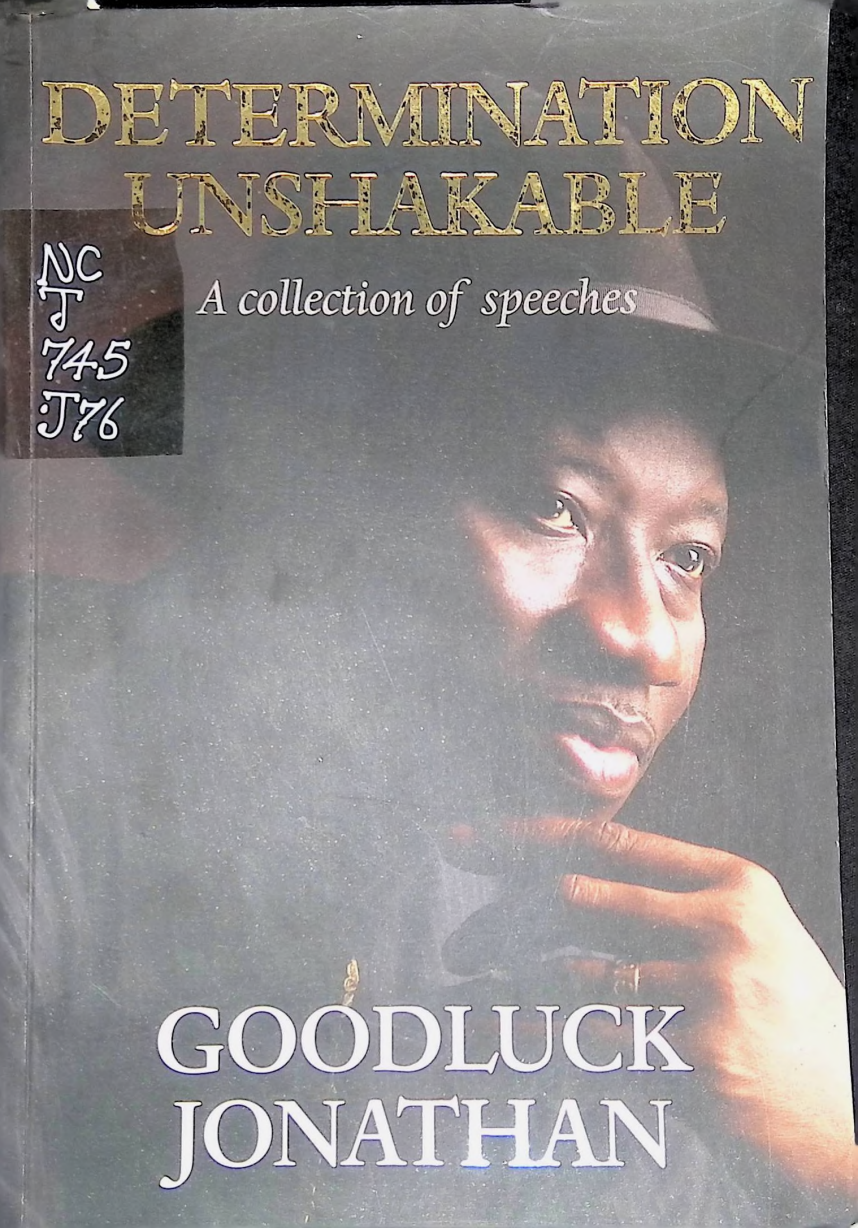


# DETERMINATION UNSHAKABLE

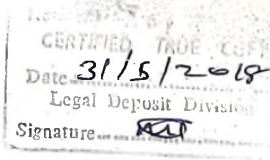
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*A collection of speeches*

A close-up, black and white portrait of Goodluck Jonathan, the 14th President of Liberia. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression, his hand resting near his chin. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his facial features against a dark background.

GOODLUCK  
JONATHAN



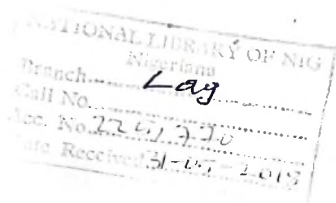


# DETERMINATION UNSHAKABLE



A collection of speeches

Goodluck Jonathan



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Dedicated to Nigerians  
who keep dreaming and keep working  
with UNSHAKABLE determination  
to actualise their dreams



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## Foreword



By Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, CFR

The process of nation-building usually proceeds from clarity of thought. Thoughts are built on reflections and ideas. The advanced nations we have in the world today are manifestations of the thoughts of their founders and leaders. When these thoughts are properly articulated and actualised, the inevitable result for these nations is greatness. That is why the popular saying, "ideas rule the world", makes sense. Dreams and visions are first and foremost conceived before they are delivered.

In this collection of speeches, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has carefully outlined his thoughts and dreams for the country. He assumed leadership of the world's biggest black country in the most unusual circumstances. His predecessor, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, had suddenly fallen ill and travelled out for medical attention. There was a serious constitutional crisis following his inability to write a letter that would formally transfer power to his then Vice-President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan.

However, as soon as the crisis was resolved with the proclamation of Dr. Jonathan as Acting President in January 2010, he assumed the leadership of our country with clear determination to succeed. Right from his first address to the nation, he began to reveal his thoughts on how Nigeria can become great among the comity of nations. He spoke about the urgency of addressing infrastructural needs so that the economy can be on sound footing. He also promised to pursue the amnesty programme for Niger Delta militants in the national interest.

Over the years, it is indeed instructive that he has consistently focused on democracy and development as the driving forces for a new Nigeria. This notion is very constant in his speeches, either written or delivered extempore. He has spoken extensively and consistently on the various issues that are at the core of the nation's development needs. Whether he is speaking about electoral reform, or addressing the nation on Independence anniversary celebrations, or delivering an address in a foreign land, or inaugurating his cabinet, he has often spoken passionately about his beliefs.

President Jonathan believes that Nigeria will be great. This is also a thread running through his speeches. And, judging from his thoughts, his chosen path to our greatness is a proper democracy where people will exercise a free choice, where elections will be credible, where consensus-building will be central to our democratic culture and where all the institutions of democracy will be empowered to serve the needs of the people. He continuously emphasises the need to uphold the principles of separation of power as well as checks and balances – two cornerstones of the presidential system.

I find this selection of speeches quite inspiring and very useful in understanding the mind of the man who has been saddled with the great task of leading Nigeria at a very trying period. His thoughts are well laid-out. There is no denying his passion to make Nigeria live up to its potential. At every turn, he reiterates his commitment to attaining his stated goals. I also find it quite exciting that

President Jonathan always harps on the need for Nigerians to actively participate in the development process. In his words, "Nigeria can only be transformed if we all play our parts with commitment and sincerity. Cynicism and scepticism will not help our journey to greatness. Let us all believe in a new Nigeria."

Definitely, it is in our interest to dream again and work for the actualisation of our dreams. We must believe in building a strong nation where there shall be political cohesion, economic prosperity, peace and justice. In this publication, that is the Goodluck Jonathan challenge for us all.

*Akinyemi, a Professor of Political Science, was Director General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 1975-1983, and Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister from 1985 to 1987.*



## *Introduction*



As I read through the speeches I have made over the years as the Chief Executive of Nigeria, there was a flow of mixed feelings in my veins. Right from the time I took the oath of office as the Acting President on February 10, 2010 following the unfortunate illness of my boss, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, I clearly made my intention known that I would not drop the ball. My determination to get things done, to move Nigeria in the right direction, was never in doubt. Whenever I read through those addresses again, my determination remains UNSHAKABLE and my resolve gets even stronger.

However, there is also a bit of mixed feelings. While my team and I are working round the clock to make Nigeria a great nation, the reality we are facing is that there is still much work to be done. We have given so much of ourselves to address the major challenges in the key sectors of the economy, but until the life of an average Nigerian is tremendously improved, we have to keep working day and night.

Thankfully, the signs are there, and the signals are encouraging, that if we keep up with the pace of work, Nigerians would be much better off than they are now. That gives me the needed fillip to trudge on.

There is no doubt that things are getting better – all the indicators point to that undeniable fact. Nigeria is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The reforms in the financial sector are yielding fruit and bringing the capital market back to life. Foreign investments continue to flow in our direction. An implication of all these positive developments is that private wealth is being created again. There is also a trickle-down effect. But we have not reached a stage where we can confidently say that our biggest problems have been resolved. We need 24-hour electricity. We need better access to healthcare, water and education. We need to continue to boost the infrastructural support for the economy if we are to attain our amazing potentials.

The good news is that the only way before us now is the way forward. When you read through these speeches again, you will come to the realisation that the determination to get things done and march forward has never wavered. Some obstacles and unforeseen circumstances have potholed our way and tried to impede our stride, but we have neither stopped nor turned back. We have kept moving with courage and faith. Even with all the achievements we have recorded, the resolve remains to keep pushing forward until we get to where we can look back and say the most difficult stretch of our journey to democracy and development has been covered.

Nobody ever said it was going to be easy. Nobody ever promised that problems that were created and sustained for decades would be addressed in two years. But I did promise to give the best of myself, to fight for the good of this country, to do all that is humanly possible to make this country a land of delight. This is very evident in the speeches I have made, both prepared and extempore, over the years.

I did say, during my inauguration as President and Commander-in-Chief on May 29, 2011: "You have trusted me with your mandate, and I will never, never let you down. I know your pain, because I have been there. Look beyond the hardship you have endured. See a new beginning; a new direction; a new spirit.

Nigerians, I want you to start to dream again. What you see in your dreams, we can achieve together." These words keep pushing me to give the whole of myself to the enormous task of building a virile nation.

Another good thing about this compilation is that it allows me to refresh my memory, look at the grounds that have been covered and the ones that have not, and then renew my desire to make sure history records this as a golden era for Nigeria.

Now you can understand why my determination is UNSHAKABLE.

Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR  
*President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*



PART ONE



*Presidential Addresses*





POLITICS &  
NATION-BUILDING



## THESE ARE UNCOMMON CIRCUMSTANCES

*Acceptance speech as Acting President and Commander-in-Chief,  
Federal Republic of Nigeria*



Fellow Nigerians, as we all know, our dear President, His Excellency, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, has been receiving treatment in Saudi Arabia for some time now. Naturally, his absence from the country has generated considerable interest and a heated national debate.

Today, the National Assembly passed a resolution mandating me to act as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In following the extant provisions of the 1999 constitution to arrive at this decision, the leadership and members of the National Assembly have shown great courage, statesmanship and patriotism. I salute them all.

In the same vein, I will like to commend all the other political actors and national leaders, particularly the former Heads of State, Elder Statesmen, Governors of the 36 States and other leaders of political groups, civil society organizations, the media, and indeed all Nigerians, for their invaluable contributions and counsel. Our security services also deserve our special commendation for their loyalty and devotion to duty during this trying period.

The circumstances in which I find myself assuming office today as Acting President of our country are uncommon, sober and reflective. More than ever therefore, I urge all Nigerians as a people of faith in God, to pray fervently for the full recovery of our dear President and his early return.

The events of the recent past have put to the test, our collective resolve as a democratic nation. I am delighted to note that our nation has demonstrated resilience and unity of purpose. Today affords us time to reconnect with ourselves and overcome any suspicions, hurts and doubts, which had occurred. In all these, there are no winners and no losers, because by the Grace of God we have once again succeeded in moving our country forward. We have all shown that our unity as a people, our love for this country, and our hope for its great future cannot be shaken.

It is now time for us to move on in a more determined manner to tackle the various challenges which we face as a nation. Our march towards Vision 20-2020 is irreversible. Therefore, we see a need to prioritise on a few of the most critical areas which continue to plague our effort at engendering meaningful economic growth and development. Some of these critical sectors include power, infrastructure, security, generation of employment and business opportunities for our teeming young men and women.

Fellow Nigerians, the Federal Government will take every step necessary to consolidate the gains of Amnesty in the Niger Delta and execute the post-Amnesty programme. I therefore appeal to all concerned to be patient, as there can be no meaningful development without peace and security.

As regards the Jos crisis, government will endeavour to sustain the peace and find a lasting solution to the recurring crisis in Plateau State. In the meantime, culprits of the heinous crimes committed in the recent incident will face the full weight of the law. I want to restate that government will not tolerate the culture of impunity that is fast becoming an unwelcome part of our socio-political life.

Our commitment to ensuring the security of lives and property in all parts

of the country will also be pursued with renewed zeal. The Nigeria Police and other security services would be given new impetus to perform their duties, even while respecting the human rights of Nigerians. They are fully expected to produce corresponding results. There shall be no excuses for failure. Nigerians deserve to be fully protected at all times nationwide.

Fellow Nigerians, one of the cardinal commitments of this administration is our commitment to Good Governance, Accountability and Transparency. We shall continue to pursue these policy objectives with all the seriousness they deserve. In particular, the war against corruption will be prosecuted more robustly. We will therefore strengthen the capacity of the anti-corruption agencies and give them a free hand to prosecute the anti corruption war.

Let me once again commend the people of Anambra State, for the successful conduct of the recent gubernatorial election. This has shown that Nigerians can conduct free, fair and credible elections. The Anambra Election has however exposed some weaknesses in our electoral system, and government is determined to plug these loop holes as we approach the next General Elections in 2011. I want to reassure all Nigerians and our friends around the world, that our determination to ensure that the sanctity of the electoral rights of our people shall not be compromised.

Let me on behalf of the Nigerian people appreciate the international community for their goodwill and understanding in our efforts at national development and consolidation of our democracy. Nigeria will continue to play a deserving role in regional and global affairs.

On a personal note, I am deeply humbled and honoured by this great call to duty. I am fully aware of the responsibilities reposed in me, and I want to reassure all Nigerians that this is a sacred trust, which I shall discharge to my fullest abilities.

Thank you and may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*February 10, 2010*

## I HAVE LOST A BROTHER AND FRIEND

*Address on assumption of office as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, after the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua*



My dear brothers and sisters, it is with deep sense of loss and profound sorrow that I received the news of the passing on of His Excellency, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Grand Commander of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Our President passed away peacefully in the Presidential villa in Abuja yesterday evening, the 5th day of May 2010. While we submit to the will of God as a people of faith, this sad event has placed our nation in deep mourning. On behalf of the good people of our great Country Nigeria, I stand by our First Lady, Her Excellency Hajia Turai Yar'Adua, the Children, our Mother, Hajia Habiba Musa Yar'Adua, and the entire Yar'Adua family and offer our heartfelt condolences on the demise of our amiable leader.

President Yar'Adua's contribution to political development and good governance would never be forgotten. He will therefore always occupy a pride of place in the political history of our dear Nation. He was a man of great personal integrity, deep devotion to God and outstanding humility. In all his public service, he displayed uncommon commitment to the peace, progress and unity of our

country. He has left for us a profound legacy that provides a firm foundation for Nigeria's future. His exit has therefore created a huge vacuum in his personal contributions to the political growth and development of our nation. I have lost not just a boss but a good friend and brother.

Having taken the oath of office in line with the Nigerian Constitution, under these very sad and unusual circumstances, I urge all fellow citizens to remain steadfast and committed to the values and aspirations of our nation. While this is a major burden on me and indeed the entire nation, we must in the midst of such great adversity continue to garner our collective efforts towards upholding the values which our departed leader represented.

In this regard our total commitment to Good Governance, Electoral Reform and the fight against Corruption would be pursued with greater vigour. As I had stated time and again, we must enshrine the best standards in our democratic practice. One of the true tests would be to ensure that all votes count and are counted in the upcoming General Elections. Similarly the effort at ensuring the sustenance of peace and development in the Niger Delta as well as the security of life and property around the entire country would be of top most priority in the remaining period of this administration.

I want to reassure all Nigerians that the pledges which we had made to improve the socio-economic situation which we face through improved access to electricity, water, education, health facilities and other social amenities would continue to be given the needed emphasis. The welfare of our teeming workers and the unemployed youths would also be accorded a new impetus.

My brothers and sisters, I call on all Nigerians to pray for the repose of the soul of our departed President. May God, in his infinite mercy, and compassion grant him eternal peace.

God bless Nigeria.

*May 6, 2010*

## FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER

*Declaration of intent for the 2011 presidential race via Facebook*



Dear compatriots, four months ago, providence placed me at the leadership of our dear country, following the untimely death of our dear former President, my brother and leader, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua. It was a very solemn and trying moment for me personally and for the country as a whole. My immediate task and priority was and still remains to give the nation purposeful leadership and to focus on the priorities of our administration in order to maintain national peace and stability and pursue our key development priorities. In these few months as leader of the country, I have concentrated on managing the affairs of the nation, and resisted all efforts to respond to the drums of partisan politics which have been sounding very loud across the land.

As President and leader of government, I decided not to place partisan politics above the immediate needs and priorities of our people. I came under intense pressure to make a declaration concerning my political future, but declined to do so because that would have immediately distracted us from all the development initiatives we have accomplished so far. I therefore told Nigerians to give me

time to concentrate on my work and that at the appropriate time I would make a public statement on my political future after due consultations with all the segments and leaders of our nation.

Today, I confirm that after wide and thorough consultations spanning the six geo-political zones that make up Nigeria, with members of my family, my party, the opposition, civil society, the Private Sector, members of the Labour Unions, religious leaders, youths and student groups and our revered traditional institutions, I Goodluck Ebele Jonathan by the grace of God hereby offer myself and my services to the Nigerian people as a candidate for the office of President in the forth coming 2011 elections. In presenting myself for service, I make no pretense that I have a magic wand that will solve all of Nigeria's problems or that I am the most intelligent Nigerian. Far from it.

What I do promise is this – If I am elected President in 2011 – I will make a covenant with you the Nigerian people to always do right by you, to tell you the truth at all times, to carry you along and most importantly to listen to you, fellow citizens in our communities and also those of you on this page. I do not want to win your affections by giving you promises of things I would do in the future which others before me have given and which have largely been unfulfilled. Rather, I would want you to judge me by my records. Since God Almighty and yourselves permitted me to serve you in the present capacity, I have busied myself with setting Nigeria on the path of peace and progress.

My team and I made no promises on adequate fuel supply in Nigeria. We simply did what was expected of those who govern, we delivered it, and you are living witnesses to that. We made no promise to revamp the textile industry. We delivered a bailout package worth 150 billion naira that is being dispensed as I write. We made no promises of securing the highest U.S Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) aviation clearance, the Category 1 Certificate which enables Nigerian registered airlines to fly to ANY U.S city. We delivered. We made no promise to give Nigeria a brand new INEC under a proven God-fearing

and incorruptible leader. We placed Nigeria first and delivered. We made no promises of protecting your loans, deposits and investments in the banking industry over and beyond what is covered under the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Scheme. We delivered it via AMCON. Rather than tell you what we could do to improve power, this administration demonstrated it by initiating a brand new national Super Grid as well as launching a concrete Road Map to the Power Sector with realistic goals tied to realistic dates. I understand from some of your mails that there have been some small improvements in electricity supply in some communities. We met an economy that was beginning to slow due to the global recession. Today, the economy has verifiably grown by 7% this half year ending in June.

I know you are tired of empty promises, so I will make only one promise to you today. The only promise I make to you my friends, fellow citizens and Nigeria, is to promise LESS and deliver MORE if I am elected. I call on you to join me to work together in harmony and synergy to forge a nation where we understand our differences instead of pretending they do not exist and work towards a perfect union founded on transparency, equity and justice. A nation that is on her way to repairing her International reputation and project to the world that things have changed and the people of Nigeria have now taken Nigeria back from a few into the hands of her people who are eager, very eager to pull her weight in the forward movement of the African continent and the world in the pursuit of peace, prosperity and happiness.

I will by the special grace of God be making a formal declaration to this effect at the Eagle's Square, Abuja, on Saturday 18 September 2010.

I call on you my friends on this page and all Nigerians to give me your support and prayers so that together we can liberate our country from the confines and self-inflicted wounds and limitations of the past. My dear friends and fellow citizens, to borrow an often used slogan by our youths, please join me in proclaiming: Forward Ever, Backward Never! Please let us all unite across

tongue and creed to move our long suffering nation forward together. I thank you and may God bless our country Nigeria.

*September 15, 2010*

## I WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN!

*Declaration speech for the 2011 presidential race*



Forty months ago my predecessor in office and I embarked on a joint ticket in the governance of our great country, Nigeria. Sadly, he passed away on the 5th of May 2010. MAY HIS GENTLE SOUL REST IN PERFECT PEACE, AMEN. With the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the mantle of leadership of our great nation fell on me. However, the days leading to my presidency were very trying times for our nation. We confronted those moments and their challenges to national security with patriotism and care. I appreciate the role played by the National Assembly, Governors, Civil Society groups, the mass media, and other patriotic Nigerians.

The late President Yar'Adua and I shared great dreams for our country. We toiled together to realize those dreams in order to justify the confidence Nigerians reposed in us. Together we swore to execute a joint mandate and today I come before you to make a pronouncement based on that undertaking.

The past four months that I have served as President of Nigeria have opened my eyes to the vast potentials of this office as a potent instrument for the

transformation of our country. I discovered that by sheer willpower, I could end the long queues and price fluctuations in our petrol stations. Today, all our refineries are working, saving us huge amounts of funds spent on importation of petroleum products. I discovered that by insisting that the right things be done, we could begin a turnaround in our power sector by involving the private sector in power generation and distribution. As you can see from the lower quantities of diesel that you are buying today, power generation has significantly improved.

I have put in place new gas policies and very soon, we will be saying goodbye to gas flaring in our oil fields. Working with the National Assembly, we rolled out a law that requires companies operating in the oil and gas sectors of our economy to utilize an appreciable percentage of their goods and services from local sources. We saw to it that normalcy began to return to the Niger Delta by ensuring government's fidelity to its promises, and this has helped to stabilize our national revenue.

In the last few months, I embarked on monumental projects in our road infrastructure to end the carnage on our federal highways. I began several projects to make our water resources available for drinking and farming. I targeted our educational system to return quality and competitiveness to them. I re-addressed our drive for self sufficiency in food production. I have taken bold steps to confront our security situation. In this regard, we are pursuing the revision of our laws to be more responsive to international conventions and more punitive to criminals.

I set the stage for free and fair elections by constituting an electoral commission comprising of Nigerians with impeccable credentials for firmness and incorruptibility. I charged our anti-corruption agencies to speed up the war against corruption, and respect no sacred cows in the process. In the management of the economy, I advocated a more transparent banking industry, price stability, low inflation, and aggregate increase in productivity as a way to drive us to a more prosperous economy. In International Relations, I advanced

the respectability accorded our country by effective engagement in global fora.

From the moment I was sworn in as President, I came under intense pressure to make a declaration concerning my political future, but declined to do so because it would have immediately distracted us from all the development initiatives we have accomplished so far.

As President and leader of this government, I decided not to place partisan politics above the immediate needs and priorities of our people. I therefore told Nigerians to give me time to concentrate on my work, and that at the appropriate time, I would make a public statement on my political future after widespread consultations.

Those consultations have now been concluded. The Independent National Electoral Commission has recently announced a time table for the 2011 general elections in the country. My party, the Peoples Democratic Party, has also published a timetable for its primaries.

In the circumstances and after a thorough self examination and prayers with my family, I, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan, have decided to humbly offer myself as a candidate in the Presidential Primaries of our great party, the Peoples Democratic Party, in order to stand for the 2011 Presidential elections. I pledge once again to all the people of this nation that they will have a free and fair election, even as I stand to be a candidate. In this race, I have the honour to have as my running mate, Architect Namadi Sambo, the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Our country is at the threshold of a new era; an era that beckons for a new kind of leadership; a leadership that is uncontaminated by the prejudices of the past; a leadership committed to change; a leadership that reinvents government, to solve the everyday problems that confront the average Nigerian.

I was not born rich, and in my youth, I never imagined that I would be where I am today, but not once did I ever give up. Not once did I imagine that a child from Otuoke, a small village in the Niger Delta, will one day rise to the position

of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I was raised by my mother and father with just enough money to meet our daily needs.

In my early days in school, I had no shoes, no school bags. I carried my books in my hands but never despaired; no car to take me to school but I never despaired. There were days I had only one meal but I never despaired. I walked miles and crossed rivers to school every day but I never despaired. Didn't have power, didn't have generators, studied with lanterns but I never despaired. In spite of these, I finished secondary school, attended the University of Port Harcourt, and now hold a doctorate degree.

Fellow Nigerians, if I could make it, you too can make it!

My story is the story of a young Nigerian whose access to education opened up vast opportunities that enabled me to attain my present position. As I travel up and down our country, I see a nation blessed by God with rich agricultural and mineral resources and an enterprising people. I see millions of Nigerians whose potentials for greatness are constrained by the lack of basic infrastructure. I see Nigerians who can make a difference in the service of their country but are disadvantaged by the lack of opportunities.

My story symbolizes my dream for Nigeria. The dream that any Nigerian child from Kaura-Namoda to Duke town; from Potiskum to Nsukka, from Isale-Eko to Gboko will be able to realize his God-given potentials, unhindered by tribe or religion and unrestricted by improvised political inhibitions. My story holds out the promise of a new Nigeria. A Nigeria built on the virtues of love and respect for one another, on unity, on industry, on hardwork and on good governance.

My fellow Nigerians, this is what has brought me to Eagle Square today. I have come to say to all of you, that Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan is the man you need to put Nigeria right. I have come to launch a campaign of ideas, not one of calumny. I have come to preach love, not hate. I have come to break you away from divisive tendencies of the past which have slowed our drive to

true nationhood. I have no enemies to fight. You are all my friends and we share a common destiny.

Let the word go out from this Eagle Square that Jonathan as President in 2011 will herald a new era of transformation of our country; an era that will end the agony of power shortage in our country. Let the word go out from here that I will be for the students, teachers and parents of Nigeria, a President who will advance quality and competitive education. Let everyone in this country hear that I shall strive to the best of my ability to attain self sufficiency in food production.

Let the word go out that my plans for a Sovereign Wealth Fund with an initial capital of \$1 billion will begin the journey for an economic restoration. This restoration will provide new job opportunities and alleviate poverty. Let the word go out that our health sector will receive maximum priority in a new Jonathan administration, a priority that will ensure maximum health care and stop our brain drain.

Let all the kidnapers, criminal elements, and miscreants that give us a bad name be ready for the fight that I shall give them. Let the ordinary Nigerian be assured that President Jonathan will have zero tolerance for corruption. Let the international community hear that today I have offered myself to lead a country that will engage them in mutual respect and cooperation for the achievement of international peace and understanding. To help me in these tasks effectively, I will re-train, revamp, and motivate the civil service.

My dear good people of Nigeria, I got here today by the power of God and the support of all Nigerians; all ethnic groups, North, South, East and West. I am here today because of your support and prayers. I want all of you to know that I am one of you and I will never let you down! I want you to know that I will keep hope alive; I want you to know that your time has come.

I stand before you today, humbly seeking your support for me, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan, to run for the office of the President of Nigeria with

Architect Namadi Sambo as my running mate.

We will fight for JUSTICE!

We will fight for all Nigerians to have access to POWER!

We will fight for qualitative and competitive EDUCATION!

We will fight for HEALTH CARE REFORMS!

We will fight to create jobs, for all Nigerians!

We will fight corruption!

We will fight to protect all Citizens!

We will fight for your rights!

My dear country men and women, give me your support, give me your votes and together we will fight to build a great nation of our dreams!

I cannot end this speech without thanking you all for attending this occasion. Your huge attendance is a loud testimony of your support for us. For this I am very grateful. I pray that the Almighty God abides with you and sees you safely back to your respective destinations.

When you return, tell all those at home that as we celebrate our fifty years anniversary as a nation, Goodluck has come to transform Nigeria and I will never let you down.

Thank You.

May God Bless you all!

And may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!

*September 18, 2010*

## THIS IS A NEW DAWN!

*Acceptance speech following declaration as the winner  
of the 2011 presidential election*



My dear country men and women, this is a new dawn! Our nation has spoken. At the end of intense and hard-fought campaigns by all the political parties, our people spoke through the ballot. In every city, town, village, ward and voting unit, Nigerians stood in the sun, some in the rain, some walked long distances and all waited patiently to vote.

With a heart full of gratitude to Almighty God, I want to thank Nigerians for the great sacrifice and overwhelming national mandate you have just given me, to preside over the affairs of this nation for the next four years.

We have, by this election, reaffirmed our unity as one nation under God; reiterated our faith in democracy; and underscored our determination to fully join the free world where only the will of the people is the foundation of governance. We will not let you down. We will not let Nigeria down.

My brothers and sisters, fellow citizens, we are all winners. In this context, there is no victor and no vanquished. Nigerians have proved to the world that we are capable of holding free, fair and credible elections. With the evidence

national spread of our victory, we have demonstrated that even in our diversity, the progress of Nigeria remains paramount to all.

This is a victory for the sustenance of our democracy; a victory which all Nigerians irrespective of creed, ethnicity, or state of origin should celebrate. It is a triumph for our common destiny as a people with shared ideals, shared dreams and shared hopes.

I congratulate the candidates of the other political parties. I regard them not as opponents, but as partners. Indeed, some of them have held high public office in the past.

Let me pay particular tribute to General Muhammadu Buhari, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and the other patriots and their running mates. They all did well and the nation expects their continued demonstration of leadership and commitment to our efforts at nation-building.

The elections are not yet over. We still have to elect our Governors and members of our State Houses of Assembly. We must approach the remaining elections with the same level of enthusiasm and seriousness.

We have to remain vigilant. On our part, we continue to assure you that the mechanisms that were put in place to assure free and fair elections are maintained.

When I declared my intention to run for the office of President under the ticket of the People's Democratic Party, I reflected on my humble background and the long journey that brought me to that moment.

Eight months later, I stand before you as the winner of the 2011 Presidential election. I am humbled by your overwhelming mandate.

During that declaration, I said that I had no enemies. Let me say it again, I have no enemies to fight.

Indeed, I reassure all Nigerians that we would continue to run a government that is committed to fairness, equity and justice for all.

The progress we seek for our country is in our collective hands. I am

confident that with this new spirit of national reawakening and our sense of collective ownership of the Nigerian project, a firm foundation has been laid for participatory governance and progress.

Together we will build a new economy that is strong and dynamic; underpinned by a patriotic work ethic. Together we will remake our society to emphasise the most noble of our national values, and together we shall create a great nation welded in unity and harmony; a nation marching towards collective progress in which no one is left behind.

This election is the renewal of hope. As we march towards our centenary as a nation in the year 2014, this election will be remembered as that which reaffirmed our faith and strengthened the bond of our union. We found within ourselves the basis for our national confidence. We demonstrated that we are making great strides in consolidating democratic governance. This election is further evidence that Nigeria is secure, that we are stable; and most of all, that the future of Nigeria is bright.

Now, we must all unite. We must quickly move away from partisan battlegrounds and find the national common ground. We must show the world that this nation of many people will always find the love, the courage and the path to move forward as one. Let us join hands to build a prosperous nation. This is the challenge of our generation. This is our unfinished task. On my part, I promise to run an all-inclusive government.

It is on this note that I am greatly pained at reports of incidents of unnecessary violence and loss of lives and property in some parts of the country over the past twenty-four hours.

I enjoin our political and religious leaders, in their usual sense of patriotism, to call on their followers to eschew all acts of bitterness and violence. As I have always stated, nobody's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian.

I thank all the nations of the world, their leaders and our friends for their goodwill. I thank our friends from the national and international media, religious

leaders, civil society, voluntary organisations, development partners and our talented Diaspora Nigerians that are reporting, monitoring or participating in our elections. We have benefitted from their fair observations.

My special thanks go to all our public services, security agencies, academia, members of the National Youth Service Corps and emergency services. These men, women and youth are making huge sacrifices towards the success of the 2011 elections.

I wish to express my profound thanks to Vice President Mohammed Namadi Sambo. He brought strength and commitment to our ticket. I am equally grateful to the leadership and members of the PDP; the governors of the 36 states of the federation; members of the Presidential Campaign Council and all our supporters across the nation for their great sense of dedication, faith and exemplary conduct.

Now is the time for all Nigerians to reach out to their neighbours. I want all of us to join hands in brotherhood, party affiliation or preferred candidate notwithstanding. We are all Nigerians and I will be a President to all. This is the new dawn we crave. What is now required is a new commitment, national solidarity and re-dedication to service.

Come, join me, let's continue on the road of national transformation.

Let us all thank our merciful God for this day. Let us all continue to pray for God's guidance in the years ahead.

I thank you and May God bless Nigeria.

*April 19, 2011*

## TIME FOR LAMENTATION IS OVER

*Inauguration address after election as President*



My Dear Compatriots, I stand in humble gratitude to you, this day, having just sworn to the oath of office as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of our great nation. I thank you all, fellow citizens, for the trust and confidence, which you have demonstrated through the power of your vote. I want to assure you, that I will do my utmost at all times, to continue to deserve your trust.

I would like to specially acknowledge the presence in our midst today, of our Brother Heads of State and Government, who have come to share this joyous moment with us. Your Excellencies, I thank you for your solidarity. I also wish to express my gratitude, to the Representatives of Heads of State and Government who are here with us. My appreciation also goes to the chairperson of the African Union and other world leaders, our development partners, and all our distinguished guests.

I want to specially thank all Nigerians for staying the course in our collective commitment to build a democratic nation. To members of the PDP family

and members of other political parties, who have demonstrated faith in our democratic enterprise, I salute you. At this juncture, let me acknowledge and salute my friend and brother, Vice-President Namadi Sambo; and my dear wife, Patience, who has been a strong pillar of support.

I thank her for galvanizing and mobilizing Nigerian women for the cause of democracy. In the same vein, I owe a debt of gratitude to my mother and late father. I cannot thank them enough.

I cannot but pay tribute to our late President, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, with whom we won the Presidential election four years ago, when I contested as his running mate. May God bless his soul.

I also wish to pay tribute to our founding fathers, whose enduring sacrifices and abiding faith in the unity and greatness of our country, laid the foundation for the nation. We take enormous pride in their contributions. The pivotal task of this generation is to lift our fatherland to the summit of greatness.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, earlier this year, over seventy-three million eligible Nigerians endured all manner of inconvenience just to secure their voters cards, in order to exercise the right to choose those that will govern them.

At the polls, we saw the most dramatic expressions of the hunger for democracy. Stories of courage and patriotism were repeated in many ways, including how fellow citizens helped physically challenged voters into polling stations to enable them exercise their franchise. The inspiring story of the one hundred and three year-old man, and many like him across the country, who struggled against the physical limitations of age to cast their vote, is noteworthy.

Such determination derives from the typical Nigerian spirit of resilience in the face of the greatest of odds. That spirit has, over the years, stirred our hopes, doused our fears, and encouraged us to gather ourselves to build a strong nation even when others doubted our capacity.

Today, our unity is firm, and our purpose is strong. Our determination

unshakable. Together, we will unite our nation and improve the living standards of all our peoples whether in the North or in the South; in the East or in the West. Our decade of development has begun. The march is on. The day of transformation begins today. We will not allow anyone exploit differences in creed or tongue, to set us one against another.

Let me at this point congratulate the elected Governors, Senators, members of the House of Representatives and those of the States Houses of Assembly for their victories at the polls. I am mindful that I represent the shared aspiration of all our people to forge a united Nigeria: a land of justice, opportunity and plenty. Confident that a people that are truly committed to a noble ideal cannot be denied the realization of their vision, I assure you that this dream of Nigeria that is so deeply felt by millions, will indeed come to reality.

A decade ago, it would have been a mere daydream to think that a citizen from a minority ethnic group could galvanize national support, on an unprecedented scale, to discard ancient prejudices, and win the people's mandate as President of our beloved country. That result emanated from the toil and sacrifice of innumerable individuals and institutions, many of whom may never get to receive public appreciation for their effort.

Only a couple of days ago, I received an entry on my Facebook page. It was sent by Mr. Babajide Orevba. He wrote to inform me that I had lost a great fan. That fan was his father, Mr. Emmanuel Bamidele Orevba. The deceased, the son told me, was no politician, but had campaigned enthusiastically for my ticket. Tragically, overwhelmed by the joy of our victory, he collapsed, and passed on three days later. I pray God Almighty to grant his soul eternal rest.

The success of the 2011 elections and the widespread acclaim which they exercised was due to the uncommon patriotism and diligence exhibited by many Nigerians, including members of the Armed Forces, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and others. Unfortunately, despite the free, fair and transparent manner the elections were conducted, a senseless wave of violence

in some parts of the country led to the death of ten members of the NYSC and others. These brave men and women paid the supreme sacrifice in the service of our fatherland. They are heroes of our democracy. We offer our heartfelt prayers and condolences in respect of all those who lost their lives.

In the days ahead, those of us that you have elected to serve must show that we are men and women with the patriotism and passion, to match the hopes and aspirations of you, the great people of this country. We must demonstrate the leadership, statesmanship, vision, capacity, and sacrifice, to transform our nation. We must strengthen common grounds, develop new areas of understanding and collaboration, and seek fresh ideas that will enrich our national consensus.

It is the supreme task of this generation to give hope to the hopeless, strength to the weak and protection to the defenceless.

Fellow citizens, the leadership we have pledged is decidedly transformative. The transformation will be achieved in all the critical sectors, by harnessing the creative energies of our people.

We must grow the economy, create jobs, and generate enduring happiness for our people. I have great confidence in the ability of Nigerians to transform this country. The urgent task of my administration is to provide a suitable environment, for productive activities to flourish. I therefore call on the good people of Nigeria, to enlist as agents of this great transformation.

My dear countrymen and women, being a Nigerian is a blessing. It is also a great responsibility. We must make a vow that, together, we will make the Nigerian Enterprise thrive.

The leadership and the followership must strive to convert our vast human and natural resources into the force that leads to a greater Nigeria. The Nigeria of our dreams must be built on hard work and not on short cuts. Let me salute the Nigerian workers who build our communities, cities and country. They deserve fair rewards, and so do the women that raise our children, and the rural

dwellers that grow our food.

The moment is right. The signs are heart-warming. We are ready to take off on the path of sustained growth and economic development. In our economic strategy, there will be appropriate policy support to the real sector of the economy, so that Small and Medium Enterprises may thrive. Nigeria is blessed with enormous natural wealth, and my Administration will continue to encourage locally owned enterprises to take advantage of our resources in growing the domestic economy. A robust private sector is vital to providing jobs for our rapidly expanding population. But this must be a collaborative effort.

We must form technical and financial partnerships with global businesses and organizations. We live in an age where no country can survive on its own; countries depend on each other for economic well-being. Nigeria is no different. Returns on investment in Nigeria remain among the highest in the world. We will continue to welcome sustainable investment in our economy.

We will push programmes and policies that will benefit both local and foreign businesses, but we must emphasize mutual benefits and win-win relationships. The overall ongoing reforms in the banking and financial sectors are therefore designed to support the real sector of the economy. To drive our overall economic vision, the power sector reform is at the heart of our industrialisation strategy. I call on all stakeholders, to cooperate with my administration, to ensure the success of the reforms.

Over the next four years, attention will be focused on rebuilding our infrastructure. We will create greater access to quality education and improve health care delivery. We will pay special attention to the agricultural sector, to enable it play its role of ensuring food security and massive job creation for our people.

The creation of the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority will immensely contribute to strengthening our fiscal framework, by institutionalizing savings

of our commodity-related revenues. With this mechanism in place, we will avoid the boom and bust cycles, and mitigate our exposure to oil price volatility.

The lesson we have learnt is that the resolution of the Niger Delta issue is crucial for the health of the nation's economy. In the interest of justice, equity and national unity, we shall actively promote the development of the region. I believe that peace is a necessary condition for development.

Fellow citizens, in every decision, I shall always place the common good before all else. The bane of corruption shall be met by the overwhelming force of our collective determination, to rid our nation of this scourge. The fight against corruption is a war in which we must all enlist, so that the limited resources of this nation will be used for the growth of our commonwealth.

I am confident that we have every reason to look to the future with hope. We owe ourselves and posterity the duty of making this country respectable in the comity of nations. Nigeria, as a responsible member of the international community, will remain committed to the maintenance of global peace and security. We will continue to play an active role in the United Nations. Our role in the African Union, ECOWAS, and the Gulf of Guinea will be enhanced to ensure greater human and energy security.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a new dawn for Africa. We fought for decolonisation. We will now fight for democratization. Nigeria, in partnership with the African Union, will lead the process for democracy and development in Africa. In particular, we will support the consolidation of democracy, good governance and human rights in the continent. Africa must develop its vast resources to tackle poverty and under-development.

Conscious of the negative effect of insecurity on growth and development, my Administration will seek collaboration at bilateral and multilateral levels, to improve our capability in combating trans-border crimes. In this regard, we will intensify our advocacy against the illicit trades in small arms and light weapons,

which have become the catalyst for conflicts on the African continent. All Nigerian diplomatic missions abroad are to accord this vision of defending the dignity of humanity the highest priority.

My fellow countrymen and women, Nigeria is not just a land of promise; it shall be a nation where positive change will continue to take place, for the good of our people. The time for lamentation is over. This is the era of transformation. This is the time for action. But Nigeria can only be transformed if we all play our parts with commitment and sincerity. Cynicism and scepticism will not help our journey to greatness. Let us all believe in a new Nigeria. Let us work together to build a great country that we will all be proud of. This is our hour.

Fellow Compatriots, lift your gaze towards the horizon. Look ahead and you will see a great future that we can secure with unity, hard work and collective sacrifice.

Join me now as we begin the journey of transforming Nigeria.

- I will continue to fight, for your future, because I am one of you.
- I will continue to fight for improved medical care for all our citizens.
- I will continue to fight for all citizens to have access to first class education.
- I will continue to fight for electricity to be available to all our citizens.
- I will continue to fight for an efficient and affordable public transport system for all our people.
- I will continue to fight for jobs to be created through productive partnerships.

You have trusted me with your mandate, and I will never, never let you down.

I know your pain, because I have been there. Look beyond the hardship you have endured. See a new beginning; a new direction; a new spirit. Nigerians, I want you to start to dream again. What you see in your dreams, we can achieve together.

I call upon all the Presidential candidates who contested with me to join

hands with us as we begin the transformation of our country.

Let us work together; let us build together; let us bequeath a greater Nigeria to the generations to come.

I thank you! God bless you all! And God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*May 29, 2011*

## WITH DEMOCRACY, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

*Address to the nation at the occasion of 2010 Democracy Day Celebration*



My dear country men and women! Today marks another important milestone in our nation's political history as we commemorate our Democracy Day. The significance of our celebration today lies in the fact that we are able as a nation to look at the journey which we have made so far, and set for ourselves a worthy course for the days ahead.

An occasion such as this should naturally therefore provoke wider reflection on our democratic enterprise. It is indeed a golden opportunity for introspection as well as retrospection on our chequered journey to the democratic Promised Land. This year being the 50th anniversary of our national independence will surely record more of this interrogation of our past as we earnestly look into the future with boldness and optimism.

