondents, among those who said budget implementation in Nigeria since 1999 have not improved the standards of living of common Nigerians, blamed it on corruption on the part of public officers; 1,200 said lack of focus by the government, while 800 others said, lack of commitment to the implementation of the budgets. Seven hundred and twelve others, said misplaced priority, 538 said greed among public officers, 350 said missappropriation of public fund while 320 said mismanagement of public fund.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the survey, 8,000 questionnaires were produced and administered out of which 6,890 were returned. This number represents 86.1 per cent. One thousand one hundred and ten were, however, not returned. This represents 13.9 per cent.

One thousand questionnaires were administered in the cities covered in this exercise. These include , Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Others cities are; Benin, Enugu and Port Harcourt.

The survey was conducted between December 6 and 16, 2001. The questionnaires for the survey contained seven structured questions, five of which were close-ended, requiring respondents to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No. Others, however, required respondents to state their responses.

The questionnaires were distributed among Nigerians of 18 years and above, both male and female. It also deliberately attempted to capture, in significant ratio, people of three broad educational background, i.e. No formal education to primary school education; post primary education and post secondary education.

Respondents who do not possess a sufficient literacy ability were assisted by MRA's researchers to read and interpret the questions and elect appropriate options according to the preferences of the respondents concerned.

CHARACTERITICS OF RESPONDENTS

The statistics howed that 3,951 out of the total respondents numbering 6,890, representing 57.3 per cent, are male and the remaining 2,939 respondents, representing 42.7 per cent, are female. It also shows that 3,174 of the respondents are single , 3,416 are married, 158 are widowed, 142 are separated.

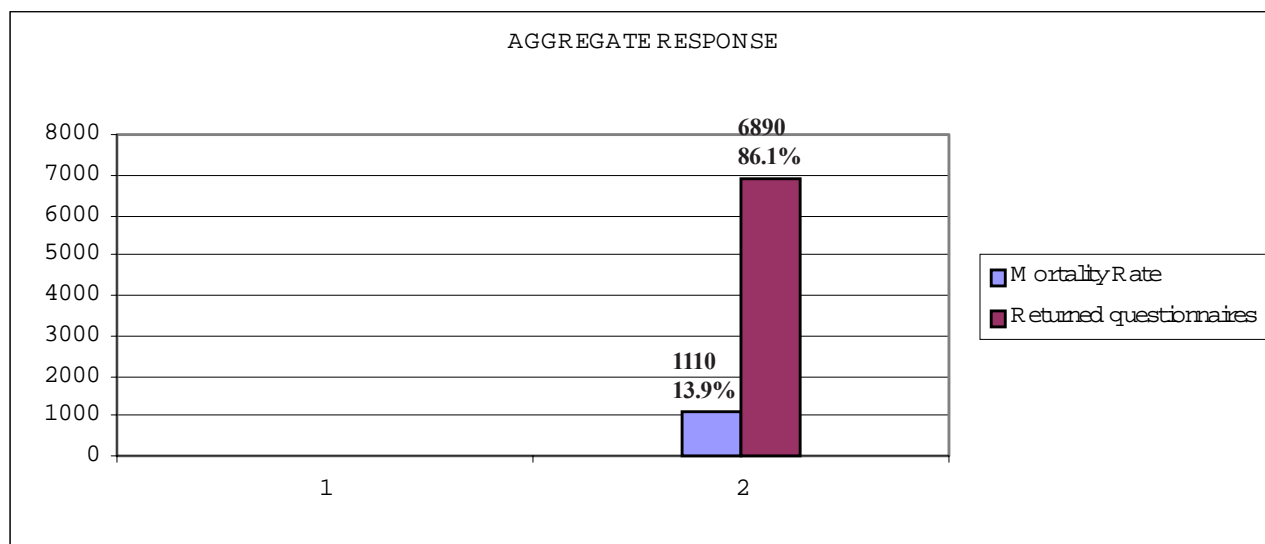
The survey also showed that 3,211 of the respondents are between the ages of 18 and 30 years, 2,018 are in the range of 31 to 50 years old and 923 are between the bracket of 51 to 60 years old. Seven hundred and thirty eight respondents are over 60 years old.

The occupation of the resopondetss ranges from civil servants, professionals, artisans, traders, housewives, unemployed persons and faith ministers.

