# Inflation Attitudes Survey

**A Quarterly Publication** 

2nd Quarter, 2015

## May 2015



Survey Management Division
Statistics Department
Central Bank of Nigeria

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### A Quarterly Publication of the Central Bank of Nigeria

2nd Quarter, 2015

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Q2, 2015 survey of households' attitudes to inflation and interest rates was conducted by the Statistics Department from 4th to 16th May, 2015. This is in its bid to asses the general public perceptions of inflation which will help gauge the Bank's macroeconomic policy formulation.

- Respondent households believed that the economy would end up weaker rather than stronger, if prices start to rise faster than they do now, thereby giving a sizeable support to price stability.
- Given a trade-off between inflation and interest rate, more respondents would prefer higher interest rates to higher inflation with a margin of more than two to one.
- The majority of respondents favoured lower interest rates for the Nigerian economy as a whole rather than for themselves.
- Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the way CBN is doing its job to influence the direction of interest rates to control inflation.

## Inflation Attitudes Survey Second Quarter, 2015

#### 1. Introduction

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), aside from its price and monetary stability mandate, is also tasked with supporting the Government's policies on economic growth and unemployment reduction. One major objective of the Bank is to build public confidence and support for sustainable economic development, price stability, and public understanding of the Monetary Policy Committee's roles. If people understand and support the objective of price stability as well as understand how the interest rate is used to achieve it, macroeconomic stability which is an essential prerequisite for economic growth and development would be attained. The level of interest rates deemed appropriate to achieve this, is decided by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on periodic basis. The Committee equally articulates other foremost policy framework which is considered as catalyst in moderating price changes and economic stability.

Opinion poll was effectively used in exploring the progression of public views and general understanding of monetary policy matters. A good estimate of inflation expectations and public understanding of what influences them are important parameter for successful monetary policy. In this way, the Bank will be in a position to quantify the impact of its efforts in stabilizing and sustaining prices in the Nigerian economy.

The Statistics Department on a quarterly basis, since June 2009, conducts the inflation attitudes survey to sample the views of households on how they view the price changes of goods and services in the shops in the last twelve months, and their expectations of price changes over the next twelve months. The Department also samples respondents' views on interest rate and knowledge of the monetary policy framework. Results of the Q2, 2015 survey of the public perceptions on this are discussed.

#### 2.0 Survey Methodology

The Q2, 2015 Inflation Attitudes Survey being the most recent in the series was conducted from 4th to 16th May, 2015 with a sample size of 1900 households in 350 randomly selected Enumeration Areas (EAs) across the six geopolitical zones of the country. The raw data were weighted to match the demographic profile of Nigeria as a whole. Table 1 presents the distribution of sample size and response rate.

Monetary Policy
framework will be most
effective, if
accompanied by wide
public understanding
and support, both for
the objective of price
stability and the
methods to achieve it.



#### **Inflation Attitudes Survey**

#### Table 1: Distribution of sample size and response rate

About the Survey

		Q2 2015 SAMPLE	Q2 2015	RESPONS
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ZONE	SAMPLE STATE	SIZE	RESPONSES	E RATE
	Niger, Kwara, Abuja, Benue,			
North Central	Kogi, Nasarawa and Plateau	350	336	96.0
	Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe,			
North East	and Taraba	250	250	100.0
	Kaduna, Katsina, Kano,			
	Zamfara, Jigawa, Sokoto and			
North West	Kebbi	350	350	100.0
	Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi,			
South East	Anambra and Abia	250	250	100.0
	Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa,			
South South	Cross River and Akwa-Ibom	300	300	100.0
	Lagos,Oyo,Ekiti,Ogun, Osun			l
South West	and Ondo	400	400	100.0
TOTAL	<u> </u>	1900	1886	99.3

Inflation expectations do vary amongst households due to the differences in the goods and services bought, which often lead to differences in the prices of the goods and services. Thus, the designed questionnaire captures information on age, sex, income, employment status of the head of the household, among others.