During the last century, the anti-colonial struggle was the greatest issue of democracy and justice universally. Our founding fathers discharged their historic responsibility by fighting and winning our national freedom. Today therefore, is a day to appreciate our resilience, our patriotism, and our faith in this Land of

our common destiny. It is a day to remember, as our national anthem clearly instructs us "the labour of our heroes' past". So, when we reflect on democracy, we remember the struggles of our great nationalists. We remember the Herbert Macaulays, the Nnamdi Azikiwes, the Obafemi Awolowos, the Ahmadu Bellos, the Ernest Ikolis, the Aminu Kanos, the Margret Ekpos, the Gambo Sawabas and our living legend, Anthony Enahoro. We, of course, remember all the vibrant and youthful members of the Zikist Movement!

The second wave of the struggle for democracy was to put an end to military rule that paved the way for this dispensation that began on May 29, 1999. It is in this spirit that we remember the great sacrifices made by Nigerian patriots, some of who paid the supreme sacrifice. We salute the illustrious memories of the M. K. O. Abiolas, the Shehu Musa Yar'Aduas, the Alfred Rewanes and the Gani Fawehinmis. The sacrifices that our compatriots living and dead have made to enthrone democracy should compel us to take our democratic enterprise more seriously and with greater vigilance. We must work to ensure that by the supreme sacrifices of these great heroes, it should no longer be necessary for the tree of freedom to be watered by the blood of yet more martyrs.

It is for this and many other reasons that our challenge in furtherance of democracy as a nation is to conduct credible elections in which every voter will only be entitled to a vote and every vote will count. We must develop a democratic culture in which the will of the people will be treated as sacred and be immune to subversion by anti-democratic elements. That is why the consummation of the process of electoral reform is a collective task that must be done this year.

In this regard, we must continue to encourage the National Assembly so that they can finish the good work already begun and in good time. It is also part of the democratic challenge before us that we must build our institutions of democracy - the legislature, the judiciary, the civil society, the media and others. The armed forces, security agencies and law enforcement organisations must continue to be re-oriented in tune with this democratic culture. The supremacy

of the constitution should always be defended by all regardless of divergence of interests. Opposing views should always be tolerated and the culture of unfettered national debates should be reinvigorated as we collectively seek solutions to our problems. It is when we do all the foregoing and much more that we can truly say that the nation is consolidating the gains of democracy and that our democratic enterprise is yielding acceptable dividends.

For our democracy to be virile, it must be genuinely competitive and strictly rule-based. Therefore, our political parties should be developed as vital institutions of democracy. We run a multi-party system and the parties should be fair competitors while performing their constitutional functions. However, for the parties to be relevant in the nation's democratic enterprise, it is compulsory that a regime of internal party democracy must prevail in the parties. It is the political parties that are imbued with democratic spirit that would deepen the practice of democracy in our land.

As we march faithfully and boldly on this journey, we must remind ourselves that it is not going to be easy. Democracy calls for sacrifice and tolerance, an open ear and a strong voice. Democracy requires constant nurturing and eternal vigilance. Democracy gives no room to lethargy. As we strive to advance our democratic development, there will be times when our will shall be tested, our patience provoked and our belief questioned. We must on those occasions remain resolute.

The beauty of democracy is that its practice is never final and always has room for improvement no matter how old a democratic society may be. Where we falter we must not fall. When we are weak, we must not surrender. The conduct of the affairs of government in policy, legislation, decision-making and execution, and the choices we make over who conducts these processes keep transforming in democratic societies.

Thus democracy is not only about elections but also about the degree of popular participation in daily governance as well as individual and group

freedoms and liberties, including the freedom of association, right to practice a chosen religion and equal protection under the law. Democracy should give us all the confidence we need as a people to conduct our personal and business affairs, assured that we are protected under the constitution of Nigeria regardless of what part of the country we reside and regardless of our religious or ethnic affiliation.

Our first responsibility as citizens is to use the ballot. For us servants in government, it is our responsibility to ensure that all qualified citizens have access to the ballot and that all votes count. Let me once again assure all Nigerians that this time, under my watch, all votes will count. It is my sacred duty to ensure that you are able to vote and that your votes count.

It is important to note that electoral integrity is not only about electoral reforms and legal and constitutional changes but also about changes in attitude and conduct. Above all, it is about exemplary leadership and principled followership. I am convinced that Nigeria will attain electoral integrity in 2011 and beyond.

My dear compatriots, we have to win for our children democratic freedoms that guarantee economic and social dividends that in turn engender and strengthen our nationhood.

Let it be said by the generation that is to come that we unified this country and consolidated our democracy.

Finally, this Democracy Day Celebration will not be complete if I do not touch on workers' welfare. It is well known that this Administration has never abdicated its responsibility to the Nigerian worker. Indeed, we support the right of every worker to earn a living wage for addressing basic necessities of life. You will recall that at the last May Day Celebration, we assured workers that we will address the problems of distortions in pay relativity in the Public Service. This has now been resolved positively. The new salary scale shall take effect from July 1, 2010.

Also, in our resolve to address the housing challenge of civil servants, Government has approved the release of the sum of N10 Billion to the Federal Government Staff Housing Loans Board (FGSHLB) for onward disbursement to eligible civil servants as loans to enable them own their own houses.

Let me therefore charge workers to reciprocate Government's gesture by increasing their productivity levels and shunning acts capable of undermining the Development Agenda of Government, knowing fully well that they are drivers of the Administration's policies. Their conduct and productivity shall henceforth be guided by performance management and the operational guidelines that are expected to be concluded not later than December 31, 2010.

I wish all Nigerians a happy Democracy Day. May God bless our beloved country.

*May 29, 2010*

# LET US KEEP THE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT ALIVE

*2012 Democracy Day speech*



Fellow Nigerians, one year ago, I was privileged to stand before you, to take the oath of office as President of our dear country, the third to serve you as President since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Today, I remember that day and the processes leading to it with profound gratitude to God Almighty and to all Nigerians who have worked very hard to enrich our journey from military dictatorship to inclusive democratic governance.

For the past 13 years, we have remained a stable democracy. We have together demonstrated that the government of the people is an ideal that the people of Nigeria cherish. We have our differences as individuals and as politicians, but we have shown great faith in democracy and its institutions. We have refused to be limited by our differences. Despite reservations about some of our institutions, we have refused to submit to despair. This achievement is a testament to the courage and optimism of the Nigerian people.

As we celebrate this year's Democracy Day, I pay tribute to all the men and women who have made our democratic experience meaningful: the ordinary

people who resisted military rule, and have remained resolute in their embrace of democracy; the army of Nigerian voters who, at every election season, troop out in large numbers to exercise their right of franchise; the change agents in civil society who have remained ever watchful and vigilant.

I pay special tribute also to all patriots who are the pillars of our collective journey, most especially, our armed forces who have steadfastly subordinated themselves to civil authority in the past 13 years. They have continued to demonstrate a great sense of professionalism. They have discharged their duties to the nation with honour and valour. In a sub-region that has witnessed instances of political instability, authored by restless soldiers, the Nigerian Armed Forces have remained professional in their support of democracy.

When General Abdulsalami Abubakar handed over the baton of authority to President Olusegun Obasanjo, in 1999, it was a turning point for Nigeria. We did not arrive at that turning point by accident. Many Nigerians laid down their lives for the transition to democracy to occur. Some were jailed. Media houses were attacked and shut down. But the people's resolve was firm and unshakeable. This is what we remember. This is what we celebrate. On this day, I recall especially the martyrdom of Chief M. K. O. Abiola, whose presumed victory in the 1993 Presidential election, and death, while in custody, proved to be the catalyst for the people's pro-democracy uprising. The greatest tribute that we can pay to him, and other departed heroes of Nigeria's democracy, is to ensure that we continue to sustain and consolidate our democratic institutions and processes, and keep Hope alive.

Let us individually and collectively, continue to keep the spirit of this day alive. No task is more important. We must continue to do well as a people and as a democracy. We must remember where we are coming from, so we can appreciate how far we have travelled.

When I assumed office as Acting President, in 2010, on account of the health challenges suffered by late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, there was so much

anxiety in the land. The tone of public debate was febrile. Some persons sought to use the situation in the country to sow the seeds of discord. My primary task at that time was to do all that was humanly possible to ensure stability within the polity. With the support and commitment of patriotic Nigerians from all walks of life, and the grace of the Almighty God, we were able to do so.

On May 6, 2010, following President Yar'Adua's death, I assumed office as substantive President. I subsequently presented myself as a candidate for the 2011 Presidential elections, with a promise that under my watch, the elections would be free, fair and credible. We kept faith with that promise. On May 29, 2011, I was sworn in as President, the fifth elected leader of Nigeria since independence. The success of the 2011 elections and the international acclaim that it generated was due to your patriotic zeal and commitment. I will like to seize this opportunity to thank all patriotic Nigerians who stood by us, and have remained unwavering in their support. These Nigerians understand one thing: that we all have a duty to protect and promote our country, and that this country belongs to all of us. Electoral contest is about values. We must not lose sight of those values that strengthen us as a people. As long as I am President, I will do my utmost to continue to work hard in pursuit of the common good.

There are challenges, yes, but we are working hard to address those challenges. And, by God's grace, we will succeed. My confidence is bolstered by the results which we have achieved in different sectors within the last twelve months.

Our democracy is stable. Its foundation is strong and firm. Its future is bright. Last year, I had spoken about the policy of "one man one vote, one woman, one vote, one youth, one vote". I am glad to see that the Nigerian people in all elections have continued to respect the principle of fair play. Since this administration came into office, we have gone to great lengths to strengthen our democratic institutions, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission. There are still persons who believe that elections should be violent and unhealthy, but they are in the minority. They will not derail our democracy

because the majority of Nigerians will not allow them to do so.

Following the spate of violence, in some parts of the country, after the 2011 elections, our administration set up a committee on post-election violence to among other things, investigate the causes and nature of electoral violence and make appropriate recommendations. We will be guided by the White Paper, on that committee's report, in dealing more firmly with electoral violence and fraud. This will include the establishment of Electoral Offences Tribunals to deal speedily with established cases of electoral violence. We cannot afford to treat the success we have recorded with our democratic experience with levity. Electoral reform is central to our administration's transformation agenda. I urge all political parties to embrace this reform.

Our successful elections, last year, opened new vistas for Nigeria's foreign policy. More than ever before, Nigeria's achievements have generated a lot of international goodwill and recognition. We have continued to build on this by further showing leadership in the sub-region and the African continent. Under my watch as Chairman of the sub-regional body, ECOWAS, and subsequently, Nigeria was in the forefront of the efforts to ensure democratic stability in Niger, Mali, Guinea Bissau, and particularly at a critical moment in Cote d'Ivoire. Our foreign policy process has proven to be dynamic and pro-active. Nigeria's place is secure among many friends in the comity of nations. We are building on that friendship to open up opportunities for foreign investments in the Nigerian economy and to provide necessary support for the vibrant community of Nigerians in the Diaspora.

We will continue to work hard, to turn domestic successes into a source of motivation for greater achievements in the international arena. We are fully aware that it is only when our people are happy and confident that they would be in a good position to walk tall in relating with others. Today, I want to talk about what we are doing and what we have done. I want to reassure you that we are making progress. But we can also do a lot more. We must. And we will.

Our economic outlook is positive. When I assumed office last year, there were still fears about the impact of the global economic recession, and implications for investments. Many Nigerians were worried about the growing rate of unemployment. In order to set Nigeria on a sound and sustainable path toward economic growth, this administration unveiled a set of priority policies, programmes, and projects encapsulated in the Transformation Agenda. These programmes and policies are aimed at consolidating our budget, fostering job creation, engendering private sector-led inclusive growth, and creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive for the ultimate betterment of the lives of Nigerians.

Today, progress has been made. The country's credit rating is positive, in contrast with many nations being downgraded. In 2011, our economy grew by 7.45%. As at mid-May 2012, our foreign exchange reserves had risen to \$37.02 billion, the highest level in 21 months. We have stabilized and improved our fiscal regime. We brought the fiscal deficit down to 2.85% of GDP from 2.9% in 2011. We reduced recurrent expenditures from 74% to 71% and reduced domestic borrowing from N852 billion in 2011 to N744 billion in 2012. We cut out over N100 billion of non-essential expenditure and increased our internally generated revenue from N200 billion to N467 billion.

For the first time in over a decade, we now have a draft Trade Policy which provides a multi-dimensional framework to boost our trade regime and facilitate the inflow of investments. We have generated over N6.6 trillion worth of investment commitments. The total value of our trade is also much higher than the value estimated the previous year due to deliberate government policies. To facilitate the ease of doing business in Nigeria, we have a policy in place to make visa procurement easier for foreign investors, with safeguards to prevent abuse.

The goal of our administration is to ensure that every Nigerian can find gainful employment. Given my dissatisfaction with the prevailing unemployment situation in the country, our administration has embarked on an ambitious

strategy of creating jobs and job-creators through the launch of several initiatives mainly targeted at the youths and women.

In October 2011, we launched the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria Programme, designed to encourage entrepreneurship and provide grants for small and medium scale enterprises. Over 1, 200 Nigerian youths have benefitted from this initiative. We have also launched the Public Works Women and Youth Empowerment Programme, which is designed to employ 370, 000 youths per annum, with 30% of the jobs specially reserved for women. Let me make it clear here that our YouWin programme is designed to nurture and mentor young entrepreneurs to become major players, employers and wealth creators in business.

We are gradually reducing the footprints of government in business activities through privatization, liberalization and deregulation based on our recognition that the private sector should be the engine of growth in our economy. To ensure that the private sector is well positioned for this task, our administration has embarked on key structural reforms in the Power Sector and at the Ports.

To improve reliable power supply, our administration is judiciously implementing the Power Sector Roadmap, which is at an advanced stage, to fully privatize power generation and distribution while reducing the cost of electricity to rural households and the urban poor.

The commitment of this Administration to the provision of regular and uninterrupted power supply remains strong and unwavering. We all agree that adequate and regular power supply will be the significant trigger to enhance this nation's productive capacity and accelerate growth. It is for this reason that I remain optimistic that the reforms we have initiated, the decisions we have taken so far and the plans we intend to faithfully prosecute will yield the desired results.

To underline this commitment, three weeks ago, I convened a special session on Power and gave specific instructions on the fast tracking of gas production

and delivery to ensure improved availability of power. I also directed that the power sector reforms must continue on schedule and that privatization of the sector must be completed according to plan.

Our approach is two-pronged: First, is the immediate repair of power plants, as well as transmission and distribution infrastructure in the short term. The second is the building of institutions and the provision of enablers to attract investors. We have revived and are accelerating the completion of the National Integrated Power Projects. We are also building about 4000km of transmission lines and hundreds of substations. We have completed the design for the construction of both Mambilla and Zungeru Hydro power plants which will add about 3,000 MW to the national grid.

By mid 2010, the national power output was about 2,800 MW. By the end of 2011, we reached a peak of more than 4,000 MW. A National Gas Emergency Plan has also been launched to redress the problem of gas supply which arose essentially due to poor planning.

For long-term power availability, we have strengthened a number of key institutions such as the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, the Bulk Trader, the National Power Training Institute of Nigeria, and others. We are also working with the World Bank to provide guarantees for gas and power providers. The signing of MOUs with World Leaders in power equipment – General Electric of USA and Siemens of Germany as well as US and China Exim Banks for financial investment, is a clear indication of the level of confidence which the world investment community has in our power sector road map.

In addition, the privatisation programme has attracted expression of interest from 131 companies across the globe. Our decision to bring in the private sector is clearly intended to achieve our target of generating and distributing sufficient and reliable power within the shortest time possible. With the measures we have put in place, we will surely achieve success in transforming the power sector.

We have also focused our efforts on Ports and Customs reforms to ensure

efficiency in the handling of ports and port-related businesses. Our administration has streamlined bureaucratic activities at the Ports by reducing the number of agencies from 14 to 7. We have also reduced the time for the clearance of goods from about a month, to seven days, with the long-term objective of ensuring that cargoes are cleared within 48 hours in line with international best practice. In the meantime, our ports, for the first time, now open for business for 24 hours.

In the Oil and Gas Sector, our Administration has charted a new course that will ensure enduring transparency and accountability. We are re-drafting the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) to ensure it meets the aspirations of all Stakeholders given the current realities and future expectations in the global energy landscape. Work on the PIB will be concluded in June 2012 and formally submitted to the National Assembly. Additionally, Special Task Forces dealing with Governance and Control, Petroleum Revenue and National refineries are finalizing their work to ensure probity across the oil and gas sector, and self-efficiency in refined petroleum products.

In the Downstream Sector, the Nigerian Content Development Act, since inception in 2010, has boosted the local production of line pipes, in-country fabrication tonnage and engineering support services. As a result, retained in-country spend has grown from approximately US \$1bn to a current estimate of US\$4bn, and over US\$3 billion Foreign Direct Investment has been brought in for upgrading and building new yards, altogether generating over 120,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Capacity utilization of existing domestic refineries has greatly improved from 30 to 60 percent. We have commenced the phased plan to return the refineries to 90 percent capacity utilization with the expected completion of the rehabilitation of Port Harcourt refinery by the end of 2012, to be followed by Warri and Kaduna refineries in 2013.

In the Upstream Sector, the April 2012 commissioning of the Usan Deep Offshore Field has increased crude oil production capacity by 180 thousand barrels

per day. Also, Government continues to support the National Oil Company, NPDC, by assigning 55% equity in 8 divested blocks which has resulted in increase in reserves from 350 million barrels to 2.1 billion barrels and 160, 000 barrels of production. We have also made significant progress in gas infrastructure development, investing close to US\$1bn for the construction of some 1000 km of pipelines, gas supply growth and stimulation of gas industrialization. Between now and the third quarter of 2013, Final Investment Decisions (FIDs) will be made on gas-based industries, such as the petrochemicals and fertilizer plants at Koko, the Central Processing Units (CPF) in Obiafu/Obrikom, and the gas growth projects. Also, the sum of N11 billion is provided in the 2012 Budget for Hydro-Carbon exploration in the Lake Chad Basin.

The Gas Revolution initiative will fully support and sustain domestic power, whilst creating Africa's largest gas based industrial park, which on completion will underpin the creation of over a million jobs and attract over US\$16 billion in Foreign Direct Investment. To protect the gains of these initiatives for all Nigerians, we are aggressively addressing the increasing incidents of crude oil theft and other criminal activities in the sector.

As a deliberate move, our goal is to transform Nigeria from a mono-modal economy, to a diversified one. The sector that we are focusing on to diversify our economy – and one in which Nigeria has huge comparative advantage – is the agriculture sector. Agriculture accounts for about 40% of our GDP and over 70% of all employment. Increases in agricultural productivity will drive down rural poverty and revive our rural economy.

In this regard, we are aggressively pursuing an agricultural transformation agenda. Agriculture is no longer a development programme. We are now treating agriculture as a business, one that can generate wealth and create jobs for millions of our youths.

We have implemented major reforms in the sector, notably in the fertilizer sub-sector. We have ended the practice of Federal Government procurement

and distribution of fertilizers. This we did because only 11% of farmers get the fertilizers that are bought and distributed by government. The old system encouraged rent seekers to collude and deprive farmers of access to fertilizers, while some of the fertilizers ended up with political farmers and in neighbouring countries.

Now, the procurement and commercialization of fertilizers and seeds have been fully deregulated to the private sector. We have ended the culture of corruption in fertilizer procurement. We must also end the era of food imports. Nigeria spends over 10 billion dollars every year importing wheat, rice, sugar and fish alone. This is unacceptable.

Our agricultural transformation agenda is directed at promoting local production, substituting for imported foods, and adding value to our locally produced crops. We are recording successes already. Government's policy to ensure rice self-sufficiency by 2015 is already paying off. New rice mills are being established by the private sector to mill locally produced rice. Ebony Agro Industries located in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State has rolled out its high quality parboiled rice. In Kano, Umza rice mill has taken off and can hardly meet demand, while in Benue State Ashi rice has hit the market. Consumers are buying more of Abakaliki and Ofada rice too.

To further accelerate the local production and milling of high quality rice, government is facilitating the import and installation of 100 new large scale integrated rice mills across the country. This will allow Nigeria, for the first time in its history, to have the capacity to mill all of the rice that we consume.

Our cassava policy is working, as we accelerate the pace of utilization of cassava to create markets for millions of our farmers. Our goal is a bold one: we will make Nigeria, which is the largest producer of cassava in the world, to also become the largest processor of high value cassava products in the world.

To further encourage cassava utilization and value-added products, government will support corporate bakers and master bakers across the country.

to use high quality cassava flour for baking. Last year I announced an increase in tariff and levy on wheat. To encourage the cassava flour inclusion policy, I now direct that part of the levy and tariff on wheat be set aside to support the promotion of high quality cassava flour and composite cassava bread. This will include support for needed enzymes, technical training and equipment for corporate bakers and master bakers, as well as accelerated cassava production.

We have also secured markets for cassava outside Nigeria, and for the first time ever, Nigeria will export this year 1 million metric tons of dried cassava chips to China. This will earn Nigeria 136 million US dollars in foreign exchange. Last week we also successfully started the commercial use of feed grade cassava grits, produced locally, for use in our poultry industry.

We are reviving our lost glory in cocoa, with massive distribution of 3.6 million pods of high-yielding cocoa varieties for farmers all across the cocoa growing states of the country. The pods will be provided free of charge. We are reviving cotton production in the North, as well. I have directed that all seeds for cotton should be provided, free of charge, to all cotton farmers.

Let me reiterate my personal passion and commitment to driving the agricultural transformation for Nigeria. The prosperity of Nigeria must start with improving the living standards of our farmers, and revitalizing rural economies across the nation. The newly inaugurated Agricultural Transformation Implementation Council, which I personally Chair, will further drive our continued revolution of the sector. Our goal is to add 20 million metric tons of food to our domestic food supply by 2015 and create 3.5 million jobs. To achieve this, the appropriate infrastructure to support all-year round farming through irrigation is being rehabilitated and developed across the country.

We must use our population to create markets for what we produce. We must grow local, buy local and eat local. To promote this, I have directed that all official functions of government serve local foods, especially our local rice and cassava bread and other foods. In the State House, I am faithfully keeping to my

promise of eating cassava bread and local rice.

Our administration is committed to the rapid and beneficial development of our country's Minerals and metals potential. In the last year, we recorded remarkable achievements in Mines and Steel Development. We increased the number of investors in the mining sector due to the transparent manner in which titles are now issued on a "first come-first served and use it or lose it basis." A total of 2,476 active mineral titles were issued compared to 666 titles issued out in the previous year, thereby reducing, significantly, illegal mining activities. About 350,000 additional jobs were created, arising from the activities of newly registered operators. We have initiated a programme to support private steel production outfits. This has resulted in an increase in production figures for steel and other metals to over 1 million tonnes.

It is our collective desire as Nigerians to improve the standard of education. We are particularly aggressive in addressing this challenge. As a former school teacher, I know that it is not enough to create jobs; we must develop human capacity, and train a generation of Nigerian children with better competencies and skills. This will grant them the edge that they require to compete in a skills-driven global economy; and by extension, strengthen our national competitiveness index.

I want every Nigerian child to have an opportunity to receive quality education and acquire useful skills. We are reforming the education sector from basic to tertiary level. The Federal Government recently launched the Almajiri Education Programme to reduce the number of out-of-school children which currently stands at about 9 million. Similar programmes will soon be introduced in various parts of the country. At the tertiary level, it is the policy of this administration that every State will have a Federal University.

To this end, we have established within the last year, nine (9) new Federal Universities and licensed nine (9) new private universities, bringing the total number of universities in the country to 124. Even with this, there is still the

challenge of getting adequate admission space for prospective undergraduates. While we are addressing this, the Federal Government is also conscious of the fact that our universities need to be better equipped, particularly with well trained teachers. Government is, therefore, working on a programme to provide scholarships for Nigerians who are interested in academics, to enable them obtain their Doctorate degrees within and outside the country.

In addition, the Federal Government has launched a Special Presidential Scholarship Scheme for our best and brightest brains. We are selecting the best out of our First Class graduates in various disciplines, especially engineering and science. They will be sent for post-graduate studies in the best universities in the world, with the expectation that this will lay the foundation for a desirable scientific and technological revolution that will take Nigeria into Space in the not too distant future.

One of the first steps taken by this administration was the creation of a Ministry of Communications Technology. Its mandate includes the design of programmes and initiatives to deploy ICT as a driver of sustainable growth and the training of skilled manpower. For our country to remain relevant, we need to adequately educate our people, as it is through education that we can turn our people into assets that can help Nigeria compete globally, and create jobs in the new knowledge economy.

By the same token, the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs is providing training opportunities for the youths in the Niger Delta. In the past year, a total of 704 youths have been sent for training, abroad and locally, in various fields of endeavour, including agriculture, petroleum engineering, commerce, tourism, and maritime studies. Nine skills centres are being built, one in each of the nine states of the Niger Delta; three of them will be completed this year.

An efficient and affordable public transport system remains a priority of this Administration. Our transformation agenda in the road sector which seeks to deliver better and safer roads to Nigerians, as well as to link the six geo-

political zones in the country with dual carriageways, is very much on course. There has been increased construction activities in the ongoing dualisation of Abuja–Abaji–Lokoja Road, Kano–Potiskum–Maiduguri Road; the Benin–Ore Shagamu Expressway; the Onitsha–Enugu Expressway; and the construction of the Loko–Oweto bridge, across River Benue.

Work has been slow on the East-West road due to budgetary constraints, but government will discharge all liabilities to contractors before the end of June and funds for the remaining part of the year, will be provided to accelerate the pace of work. In other parts of the country, about 21 other road projects are in different stages of completion. These include the Yola–Numan road, Aba–Owerri road, Owerri–Onitsha expressway, Oyo–Ogbomosho old road, and the Gombe–Potiskum road. Many others are at different stages of completion.

Government is also currently rehabilitating about 3,000 kms out of the 3,505 existing narrow gauge rail lines across the country. The Lagos-Kano corridor will be completed this year, while the Port Harcourt–Maiduguri corridor, which has equally commenced, will be completed by the end of 2013. We have also commenced the construction of the Abuja–Kaduna segment of the Lagos–Kano standard gauge rail lines, while the Lagos–Ibadan segment will be awarded this year. The Itakpe–Ajaokuta–Warri standard gauge rail line is nearing completion with the entire tracks completely laid.

To enhance sustainability in the rail sector, this Administration has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with General Electric (GE) to establish a locomotive assembly plant in the country. Our goal is to make Nigeria a major hub in West and Central Africa.

Within the last 12 months, we completed the capital dredging of the Lower River Niger from Warri (Delta State) to Baro (Niger State) to boost our inland water transportation. This year, work will commence on the dredging of the River Benue in addition to the construction of River Ports at Baro (Niger State), Oguta (Imo State), and Jamata/Lokoja, (Kogi State). The Onitsha River Port

in Anambra State, equipped with modern cargo handling equipment, has been completed and I shall be commissioning the project in the next few weeks.

The Aviation sector remains pivotal to our economic growth. Within the last year, we have developed a road map for the restoration of decaying facilities and infrastructure, some of which had not been attended to since they were first constructed over 30 years ago. Currently, we are renovating airports across the country and have begun the development of four new international terminals at Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kano and Abuja. We have also reviewed our Bilateral Air Service Agreements to ensure improved service delivery, and more customer-friendly processes. We are working to ensure that within the life of this Administration, the aviation sector in Nigeria will be transformed into a world class and self-sustaining provider of safe, secure and comfortable air transportation.

Globally, the role of women in governance has assumed great significance. In Nigeria, it is also widely acknowledged that women who constitute about half of the Nigerian population are great and invaluable assets, in both the public and private spheres. On our part, we have demonstrated serious commitment in further empowering women and projecting their role in public life. Out of the 42 members of the Federal Executive Council, 13 are women, heading major Ministries of Government.

Last week, I appointed the first female Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission. In the Armed Forces, female cadets have been admitted into the prestigious Nigerian Defence Academy, an institution that was hitherto an exclusive preserve of men. The first set will graduate in 2016. This year, we reached a significant milestone as the Nigerian Air Force produced the first Nigerian female combatant pilot. Our administration will continue to empower women and the girl-child as a focal point of our Transformation Agenda.

More than anything else, health matters. We are upgrading the country's tertiary health facilities to bring them up to international standards. We have

increased funding for health-related MDGs. We are also committed to reducing maternal and infant mortality, and to eradicating polio completely by 2014.

I want to reassure all Nigerians that this administration remains committed to waging a sustained battle against the menace of corruption. In the last one year, we have taken specific steps to reduce opportunities and avenues for corruption, and to strengthen the capacity and integrity of our institutions. For example, our ports reform programme has reduced the number of agencies at the ports which hitherto frustrated the speedy clearance of goods at the ports. We have also cleared the stretch of trailers and lorries blocking the Apapa Expressway. We have put an end to the fertilizer and tractor scam that once dominated the agricultural sector. Our review of the pension payment system has also blown the whistle on corrupt practices which are now being addressed.

Within the last one year, we set up a committee to identify leakages and waste in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies. I am confident that the implementation of the recommendations of that committee will help to eliminate corruption channels within the system, and improve the efficiency of the public service. In January, we announced a policy of deregulation in the downstream sector, but this was misunderstood by naysayers and reduced narrowly to a fuel subsidy removal initiative, whereas the policy was designed to completely eliminate the grand corruption in the downstream sector, and create the necessary incentives for private sector investment.

We have strengthened the leadership of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). Both agencies are being re-positioned for more effective service delivery. We will continue to strengthen the law enforcement and anti-corruption agencies for optimal performance. We will also need the support of our courts. The courts have to do more.

Terrorism, a new menace, totally alien to our way of life and culture, has reared its head and is posing a serious challenge. My thoughts and prayers go to

the victims of the terrorist attacks, and their families.

As President, it is my solemn duty to defend the Constitution of this country. That includes the obligation to protect life and property. We are doing everything possible to check the menace of terrorism. In this regard, we are determined to review some of the existing laws, to further strengthen the national counter-terrorism strategy. Coordinated joint action among our security agencies has now assumed greater importance. We have developed a new security architecture to strengthen the security environment.

I wish to reassure every Nigerian that we will confront this threat against our collective peace and security, and bring the perpetrators to justice. We will confront the few misguided persons who falsely believe, that through violence, they can impose their agenda of hate and division on this nation of good people. We must confront all those who think they can derail us by engaging in indiscriminate violence and mass murder, perpetrated in places of worship, in markets and public places, against the media, and security personnel. Nigeria is a nation of resilient people. We will never yield to the forces of darkness. Nigeria will never, ever, disintegrate.

Let me end this address at the point where I began. What matters most to all of us, is Nigeria. It is what binds us together. We have a duty to be loyal to our country. If we believe this to be a sacred obligation, it will not matter whether we are Christians or Muslims, or politicians, irrespective of political parties or divide. It really will not matter whether we are civil society agents, social activists or union leaders. What matters is Nigeria. This nation exists because we are one. We must, therefore, remain as one family, and work together to defend our country.

Within two years, it would be exactly 100 years since the Northern and Southern protectorates were amalgamated and Nigeria was born. We need a lot more introspection, even as we look forward. We must take steps to heal the wounds of the past and work together, as a people with a shared destiny under

one flag. We must strengthen our collective memory, draw strength from our history, and build bridges of unity to take our country to greater heights.

This is what we should do. And we must. As a starting point, we must draw strength from our history and work to ensure that the labour of our heroes paid is not in vain. It is partly for this and other reasons, that I have directed, as part of the activities marking today's Democracy Day, that all due processes should be initiated for the building of a Presidential Museum in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. This Museum will document the lives and times of Nigerian Presidents and Heads of Government since 1960, and remind us, by extension, of the high points of our national history.

It is also in this regard that the Federal Government has decided that late Chief M.K.O. Abiola be honoured, for making the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of justice and truth. Destiny and circumstances conspired to place upon his shoulders a historic burden, and he rose to the occasion with character and courage. He deserves recognition for his martyrdom, and public-spiritedness, and for being the man of history that he was. We need in our land, more men and women who will stand up to defend their beliefs, and whose example will further enrich our democracy. After very careful consideration, and in honour of Chief M.K.O. Abiola's accomplishments and heroism, on this Democracy Day, the University of Lagos, is renamed by the Federal Government of Nigeria, Moshood Abiola University, Lagos. The Federal Government will also establish an Institute of Democratic Studies and Governance in the University.

Thank you.

God bless you.

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*May 29, 2012*

## WE ARE SHOCKED BY THESE HORRIFIC ACTS

*On the post-election crisis in parts of the country*



Fellow Citizens and compatriots, three days ago, I addressed you to express our pride on the successful conduct of the Presidential Election. I said then that we are all winners and that there are no losers. I believe that I spoke the minds of most Nigerians, as well as men and women of goodwill all around the world. We all came together for a historic achievement and to celebrate the progressive march of our democracy. I thank all of you who responded to my appeal on that occasion to reach out to your neighbours with love; to keep our nation united and strong.

This Administration had taken practical steps to ensure the attainment of its goal of delivering free, fair and credible elections. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was reconstituted with credible and non-partisan people to the acclaim of Nigerians and the international community. Despite a few challenges, the new INEC has provided an atmosphere for the conduct of credible elections right from the review of the voters register to the Presidential elections which took place last Saturday.

Sadly, some misguided elements do not share in the spirit of our democratic achievements. They formed into groups of miscreants; and struck with deadly and destructive force in some parts of the country. They killed and maimed innocent citizens. They set ablaze business premises, private homes and even places of worship.

In some cases, they showed utter disrespect to all forms of authority, including our most revered traditional institutions. They systematically targeted population groups. They singled out and harassed nationalistic politicians. They intimidated travellers.

The mobs also targeted government offices and facilities, especially those of INEC. They waylaid vulnerable Youth Corps members even though we all know that these young and innocent Nigerians are guests within our communities and are agents of public good and national unity. We are shocked by these horrific acts which strike at the heart of our nation. These disturbances are more than mere political protests. Clearly, they aim to frustrate the remaining elections. This is not acceptable.

If anything at all, these acts of mayhem are sad reminders of the events which plunged our country into thirty months of an unfortunate civil war. As a nation we are yet to come to terms with the level of human suffering, destruction and displacement, including that of our children to far-away countries, occasioned by those dark days.

In recent years, we have also witnessed other acts of intolerance, violence and destruction of human life perpetrated by unpatriotic elements for no justifiable reason. Indeed, the nation still bears some of the scars of other similar events like the aftermath of the June 12th 1993 elections that brought our polity to the brink. It is inconceivable therefore, that there are some in our midst who seek to re-enact a stalemate in the political process.

My fellow countrymen and women, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

Democracy is about the rule of law. It is to its credit, that in recent years our

judiciary has demonstrated great courage, fortitude and independence in the discharge of its duties.

There are, therefore, no grievances that our laws and courts cannot address.

I have been in touch with all State Governors and relevant security agencies. I have consulted with traditional, religious and political leaders who are also very disturbed by this trend of events.

As President, it is my solemn duty to defend the constitution of this country. That includes the obligation to protect the lives and properties of every Nigerian wherever they choose to live.

I will defend the right of all citizens to freely express their democratic choice anywhere in this country; to enjoy every freedom and opportunity that this country can offer without let or hindrance.

I assure all Nigerians that I will do so with all powers at my disposal as President, Commander-in-Chief.

I have ordered the deployment of security personnel to troubled parts of the country. I have also directed the reinforcement of security in all parts of the country.

I have authorized our security services to use all lawful means, including justifiable force to bring an immediate end to all acts of violence against our fellow citizens.

In view of the condemnable attacks on our gallant Youth corps members, I have directed all State Governors to take personal responsibility for their security and safety in the States where they serve.

I have directed that the perpetrators of these dastardly acts of violence and all those who seek to continue to breach the peace and stability of this nation must be fished out and made to face the full weight of the law.

In this regard, a Judicial Commission of Inquiry will be constituted to look into the immediate and remote causes of this recent tide of unrest.

I urge all Nigerians to remain law abiding. I appeal to parents to take full

charge of their wards.

We must not allow anybody to use innocent youth as cannon fodder for the ambitions of a few. Let us preserve the sanctity of the lives and future of all our children.

On behalf of all Nigerians, I express heart-felt condolences to the victims of this violence. I lament the loss of lives; destruction of means of livelihood; the burning of homes and places of worship

I appeal to all members of the political class, leaders of thought and traditional rulers to continue to put our national interest first at this critical time.

Particularly, I call on our religious leaders not to use the sacredness of our places of worship to promote messages that could lead to hate, disharmony and disaffection. Rather, we must all at this time join hands and support INEC in ensuring a successful conclusion of the commendable work which they started

I appeal to all communities around the country to show restraint in the face of provocation. I urge all Nigerians to remain steadfast in prayers for peace and tranquility in our country.

I assure you all that calm is being restored in troubled parts of the country and that the elections scheduled for next Tuesday will go on as planned.

All Nigerians should therefore go about their businesses without fear and exercise their franchise on April 26th to vote for candidates of their choice in the next round of elections.

To those who persist in sowing the seeds of discord, I say – You may hurt and bring grief to some innocent families momentarily, but you will never succeed in stopping our transformational journey: a journey that will lead this country by the grace of God, to emerge stronger, more prosperous and more united.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us continue to build a nation in which we all live in peace. A nation where the bonds of our common aspirations and goals will spur and re-energize our resolve towards greatness. A nation where our children from North and South, East and West will grow with hope and live together as

brothers, sisters and friends. Let us always remember that we are all part of a shared destiny.

I thank you all. God bless Nigeria.

*April 21, 2011*

## NIGERIA IS BIGGER THAN ANYONE OF US

*On the rescheduled 2011 General Elections*



My Dear Compatriots, I address you today on the rescheduled 2011 General Elections which are now to commence across Nigeria on Saturday April, 9, 2011. By the schedule originally announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the elections into the Senate and House of Representatives ought to have taken place last week Saturday – April 2nd, 2011.

The Chairman of INEC has informed the nation that the non-delivery of critical election materials in large parts of the country, compelled the Commission to postpone the exercise. The Commission, in consultation with all key political stakeholders, has now announced a revised timetable for all the elections, which will see the process commence on Saturday, 9th April 2011, with the National Assembly elections.

Dear compatriots, I deeply share with all Nigerians the understandable feeling of disappointment and frustration that was caused by the postponement. Across the country, there was clear evidence of an overwhelming spirit of patriotism that saw our countrymen and women troop out in large numbers

participate in the electoral process. Our people exhibited phenomenal fortitude and understanding, as many of you travelled long distances at great personal cost, and waited patiently to perform your civic responsibility. This was a clear demonstration of your abiding faith in the electoral process.

Fellow Nigerians, my appeal to you this morning, is to sustain that patriotic zeal that you so visibly displayed last Saturday. I call on you all to come out again, en masse on Saturday and on all subsequent election days, to cast your vote. The Chairman of INEC has again assured the nation that the Commission is fully ready to deliver credible polls to Nigerians.

Let me reiterate that the Federal Government is fully committed to the independence of INEC and to the conduct of free and fair elections in the country. Government will continue to support the Commission and provide all it requires to carry out its mandate. The security agencies have been directed to provide optimal security for the entire process. They are to ensure the security of all voters, polling agents and INEC officials, and the maintenance of law and order. I therefore appeal to all Nigerians, to cooperate with the security agencies to achieve peaceful elections throughout the country.

I seize this opportunity, once more, to urge all political stakeholders to continue to be faithful to the tenets of fair play and healthy competition. At this critical stage in our national development, we cannot afford to engage in acts that can fan the embers of violence and discord. Let me assure you that Government remains committed to ensuring the safety of the lives and property of all Nigerians across the country. Nigeria is bigger than anyone of us. No one's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian. Let me also take this opportunity to thank all our friends around the world for the continued show of support and goodwill.

Fellow Nigerians, the 2011 General Elections represent an important milestone in our nation's march to greatness. Our collective posterity beckons on us all to stand up and be counted. Participating in the electoral process is your

way of demonstrating your faith in the future of our country; a future founded on the promise of democracy, unity and progress.

I urge us all to continue to pray for the nation, and for peaceful and orderly elections. May God bless you all.

*April 7, 2011*

## THERE ARE GAPS IN THE CONSTITUTION

*At the Presentation of the Report of the Committee  
on the Review of Outstanding Constitutional Issues*



It is with great pleasure that I formally receive the Report of the Committee to Review Outstanding Issues from Recent Constitutional Conferences. Today's event signals a seminal defining moment in our quest for the consolidation and entrenchment of democratic ideals in our nation's political and governance processes. While inaugurating this Committee on November 17th 2011, I made it clear that the work of the Committee would be an important component in the process of national dialogue for enduring change and transformation.

Such a process must, of necessity, admit conflicting persuasions while it is the duty of Government to focus and mediate the different perspectives to our shared vision and forge national consensus and cohesion. That was why I urged the Committee to build on the many issues on which the previous Conferences had reached firm consensus.

It is gratifying to note that the Committee chaired by the Honourable Justice Alfa Belgore has faithfully discharged its mandate; and for the painstaking work they have done, they richly deserve to be commended. I

thank the members for their personal sacrifice, demonstrable patriotism, and uncommon diligence exhibited during the execution of this onerous national assignment.

I am particularly grateful to the Honourable Justice Alfa Belgore, who continued with the arduous task of steering the work of the Committee even after the very sad loss of his wife. I would request that you please join me to observe a minute's silence in honour of the memory of Hajia Fatima Alfa Belgore. May her soul find eternal rest in the bosom of Almighty God.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, even though the present Constitution has served the nation well, the general consensus is that it requires review and amendment in view of gaps that have become evident in our attempt to operationalize it over the last 13 years. The Committee's mandate included the preparation of a legislative bill that would be sent to the National Assembly for debate and consideration in the proposed Constitutional Review exercise. In submitting its Report today, the Committee has fulfilled this charge.

I am informed that the Committee reached unanimous agreements on changes in key areas of the Constitution; and that the recommendations that you are submitting today include provisions to strengthen Fundamental Rights as well as legal protection for all citizens, especially children, women and the physically challenged. I also understand that you have worked hard to develop provisions for speedy and fairer administration of justice.

I am one with you on these issues, as I believe that fundamental rights, security of life and property, the protection of the law, and equitable dispensation of justice must be made real as they greatly influence the average citizen's sense of obligation and patriotic disposition towards the nation.

I am equally pleased that the Committee has paid justified attention to Local Government Administration. I am convinced, given my personal experience at national and sub-national levels of governance in Nigeria, that the greatest asset of our democracy is the commitment of people at the grassroots to

the ideals of transparency, accountability and good governance. Considering that Local Governments have the greatest potential for maximum impact on the lives of all citizens, the extent of their efficient development is the true measure of our democracy's claim to being a government of the people by the people and for the people.

Similarly, the Committee has made robust proposals on the public accountability imperative for officials in the Executive and the Legislature. As the most visible arms of Government, their integrity and functional capacities determine the quality of trust and reality of the social contract in any society. Their success and mutual reinforcement define the hope of our nation, while their excesses and shortcomings subvert the dreams of democratic transformation.

I welcome the Chairman's assertion that the Committee has made profound recommendations to strengthen the Legislature at all levels and also to demand conformity with extant national regulations in the conduct of their affairs.

I equally welcome the recommendations that will grant the Executive more flexibility in policy making, like the removal of the Land Use Act from the Constitution but retaining it as a National Law.