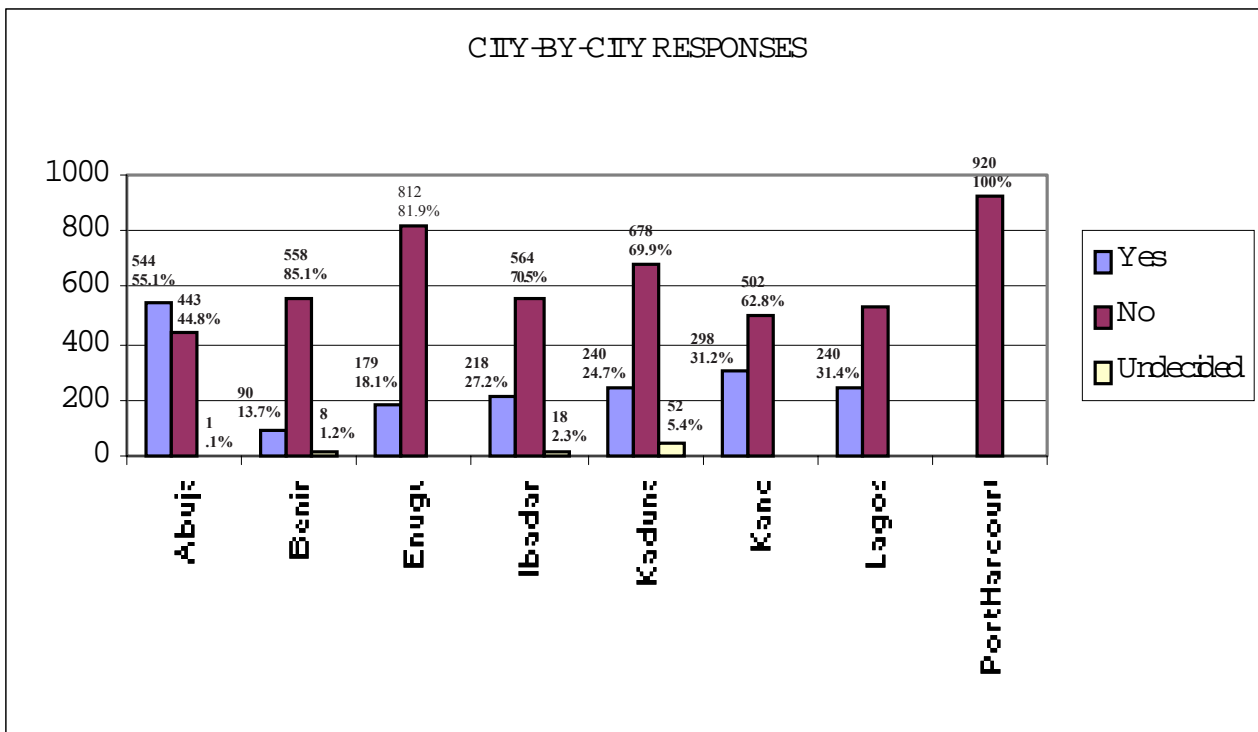
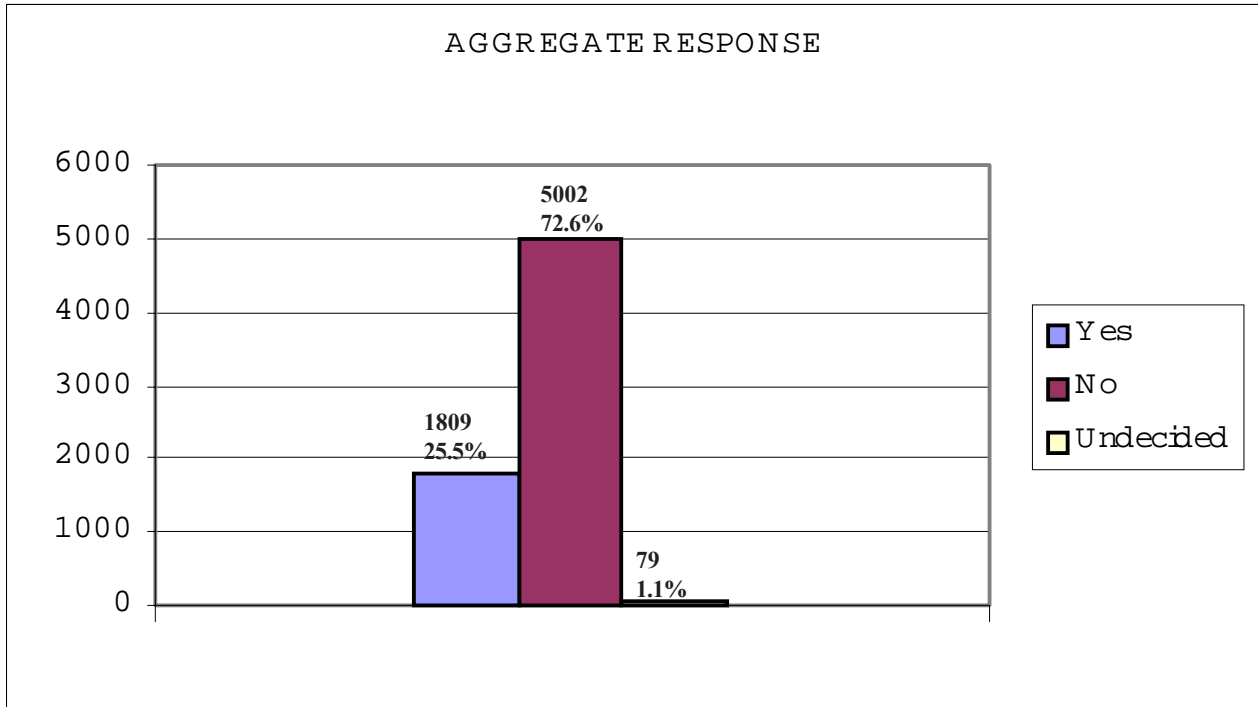
QUESTIONNAIRE RATE OF RETURN / MORTALITY