The survey involves in-house face-to-face interview of randomly selected house-holds. The selection entailed a quota sample of individuals within randomly selected Enumeration Areas (EAs). This was done using the instrumentality of the National Integrated Survey of Households (NISH) of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The survey asked questions about the evolution of prices of 'goods and services', and the questions were designed to reflect the concept of inflation the general public are most likely to be familiar with, instead of any specific measures of inflation, like the Consumer Price Index.

In-house face-toface interviews of randomly selected respondents were conducted.

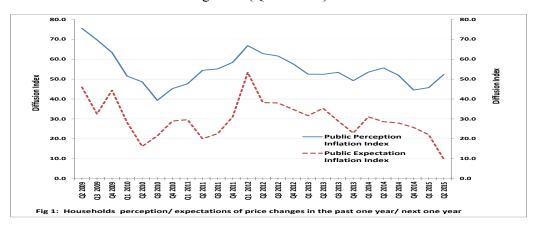
The questionnaire was therefore couched in a manner to capture the expectations of respondents. The options for questions asked were in ranges of price change, of which respondent households are expected to select one that best suites their expectations. The options were in the form of "Gone Down", "Not Changed, "Up by 1% but less than 3%", "Up by 3% or Above" and "No Idea". Respondents were made to answer a total of 14 questions which includes; their thought on how prices had changed in the previous twelve months and how they expect prices to change over the next twelve months, in addition to inquiring from them the body that sets the interest rates. Also range of questions seeking information on public knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards MPC process and expectations of interest rates were asked.

The respondents were also requested to state whether they were satisfied or not with the way the Central Bank of Nigeria is doing its job of setting interest rates in order to control inflation. Furthermore, because households focus on particular types of goods and services when thinking about inflation, variation in the answers may therefore be because respondents are thinking about inflation as it relates to their own patterns of spending in addition to media reports about price trends. Respondents understanding of the transmission mechanism of monetary policy may also be another factor to be considered in their opinion about inflation.

#### 3.0 Inflation

The Q2, 2015 survey result showed that 46.1 per cent of the respondents believed that the economy would end up weaker while 10.5 per cent opined that it would be stronger, if prices start to rise faster than they do now. Also, 25.1 per cent of the respondents believed it would make little difference. The responses suggest considerable support for price stability, as a good number of people were of the view that inflation is inimical to economic growth (Question 3).

Respondent
households believed
that the economy
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When respondents were asked to say how prices have changed over the past 12 months, by making a choice from the five banded options on the questionnaire, they gave a median answer of 2.3 per cent, which is consistent with the previous trends (Question 1). This however, conceals a wide variation, from 26.8 per cent who thought prices had gone down or not changed. While, 34.7 per cent felt that prices had risen by at least 3.0 per cent, 24.6 per cent felt that prices inched up by 1.0 per cent but less than 3.0 per cent.

Respondents' median expectations of the price changes over the next twelve months (Question 2) was that prices would inch up by 0.7 per cent. The views of the respondents on Question 2, on 'how much they expect prices in the shops generally to change over the next 12 months?', showed that 17.2 per cent of the respondent households expect prices to rise by at least 3 per cent in the next 12 months; compared with the 21.9 per cent of respondents that expect prices to rise by 1 per cent but less than 3 per cent in the next 12 months. Similarly, 46.7 per cent of the respondents were optimistic that prices over the next one year would either go down or remain the same. Few people thought that prices were not likely to rise. This pattern has been maintained since Q2 2009 (see Fig. 1).

More respondents were of the view that price increase is inimical to economic growth.

Informed in Question 4 that the Government has anticipated an inflation rate of between 6 to 9 per cent in this year's budget, 19.1 per cent of the respondents thought that the target was 'about right', 40.2 per cent believe it was 'too high', 15.3 per cent said 'too low' while the rest 25.2 per cent had 'no idea'. This pattern had been relatively steady in all the series so far, and equally maintained in every zone and demographic group, suggestive of their support for low inflation.