This Report is a great contribution to our efforts to have a Constitution that not only reflects our present reality, but also anticipates future challenges. I assure you that the Report will receive expeditious consideration.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our Administration's unshakeable faith in the emergence of a strong, united, and prosperous Nigerian nation.

Our enduring sense of brotherhood, unwavering desire for freedom, unique resilience, and abiding faith in Nigeria have seen us through sundry challenges over the past 52 years of nationhood. I am confident that these innate attributes will provide us the requisite fortitude to persevere and overcome in the face of new challenges.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Federal republic of Nigeria, I once again thank the Chairman and members of the Committee to Review Outstanding Issues from Recent Constitutional Conferences for a job well done.

Thank you.

*July 10, 2012*

## THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB

*On Okonjo-Iweala's candidacy for World Bank President*



I am very pleased to note the staunch support and universal acclaim elicited by the nomination of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, as a candidate for the post of World Bank President.

I am particularly appreciative of the strong endorsement and proactive backing for her candidature as Africa's nominee for this very important position by fellow Heads of State across the continent, the African Union Commission, ECOWAS and African Ministers of Finance, Economy and Planning.

It is noteworthy that other developing countries, prominent individuals and organizations across the globe, including development experts, national and international media, Think Tanks, and Civil Society groups, have been very supportive of her nomination.

I also acknowledge the positive role played by Nigeria's legislature, and other prominent groups, including members of Nigeria's vibrant media, in lending strong support to her candidature. These have given Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's

campaign a tremendous momentum, which we welcome.

As a pre-eminent development institution, the World Bank is well-positioned to play an important role in partnering with Developing countries to promote growth, tackle poverty and uplift living standards. Accordingly, the leadership of the institution matters greatly and must be chosen with utmost care.

It matters even more in a complex, increasingly inter-connected global environment characterized by volatility and uncertainty. It is for this reason that there is a resounding call to ensure an open, transparent and merit-based process in the election of the World Bank President, which our country aligns with, and which has been promised by the G-20 Countries as well as the World Bank Development Committee.

We firmly believe that Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's knowledge and expertise as well as the depth and breadth of her experience make her the best candidate to lead the World Bank. She has first-hand experience of managing complex financial and economic development issues at national and international levels, deploying her skills with demonstrated passion, commitment and professionalism.

She has also shown a high degree of innovation and drive, while exhibiting a strong ability to integrate and manage interwoven problems of development in infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, and other sectors in her expanded role as Coordinating Minister for the Economy.

I am firmly convinced that Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's leadership will be beneficial, both to the World Bank and to its principal stakeholders. I also believe that it would be immensely beneficial to Africa and the developing world at large. Nigeria urges that her candidacy receives fair consideration in an open, transparent and merit-based process, which should be embraced by all stakeholders.

*April 2, 2012*

## BUILDING A STRONGER, MORE COHESIVE PDP

*At the 9th National Convention of the Peoples Democratic Party*



I am delighted to be here today at the National Convention of our great party – the People’s Democratic Party. Let me congratulate our party members across the country on the successful conduct of congresses from the ward to the state and zonal levels, and particularly on the success of today’s Convention. I, equally, thank every member of our great party for their perseverance and hard work.

As Nigeria’s foremost political party, the PDP should continue to lead by example with an utmost sense of responsibility in order to set the pace in the march to consolidate and stabilize our democracy. I urge all our members to remain committed, and to be prepared to continue to work for the interest of our party and the country. For the PDP family, the contest for party offices does not produce winners and losers. We are all winners because our primary interest is to strengthen and unite the party.

Unity speaks to the greatness of our party and will make us greater still. This is the time; this is the moment to build afresh from within. I urge all our members to remain united and place the party’s interest above personal ambition.

In the political history of our dear country since independence in 1960, the PDP is the only party that has united Nigerians across all the geo-political zones. It is a national party that reflects the diversities of our cultures and religions. Although our party makes no claim to perfection, it has helped to nurture our democracy in the last 13 years by providing a common platform for all interest groups to realize their dreams and aspirations within the Nigerian Federation.

Let me, therefore, salute the foresight and vision of the founders of our great party, for evolving a strong political platform as a vehicle to strengthen our democracy, and give our citizens hope for a better tomorrow.

We gather here today at this Convention, to uphold old and tested values as well as to chart a new course. Among other things, is the election of the new National leaders who will run the affairs of this party and see us through this journey for the next four years. Let me on behalf of our great party congratulate those who have emerged as our National Officers. You are welcome on board. Congratulations.

As we welcome the new leadership, let me on behalf of you all, offer our sincere appreciation to the outgoing executive members led by the former Acting Chairman, Dr. Abubakar Kawu Baraje for providing energetic and purposeful leadership at a very critical period in our party's history. We salute their courage and industry. We enjoin those who have now been entrusted with the mantle of leadership after them to follow their footsteps by working hard to position our party for the pressing tasks ahead. In our electoral processes we must not deviate from the tenets of free, fair and credible elections.

However, while it is true that the PDP is a winning party and our electoral victories attest to this, we must continuously strengthen and reform the party to retain our leadership position. The reforms in our great party should start at the grassroots by strengthening the party organs at that level to be focused, visionary and functional. The PDP has a vision that is embedded in the manifesto of the party, the challenge before us is to make the party more cohesive, and that

can only be realized with everybody, within the party, in or out of government, driving that vision.

We should continue to enforce discipline within our party and guard against conduct that can bring the party into disrepute. We must be a party where internal discipline is supreme and a guiding anchor of our processes. We must eschew bickering and remain united in the pursuit of our goals. As members of a great party, we must resist the temptation to allow inordinate ambition and what appears to be a growing obsession with the politics of succession in 2015, to cause disaffection within our ranks. We have an obligation, each and every one of us, to ensure that our party remains a party of values and fresh ideas.

We must transform into a party of innovation by improving and renewing our structures and procedures regularly to prolong and ensure our relevance in the hearts and minds of the people. Such a transformation will mark a critical threshold in the fulfilment of our historic responsibilities. To achieve this, the party must first begin to improve on its capacity as an incubator of ideas. I want to see a ruling party that will, in-between elections, be a melting-pot of ideas on how to excel in the provision of the total good of the people for whom it exists in the first place.

I want to see a ruling PDP that will set the best standards for party discipline and democracy on the continent and beyond.

Party rules must be enforced until they are changed, and such rules must apply to all members equally. The doctrine of the supremacy of the party may seem over-flogged, but my belief is that party members, wherever they may be, must be seen to be more supportive of our government, and the administration's Transformation Agenda.

The restoration of democracy and constitutional rule in 1999 has returned the country to the path of sustainable development and steady economic growth. As leaders, we have to continue to make concerted efforts and sacrifices to build our economy as the basis to stabilize and consolidate our democracy. The PDP

must be driven by issues of development and must align its reform agenda with current realities, in our quest to build a modern and prosperous economy.

In the last 13 years, PDP governments have carried out far-reaching reforms in the various sectors of the economy to serve as building blocks for sustainable development and to grow our capacity in local production and improve the quality of service delivery. We are also now at various levels in the implementation of reform policies in key sectors of the economy. I assure you that very soon tangible results will begin to come in, for Nigerians to appreciate some of the tough decisions we have had to take in the last two years to improve the quality of life of our citizens.

In recent times, the economic reforms implemented by the PDP administration led to increase in our oil production, up to 2.6 million barrels per day. The implementation of the local content policy in the oil and gas sector is also helping to grow indigenous capacity. In addition, investments are being encouraged in the power sector, and a comprehensive roadmap for the power sector is being implemented, with a view to stabilizing power supply in the country.

We are rehabilitating all our hydro-power plants for optimal capacity utilization, alongside the construction of ten power plants of which three will be commissioned this year. This is in addition to renewing our transmission and distribution capacity to ensure adequate power supply to all parts of the country.

Our administration has also resolved to make Nigeria a major player in the international gas market through the implementation of the Nigerian Gas Master-Plan. We have designed a framework for the expansion of gas infrastructure within the domestic market to boost commercial exploitation of gas for domestic consumption and export. The Gas Master-Plan is a roadmap to fully harness our gas potentials and meet the challenges of gas supply to our power plants.

The diversification of the economy is progressing steadily with sustained

increase in non-oil GDP growth, particularly through agricultural production. Our country has continued to record favourable ratings from international credit agencies due to the success of our economic reform programmes. Nigeria's exit from the Paris Club, a feat achieved under a PDP-led administration, has freed more resources that now go into investment in human capital and economic development annually.

I assure you that we will continue to expand the frontiers of reforms to consolidate on the successes recorded by our predecessors.

The political reforms, which are aimed at restructuring our democratic process, will go a long way in stabilizing our democracy. We will continue to ensure that the votes of Nigerians count in every election.

Our administration is consolidating democracy through strict observance of the rule of law and creating a favourable environment for freedom of political association and the freedom of expression particularly with the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act.

We are also in the process of encouraging the National Assembly to amend aspects of the Nigerian Constitution in line with the expressed desire of the people, to have a Constitution that addresses those issues that can strengthen our union. The administration has since set up a Committee, whose mandate is no more than to take a stock of all the issues at stake, arising from previous political reform conferences, and inputs by various stakeholders.

This is about building a new Nigeria, a better and stronger Nigeria, secure and united at home and respected abroad. This is the vision that we have encapsulated in the Transformation Agenda. The vigorous and relentless pursuit of the well-thought out objectives of the Agenda is the impetus for our every action.

We have anchored the Transformation Agenda on good governance, human capital development, and infrastructural renewal. It is our belief and resolve that improvement in the governance index at all levels is crucial to attaining development. We have to change the perception of governance positively and

strengthen institutions for effective service delivery.

I re-assure you that our administration is committed to making a difference. Already, we are approaching the final stages of the maiden edition of the YouWin! Programme. It is delightful to report that the promises we made under this programme are being delivered. Out of 24, 000 applications received in October 2011, 1, 200 winners have emerged through a fair and transparent screening process. It is envisaged that after three cycles of the competition, a total of 3, 600 entrepreneurs will be supported to create 80, 000 to 110, 000 jobs.

We have also launched the Public Works Women and Youth Empowerment (PW/WYE) programme which is designed to employ up to 320, 000 youths in public utilities and special activities and 50, 000 youths on a graduate internship scheme for a total of 370, 000 jobs.

The budgetary process for the 2012 Fiscal Framework has been much smoother this year than in previous years due to strong interaction between the National Assembly and the Federal Executive. It is important to note that the 2012 budget provides a solid macroeconomic framework upon which necessary investment could be made in key sectors of the economy as contained in the administration's Transformation Agenda.

We have been having some challenges with threats to national security, due to the activities of some misguided and criminal elements in our society. The security agencies have done a lot to contain the threat. We are determined to overcome. The war against terror is a global challenge, we are resolved to play our part in tackling this scourge squarely in order to continue to guarantee the sanctity of human life. What we need is the collaboration and support of all Nigerians, including the media establishment. Whenever a country is challenged, the people have an obligation to bond together.

As we conduct the National Convention of our great party today, I call on all our members to continue to support the administration. The nation is ready for Transformational change. What the nation expects from the PDP is an enhance

capacity to mobilize for national transformation. The fight against corruption must be understood clearly as a PDP major policy commitment, and it must succeed like our policy of one man, one vote; one woman, one vote; and one youth, one vote.

We must seize this moment and opportunity to stamp out corruption in order to impact on the quality of lives of millions of Nigerians who voted for us and who are short-changed each time a corrupt deal goes undetected. The Party must unite on this issue, both in words and in actions!

At the end of this Convention, I expect a stronger, more disciplined, more focused and more cohesive PDP, a PDP that will continue to organise free and fair elections, a PDP that will be known for the high ethical standards of its members, a PDP that will remain a united family, a PDP that we can all be proud of. All the efforts we have put into this Convention will only be meaningful if we continue to conduct ourselves in the most democratic manner as well as respect and support the results of the elections and the leaders that have emerged.

As I conclude this address, let me once again congratulate our new party leaders at the wards, Local Government, State, and Zonal levels, as well as the National officers and Members of the National Working Committee. Let me specially congratulate the National Chairman, Dr. 1 and the National Secretary, His Excellency Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, who will be at the apex of our party's leadership for the next four years.

I thank you all for your attention.

God bless the People's Democratic Party

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*March 24, 2012*

## HOLDING HANDS AS SEPARATE BUT COMPLEMENTARY ARMS OF GOVERNMENT

*At the 2012 Senate retreat in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State*



I express my appreciation to the leadership of the Senate for inviting me to declare open the 2012 Retreat of the 7th Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It gladdens my heart whenever I have the opportunity to interact with the members and other senior officials of our other arms of government, deliberating on ways of making our country more stable and prosperous. It is a great honour to be here with you. Nigerians deserve a country that is peaceful and secure. As elected leaders, our primary responsibility is to protect all our citizens, and those who come here to work or visit.

The theme of this year's retreat, "National Assembly and National Security: Securing the Future for Development" underscores the commitment of the Senate to join hands with the Executive to defeat all threats to our national security.

As we look at matters of national security, we must recognize that it is an encompassing issue. The security of a nation depends on its economic growth and resilience. Our economy is growing well. We are diversifying the economy

especially through greater focus on agriculture, as food security is crucial for national security. We are committed to fiscal responsibility and consolidation, as we manage our economy in the face of global recession. We are re-building our external reserves. We must plan and manage our budget process better to ensure that government meets the social and economic security of our people.

We recognize we have several challenges including terrorism and other crimes, which undermine our national security.

I thank the Senate for its foresight, maturity and commitment in initiating this discourse on national security. The Senate being a body of all political parties can work to elevate national security above politics.

Mr. Senate President and distinguished Senators; before the civil war, armed robbery was not known in Nigeria. However, with the influx of small arms and light weapons into the country during the war many of our cities started experiencing armed robbery after the war. We had experienced militancy in the oil producing areas and other ethnic based militant groups in the South West and South East, as well as kidnapping and cyber crime that undermine our national security.

It is unfortunate that politics has become a major source of insecurity as evidenced in the do or die politics of some practitioners. Bitter and inflammatory statements, emanating from some politicians have, at different times in the history of this country, consumed thousands of innocent lives and threatened the foundations of our nation. We must return to politics as espoused by the late Ibrahim Waziri: "Politics without bitterness".

Terrorism, which has become a global phenomenon, is now unfortunately a direct experience in this country. A faceless group of enemies of our democracy and prosperity of our nation have continued to carry out terrorist attacks on innocent people in our nation.

This development is one that particularly concerns me as the President, and is one I will continue to decisively deal with. It is one on which I seek the support

and cooperation of the Senate and the House of Representatives. We must work together under a new social and political contract, to safeguard our nation.

How did we get here? Some have suggested that the root causes of our malaise include weak moral foundations, poverty, dirty politics, poor governance, unemployment, religious intolerance and fanaticism.

Whatever be the causes, the solutions lie in a stronger union; employment and wealth creation for all; equity and justice; transparency and accountability and above all the fear of God.

I call upon all Nigerians to remember that if God did not will it we will not be together today as a country of Muslims, Christians and traditionalists; if God did not will it we will not be together as a people of ethnic groups; if God did not will it we will not be Nigerians.

Our unity is the will of God and our diversity is the binding ligament of our strength. Those who want to weaken us use axes of hate to cut the trunk of our strength. We refuse to be weakened. Let us unite to defeat the forces of darkness. Let us unite to prosper.

As a government, it is our responsibility to lay a firm foundation for our people to prosper. Through legislation, executive action and timely dispensation of justice we create the infrastructure, policy environment and sense of justice that form the bedrock of inclusive economic growth. This in turn will bolster stability.

I am committed to mobilizing all citizens to work together to achieve our national security objectives. Although our system of government rests on the separation of powers amongst the three arms of government, this principle does not call for working in silos; it calls for synergy and commonality of purpose.

Distinguished Senators, I should like to dwell briefly, not so much on the formal mechanics of the separation of powers, but on the logic of this important doctrine variously theorised by scholars and Statesmen around the world.

This doctrine is even more relevant to us here in Nigeria as we continue

to labour to move our fledgling and hard-won democracy to the stage of consolidation.

When our Constitution states that the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary all enjoy separate powers, and that these various powers countervail and balance each other, what it is simply saying is that you can never have enough of democracy and plurality of voices, small and big.

Now, this point is particularly important given the long and tortuous road we have travelled since colonial times to give unto ourselves an elected government where all are represented; and one which all citizens are constitutionally entitled to call upon to address their needs, dreams and aspirations.

The President of the Senate, Distinguished Senators, ladies and gentlemen, our country has walked a difficult road since our independence in 1960. Our people had to endure a civil war, and several seasons of military dictatorship. In 1999, our present system of government, an executive presidential system was established.

While our Presidential system of governance is not perfect, we must salute the commitment of Nigerians to the path of democratic discourse. Yes, we have our challenges, but make no mistake: Nigeria is moving forward. We continue to build stronger institutions, expand the political space and improve governance of political systems that can assure greater peace, stability and prosperity for our nation. For only strong and inclusive political and economic institutions can guarantee prosperity for all.

That was why I strongly supported and assured a free and fair 2011 general election. Free and fair elections are the strongest pillars for any democratic society. We must continue to build on these gains for the greater good of our nation.

National security requires that we continue to tackle corruption at all levels. Greater transparency and accountability, fiscal consolidation and responsibility, and development of a culture of service delivery for our people, must also form

the hallmarks of our effort to assure national security.

Executive, legislative and judicial arms of government must continue to work together to fight corruption. We must not take for granted the patience of our people.

A clear consensus has emerged today in our nation that peaceful conciliation of opposing views, which is really what democracy is all about, is the only path to the prosperity and political stability that we all desire.

The Presidential system of government recognizes that diverse views are a fact of life, and deliberately put forward three separate entities, each with its own clear area of jurisdiction so that none performs the functions of the other.

The basic interest of all branches of government is the security and welfare of the Nigerian people. The principle of separation of powers does not override this fact. Each should see the other as a partner and not a competitor or rival. Each can rightly claim to represent the will of the people - the Nigerian people.

Let us continue to work together for the good of our country. Our Transformation Agenda has five key elements. The first is growing and diversifying the economy to create jobs, especially for our teeming youth; modernising our infrastructure; accelerating human capital development; improving governance; and reinforcing social cohesion and security.

I ask for the understanding and support of all Nigerians, and indeed extend a hand of fellowship to all patriots so that together we can all continue to make our young democracy yield the social and economic fruits without which any system of government, no matter how perfect, will endure.

Nigeria cannot be in the margins of the global economic and political order. Now is the time to reclaim our place on the table of prosperity and stability. We are all politicians. But we must recognize that there is a difference between governance and politicking. We must together forge a strong understanding and promote progressive dialogue that moves our nation forward, not backward.

We must not play politics with everything – and certainly not with the sensitive matter of national security.

This is a trying period for us as a nation. The challenge of terror and insecurity should unite us, as we take the fight to the terrorists. As leaders, we must be resilient in the face of terror. The task of building a greater Nigeria to achieve her manifest destiny is a duty for all of us charged with the responsibility of governing the Nigerian people.

This requires the promotion of a conducive and cordial working relationship between the various arms of government, regardless of their individual constitutional functions.

Thus, for example, the performance of the oversight functions by the National Assembly or the use of executive powers by the President must not act as a barrier to the compelling need for cooperation in service delivery for the good of our country. We are one government with one constituency, the Nigerian people.

Mr Senate President, distinguished Senators, ladies and gentlemen, we must continue to hold hands as separate but complementary arms of government and make our presidential democracy a living institution that meets the needs of all our people and guaranties their safety and security.

We must continue to muster our forces and unite our people and bring to an end this challenge to peace, unity and progress.

Over the past one year, we have upgraded our capabilities and intensified our actions against this threat. Although the threat has far from abated, we have implemented several measures that weakened the terrorists' infrastructure.

We have carefully studied the activities of terrorist networks across the continent and beyond. We are aware of the effects of the displacement of fighters and ammunition from the Maghreb and the precarious positions of some of our West African neighbours and we continue to take appropriate measures including the building of mutual security partnerships.

No challenge is too difficult when leaders cooperate, rather than dissipate energies. Through the collective efforts of the legislature and the executive, we have brought the militancy in the Niger Delta to an end. Today oil production is at a record peak and there is peace again. We must continue to be watchful and sustain the gains already made. Today as we face the new threat to our peace and stability, let us put politics aside, and as leaders work across the aisle to secure the future of our nation.

I take this opportunity to commend the men and women of the Nigerian Armed Forces, the police, the State Security Service and other intelligence agencies for their resilience and professionalism in combating this new threat. Several have lost their lives in the defence of our nation. I salute their heroism and patriotism.

Mr. Senate President, Distinguished Senators, Ladies and Gentlemen, to assure the security and safety of our people, and safeguard our national borders from insurgents, I will continue to re-organize and reposition our security operations. As we do this, we need to put in place new legislations that make it easier to track, obstruct, prosecute and punish terrorists. And I need your support.

I believe in the politics of give and take. I have worked to promote the power of the ballot as a vehicle for securing our democracy. I believe strongly in the place of God in determining our destiny. And God will help Nigeria and help us as leaders as we boldly take steps to secure our nation.

As we work on securing our future, by securing our nation today, let us move to a new phase of governmental cooperation and citizens' collective action, in the defence of our country. We will not fail. On this note I declare open the Senate Retreat to the Glory of God and the Greatness of our Country.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you for your attention.

*June 25, 2012*

## THE WORST IS OVER

*An address to the Parliament of Cote d'Ivoire during a state visit*



It is always, for me, a great delight to be in Cote d'Ivoire and to receive the generous welcome of the Ivorian Government and people. The warmth of reception reflects the strong bonds between our two nations and peoples which we must continually work to strengthen and deepen. I am certain that our region and our continent are the richer and stronger when we come together, when we collaborate, and when we approach common problems not only with similar perspectives as we happily do, but also with a sense of purpose and action. It is reassuring that Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria are now setting a much cherished example of this cooperation and partnership. I bring with me the greetings and the best wishes of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I am grateful for the honour of addressing this Assembly and the opportunity to have a dialogue with you, distinguished members, who play such a vital role in the governance of this great country. The critical role of the National Assembly in the promotion and sustenance of democracy and good governance all over the world, and indeed in Cote d'Ivoire, cannot be ignored or under-estimated.

Mr. President, honourable members of parliament, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this occasion is an encouraging moment for me, standing in front of fellow brothers and sisters in the West African sub-region. We have similar history, similar challenges and similar triumphs. On a daily basis, we face the challenge of building an enduring democracy; to ensure that each and every one of our citizens will have a sense of belonging. We face the challenge of economic prosperity, with a shared determination to banish poverty and deprivation from our lands. We equally face the challenge of nation-building: to create an enabling environment where our diverse cultures and traditions can coexist in peace, unity and harmony.

Our triumphs are also similar in many respects. Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire have both overcome devastating civil wars. Ordinarily, we should not be where we are today because of the bitterness and rancour of the past, because of the pain and the plunder that political crises brought upon us at different times in our history. But here we are today, waxing stronger by the day and marching to our destinies with determination, tolerance and compromise. Our recent struggles and victories indicate, to me, that the worst, for us, is over. The time has now come for us to work harder, work more harmoniously and forge ahead with our goals of building great countries that the whole world will be proud to associate with.

I must concede that for those who do not understand Africa and our history, their views may, more often than not, emanate from news headlines and sensational stories that generally project our continent as a region of conflict, poverty, underdevelopment, broken dreams and unfulfilled expectations. But Africa's story is much more complex than that. Our governance systems have evolved from village republics, through city states, emirates, kingdoms, and empires to the countries we now have today. We have also travelled through the valleys of colonial and military dictatorships with the attendant pain and dislocation. It is gratifying that most of West Africa is now democratic and

people are determined to defend our democracy.

Mr President, our democracies came about as a result of our peoples' insistence that their votes matter. At independence, most African countries were saddled with weak governance arrangements and political institutions. These and other sundry challenges exacerbated the crisis of national identity and nation building. Most of our states lost their first decades of independence to internal strife as political contests often degenerated into violent adversarial situations and, at times, even armed conflicts, leading to military rule.

After decades of military dictatorship or one-party rule in many countries, Africa's nascent democracies are now striving to consolidate. The continent is striving to deepen democracy for good political, economic and social governance so as to build firm foundations for peace and stability on the continent. This is borne out of a realisation that the prosperity and welfare of our people constitute the bedrock upon which durable peace and security can be anchored and nurtured.

The challenge of governance in Africa is to order our societies and manage the contest for political power in a manner that assures collective security and peaceful co-existence. To do this, we must summon the best that there is in us, especially our tradition for dialogue and support system that is firmly embedded in the character of our peoples, nations and civilizations.

Today, indeed, all over Africa, democracy and good governance are accepted as a political, economic and societal necessity. They are seen as necessary conditions for the advancement of peace and security. For Africa, the principles and institutions of democracy and good governance should promote the following:

- Constitutionalism, the rule of law, the protection of human rights as well as an independent judiciary within a system of checks and balances;
- Responsiveness, accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs and resources;

- Broad and popular participation in political processes and consensual orientation informed by the mediation of societal differences in a manner that best serves the interest of the whole community, in an equitable and inclusive manner.
- The ability of Government to properly manage socio-economic development and ensure efficient delivery of public goods.

Indeed, it is self-evident that people, who feel secure and free, governed by the rule of law and not by the whims of men, are less likely to go to war with each other, either within or across borders, than those who do not.

The current realities are obvious to all: the people of Africa want to exercise their right to free choice and they are ready to defend what they believe in. We therefore risk the very institution we are trying to build if we exclude the people who voted us into power in the governance process. That is why we have to build strong institutions and allow the rule of law to take root. Democracy without strong institutions defeats its own objectives.

In building institutions, I have been fascinated by the beauty of the separation of power principle which advocates that the executive, the parliament and the judiciary perform their functions independently without cross-interference between each arm of government. My understanding of this separation of power concept is to the effect that the various arms of government should in the discharge of their functions, act cooperatively and communally, in the interest of the people who voted us into office.

My belief is that the separation of power is not a separation of governance. There is so much work to be done for the good of our people that I see separation of power more as division of labour, so that the work of governance can be effectively accomplished. The cooperation of the various arms of government that I advocate must necessarily guarantee the following;

- Food, clothing and shelter, for these are the primary needs of every human society.

- Fundamental freedoms, so that citizens can aspire to expand the frontiers of our present civilization.
- International cooperation across countries and continents as we members of the same humanity, work to ensure peace, justice and equity for man and nature.

Democracy works best when everybody is equal before the law, when there are established processes for the resolution of disputes in business and politics, when the basic rights of the citizens are defended and protected by our institutions no matter whose ox is gored. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in the light of this, I salute you and the good people of Cote d'Ivoire for your promotion of open, accountable and responsive government. We are your allies in this undertaking and you can always count on our support and encouragement. As Africans, wedded to the same destiny, we will not shirk our responsibility of being our brothers' keeper.

We are ourselves daily confronted with the multiplicity of demands and expectations that are the hallmarks of a multicultural society. There are some, here and elsewhere, who might think that the straightjacket of a dictatorship is the surest way to bottle up these grievances and dismantle dissent. That is wrong. Nothing strengthens a society more than openness and a leadership courageous enough to understand the inherent positives that flow from these contending demands. As African leaders, we have to, calmly and dispassionately, harness these energies and utilise them to serve the best interest of our people.

Often enough, there has been too much attachment to past definitions of self. We are all too quick to see ourselves as our forbears saw themselves centuries ago, not minding the changed and the changing nature of the society we live in. A major challenge to democracy in Africa, in particular, is widespread poverty. Poverty disempowers our people and retards growth and sustainable development. We must, therefore, assiduously promote the welfare of all citizens and create the enabling environment in which they can fully realise their

aspirations and potentials. This would enable them, as stakeholders, to contribute to the protection of peace and stability of our countries. And this is achievable.

Your pre-eminent city, Abidjan, is an example of the future of Africa. A bustling cosmopolitan centre of mixed ethnicities and nationalities. My compatriots and people form a sizeable proportion of the population of this wonderful city. They have brought their energy and skills to enrich the economy and culture of Abidjan and other towns and villages in this country. That is the African spirit at work. That is the way we should see ourselves. Borders divide geographically, but our spirits are one and indivisible.

It is therefore imperative for West African governments to follow the interests of their citizens. We need to set free the energy of our peoples by loosening the bolts of bureaucracies that have stifled trade and exchange of ideas across the sub-continent. The borders we defend so resolutely nowadays are, after all, fairly recent creations. Useful as they may be, they must not be more important than the welfare of the sub-continent and its peoples. It is estimated that there are billions of dollars waiting to be unlocked by improved trade among West African countries. Presently, most of this trade is underground. It has resulted in little revenue for our governments and brought untold sufferings to our citizens engaged in this venture.

More importantly, it has complicated the security environment in our region. Merchants of death who bring the small arms and light weapons have brought anguish and despair to our sub-continent by using the smuggling routes that our traders use. We must continue to work on easing the bottlenecks along our borders to bring genuine traders into the open.

In this way, we can deploy our resources more quickly to interdict the activities of criminals who import harmful substances into our countries. I am convinced that the urgent and effective tackling of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons will, without doubt, significantly reduce the security challenges to democracy and stability in Africa in particular. To this end, international cooperation between

states, regional and international organisations is of utmost importance.

There is also a worrying upsurge of piracy and other maritime crimes that is threatening security, trade and other economic activities in parts of Africa. In the Gulf of Guinea, international criminal activities are often targeted at cargo ships and the taking of hostages for ransom. This negatively impacts economic growth and development, as shippers are discouraged from transporting their goods through piracy-prone waterways.

This realisation makes it incumbent on the states of the sub-region to forge strategic alliances with other members of the international community in curbing this menace. No doubt, Cote D'Ivoire has played its part in providing solutions to the ills that confront this region. We recognise and salute your contributions to the enthronement of peace and progress across West Africa.

As the second most populous nation in the region and an economic powerhouse as well, your country has shown leadership. Part of my mission here is to reaffirm my country's commitment to sharing this burden of leadership with you. We stand to gain a lot by strengthening linkages between your institutions and ours, in areas ranging from agriculture, finance, culture and sports to security. We have undertaken momentous reforms in these areas and we are of the belief that we could both share our ideas and experience. We will therefore seek improved coordination between our officials and experts and yours to enrich our two sister-nations.

Permit me, Ladies and Gentlemen to recount a tale that I always find instructive. In August 1914, an English explorer, Ernest Shackleton, placed an advert in a London newspaper. It reads: 'Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return, doubtful. Honour and recognition, in case of success.'

The man was seeking to build a team that will explore the Antarctic. Some 28 men responded to the advert and embarked on a 22-month endurance trial under the most hostile condition to traverse the Antarctic on foot through ice,

snow and intense cold. Although the task was not completed, Shackleton and his men are today remembered for their courage and sense of honour. Others have since completed the job, following on the trails of these bold souls.

Our job is no less arduous, but I daresay the environment is not as forbidding as that confronted by those explorers. The men and women gathered here today are the embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of our peoples, and we must not fail them. We are, most of us here, the elite of our countries.

I recall your recent struggle for democracy and how the world rose in your support. For me and my country Nigeria, our support for your struggle was based on principle and our common aspiration for freedom, equity and justice. We decided to stand with the people of Cote d'Ivoire to demand that the ballot must be respected. Our ultimate objective was to work with like-minds across countries and people to insist:

- That all elections conducted in our continent must be free, fair and credible.
- That no person or group should wake up to change the constitution of a people without the support of the people.
- That whenever elections are conducted, the driving force should be the people and nothing but the people who stand to collectively benefit from its outcomes and that the principle of one man one vote; one woman one vote; one youth one vote should be respected.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a time to show true leadership to confront the challenges facing our countries. Pulling together, we can more quickly overcome these. Our two countries are richly blessed. In Cote d'Ivoire whether you are Baule, Bete, or Jdioula (Jola), you belong to a united nation. It is the same in Nigeria, whether you are Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa-Fulani, or you belong to a minority group like mine, Ijaw.

Together, we must build our nations on the foundation of our diversity, to allow for inclusiveness and equitable participation of all our peoples, to as-

peaceful co-existence and political stability. Regardless of our religion or ethnicity, we must all work together and use our diversities to build stronger economies and robust and inclusive systems that benefit all.

I assure you of the continued friendship and comradeship of Nigerians and our willingness to share your joys and burdens in the spirit of true sisters and brothers.

Long live the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I thank you all.

*March 2, 2013*



POLICIES &  
PROGRAMMES



## GROWTH SHOULD TRANSLATE TO BETTER LIFE

*At the signing ceremony of Budget 2012 at the President Villa, Abuja*



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the signing of the 2012 Appropriation Bill into law this morning. I would like to begin by registering my gratitude to the Distinguished and Honourable Members of the National Assembly for the cooperation that has been put into preparing this budget which is undeniably a stepping stone in our medium-term developmental plan as presented in the Transformation Agenda.

I particularly wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the various Committees of the National Assembly, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy and the Budget Office for the painstaking work that has resulted in the budget that I am signing into law today.

You will recall that on December 13, 2011, I presented the 2012 Budget Proposal with a total expenditure of N4.749 trillion based on a benchmark oil price of US\$70 per barrel to the National Assembly for appropriation. A total of N1.32 trillion was proposed for capital expenditure while N3.429 trillion

was for recurrent expenditure. The initial 2012 Budget Proposal assumed deregulation of the downstream petroleum sector. However, after listening to the voice of Nigerians, we opted for partial subsidy removal.

This meant that we had to review the Budget's revenue and expenditure projections in order to make some provision amounting to N888 billion in the Budget.

On March 15, 2012, the National Assembly passed a budget of N4.697 trillion based on a benchmark oil price of US\$72 per barrel. This appropriation consists of capital expenditure of N1.34 trillion and recurrent expenditure amounting to N3.357 trillion. We have had extensive discussions with the National Assembly since then, and the result is the Budget that I now have the honour of signing into law today. It is a Budget of fiscal consolidation, inclusive economic growth and job creation.

The Budget has an aggregate expenditure of N4.697 trillion (excluding an appropriation of N180 billion for programmes and projects encapsulated under the SURE-Programme).

The total Federal Government revenue forecast is N3.561 trillion based on a Benchmark Oil Price of US\$72 per barrel, which is US\$2 higher than the initial proposal of US\$70 per barrel. The additional resources were used to increase the capital and to reduce the deficit to a manageable level that we can finance without excessive borrowing. Details of the expenditure are summarised below:

- Capital Expenditure is N1.34 trillion, which is 28.5 percent of the aggregate expenditure. One of the main goals of this administration is to complete and exit the large stock of ongoing projects and programmes. Thus, the 2012 budget is focused on completing viable ongoing projects, in accordance with the Transformation Agenda, which will quickly deliver tangible and significant added value to Nigerians. Furthermore, our approach to funding the development of critical infrastructure in Nigeria is to involve the private sector, which has the capital and implementation capacity.

successfully deliver specific infrastructure projects.

- Non-debt Recurrent Expenditure is at N2.425 trillion, which is 52 percent of the total budget compared to 54 percent of the aggregate budget in 2011. This is in line with Government's determination to correct the structural imbalance in our expenditure profile where recurrent spending has outstripped the growth of spending on capital projects in recent times.
- Statutory Transfers is N372.59 billion.
- Based on the above and in line with Government's medium-term strategy, the share of the recurrent spending in aggregate expenditure has declined from 74.4 percent in 2011 to 71.5 percent in 2012. The deficit is 2.85 percent of GDP, which is in line with the provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2007, which pegs this at 3 percent of GDP.

The goal of achieving positive macroeconomic stability is no end in itself. The robust growth experienced in recent years needs to be translated into tangible and concrete improvement in the living standards of our people. In this respect, the Government is focused on investments in priority sectors in order to sustain economic growth and create jobs. The 2012 Budget is geared toward supporting economic growth and employment creation

Let me conclude by once more thanking the Legislature for their hard work and cooperation as, together, we continue to strive to ensure that we take the requisite steps to promote the welfare and well-being of all Nigerians.

God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Thank you.

*April 13, 2012*

## FISCAL CONSOLIDATION WITH INCLUSIVE GROWTH

*At the presentation of the 2013 Appropriation Bill to a  
joint session of the National Assembly*



It is my pleasure and honour to present the 2013 Federal Budget Proposal before this esteemed Joint Session of the National Assembly. I am particularly delighted to present this Proposal to you earlier in the year, and soon after the commemoration of our national independence, to signal our commitment to evolving a new Nigeria. This Proposal is the product of extensive consultations with key stakeholders and would further translate the Government's development plans into concrete actions.

When I presented the 2012 Budget, you will recall, I emphasized the fact that it would be "a stepping-stone to the transformation of our economy and our country in our walk to economic freedom ...". I am glad to report that we have made progress in this regard. Today, in the face of critical resource constraints, the defining moment of our work is in actualizing our promises to Nigerians. We need to create a structured economy where everybody plays by the same rules, and contributes their fair bit. That is the Nigeria our heroes past craved; that is the Nigeria we believe in; and that is the Nigeria we are building together.

## **GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

As we build this nation and walk the path of development, we must be mindful of the realities of our circumstances and those of the changing global economy. This Budget Proposal was therefore designed against the backdrop of global economic uncertainty. By the end of the second quarter of this year, the global economy was recovering but at a very slow pace. Growth in a number of major emerging market economies, has been lower than forecast. Overall, global growth is projected at 3.3% in 2012 and 3.6% in 2013.

The uncertainty surrounding the global economy, which could have adverse effects on commodity prices, highlights the downside risks for our economy. The oil market is well known for its volatility. We recall the 2008 experience at the height of the global economic downturn when oil prices fell almost overnight from \$147 per barrel to \$38 per barrel. This threat of oil price volatility remains constant and underscores the need to rely on a robust and prudent methodology to estimate the benchmark price.

The global economic slowdown can also have far-reaching implications for the demand for our export commodities, given that the Euro zone and the USA account for over 50% of the nation's crude oil exports. These global developments are also being transmitted to our economy through a dampening effect on foreign capital inflows and remittances by Diaspora Nigerians. Fellow Nigerians, these are uncertain times in the world economy, and my Administration is taking necessary steps to mitigate possible adverse effects of the global economic slowdown on Nigeria. I assure you that we are going to build up the necessary savings to protect the economy against a possible global recession or a slow recovery.

## **DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT**

In spite of the foregoing, our economy has done relatively well. Over the past nine months, through a number of initiatives, we have created new jobs directly and

supported many young entrepreneurs running SMEs to create jobs. Nigeria is looking to become more self-reliant again in food security, and we are increasing local content in our manufacturing processes and the oil and gas sector.

As at the end of the second quarter, the economy recorded an impressive growth of 6.28% compared to 5.4% forecast for sub-Saharan Africa. It is gratifying to note that the non-oil sector remains the main driver of growth. There are also improvements in other macroeconomic indicators. Inflation has dropped from 12.9% in June 2012 to 11.7% in August 2012, and our goal is to reduce it further. Our foreign reserves now stand at US\$41.6 billion – the highest it has been in over 2 years. We intend to continue with our programme of fiscal discipline and prudent monetary policy in order to continue to improve our country's macroeconomic environment.

Furthermore, in addition to being upgraded last year by Fitch and S&P rating agencies, Nigeria has now been included in the JP Morgan Emerging Markets Bond Index, signifying increasing investor confidence in our economy. In addition, the World Economic Forum has upgraded our ranking from 127 to 115 in the global competitiveness index.

Here in Nigeria, we do not join the debate on fiscal consolidation versus growth because we believe in the need to do both; hence, we are continuing our focus of fiscal consolidation with inclusive growth. The fiscal consolidation policy has helped to strengthen our finances with a programmed budget deficit of about 2.85% of GDP in 2012, now projected to drop to 2.17% in 2013. Moreover, the share of capital expenditure in the total budget is increasing as we gradually reduce recurrent expenditures and also develop non-oil revenue sources.

## REVIEW OF THE 2012 BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Fellow Compatriots, the 2012 Budget was focused on achieving Fiscal Consolidation with Inclusive Growth using the budget balance as a fiscal anchor. In that respect, while investing in key priorities, the budget also ensured that

deficit followed a downward trend over the medium term. This is being done through a more aggressive revenue collection drive and prudent management of available resources.

On the expenditure side, the implementation of the 2012 Budget is on track, having commenced effectively in April when it became law. We have so far released N711.6 billion to MDAs for the implementation of their capital budgets while further releases are to follow shortly for the fourth quarter. The continued implementation of the 2011 capital budget in the first quarter of 2012, clearly affected the implementation of the 2012 Budget.

I have taken a personal interest in the budget implementation since May by chairing weekly sessions with Ministers and Heads of parastatals on their progress in this regard. We are determined to use the instrument of the budget to improve the welfare of Nigerians. You would recall my assurance to Nigerians that subsequent budgets will be presented earlier to the National Assembly. It is in this spirit that I lay this Proposal before this Assembly today, to give sufficient time for deliberation on the Proposal and approval of the budget, and to enable us commence implementation from January 1st 2013.

Let me stress that Government remains focused on the tangible outcomes from the implementation of the Appropriation Acts, not just the amounts spent. In this respect, I have signed Performance Agreement Contracts with my Ministers with a view to ensuring delivery of projects and programmes in their respective budgets. The Ministers in turn, are signing similar agreements with their Permanent Secretaries, Heads of parastatals and Directors to cascade down the need for responsibility and accountability. Key government officials with responsibility for implementing different aspects of the budget will be appraised based on these performance agreements. My goal is to ensure optimal implementation of our annual budgets.

Government is also determined to reduce the cost of governance. We are reviewing the recommendations aimed at rationalizing Agencies of the Federal

Government with overlapping functions. This has been taken into account in the preparation of the 2013 Budget, and we expect some modest cost savings from this exercise in the course of the 2013 fiscal year. However, more significant progress will be made in 2014, as we work with the Legislature to harmonise those Agencies that have enabling laws, but which also have duplicative mandates.

### **Subsidy Reinvestments and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)**

You will recall that we had assured Nigerians that the proceeds of the partial withdrawal of petroleum subsidies will be applied to implementing the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P). The implementation of this programme is continuing over the medium-term.

In the 2012 fiscal year, we had voted N180 billion for the implementation of social safety net programmes, road and rail infrastructure projects. So far, N30 billion of this amount has been utilized to support maternal and child health programmes as well as mass transit, roads and rail projects and job creation through the Community Services and Public Works programme. The SURE Board under the able chairmanship of Dr. Christopher Kolade is presently working hard to ensure the successful oversight of the implementation of the programme. We are grateful to them for their hard work and patriotism.

### **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2012 FISCAL YEAR**

In the 2012 Budget, Government outlined some projects and programmes that were to be implemented in key sectors of the economy in order to improve the livelihood of Nigerians. We have numerous activities in various sectors such as Power, Health, Agriculture, Education, Housing, Transport, Aviation, etc. I will now highlight a few of these sectors.

#### **Power**

The Power Sector Reform is on course. Our efforts have begun to pay off as

have improved power supply to various parts of the country. Our gas-to-power and other initiatives are making this possible, but I acknowledge the fact that we still have a long way to go. As you may be aware, the ongoing privatisation of the generation and distribution companies has reached an advanced stage. In some cases, Preferred Bidders have already emerged. When completed, the programme will bring into the sector significant private investment, along with the requisite power output.