ACHIEVED SAMPLE

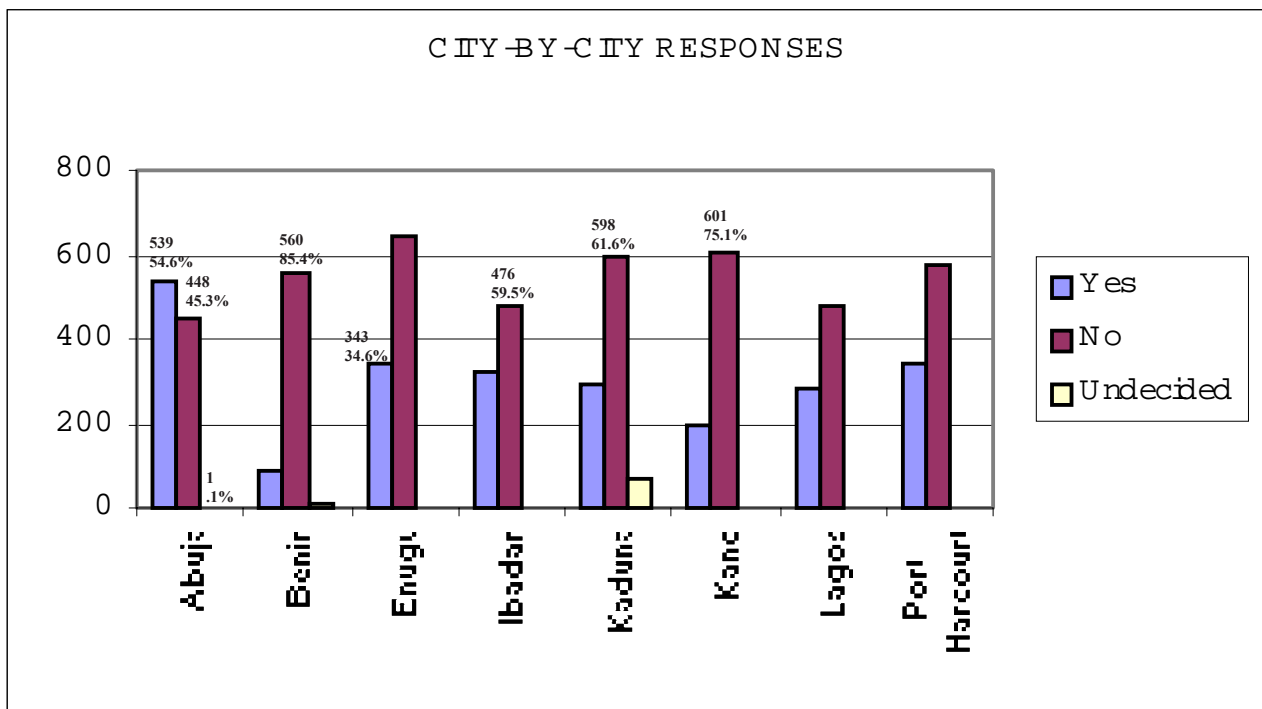
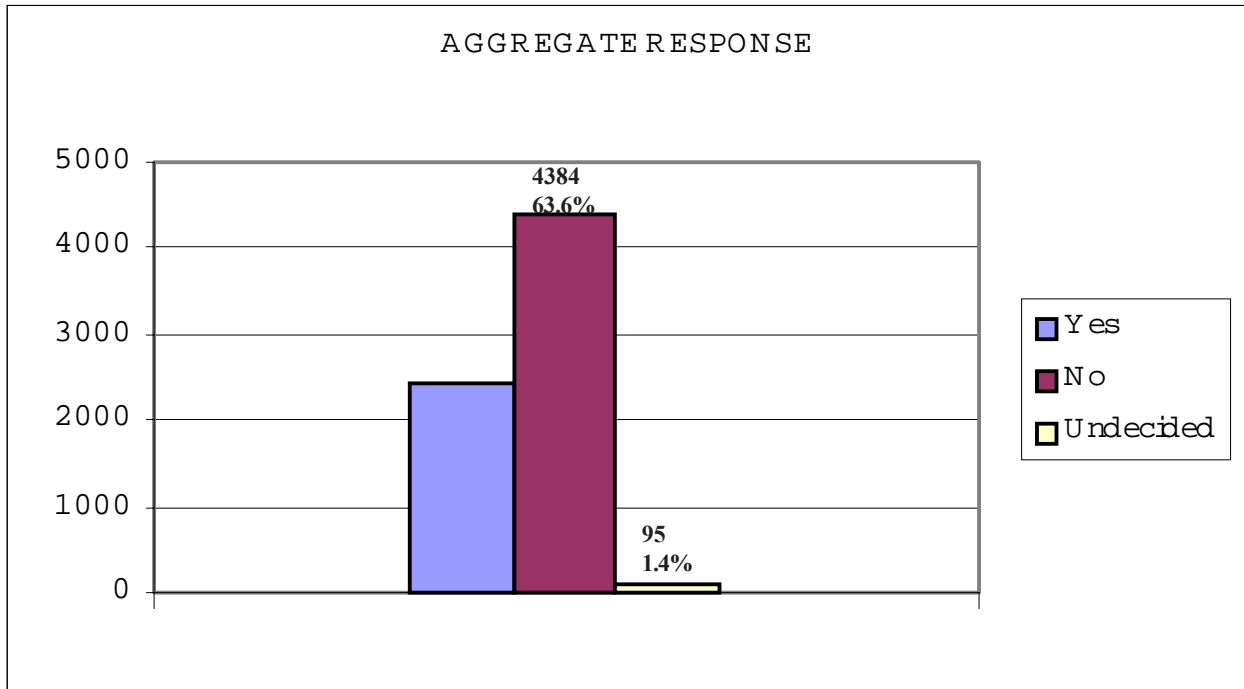
Sample sizes Sample groups	Nos of questionnaires administered	Nos of questionnaires received and %	Nos of questionnaires not received and %
Abuja	1,000	988 98.8%	12 1.2%
Benin	1,000	656 65.6%	344 34.4%
Enugu	1,000	991 99.1%	9 .9%
Ibadan	1,000	800 80%	200 20%
Kaduna	1,000	970 30%	30 3%
Kano	1,000	800 80%	200 20%
Lagos	1,000	765 76.5%	235 23.5%
Port Harcourt,	1,000	920 92%	80 8%
Grand Total	Cumulative 8,000	Cumulative % 6,890 86.1%	Cumulative % 1,110 13.9%