#### 4.0 Interest Rate

The percentage of respondent households (Question 5) who felt that interest rate has fallen in the last 12 months increased by 0.1 percentage points to 53.4 per cent in the current quarter, from the 53.3 per cent attained in Q2, 2014. On the other hand, 10.2 per cent of respondents believed that interest rates will fall, while 16.2 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that the rates stayed about the same in the last 12 months. Also 20.1 per cent of the households had no idea. The result revealed that majority of households perceived that interest on bank loans and savings rose over the past 12 months and this is consistent with the trend observed since Q2 2009 (see Fig. 2).

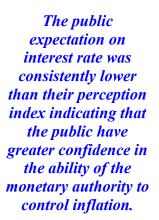
50.0 Diffusion Index 20.0 20.0 10.0 10.0

Respondents views differed on whether the interest rate on bank loans and savings will rise or fall over the next 12 months. While 43.2 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the rates would rise, 38.2 per cent believed it would fall. The 'net rise' value of -9.1 per cent was achieved compared to 4.1 per cent attained in the corresponding quarter a year ago. Almost one-third of the respondents either expected no change or had no idea. As illustrated in Fig. 2, the public expectation on interest rate index was consistently lower than their perception indicating that the public have greater confidence in the ability of the monetary authority to control inflation.

Respondents were in Question 8 asked what would be 'best for you personally, for interest rates to go up or go down'. Respondents answers showed that 55.5 per cent reported that it would be best for them personally if interest rates go down, 17.6 per cent reported it would 'make no difference', while 16.5 per cent of the respondents opted for higher interest rates. The results further revealed that 10.4 per cent expressed 'no idea'.

Similarly, the respondents were also asked in Question 7 what would be 'best for the Nigerian economy, for interest rates to go up or go down'. Respondents answers showed that 43.6 per cent reported that it would be best for Nigerian economy if interest rates go down, while about 16.2 per cent of the respondents opted for higher interest rates. The results further revealed that 23.4 per cent expressed the thought that it would make no difference.

The percentage of respondent households who felt that interest rate has risen in the last 12 months increased by 1.9 percentage points to 50.3 per cent in the current quarter.



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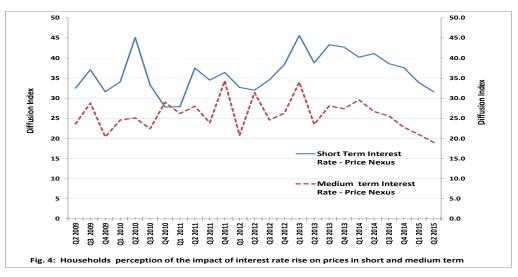
The responses to questions 7 and 8 revealed that many people favoured lower interest rates for the Nigerian economy. The high lending rates by Deposit Money Banks which discourage borrowing that serve as catalyst for industrial and economic development could be responsible for the respondents holding such views.

Interest rate diffusion 0.0 Interest rate diffusion Index: Nigerian -10.0 Diffusion Index -20.0 -30.0 -40.0 -40.0 -50.0 -50.0 -60.0 -60.0 -70.0 -70.0 Q1 2013 Q4 2014 Q1 2015 Q4 2011 Q1 2012 Q1 2011 Q3 2011 Fig. 2: Households perception/ expectations of interest rate changes in the past one year/ next one year

Majority of respondents favoured lower interest rates for the Nigerian economy.