We have accomplished a number of goals in the Power sector reform programme in line with the Roadmap, including:

- a. Completion of new units at our thermal power stations, to increase generation;
- b. Rehabilitation of existing power infrastructure, which has yielded up to 1,000 mega watts of additional electricity;
- c. Fast-Tracking 3 NIPP projects, which will bring an additional 1,055 mega watts by the end of the year; and
- d. Facilitating a power and gas financing package, which includes Government Guarantees, proposed Infrastructure Bonds of about \$1 billion, and \$150 million of external funding from the African Development Bank to support continued gas supply and the liberalization of the power sector.

## **Agriculture**

My Administration has instituted key policy reforms to establish staple crop processing zones aimed at attracting the private sector into areas of high production, reducing post-harvest losses, and adding value to locally produced commodities. So far we have succeeded in attracting \$7.8 billion investment commitments to the agricultural sector. These investments and the value chain approach being used to transform the sector have the capacity to create 3.5 million additional jobs in the medium term by 2015.

- You will recall that Government provided incentives to support cassava value chains, including zero duty on machinery and equipment to process high quality cassava flour. Cassava bread is increasingly commercially available with 20% cassava flour content. In addition, a total of one million metric tonnes of dried cassava chips, are being exported to China this year.
- Achieving self-sufficiency in rice production in 2015 remains our target. In response to our new fiscal measures, 13 new private sector rice mills with capacity of about 240,000 metric tonnes have been established. These mills buy and process local paddy and create employment for Nigerians.

### Housing

Fellow Nigerians, the provision of affordable housing is one of the Administration's strategic imperatives for guaranteeing our citizens' productivity and well-being. We are creating an enabling environment for the private sector to produce much needed housing, whilst creating jobs in the process.

To facilitate this, I will be holding a presidential retreat on Housing in early November, to discuss policy and modalities for dealing with land titling issues, developing an affordable mortgage finance system and reducing the high cost of housing construction.

In the meantime, under various social housing programmes, close to 2,000 housing units have been completed, while over 24,000 housing units are at various stages of completion. This is outside housing being constructed for the use of the Armed Forces and Paramilitary services.

The Federal Government has entered into Partnership Agreements with several States for the provision of 6,000 housing units. Another 600 housing units have already been completed under the direct construction scheme of the Federal Housing Authority in these States. Gradually, we are ensuring that more Nigerians enjoy the benefits of having their own homes.

**Transport**

You are already familiar with the improvement in the functioning of our ports, the details of which I provided in my 52nd Independence Anniversary Speech. With regard to Rail transport, in our continuing effort to boost infrastructure development in the country, work is ongoing to rehabilitate the rail system across the country. These include the Lagos-Kano line as well as the Port Harcourt–Maiduguri line. Our people have started enjoying rail service again.

Our railway modernisation programme is progressing with the Abuja–Kaduna line now at 46% completion, while work on the Lagos–Ibadan line is to commence soon. We also expect to complete the Itakpe–Ajaokuta–Warri line in 2013. In the same vein, we are fast-tracking the implementation of the mass transit Abuja Light Rail system. When completed, it will improve transportation for all residents in the FCT, especially workers living in the satellite towns.

**Inland Waterways:** Our inland waterways programme is on track to boost commerce in the surrounding communities, and I had the pleasure of commissioning the Onitsha Inland Port on 30th August 2012.

**Aviation**

We are working hard to improve the regulatory regime and safety of the Aviation sector and will continue to look for ways to support its development. This Administration identifies this sector as a key part of the Transformation Agenda. As such, we have embarked on a comprehensive programme to transform our airports to world-class standards and improve air travel safety standards across the country.

For instance, the remodelling of airport terminals and the upgrading of airport runways are presently at advanced stages of implementation across virtually all our airports. In addition, we have just concluded arrangements to commence the construction of five brand new terminals in Kano, Port Harcourt, Lagos, Abuja and Enugu, and six perishable cargo terminals, early next year. In

line with international best practice, these new terminals will be private sector managed.

Roads: We know that Nigerians are disturbed about the state of our major highways. We are addressing this issue frontally. With the rains receding, the Ministry of Works will intensify the construction and rehabilitation of major roads in the country, for example, the dualization of the Abuja–Lokoja road, the Benin–Ore–Shagamu road, and the Kano–Maiduguri road. Also, the Enugu–Port-Harcourt road rehabilitation has been awarded to four contractors in order to fast-track its completion. It is gratifying to note that resources from the Petroleum Subsidy Reinvestment Programme are being used to supplement the regular budget for these projects.

### The Petroleum Sector

The petroleum sector continues to play a crucial role in our economy, even as we seek diversification. In this regard, we are taking steps to modernise the sector. A robust Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) has been delivered as promised to the National Assembly for consideration. When passed into law, the Bill will provide the new legal framework that will govern Nigeria's Oil and Gas industry. This Bill, which encompasses major reforms, will encourage additional investments in the sector, create accountability and transparency, and ensure that the management of our petroleum sector is commercially driven.

Our gas to power initiatives are moving firmly ahead, with the 12-month gas supply emergency plan already yielding more than the targeted volumes of gas for power generation.

With respect to the Petroleum Subsidy Programme, Government is succeeding in substantially cleaning up the management of the petroleum subsidy regime. We are tightening up the payment regime, to weed out corruption while working hard to recover monies fraudulently obtained from the subsidy regime. The EFCC is prosecuting those found wanting and

efforts to crack down on corruption in this sector will continue.

On Frontier Exploration, the Government's drive to build up the nation's oil reserves through exploration of new frontiers for oil and gas production is beginning to yield results with news of the discovery of crude oil in some inland sedimentary basins in the country. These include the Chad Basin, Benue Trough, Yola Basin and Anambra Basin amongst others. We are determined to further develop on these findings and expand the scope of such explorations. To support this, we have raised the provision for frontier exploration services from N12 billion in 2012 to N16 billion in 2013.

### **Job Creation**

Fellow Compatriots, in spite of the economic growth noted earlier, it is clear that as a nation, we still face economic disparities across the country. This constitutes an obstacle to sustainable development as it limits improvement in living standards, output and social cohesion which are key factors for achieving inclusive growth. Our challenge therefore, transcends how to achieve growth. Our objective is to achieve inclusive growth by identifying and developing job creation opportunities. We have mentioned the 3.5 million jobs we aim to create in agriculture and more jobs in the housing and construction sectors, solid minerals sector, aviation and the creative industry.

In my Independence Day Speech, I spoke of the 80,000-110,000 jobs we are supporting young entrepreneurs to create through the YouWin programme. We have received numerous testimonies from young men and women who have been able to expand their businesses through the programme. We have just launched a second round of the competition targeting only women entrepreneurs. Across the country, our youth are developing new ideas and enterprises, and we must support them.

I launched the Community Service, Women and Youth Empowerment Programme (CSWYEP) under the SURE-P in February 2012. This is now

working in pilot phase in 14 states, and to be replicated in other states in 2 weeks. We also have the Graduate Internship Programme, in which participating private companies provide one-year internships to 50,000 graduates, paid by the Federal Government. So far, 700 firms, and 20,000 young graduates have applied to participate in this scheme.

Fellow Nigerians, even as we review our achievements in 2012, we are also conscious of the unprecedented floods, which have ravaged many parts of our country, displacing tens of thousands of fellow Nigerians, and causing massive destruction of property, farmlands, and infrastructure across the country. My heartfelt sympathy goes to the affected families and communities.

Yesterday, I made a broadcast on the Federal Government's actions to deal with the situation. I authorized the disbursement of N17.6 billion to States and MDAs to help bring succour to our fellow citizens affected by the floods. This will complement ongoing efforts by Federal and State agencies, and private initiatives.

A Presidential Technical Committee to properly assess the extent of the impact, and propose a rehabilitation strategy, has submitted an Interim Report and is continuing to visit all the affected communities. I have also set up a National Committee on Flood Relief and Rehabilitation to assist the Federal Government to raise funds to mitigate the pains and ensure effective post-impact rehabilitation of victims.

I have also directed that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development put in place a flood recovery food production plan. This will include the provision of early maturing varieties of maize, which mature in 60 days, to several flood-affected areas. In addition, flood-tolerant rice varieties are being procured for flooded rice growing areas. We will also accelerate dry season production of major food crops.

### **Security**

Fellow Compatriots, we are conscious of the fact that without security, no meaningful development can take place in our land; and our collective efforts at building the nation would only amount to little. This is why we channelled a great deal of resources to security in the 2012 Budget. We remain conscious of the impact of security challenges facing the country and are determined to bring the situation under control.

I commiserate with all our citizens who lost loved ones in the recent Mubi killings and all the other acts of senseless destruction of lives and properties in the country. We have already made arrests in the Mubi case, and I want to assure Nigerians that all the culprits will be made to face the full weight of the law. I want to thank our brave men and women of the security services for their commitment. I also want to acknowledge and thank the various state Governors for their cooperation and untiring effort to ensure peace in their domains. The unity of Nigeria is not negotiable

### **THEME OF THE 2013 BUDGET**

#### **Theme**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall that in furtherance of my Administration's efforts to transform our economy, the 2012 Budget was established on four main pillars - Macroeconomic stability; Structural reforms; Governance & institutions; and Investing in priority sectors.

The 2013 Budget promotes continuity of these pillars and is designed with the theme: fiscal consolidation with inclusive growth. We will remain prudent with our fiscal resources but also ensure that the Nigerian economy keeps growing and creating jobs.

To this end, the government will continue with the medium-term theme and interventions that are consistent with the objectives of the Transformation Agenda.

### **Macroeconomic Stability**

One key plank upon which our economic transformation is based is the achievement of macroeconomic stability. My Administration has made significant progress in putting the finances of the nation on a sound footing, laying the foundation for rapid and sustainable growth. We will stay focused on maintaining macroeconomic stability in Nigeria.

### **Budget Structure**

Now let me turn to the structure of the 2013 Budget. In recent years, recurrent expenditure has tended to crowd out capital expenditure in the national budget. Over the 2013-2015 medium-term, my Administration will continue to implement measures aimed at correcting this imbalance in the budget structure in a viable and sustainable manner.

In the 2012 Budget speech, I noted that Government was going to focus on cutting recurrent expenditure to sustainable levels through reduction of waste, corruption and duplication in the functions of government agencies. In this respect, the biometric verification of employees is being extended to all agencies of Government, while the process for rationalizing public agencies and reducing duplication of mandates among different government agencies has begun following the Report of the Oronsaye Committee.

I am therefore pleased to announce that the share of recurrent spending as a share of aggregate expenditure is set to further reduce from 71.47% in 2012 to 68.7% in the 2013 Budget, while capital expenditure as a share of aggregate spending is set to increase from 28.53% in 2012 to 31.3% in 2013.

### **Public Debt Management**

Government will continue to exercise fiscal prudence and limit its borrowing requirements in compliance with the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2007. Consequently, we have developed a responsible domestic debt management

strategy that, for the first time, seeks to start paying off our domestic debt rather than rolling it over. In this respect, a sinking fund of N100 billion is being established in the 2013 fiscal year to be used for repaying Government's maturing debt obligations and to curb the rising domestic debt profile. We have further reduced our annual domestic borrowing from N852 billion in 2011, N744 billion in 2012, and to N727 billion in 2013.

### **THE 2013 BUDGET**

The 2013 Budget is underpinned by the following parameters which reflect Government's prudent economic policies in an uncertain global economic environment:

- Oil production of 2.53 million barrels per day, up from 2.48 million barrels per day for 2012.
- Benchmark oil price of US\$75/barrel, a modest increase from the US\$72/barrel approved in the 2012 Budget. This benchmark price is based on a well established econometric methodology of estimating oil price moving averages.
- Projected GDP growth rate which is now estimated at 6.5% compared to 6.85% in the Fiscal Strategy Paper. The revision is underpinned by the fact that the severe floods experienced over large parts of the country are expected to impact on economic activity in 2013, especially agriculture. However, the growth prospects may improve with the plan to boost dry season farming.

### **Revenue**

Based on these assumptions, the gross federally collectible revenue is projected at N10.84 trillion, of which the total revenue available for the Federal Government's Budget is forecast at N3.89 trillion, representing an increase of about 9% over the estimate for 2012. Non-oil revenue is projected to continue to grow in 2013 as the

ongoing reforms in our revenue collecting agencies, and the implementation initiatives to further develop the non-oil sector continue to yield results.

### Expenditure Proposals

An aggregate expenditure of N4.92 trillion is proposed for the main budget the 2013 fiscal year, representing a modest increase of about 5% over the N4.7 trillion appropriated for 2012. This is made up of N380.02 billion for Statutory Transfers, N591.76 billion for Debt Service, N2.41 trillion for Recurrent (Non-Debt) Expenditure and N1.54 trillion for Capital Expenditure.

Based on the above, the fiscal deficit is projected to improve to about 2.17% of GDP in the 2013 Budget compared to 2.85% in 2012. This is well within the threshold stipulated in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2007 and clearly highlights our commitment to fiscal prudence. We are determined to further rein in domestic borrowing, and this way, ensure that our debt stock remains at a sustainable level.

Our focus on critical economic and social sectors continues. Some of these sectors are largely driven by private sector activity, while others require a great deal of public sector support. Some key allocations are as follows: Works – N185.5 billion; Power - N74.26 billion; Education – N426.53 billion; Health – N279.2 billion; Defence – N348.91 billion; Police – N319.65 billion; and Agriculture & Rural Development – N81.41 billion.

The power and gas sectors require a lot of investments to sustain our supply improvements. We shall therefore complement available resources with the proposed Infrastructure Euro Bond of about \$1 billion in order to complete gas pipelines and other infrastructure investments. We have also programmed other grants and soft credits critical to infrastructure and other sectors in our medium term external borrowing plan.

The SURE-P will continue with the expected resources of N180 billion in 2013 augmented by the projected 2012 unspent balances bringing the total

about N273.5 billion. We hope to make further progress in the programme, providing additional infrastructure investments and social safety net schemes for Nigerians. I am pleased to also lay before this esteemed Assembly, the 2013 Budget for the SURE-P.

### **Fiscal Policy**

To promote Nigerian agriculture and industry, we will continue to implement supportive fiscal measures for some priority areas. You will recall that in my 2012 Budget speech, I announced fiscal measures on rice, cassava, wheat, and machinery for the agriculture and power sectors. In this regard, I am pleased to announce the following additional measures which will be effective from 1st January 2013:

- a. **Sugar:** Machinery and spare parts imported for local sugar manufacturing industries will now attract 0% duty; there will also be a 5-year tax holiday for “sugarcane to sugar” value chain investors. Furthermore, import duty and levy on raw sugar will be 10% and 50% respectively, while refined sugar will attract 20% duty and 60% levy;
- b. **Rice:** A 10% import duty and 100% levy will be applied to both brown and polished rice;
- c. **Aircraft:** All commercial aircraft and aircraft spare parts imported for use in Nigeria will now attract 0% duty and 0% VAT. This will appreciably improve safety in our skies as newer fleet and less onerous maintenance will prevail;
- d. **Solid Minerals:** Machinery and equipment imported for use in the solid minerals sector will now attract 0% import duty and 0% VAT; and
- e. **Public Mass Transit:** In order to encourage the production of mass transit vehicles in Nigeria, duty on Completely Knocked Down components (CKD) for mass transit buses of at least 40-seater capacity, will now be 0%, down from 5%. Government is desirous of supporting green growth

and, in this regard, will explore options for providing incentives for energy efficient vehicles from the 2014 fiscal year.

### Gender Empowerment

This administration is gender friendly and has worked to improve the position of women in society and empower them economically. Nevertheless, to further integrate women in the various sectors, we have developed an innovative approach to mainstreaming gender issues starting with 5 pilot ministries: Agriculture, Health, Communication Technology, Water Resources and Works. These ministries are signing MOUs with the Ministry of Women Affairs to deliver on specific services for women.

- a. The Ministry of Agriculture, for example, will work with the Ministry of Communication Technology to ensure that 5 million women farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs receive mobile phones to be able to access information on agro-inputs through an e-wallet scheme.
- b. The Ministry of Health, in addition to scaling up its ongoing "Save Million Lives" initiative, plans to give back health and hope to one-third of the pool of young girls and women who have been waiting a long time for VVF repairs through surgery and economic rehabilitation. In addition, we are up-scaling routine immunization.
- c. For 2013, the Ministry of Works plans to increase the number of women that are employed in public works programmes as contractors, workers and project evaluators, setting itself a target of 35% for women in FERM rehabilitation work. In every geopolitical zone, at least 3 roads leading to areas where women's socio-economic activities are concentrated, will be prioritised and completed.

To support these activities, we have set aside the sum of N3 billion to be disbursed to participating MDAs as incentives for them to deliver on their targets. Our focus on empowering women is part of our agenda for improving

the country's human development indicators. In this regard, we shall not relent in our efforts to improve access and quality in our health and education sectors.

### **Sports**

The performance of our sportsmen and women continues to strike an important chord for all Nigerians across the country. We want to take our sports to great heights again. We all recall our disappointment with our performance in the recent Summer Olympics games in London. At the same time, we were very delighted with the success of our Paralympics athletes.

My Administration is committed to addressing the challenges faced by our sports men and women. Later this month, I will be hosting a Presidential retreat on sports in order to strategise on ways to support our sports sector to achieve greater heights.

### **CONCLUSION**

Mr. Senate President, Mr. Speaker, Distinguished and Honourable Members of this esteemed Assembly, Fellow Nigerians, the Budget Proposal I lay before you today represents our continued drive for real and sustainable growth for the wellbeing of Nigerians.

It is a budget that gives priority to our concerns for security, infrastructure, food security and human development sectors. It is a Budget that introduces a series of innovative features. This Budget is a push in the right direction borne out of our well thought-out and articulated developmental policies.

This is a budget for every Nigerian. It belongs to the farmer, the investor, the entrepreneur, the youth and the elderly. Yes, we have challenges, but also incredible opportunities. Ours is the task of transforming these opportunities into real, tangible outcomes which all our people can experience and call their own. We need the cooperation of everyone to make it work, to grow the economy, and to create jobs for our people. I continue to call on all Nigerians to

act. Making Nigeria work begins with you and me.

Finally, I must restate my appreciation of the contributions and cooperation of the Legislature in discharging our collective responsibility to build the nation of our dreams.

I look forward to an expeditious consideration and passage of this Proposal as we strive to guarantee positive socio-economic transformation for the betterment of our people.

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I thank you.

*October 10, 2012*

## THE PRICE OF DARKNESS IS INFINITE

*At the public presentation of the Roadmap  
for the Nigerian Power Sector Reform*



We are today gathered here in Lagos, the commercial capital of our nation, for a twin seminal event: to launch our Administration's electric power roadmap and to productively engage with key stakeholders of the economy in a focused discourse on our plans to effectively tackle the critical challenge of the enormous electric power deficit and transforming the sector into the major driver of Nigeria's economic development process.

I have brought along to this session cabinet members and other key functionaries of my government to underscore the seriousness with which our Administration views Nigeria's huge infrastructure deficit, with special focus on the power sector.

My appraisal of the sector over the past few years has revealed that the factors that impede reliable electricity service delivery in Nigeria include the absence of a sustained and deliberately deployed long term power development strategy; under-exploitation of our abundant energy endowment; and the absence of significant reform.

Fortunately, the Obasanjo Administration recognized these challenges and did initiate a power reform program that is enshrined in the Electricity Power Sector Reform (EPSR) Act of 2005, which we are implementing fully. In order to fast track the resolution of all critical issues pertaining to power, I constituted committees soon after I assumed office as President. These are the Presidential Action Committee on Power, PACP, which I chair, with the Vice President as Alternate Chair and the Presidential Task Force on Power, PTFP, with my Special Adviser on Power as Chairman.

The primary objective was to eliminate bureaucratic red tape while maintaining the rigorous nature of decision making in Government. The PACP is charged with the responsibility of providing leadership and guidance, and to determine the general policy direction and strategic focus of power reform. The PTFP is the engine room for day-to-day planning, and is charged with the responsibility of developing and driving forward the Action Plan for the Nigerian power sector, with achievable targets; especially with reference to the areas of power generation, transmission, distribution as well as fuel-to-power.

The Ministry of Power continues to handle the day to day running and supervision of the affairs of the Ministry's relevant agencies. In drawing up this roadmap, we have identified a critical element in resolving the entire value chain of supply of electricity as the issue of tariff. The idea is to ensure that the relevant agencies achieve a tariff structure across the value chain from tariff on fuel, wholesale tariff for generation and retail tariff, all of which will incentivize investors.

Another issue is the role that government has played so far in establishing investor confidence. The suspension of the commissioners of the Nigerian Electricity Regulation Commission Commissioners (NERC) last year and the subsequent unfortunate handling of the commission's issue appeared to be a lack of determination to assure regulatory independence. For this reason, we have taken steps to resolve all outstanding issues with the suspended men

and we will reconstitute the Commission in a way that will ensure the integrity and independence of the NERC within the next two weeks.

I have declared on a number of occasions, that from next year, Government will disengage from generation and distribution of electricity in the country and provide the enabling environment for the private sector to effectively take up this role. Therefore, as articulated in the EPSR Act, the private sector will be responsible for generation and distribution while Government will still own the transmission grid but with private sector management.

Henceforth, Government will no longer build thermal power plants on its own. We are in the process of commissioning Independent Power Producers, International Oil Companies (IOCs) and companies that have captive production of electricity to produce at least 5000 MW of new capacity. These plants will begin production in 2012 and 2013. Government will provide the credit enhancement that will incentivize them to invest in the construction of the power plants. It means that government will neither directly [be] investing in, nor managing these plants.

In the interim, the Presidential Task Force has devised a plan to fast track the full reclamation of installed capacities at the various Federal Government Power Plants across the nation through rehabilitation over the next one year. I will briefly outline our plans with respect to Fuel-to-Power, NIPP, Generation, Transmission, Distribution, Reform and PHCN Workers.

## GENERATION

Nigeria will largely rely on hydro, coal and natural gas for generation of much of its power over the next decade, while the quantum of electricity generated through nuclear and renewable energy such as solar, wind and biomass will be gradually developed.

The plan for exploitation of hydro sources is already quite advanced. Coal will also be fully exploited over the next few years to install power plants in

such places as Gombe, Kogi, Enugu and Benue. However, the largest resort for fuel-to-power will come from natural gas. It is the intention of the Federal Government to exploit this asset to its fullest by converting flared gas asset to domestic application for power and harnessing non-associated gas for power application.

However, this would require investment far beyond what the Federal Government can muster and would require providing incentives to invest. In the case of hydro, we currently have generation from Kainji, Jebba and Shiroro. However, all three plants are not producing to their installed capacities because of poor maintenance and equipment damage. These are currently earmarked for repairs so as to ensure recovery of non available capacities. In addition, Government is completing plans that will lead to commencement of construction of the Mambilla plant in Taraba State and Zungeru Plant in Niger State which will generate 2600 MW and 700 MW respectively.

The Gurara Hydro power plant in Kaduna State which currently has 300 MW installed will expand to additional 300 MW. The Niger State government is planning a 250 MW hydro power plant at the Gurara Falls. Completed hydro plants will be concessioned to the private sector for effective management. With hydro plants, the Federal Government will no longer develop and build coal and natural gas thermal power plants but, instead, we will encourage immediate private sector participation.

More specifically, the Federal Government is engaging companies that have installed capacities either for manufacturing or as Independent Power Producers to expand their production capacities and sell electricity to the national grid. From the category of those that have requisite installed capacity, we expect to generate over 5000 MW within the next three years.

In line with the EPSR Act, the Power Bulk Trader which the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) has now incorporated will have credit backing from the Federal Government to purchase power from these private power providers and sell

the distribution companies. This bulk trader should be in full operation less than two months from today. The beauty of this approach is that in each case, the Federal Government will only provide credit enhancement to the Bulk Trader. This support is in form of contingent liability for the Federal Government and therefore not full liability for the full megawatt (MW) purchased. It is also important to mention that the bulk trader will play this "middle man" role until the distribution companies become credit worthy and subsequently buy electricity directly from the power producers on bilateral basis.

In summary, the Federal Government's short term plan in generation is to improve all of its hydro and thermal power generating assets. Some of these will become available by the last quarter of this year while others will become available next year. The strategy from the beginning of next year will be to maintain for every part of the country, the current allocation of power, and then begin to allocate the additional power that will come from the NIPP and other IPP projects to key industrial cities in the country until such industrial cities reach adequacy. The intention is to immediately stimulate employment and economic growth across the nation.

A second component of Government's strategy is to domicile as much power as possible from the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) within the local domain where the power is produced, thus reducing stress on the national grid. This also reduces technical losses and provides such power directly to the local community.

### **FUEL-TO-POWER**

Nigeria is blessed with a number of fuel sources for power, including the possibility of developing nuclear-powered electricity. However, because of the high capital costs required to implement commercial power generation through these alternate fuel sources, the Federal Government is primarily focusing on electricity generation in the areas of Hydro, Natural Gas and Coal. Under the

National Gas Masterplan there is clear provision for private sector investment in gas infrastructure so that gas can be used throughout the nation for industrial processes and power generation.

Most of the power plants to be built in the southern part of Nigeria over the next few years will be gas fired. Although there is enough gas to support available generation capacity for now, generation capacity will outstrip available gas in the nation before the end of next year. The solution is to attract private sector investment as quickly as possible in the gas sector. Consequently, the Federal Government will begin to engage the IOCs and smaller companies to fast-track bankable gas production and supply agreements, as well as gas transportation, both Federal Government power plants and the Independent Power Producer plants.

### **NIPP**

As you may recall, the Obasanjo administration initiated the National Integrated Power Projects (NIPP) initiative which covered areas of gas, generation power plants, some transmission networks to make the national grid have a closed loop system at 330 KV level, and also some distribution projects. Whereas these projects have yet to contribute to the nation's power system, we expect that they will begin to come to fruition by the end of this year.

Cumulatively, they should contribute a total of 4775 MW upon completion. Under the NIPP initiative, there are contracts in place to complete NIPP 330 KV line projects in the country in such a way that when they are combined with PHCN on-going projects for 330 KV lines, the country will have a closed loop network at that high voltage level. This will significantly stabilize the electricity wheeling capacity in the country in the short to medium term.

### **TRANSMISSION**

The transmission infrastructure in the country can only address the generation

power up to some part of next year, after which it will no longer be able to wheel the available generation. Therefore, the Federal Government plans to embark on significant increase in transmission that will begin to fundamentally address anticipated capacity problems. We plan to build a super transmission network at the voltage level of 700 KV that will go from Afam in Rivers State, through Makurdi to Jos, Kaduna, Shiroro, Jebba, and then down to Lagos through Oshogbo; before going through Benin to Onitsha, to Alaoji and finally back to Afam.

The procurement of designers of this network will commence soon. A line will also run from the 700 KV line in Kaduna to Kano and from Jos to Gombe. Simultaneously, there will be significant work in providing reliability and stability in the network infrastructure by providing grid integrity and reliability systems, power quality and systems-stability systems, as well as institution of corporate governance of the Transmission Company of Nigeria.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

The distribution infrastructure is very dilapidated and will require significant investment and high professional management to bring it to requisite acceptable standards. Since distribution is always an easy source of leakage and corruption, the Federal Government has decided to follow through on the EPSR Act and privatize the distribution companies in order to induce effectiveness and efficient management. NERC will provide strict oversight on these distribution companies. In the plan of the BPE, the Federal and State Governments will maintain some equity positions in the new privatized companies until such a period that these companies are stable and the various Governments can divest themselves by selling their shares to the Nigerian public.

## **TARIFF**

A key driver to realizing the goals of the Government in the power sector is

appropriate tariff regime. Available records show that Nigerians pay more individually for private generation of electricity or light whether we are using kerosene for light or diesel for electricity generation. The tariff on electricity in our country today is much lower than what is paid in countries across the West African sub region. We have come to the conclusion that it is not so much that Nigerians cannot pay or do not want to pay for the electricity they consume, rather it is that they want the electricity to be available and reliable.

The price of darkness is infinite. NERC has taken cognizance of the concerns of all stakeholders ranging from consumers to power producers and regulators, and in its major review, an end-user tariff regime that will incentivize the industry. This will be driven by delivering quality service to the end user, and the eventual end user tariff will be cushioned through a cross subsidy for the urban poor and rural dwellers.

#### **PHCN WORKERS:**

This Administration has demonstrated sincere commitment to ensuring that it meet the Government's obligations to the PHCN workers, and has paid particular attention to the concerns raised by the Workers' Unions. In this regard, we have provided through a supplemental budget, the entire sum of over N57 billion required [for] addressing the arrears of monetized benefits of PHCN workers which have been outstanding for over seven years.

Funds have also been provided in the same supplemental budget to address the workers' severance, pension and gratuity payments upon privatization of their various companies. It should be noted that the electricity industry cannot expand just like the telecommunication industry grew after the introduction of liberalization. Existing PHCN staff will expectedly form the nucleus of the work force of the new private sector-driven electricity industry. It therefore stands to their benefit to see reform in the sector as a panacea for progress in their individual lives and the growth of the sector.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I have taken you through an overview of our plans to ensure reliable and sustainable electricity service delivery in Nigeria. We are convinced that it is only by productively engaging the private sector as partners in this journey of national transformation that we can be assured of success. With the commitment and unwavering political will which we are willing to bring to bear on this challenge, Nigerians have cause to believe in the dawn of a new era.

Thank you for your kind attention.

*August 26, 2010*

## WITH POWER SECTOR REFORMS, THERE'LL BE NO LOSERS

*At an international investors' forum*



I would like to offer a special welcome to our international visitors to Nigeria. I also welcome members of the Diplomatic Corps, Captains of local and international power industry. Exactly forty-nine days ago, on 26 August 2001, we gathered in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, to launch the Roadmap for Power Sector Reform, a document that details my administration's strategy for transforming Nigeria's power sector into a dynamic, fast-growing industry. One thing that struck Nigerians is the clarity of our strategy, especially the unequivocal acceptance of the fact that the only way to satisfy Nigeria's yearning for stable power supply is to create an attractive regime for private sector investment.

Since the launch of the Roadmap, my administration has appointed new Commissioners for the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), thereby reassuring investors in our power supply industry that the market will be regulated in a manner that promotes growth that is devoid of interference. It should also reassure electricity consumers of their protection from over pricing and poor service. A new Director General has also been appointed for the Bureau

of Public Enterprises, the agency responsible for privatisation of government assets.

We have invited Nigerian and international investors and lenders to Abuja to showcase the opportunities available in Nigeria's power sector, share with you the precise details of our plans for the divestiture of government-owned assets, our guidelines on other investment opportunities, and our plans to reduce investment risks to the barest minimum as we grow our power industry. Our intention is to have a better understanding of your concerns and gain insights from your experience in other markets so that we can build a power supply industry that works for all and grows as fast as possible.

We are very clear about what we want from the power sector reform. I believe that Nigeria is a power investors' haven. With a population of more than 140 million people and the 7th largest deposits of natural gas, a major fuel for power, in the world, we are ready for business. Today, less than half of our citizens have access to electricity and according our Central Bank we expend about \$13 billion every year providing power from diesel generators when we require only about \$10 billion per year in investment over the next few years to develop our generation, distribution and transmission capacities. Generating power from generators adds more than 40 percent to the cost of goods and services in Nigeria and this we can ill-afford. Our mission therefore is for Nigeria to reach power reliability and sustainability within the shortest possible time so as to catalyse the much needed development. Without a doubt, the revitalisation of Nigeria's power industry would be the single most important economic development in Nigeria in the last 50 years, which will clearly give the much needed boost to Nigeria's competitiveness and job creation aspirations.

We are fully aware of what is at stake. This Government created the Presidential Action Committee on Power (PACP) in which all Ministries and Agencies with mandates related to the power sector are represented; the PACP functions like a Special Cabinet on the power sector. The PACP has been

described as a "War Cabinet" and you would agree that the fight to achieve sufficient power supply in Nigeria is indeed a war for economic development. The PACP sets policy guidelines for the Presidential Task Force on Power (PTFP), a multi-agency body that carries out the day-to-day work of fast-tracking the implementation of the 2005 Electric Sector Reform Act (ESRA) by removing legal and regulatory obstacles to private sector investment in the power industry. Membership of the PTFP comprises various ministries and agencies that are critical to attaining its objectives, such as the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), the Federal Ministry of Power, the Ministry of National Planning, the Infrastructure regulatory Commission, and the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN). The membership of the PACP and the PTFP reflects our recognition that a successful power sector reform requires policy input and change across several sectors, e.g. the requirement to set realistic prices for gas and the need to get relevant decision makers meeting frequently and taking action on interdependent policy issues. The outcome of the work of the PACP is the Roadmap for Power Sector Reform which has brought us thus far.

I have often emphasised that the 2005 Electric Power Sector Reform Act which was initiated by President Obasanjo's administration, remains the legal basis of Nigeria's power sector reform and encouraged Nigerians to take ownership of all that we do under it. One of the things that Nigerians have come to agree on is that throwing ever-increasing amounts of government money that is better spent on improving education or healthcare cannot be the solution to Nigeria's power problem. Experience has been a very good teacher. In less than ten years, the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector has seen the number of telephone lines rise from under 400,000 to over 70 million in Nigeria. Our people now expect a second "economic revolution" that will have a much greater impact on economic growth and employment creation. As a nation

we have escaped the “ideas trap”, by which I mean the predilection to seek the solution to economic problems by making recourse to more of the same failed policies.

This administration is determined to implement the reform of Nigeria’s power sector in a way that Nigerians shall be proud of. We are determined to attract high quality investors with the track record that ensures they will bring world class expertise and industry best practices to our evolving power supply industry. We are looking for distribution companies with the experience to rapidly reduce commercial and technical losses on our network. We are looking for generation companies that can operate with great efficiency and rapidly expand services to underserved parts of Nigeria. Remember, this is a country with tens of millions of potential new power consumers. We need firms that can grow quickly. Our national interest dictates that we encourage investors who are willing to stand with us for the long term not those without the requisite pedigree in the sector.

An opinion poll sponsored by the World Bank has confirmed that Nigerians are willing to pay for cost-reflective tariffs for electricity. This is hardly surprising given the fact that some of the poorest Nigerians, including artisans and small business people, spend considerable amounts on petrol-powered generators.

The administration is confident that it enjoys the backing of Nigerians in its determination to implement a fair and transparent reform that transforms decades of paralysing government monopoly into private sector efficiency. Electricity technology is very old and basic; all we need to ensure its abundant supply is the investment, transparency and efficient management.

We are determined to make the power sector reform fair to all concerned. In this reform there will be no losers. As a result of the determination of this administration to successfully create incentives for private sector investment in power, we have departed from the practice of settling labour liabilities from the proceeds of privatisation. Thus we made resources available and have also made

provision for more resources where this may become necessary. I firmly believe that the Nigerian people including workers will be the beneficiaries of the reform; which will attract the investment into the power sector that is required to supply adequate levels of electric power to industries, particularly in our large cities such as Kano, Kaduna, Aba, Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Port Harcourt. No one is in any doubt that the biggest casualty of our epileptic power supply is our manufacturing sector and the jobs that could have been created for thousands and thousands of our citizens. The work of building a prosperous Nigeria cannot be done if our factories continue to run on generators.

There are tremendous opportunities across Nigeria's power value chain that needs to be harnessed for the good of our people and investors. Nigeria's power sector liberalisation presents very attractive opportunities to investors because of the country's large population, the long-repressed demand for power and the vast state investment in power generation, transmission and distribution assets over decades. The reform allows investors to become involved under concessions or privatisation. From next year, the Federal Government of Nigeria will cease investment in power generation and distribution and our plan is also to concession the management of the Transmission Company of Nigeria. Federal government will complete processes for already initiated hydro power projects.

You may also recall that the last administration initiated the National Integrated Power Projects (NIPP) initiative. These projects are now beginning to bear fruit and the power plants built under this initiative will be managed under Operation and Maintenance contracts now being prepared by the Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC), the parent company of these plants. The mode and strategy for their subsequent divestiture will then be communicated once these plants have been commissioned.

But I must say again that the most attractive feature of the liberalisation is our commitment to creating realistic incentives across Nigeria's power sector value chain. Our regulatory agencies fully understand that we require a tariff structure

which promotes the financial health of companies in the power sector, whether these are tariffs for fuel, wholesale tariffs for generation or end-user tariffs.

The largest resource for fuel-to-power remains natural gas. It is the intention of the Federal Government to exploit this asset to its fullest by converting flared gas assets to domestic application for power and harnessing non-associated gas for power application. Again, it is very obvious that the government has nothing near the investments required to convert this gas to power. In fact, although there is enough gas to support available generation capacity for now, generation capacity will outstrip available gas in the nation before the end of next year. We are, therefore, offering incentives for investors to develop the infrastructure required to capture and distribute gas. Over the next few days our teams will share with you the precise details of the opportunities in these areas.

Investment in Independent Power Plants will also be encouraged by our new regulatory climate and my administration has not hesitated in taking the advice of our reform and regulatory team to take steps to minimise risks to investors to the barest minimum. We will resource the Nigerian Electricity Bulk Trading Plc which will buy power from the generation companies on behalf of the privatised distribution companies until such a time when they will have established their creditworthiness. We have also taken steps to provide partial risk guarantees to back the Bulk Purchaser as well as suppliers of gas to the generation firms with the assistance of the World Bank.

We have also established the Nigerian Electricity Liability Management Company (NELMCO), which will assume the non-operating assets and liabilities of the privatised government assets, ensuring that the new managers of former state assets are not encumbered by unresolved liabilities.

We are confident that because of the potential of the Nigerian market and the quality of investors we are determined to attract, these transitional credit support mechanisms will only be temporary.

In conclusion your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have taken you through an overview of our plans to ensure reliable and sustainable electricity service delivery in Nigeria. All the major stakeholders are here and I urge you to have in mind the transactional nature of this event. We expect partnerships to be struck. Ministers, their aides, Presidential Task Force Performance Monitors and their Technical Advisers as well as officials from the Bureau for Public Enterprises and the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission are here with you over the next two days. Ask them the questions, get the facts from them that enable you to invest in full confidence.

We have invited you, from across the world, because we fully realise that transforming Nigeria's power sector is the next major enterprise in our journey to advance human progress in this part of the world. We believe that to make Nigeria work better as an economic and political union, the power sector will play a major transformational role. I invite you to join us on this important mission. Very distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Nigeria is open for business. You are most welcome.

I thank you for your kind attention.

*October 15, 2010*

## POWER SECTOR REFORM HAS COME TO STAY

*At the inauguration of the Board of the Nigeria Bulk Electricity Trading Plc*



I welcome you all to this ceremony, the inauguration of the Board of Nigeria Bulk Electricity Trading Plc, otherwise known as the Bulk Trader. I seize the opportunity to also congratulate you on your appointments as pioneer members of the Board. Government expects that you will use your experience and skills to add value to the important work that the Bulk Trader is called upon to perform, in our ongoing efforts to transform the power sector.

As you know, the Bulk Trader is a critical component of the implementation of the Electric Power Sector Reform (EPSR) Act of 2005. It is to act as a catalyst for new investment into the power generation market. The Bulk Trader is expected to equally stabilize the market for those already in the business, especially at this time when we have embarked on the privatization of successor distribution companies of the PHCN.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are unfortunately faced with a situation where our power distribution companies find it challenging to collect enough revenue from their customers to pay for power they receive from generating companies.

In this situation, if potential investors do not have the confidence that when they produce and deliver power they would receive payments, they would not be encouraged to invest in the sector. Our goal of generating enough power for all people may therefore not be reached. Government has therefore incorporated the bulk trader as a guarantor, to give confidence to potential investors that they would be paid for the power they generate and sell to the distribution companies.

I therefore expect that you will carry out diligently the job of negotiating and signing off future contract agreements with power producers. I have every confidence that you will faithfully execute this mandate of serving as a bulwark against potential payment defaults by distribution companies, until they become financially strong (creditworthy) to directly enter into power purchase agreements on bilateral basis.

This administration has placed a premium not only on delivering more electricity per capita to people and businesses in Nigeria but also ensuring that whatever power generated is faithfully transmitted, distributed and paid for. The distribution companies will therefore continue to put in place measures to ensure that everyone is provided with a meter so that they can capture the generation revenue and thereby ensure sustainable supply of electricity to the public.

As I said in my address at the launching of the Power Reform Road Map in August last year, everything we do in this process of transforming the power sector must "introduce a greater degree of transparency to the way in which we implement the reforms and greater accountability on the part of those responsible... so that the fundamental changes to the ownership, control and regulation of the sector envisaged by the legislation are achieved and downstream benefits are realized."

Your Board therefore owes this nation a duty to execute the task transparently and diligently, so as to continue to attract confidence of consumers and goodwill of our international partners, including the World Bank, which is partnering with us to provide the Partial Risk Guarantee that will support

Bulk Trader's contracts.

Finally, let me restate that the power sector reform has come to stay. This government shall continue to do all that is necessary to ensure that the processes needed to transform the sector are not abridged in any manner or form. We are quite determined to conclude all processes that will lead to generation, transmission and distribution of improved, steady, stable and regular power supply to our people.

Thank you and may God guide you as you serve our country.

*August 23, 2011*

## I FEEL THE PAIN BUT WE MUST DO THE RIGHT THING

*On the removal of fuel subsidy*



Dear Compatriots, a week ago, I had cause to address Nigerians on the security challenges we are facing in parts of the country, which necessitated the declaration of a state of emergency in 15 Local Government Areas in four states of the Federation. That course of action attracted widespread support and a demonstration of understanding. With that declaration, government had again signalled its intention to combat terrorism with renewed vigour and to assure every Nigerian of safety.

The support that we have received in the fight against terrorism from concerned Nigerians at home and abroad has been remarkable. We believe that it is with such continued support that progress can be made on national issues. Let me express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has expressed a commitment to support us as we strive to improve on the country's security situation, and build a stronger foundation for the future. The recent mindless acts of violence in Gombe, Potiskum, Jimeta-Yola and Mubi are unfortunate. I urge all Nigerians to eschew bitterness and acrimony and live together in

harmony and peace. Wherever there is any threat to public peace, our security agencies will enforce the law, without fear or favour.

This evening, I address you, again, with much concern over an issue that borders on the national economy, the oil industry and national progress. As part of our efforts to transform the economy and guarantee prosperity for all Nigerians, Government, a few days ago, announced further deregulation of the downstream petroleum sector. The immediate effect of this has been the removal of the subsidy on petrol.

Since the announcement, there have been mixed reactions to the policy. Let me seize this opportunity to assure all Nigerians that I feel the pain that you all feel. I personally feel pained to see the sharp increase in transport fares and the prices of goods and services. I share the anguish of all persons who had travelled out of their stations, who had to pay more on the return leg of their journeys.

If I were not here to lead the process of national renewal, if I were in your shoes at this moment, I probably would have reacted in the same manner as some of our compatriots, or hold the same critical views about government. But I need to use this opportunity as your President to address Nigerians on the realities on the ground, and why we chose to act as we did. I know that these are not easy times. But tough choices have to be made to safeguard the economy and our collective survival as a nation.