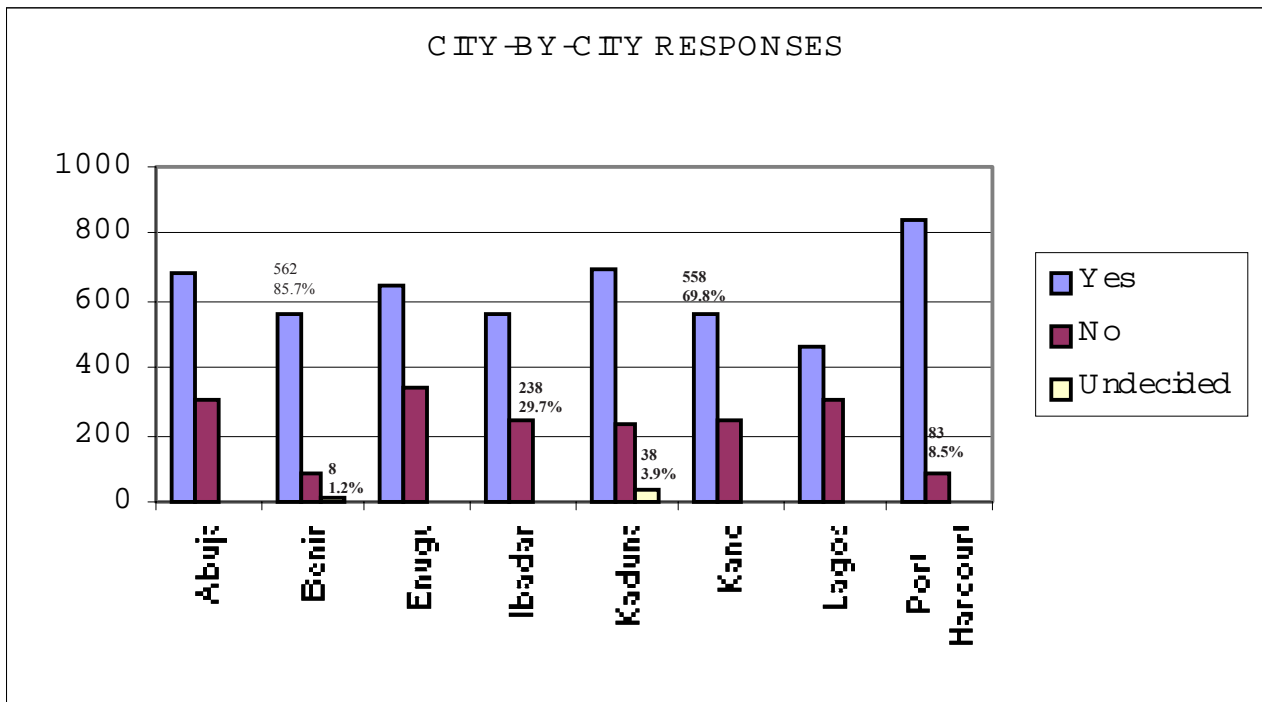
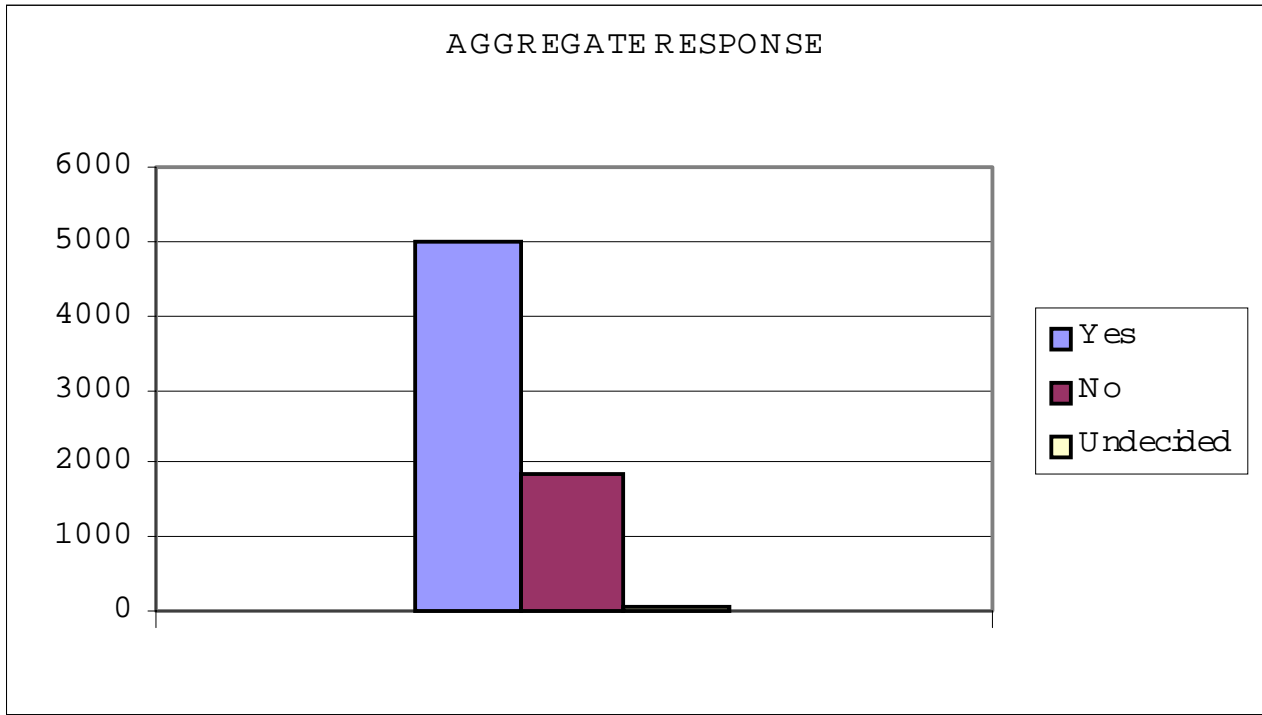
Q1. Do you think that the priorities in the budget clearly reflect the dire needs of Nigerians?
 Yes No