#### 5.0 Interest Rate—Inflation Nexus

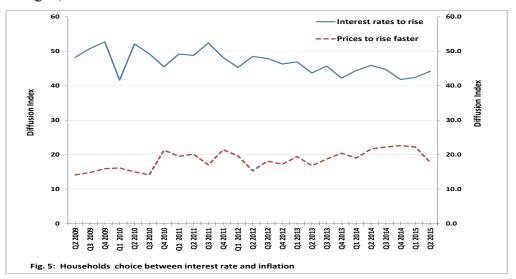
Question 9 was designed to measure peoples' understanding of how interest rates would affect changes in prices. In response to what the impact would be on prices if there is a rise in interest rates in the short and medium terms. Over half of the respondents (50.9 per cent) agreed that 'a rise in interest rates would make prices in the street rise more slowly in short term', as against 19.3 per cent that disagreed. While in the medium term, 43.4 per cent agreed that 'a rise in interest rates would make prices in the street rise more slowly', while 24.4 per cent 'disagreed' (See Fig. 4).



Given a trade-off between inflation and interest rate, more people would prefer higher interest rates to higher inflation.

Question 10 asked 'if a choice had to be made, either to raise interest rates to keep inflation down, or keep interest rates down and allow prices in the shops to rise faster; which would you prefer?' Responding, 41.8 per cent of the people preferred interest rates to be higher in order to keep inflation down, compared with only 22.6 per cent who said they would prefer prices in the shop to rise faster, while 35.5 per cent had no idea.

These responses suggest that given a trade-off, most people would accept higher interest rates rather than higher inflation with a margin of two to one; and is suggestive of the respondent households support for the Bank's price stability stance (see Fig. 5).



#### 6.0 Opinions on the Central Bank of Nigeria

Questions 11 and 12 assess whether people are aware of the way monetary policy works in Nigeria. Question 11 asked respondents if they knew which group of people meet to set Nigeria's monetary policy rate. Responding, 51.7 per cent felt it is Monetary Policy Committee, as against 12.8 per cent for Federal Ministry of Finance and 13.7 per cent who believed it was the Government, about 5.6 per cent felt it was the National Assembly, 2.1 and 14.1 per cent answered 'others' and "do not know", respectively.

Majority of respondents (51.7 per cent) are aware of who influences the direction of Nigeria's 'basic interest rate level'.

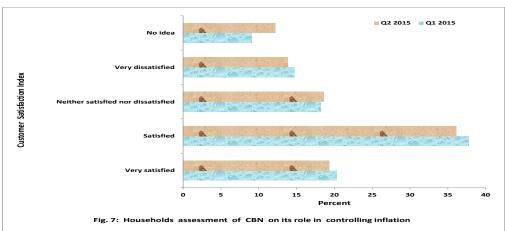
Question 12 then prompted respondents to identify which group mostly influences the direction of interest rates. The result indicated that majority of the respondents (76.0 per cent) are aware that Central Bank of Nigeria influences the direction of interest rate. Other respondents opined that the Government (5.3 per cent) now influences interest rates. About 5.5 and 2.9 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that civil servants and other banks influence the rates, while 10.2 per cent had no idea. This level of proportions has not significantly changed in all the series since the commencement of the survey (see Table 1).

Responding to Question 13 about the nature of the MPC, 32.1 per cent felt that the Committee is a body wholly owned and appointed by the Government, while 24.2 per cent believed that it is an independent body partly appointed by the Government and 10.5 per cent believed that it is completely independent.

However, 18.0 per cent regard the MPC as 'part of the Government'. This shows that 75.8 per cent of the respondents are not aware of the composition of the MPC membership.

Question 14 asks whether respondents are satisfied with the way CBN is 'doing its job to influence the direction of interest rates to control inflation'. The net satisfaction index—the proportion satisfied minus the proportion dissatisfied was 41.6 per cent as against 52.9 per cent recorded in Q2, 2014. Among the satisfied group, 19.3 per cent were 'very satisfied' while 36.1 were 'fairly satisfied'. However, 18.6 per cent were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', whereas 13.8 per cent were 'very dissatisfied'. Those who had no idea accounted for 12.2 per cent of the respondents (see Fig. 6).

75.8 per cent of the respondents are not aware of the composition of the MPC membership.