My fellow Nigerians, the truth is that we are all faced with two basic choices with regard to the management of the downstream petroleum sector: either we deregulate and survive economically, or we continue with a subsidy regime that will continue to undermine our economy and potential for growth, and face serious consequences.

As you all know, the subject of deregulation is not new, we have been grappling with it for more than two decades. Previous administrations tinkered with the pump price of petroleum products, and were unable to effect complete deregulation of the downstream sector. This approach has not worked. If it

did, we would not be here talking about deregulation today. I understand fully well that deregulation is not a magic formula that will address every economic challenge, but it provides a good entry point for transforming the economy, and for ensuring transparency and competitiveness in the oil industry, which is the mainstay of our economy.

As a President, elected and supported by ordinary Nigerians, and the vast majority of our people, I have a duty to bring up policies and programmes that will grow the economy and bring about greater benefits for the people. Let me assure you that as your President, I have no intention to inflict pain on Nigerians.

The deregulation of the petroleum sector is a necessary step that we had to take. Should we continue to do things the same way, and face more serious economic challenges? Or deregulate, endure the initial discomfort and reap better benefits later? I want to assure every Nigerian that whatever pain you may feel at the moment, will be temporary.

The interest of the ordinary people of this country will always remain topmost in my priorities as a leader. I remain passionately committed to achieving significant and enduring improvements in our economy that will lead to sustained improvement in the lives of our people.

I am determined to leave behind a better Nigeria, which we all can be proud of. To do so, I must make sure that we have the resources and the means to grow our economy to be resilient, and to sustain improved livelihood for our people. We must act in the public interest, no matter how tough, for the pains of today cannot be compared to the benefits of tomorrow. On assumption of office as President, I swore to an oath to always act in the best interest of the people and remain faithful to that undertaking.

To save Nigeria, we must all be prepared to make sacrifices. On the part of Government, we are taking several measures aimed at cutting the size and cost of governance, including on-going and continuous effort to reduce the size of our recurrent expenditure and increase capital spending. In this regard

I have directed that overseas travels by all political office holders, including the President, should be reduced to the barest minimum. The size of delegations on foreign trips will also be drastically reduced; only trips that are absolutely necessary will be approved.

For the year 2012, the basic salaries of all political office holders in the Executive arm of government will be reduced by 25%. Government is also currently reviewing the number of committees, commissions and parastatals with overlapping responsibilities. The Report on this will be submitted shortly and the recommendations will be promptly implemented. In the meantime, all Ministries, Departments and Agencies must reduce their overhead expenses.

We are all greatly concerned about the issue of corruption. The deregulation policy is the strongest measure to tackle this challenge in the downstream sector. In addition, government is taking other steps to further sanitize the oil industry.

To ensure that the funds from petroleum subsidy removal are spent prudently on projects that will build a greater Nigeria, I have established a committee to oversee the implementation of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme. I sincerely believe that the reinvestment of the petroleum subsidy funds, to ensure improvement in national infrastructure, power supply, transportation, irrigation and agriculture, education, healthcare, and other social services, is in the best interest of our people.

Fellow Nigerians, I know that the removal of the petroleum subsidy imposes an initial burden on our people, especially the rising cost of transportation. Government will be vigilant and act decisively to curb the excesses of those that want to exploit the current situation for selfish gains. I plead for the understanding of all Nigerians. I appeal to our youth not to allow mischief-makers to exploit present circumstances to mislead or incite them to disturb public peace.

To address the immediate challenges that have been identified, I have directed all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government to embark immediately on all projects, which have been designed to cushion the impact

of the subsidy removal in the short, medium and long-term, as outlined in the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme Document.

Tomorrow, 8th January, I will formally launch a robust mass transit intervention programme to bring down the cost of transportation across the country. The programme will be implemented in partnership with state and local governments, labour unions, transport owners, and banking institutions and supported with the provision of funding at zero interest rate as well as import duty waiver on all needed parts for locally-made mass transit vehicles which will create additional jobs in the economy.

We will keep these incentives in place for as long as it takes. I want to assure you that Government will not rest until we bring down the cost of transportation for our people. Let me thank the transporters' associations that have agreed to reduce transport fares. I have directed the Minister of Labour and Productivity to work with these associations to come up with a sustainable plan to guarantee this within the shortest possible time.

In addition, I have ordered the mobilization of contractors for the full rehabilitation of the Port-Harcourt-Maiduguri Railway Line and the completion of the Lagos-Kano Railway Line. I have also directed the immediate commencement of a Public Works programme that will engage the services of about 10, 000 youths in every state of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory. This will create an additional 370, 000 jobs.

Government has taken these decisions in the best interest of our economy so that we not only have benefits today, but to ensure that we bequeath even greater benefits to our children and grandchildren.

Let me assure Nigerians that every possible effort will be made to ensure that we march forward, with a collective resolve to build a Nigeria that can generate greater economic growth, create and sustain new jobs, and secure the future of our children.

This Administration will aggressively implement its programme to reposition

and strengthen our economy, while paying adequate attention to the immediate needs of our citizens.

I assure you all that we will work towards achieving full domestic refining of petroleum products with the attendant benefits.

As I ask for the full understanding of all Nigerians, I also promise that I will keep my word.

Thank you. May God bless you; and may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*January 7, 2012*

## TAX IS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE

*At the launch of the National Tax Policy and Nationwide  
Tax Identification Number*



It is with pleasure that I welcome you all to today's historic twin event: the formal launch of the nationwide Tax Identification Number and the National Tax Policy.

This marks the culmination of a journey which began almost a decade ago. The idea of a National Tax Policy first arose from the report of a Presidential Study Group and a Private Sector Working Group set up in 2002 which examined the Nigerian tax system and made recommendations towards entrenching better tax policy and improved tax administration in the country.

The National Tax Policy which we are launching today is a product of widespread consultation and deliberation at all tiers of Government and all sectors of the economy; one which, we believe, will lay the foundation for the complete transformation of the Nigerian tax system.

It sets broad parameters for taxation and other ancillary matters, and provides clear principles governing tax administration and revenue collection.

The unique Tax Identification Number (TIN) system, introduced by the J

Tax Board as a collaborative project between the Federal and State Governments, is a key deliverable under the National Tax Policy. TIN is a nationwide electronic database system for the registration and storage of data of tax payers in Nigeria. It is a revolutionary tool for tax administration and holds immense potential not just for expanding the nationwide tax base with consequent increase in revenue collection accruable to all tiers of Government, but is also a big step in the modernization of the Nigerian tax system, in line with global best practices and expectations.

I commend the Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, as well as the staff of the Federal Ministry of Finance, under whose diligent watch the reforms of the Nigerian tax system commenced and are being efficiently prosecuted.

I also commend the State Governments and the Joint Tax Board for their collaboration in ensuring the successful implementation of the Taxpayer Identification Number. I recommend this productive collaboration model to other agencies of Government.

Let me also use this opportunity to particularly commend the Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service and Chairman, Joint Tax Board for her dedicated and exemplary service to the nation over the last eight years. She has no doubt put the Nigerian tax system on an impressive pedestal and has overseen reforms and revenue generation that are unmatched in the history of the Nigerian tax system. This Government is particularly honoured to have had your distinguished service and, as you conclude your tenure, we wish you unqualified success in all your future endeavours. It is my hope that you will be ready and willing to avail the nation of your committed service should occasion demand.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to reiterate this Administration's commitment to repositioning Nigeria for the challenges of today's global economy.

Overall, what we seek to achieve with the introduction of the National Tax Policy, is to have a nation and a people who see taxation as a partnership with government.

We want to create a participatory system of taxation, where the taxpayers and other stakeholders all see that they have an equal stake in the tax system. We want to create an economy that is self sufficient and does not depend wholly on resource wealth to bring development to the people. Over and above all we want to institutionalize a tax culture amongst Nigerians such that we see ourselves as custodians of the tax system and our commonwealth. We definitely are on the right track.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my singular honour to formally launch the National Tax Policy and the nationwide unique Tax Identification Number to the glory of God and the sustained growth and development of our national economy.

Thank you.

*April 5, 2012*

## LAKE CHAD IS DISAPPEARING!

*At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development  
(Rio+20 Summit), Rio De Janeiro, Brazil*



Your Excellencies, dear delegates, let me first congratulate the President of Brazil for her election as the President of this historic Summit and also appreciate her for the facilities and the warm hospitality the Government of Brazil has provided. I also commend the Secretary General and staff of the United Nations for organizing this Conference, which marks the 20th Anniversary of the Earth Summit, also held in this beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro.

The presence of many world leaders at this Summit lends credence to the fact that global cooperation is imperative to ensuring sustainable development in our world. In line with the chosen theme for the Conference, we owe an obligation to our peoples and coming generations to eradicate poverty and employ green economy in our sustainable development programme.

For us in Africa, the Green Economy is an agenda for growth, wealth creation and employment generation. We believe that the promotion of a Green Economy must be underlined by clear national objectives, social and economic development imperatives and the attainment of the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs).

We are aware of the constraints posed to sustainable development in Africa by emerging challenges such as the global financial crisis, migration, rapid urbanization, the energy and food crisis, low resistance to natural disasters, desertification and the loss of the eco-system resulting from climate change.

A spectacular case in point is the Lake Chad in West and Central Africa which used to be the 6th largest Lake in the world. Unfortunately, this body of water, a major global resource, has become endangered to the extent that it has shrunk from about 25,000 sq kms in 1964 to less than 2000 sq kms today. At this rate, if nothing is done promptly to salvage the situation, this world heritage will disappear within 20 years.

As a response to this great ecological challenge, a feasibility study on the Inter-Basin Water Transfer from the Ubangi River in Central African Republic (CAR) to Lake Chad has been embarked upon. Nigeria has committed US\$5 million out of the US\$6 million earmarked for the studies. However, efforts to save the Lake exceed the capacity of the contiguous states because of the enormous resources required. I, therefore, appeal to the international community to support this project which is a global responsibility.

Concerned as we are about the sustainability of the environment, Nigeria promoted the Great Green Wall for Sahara Initiative as an integrated approach to check desertification and depletion of natural resources in the Sahel, from the West Coast to the Horn of Africa. The goal of the Great Green Wall project is to develop a regional strategy and national implementation plan that would lead to selection of country and cross-border projects for financing by the countries. This noble project calls for donor support.

In our sustainable development agenda, under our medium to long term National Plans, we have developed several sectoral initiatives, particularly in agriculture, petroleum, solid minerals, power supply, renewable energy, trade and investment, water and sanitation, which accord priority to environmental

and wider development issues. Our goal is simple: Create more jobs and opportunities for our people to rise out of poverty, create wealth to ensure sustainable development.

While we recognize that the developing countries have primary responsibility for implementing their own sustainable development agenda, there is no doubt that they need the support of the international community to achieve these objectives. In effect, Rio+20 can only be seen to be successful if the thorny issue of the means of implementation is adequately addressed. We must bridge the yawning gaps undermining the fulfilment of international commitments on sustainable development, especially in areas of finance, external debt, trade and investment, capacity building and technology development.

I earlier referred to this Conference as historic because it marks a defining moment, both for humanity and for our planet. Today, we have a unique opportunity to reshape the future and redefine the relationship between human advancement and environmental sustainability, by ensuring that we join, in a collective effort, to reduce the conflict between human development and environmental conservation.

Twenty years ago at the 'Earth Summit', we made a number of pledges. Today, twenty years later, it is evident, that there is still a lot more that we need to do. Working together to develop 'green economies', offers us a greater chance of a sustainable future. And that work must be intensified now.

As our challenges are collective, both in nature and consequence, our responses must also be collective, for them to have the desired impact. And because the circumstances that confront us are extraordinary, the kind of change that is needed must also be extraordinary. To serve as a catalyst to advance this, Nigeria believes that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya be strengthened as a more robust United Nations Agency dedicated to advancing environmental and sustainable development issues.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my hope, that the outcomes of

this Conference will mark that turning point in history that we all can look back at another ten to twenty years from now, and say that this is where and when we met, took the right decisions and the right actions that shaped a better future.

I thank you.

*June 20-22, 2012*

## NO HIDING PLACE FOR EVIL DOERS

*At the official launch of new national driver's licence and number plates*



Today marks another step in our transformation journey. The launch of the new driver's licence and number plates today is the culmination of three years of hard work which started with a discussion I had with the Corps Marshal in my office then as Vice President on the need to improve our driver's license for it to meet international standards.

Today's launch has acquired greater significance following last Friday's unprovoked attack which led to the loss of lives and has left in its trail gory images of the threat terrorism now poses to the peace and security of our nation and the safety of our citizens.

Since the last bombing episode on October 1, I had directed the hastening of efforts to build a credible database of drivers and vehicles in order to improve public safety. The importance of this project is reaffirmed by the consistent use of vehicles in the conduct of the recent bombing episodes.

Let me use this occasion to reassure Nigerians and members of the international community that we now have strong leads as to those involved in

this terror war on Nigeria and Nigerians. I have directed security operatives to go after them no matter where they may be hiding.

Also I am using this opportunity to warn that those who choose to hide under our new freedoms to perpetuate evil against our people shall have no hiding place. This administration is fully determined and able to deal with all threats and agents of instability who continue to test the resolve of our nation and its democratic institutions and leadership.

As President and Chief Security Officer of the nation, I will employ every means and instrument at my disposal to secure this nation against forces of evil which seek to divide and sabotage our country. There shall be no sacred cows in our efforts to expose, contain and defeat this network of terror and its sponsors.

I have directed a review of our national security architecture to lay greater emphasis on intelligence and citizens' participation in security surveillance.

It is in this regard that government is pleased that FRSC has delivered on the promise to introduce a credible driver's license that meets international standards. This is a positive development, which demonstrates FRSC's commitment to the government's transformation agenda and a testimony that we can get it right in this country.

Restoring the integrity of the driver's license aligns fully with the transformation agenda of this government, it is at the heart of the efforts to alter a culture of recklessness, impunity and lack of consideration for other road users and to transform these negative traits to a positive affirmation of a rule-driven society.

Today, a new era has begun with the introduction of the new driver's licenses and number plates. The government has invested in technology, people and processes that will not only restore the integrity of the driver's license but also provide the nation with a credible database of drivers and vehicles.

This administration, in line with the reform agenda, acceded last December to the Vienna and Geneva Conventions on road signs and markings. The

accession to these conventions, which have been in existence since 1949, imposes new responsibility on Nigeria to ensure that the driver's license is a competency-based certificate.

Therefore I am happy to announce that part of what we are launching today is the immediate implementation of the Driving Schools Standardization Programme (DSSP) that stipulates that only accredited driving schools must sponsor all fresh applicants for driver's licence. Also a new regulatory regime of mandatory test and continuous drivers training has been introduced for commercial drivers.

Let me assure the FRSC of my total support in ensuring that enforcement of road traffic rules does not exempt or accord any undue respect to positions, ranks and status of any select group of road users. I will therefore like to see greater enforcement on indiscriminate use of siren by unauthorised persons on our roads and removal of tankers and trailers that are indiscriminately parked to obstruct the roads.

I charge the Corps Marshal to come up with an immediate action plan in conjunction with other stakeholders for ensuring that adequate parks are provided for trailers and tankers on our highways nationwide.

In the last five years, government has increased FRSC's budget and has observed appreciable decline in road traffic crashes and fatalities.

Government will continue to support the FRSC in its quest to sustain the decline in road crashes and attendant injuries in order to achieve the objectives of the Accra Declaration of reducing road crash fatalities by 50% by 2015 and the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety (2011 – 2020) which hopefully will make Nigerian roads to rank among the world's 20 safest roads by year 2020.

The international dimension of driver's licence and number plates imposes on us as a country the need to ensure that they are not used as instruments of terrorism. I want to reassure Nigerians and members of the international community that terror groups will be defeated in our land. This administration

will spare no effort or resource in containing this latest threat to the unity and stability of our nation. Terrorism has no conscience and spares no one. We must all stand together against terror in its destructive manifestations.

We are in touch with all international agencies, involved in the global fight against terror. We will work in tandem with all organizations and partners towards the timely and eventual containment and defeat of terror and its sponsors in our land.

I therefore appeal to all State governments, law enforcement agencies, transport unions and institutions, non-governmental organisations, the organised private sector and of course, the general public to be resolute in their support for the FRSC in their quest to reform motor vehicle administration in Nigeria for our collective good.

I hereby launch the new National Driver's Licence and Vehicle Number Plates to the glory of God and for the safety of all road users and promotion of national security.

Thank you.

*September 2, 2011*

## MAKING OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE

*At the commemoration of University of Nigeria's golden jubilee*



Lions and Lionesses, I am delighted to be at the University of Nigeria on this memorable day to commemorate her 50th anniversary and to commission the University of Nigeria/Information Communication Technology Strategy Programme. It is of particular significance that the University of Nigeria is celebrating its Jubilee a few days after the formal celebration of our nation's 50th year of independence. This occasion offers a significant opportunity to reflect on the challenges before Nigerian universities and the higher education system in our country, the role of universities as drivers of prosperity for any nation and the expectations of the Federal Government from the education sector.

The University of Nigeria has earned a deserved place in the history of higher education in Nigeria and Africa. The University of Nigeria commendably pioneered the concept of an independent and indigenous university in Nigeria and matched it with innovations in curricula, in disciplines and orientation.

The University of Nigeria was founded on the American Land Grant University Model, which ensures, even now, a strong basis for meeting the challenges of

higher numbers and the increasing demand for higher education in our country. The founders of the University of Nigeria sought from the beginning to link its purpose to the destiny of the Nigerian Nation. The University of Nigeria has therefore borne the travails of our national history, the rise and slump of our economy, the socio-political challenges including the civil war. The University of Nigeria has therefore borne the travails of our national history, the rise and slump of our economy, the socio-political challenges including the civil war, and is now set, like Nigeria, for a renaissance. I salute the founding fathers for their vision and courage that gave birth to this great institution.

The celebration of a significant milestone such as the 50th Anniversary of the first university in Nigeria to offer its own degrees provides opportunity for reflection on the purposes and role of higher education in Nigeria.

This review is important because universities are engines of economic and social development in all societies, but more so in developing economies such as ours. The state, market and civil society place great expectations and demands on universities.

The capacity of nations, in the world's most advanced economies as well as those experiencing rapid development, to compete in the global knowledge economy increasingly depends on the ability to meet a fast growing demand for high-level skills. Development of competent human capital resource hinges on significant improvements in the quality of learning outcomes and equitable distribution of learning opportunities.

The Nigerian education system will therefore as a matter of urgent necessity need to address the three fundamental components that are evident in following globally successful school systems.

- Teacher quality; getting the right people to become teachers.
- Professional development, developing faculty into effective instructors, and
- Curriculum development; ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best

possible instruction for every child.

Addressing issues militating against these key drivers of educational development will demonstrate that substantial improvements in outcomes is possible in a short period of time and that applying these best practices nationally could have enormous impact in rescuing and improving failing schools in Nigeria, wherever they might be located.

There are several challenges in the Nigerian universities system in the next half century, which require concerted action by all stakeholders of the educational system. These include our universities attaining world-class status through the development of relevant curricula and enabling learning environment.

I must now address the issue of building world-class universities in Nigeria. Our universities must play a central role in rebuilding Nigeria's economy and in meeting our society's most crucial needs; an educated citizenry and a competent workforce. These are necessary in order to strengthen our young democracy and our ability to compete in a global economy.

Nigerian universities must strive to rank among the best globally. The latest global rankings of universities show that only seven of our institutions rank in the Top 100 in Africa, with the best at Number 55. We rank very low, in the Top 5000, globally.

This situation is clearly undesirable and unacceptable. The challenges of providing enabling teaching and learning and research environments as well as the production of quality graduates with adequate skills for global competitiveness militate against the attainment of excellence by our universities.

To attain world-class status, Nigerian universities require first-rate faculty with strong researches, citation impact and inventions to their credit; research reputation; international presence; aggressive mobilization and efficient deployment of resources, development of strong and effective alliances and networks; multidisciplinary approach; technological expertise; and good management including requisite funding.

We must look ahead to the next 50 years and set targets for each decade, for each year and for each moment. It should be the institutional goal of the Nigerian university system to ensure that in the next 10-20 years, Nigerian universities rank in the Top 10 in Africa, and the Top 100 in the world. Attainment of this educational status would require enormous resources in funding, but above all, dedication, change in work attitude, focus, and strategic collaboration between the universities, government, and the private sector. I am reliably informed that the National Universities Commission is adequately addressing these issues.

Collaboration is required in the acquisition of relevant modern infrastructure and facilities for improvement of the research, teaching and learning environment, particularly ICT infrastructure and classrooms, laboratories, studios, etc. upgrade.

A key challenge for countries like Nigeria is keeping pace with the changes in the fast-growing world of technology and adapting the technology to suit our purpose. Issues of deepening and entrenching our democracy through socialization processes and education, fostering nationhood through shared ideals, values, and ideas; developing a common sense of purpose as a people and eliminating or minimizing the issues that divide and fractionalise our society also arise. Relevant knowledge is required and implied in all these.

The mission of our universities therefore ought to flow from these challenges. I submit, as one whose first love has been with the academic world that universities in Nigeria should concentrate on knowledge creation and dissemination for quality human resource development and community engagement.

In order to address the knowledge gaps evident in our current structure, our universities should play the following roles:

- Cultivating highly educated people with the right knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes to compete in the modern Knowledge Economy. We desire and require innovation in curriculum design and development to ensure that both timeless universals and practical ideas

relevant to today's world are communicated to the students.

- Promoting ideals such as democracy and democratic citizenship. The demography of Nigeria tilts towards the younger generation. Our population indicators show that 60% of Nigerians are less than 18 years. Nigerians have agreed on democracy as a more desirable form of government, even with its trials and challenges. For the sustenance of that democracy, this young generation needs to understand the concepts of democracy, broad-based representation, citizen participation, and human rights and made to imbibe the spirit of competition and teamwork.
- Developing emotionally sensitive intellectuals and engaged citizens produced in our laboratories of social innovation, which the universities represent.
- Engaging with and tackling the developmental needs and challenges of our evolving society and economy. The task here is obvious and calls for a closer bond between town and gown in more practical ways that go beyond the cynicism of shared ballroom dances and cultural activities.
- Improving the intellectual and cultural life of our societies. After many decades of higher education in Nigeria, what can we say we have achieved? Have science and the scientific idea become part of the thinking and socialisation process in our societies? What impact has education had on our cultures, on our religion, on our social organisation? Have our universities engaged in 21st Century tools in enhancing communication and visibility in global learning communities?

There is a large issue of addressing the iron triangle of access, quality and cost of higher education in Nigeria. How do we increase access to higher education with the implied higher costs without sacrificing quality of education? Movement in any of access, quality and cost affects the other two.

The statistics are sobering. As at 2009, there were 288 higher education institutions in Nigeria, consisting of 104 universities, 58 polytechnics, 47

monotechnics, and 79 colleges of education. The Federal Government accounts for 101 of these institutions. The Federal Government share of the burden of higher education is even more pronounced in the university sector.

There were 775, 385 registered students in Nigerian universities in 2009. Federal universities accounted for 61 per cent, state universities contributed 33.6% while private universities had only 5.3%

What is worse for the issue of access is the fact that annually, our universities are only able to absorb about 15% of candidates qualified for university admission.

There is therefore a major challenge with access. We also have challenges with production of desired higher-level manpower. Note that for development of higher-level manpower, only 69, 465 persons or less than 10 per cent, were actually pursuing higher education.

Two other issues regarding our university education are paucity of academic staff necessary for optimum leap in production of graduates and the challenge of funding. As at 2009, statistics show a staff enrolment of 25, 066 academic staff. Only 3099 of these were professors; readers (or associate professors) accounted for 1536; there were 5474 senior lecturers and 15, 017 lecturers. This is a far cry from what is required.

The funding situation is similarly very poor. Universities earn income from government allocation, Education Trust Fund disbursements, endowments, grants, student fees and levies and internally generated revenue. Government allocation and ETF disbursements represent the first stream, which in most universities accounts for about 75.5 to 80%; student fees and levies are the second stream of income accounting for 10 to 15% while grants account in most cases for only 5 to 10%. \total Federal disbursement to universities in 2008 for example was N103.5b. Higher education administrators must therefore strive to increase the non-subsidy portion of their total revenue. Resource mobilization has therefore become vital a skill for management of higher education institutions the world over.

Technology has transformed every facet of human activity. It is gratifying that the University of Nigeria has taken the bold step in collaboration with Google Incorporated and other partners to provide the enabling infrastructure for participation of your faculty and staff in the global learning environment of today.

I understand that the UNN ICT infrastructure project is a comprehensive, ubiquitous, always-on, wired and wireless network that covers the entire geography of the four campuses of the university. You have indicated costs of nearly N4b shared by several collaborators.

I commend the Vice Chancellor and the university administration on steadfastly pursuing classroom and laboratory upgrade and digitalization projects that would enable the University of Nigeria render teaching, learning and research in the most up to date global standard. This is a model for all our institutions: we have to meet the challenge of relating our educational system to the needs of our environment using technology as a key driver in accomplishing this vision.

It is critical that we incorporate Information and Communication Technology into our educational system and in particular, into our classrooms to ensure that we improve teaching effectiveness and that children have enhanced learning environment. Incorporating ICT into education is another reason why this occasion is memorable because the University of Nigeria is one of the first universities to truly reflect an understanding of the importance of creating the partnership necessary to develop the information communication technology that will change the face of teaching, learning, and research in Africa.

This university has the potential of leading innovative practice in Nigeria and Africa. Through its groundbreaking partnership with Google Incorporated, other ICT multinationals, and Nigerian private sector organisations, it is bringing the university education of Nigerian students in line with twenty-first century international best practices. This is a highly laudable achievement.

The relevant ministers of Education, Science and Technology as well as Power and Mines and Steel will work with UNN to see how we can develop coal powered and solar turbines for use of the university and its host community as a pioneer project. It would also offer practical research and learning experience to the faculty and students as the project is executed.

The very poor results posted by our students in public qualifying examinations indicate very serious systemic crises that we cannot afford to overlook. It is clear that ad hoc approaches would not suffice for the deep crises that we face. We would be setting up the Presidential Commission for the Study of Issues in Education and the Knowledge Economy to examine critically the issues, causes, and requisite frameworks for ensuring better competitiveness of Nigerian Education including the much-neglected Technical and Vocational Education. The Presidential Commission on Education would have a broad-based representation and membership, from the public and private sectors, as well as across disciplines.

It is my hope that the work of the Presidential Commission on Education would inform further action on ensuring that we improve Nigeria's ranking in other key measures of educational progress such as quality of primary education, primary school enrolment, secondary education, and expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP. We need to lay the right foundation at these lower levels of the educational ladder to ensure that a higher proportion of students qualify for places in our higher institutions.

Universities have been responsible for shaping the destinies of nations and individuals. The Nigerian university system must now play a critical and focused role in bringing about the desired change. The Federal Government is committed to ensuring the provision of the enabling environment for our universities to contribute optimally to defining and shaping our societies.

We have demonstrated our sincerity of purpose in recent times with special grants to 12 federal universities. This initiative will provide regional centra

laboratories, improved infrastructure, publishing houses as well as a N12 billion book fund. In addition, government has provided through ETF a central research fund of N3b. The National Universities Commission has initiated a process for ensuring that we have in the shortest possible time at least five world-class universities from out of Nigeria.

This process has resulted in the improved ranking of \Nigerian universities in the recent ranking outlets

We expect to read of the Nsukka Theory, the Ife Report, or the Zaria theorem on various issues in our national life, being well-researched papers and scientific experiments that address concerns in our environment and provide answers germane to our environment. Because we live in the Knowledge Economy, there is an even more significant role for universities and higher education in general. Our expectations are high. We expect leadership and guidance from the repositories of knowledge, who can no longer afford to be laggards.

As someone has posited, "If knowledge is the electricity of the new international economy, then institutions of higher education are the power sources on which a new development process must rely".

As our country braces for more economic uncertainty locally and globally, we can choose to invest in a skilled workforce that can compete with the best and brightest the world has to offer, or we can continue to ignore the problem and force employers to fight among themselves for an ever more scarce human resource. We understand that the quality of our workforce is a direct reflection of the quality of schooling system. For our nation to move forward, we must strategically align our resources to provide staff development opportunities that will further prepare our teaching workforce. We are all concerned about the quality of research in our universities and I am here to assure you that the government is working with relevant stakeholders to provide the support necessary to meet the vision for research tertiary institutions that model best practices in scholarship, teaching, learning, and research.

We will explore practical ways of supporting research and innovation in higher education in Nigeria. One of the practical and cost effective steps would be to enable our higher education institutions render service in the research component of public sector jobs. The Bureau of Public Procurement and other relevant public sector organs would work out modalities for ensuring that our educational institutions are enabled to compete for such research jobs so that faculty and students can gain not just practical experience but also exposure to current issues in the political economy and thus enrich the teaching and learning experience. We will find other ways to collaborate with our educational institutions to provide opportunities for value-added research that would enhance the productivity of our school system and the nation. This is the only way of addressing the new global challenges of Food Security, Economic Meltdown and Climate Change

At this defining moment of the 50th anniversary of our nation and this great institution, we will draw from what previous generations of Nigerians have done, and unleash the resolve of our people, unlock the potential of our country through its education system, and make sure that Nigeria remains a symbol of hope, of opportunity, and prosperity for all the world. The University of Nigeria is a critical component of this change process and I am delighted to share this very memorable occasion with you. I believe that together, we will be able to truly reflect the motto of this university, "To Restore the Dignity of Man" in every aspect of our education system and national framework.

God Bless you!

God Bless the University of Nigeria!

God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*October 8, 2010*

## DEFENDING OUR DIGNITY HOME AND ABROAD

*At a retreat on the Review of Nigeria's Foreign Policy*



It is my pleasure to address this august gathering of International Relations experts and foreign policy practitioners at the start of the Retreat on the Review of Nigeria's Foreign Policy. Let me start by thanking the Presidential Advisory Council on International Relations for organizing this important Foreign Policy Review Conference. I have every confidence that with the calibre of experts assembled for this exercise, a future of exciting possibilities lies ahead for our nation's foreign policy pursuits.

At the dawn of our independence, our founding fathers rightly devoted attention and our nation's scarce resources to the decolonization process and the eradication of racism from the African continent. To the extent that these were blights on the dignity of the black race, they were legitimate foreign policy pursuits for our country.

As President, I stand before you to affirm that our country did, indeed, play a leading and facilitating role in the emancipation of the African continent from colonialism and racial discrimination. These are achievements we can all be

proud of. As the most populous black nation on earth, it seemed our manifest destiny, is to champion the cause of African emancipation and integration. To be sure, African renaissance remains an unfinished business, but the work that remains should not stop us from focusing on new priorities and challenges.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no doubt in my mind that our post-independence foreign policy served our country well. The question that naturally flows from this assertion is why the need for a review if current policy is effective and serving the national interest? I agree with those who think that a review is necessary in order to fully capture emerging challenges and also to inject new dynamism into our foreign policy. I must caution, however, that the changes or adjustments we seek through this review should not merely be for the sake of change.

We should rather be looking at how we can deploy our foreign policy at the service of our nation's domestic priorities.

In the era of globalization; at a time of grave challenges to national and international security, such as we face from terrorism and transnational criminal networks; at a time of massive poverty and youth restiveness in our country, we have no choice but to adjust and adapt the way we conduct foreign policy. As we respond to the forces of globalization, perhaps more than ever before, our diplomacy must be put at the service of our domestic priorities.

As you are all aware, the upheavals of the late 1980s brought an end to bipolarity and ideology as organizing principles of international relations. The rise of new economic powers outside the traditional economic centres of Euro-America has altered the landscape of international political economy and economic partnership arrangements, as we see happening in the ongoing dialogue between Africa and China, on one hand, and with India, on the other.

All these changes present both challenges and opportunities in the murky world of international politics. I expect this retreat not only to come up with ideas on how to re-design our foreign policy, but also strategies for achieving our

foreign policy objectives.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in my Inaugural Address of 29 May, 2011, I enunciated what I believe could form the outlines of our country's future foreign policy direction. In that Address, I indicated that "Nigeria, in partnership with the African Union, will lead the process for democracy and development in Africa. In particular through support towards the consolidation of democracy, good governance and human rights in the continent".

In taking a firm position on democracy, my objective was to challenge Nigerians to see democracy as the future of their country and for all of Africa. As a nation, we have taken the right decision to embrace democracy. Democracy is good for Nigeria because it can help us build a just, fair and inclusive nation. For me, there is no greater indignity, no greater disrespect for the values that bind us together as a nation than to deprive citizens of a say in who would govern them.

This is the philosophical basis of the marching order I gave to all our diplomatic Missions abroad in my Inaugural Address to "accord this vision of defending the dignity of humanity the highest priority".

Since foreign policy is the externalization of domestic priorities and the aspiration of citizens, the big challenge for Nigerian diplomacy, is to articulate and vigorously market the country as a conducive environment in which to do business. After all, for a developing country like Nigeria, poverty eradication, job creation, economic progress and security are some of the top priorities on the national agenda which must necessarily drive foreign policy undertakings. The dignity of humanity must therefore be defended at home and abroad.

I believe economic diplomacy is entirely compatible with democracy promotion, for at least two reasons. First, building a strong economy will help us build a strong, stable, prosperous and peaceful country, where democracy will thrive and business will flourish, and where citizens can live and pursue their dreams with dignity under the protection of the law. Second, it is in Nigeria's interest to promote the culture of democracy across Africa. Since it is the surest

way to guarantee peace, justice and happiness in the continent.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not mean to prejudge the outcome of your deliberations, but I feel I must share some of my thoughts regarding some general principles that have evolved from our historical experience as a nation. First, I believe our foreign policy must reflect the aspirations of a democratic Nigeria.

Second, when the issues are unambiguous as, for example, when the interests of Africa are at stake, we must be assertive but not dogmatic. Our objective should always be to negotiate the best possible outcome for Africa in the belief that when Africa does well, Nigeria's interests would be well served.

Third, given the increasing inter-connectedness of the world, we would do well to pursue a robust multilateral diplomacy, but this should not be at the expense of our bilateral relationships. We should, therefore, continue to build and deepen our partnerships with friendly countries. In all cases, these relationships must be anchored on mutual respect and responsiveness.

As a responsible member of the international community, Nigeria must remain committed to the principles and purposes of the UN. It is in Nigeria's interest to continue to share our peace-keeping experiences with regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa, including ECOWAS. In other words, our commitment to regional and international peace and security must remain as strong as ever.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as Nigeria's window to the outside world, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must constantly raise its game to match international best practices. This necessarily calls for periodic introspection and self-renewal, the objective being to ensure sustainable coherence and adaptability in a rapidly changing and competitive environment.

In other words, for it to be able to cope with Nigeria's growing responsibilities on the world stage, the Foreign Ministry must itself be reformed to equip it with the competencies necessary to drive policy implementation.

Looking forward, the challenge should be to create a knowledge-driven, confident, nimble and globally competitive Service, which would be able to respond to the many challenges and opportunities in the external environment.

In conclusion, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I charge the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to embark on a comprehensive documentation of the various roles our nation had played globally in her determined contributions to human progress.

Such documentation will hopefully capture our past commitments, our losses, and gains, and help guide our future endeavours. It will also serve as a constant reminder to us as we refocus our reform objectives and aspirations. We need this documentation as quickly as possible so as to indicate what our founding fathers had done and to also use it to engage the international community more constructively.

I wish you well in your deliberations and hope that you arrive at very fruitful outcomes.

Thank you and God bless.

*August 1, 2011*

## NIGERIA IS RIPE FOR INVESTMENT

*At the 12th meeting of the Honorary International Investors' Council*



It is with great pleasure that I address the 12th Meeting of the Honorary International Investor Council (HIIC), after last year's successful 11th meeting in Paris. I welcome and thank you all for your unrelenting efforts to raise Nigeria's investment profile and make our nation a preferred investment destination. The outcome of your last meeting is unmistakable evidence that the stakes and expectations are now much higher. I sincerely hope that the various sessions, over the next two days, will generate open and frank dialogue and propose measures that will facilitate the enhanced delivery of the Council's mandate.

Let me reiterate that your work is critical to our investment promotion activities. The country needs your continued support in designing and undertaking practical steps to promote investment opportunities in Nigeria and give relevant information to the international community on our improved business climate.

Today's meeting is taking place against the backdrop of a global economy that remains vulnerable. Whilst economic growth remains sturdy in Nigeria at

6.17% for the first quarter, we recognise the need to strengthen our economic buffers to deal with a volatile global economic climate.

We are steadily building up our Excess Crude Account and our foreign reserves. We are also on the verge of launching the Sovereign Wealth Fund. We are aware that, in recent years, the country has been rated very poorly in the reports by the Doing Business Segment of the World Bank Group.

The Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum and the World Investment Report of the United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have equally had poor ratings for Nigeria.

What these challenging economic reports call for is concerted action by all stakeholders. Our Transformation Agenda is, therefore, about turning Nigeria's huge potential into developmental realities. There is now an increased focus on diversification of our economy away from almost total dependence on oil and attraction of investments into critical sectors.

We have commenced a rigorous investment climate reform programme, with the support of key international development partners. The focus is on removing known bottlenecks in the business environment and making it more investor-friendly. We have engaged the services of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for the development and application of the Nigerian Policy Framework for Investments. We also have in place an After-Care Committee to handle complaints from investors.

Only recently, I approved the setting up of the Nigerian National Competitiveness Council in line with the recommendation of the World Economic Forum. This Council shall be the focal body responsible for creating awareness on national competitiveness in the country and coordinating the efforts of both the Public and Private Sectors to improve Nigeria's competitiveness.

It is also charged with the responsibility of recommending relevant policies and proactively monitoring and evaluating the progress being made at the national and sub-national levels.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that a Competition, Anti-Trust and Consumer Protection Bill is in the process of being finalised by the National Council on Privatisation, for onward processing to the National Assembly for passage into law.

These are all efforts aimed at improving the competitive landscape with the understanding that no nation has moved from poverty to wealth by relying solely on exporting raw materials and foodstuff without a vibrant industrial and service sector.

We have embarked on the path of value addition to our raw materials as a way to underpin and expand our manufacturing sector. This is based on areas where we have comparative and competitive advantage. I hereby implore you to seek ways of attracting investment into the real sector of the economy, particularly the industrial and agricultural sectors.

Let me add here that the Government has reformed its visa policy. Authentic investors are not only assured of easy processing of visas in their home countries, they can also actually procure same at the point of entry into Nigeria. Business visas can now be obtained for much longer terms.

To improve Customs efficiency and foster collaboration with relevant Government Agencies, we are taking measures to modernise the Nigerian Customs Service. We intend to review its underlying legislation; introduce the Single Window concept; and introduce Ports and Customs reforms with emphasis on both trade facilitation and revenue generation.

We are streamlining the operations at our ports and upgrading port infrastructure. We have reduced the number of agencies operating at the ports and reduced the number of days it takes to process goods from 3 weeks to 7 days for the routine imports of large registered importers. We have also introduced the One Stop Check procedure in Customs service and are working on a container management strategy.

On the issue of security, we are building the capacity of the Police and other

related agencies to fight crime and defeat terrorism. We have also strengthened coordinated joint action between our security agencies and their counterparts abroad.

The recent overhaul of our security team should herald a fresh approach towards frontally tackling our security challenge in all its ramifications.

In pursuing these broad objectives, we are mindful of the challenges as well as opportunities that abound. We are also mindful of the need for intensified support and cooperation to achieve our objectives.

As we progress on this journey of nation-building, I wish to state that valuable suggestions from successive HIIC meetings will continue to guide government's decisions. We will, however, also rely on your good offices to communicate the immense opportunities in Nigeria to the international community.

This 12th meeting, therefore, offers us a new window of opportunity to strengthen our engagement and collaboration with you. To underline our seriousness, key government functionaries will rigorously engage with you on the most critical issues underpinning our development efforts. Specific policy initiatives to encourage investments will be clearly articulated.

After almost 12 years of activities by the Council, there is need to take stock of what has been achieved and what can be done differently or better, in order to deliver on the Council's original mandate. I believe that such a review is vital.

The Council may have to broaden the base of its membership in response to the increasingly complex global economic configuration. That will enable it to confront both existing and new challenges.

Recognising infrastructure as a binding constraint to our competitiveness, we shall welcome specific suggestions that will facilitate the work of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) and relevant Ministries and Agencies charged to speed up possible concession arrangements with the private sector.

While I charge members to take practical steps in influencing investment

decisions in favour of Nigeria, let me commend the efforts of some Council members, especially Xenel Industries of Saudi Arabia for their commitment to investing in the Petrochemical sector in Koko, Delta State; Mitsubishi Corporation for the joint venture with Notore Industries to set up a \$1.5 billion fertilizer plant in Onne, Rivers State; the efforts of CNBC in the communication of Nigeria's good image and perception; ACTIS' various investment interests in the country; and of course, our own Dangote Group's leading role in showcasing the benefits of investing in the Nigerian economy.

I assure you that our Administration is more than ever committed to improving the economy, fighting corruption, developing infrastructure and ensuring the security of lives and property.

I would like to end my brief remarks by, once again, thanking you all for your enduring faith in our country and your demonstrable readiness to partner with us as we committedly work to engender a strong, secure, and prosperous Nigeria.

I wish you very fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.

*July 5, 2012*

## BORROWING A LEAF FROM THE KOREAN EXPERIENCE

*At the Nigeria-Korea Investment Forum in Seoul, South Korea*



Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Captains of Industry, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I am greatly honoured and pleased to address this auspicious gathering of eminent industrialists and business tycoons as well as government officials of our two friendly countries. I commend the Nigerian Embassy in Seoul and the Korean Chambers of Commerce and Industry for organizing this event aimed at show-casing Nigeria's investment opportunities with a view to attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from South Korea. In addition, it is a collaboration that I believe will provide the synergy for more productive engagements between our two countries in all spheres. It is also a powerful message of hope and cooperation.

South Korea and Nigeria maintain unrivalled fraternal relations; and it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge that genuine efforts are being made to expand the scope of our economic relations. This, indeed, has added colour to my first ever visit to Seoul since my assumption of office as President of Nigeria. It is my sincere hope that the interactions of today would add impetus and further

accelerate collaboration between our two countries in the area of trade and investment.

It is an established fact that South Korea has one of the world's fastest growing economies and, being one of the Asian Tigers, Nigeria no doubt stands to benefit immensely from this partnership. The unprecedented growth of the Korean economy, despite having virtually no natural resources, is indeed encouraging. It is Nigeria's desire, therefore, to replicate this extraordinary growth popularly referred to as the "miracle of the Han River" in an even greater dimension; given the enormous natural and human resources my country is endowed with.

The growth of the industrial sector has been the principal stimulus of the South Korean economy. Today, South Korea is an industrial giant with notable achievements in high-tech, automobile, electronics, manufacturing, shipping, construction, telecommunication and heavy industries, among others. South Korean investors like Samsung, Hyundai and LG are household names in Nigeria.