Q2. Is there any fundamental difference between this budget and that of a military head of state?
 Yes No



Q3. Do you see a preference in the proposed budget for projects and programs, meant to satisfy the greed of the ruling class? Yes No



Q4. Which sector do you believe should attract more funds in the proposed 2002 budget?

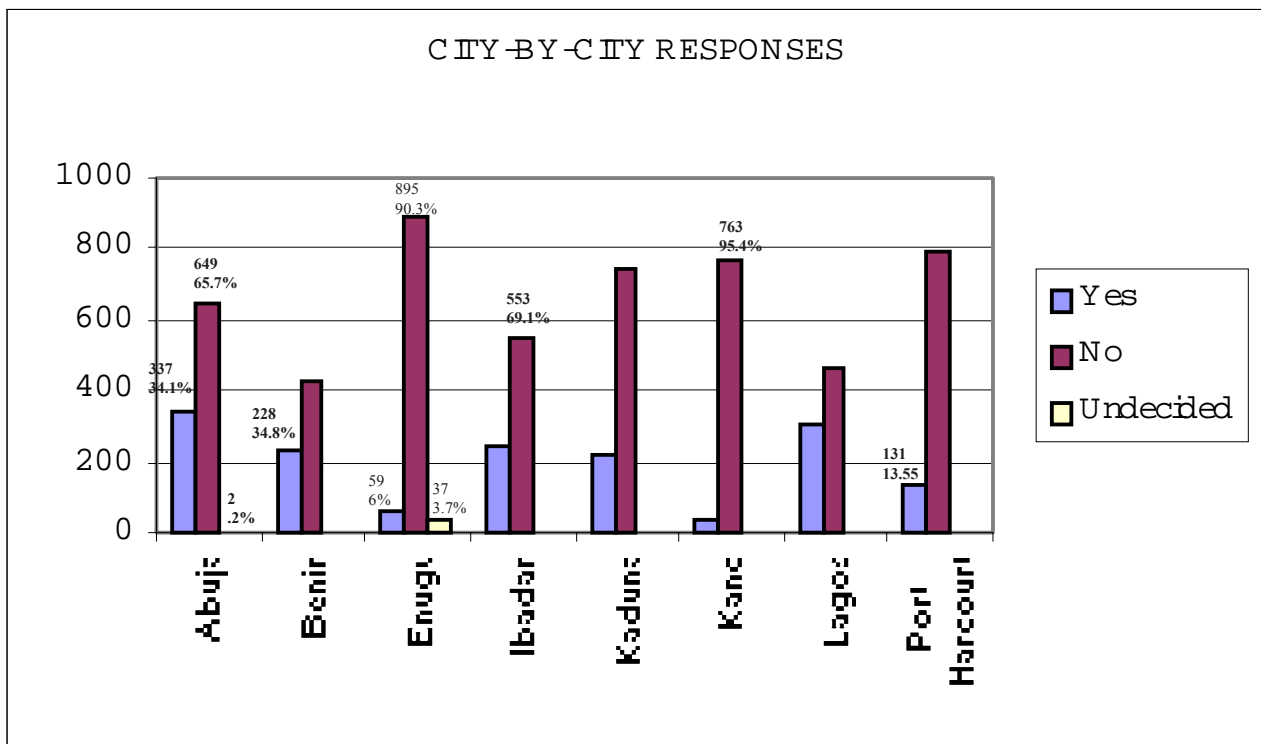
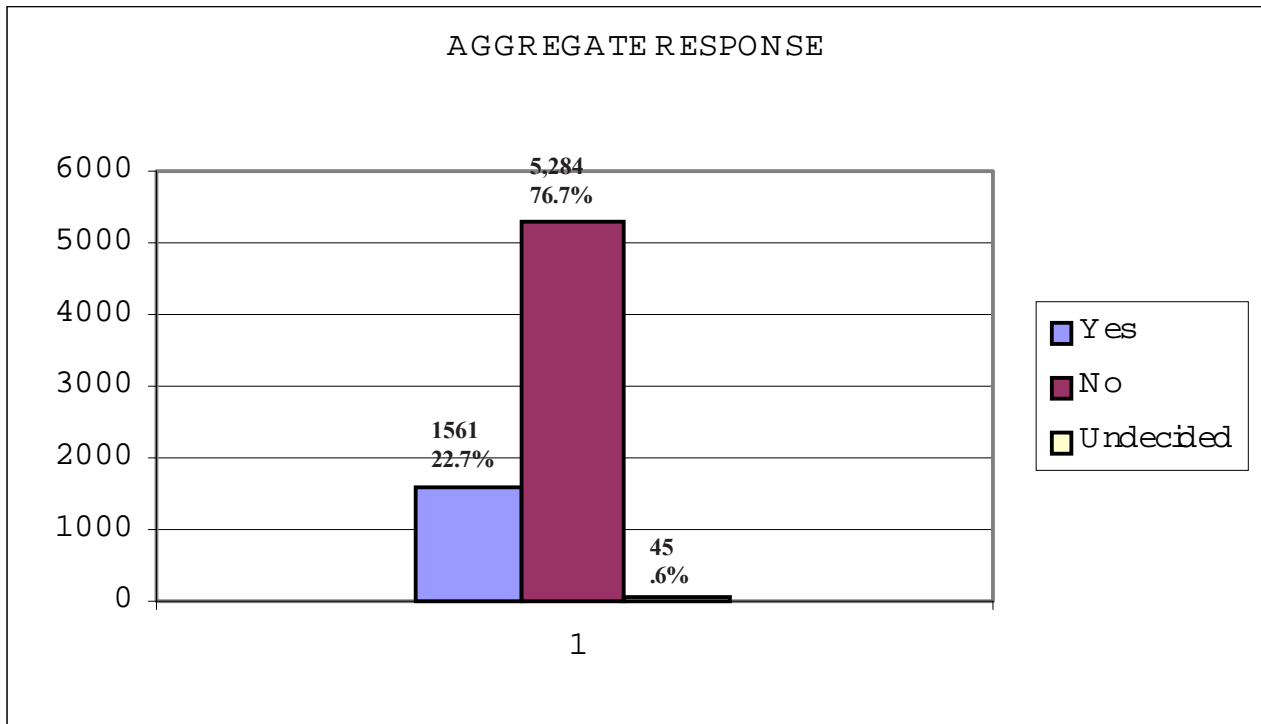
AGGREGATE RESPONSE