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						TABLE	E 1							
			SUN	SUMMARY C	OF RESUL	TS INFL	ATION AT	TTITUDES	S SURVEY					
Q. 9 How strongly do you agree with the following statements? A rise in interest	Q1 2012	Q2 2012 following stater	Q3 2012	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	the (a) short term	Q2 2014 C	Q3 2014	Q4 2014	Q1 2015	Q2 2015
Agree strongly Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree strongly Don't know	22.0 30 15.2 13.8 5.5	0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.0	22 343 345 445 447 447	2.4.2 3.7.4 1.7.1 7.3.7 3.5.5	2.7.2 2.3.5 2.0.4 2.0.4 0.04	2.6.2 4.6.2 6.4.4.7 7.0.7 8.4.7	23.9 3.4.7 3.4.1 3.7.8 7.8		23 3333 15333 1753	00-6	2.13 3.35 7.201 7.24 6.0	7.12 8.1.6 9.1.7 8.1.4 1.1.6	27.3 37.8 16.8 12.6 6.6	18.5 32.4 16.5 7.0 7.0
Total agree Total disagree Net agree	52.0 19.3 32.7	52.9 20.9 32.0	52.6 18.0 34.6	55.6 17.2 38.4	60.9 15.3 45.6	54.3 15.5 38.8	58.6 15.3 43.3	58.1 15.4 42.7	56.8 16.6 40.2	57.9 16.8 41.1	54.8 16.2 38.6	53.5 15.9 37.6	53.1 19.2 33.9	50.9 19.3 31.6
b) A rise in interest rates would make prices in the street rise more slowly in the	vould make pri	ces in the stree	t rise more slow		medium term - say	a								
Agree strongly Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree strongly Don't know	77.1 26.8 17.5 16.1 7	0.46 0.46 0.47 0.47 0.47	77 29.6 17.6 16.8 5.2 13.8	18.6 29.8 16 16.4 5.7	19.7 15.3.4 13.8 13.8 12.6	77.0 28.3 15.7 15.5 6.3	76. 32.5 73.0 75.5 7.5.5 7.3.7	18.7 30.3 15.5 15.5 6.1	17.7 32 17.2 13.7 6.4	18.1 31.1 17.0 15.2 7.3 11.3	15.7 31.2 18.8 15.6 5.7	28.88 28.88 125.4 7.7.7 6.31	15.2 30.7 16.7 16 8.9	6.00 6.00 7.00 7.00 7.00 8.00 8.00
Total agree Total disagree Net agree	43.9 23.1 20.8	51.1 19.7 31.4	46.6 22.0 24.6	48.4 22.1 26.3	53.1 19.1 34.0	45.3 21.8 23.5	49.4 21.3 28.1	49.0 21.6 27.4	49.7 20.1 29.6	49.2 22.5 26.7	46.9 21.3 25.6	44.6 21.8 22.8	45.9 24.9 21.0	43.4 24.4 19.0
Q. 10 If a choice had to be made, either to raise interest rates to try to keep inflation interest rates to try to keep inflation has received in the second section in the sec	made, either to 45.3 19.6	o raise interest r 48.5 15.3	ates to try to ke	sep inflation d 46.3 17.2	lown; or keep i 46.9 19.4	interest rates 43.7 16.8	down and allo 45.7 18.7	ow prices in th 42.2 20.4	he shops to ris 44.4 19.0	se faster, which 21.6	ch would you 44.7 22.2	prefer ? 41.8 22.6	4 0	44.2 7.71
No idea	33.2	32.1	33.7	36.2	33.4	39.3	35.4	37.2	36.5	32.3	32.9	35.5	35.4	38.1
Q. 11 Every other month, a group of people meet to set Nigeria's basic interest ra Do you know what this group is?	a group of peo <sub>l</sub> oup is?	ple meet to set !	Nigeria's basic i		e level.									