In view of these landmark achievements, my administration intends to borrow a leaf from the Korean experience and the experience of other developed economies, to transform the Nigerian economy to one of the world's largest 20 economies by the year 2020. It seems a very ambitious project, but I can assure you, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, that all hands are on deck to realize this vision. I can only plead for your cooperation.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Transformation Agenda of my administration is focused on diversifying Nigeria's economy from an oil-dependent one to a multi-faceted one, and from a government-controlled economy to a private sector-driven economy. Investment opportunities thus exist in the areas of agriculture, power and energy, oil and gas, construction and real estate development, aviation and water resources management, among others. In the course of this Forum, you would be enlightened further by key members of my cabinet on the investment potentials in the country and what

government is doing to incentivize foreign investments as well as create an enabling environment for businesses and investments to thrive.

Suffice it to emphasize that Nigeria, as you know, is the most populous nation in Africa, currently estimated at 167 million and still growing. The country now enjoys stable democratic system of government after decades of military rule. We are committed to sustainable democracy and to the respect of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms.

It is my hope that South Korean industrialists and business men would seize the investment opportunities available in Nigeria to invest in the country. I assure you that Nigeria's enormous natural and human resources as well as its viable market would guarantee maximum returns on your investments.

The possibilities for mutually-beneficial economic and trade relations between Nigeria and Korea are undoubtedly immense. We must, by our commitment and action, be the vehicles of achieving this lofty goal. This Investment Forum, organized with the support of the Korean Chambers of Commerce and Industry, will ignite this process and give it substantive edge. We must sustain the effort and keep the momentum that has been kicked off today.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me stop at this point and thank you for your patience. I am prepared to answer any questions that you might wish to raise and please be assured that we will be prepared to welcome you to Nigeria to partner with us in developing Nigeria as a vibrant and stable economy – a contribution to our common effort to build a world that is safe for business and shared prosperity.

I thank you for your attention.

*March 26, 2012*

## A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

*At the 2nd Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, South Korea*



Let me start by expressing my profound appreciation to our host, President Lee Myung-bak, for hosting the Second Nuclear Security Summit and for the warm hospitality accorded me and my delegation. It is important to note that this Summit is holding at a time nuclear security is demonstrating to be a major issue of global concern which needs concerted and cooperative efforts of all countries to contain.

Permit me to also pay tribute to President Barack Obama for organizing the first Nuclear Security Summit in Washington D.C. in 2010. The Summit succeeded in establishing a common understanding of the security threat posed by proliferation of nuclear agents, the fear of the use of same by terrorists and the urgent need to secure and prevent access by unauthorized persons to nuclear materials. The timing of this Summit would not have come at a better time than now when myriad of problems are still prevalent in our world, and for which many non-state groups, unfortunately, are abandoning dialogue anchored on acceptable peaceful conflict resolution measures, to resolve local, national or

regional conflicts, have tended to increase the tempo of use of means which at times favour terrorism to achieve desired objectives.

In ensuring global security of nuclear materials and the prevention of the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, legitimate developmental aspirations of countries should be supported by the deployment of peaceful nuclear technology. It is thus my expectation that the issues for discussion at this Summit should include building partnership between nuclear technology supplier countries and developing countries aspiring to deploy nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This should be done without losing the firm commitment to the implementation of strategies and mechanisms to safeguard nuclear materials.

One unfortunate but fundamental development since the Washington Summit was the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear accident occasioned by the earthquake and tsunamis that hit that country in 2010. I congratulate the government and people of Japan on the success recorded in containing the tragic incident. The collaboration between IAEA and Japan in handling that accident is commendable. The tragic incident has brought to the fore the necessity of nuclear safety in the application of nuclear technology. As for Nigeria, we are doing our best to ensure that adequate safety measures are employed as we introduce nuclear energy into our energy mix.

Mr President, I wish to assure this august gathering that Nigeria has remained manifestly committed to compliance with international legal and regulatory requirements for safety, security and safeguards in the use of nuclear energy. Our commitment is unwavering; as it would be recalled that Nigeria was the second country to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 and voted for its indefinite extension in 1995. Nigeria also signed the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in 1998 and ratified the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident in 1990. Furthermore, in preparation for the introduction of nuclear power in the country, Nigeria has ratified all relevant international treaties and conventions.

In support of the Programme of Action of the Washington Nuclear Security

Summit and the UN Security Council Resolution 1540, Nigeria has undertaken a number of actions to complement global efforts. Some of the issues so far pursued include:

- Accelerated efforts in partnership with the United States, China and the IAEA to convert the highly enriched uranium (HEU) research reactor in Nigeria to low enriched uranium (LEU) as a means of reducing threats for theft of fissile materials by potential rogue groups;
- Organized sub-regional workshop for ECOWAS Ambassadors in April 2011 to seek support for the Nuclear Security Summit initiative and to sensitize the governments on common nuclear security problems within the sub-region as well as the template of regional approach that would reduce vulnerability to incidents of nuclear materials reaching the hands of non-state actors likely to use same for terrorist operations;
- The efforts of networking with the ECOWAS community was further enhanced during the 55th General Conference of the IAEA in September 2011 when Nigeria organized a side-event for experts from ECOWAS countries to fine-tune the outcome of the Abuja meeting as well as mobilize support for the 2012 Seoul Summit;
- At the end of the Conference, the experts agreed to network among themselves and the need for collective border control, information-sharing among the security agencies in the sub-region as well as the sensitization and education of the populace. The enhancement of government control of nuclear materials as well as the training and re-training of security personnel were also broached;
- Development in partnership with the IAEA and other international expert institutions, the institutional mechanism to enhance the training of national security agencies so that they are able to respond better in understanding the challenges of nuclear security threats as well as planning adequate system for tracking and containing these range of problems. A national

institute for Nuclear Security training is being established in Abuja, to provide human capacity development, which could support the African region.

Mr President, in conclusion, I would like to assure this meeting of my country's unflinching support for all multi-lateral efforts aimed at nipping the menace of nuclear terrorism in the bud. As a country, we are desirous of the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes only. We are committed to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons and we would continue to work assiduously with like-minded countries to achieve that goal. In this regard, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to the amended Convention on Physical Protection on Nuclear Materials and also to pledge our preparedness to sign the International Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Thank you.

*March 28, 2012*

## GROWTH MUST CREATE JOBS

*At the Presidential retreat with the Private Sector*



It is with great pleasure that I welcome all our guests to this retreat. As a mark of its importance, this Retreat brings together key functionaries of this Administration and leaders of industry to brainstorm and strategise on the most critical issues underpinning our development as a nation.

This Retreat could not have come at a more auspicious time in our nation's history. The global economy is facing uncertain times, as developed and developing nations, alike, strive to recover from the ongoing global economic upheaval.

Several nations are grappling with the grim realities of a protracted crisis. Prospects for global economic growth remain unbalanced.

We have tried to be pro-active in response to these issues. Primarily as part of my Administration's Transformation Agenda, we are adopting and implementing more prudent macroeconomic and fiscal policies over the medium-term horizon.

We understand that the global challenges also present opportunities for u

as a responsible Government, to strengthen our economy by implementing key economic policies.

Some of these, which are already at the implementation stages include:

- a) Accelerating economic diversification by improving our investment environment;
- b) Ensuring that our sustained economic growth results in significant employment generation for wealth creation; and
- c) Implementing fiscal policies that support the private sector, as it reverts, in line with our national Transformation Agenda, to its traditional role of driving economic development and growth.

Hence, this Retreat is organised to encourage discussions, debates and partnerships between members of the private and public sectors, including the regulatory bodies. Our hope is that this will help to secure a constructive engagement among all stakeholders to achieve our desired national economic objectives. This is a historical responsibility. Our people demand it and we must work together to deliver on our promises to our citizens.

In my view, the following areas of collaboration and engagement with the private sector are pertinent. Our historical over-reliance on oil revenue has hampered the growth of the non-oil sectors of our economy. I am happy to inform you that this Administration is committed to reversing this trend by implementing targeted interventions to boost non-oil and real sector productivity.

For instance, under the Agricultural Transformation Action Plan, efforts are underway to improve the productivity, yield and competitiveness of key agricultural commodities with significant export potential. By harnessing the value chains in the production of cocoa, groundnut, oil palm and rice, as well as for cotton, cassava and sorghum, we will conserve billions of dollars in foreign exchange that would otherwise have been spent on imports. We will equally reverse the unsustainable food importation process, which has fuelled domestic inflation.

And in effect, improve our national food security position; and unleash the sector's potentials for employment generation and wealth creation. We are open to your views and suggestions on this and other issues, including this Administration's proposals to do the following: build a private sector-based fertiliser industry; develop commodity marketing institutions; introduce Staple Crop Processing Zones; introduce commodity exchanges and other innovative agriculture financing mechanisms; develop world-class storage infrastructure and adopt a more sustainable tariff policy.

In previous economic recoveries, higher growth has not visibly translated into sustainable job creation for the benefit of all Nigerians. However, employment generation for wealth creation remains at the heart of our current Transformation Agenda. We remain committed to ensuring that ordinary citizens enjoy the tangible benefits of economic growth by benefiting from the gainful employment opportunities which our economic growth will stimulate.

Our proposed interventions are multifaceted and range from, revitalising key segments of the manufacturing sector; increasing capacity utilization and developing manufacturing clusters for leather, textiles and food processing; promoting housing and construction through the development of a viable mortgage system.

Some of these interventions are borne out of our recent engagements with the private sector, especially through the work of the Job Creation Committee and the Job Summit, respectively. As we move to actualise the commitments we made during that Summit, we solicit your input into our job creation strategy to maximise their short term, medium-term and long-term impact on poverty reduction and wealth creation.

Ultimately, to achieve sustainable and inclusive real sector growth, we must be resolute in our commitment to effectively enhance our domestic investment climate, and so empower our industries and businesses to create jobs and wealth.

Accordingly, in line with the Government's commitment to ensure good and

responsible fiscal policies, we are committed to maintaining the fiscal deficit at below 3% of GDP during the life of this Administration. This would result in a deliberate and systematic reduction of domestic borrowing by Government to bring it to sustainable levels. This Administration is also accelerating the implementation of key trade, tariff and customs reforms mostly to improve the domestic investment environment.

There are proposals to phase out petroleum subsidies in a deliberate and responsible way that will:

- i. harness revenues for capital stock formation;
- ii. leverage on private sector investments in public-private partnerships (PPPs) to help bridge the infrastructural gap; and
- iii. create incentives for investment in refineries and the petrochemical industries.

However, in the event of deregulation, this Administration is committed to investing the resources in tangible infrastructure and providing social safety nets and other mechanisms to moderate the impact of the reforms on the most vulnerable segments of our society.

Our external trade and tariff policies are also to be carefully reviewed. There is no denying the need to promote our own domestic industries and protect them from unfair trade practices. We must also adopt a more responsive tariff policy that recognises the limitations of an over-extensive prohibition list.

In this regard, we need to arrive at more effective trade and tariff policies that facilitate the creation of local businesses and jobs. We are determined to accelerate the implementation of the 48-hour ports clearance reforms, improve the efficiency of the Nigeria Customs Service and other related agencies, and reduce the incentives for smuggling.

This Administration is also working with the National Assembly to pass the Petroleum Industry Bill into law, even as we intensify our engagement with the Legislature and other key stakeholders to agree on critical reforms to the fiscal

regime for our oil and gas sector.

During the course of this Retreat, we will discuss various fiscal and other policy measures. I encourage us all to dialogue openly, frankly and in good faith. Let us consider dispassionately the various policy options and alternative paths that may lead towards our destination. Let us collectively decide on the best course that will swiftly propel us to the attainment of our shared goals as a nation.

As evidenced by our strong economic growth in recent times, our nation has proven resilient to the global economic downturn. However, we face formidable challenges ahead in charting a course towards the achievement of our developmental objectives outlined in this Administration's economic transformation blueprint.

Indeed, some of the fiscal, monetary and other risks that we must mitigate and resolve are already becoming more apparent and will require decisive interventions to address them.

I note, with thanks, the patriotism, commitment and support that all the participants have demonstrated in being here and look forward to the policy outcomes this Retreat will generate. This retreat is the first of many such government and private sector retreats that will be conducted in the life of this administration. Subsequently, there will be sector-by-sector retreats with a view to getting the best out of each identified sector.

Let me thank you all in advance, for your contributions and collaboration as we strive to attain a positive socio-economic transformation for the benefit of all Nigerians.

I am indeed grateful for your kind attention.

May God bless you all, and may He bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*October 13, 2011*

## WE'RE DEVELOPING A ROBUST PRIVATE SECTOR

*At the public launch of the YOUWIN! job creation programme*



It is with great pleasure that I formally launch one of this Administration's key programmes targeted at youth empowerment, employment generation and wealth creation. As I said in my Budget Presentation Speech late last year, unemployment among our youth is one of our biggest challenges as a nation. But this is a challenge that we are willing and ready to address to unlock the vast potentials of the Nigerian youth.

In the course of the campaigns for the April 2011 Presidential elections, I met many young Nigerians, based at home and in the Diaspora who have refused to submit to the blackmail of self-defeat and despair, and who are showing great initiative in making positive use of their God-given talents.

My concern is that we need to grow the population of such positively-attuned youth. It is our duty to identify them early and support them and this cannot be done by merely raising their hopes but by giving them a chance to be who they want to be.

At the 17th ordinary session of the Summit of the African Union in Malabo,

Equatorial Guinea, last June, I spoke about the opportunities in the continent's demography profile, as projections show that close to 70 % of the African population will be under 20 by 2020. I told my colleagues that this constitutes such a large and powerful force for future development.

Incidentally, at the summit, I met a young Nigerian entrepreneur who spoke passionately about the challenges faced by young people in business and the need for government to assist them in fulfilling their aspirations.

That young Nigerian is Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru, who represents the can-do spirit of the youth that gives us confidence about the future of our great country. Her call for government's support incidentally coincides with the commitment we made at the Malabo Summit on accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development.

In this regard, and in fulfilment of my electoral promises, the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria initiative, also known as YouWin!, is one of the first programmes to be funded, in part, from the N50 billion job creation fund set aside in the 2011 budget. YouWin! is a demonstration of this Administration's goal of developing a robust private sector by encouraging locally-owned enterprises.

YouWin! is an innovative business plan competition that harnesses the creative energies of young people between the ages of 18 and 35. The programme is largely targeted at owners of existing formal and informal businesses who will be asked to submit their business plans for a competition. These will be evaluated by a panel of experts and the best submissions from each geopolitical zone will be selected for support.

The government, in partnership with other stakeholders, will then provide support for these winners to either expand their existing businesses to create jobs for the youth in their locality, or start-up businesses that create jobs based on their ideas.

Through YouWin!, over 3,600 Nigerian youth will be financially assisted to actualise their entrepreneurial ideas and plans. It is expected that these would

create between 80,000 to 110,000 sustainable jobs over the next 4 years.

Permit me to make a reference to Steve Jobs, the recently deceased co-founder of Apple. Jobs started his career by building the first Apple personal computer in the run-down garage of his foster parents and he pursued his entrepreneurial dreams to become one of the most influential innovators of the 21st century.

Similarly Bill Gates' Microsoft and Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook are eloquent testimonies to the capacity of the youth to dream big and win big in an innovative manner. We have such men and women in this land too: our challenge is to find them early, nurture them and encourage them.

As I formally launch this programme today, I am also formally declaring the application for the first cycle open. Following this national launch here, the programme will be re-launched in each of the six geopolitical zones of the country over the next two weeks.

In line with our renewed commitment to regular performance evaluation and measurement, this Administration will monitor the programme closely over the next three years of its implementation to ensure that it remains responsive to the needs of young Nigerian men and women.

While I commend our development partners for their support on the YouWin initiative, let me use this occasion to reemphasise the need for productive partnerships with global businesses and organizations on our job creation agenda.

I wish to reiterate this Administration's commitment to comprehensively address the challenge of youth unemployment and as we invest in the development of their skills, talents and entrepreneurship through programmes such as YouWin!, we provide that mentorship and support that they need to become all that they potentially can be.

Thank you for your attention and may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*October 11, 2011*

## RESTORING OUR VIBRANT READING CULTURE

*At the launch of Bring Back the Book, an initiative  
aimed at engendering a reading culture in Nigeria*



I would like to specially welcome you all to this very important event. I have invited you here, so that we can, together, begin a serious conversation on the critical issue regarding the neglect of the Book and very urgently put in place a citizens framework to Bring Back the Book into our communal and national survival spaces. The Bring Back the Book Initiative we are kick starting today is one of several efforts aimed at placing our country on the platform of irreversible progress.

I am humbled by the presence of the Nobel laureate Professor Wole Soyinka, Prof. J. P. Clark, Dr. Odia Ofeimun and other literary giants and grateful for the participation of so many of you, young people, who have come here today. I am confident that with my convening influence, the star power of the literary giants so uncommonly gathered here, we can indeed enthrone a new culture of book reading.

Many agree that the foundation for the development of all civilizations lies with a vibrant educational system and that at the core of any successful

educational system is a vibrant reading culture. Today we are fighting an uphill battle to restore our educational system to its glorious past and to lift it further to the heights where it would lead the resurgence of our march towards economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and social advancement.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wanted to play a role in restoring our vibrant reading culture so I consulted widely and have come to the conclusion that among other measures we would require a nation-wide campaign to bring back the book. This campaign may be led by government but must transcend government.

It is my suggestion that we focus on restoring a book reading culture with particular emphasis on children and youths. This is following the well known adage - "catch them young" and would help guide our young people towards broadening their knowledge, encouraging intellectual endeavours, and building a nation at the forefront of an emerging knowledge economy.

This campaign to bring back the book starts here and now. The nature and shape of the campaign will be fashioned by all of us. We can all contribute to a new reading culture across Nigeria in our various innovative ways.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, while on the subject of a book reading culture, allow me to formally present the compilation of my conversations on policy and governance via facebook. I decided to compile my conversations on governance and policy with Nigerians on facebook because I wanted to encourage a reading culture and promote responsible and accountable governance at all levels.

I hope that this launch will further encourage Nigerians to appreciate the power of people over government, and encourage government officials at all levels to develop feedback mechanisms and subject their actions and policies to the will of the people.

Knowledge is the foundation for economic development and information is the foundation for democracy and good governance. I believe that responsibility and accountability is at the heart of good governance and the fuel for responsibility

and accountability is access to government information. Access to information and regular consultation brings about shared responsibility and strengthens the bounds between government and citizens.

My facebook page has over the past four months offered an amazingly effective and rewarding platform for direct communication between a diverse group of Nigerians and I. The feedback provided by this line of communication has been invaluable in informing public policy.

At my last count there were more than three hundred and fifty thousand (350,000+) friends on my facebook fan page. This is far above the world average terms of number of people connected virtually with their Presidents. I will like to use this opportunity to thank all of you who have kept in touch with me via facebook and encourage more of you to do so. I encourage all of you to use your pages to campaign for a book reading culture across Nigeria.

I also thank those who have given feedback to government through various means to continue to do so. I again thank all of you for participating in this launch and urge you to take the campaign for a viable book reading culture across all of Nigeria.

From the heart comes passion for transformation, raising questions that must be answered in the mind by solutions that reside in books and the imagination.

Ladies and gentlemen, at all times we should have a book in hand. This is the way of civilization and progress. This is the beginning of the campaign to bring back the book.

Thank you.

*December 20, 2010*





CEREMONIES &  
COMMEMORATIONS



## MAKING NIGERIA GREAT IS A TASK FOR EVERYONE

*On the 50th Independence Anniversary*



Today, 1st October, 2010 marks the 50th Anniversary of our independence from Britain. It is with a deep sense of humility and gratitude to the Almighty that I address you this morning.

On this day in 1960, the heroes of the nationalist struggles and all Nigerians were full of hopes and dreams. The citizens of the new country danced in colourful celebration of the newfound freedom. Nigerians were filled with expectations as the Union Jack was lowered and the green-white-green flag was raised in its place. A new country was born. A new journey had started on a road never taken before. The future was pregnant with promise.

With patriotism and pragmatism, our founding fathers charted a course for the greatness of this country. While there were differences and disagreements, they did not waver in their desire to build a country that future generations would be proud of. They made compromises and sacrifices. They toiled night and day to build a viable country where progress and peace would reign supreme. Our independence was gained by men and women who envisioned

a land of freedom and one of opportunity. Our founding fathers sought a government of character that seeks justice to her citizens as our national anthem so eloquently describes: One Nation Bound in Freedom, Peace and Unity.

However, today, the opinion of many Nigerians is that these dreams and expectations have not been fulfilled. Not only have people despaired about the slow pace of progress, some have in fact given up on the country. Some believe that if the colonial masters had stayed longer, Nigeria may have been the better for it.

All these postulations, we must admit, are borne out of a somewhat justifiable sense of frustration. Our troubles and failures are well catalogued. For a country that was, in terms of development, on a similar, if not better level with many countries at independence, it is discomfoting that we are lagging behind as the economic indicators among nations now show.

In the midst of these challenges, it is easy to forget our unusual circumstances. We have actually been moving from one political instability to the other such that we have barely been able to plan long-term and implement policies on a fairly consistent basis.

This instability has also impacted negatively on institutional development, which is necessary for advancement. The structures of governance had barely been developed when we ran into a series of political obstacles shortly after Independence.

While we were at it, the military took over power and this fuelled a different kind of political instability which ultimately led to the unfortunate 30-month Civil War. This was certainly not the dream of our founding fathers who sacrificed so much to give us Nigeria. They did not dream of a country where brothers would be killing brothers and sisters killing sisters. They did not dream of a country where neighbours and friends would exchange bullets in place of handshakes.

Military rule and the Civil War were major setbacks for our nationhood. They produced a polluted national landscape. This did not offer the best atmosphere for national development. It impacted negatively on Nigeria socially, politically and economically, a situation which further undermined our aspiration as a stable nation. Without political stability, it has been very difficult to plan and build our institutions like other countries that were our peers.

Dear compatriots, despite the serious challenges that we have been living with; we cannot ignore the fact that we have cause to celebrate our nationhood and even a greater cause to look forward to a brighter future.

This is a historic occasion when we need to pause and appreciate who we are, what we have, and to reflect on the encouraging possibilities ahead. There is certainly much to celebrate: our freedom, our strength, our unity and our resilience.

This is also a time for stock-taking, to consider our past so that it will inform our future. This is a time to look forward to the great opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for Nigeria. In fifty years, we have in several respects, attained heights that we should be very proud of as a nation.

In the fields of science and technology, education, the arts, entertainment, scholarship, and diplomacy, Nigerians have distinguished themselves in spite of the enormous hurdles they encounter everyday. If we could achieve so much under tough conditions, we are capable of achieving even much more in our journey to the Promised Land.

Our strides in medical science are hardly celebrated. Recently a team of Nigerian scientists led by Dauda Oladepo of the International Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD) discovered CD4 Lymphocyte baseline for testing people living with HIV/AIDS.

The effort is all the more remarkable because it was funded by the Federal Ministry of Health and its findings are particularly useful to the Nigerian

environment. The discovery is very vital to monitoring and managing the disease progression in infected people.

Also, a Nigerian scientist, Dr. Louis Nelson, has made significant progress in his research to find a permanent cure for diabetes, which afflicts over 123 million sufferers worldwide. The vaccine that has made Yellow Fever disease manageable was developed in our shores! While we may not have landed a spaceship on the moon or developed nuclear technology, our inventors and innovators have made globally acknowledged contributions. Clearly, these are indications that within us are potentials that can be harnessed for greatness.

Nigerian writers have won numerous awards on the global stage. Professor Wole Soyinka gave Africa its first Nobel Prize in Literature. Professor Chinua Achebe pioneered the most successful African novel in history. Ben Okri won the Booker prize. Helon Habila, Sefi Attah and Chimamanda Adichie, among several others, are internationally renowned.

In the movie industry, Nollywood is rated second biggest in the world. Nigerians have by themselves defied all that is negative around them to build a billion dollar film industry from the scratch. This is a major landmark worth celebrating.

Today our actors and artistes are household names in Africa and parts of the world. The future can only be brighter as competition in this sector breeds improved quality and better creativity. Our leading professionals - lawyers, scientists, economists, doctors, diplomats and academics are celebrated all over the world. They occupy prestigious positions in the leading institutions across the developed world.

Most of them were born and bred in Nigeria. Most of them schooled here before they travelled abroad. This should tell us something: that daunting as our circumstances have been, we are still full of ability and capability. We are blessed with talented and patriotic Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora, many of whom are willing and ready to return home to be part of the drive to

turn Nigeria around for good, so that the country can take its pride of place in the comity of nations.

My brothers and sisters, as we begin the journey to another fifty years of nationhood, we have two choices to make. We can choose to focus on the imperfections and problems that easily beset us as a nation or we choose to focus on the unlimited possibilities that we have. I urge us all to choose the latter. I prefer to see the silver lining in the dark cloud rather than the dark cloud in the silver lining.

Today, we need to celebrate the remarkable resilience of the Nigerian spirit. We need to appreciate, that even though the road has been bumpy; we have trudged on, in hope. We may not have overcome our challenges, but neither have our challenges overcome us. Whenever we are completely written off, we always bounce back from the edge to renew our national bond for the benefit of our progress. That is the Nigerian spirit. This is what has kept us together as a country even when other countries with far less challenges have fallen apart.

Our recovery from the scars of the Western Region Crisis, the Civil War, and the June 12, 1993 election annulment has convinced me more than anything else that Nigeria is destined for greatness. It has proved that in our differences, tough circumstances and diversity, what binds us together is far stronger more than what divides us. We have a glorious future awaiting us. I am convinced that North or South, East or West, Muslim, Christian or other faiths, majority or minority, we are all bound by our common humanity and mutual aspirations.

We are not sworn enemies. We are not irreconcilable foes. We are neighbours who sometimes offend each other but can always sit down to talk over our differences. We are one people and one family. There are clear examples across the country where, in one family, you have people of different faiths and convictions living peacefully under the same roof.

The father could be a Muslim, the mother a Christian and the children professing different faiths. Yet, they do not draw the sword against one another in the name of religion.

Fellow compatriots, one of the greatest achievements of our union this past fifty years is our togetherness. The late Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello once said: "Let us understand our differences." I identify fully with these words of wisdom. Our faith may be different. We may not speak the same language. We may not eat the same kind of food. But we are in a plural society where we have continued to accommodate one another and integrate without reservations. This we must build on! This we must strengthen! We have the opportunity of imitating our forefathers by envisioning a new society where our children and children's children will live in peace and harmony and enjoy good quality of life comparable to the best the world can offer.

Today marks the dawn of a new era. It is in our hands to decide what we want to make of it. We must reawaken in ourselves the hunger and aspirations of our founding fathers for a strong, united and prosperous nation that shall be the pride of future generations. To do this, we must change the old ways of doing things. The core values of patriotism, hard work, integrity and commitment to good governance must henceforth take precedence.

It seems to me that the consensus of most Nigerians is that the time has come for us to break from the past and progress into a better future. We should not allow Nigeria to be pulled back again by those who believe it is either they have their way or the country should fall to pieces. The new Nigeria ahead of us, the new Nigeria we have to build together, is a society where everybody must feel at home. It must be a place we can all be happy, comfortable and confident to call our country. It is not just enough for us to talk about how Nigeria can be great; it is our duty to make Nigeria great.

We can change Nigeria from our communities, cubicles and desks. The task to make Nigeria great is a task for everyone.

My fellow citizens, we stand at a cross road. Our forefathers did not achieve our freedom by doing what was easy or convenient. We have not sustained our independence and built our democracy by wishful thinking. We must not allow our future to pass us by. We must grasp it and shape it, drawing on the same spirit and vision that inspired our founding fathers fifty years ago.

On my part, I promise visionary and committed leadership. I promise to give my all, my best, to our great country. I am committed to ensuring public safety and security. Government is fully aware of the ugly security situation in Abia State. We are determined to confront it with even greater vigour. For our present and our future, I am committed to improving the quality of education and to give Nigeria the edge in human capital development. We will rebuild our economy by continuing the implementation of the reforms in the banking and other sectors to ensure economic progress.

I will fight corruption and demand transparency so that we can all take pride in our government. Through various policies, we shall continue to seek ways to grow the economy further, give our citizens greater opportunity so that we can compete better in the global market place.

I am committed to the implementation of a national fiscal policy that will encourage growth and development. We will give priority to wealth creation and employment generation. I am focused on addressing our infrastructure needs, especially power, as this is the biggest obstacle to our economic development and wealth creation.

I am determined to implement to the letter the recently launched power sector roadmap, and I am confident that we will soon be able to provide the power that we need today as well as the resources to meet the needs of tomorrow. All the issues bordering on peace, justice and stability in the Niger Delta are being addressed and will continue to receive attention as we consolidate on the Amnesty Programme.

When God gives you an opportunity, you must use it to His glory and to

the glory of His creations. I promise to use the opportunity given to me by God and the Nigerian people to move Nigeria forward. We must therefore pay special attention to the advancement of our democracy through credible elections. I have said this and I will say it again, with all the conviction in me: Our votes must count! One man. One Vote! One woman, one vote! One youth, one vote!

The future of Nigeria and generations yet unborn is at stake. We must start the journey to the next fifty years with credible elections, with a clean break from the past. We must show the whole world that we can do things the right and the equitable way. This is my pledge and I will never deviate from it.

The Nigeria of the next fifty years must be a land of delight. The signs are not difficult to see. We have a hardworking population, a growing sense of Nigerianness and a new generation of leaders with new ideas. We must have a new sense of purpose and a determination to make things work. **WE MUST COLLECTIVELY TRANSFORM NIGERIA.**

The ultimate result of all these, Fellow Citizens, is that a new Nigeria is in the making. The worst is over. Our latest democratic dispensation has defied all the odds. Since Independence, we have never had 11 years of unbroken civilian rule as we have today. This is a new experience for us. With this comes stability. With this comes the building of strong institutions. With this comes the ability to plan and pursue our plans.

The great people of Nigeria, I implore all to join in the renewed efforts to remake Nigeria. It is a task for everyone. Pray for our country; wish our country well; do things that will make our country great; see and tap into opportunities for greatness that are everywhere around you and take pride in Nigeria. These are the ideals that I embrace. These are the issues that I am committed to.

In conclusion, I will like to speak to Nigeria's greatest resource: our young men and women. I say you have the greatest stake in transforming our nation.

It is time for this generation of Nigerians to answer the call and contribute to Nigeria's foundation of freedom. That is how this generation will make its mark. That is how we will make the most of these opportunities. That is how we will ensure that five decades from now, as our children and grand children celebrate our nation's independence centenary, we will be remembered as having contributed to the great history of Nigeria.

On my part I commit myself to doing my very best and to call on your intellect, wisdom and commitment to bring this dream to fruition.

May God Almighty bless you all!

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

*October 1, 2010*

## WE NEED TO CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSITY

*The 51st Independence Anniversary broadcast*



Compatriots, on this day 51 years ago, the British Union Jack was lowered and replaced by our national Green-White-Green flag, heralding the independence of our nation. The 1st of October remains a special day for us, for Africa, and indeed the world.

As we celebrate today, we remember with pride, the nationalism and patriotism that inspired our founding fathers and the Nigerian people. They set aside their differences, to secure the unity and independence of our great country.

That is the Nigerian spirit! For the Nigerian spirit cannot be broken. We are a resilient nation, determined to chart a course, through the turbulent waters of nation building. The Nigerian spirit is vibrant today in the world.

Our citizens at home and abroad, are making their mark in all fields of human endeavour. These hard-working and committed Nigerians, remain a source of pride to us and a beacon of what is achievable, if we remain focused and determined.

I know that a great number of you are joining hands with me and the Administration, in the great task ahead.

I value all Nigerians. I see our youth who are looking for jobs and yet remain hopeful. I see the farmer, and fisherman, toiling everyday to earn a living. I see the teacher, working hard, to train our future generations, with much sacrifice. I see the market women whose entrepreneurial spirit helps to generate income for their children and families. I see our sportsmen and women training hard to bring glory to our nation. I see our resilience and commitment, as a nation, to defend our democracy and secure our future.

I see every single profession and vocation, making positive contributions to national progress. I value you all!

Together, we shall work for a Nigeria in which democracy and the rule of law are sacrosanct.

A country where corruption and its attendant vices, are banished. A country where human life is sacred and respected, and where the rights of the individual are protected.

Nigeria is a young entity in the comity of nations and yet in her 51 years, she has made significant strides in making her presence felt all over the world. Our diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts, in various parts of the continent, have helped to end conflict and avert crises. In sustaining global security, our intervention has been crucial to peace, progress and democracy for the citizens of the affected countries.

The journey to nationhood always has its own challenges. Nigeria has had her own share. Our growing pains as a nation have included the civil war, the June 12 election crisis and restlessness in the Niger Delta. But Nigeria has always overcome each of these challenges. We overcame before. We will overcome yet again.

Today, as a nation, there is much for us to celebrate. We celebrate our diversity. We celebrate our entrepreneurial spirit.

We celebrate our resilience and ability to turn adversity into hope. We celebrate our culture. For the labours of our heroes past, shall never be in vain.

As your President, let me reassure all Nigerians that I remain resolutely committed to the ideals and dreams of our founding fathers. Let me also reassure Nigerians that I will strongly defend the peace and stability of our nation.

My administration will spare no effort in fighting crime, building peace, and securing our homeland against internal threats and infiltration by violent groups, from outside our borders.

We condemn all acts of violence and declare that such acts of mindless savagery shall not be allowed to define our country. We will not be deterred. Our resolve is strong.

I have put in place a new and reinvigorated national security strategy, to combat the threat to our safety.

Yet, no matter what I do as your President and no matter what we do as your elected leaders, at all levels, the peace and security of our nation rest also on our collective efforts as citizens, in our various communities.

All leaders and citizens, in every community, must therefore make peace the number one priority of their daily routine. This is because, without peace, no community can realize its objectives or achieve a happy and productive life for its members.

The current incidents of violence and terror, in parts of the country, will surely be overcome. We will secure the safety of our citizens for only when we do this, will we be able to build the needed peace and tranquillity in all parts of the federation.

Securing our peace and stability will ensure economic growth and prosperity for all.

Since I assumed office, as the President of our great country, I have continued to focus my attention on the economy. I have taken several measures to address structural weaknesses which stand between us and economic growth and

prosperity for all.

We are growing our economy, to generate employment opportunities for our teeming youth and enhanced prosperity for every citizen. This remains the main focus of my administration.

In a few days time, I shall launch an innovative competition for our young entrepreneurs to come up with ways to expand their businesses, create more jobs, and sharpen their business skills.

Now, it is very clear that without fundamental reforms in the key sectors of our economy, we will not be able to fully unlock our potential as a nation. We must manage our resources more prudently and efficiently. We must provide stable electricity to our citizens to help drive economic activity.

I call on our political leaders to put aside partisan politics, for united action towards the advancement of our nation. We must build together.

Because of the measures we have taken on the economy, our GDP is today one of the fastest growing in Africa. We are currently growing the economy at 7.8%. We expect to sustain an 8% growth rate and a better GDP in the medium term, on our journey towards realizing our Vision 20:2020 goal.

We shall strive to make this growth, job creating and inclusive.

Growth in agriculture and other non-oil sectors are crucial, to help diversify the economy and to generate much needed jobs. Agriculture remains one of the highest priorities in my government's Agenda for National Transformation. We have set out clear, agricultural, transformation action plans and policy measures, to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of rice, cassava, maize, sorghum and other staple foods.

Self-sufficiency in rice alone will save us the N356 billion that we currently spend annually importing rice. We will revamp the way we distribute fertilizers, taking government out of distribution of fertilizers.

We plan to reach 20 million farmers with private-sector distributed fertilizers over the next four years. We will improve the investment environment and

incentives for the private sector across the agricultural value chains. Our agricultural transformation plan will generate 3.5 million jobs and an additional 20 million metric tons of food.

But we must all show pride in our farmers. We should eat what we produce. The increasing popularity of local products, like 'Ofada Rice', 'Badegi rice', and 'Abakaliki Rice', attest to the fact, that the populace will readily embrace locally grown produce.

We must also take pride in our scientists. This week, Nigeria released 8 new high yielding cocoa varieties. This will help to transform cocoa production, across the 14 cocoa producing states in the nation.

We have put in place implementable programmes to transform our Nation from an importer of petroleum products, to the regional hub for exportation of value-added petroleum and petrochemical products. We are revamping existing refineries and building three new ones.

We are effectively supporting the private-sector led construction of world scale petrochemical and fertilizer plants. This will for the first time in our history, result in effective monetization of our abundant natural gas resources while at the same time, creating over a million jobs.

Our potential is huge.

We have the requisite market volume.

We have a youthful, energetic, and hardworking population.

The structural and managerial bottlenecks, that have obstructed our economic growth, are being addressed, to unleash the energy and potentials of this nation.

To achieve this, I am determined to ensure that Nigerians have reliable electricity. Our economy will grow faster, and our hard working small businesses will thrive, when we finally fix the power challenges we face. We are fast tracking power reforms, to improve the generation and distribution of electricity.

Already, we are beginning to do things differently. I believe that integrity,

honour, patriotism, selfless service and fear of God, must be the hallmarks of leadership at all levels.

A nation is sustained by its institutions and systems. I have taken strong measures to improve on governance. It is in this regard, that I signed into law, the Freedom of Information Act. I will further strengthen all institutions, to ensure greater transparency, probity, and accountability at all levels.

Last year, I promised to restore confidence in our electoral system and pledged to deliver free and fair elections. To achieve that, we initiated some electoral reforms and strengthened INEC and other related agencies.

As a result, our April 2011 general elections were adjudged by Nigerians and the international community as the most transparent and credible elections, ever conducted in our country. Indeed, post-election petitions reduced by over 50%.

Let me assure all Nigerians of my resolve to lead our nation into a safer, more peaceful, and prosperous future for our children.

For the time has come, to rise above ethnic and religious divisions;

The time has come, to unite against violence, in all its ramifications;

The time has come, to secure our peace, and unite against suffering, and deprivation;

I see a new Nigeria rising. A Nigeria that is economically strong. A Nigeria that takes its rightful place of leadership in the world. A Nigeria that uses its diversity to reinforce its strength. A Nigeria, we all can be proud of.

This is the Nigeria we need and this is the Nigeria, we all must build.

As we celebrate today, let us resolve to build the Nigeria of our future.

I thank you.

God bless you all.

And God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*October 1, 2011*

## THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER

*On Nigeria's 52nd Independence Anniversary*



Beloved countrymen and women, on this day, fifty-two years ago, our founding fathers brought joy and hope to the hearts of our people when they won independence for our great country. Nigeria made a clean break with more than six decades of colonial rule, and emerged as a truly independent nation. That turning point was a new beginning for our nation.

Those who witnessed the lowering of the Union Jack and the emergence of the Green White Green flag continue to relish the memory, because that ceremony was not just about the destiny of a nation, but the future of a people.

That future is here; we are the inheritors of a great legacy that goes even much farther into the past.

The worthy patriots who made this possible were young men and women in their twenties and thirties. They worked together to restore dignity and honour to the Nigerian people. Their resolve united a multicultural and multilingual nation of diverse peoples, with more than 250 distinct languages and ethnic groups.

In 1960, our diversity became a source of strength, and the new leaders resolved to carry the flag of independence for the benefit of future generations. They had their differences, but they placed a greater premium on the need to come together to build a new nation.

It is that resolve, and that glorious moment that we celebrate today. We also celebrate the patriotism of our heroes past: Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Michael Okpara, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Herbert Macaulay, and several others who made the case for our independence.

We remember as always, their contributions to the making of the Nigerian nation, and the efforts of their successors since 1960. We also celebrate the unflinching optimism and resilience of Nigerians who remain proud of our national identity.

On this special day, I call on every Nigerian to remain steadfast, because our nation is indeed making progress. I call on every Nigerian to rediscover that special spirit that enables us to triumph over every adversity as a people:

We weathered the storm of the civil war, we have refused to be broken by sectarian crises; we have remained a strong nation. I bring to you today, a message of renewed hope and faith in the immense possibilities that lie ahead.

Fellow citizens, I have an unshaken belief in the future of our great Country. I consider it a priority and sacred duty to continue to strengthen the bond of unity that holds our nation together and to promote and nourish the creative energies of our people. This is a central objective of our administration's Transformation Agenda. Nigeria, I assure you, will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Since I assumed office as President of our dear country on the 6th of May 2010, I have continued to work with our countrymen and women to enhance our nation's growth and development.

Our vision is encapsulated in the Transformation Agenda. We are working hard and making progress on many fronts. We have cleaned up our electoral

process; our elections are now globally acclaimed to be free and fair. Nigeria is now on a higher pedestal regarding elections.

Over the past five years, the global economy has been going through a weak and uncertain recovery. During the same period and particularly in the last two years, the Nigerian economy has done appreciably well despite the global financial crisis. Nigeria's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown by 7.1 per cent on average.

It is also significant that the GDP growth has been driven largely by the non-oil sector. In pursuance of the main goals of the Transformation Agenda, a number of reforms and initiatives are being pursued in key sectors of the economy with a view to consolidating the gains of the economic growth.

Our country's power supply situation is improving gradually. We are successfully implementing a well-integrated power sector reform programme which includes institutional arrangements to facilitate and strengthen private-sector-led power generation, transmission and distribution. We have also put in place a cost-reflective tariff structure that reduces the cost of power for a majority of electricity consumers. I am pleased with the feedback from across the country, of improvements in power supply.

We are continuing to improve and stabilize on our crude production volumes; our 12-month gas supply emergency plan, put in place earlier this year, has produced more than the targeted volumes of gas for power generation. A robust Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) has been placed before the National Assembly. Its passage into law will ensure far-reaching reforms, transparency, accountability, increased government revenue and predictability for investors in the Oil and Gas sector.

Several government programmes and projects are creating wealth and millions of job opportunities for our youth and general population. Such programmes include: You-Win, both for the youth and for the women. Public Works, the Local Content Initiative in the Oil and Gas Sector, and the

Agricultural Transformation programme. We have improved on our investment environment; more corporate bodies are investing in the Nigerian economy. Our Investment Climate Reform Programme has helped to attract over N6.8 trillion local and foreign direct investment commitments.

Nigeria has become the preferred destination for investment in Africa. It is ranked first in the top 5 host economies for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa, accounting for over 20 per cent of total FDI flows into the continent. We have streamlined bureaucratic activities at the ports to ensure greater efficiency in the handling of ports and port-related businesses. Specifically, we have drastically reduced the goods clearing period in our ports from about six weeks to about one week and under. We have an ultimate target of 48 hours.

We have put in place, a new visa policy that makes it easier for legitimate investors to receive long stay visas. We have achieved a 24-hour timeline for registration of new businesses, leading to the registration of close to 7,000 companies within the second quarter of 2012. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has disclosed that, as at July 2012, 249 new members across the country had joined the Association, and that capacity utilization has also improved. The multiplier effect of this development on our job creation programme cannot be over-emphasized.