	Sector	Frequency	& %
1.	Education	1,812	26.3
2.	Health	1,804	26.2
3.	Agriculture	1,681	24.4
4.	Security	1,113	16.1
5.	Power Supply	400	5.8
6.	Water Supply	40	.6
7.	Defence	40	.6
	Total	6,890	100%

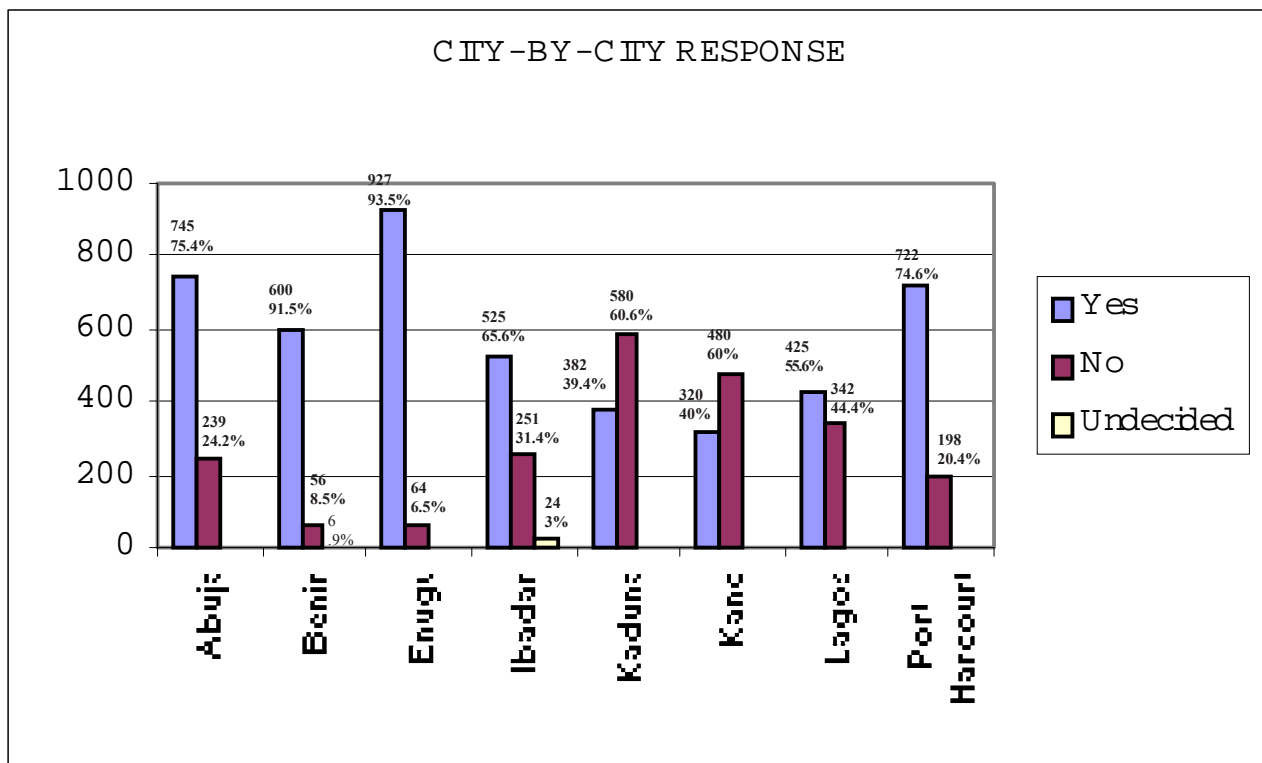
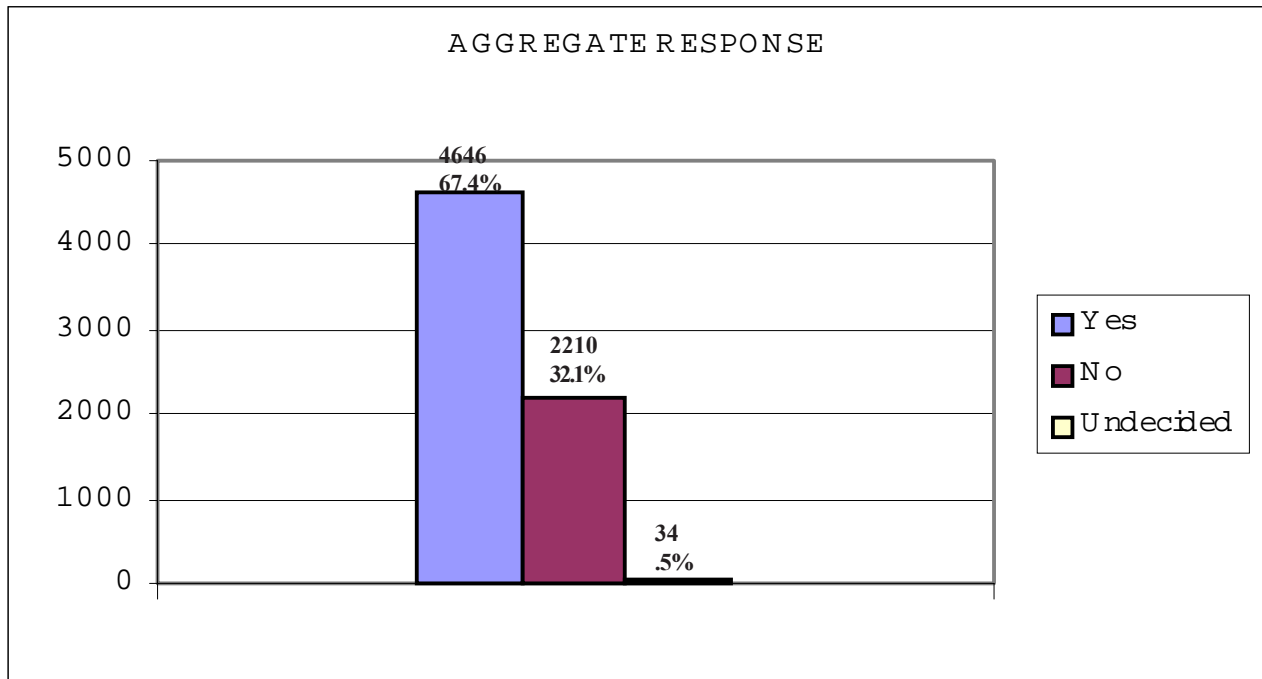
CITY -BY- CITY RESPONSES