Monetary Policy Committee The Government Federal Ministry of Finance National Assembly Others Don't know	44.7 7.5 76.5 6.5 4 20.9	49.8 9.3 18.7 5.3 2.2	53.9 8.5 12.5 6.5 2.1	51.0 11.1 13.7 4.7 2.6 16.9	53.0 11 12.9 6 1.9	53.2 7.2 12.7 5.7 2.1	4.9.3 4.0.0 4.0.0 4.4.0 6.4.1	50.3 10.7 13.7 7.3 7.6 1.6	52.6 9.6 15 6.3 2 14.6	54.4 8.4 15.2 6.0 2.1 13.9	50.2 13.6 15.7 6.4 2	48.4 11.6 15.7 7.5 2.9	53.3 12.8 14.9 2 2 12.2	51.7 13.7 12.8 5.6 2.1
Q. 12 Which of these groups do you think sets the interest rates?	ps do you thin	k sets the intere	st rates?											
Government ministers	5.7	5.2	6.4	8.3	7.2	4.5	7.0	4.7	8.4	2.0	2.0	8.4	4.1	5.3
Civil servants CBN Other banks No idea	5.7 69.5 4.3 14.8	5.2 73.8 4.7 11.0	4.3 76.2 3.2 9.9	6 70.3 5 10.3	5.1 72.8 4.2 10.7	5 70.2 4.9 15.4	4.7 73.6 4.2 10.3	6.9 71.1 4.1 13.1	6.2 74.1 5.3 9.6	6.2 75.8 3.5 9.3	7.6 71.8 4.6 9.0	8.0 72.7 4.6 10.0	7.7 75.2 4.4 8.6	5.5 76 2.9 10.2
Q. 13 in fact, the decisions are taken by the Monetary Policy Committee of the Cel Which of these do you think best describes the Monetary Policy Committee?	s are taken by t nk best descrik	he Monetary Po ses the Monetar	ilicy Committee y Policy Commi	of the Centra ittee?	al Bank of Nigeria	ria.								
Part of the Government A Body wholly owned appoir An independent body, partly A completely independent bo	24 26.6 22.6 7.9	23.7 26.4 26.1 10.2 13.7	24.1 26.1 25.5 11.5	23.5 27.7 26.1 8.3 14.2	23.8 27.3 27.4 9.1 12.3	19.7 27.7 25.7 10.4	23.3 29.0 24.7 9.2 13.5	20.4 28.4 26.3 9.7 15.0	20.4 27.7 28.9 10.1	19.3 29.2 27.5 10.7 13.2	21.9 31.9 25.2 10.5	19.2 29.7 26.0 10.2 14.9	19.3 30.2 26.9 10.5 13.1	18.0 32.1 24.2 10.5 15.3
Q. 14 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Central Bank is doing its job to set interest rates in order to control inflation?	d or dissatisfie est rates in ord	d are you with t ler to control inf	he way the Cen flation?		of Nigeria									
Very satisfied Fairty satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatis Very dissatisfied No idea	28.8 34.8 13.5 7.9	20.7 40.8 12.8 10.0	23.7 41.1 16.4 10.7 8.0	22.4 38.2 19.2 12.2 8.0	22.1 39 16.5 14.3 8.0	21.2 41.2 13.7 7.11	22.6 40.1 16.8 11.2 9.2	23.3 39.7 15.2 11.1	23.7 39.9 14.8 12.4	24.3 39.3 16.3 10.7	25.5 38.3 16.7 11.4 8.1	21.2 38.0 16.4 12.6	20.3 37.8 18.2 14.7	19.3 36.1 18.6 12.2
Total satisfied Total dissatisfied Net satisfied	63.6 7.9 55.7	61.5 10.0 51.5	64.8 10.7 54.1	60.6 12.2 48.4	61.1 14.3 46.8	62.4 11.7 50.7	62.7 11.2 51.5	63.0 11.1 51.9	63.6 12.4 51.2	63.6 10.7 52.9	63.8 11.4 52.4	59.2 12.6 46.6	58.1 14.7 43.4	55.4 13.8 41.6