In the last two years, we have put in place structures for an upgrade of the country's health sector, to promote in every respect, the individual citizen's right to quality, affordable and accessible healthcare. In this regard, we are devoting resources under the Subsidy Reinvestment Program (SURE-P) to reducing malaria incidents, dramatically reducing maternal and child mortality, and eradicating polio.

Fellow Nigerians, in recent times, we have witnessed serious security challenges in parts of our country. We have taken pro-active measures to check the menace. This has included constant consultation and collaboration with our neighbours and other friendly nations on issues relating to internal and cross

border security, and the sharing of information on smuggling and illegal dealing in small arms and light weapons.

Our security agencies are constantly being strengthened and repositioned for greater efficiency. Many Nigerians have acknowledged that there has been a significant decline in the spate of security breaches.

While expressing our condolences to the affected families, let me reiterate the commitment of this Administration to ensure the safety of lives and property of all Nigerians. Even as we remain focused on the issue of security, the fight against the scourge of corruption is a top priority of our Administration. We are fighting corruption in all facets of our economy, and we are succeeding. We have put an end to several decades of endemic corruption associated with fertilizer and tractor procurement and distribution. We have exposed decades of scam in the management of pensions and fuel subsidy, and ensured that the culprits are being brought to book.

In its latest report, Transparency International (TI) noted that Nigeria is the second most improved country in the effort to curb corruption\*. We will sustain the effort in this direction with an even stronger determination to strengthen the institutions that are statutorily entrusted with the task of ending this scourge.

I have given my commitment of non-interference in the work of the relevant agencies and I am keeping my word. What we require is the full cooperation of all tiers of government, and the public, especially civil society and the media.

This Administration has also introduced for the first time in Nigeria's history, a Performance Contract System for all Ministers, and other officials of government. This is to further place emphasis on performance, efficiency, and service delivery. Fellow Nigerians, our determined efforts on several fronts notwithstanding, our country still faces a number of challenges.

Those challenges should not deter us. In the last few weeks, for example, many of our communities have been ravaged by floods, resulting in the loss of lives and property, and the displacement of persons.

\* My assertion is based on a 10-year comparative analysis of TI's ratings from 2001-2011

I want to reassure all affected Nigerians that I share in their grief, and our Administration is taking steps to address these incidents, in collaboration with the States and Local Governments. I have received the interim Report of the Presidential team that I set up to assess the flooding situation across the country.

The Federal Government has taken measures to assist the affected States, while considering long term measures to check future reoccurrence.

We must continue to work together, confidently and faithfully, to ensure that our country's potentials are realised to the fullest; that our dreams are translated into reality; and that our goals are achieved.

Let me reiterate that our administration is committed to the pursuit of fundamental objectives of an open society: the pursuit of freedom, security and prosperity for the Nigerian people, and the rule of law.

In the next few days, I shall lay before the National Assembly the 2013 Federal Budget Proposal so that deliberations can commence in earnest on the key policies, programmes and projects that will mark a decisive year for our development and transformation.

I have no doubt that by the time I address you on our next independence anniversary, many of our reform efforts would have yielded even better results.

Over the years, several leaders have built on the foundation laid by our Founding Fathers. The baton is now in our hands.

Let me assure all Nigerians that we shall not fail. I am confident that Nigeria will continue to be a source of pride to its citizens; to Africa and the Black Race and to humanity; a land that is known for progress, freedom, peace and the promotion of human dignity.

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. May God bless you all.

*October 1, 2012*

## OUR AIR FORCE DESTINED FOR GREATER ACHIEVEMENTS

*Address at the Nigerian Air Force Distinguished  
Flying Star investiture parade*



It gives me great pleasure to be at the Nigerian Air Force Distinguished Flying Star Investiture parade. This event underscores the importance of strong military traditions which foster greater cohesion and esprit-de-corps in our Armed Forces. This sense of purpose and brotherliness is especially crucial now, in view of the global security challenges from which we are clearly not immune.

Yet, as we work to bring about a transformation in our great nation, it is imperative that we focus upon the things which bind us together and make us stronger.

I must commend the Nigerian Air Force and, indeed, the Armed Forces as a whole for their immense contributions to the maintenance of National Security and the defence of our emerging Democracy. Members of the Armed Forces are currently involved in Internal Security Operations in several parts of our dear Country.

I must also note with pride your contributions towards ensuring stability across our great continent and beyond. Your active participation in bringing

peace and stability to the West-African Sub-region has been commended globally. I wish to commend you on the professionalism with which you have handled the various situations.

Your courage, dedication to duty and professionalism bear noble testimony to the indomitable spirit of the Nigerian People.

I am aware that these accomplishments have not been without great and often painful sacrifices, and for this reason the Nation owes you and your families a debt of gratitude. The Nigerian Air Force plays a uniquely significant role in ensuring the security of our great country. I am confident that with the ongoing positioning of the NAF for sustained employment of air power, as evidenced in the establishment of the Mobility Command, the Air Force is destined for even greater achievements as we work to transform Nigeria.

No nation can rightly boast of greatness in the absence of vibrant Armed Forces, bearing in mind that the onerous task of nation building can only be accomplished when the safety and territorial integrity of the nation is assured. There is, therefore, no doubt that building and maintaining a virile and motivated Air Force is essential to ensuring our security and national development.

It is for this reason that the Federal Government has continued to make substantial investment in the provision of new platforms and the reactivation of older ones. This is in addition to our commitment to ensure better training and improved welfare packages for the brave men and women of our noble armed forces.

This Parade affords us an opportunity to reflect upon the challenges and accomplishments of the Nigerian Air Force, which essentially mirror those of the Nation as a whole. Permit me, at this point to join the Nigerian Air Force in celebrating the leaders, past and present, who have been instrumental in shaping the growth of the Service.

My congratulations, therefore, go to the recipients of the Distinguished Flying Star. There is no doubt that the award is in recognition of your contributions to

the advancement of the Nigerian Air Force and the security of our Country.

I must, therefore, urge you, whether serving or retired, to continue to contribute towards the advancement of our Great Nation in whatever capacity or opportunity is available to you. I enjoin you all to continue to give your best towards our shared dream of transforming Nigeria.

Finally, I encourage all Nigerians to remain steadfast, vigilant and optimistic, bearing in mind that the endeavour of building a great nation can never be without challenges. I want to assure you, however, that as we work together and draw upon our collective strengths and the numerous ties that bind us in peace and unity, we shall prevail over the challenges and leave a better country for our children.

Thank you and May the Almighty bless you all.

*October 11, 2011*

## NIGERIA'S UNITY IS NON-NEGOTIABLE, SACRED AND SACROSANCT

*At the flag-off of activities marking the celebration  
of Nigeria's centenary anniversary*



On January 1, 1914, the British Empire, the foremost world power at the time, took the historic and momentous step of uniting the colonies and protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria, to create a country that became known as Nigeria.

This singular action brought together people from different communities, kingdoms, emirates, city states, ethnic nationalities, traditions, cultures, languages, ethos and aspirations - all linked together by geography and a common destiny.

Come January 1, 2014, it will be exactly 100 years since that historic journey began. It is a significant moment in our history as a nation and as a people.

To acknowledge this moment of national birth, is to acknowledge the beginning of Nigeria's integration and existence as a single entity, a journey on the path of nationhood that led up to our independence fifty-two (52) years ago when we officially became a sovereign state and later, a federal constitutional republic.

As a collective, we as Nigerians have an extensive history, and indeed archaeological evidence shows that human habitation of the area known as Nigeria dates back to several millennia.

The country has come a long way from 1914 achieving great feats in social, academic, political and economic spheres and though still confronted with issues and challenges not uncommon with a multi-cultural society, Nigeria is considered a significant player in the comity of nations.

We owe it to ourselves, to past generations and to the future generations to tell our own story, the story of our experience, our challenges and most certainly, our strides within the continent and the world. We must do this. To ignore the significant milestones along the path to this date, will be to ignore the essence of our statehood – and most importantly, our most critical responsibility for the generations to whom we will entrust the management of our nation.

We owe them a duty to renew their commitment to the vision which seeks to respond to every citizen's prayer that this land of ours will live up to her great potential and unite us more than it divides us.

I therefore feel a special sense of history and humility in welcoming you all to this unique event, to flag off activities to mark the celebration of Nigeria's centenary.

I am particularly pleased with the large turn-out tonight, and the interest that this programme is generating among our people at home and abroad, and the widespread support that it has attracted. I am also thankful to our former Heads of State and former Presidents who have not only agreed to attend but also to participate fully in this event.

Let me extend my personal appreciation to the patriotic Nigerians and corporate organizations who have taken ownership of our call for private sector participation in the centenary anniversary programme. I want to reassure you that every item earmarked as part of the programme has been carefully selected to inspire national consciousness and patriotism.

I wish to encourage all people of goodwill and corporate organizations to partner with the organizers of the Centenary Celebrations, and to take their pride of place in our nation's success story. I urge all Nigerians to participate in every aspect of the celebrations.

I am aware that many Nigerians still have mixed feelings about the amalgamation. What has come to light, for me, as I reflect on the history of the amalgamation, is not the mistakes that certain persons and groups dwell upon, but the God-inspired greatness of our country.

The amalgamation created a unique entity in the world; a country that stretches from the Atlantic ocean to the Sahara desert: a beautiful country, a richly blessed people, who have turned out to be some of the most resourceful and innovative people in the world in all fields of human endeavour.

What makes our country great is not the rich natural resources that we are blessed with, but our diversity and the inner strength that is reflected by the people at all times - in good times, in times of challenge; the beauty of our land, the purity of our souls, and the incandescence of our hopes.

Most importantly, what makes us great is the unique collection of people that God has placed here – and everyday, I see this through their cross cutting interactions and exchanges, their industry and their dedication to be the anchor of Nigerian nation-building and the carriers of Nigerian nationhood.

Nigerians who left home for various reasons and who today make up the Nigerian Diaspora are making major contributions to the global community in various parts of the world where they are. They can be found as doctors, lawyers, scientists, engineers, ICT experts, administrators, professors and nurses, and various other callings.

In all of these areas they show their Nigerian attributes of hard work, drive, resilience and success orientation. As they connect from the global to the local, they demonstrate the same Nigerianness and connect with the larger community of Nigerians at home.

As we reflect on the fact of amalgamation, I am also immediately reminded of the victory against all odds that our football team the Super Eagles achieved yesterday; demonstrating that our pride in the national colours runs deep. In those tense moments, yesterday, no one called out or recalled the ethnic background of the player – local or Diaspora - that wore the green and white jersey.

This is the Nigeria we have all worked to create and the Nigeria we should work hard to sustain. There is certainly no question that certain affirmative characteristics like drive, ambition, hard work, resilience, entrepreneurial spirit and organizational acumen are distinctive traits commonly found among Nigerians of all ethnic groups. These are partly inheritances from our evolved and distinguished ancient cultures and partly the results of our common interaction in contemporary Nigeria.

I am convinced that the story of amalgamation contains many lessons for our benefit. In spite of our diversity, the founding fathers of our nation found cause to work together and promote a sense of unity.

We have seen a country buffeted by domination, even a civil war, and other challenges, but 100 years later, it remains one country.

The One Nigeria consciousness which has kept us together is what we must safeguard. The question we must devote time and effort to is: how do we build the foundations for the Nigeria we seek in the next 100 years?

I urge all of us, as Nigerians to rededicated ourselves to a Nigeria where our abundant talents, ideas, competencies and values drive the change that will shape an emergent Africa in the new world. Our belief as a people as we prepare for the next 100 years, must be that the unity of Nigeria is indivisible, non-negotiable, sacred and sacrosanct.

No one should insist on reversing history; those who seek a return to pre-1914 Nigeria only seek to diminish our collective heritage; we must remain the forward-looking people that we are.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the journey of our country since

independence has been directed at a destination of unquestionable greatness. We have no choice but to continue to work hard at building a powerful, cohesive, inclusive and progressive country that will remain the pride of all Nigerians and the black race in general.

We are emerging as a strong, politically stable and democratic country. We have held four successive elections since 1999, democratic principles and ideals are progressively becoming part of our political culture. During the 2011 elections, I promised free and fair elections, and one man one vote, one woman one vote, one youth, one vote.

I kept my word and the election was adjudged nationally and internationally as free and fair. We are encouraging greater social participation through the enactment of the Freedom of Information law which I signed. This encourages all Nigerians to freely express their views and dissent on all matters.

We should encourage all those Nigerians from all walks of life who demonstrate boundless faith and hope in the country to continue their emotional and practical investments in the worthy and glorious Great Nigeria project.

We shall sustain and advance our country's emergence as a politically powerful, socially stable and democratic society; a technologically advanced industrial economy, a prosperous and equitable society and a powerful player in the global system. On balance, despite all the challenges, we have recorded great strides in building and welding a new Nigeria; our current Transformation Programme will take the process to even greater heights.

As we keep our hopes alive and let our passion for development burn we will build the Nigeria of our dreams. I believe that Nigeria is destined for greatness.

I see a united, peaceful and prosperous nation in the horizon. This greater Nigeria, will make generations yet unborn very proud. To this greater Nigeria, we fully commit ourselves. Arise we shall, and prosper, we will.

Thank you. God bless you all and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*February 4, 2013*

## WE SHALL OVERCOME THIS TRAUMA

*At a special session of the Federal Executive Council in  
honour of victims of Dana plane crash of Sunday, June 3, 2012*



It is with a very heavy heart indeed that I address you today on this last day of national mourning for our fathers, mothers, children, brothers, sisters, colleagues, associates, friends and fellow citizens who lost their lives in Sunday's plane crash. While the official mourning period ends today, no one can doubt that the pain and anguish of the shocking, sudden and unexpected loss of highly valued lives in that horrendous plane crash will remain with us all long after this day has ended.

My heart goes out to the immediate families of all the Nigerian and foreign victims of the crash. We continue to pray that God Almighty will grant them divine solace and consolation. As I said at the crash site on Monday, it is a highly regrettable setback to ongoing efforts to reposition our aviation sector and further enhance the safety record of Nigerian carriers which had improved significantly in recent years.

I wish to reaffirm our commitment to the improvement of the quality of our aviation infrastructure with the overall goal of making air travel safer. We will

remain and stay firm on this commitment. At a time such as this when a tragedy of such proportion befalls the nation, we must strive even more to put in place those measures that can support air safety and other means of transportation.

I have directed that the fullest possible investigation be undertaken into the remote and immediate causes of the crash with a view to ensuring that the proper lessons are learnt from it, and that going forward, every necessary measure is effectively implemented to enhance the safety of air travellers in Nigeria. In the past few days since the crash, our newspapers, airwaves, and social media have been awash with all manner of theories and speculations on the cause of the tragedy. I urge that there should be no rush to judgment.

The lives of all Nigerians and foreigners in our country are precious to this administration. We will continue to do everything possible to protect lives and prevent avoidable deaths. I assure all Nigerians and the international community that the investigations which I have ordered will be very thorough. Let me warn that where clear dereliction of duty is established, firm action will be taken.

This administration stands ready to take whatever action may become necessary after the investigation to prevent the recurrence of air mishaps.

We are a nation of highly resilient people; in time, we will surely overcome the collective trauma of Sunday's plane crash in Lagos.

However, we must never forget the many precious lives that were lost in that utterly devastating crash.

I invite all stakeholders in the sector to join hands with us in proactively implementing measures and undertaking actions that will ultimately benefit the entire industry and reassure the public.

In addition to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)/Federal Ministry of Aviation Committee on the strengthening of the financial stability and growth of domestic airlines, I have also directed the Coordinating Minister of the Economy/Minister of Finance, the Minister of Trade and Investment, the Governor of the Central Bank, and the Chief Economic Adviser to the President, to further look into our

tariffs and other taxes as they relate to the aviation industry and come up with recommendations as to where we can further assist the sector.

May God have mercy and bless the souls of our beloved departed and continually strengthen those who mourn their loss.

May their souls rest in perfect peace.

*June 6, 2012*

## NIGERIA AND JAMAICA SHARE A UNIFYING VISION

*At the Joint Meeting of the Houses of Parliament of Jamaica, in commemoration  
of the 50th anniversary of Jamaica's independence in Kingston, Jamaica*



I consider it a great honour to be invited by the Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller to Jamaica at this special and historic moment. It is a great delight to be here at a time when you are celebrating both the Emancipation Day and the Golden Jubilee of your country's Independence. I wish on behalf of the Government and the People of Nigeria to congratulate the Government and the People of Jamaica on the occasion of your country's 50th. Independence anniversary and to express to the Governor General, the Prime Minister, Members of Parliament, and the people of Jamaica, that we as your kith and kin in homeland Africa, rejoice with you and bring you special greetings on this memorable occasion.

I am grateful for the warm welcome that has been extended to me and my wife and members of my delegation, since our arrival. I am also grateful for the honour of addressing this great House, the Parliament of Jamaica.

It was only two years ago that our own country, Nigeria also marked the 50th anniversary of her independence. Although our two peoples are separated

by distance, we share many things in common: a common heritage that spans centuries and generations, as well as political and cultural linkages. It is not lost upon us that we have come to Jamaica at a time of great national renewal, of hope and belief that a determined people can prevail and overcome any challenges that may be thrown at them irrespective of time and space.

This is what I believe Emancipation and Independence mean for this land and all the states in the Caribbean. The loosening of the chains that held people down and diminished their humanity has awesome inspirational force and great symbolism.

The good news is that the chains have since been cast away. It is a new age. And we must rise to its challenge. Jamaica, in particular, has come a long way through generations of history that are marked by significant experience. The Independence that is celebrated today tells a story of triumph and progress. Today, I do not intend to take you on a voyage through the history of the black man and woman and our common heritage. I believe that this is something that you are familiar with, and very knowledgeable about too, like an inescapable sub-text of our collective experience as one people. One certain fact is that the Black man is alive; he remains resilient, proud and is moving on.

Your country, Jamaica is a fine example of how a people can turn handicaps into opportunities and challenges into narratives of success. The strength, resilience and durability of Jamaica's freedom and democracy speak for themselves and are to be found within this setting. Over the years, especially since Independence in 1962, this country of great men and women has built and nurtured very strong democratic norms as a foundation for inclusive nationhood.

As Jamaica moves ahead, Nigeria stands with her and her people and will continue to work with you. Jamaica has always been a reliable partner in progress among the developing nations especially of African descent. It has always been a source of hope that has given support to the cause of the developing world and the black race in particular. Having come along so far, and so gloriously,

and to this point in your 50 years of Independence, you can only move forward with greater expectations and successes not only from your people but from the world.

The people of Jamaica can only be prosperous living together in peace and harmony within the context of a peaceful world. There is much that Jamaica and Nigeria can do together to promote and sustain the democratic ethos and culture, beyond our respective countries, along with those with whom we share affinity and a common cause. We must put together, frameworks for action to support needed collaboration in this vital area. We must also work together to secure and guarantee human, civil and other basic rights that support nation building.

In a clear sense, these are the same rights that we celebrate today. These are the same passions that underpin both Emancipation and Independence. They are the same values at the heart of the Black Heritage. But if I may locate the present in the context of our past, the question should be asked: is the Black man really free today?

Today I am happy that the black man has put the shame of dispossession behind him and is moving on. At independence, many African States had ephemeral democratic governments that were overthrown by Military dictators. Dictatorial regimes invested heavily in self-preservation and not development. I am happy today that most black people of the world live in countries where democratic governments are in control. Today the destiny of the Black person is in the hands of the Black people.

But the other truth is that the Black race is still at war against poverty, against diseases, ethnic conflicts and underdevelopment. This must be addressed. There is the need for Nigeria and Jamaica, and indeed the rest of the world, to work together to reduce the level of those artificial forces that have kept the majority of our people from making progress.

The predicament of the black race is inherently shared by Nigeria with its

population of 167 million people. The same reason our past leaders took it upon themselves to be part of the fight for the total liberation of African countries from the shackles of colonialism. Our forbears, in Africa and in Diaspora, have done well. We are working very hard. But we have a duty and a responsibility to create, nurture and sustain an environment under which future generations have no other option but to prosper and excel. We can only do this through the consolidation of democracy and good governance.

Let me at this point sincerely appreciate what this great country of Jamaica is doing in this regard. To have a female Prime Minister elected even for a second term, demonstrates clearly the advanced level of democracy in your country. I congratulate you and I congratulate my dear sister, The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, for being the first female Head of Government of this great country.

Recommending a model for the growth of nations is not an easy enterprise, and I do not intend to venture into that. Different countries have different challenges at different times in their history. But it is my humble belief that democracy, good governance and the rule of law will be the tonic that will revolutionize our economies and technological development.

In a highly globalised and competitive world, states are forming strong regional economic blocs. To promote trade and investments, boundaries are beginning to get narrower and narrower every day. It is for the same reason that we must support one another in tackling the scourge of imbalances in the prevailing global order. As black people, with a common ancestry, we must unite.

We must unite to fight poverty.

We must unite to fight hunger

We must unite to fight diseases

We must unite to fight illiteracy

We must unite to fight bad governance and electoral malpractices

We must unite to fight ethnic conflicts

We must unite to fight dictatorial regimes in Africa

We must unite to fight terrorism.

We must unite to secure a place of pride for the Black man in a modern and technology-driven world.

Africa is free of colonialism but not totally free because of its economic dependence on others. We therefore still have our work well-defined for us: we must be committed not only to liberating ourselves from economic woes but also to work with other counterparts, the developing nations of the world, to achieve economically what we have achieved politically.

Within the context of a new world order, Jamaica is potentially gifted to create for herself, a redefined role in the pursuit of economic development within the emerging new World Order. Where will Jamaica be in the next 50 years? Where will Africa be in the next 50 years? What is the future of the black man or woman in the world in the next 50 years? This should be our pre-occupation. That is our challenge, as we celebrate this Golden anniversary.

There are new realities to which working with Jamaica, Nigeria will further commit herself. These include new trends of global economic slowdown and security concerns. These are global issues of our time. Our roles must be complementary. Nigeria and Jamaica must work together to make a difference and increase the fortunes of our people. As leaders we cannot afford to disappoint our people and future generations.

There is a unifying vision that Nigeria and Jamaica share. There is ample scope for even greater and more functional co-operation between our two countries. The opportunities for increased trade and investments are immense. We must take advantage of them to build and strengthen our ties. Jamaica was one of the first countries to which Nigeria sent her first set of Technical Aid Volunteers in 1989.

We also have a Cultural Agreement with Jamaica signed in 1991, which provided for the exchange of information on the culture and the arts of both

countries. I recall, very vividly, Jamaica's effective participation at the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Lagos in 1977. A Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) has since been established to consolidate the achievements of FESTAC '77. I intend to discuss with the Hon. Prime Minister, ways and means of developing an interaction between the Centre and similar structures in Jamaica to further improve our technical cooperation in cultural matters.

I also must affirm the role that both Jamaica and Nigeria, in concert with other countries, have played in the quest for a new world order that is more equitable and just. We have done this together over the decades, especially within the United Nations, the G77, the Commonwealth and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) and in other multilateral bodies where through determined action, we have made a difference. We must continue to press ahead with such collaboration at the multilateral level.

Jamaica and Nigeria must continue to work together to strengthen our special relationship and to help transform our societies and the world.

Your Excellency, the Governor General, Honourable Prime Minister, President of Senate, Members of Parliament, I wish to thank you once again for inviting me to Jamaica at this special moment in the history of your country.

Thank you very much.

Aug 2, 2012

## WE'LL SURELY TRIUMPH OVER CURRENT CHALLENGES

*2012 Easter message to the nation*



Dear Compatriots, I greet you all on this happy occasion of Easter celebrations for the year 2012. For our Christian brothers and sisters, the significance of Easter which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ lies in its promise to the faithful of ultimate triumph over all challenges and adversity. We are a people of great faith and the vast majority of our people are adherents of the world's major faith-based religions.

My message to the nation therefore, as we celebrate one of Christianity's most holy days, is that we should continue to have faith in our collective ability to overcome all present challenges and take our rightful place in the comity of nations as a strong, united and prosperous country.

As people of faith, we must never succumb to hopelessness and despair. We must rekindle and retain deep faith in our shared vision of greatness, and continuously renew our determination to achieve our immense potentials through total commitment and dedication to the fulfilment of our national aspirations.



PHOTOS





Then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan presiding over the Federal Executive Council meeting in the absence of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua who was receiving medical attention abroad



Dr Jonathan taking the oath of office at his inauguration as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu on May 29, 2011



President Jonathan signing the official oath documents after his inauguration



President Jonathan acknowledging cheers after his inauguration



From Left, Foreign Affairs Minister, Olugbenga Ashiru, President Goodluck Jonathan, Chairman, Korean Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Kyung Shik Sohn and Nigerian Ambassador to South Africa, Ambassador Desmond Akawor during the Nigeria-Korea Investment Forum in Seoul, Korea, in March 2012.



President Jonathan receives the victorious Super Eagles who won the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations



Change of Guard at the State House, Abuja during the 2011 National Independence Day



President Jonathan flagging off his presidential campaign in Lafia, Nasarawa State, 2011



Meeting with UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon in Addis Ababa



At the launch of the SURE-P with principal officers of government. On immediate right is Vice President Namadi Mohammed Sambo.



Presenting the Appropriation Bill to a joint session of the National Assembly



Presiding over Council of State Meeting      Acting President



Addressing the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio, Brazil. June 2012



I fervently believe that as the resurrection of Jesus Christ signifies the triumph of light over darkness, Nigeria will overcome its developmental challenges in the shortest possible time if we all resolve to set aside our differences, work together as one people, and foster peace, harmony and security in our country as requisite conditions for steady socio-economic growth and development.

My administration will continue to give dynamic, purposeful and effective leadership towards the attainment of our goal of faster national progress and development. We shall continue to put the greatest effort into achieving a positive transformation in the lives of our people with the effective implementation of our agenda for national transformation.

I shall continue to count on your support, cooperation and prayers for the progress and well-being of our dear nation.

Happy Easter celebrations.

*April 8, 2012*

## HOUSING IS KEY TO GDP

*On his maiden visit to the Eko Atlantic City project in Lagos*



I am highly delighted to be here today on my maiden visit to the construction site of Eko Atlantic City. This landmark event is continuing the good news narrative that Nigeria must embrace permanently. It took us nineteen years for us to win the Africa Cup of Nations again; the trains that now run from Lagos to Kano took us another nineteen years to get them back on track. And in this same year preceding our centenary, we are gathered here to witness the ground breaking of a modern city that will rise from the Atlantic bed in the commercial nerve centre of our beloved Lagos. This is good news indeed.

I want to congratulate South Energyx Nigeria Ltd, the Government and good people of Lagos State, Messrs Dredging International Ltd and all the financial institutions, especially First Bank of Nigeria Plc, First City Monument Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank, BNP Paribas, Fortis and KBC Bank, for this most outstanding initiative.

The correlation between well-planned development and good quality of life as a bedrock for higher standards of productivity and sustainability cannot

be over emphasized even as we note that housing is an important sector that provides jobs for our young men and women.

It is in this regard that the Housing and Urban development sector has been accorded priority attention by my Administration in recognition of its huge potential as an engine of growth and sustainable development. To this end, the enabling policy frameworks for kick-starting the revitalization of this sector are now being put in place. As part of the overall Transformation Agenda, this administration is committed to harnessing the potential of the housing and construction sectors as an important growth area for the Nigerian economy.

All over the world, housing and construction constitute an important component of GDP. The sector has extensive backward and forward linkages, and thus can drive job creation for the building materials industry, for artisans such as plumbers, carpenters, and masons, and also for those who specialize in the interior and exterior decoration of buildings.

Admittedly, there are challenges in the housing and construction sector that cut across a number of areas, including property titling and high costs of building materials among others. To resolve these challenges I convened a presidential retreat with a view to consulting widely and extensively with various stakeholders so as enable Government take the right decision in the interest of our people.

I am therefore pleased to announce, as one of the outcome of the retreat, that we have commenced work on establishing a Nigeria Mortgage Refinance Corporation (NMRC) to help in providing finance for the housing and construction sector.

The NMRC, which will be private-sector led, will be established as a PPP arrangement. The partners will include the Federal Government, Nigeria's local banks and savings & loans institutions, and the multilateral institutions, especially the World Bank which is providing concessional credits of three hundred million dollars. Subsequently, the NMRC would be able to access the capital markets to

raise long-term funds via bond issues.

We anticipate that the NMRC will provide more liquidity to the housing and construction sectors, and with its operations, would hopefully lead to reduced mortgage and construction finance interest rates.

The e-collection platform created by the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) for a more efficient collection and management of the National Housing Fund (NHF) and the broadening of its products to include provision of credit for informal sector workers are other complementary efforts to increase accessibility and affordability to mortgage finance.

With the on-going efforts to deal with the low capital base of mortgage institutions through new policy measures, we are optimistic that more Nigerians will be provided the opportunity of having access to home ownership.

The current policy measure of Government to encourage private sector participation in housing delivery through the Public-Private Scheme is also yielding good results with the implementation of a number of pilot schemes by the Federal Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development under the contractor-finance initiative.

The lessons from this initial effort are to be factored into a larger plan to gradually upscale the scope of implementation in the coming years to deliver more housing units using a variety of alternative technologies to promote accessibility and affordability in housing delivery.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is working with the State Governments to reduce the transaction time and the cost of the acquisition of land titles so that we can meet our objective of reducing the national housing deficit through substantial addition to the current stock.

I have received briefing to the effect that the construction of Atlantic City is benefiting from cutting-edge technology with special attention paid on climatic conditions including the perennial threats of ocean surges that has posed serious challenge to human and property on the coast of Victoria Island.

When completed, the Atlantic City will not only benefit the promoters of this project, but it will be an important addition to our nation's strive to promote tourism and good living. The Project is a great example of partnership, for it brings private individuals and companies who have the knowledge and requisite expertise to transform land lost to erosion into a delightful Ocean City.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, new cities are good, new cities are smart, new cities help to improve our thinking and our lives. We will encourage urban renewal, and where necessary new cities to be built to complement the old. It is in this regard that the Federal Government has given its full support to the construction of the Eko Atlantic City. I want to encourage every state government and other entrepreneurs to emulate this noble initiative.

Once again, I thank the initiators for this outstanding legacy project that will not only benefit the present generation, but generations yet unborn as well.

I thank you.

*February 21, 2013*

## ACHIEVERS WORTHY OF EMULATION

*At the investiture ceremony for the conferment of the year 2009  
Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM) award*



I am delighted to welcome you all to the Investiture Ceremony for the conferment of the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM) Award for the year 2009, on three distinguished Nigerians who have been adjudged as deserving of the Award by the Governing Board of the Nigerian National Merit Award. This is the highest and most prestigious Award bestowed by our nation on Nigerian citizens, at home and in Diaspora, for creative, intellectual and academic contributions that have national as well as global significance.

This ceremony is held to recognize and celebrate your achievements. I congratulate you for your outstanding achievements. This ceremony is holding one year behind schedule due to the circumstances the nation found its self at the originally appointed time. So as we celebrate your investiture this is also another opportunity to celebrate the resilience of this country.

Since the Nigerian National Order of Merit Award was established thirty-one (31) years ago, only a total of 60 Nigerians have been honoured with the Award. This is a clear evidence of the high standards and quality of the merit-

driven evaluation procedure used in selecting the winners of the Award. It also underscores the high expectations of the nation that the new recipients of the Award, like their predecessors, shall hold the banner of creativity and intellectual attainment high at all times. They must also endeavour, at all times, to be the beacon of hope and role models for the younger generation of Nigerians. This serves to remind all of us that our survival and collective future as a nation and as a people rests with the contributions we make to the national and global development effort in science, technology, economics, arts and other fields.

The three recipients of the 2009 awards are amongst the best in the world in their fields. They are:

- (1) **PROFESSOR LADIPO AYODEJI BANJO** is an educationist of high repute, a former University Vice-Chancellor and an internationally acclaimed linguist who has been a leading light in his field and a source of pride to our dear nation;
- (2) **PROFESSOR ADEREMI KUKU** is an international scholar and mathematician. In the field of Algebra, in particular, the Algebraic-K Theory, Professor Kuku is held in high regard and recognized as the world leader by his peers.
- (3) **MRS MABEL DOROTHY OKANIMA SEGUN** is five-star creative artist and literary giant, who is well known and highly respected for her meritorious contributions in the fields of Prose, Fiction, Poetry, and Children's Literature.

You have made us proud. I also wish to congratulate your families, friends, well-wishers, and in particular, your children and others who have come to share with you the joy of today's milestone event. I enjoin all our youths to emulate your good works and thereby dedicate themselves to excellence and strive to contribute their quota to the arduous task of getting Nigeria on the track for becoming one of the leading nations of the world.

I wish to congratulate the members of the Governing Board of the Nigerian

National Merit Award under the Chairmanship of Professor Oluwafeyisola Sylvester Adegoke as well as the members of the Board's four specialized Committees of Assessors. The integrity and the excellent sense of duty that have been the hallmark of the work of the Board and the Assessors have won the accolades of the entire nation from year to year. These qualities have made the NNOM Award, not only controversy-free, but one of the few enduring legacies of the nation that is held in high regard and actively sought by the nation's most creative sons and daughters.

I assure the board of government's commitment to support your innovative approach to the reestablishment of the nation's research and development capability and the welcome news that the laureates, in concert with the distinguished members of the five National Academies, are willing to work together as a Think Tank to support government's developmental policy initiative. I have directed the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to study the recommendations in the communiqué of the 3rd Forum of Laureates with a view to developing a White Paper for the Nigerian National Research and Development Fund and other recommendations. We are very keen to consider the recommendations in the Federal Executive Council.

Once again, I congratulate the new laureates of the Nigerian National Order of Merit and their families. We urge you all to continue to work relentlessly for the development of the nation. I wish you all God's abundant blessings in the incoming year.

*December 2, 2010*

## THE NEED TO FOCUS ON HUMAN SECURITY

*At the passing out parade of 58th Regular Combatant Course  
of the NDA Kaduna*



I am delighted to be here today at this occasion of the passing out of Combatant Cadets of the 58th Regular Course of the Nigerian Defence Academy. It is indeed most heart-warming to note that over the years, the Academy has continued to live up to the vision of the founding fathers of this prestigious institution through quality training of cadets.

The impressive parade which we have all witnessed this morning is indicative of the high standard of training and discipline that has been imbibed by these young and promising officer cadets about to be commissioned into the Nigerian Armed Forces today. A few minutes ago, I was in fact telling the Defence Minister that judging from the way the cadets conduct themselves, this place is not for "sandy rocks" but "igneous rocks". Let me therefore, extend very well-deserved commendation and congratulations to the Commandant and his team of highly dedicated staff for a job well done. Similarly, I congratulate the graduating officer cadets for being receptive to training and for undergoing both the academic and the very rigorous military training in the past 5 years in the Academy.

Let me remind you the cadets that as you file past the saluting dais within the next few minutes, you will be going through a ceremony that you'd not do again. You will be doing so for the last time as officer cadets from this parade ground. Indeed, this parade marks the end of your five-year sojourn in the academy and your transition into the Officer Cadre. I expect all of you to look back and give glory to the Almighty for this memorable event in your lives. Some of your colleagues with whom you started this course, for one reason or the other, may not have completed this programme with you. While you have every reason to feel proud and fulfilled for making it to this glorious day, you should bear in mind that the officer corps into which you are moving has many responsibilities. I am however, confident that armed with the quality of training which you have been given at the academy, you will be able to cope with the demands of the various services to which you will be commissioned.

Let me reiterate that my administration places much premium on security. The development of any nation is hinged on security and peace. It is for this reason that this administration is taking all necessary measures to create a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere in every part of this country so that we can achieve the goals of our all-important transformation agenda.

Apart from defending the territorial integrity of this country, members of the armed forces have often been called upon to contribute to the maintenance of internal security. The Nigerian Armed Forces which are known for their professionalism, valour, discipline and dedication to duty, have always lived up to the expectations of our people. As you will be granted the Presidential Commission, and thereafter posted to the various services to strengthen the lower segment of the leadership of our Armed Forces, you are expected to emulate your senior colleagues by avoiding any behaviour that is capable of tarnishing the image and reputation of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I urge you to comply strictly with the rules of engagement based on universal best practices in any security operation you may be involved in either within or outside our dear nation. You should also avail yourselves of training opportunities in the course of your career to enhance your contribution to the armed forces and the nation at large.

Within the past month, I have directed a review of the national security architecture to place a greater emphasis on human security. This is in response to the new emerging threat environment, and the urgent need to ensure that government provides necessary leadership in checking the reign of impunity in our land. Those who seek to violate national security must be told in very clear terms that government will spare no effort in making it impossible for them to achieve their dastardly goals, or to escape justice and punishment.

The Armed Forces have a crucial role to play to defend the integrity of Nigeria. As young officers, you will be required to uphold the same charge, now and throughout your career. Soldiering is a noble profession; your main charge is to go into the field as true officers and gentlemen. I want to assure you that my administration will do everything possible to provide the enabling environment to encourage every officer and everyone that is committed to serving the fatherland.

I am aware that a new Harmonized Terms and Conditions of Service for the Armed Forces has been proposed. Let me assure you that my administration will take a careful look at the recommendations and act in the best interest of the Armed Forces.

Last year, as part of our transformation agenda, my administration approved the admission of female officer cadets into the Nigerian Defence Academy for regular combatant training.

This is in keeping with my belief that women can make and have been making valuable contributions to nation building in this country. I am pleased to note that the first set of female officer cadets have been selected to start training

with their male counterparts in October 2011 as members of the 63 Regular Combatant Course. I am indeed happy about this, and as a coincidence, this institution is for the first time today honouring a lady, a deserving lady, with a honorary degree.

It is also pertinent to state that these female cadets who were selected purely on merit will be well represented in the existing three Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering. I have no doubt in my mind that they will cope with the challenges of training in the academy and that standards will not in any way be compromised on account of their gender. I was in fact made to understand that about 5, 000 females applied and only 20 of them were selected; 20 out of 5, 000 must be good.

The Nigerian Defence Academy provides the opportunity for our youths from all over the thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory to train and interact irrespective of their cultural and religious backgrounds.

The friendship forged among the officer cadets is a life-long one which transcends all sorts of divides. I wish therefore, to appeal to all our brothers and sisters who hide under the guise of religion or ethnicity to cause unrest, to cultivate the values of togetherness and love which exist here at the Nigerian Defence Academy. This way, we will build a better Nigeria which every one of us would be proud of.

Let me at this point rejoice with the families and friends of the graduating cadets who have travelled from all over the country to witness this occasion. Your love, prayers and support have all made this day a reality for these young men. I appeal to you to continue to assist them with your prayers to enable them make a success of their chosen career.

Finally, I congratulate the Commandant and the staff of the Academy once more on the successful training of yet another set of future leaders of our armed forces.

The nation will continue to depend on you for the production of highly

disciplined young officers for our armed forces. On our part, my administration will continue to provide the NDA with all that is required to offer quality training to its Cadets.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you most sincerely for your attention and wish the passing-out cadets a very successful career as gentlemen officers in the noble profession of the arms.

I thank you all.

*September 17, 2011*

## WE REFUSE TO BE DISCOURAGED

*New Year speech to Nigerians*



Fellow Nigerians, I greet and rejoice with you all as we celebrate the advent of a new year. I join you all in giving thanks to God Almighty for bringing us and our beloved nation safely through the past year to the beginning of 2013 which, by His Grace, will be a much better year for us and our country. In keeping with tradition, it is usual for individuals, institutions and organizations to make resolutions and set agenda as a new year begins, to guide their actions in the coming months.

I have already given a clear indication of the Federal Government's agenda for 2013 in recent pronouncements. Our objective for the year is to ensure by all possible means that more of the programmes and projects envisioned by this administration, and which are already being embarked upon are further brought on stream within the next 12 months to meet the yearnings of our people, and raise the quality of life.

We have in the last year achieved a lot in terms of the positive transformation of vital sectors of our national life such as public infrastructure, power supply,

oil and gas, transportation, education, health and agricultural development. We will continue to work diligently in 2013 to ensure that our efforts in these areas are carried forward to full fruition in fulfilment of our promise of better public services and improved living conditions for all Nigerians.

We will give priority attention in the coming year to flood and erosion control, the rehabilitation and expansion of existing federal roads, improved power supply, as well as the continued rehabilitation, upgrading and reactivation of the national rail network.

Employment generation and wealth creation will also remain a primary objective of our socio-economic agenda for 2013. Creating more employment opportunities for our youth and graduates of our universities is an imperative that will continue to underpin our drive for massive economic growth, the rapid expansion of our manufacturing and industrial base, and the productive diversification of our national economy. In this regard, we will continue to provide the necessary enabling environment for the private sector to thrive.

As peace and security remain pre-requisite conditions for the full realisation of our objectives, we will also do more in 2013 to further empower our security agencies who are working in collaborative partnerships with our friends in the international community to stem the scourge of terrorism in our country and enhance the security of lives and property in all parts of Nigeria.

I also want to assure Nigerians that we will refuse to be discouraged by those who have taken it upon themselves to pick on every initiative and effort of this administration. We remain resolutely committed to the rule of law, due process and fair play in all circumstances. Our democracy continues to grow, and the scope for human freedom continues to expand. It is an achievement that we will continue to build upon.

I say it again: we are determined to continue to push forward. We will do more, not less. We will remain focused.

For your part, dear compatriots, I urge that you all include in your new year

resolutions a commitment to do more this year to support the implementation of the Federal Government's Agenda for National Transformation in every possible way. That is all I ask for.

The task of making our dear nation a much better place for present and future generations cannot be left to government alone. Leaders and followers alike have critical roles to play in our march towards the fulfilment of our great national potentials.

Let us all therefore resolve as we celebrate the new year to place the higher interests of national unity, peace, stability and progress above all other considerations and work harder in our particular fields of human endeavour to contribute more significantly to the attainment of our collective aspirations.

I wish you all a happy and rewarding 2013.

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*January 1, 2013*

## NIGERIANS ARE EAGER FOR RESULTS

*At the two-day retreat for Ministers and Special Advisers*



Let me begin today's retreat for members of the Executive Council of the Federation and Special Advisers by expressing gratitude to the Almighty who has made it possible for Nigeria to wade through difficult times in our determined march towards greatness.

This is the first in a series of retreats that we have initiated to help retool and energize key managers of the administration towards a more purposeful, effective and productive service delivery. Our thinking is that since Ministers, Special Advisers and other aides are coming from various backgrounds, a programme of this nature will also serve as a foundation for building team spirit. This retreat will be succeeded by another retreat with the private sector, targeted at growing our economy with inputs from all stakeholders. We are determined to tap into the impressive pool of talented Nigerians hungry to join hands in developing our nation.

I wish to also express my personal gratitude to former President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, who has graciously agreed to chair the first session of this

event. He comes with very unique experience, and great commitment, as a statesman and father-figure in our polity. Ladies and gentlemen, you'd all agree with me that we have a lot to learn from President Obasanjo.

As you are all aware, Nigerians are waiting to see how quickly we are able to translate ideas and words into actionable and measurable outcomes for the benefit of all. Our compatriots are eager to see the fulfilment of the promises we have made in terms of visible growth in the economy, job creation, improved electricity supply, security, better health care facilities, qualitative education, an effective public transport system, a sincere and determined fight against corruption and working for enduring peace and happiness for all Nigerians.