Cities	Abuja	Benin	Enugu	Ibadan	Kaduna	Kano	Lagos	P/H	Total
Nos of Respondents	988	656	991	800	970	800	765	920	6,890
Education	237 24%	202 30.8%	239 24.1%	181 22.6%	223 23%	250 31.3%	100 13.1%	380 41.3%	1,812 26.3%
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Water Supply	25 2.5%						15 2%		40 .6%
Defence	26 2.6%	3 0.5%				11 1.3%			40 0.6%

Q5. Would you say that budget implementation since 1999 have improve the standard of living of common Nigerians? Yes No



Q6. Do you read or listen to budget speech by the President? Yes No



Q7. If your answer to Q5 is 'No', what informed this a ttitude?

AGGREGATE RESPONSE

	Reasons	Frequency	&	%
1.	Corruption of public officers	1,364		25.8
2.	Government's lack of focus	1,200		22.7
3.	Lack of commitment by Public officers	800		15.1
4.	Government's misplaced priorities	712		13.5
5.	Greed among public officers	538		10.2
6.	Misappropriation of public funds	350		6.6
7.	Mismanagement of public funds	320		6
	Total	5,284		100%



Media Rights Agenda (MRA) is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in August 1993 for the purpose of promoting and protecting press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria. MRA is registered in Nigeria, and has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia.

The Aims and Objectives of Media Rights Agenda are:

- to promote respect and recognition for press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria;
- to provide protection and support for journalists and writers engaged in the lawful pursuit of their professional duties;
- to promote the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity, training and conduct in the journalism profession; and
- to bring about a conducive social and legal atmosphere for the practice of journalism, and ensure the protection of the journalist's right not to be compelled to work against his or her conviction or disclose confidential sources of information.

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Head Offices

Media Rights Agenda, 44, Alhaja Kofoworola Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Ikeja,
P. O. Box 52113, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: 234-1-4936033-4, Fax: 234-1-4930831.; E-mail: pubs@mediarightsagenda.org; Web site: www.internews.org/mra

Regional Office

<p>Abuja Suite 52, Corner Shop Zone 2, Wuse, Abuja</p>	<p>Kaduna AK. 7, Yoruba Road Kaduna Tel. & Fax: 062-240083</p>
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