Whilst again congratulating Honourable Ministers and Special Advisers on their appointments, let me remind you that Nigeria is greatly endowed with human talents. Therefore, you must see your appointment from a mass of qualified Nigerians as a God-given privilege to serve the people of our country. For those of you who have been there before, this is a second chance for you to improve on your previous performance. For first-time ministers, I urge you to seize this moment of opportunity to serve Nigeria with your heart and all your might.

I made a pledge to Nigerians during my inauguration on the 29th of May, 2011 that with God's help I will never, never let them down. Those few words encapsulate the passion that I want to see in myself and in this cabinet.

We promised that there will be improved funding of educational institutions that already exist and that we will ensure quality access to education for all Nigerians of school age. I promised to tackle the issue of youth restiveness and insecurity by investing in education. We also pledged at various times to reduce the incidence of unrest in the education sector by being proactive in addressing issues of staff welfare, and other concerns. I look forward to making sure that these promises are fulfilled in the life of this administration.

Nigerians have indicated that their priority is improved supply of electricity

and even as this administration is set on implementing the various goals set out in the Roadmap to Power Sector Reforms. Nevertheless we have to ensure a successful completion of ongoing short term investments which must deliver additional power to Nigerians within the time promised.

On energy security, I repeatedly promised Nigerians that we will continue to build on the prevailing peace in the Niger-Delta to expand our oil and gas industry's productive capacity by ensuring that incidents that necessitate the declaration of a Force Majeure by the oil multinationals are few and far between and also by ensuring transparency and accountability in the extractive industry. In the downstream sector, we should gradually begin to phase out the importation of petroleum products in the short term by improving the capacity utilization of existing refineries and in the long term by building new ones. I also expect that Nigeria should have Strategic Reserves as there should never be a scarcity of petroleum products, since we must at all times have more than we need for distribution.

The policy of gradually reducing the importation of cement so that local manufacturers can grow their productive capacity has been useful in placing the country on the way to self sufficiency in cement production. We must replicate this in the area of agriculture. We must begin to implement policies that gradually reduce the importation of those products in which we can easily establish a comparative advantage even as we provide assistance through funding, training and tax incentives to local manufacturers to encourage local manufacturing of goods.

In the area of infrastructure, I will be looking out for tangible results in the repair of our existing roads and the construction of new roads. Moreover, we cannot be a nation of over a hundred and fifty million people that depend solely on road transportation. We need to build on our railways. Of particular interest to me is that projects such as the Lagos to Kano rail tracks which will ease the burden on Nigerians are completed within the projected time.

Our aviation sector has made progress in recent times including the Total Radar Coverage of Nigeria (TRACON). We must now make sure that we also have Total Voice enabling control towers at our airports. We must also bear in mind that the nation's airports must project Nigeria's image properly by being well-maintained and modernized.

We should also be mindful of the current security challenges in the country. There are those who have taken up arms against the state and their fellow citizens. We must be ready to do whatever needs to be done, within the scope of the rule of law, to bring about peace.

We must lay more emphasis on an intelligence based approach to meeting our national security challenges.

I am pleased to note that this administration has obeyed every court order and has shown due regard for the Nigerian constitution and other statutes. I expect that every government functionary will respect the sanctity of our constitution and follow due process in the discharge of assigned duties.

In addition, I also expect that we would collectively uphold the finest qualities of a democratic government by practicing collective responsibility. As long as we take a decision or formulate a policy in these chambers, every one of us is expected to uphold and defend that decision or policy. We must work towards ensuring full implementation of our budget in years ahead.

Honourable Ministers, Special Advisers, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are not here to reinvent the wheel. Where a particular model of governance has succeeded in bringing happiness to the governed, we must not hesitate in drawing lessons from its successes. However, we must also not be shy in deploying revolutionary leadership in the governance of our MDAs where such is required to make them work.

Ministers must effectively supervise their ministries, agencies and departments under them and ensure that they are positioned to add value to good governance and create jobs for our youth.

We have taken steps to tinker a little with some ministries. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has been renamed the Ministry of Trade and Investment and a new Ministry of Communication Technology has been created. We took these actions in our nation's interest so that the vast opportunities existing in these sectors can be properly harnessed to grow our economy and create jobs for our people.

Ladies and gentlemen, transformation in my view simply means taking what you have and making the best of it and in so doing produce results that can bring about a paradigm shift.

To give you a graphic example of what a paradigm shift can do, I commend to you the story of Sir Roger Gilbert Bannister. In all of recorded human history before 1954, it was said by the experts that it was impossible to run a mile in under four minutes. Then on the 6th of May, 1954, Roger Bannister, after more than a year of rigorous training, ran a mile in under four minutes and shattered the myth. Now the thing to note is that from 1954 till date, over a thousand people have ran a mile in less than four minutes. Why? Because Roger Bannister challenged their belief-system and empowered them with the mental attitude to do the seemingly 'impossible'.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is what we need to do in Nigeria. We must by our deliberate action challenge the prevailing cynicism of the average Nigerian and engender a paradigm shift that inspires hope and confidence.

Having said that, let me again reiterate that public funds are meant for the public good and I am quite pleased to know that this administration's fidelity to the rule of law is common knowledge because neither the Vice President nor I will offer protection to any one in government whose integrity is called to question.

This in a nutshell is what I expect from you and if for any reason whatsoever, you do not remember everything I have said to you today, then please remember this - I promised Nigerians that with God's help, I will never, never let them

down. Because that was my promise, it also becomes your promise. So go forth to your various stations and fulfil that promise and may God go with you and may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you.

*July 15, 2011*

## SUPER EAGLES ARE SUPER HEROES

*At the reception in honour of the Super Eagles*



We are here this beautiful evening to receive and celebrate you, our gallant Super Eagles and the technical crew, for your well-deserved victory at the 29th African Cup of Nations (AFCON) just concluded in South Africa. It is an awesome achievement for which you deserve the praise of a grateful nation. We salute you!

Without a doubt, you are our "Super Heroes". You have put a spring in our steps. You have put a golden smile on our faces. Your victory is a timely reminder that Nigeria is a land of possibilities where dreams do come true.

Your victory is an inspiration to millions of Nigerians, young and old, men and women. It is an affirmation of the resilient Nigerian spirit.

There are lessons to be drawn from your amazing victory. For 19 years, Nigeria had not won the African Cup of Nations. With all our endowments in the game of football, we could not even qualify for the last tournament. It was very humiliating. The general impression was that our football had been drained of its energy and lost its sparkle.

When you left for South Africa for the 29th AFCON, not many people believed victory could come our way. There was scepticism about your ability to perform. Not many people believed that the combination of local talents and foreign-based players could deliver glory to our country.

In spite of the scepticism, you did not despair. You refused to be held back by the fears of those who doubted you and your abilities. With determination, you got down to work, ignoring the critics and cynics. You focused on your goal with inflexible will. When you drew your first two matches, many Nigerians lost hope, remembering that we have been out in the cold for 19 years.

Commendably, you did not flinch. You did not give up. You did not surrender. You kept working hard in training. You put in all your best, believing that it was not over yet. With determination, you qualified for the next stage. From then on, there was no stopping you.

I want to assure you, and all Nigerians, that your victory at the African Cup of Nations is a good indication that there is also victory for us as we work hard to transform Nigeria.

I am very confident that the Transformation Agenda will continue to deliver positive results for our people. I want to declare that the process of rebuilding our sports has begun. This victory is an encouraging reward for our efforts.

After our poor outing at the London 2012 Olympics, we went back to the drawing board. I hosted a Presidential Retreat on Sports where we strategized on the way forward. We are more than determined to make sure the glory days return to our sports. We will not drop the ball. We will continue to give sports its pride of place.

Our dear Super Eagles, the major lesson of your victory is that no matter the number of people who doubt you, never doubt yourselves. Never give up in the midst of criticisms that may be unfair. Believe in yourself. Redouble your efforts. Keep the flag flying. It is a matter of time for you to begin to enjoy the fruit of your labour.

I want to seize this opportunity to thank the technical crew, led by Stephen Keshi. Let me assure you once again, that you have my full support. We are here to help you to achieve even greater successes. Qualification for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil is the next item on your agenda and you must not fail. Government will continue to support you to attain your goals. Nigeria must qualify for the World Cup!

Let me thank millions of Nigerians for keeping the faith. Football remains a strong unifying force even when politics and religion seek to divide us. On the football field, nobody cares who scores for Nigeria. You can be a Musa or a Moses; you can be a Christopher or a Mustapha, nobody cares! All we care about is for the green-white-green flag to keep flying high.

Anytime Nigeria wins, the celebration in Ibadan is as loud as the celebration in Kano; the celebration in Aba is as loud as the celebration in Maiduguri. That is the spirit. That is what makes us Nigerians.

We must not let our differences define us. We must insist that our togetherness is God's testament to our common humanity. Last Monday, my predecessors and I converged here and flagged-off our Centenary celebrations.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in this pre-centenary year, our victory in South Africa is the most precious gift that the Super Eagles have presented to our Nation. We are most grateful.

At the last Presidential retreat on Sports, I directed that innovative ways of funding sports to compliment government's efforts be examined. I am happy at the result we are receiving.

I want to specially thank State Governments, Corporate bodies and individuals that have contributed to the success of the Super Eagles success.

In appreciation of this glorious victory, Alhaji Aliko Dangote has donated one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the Super Eagles: each player is to get 5million naira and the rest to the coach and other officials of the team.

Also, Otunba Mike Adenuga Jnr, has donated one million dollars (\$1,000,000)

to the team; Sir Erneka Offor, five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000); Mr. Jim Ovia, five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000); Mr. Tony Elumelu, five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000); and Alhaji Rabi'u Samad, five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

I urge others who are eager to join in honouring our dear Super Eagles to feel free to do so.

The Federal Government on its part has decided to reward the team and the technical crew as follows:

(a) National Honours are hereby conferred on:

- |                         |   |     |
|-------------------------|---|-----|
| i. Head Coach           | - | CON |
| ii. 3 Assistant Coaches | - | OON |
| iii. The Captain        | - | OON |
| iv. Each Player         | - | MON |

(b) Cash Rewards

- |                             |   |             |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------|
| i. Head Coach               | - | N10 million |
| ii. Each Player             | - | N5 million  |
| iii. Each Assistant Coach   | - | N5 million  |
| iv. Each Technical Official | - | N2 million  |

(c) In addition, members of the team and the technical crew will each get a plot of land in Abuja.

Congratulations, our victorious Super Eagles. Congratulations, our resilient technical crew. Congratulations, my fellow Nigerians. The best is yet to come. Nigeria's greatness is assured!

I thank you.

*February 12, 2013*



INAUGURATIONS



## OUR INTEGRATION CAN BE ON THE FAST LANE

*Acceptance speech on the re-election of Nigeria as Chairman of ECOWAS*



Today, on behalf of Nigeria, I accept the Chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States and wish to express my sincere appreciation to you all for Nigeria's re-election as Chairman of ECOWAS for yet another one year. Nigeria's re-election is a reaffirmation of your faith and confidence on my country and my humble self despite the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Let me therefore assure you that our circumstances notwithstanding, Nigerians remain strong and unwavering in their belief in Nigeria's future, its unity and progress.

I also wish to assure you of our continued commitment and our preparedness to work with each and every one of you for the advancement of our common cause especially in creating a region of peace, democracy and development. This is a challenge we face and this is a challenge we must confront in order to meet the hopes and aspirations of our peoples.

In each of these, we have made some significant progress but a lot more

remain to be accomplished. We must not relent in our collective efforts to make our sub-region an oasis of peace and tranquillity. Under Nigeria's leadership, we must continue to work assiduously for peace and security in the sub-region. Individually and collectively, we should resolve today and stand ready to assist any member state that is threatened by forces of destabilization.

Your Excellencies, the drive for democratization must continue unhindered as it guarantees peace, security and opportunities for development. We owe it as a responsibility to our peoples to open up the political space and allow them to select or elect their leaders. Their will we must respect at all times. ECOWAS must therefore continue vigorously in its efforts to ensure free and fair election throughout the sub-region.

On behalf of ECOWAS, I appeal to all leaders where elections are due to take place in the coming months to exercise restraint and conduct their campaigns in such a way that elections do not end or generate new crisis of instability in our sub-region.

As an organization created to pursue the integration of the sub-region, through collective development, there can be no better time especially in the face of new global economic changes to seriously renew our commitment and focus on how to accelerate the economic integration of our sub-region.

I am convinced that our integration can indeed be put on the fast lane when we deepen and expand the free movement of peoples, goods and services and when we focus on the development of integration infrastructure especially transport and communication. From the perspective of economics of scale, the whole sub-region stands to benefit from such a focus as it will lead to the collective growth of our economies and our survival. There is also no doubt, that we stand a better chance in meeting the challenges posed by the fast developing changes in the global economy.

Under Nigeria's Chairmanship, these will be our main focus. Our desire and aspiration is to work with each and every one of you to improve on the already

high standard of the Commission. We must endeavour to continuously make ECOWAS responsive to the desires of the peoples of our sub-region. We must not fail.

Thank you and God bless.

*February 16, 2010*

## YOU MUST HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

*At the inauguration of the reconstituted Federal Executive Council*



Good afternoon, very distinguished Ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to have you all here for the inauguration of the reconstituted Federal Executive Council. It takes only a great people to have demonstrated so much patience and tolerance with government in the light of the recent experiences in our country. For this, with all humility, I salute the Nigerian people and its indomitable spirit of never-give-up.

It is that spirit, well identified as the nucleus of our unity and our citizenship, which our founding fathers laboured to uphold that we must now defend with every strength in our breath.

Moments like this offer us an opportunity for reflection and rejuvenation so that the labours of our heroes past shall never truly be in vain. For me, this brief ceremony, as we enter the last lap of our four years mandate is also a time for the revalidation of the original dream of our founding fathers as rooted in our nation's aspiration for justice, liberty and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms.

No longer must we tolerate the triumph of centrifugal forces whose main agenda is to distract and defeat the march of our people to the summit of economic self-sufficiency and political maturity. In this regard, let me use this occasion to once again salute all stakeholders especially the National Assembly, Elder Statesmen, Former Heads of State, Civil Society, the Armed Forces, Religious and Opinion Leaders, and the various security agencies for their loyalty to the constitution and the defence of the Nigerian people and our young democracy.

The oath of office and oath of allegiance which you have just taken, together constitute a sacred commitment to serve the Federal Republic of Nigeria without fear or favour, with transparency and accountability, and at all times with good faith and maximum effort.

At the outset let me say clearly that I have confidence in this team, which I believe reflects the ambition of the Federal Government to take bold steps in all sectors. Our people demand the best because mediocre performance will not be enough to meet the high expectations of the moment. I will, therefore, continually monitor and evaluate your performance. Each of you has a portfolio but our responsibility will also be collective. This means that we must support one another, because together each achieves more.

Therefore, the mission of this executive council is to deliver on the promise of good governance by showing competence, honesty of purpose, patriotism and selflessness in the privileged business of governance.

The executive council we are inaugurating today will continue to work for a rigorous implementation of the policy framework of this administration, which came into office on the 29th of May 2007. While we continue to pray for the speedy recovery of the President, permit me to emphasise the policy continuum of governance and to insist on the imperative of this team to roll up its sleeve, and to redouble effort so as to meet the expectation of our people who are yearning for good governance.

Our efforts in governance must be manifested in the revamp of decaying infrastructure including steady power supply and good roads; provision of sound and quality education; the good health of our people; provision of jobs for our unemployed youths, security of life and property, commitment to free and fair elections and the very strict adherence to the rule of law.

To me, the best instrument for the measurement of development is the yardstick of a steady improvement in the quality of life of our people in all areas. In the next two weeks my office will work with you to determine and agree on ministerial goals and targets including milestones. This will form the basis for performance agreements that each of you will sign. Once the ministerial objectives are agreed it will be your responsibility to inform the public and you will also publicly report progress.

I will hate to disappoint you but I will hate even more to disappoint the nation. So let it be clear that the collective interest of the nation will always override any narrow interests.

Patriotism, accountability and transparency must underpin all our work. We should remember that the public has a keen interest in what we do as public officials. I take public perception seriously because I believe that citizens always matter. We must therefore strive to maintain public confidence at all times.

We owe this much to our people.

The policy of this administration remains a zero tolerance of corruption. Therefore, demonstrable accountability must not only be done but be seen to have been done. In this regard, we will not hesitate to take whatever action necessary to protect the bond of trust, which must always exist between the government and the governed.

Let me put you on notice: The assignment of offices is not an allocation of privileges. You are here on national assignment and you can be reassigned with little or no notice in the national interest, for you are political administrators not operators!

As we advance towards the strengthening of our democracy and the institutions and systems of our federalism, let me urge you to be partners in progress with other tiers of government. We will frown at undue politicking and the promotion of needless friction in the polity.

You are here to serve Nigeria and Nigerians.

In the comfort of our offices let us not forget that majority of our people live below the poverty line and that many of the things we take for granted are in fact the long unfulfilled dreams of many of our country men, women and children. There is therefore an urgency here that must not escape our attention.

Thus, I will be requesting a fortnightly briefing on the state of our economy from the economic team, which shall be constituted very shortly. This team, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Finance must help to fast-track the process of our development as this is the most important task in the life of our nation. Our present and our future depend on it.

Honourable Ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the blue print for the actualization of government objectives are there in the budget and in the various policy frameworks now gathering dust in our archives. No minister will be allowed to go on a mission of endless search for solutions. You must hit the ground running! Time is of fundamental essence and no distraction in our mission will be tolerated. This is a patriotic call to service and the self must therefore take a back seat. This rare privilege must not be abused!

I look forward to working with you to accomplish important tasks that will result in economic transformation that promotes social mobility and equity, governance initiatives that subordinate government to the people and relationships that promote national unity, peaceful co-existence and security.

I thank you for honouring our call to service, may God Almighty guide and guard you in the discharge of your assigned duties.

*April 6, 2010*

## JUDICIARY HAS TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE

*At the swearing in of Justice Musdapher as Chief Justice of Nigeria*



Today marks another special moment in the history of the Nigerian Judiciary as we have just witnessed the swearing-in of Hon. Justice Dahiru Musdapher as the 12th Chief Justice of Nigeria. Hon. Justice Dahiru Musdapher has a very rich and impressive legal background which eminently qualifies him for this appointment. The hallowed office of the Hon. Chief Justice of Nigeria carries with it onerous obligations. It requires the occupant of such an office to possess certain qualities: hard work, perseverance, ingenuity, a robust intellect and integrity.

Your Lordship, it is the expectation of the general public that as you assume office, the judiciary will remain totally committed to the cause of justice.

It is equally expected that your Lordship will at all times, particularly in the course of your service as the head of our nation's judiciary protect and uphold the rule of law, respect and observe due process, exhibit great character and learning in the discharge of this sacred responsibility which God has placed on your shoulders. And more importantly, inspire the confidence of the general public in the Administration of Justice.

It is my hope that your Lordship will steer the ship of the Nigerian Judiciary to the best of your ability at this moment when our dear nation and the Judiciary especially, is faced with daunting challenges. There is no doubt about the need to embark on comprehensive reforms in the Judiciary to enhance capacity, efficiency, and productivity as well as the perception and confidence of the general public in the ability of the judiciary to dispense justice.

The judiciary has a sacred duty to help ensure stability within the polity through the promotion of the rule of law, strict guardianship of the Constitution, and constant and unfailing application of the principles of justice.

To my mind, a vibrant judiciary, fulfilling its essence as the Third Estate of the Realm, acts as a restraining influence on the likely excesses of the Executive. It also provides a signal to all men that while their rights would be protected under the law, no form of impunity or wanton recklessness will be tolerated under the same laws. The fundamental value of the judiciary thus lies in the manner in which it builds a tradition of respect for the law.

Your Lordship, the most urgent task, with regard to the judiciary at this time, is to protect and ensure the sustenance of that tradition of respect for the law.

My Lords, distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, our judiciary has had quite an eventful history in contemporary times:

From the era of military rule when its officers had to walk the tightrope between the enforcement of constitutional principles and the challenge of managing a military that combined both executive and legislative authority, to recent years when the separation of powers is well defined under a democratic framework. Political questions are now increasingly being resolved by the courts, a general awareness of the place of the courts as the last hope of the common man seems to be on the rise. This is an encouraging development.

In many ways, the judiciary is proving to be a pillar of our Constitutional democracy; its potentials and value are well advertised. But it is also, I must say, a judiciary that is faced with a lot of problems; in its relative success lies many

unanswered questions, challenges and opportunities for fresh learning and reform.

The wheel of justice, for example, still grinds rather slowly although many laudable efforts have been made to correct this. There are questions also about the quality and efficiency of the administration of justice with regard to procedures. This year, I had signed the Evidence Act and the Legal Aid (Amendment) Act as an indication of our preparedness to support all efforts to enhance the dispensation of justice. We are prepared to continue to collaborate with the judiciary and the legislature to do everything possible to upgrade the performance of the judiciary as an institution.

However, a much bigger challenge is to be traced to Your Lordship's reference at a recent public occasion to the widespread perception of a growing crisis of integrity within the judiciary. This is something that should be carefully addressed.

The reputation of judges, the public perception of their commitment and integrity, is central to the efficacy of the courts to uphold the law and dispense justice. Judges are expected to be impartial, independent-minded and fair to all concerned. A partisan judge compromises his or her oath of office and acts unfairly. A corrupt judge disgraces the Bench on which he or she sits and the title that he wears. Judges should have power, and they do, but just as the Executive and the Legislature must not abuse their powers, judges are also expected to be above board.

Your main task therefore should be to further enhance the dignity of the courts, for on that foundation rests the integrity of our Constitutional Democracy. Every one of us must wake up every morning, confident that the judges of Nigeria will always protect our freedoms.

My expectation is that all judges whatever be their title or rank will cooperate with the Chief Justice of Nigeria to make his tenure successful. In-fighting, personality clashes, and needless acrimony within the judiciary can only serve

the unwanted purpose of bringing the entire institution to ridicule. Nigerian judges themselves must see the need to set their institution on a path of renewal.

On the part of the executive, we pledge to make ourselves available and ready to partner with your Lordship on how to make the judiciary more efficient and inspire the generality of our citizens to become more confident about the capacity of the judiciary to do justice to all men.

To this end, this administration will give full support to your Lordship's Reform Initiatives and necessary funding will be made available.

My Lords, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I will personally liaise with the National Assembly to support constitutional amendments necessary to further ensure the independence of the Judiciary and improve Judicial efficiency. Efforts would also be made to liaise with the State Governors to ensure that state judiciaries are also adequately provided for by giving full effect to the provision of S.121(3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Finally, I wish Hon. Justice Dahiru Musdapher, CFR the best of luck as he assumes the leadership of the Nigerian judiciary.

I thank you all.

*September 26, 2011*

## DEVELOPMENT SYNERGY IN THE NIGER DELTA

*At the Inauguration of the Niger Delta Development  
Commission Advisory Committee*



It is with a deep sense of the profound vision that birthed the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) that I welcome you to the formal inauguration of the Commission's Advisory Committee this morning. The law setting up the NDDC stipulates that the Advisory Committee shall comprise the Governors of the nine Niger Delta States and two persons appointed by me. I am confident that the two persons I have so appointed to work with the Governors on this Committee have the requisite antecedents and commitment to the growth and development of the Niger Delta, to make a success of this assignment.

For an organization created with a mission to restore hope and to expand opportunities for the people of the Niger Delta, the recent history of the Commission has not been an encouraging one. The Federal Government is very concerned that lingering managerial challenges have continued to plague the NDDC; and this has hindered it from pressing ahead with its critical mandate of bringing needed development to the region.

Rather than tackle the very pressing challenges of poor infrastructure, unhealthy

living environment and ill-trained citizenry of the Delta, past leaderships of the Commission allowed themselves to be distracted by extraneous considerations. This unacceptable situation led to Government intervention through the constitution of the Stephen Orosanye Committee, to look into the problems of the NDDC from 2007 to 2011. One of the outcomes of that Committee's assignment was the dissolution of the former Board of the NDDC and the constitution of a new one.

Today's inauguration of the Advisory Committee of the NDDC is further part of our Administration's holistic measures aimed at strengthening the Commission and ensuring that the entire membership of the Board functions with an uncommon sense of duty, responsibility, and accountability. The Advisory Committee is charged with the responsibility of advising the Federal Government and the Governing Board, while also monitoring the activities of the Commission, to assist it in achieving its objectives.

It is my expectation that you will also focus on addressing the very critical issue of programme and project overlap that has been observed in the operations of the Commission vis-a-vis the State Governments in the region, the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, and the Office of the Special Adviser on Niger Delta Affairs. This has often led to avoidable confusion and dissipation of scarce resources.

As major stakeholders in the development of the Niger Delta, I expect you to bring to bear on the operations of the Board, your wealth of experience and knowledge of the region's peculiar challenges. That way, we can, together, build the requisite synergy to effectively tackle the human and development challenges in the region. In the discharge of your onerous responsibility, you can be assured of the unequivocal support of this Administration.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to formally inaugurate the Advisory Committee of the Niger Delta Development Commission

May Almighty God continue to bless our country.

*March 23, 2012*

## BELIEVE PASSIONATELY IN NIGERIA

*At the swearing-in of new ministers*



Today, I am formally presenting the team that will handle the affairs of the Federal Government. Let me congratulate all appointed members of the Executive Council of the Federation on their achievement, and also for having successfully gone through the Senate Confirmation Hearings as required by law.

I want to assure everyone that the process of selecting this team of Ministers was quite rigorous; we searched far and wide within and outside the country, and finally made a selection based on an assessment of expertise, integrity, experience, qualifications, and after due consultations with a broad category of stakeholders. The Senate also did a thorough job in screening the nominees. I want to thank our Senators for their efforts and their patriotism. We have taken time to put together a Cabinet, and due process, as stipulated by the Constitution, has been carefully observed. Some of the Ministers are returning to their old portfolios to ensure not just continuity, but also the consolidation of projects and processes embarked upon in the last year.

I am concerned however, that in the course of our efforts to select this

cabinet, I received disturbing reports of threats of assassination to nominees, their families and friends, and so much campaign of calumny to discourage them from coming into government to serve. This is most unfortunate; service to the nation is a patriotic duty that every citizen must look up to, and support. There is no greater responsibility than service to the nation.

I am also aware of the comments that have trailed these appointments, both positive and negative. Honourable members of the Executive Council of the Federation, it is important for us to realize that we are all on probation in the eyes of the public. We are public servants, and we must give proper account of our stewardship to the people at all times. I believe that this Cabinet is made up of men and women who can drive our transformation programme, and work hard to make Nigeria better.

You have been called upon to serve your Fatherland at a most trying and challenging period in our nation's history. On October 1st last year, we celebrated our golden jubilee as an independent nation. On January 1, 2014, we will celebrate our centenary as a nation. This surely is a transitional phase that requires transformational leadership at all levels. I believe that the best way forward is to have a strong government of determined and capable men and women, who believe passionately in Nigeria and who want to make a difference.

You have been selected to be the change-agents that Nigerians are asking for. You must know that expectations are high at home and abroad. We are expected to stabilize power supply in the country, as a minimum pre-condition for strengthening national productivity, we are expected to generate employment for our unemployed youth; we are expected to revolutionize the agricultural sector and ensure food security for the people; we are expected to sanitize the oil and gas sector; the people also want good roads, a more qualitative public school system, as well as more efficient public health and transportation systems, and so on. These expectations cut across all sectors. Most importantly, we are expected to protect life and property, and guarantee the welfare and happiness

of all Nigerians. We cannot afford to disappoint the people.

Our nation has been described by certain persons, as a failed state. But we are definitely not a failed state. We are a country of talented people, who have the capacity to address whatever challenges our country may be facing. Other nations have passed through their own trying moments, in no way is our experience peculiar.

I believe with a transformational leadership that is willing and committed, we can reposition our country for economic growth and development, and win the support of all and sundry, including those who are in doubt or denial. There will be difficult decisions and tough moments ahead but we must through our efforts show that we are prepared to work in the best way to focus on the people's aspirations. It only takes committed people to do things differently. I believe you are among the group of Nigerians that can do things differently and help to move our country forward.

Our task is to address the issues which preoccupy Nigerians. We must act quickly while at the same time, working on sustainable responses to long-term challenges. This is the debt we owe the electorate who turned out in large numbers in the April 2011 elections to make a statement with their votes. I will therefore expect the best form of conduct in the discharge of your responsibilities.

A responsive, responsible and accountable government is central to a genuine democracy. To continue in your positions, you must always be responsive, responsible and accountable. In particular, I expect that Ministers and Ministers of State will work together as a team, and in so doing eschew the kind of rivalry and one-upmanship that has been a problem in the past. I expect maximum cooperation among all members of the Executive Council of the Federation. We cannot achieve much if we work at cross-purposes.

In the various speeches that I gave from the primaries through the campaigns to the inauguration on 29th May, I promised Nigerians that I will run a transparent government and ensure a significant improvement in our economy. You are to

join me and the Vice President to achieve this. Our plan is to restructure the economic management team in order to make it more functional; the new structure will be co-ordinated by the Minister of Finance, with a charge to ensure improved performance of key economic sectors and greater efficiency.

One critical issue that will also engage our attention is the issue of corruption. There is no doubt that our rating in the Global Corruption Index is embarrassing. Corruption is therefore the monster that we need to confront and defeat, in order to raise the country's integrity profile. The war against corruption in this dispensation will start at the centre.

The anti-corruption agencies have been directed to beam their searchlights on the Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government, and also focus on the states and local government areas, in order to send out a clear signal, that no form of abuse will be tolerated. We will carry out a comprehensive audit of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government beginning from June 2007. You must observe due process in all that you do. I expect you to be above board.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I enjoin you not to see your position as merely another job or a reward for status, but as an opportunity to serve the people of Nigeria. You must remember that Nigerians have serious concerns about the integrity of their leaders. We cannot just talk about transformation; Nigerians must see us taking serious steps in that regard. To start with, this is not a government of the ruling party; this is a government of the Nigerian people.

Each one of you must prove that you are deserving of the honour of recognition and of the portfolio that has been assigned to you. You are expected to ensure that the Ministry you head serves the interest of public good, and promotes the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. You must always remember that we are not alone in government; you will be carefully watched and assessed by other stakeholders who have as much right as you do, to be concerned about the fortunes of our country.

Everything will be done to provide an enabling environment for you to be able to function efficiently. I will also personally ensure that we remain focused as a team, and that the confidence that the people repose in us, is not taken for granted. The task ahead is not going to be an easy one. Remember the words of the late Tai Solarin, in a January 1, 1964 essay: "May your road be rough," he said. "I am not cursing you; I am wishing you what I wish myself every year. I therefore repeat, may you have a hard time this year, may there be plenty of troubles for you this year! If you are not so sure what you should say back, why not just say, same on you? I ask no more!" Obviously the road ahead of us may be rough, but with sincere and purposeful leadership, we will surely succeed in transforming this country.

Thank you. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*July 14, 2011*

## A TECHNOLOGICAL MILESTONE

*On the launch of Nigeriasat-2 and Nigeriasat-x*



Today marks another milestone in our nation's effort to solve national problems through space technology as two satellites, Nigeriasat-x designed and built by Nigerian engineers and scientists, and Nigeriasat-2, built in collaboration with our international partner, the Surrey Satellite Technology Limited of the United Kingdom have been launched at 7.45 hours GMT, today, Wednesday 17th August, 2011 at Yasny in the Russian Federation.

I congratulate our nation for this new chapter in our transformational efforts as we strive for self reliance. Let me also congratulate the resourceful Nigerians who made this history possible. We will continue to emphasize investment in science and technology as a tool to drive the transformation agenda of this Administration. With our satellites in orbit, I urge Nigerian professionals, Ministries, Departments and Agencies and the private sector to take advantage and optimise the use of these national assets.

God bless Nigeria!!!

*August 17, 2011*

## WE CAN'T AFFORD TO POLITICISE CENSUS

*At the inauguration of the board of National Population Commission (NPC)*



It is my pleasure to perform the formal inauguration of one of the Federal Government's major statutory bodies, the National Population Commission (NPC). The critical place of the NPC in the realization of our Administration's holistic Transformation Agenda can be properly appreciated when we consider the established fact that there cannot be genuine, sustained development if it is not anchored on accurate and reliable data. No meaningful planning is possible without dependable data and statistics.

This informs why we have chosen these distinguished men and women of noteworthy antecedents to run the affairs of the National Population Commission as Chairman and Members.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, while congratulating you on your appointments, I would like to reiterate the fact that you have been selected to serve on this august Commission on account of your proven integrity, unwavering patriotism, and uncommon sense of duty. It is my hope, therefore, that you will bring these worthy attributes to bear on the discharge of this very

vital national assignment.

You are expected to demonstrate the highest standards in the discharge of your constitutional mandate. This entails conducting periodic censuses and the dissemination of accurate demographic data about the country.

As you are aware, the last census which took place in 2006, was conducted using cutting-edge technology, including satellite imagery and electronic data reading technology. The entire members of the previous Commission which conducted the 2006 national census deserve our commendation.

The Commission being inaugurated today is expected to carry on from the lofty heights where their predecessors left off, and consolidate on their achievements, taking the National Population Commission to the next level. This would require total commitment and diligence of the highest order: attributes which I am confident that our new Commissioners epitomize.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as we strive to build a strong, united, progressive, and stable nation, we must eschew the temptation to pander to primordial sentiments and divisive tendencies. We should rather focus on emphasizing the strength of our diversity and the renowned resilience and creativity that mark us apart as a uniquely gifted people. It is in this context that I advise that we must never subject the sensitive issue of census figures and demographics to the expediency of cheap political advantage, with its potential for avoidable discord.

At the same time, members of the Commission must be conscious of the imperative to be guided at all times by the principles of integrity, accountability and transparency, and the need to function in the overall national interest at all times.

As we move towards 2016, the planning for a successful census should commence in earnest. In the meantime, there should be continuous update of the figures and statistics that we have. As a first charge, the Commission should ensure that the vital registration system is completed by 2015.

Beyond providing us with the numbers, it is our expectation that the National Population Commission will be more dynamic in its approach to population matters by providing real time data, which will provide us key economic and social statistics for planning purposes.

I assure you that the Federal Government will be unstinting in its support for you as you face up to the vital task of providing Nigerians with accurate, dependable, and functionally useful demographic data.

While congratulating you all and wishing you every success in your assignment, it is my honour and pleasure to formally inaugurate the National Population Commission to the glory of God and the enduring development of our nation.

Thank you.

*June 26, 2012*

## TIME TO REDUCE COST OF GOVERNANCE

*At the inauguration of committee on restructuring  
of Federal Government parastatals*



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the inauguration of the Committee on the Restructuring and Rationalization of Federal Government Parastatals and Agencies. As you are aware, the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC) which was chaired by Lt. Gen. T. Y. Danjuma, GCON (Rtd) in January, 2011 submitted a memorandum on the effective and optimal management of national resources.

One of the recommendations contained in the memorandum was the need to restructure and rationalize the number of non-ministerial agencies to eliminate overlap, duplications and redundancies. Consequently, I directed the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to review previous reports and records on the subject and proffer advice on the Restructuring of Federal Government Parastatals and Agencies.

The Ad-hoc Committee constituted by the SGF noted that there were indeed duplications and overlaps in the mandates and responsibilities of the Parastatals and Agencies and recommended the setting up of a broader committee to carefully examine the enabling Acts of the Federal Parastatals, Agencies and

Commissions and identify all areas of overlap and duplication of functions with a view to their eventual rationalization.

It will be recalled that these Parastatals and Agencies were established to speedily implement government projects and programmes without the usual encumbrances of the bureaucracies.

However over the years, government has set up too many of such parastatals with overlapping functions thereby leading to inefficiencies and wastages. Government has in effect decided to establish this Committee with the following Terms of Reference (TOR):

- i. to study and review all previous reports/records on the re-structuring of Federal Government Parastatals and advise on whether they are still relevant or not;
- ii. to examine critically the mandates of the existing Federal Agencies, Parastatals and Commissions and determine areas of overlap or duplication of functions and make appropriate recommendations in order to eliminate such overlaps, duplication or redundancies; and
- iii. to examine the enabling Acts of all the Federal Agencies, Parastatals and Commissions and classify them into various sectors and make appropriate recommendations for the review of their extant laws in line with the recommendations; and
- iv. to advise on any other matter(s) that are incidental to the foregoing which may be relevant to the desire of Government to prune down the cost of governance.

Government attaches great importance to this committee's assignment in view of the financial implications of maintaining a Federal bureaucracy with over 400 parastatals and agencies. The need to reduce the cost of government cannot be over-emphasized. You are expected to commence your assignment immediately and submit your report within eight weeks from today.

I am confident that you all appreciate the urgency and significance of this

assignment. I have no fear whatsoever that your findings and recommendations will go a long way to transform the Parastatals and Agencies in line with this administration's determination to ensure greater efficiency and productivity.

I wish you God's guidance as you carry out this crucial assignment.

I thank you all and God bless.

*August 18, 2011*

## CREDIBLE ELECTIONS DEPEND ON US ALL

*On the reconstitution of the  
Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)*



Let me begin by expressing gratitude to the Almighty for making it possible for us all to witness the swearing-in of the new Independent National Electoral Commission team. With the Senate's gracious confirmation of my nomination of Professor Attahiru Jega and the other distinguished members of the team, we have advanced one more step in our quest for credible elections.

Often, trust is the beginning of success. In this light, I must thank Nigerians for the almost unanimous endorsement of our choice of INEC leadership. We however noted that there were some complaints against some of our nominees who were perceived to have played major roles in electioneering politics in our country. Being a listening government, we had to drop such nominees. Their replacement would be presented to the Senate in a not too distant time.

May I also express my immense gratitude to the Senate for the expeditious clearance given to our nominees. This once again marks out our distinguished Senators as partners in progress; and as men and women eager as the rest of us to conclusively set our nation on a path of progress.

I was convinced, and I still am, of the compelling need to institute a robust electoral process and ensure that the process is overseen and managed by men and women of integrity. The nominees being sworn in today were selected with this goal in mind.

I therefore expect Professor Jega and his able team to meet the high standards that Nigerians and the rest of the world expect of them. This assignment is one of the most important jobs in our country and our citizens are keenly interested in its outcome. It is true that legitimacy is one of the fundamental building blocks that compel governments to accountability. To be accountable, elected officials must emerge through a process that is free, fair and transparent. Most Nigerians believe that our difficult electoral history is the reason for our underdevelopment and lack of confidence in those who govern. We must therefore begin to repudiate this arbitrariness, and there is no better time to start than now.

On assumption of office in May 2007, we publicly acknowledged the shortcomings in the nation's electoral processes and initiated vital reforms to correct this more than five decades old problem. Fellow Nigerians, we are now on our way to a new beginning.

The success or failure of the reconstituted INEC rests upon all of us. We must act with responsibility towards INEC, in order to retain the trust reposed in us by the Nigerian people. Rules and regulations must be obeyed and electoral misconduct shall not be tolerated irrespective of status or party affiliation. As the saying goes, we are all equal before the law.

We must therefore approach the coming elections with confidence and faith while maintaining constant vigilance. As we strive to strengthen the foundations of our democracy, we must rise in defence of our electoral process and insist that every vote must count.

Mr. Chairman and members of INEC, I urge you to seize the moment and do our country proud in our collective pursuit of good governance and justice.

I congratulate you all and thank you for accepting to serve our motherland.  
May God Almighty bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*June 30, 2010*

PART TWO



*Extempore Speeches*



## ON THE 2011 CAMPAIGN TRAIL



### *Presidential Campaign Flag-off in Lafia*

The rally today in this great city is for two purposes: to formally present the PDP flag to me and my running mate, the vice president - which you have witnessed - and to present the flag to the six PDP governorship candidates in the North-Central. That ceremony has been done.

Many people have spoken, so I will not bore you with lengthy speech. But I would like to comment on two issues which I consider critical factors - the economy and security. The economy is central because it is when you address issues relating to the economy that you can address poverty in the country. To create wealth, you must improve the economy.

To move a country from the third world to first world, it is the economy. Unfortunately, growing the economy is akin to the process involved in farming. It is not the day you clear the farm that you harvest the fruits; you must clear your farm, plant good seeds, so that they will grow, blossom and give you good yield. Similarly, the destruction of the economy does not start the day somebody says something or does something unwholesome. If the economy is bad, sometimes,

the problem started some years back. Sadly, in Nigeria, those who played a key role in pushing the economy to the brink are those eager today to comment on the economy.

The twin issue I intend to dwell on is security. Without security, you cannot possibly talk about the economy, because when you cannot secure lives and property, government almost loses its reason for existence. That is why the federal government could declare a state of emergency in the entire country or any part of the country when there are major security challenges.

These two things are central to our administration and we will pursue both jealously. But before you talk about improving the economy, the people must be enlightened. Education is essential and that is why we are committed to changing the educational system or improve on it from primary, through the Almajiri system, through the secondary system and the university.

Of course, we must have good and competent graduates that can drive the economy. That is one of the reasons we believe that every state of the federation should have one federal university. Some states haven't got yet. We intend to give one per zone in the first phase and complete the rest in the second year of this administration, that is 2012. But North-Central is dear to us, and we are establishing two federal universities in the North-Central states: one in Lafia here and another one in Kogi. We are also launching the Almajiri educational system. Before people get to the university, they must be nurtured at the kindergarten level and at the primary stage.

The other essential component of development is power. We are totally committed and, as such, the power situation is already improving. To ensure farmers produce food that can yield good money for them, especially in the north where rainfall is just within three months, you must irrigate.

That is why we are taking up most irrigation projects to provide water, not just potable water for domestic use, but water for irrigation so farmers can farm throughout the year.

We have a number of ongoing road projects between the North-Central and the rest of the country. The vice president has already spoken about our commitment to the development of rail. Without developing the rail network, our roads will continue to collapse. We are totally committed to that.

Nasarawa is one of the states that have got mineral deposits. This is another green area we are exploiting. We must remember the tin mines in Jos and also the fact that the zone, particularly in Benue and Kogi states, has coal through which we could generate power. We have awarded contracts for a survey to enable investors get money from the banks. They are supposed to do it, but we are helping them in order to fast-track the process.

We will look at the issue of communities that serve as catchment areas for our major dams like the Kainji Dam in Niger State. Of course, there is already a law passed by the National Assembly which I have signed. These communities have suffered so much, and some of them have been relocated, yet they are seldom considered. We will remember these communities, so that they will cooperate with the government. You are already aware of the green field refinery planned for Kogi.

We know we have our security challenges now, but we are working very hard and those who are detonating bombs will all be arrested someday. For any bomb you detonate, we will pursue you until we get you.

This administration will not sweep any crime under the carpet. Those who are encouraging the perpetrators may continue; but they will have a date with history because we will investigate, and we will not stop until the culprits are prosecuted. I promise you that we will soon put this behind. We are going to crush it.



*In Uyo...*

We are not here to campaign; but we are here to appreciate what you have done for us. Even before the primaries, Akwa Ibom declared its support when some states had yet to decide. And during the primaries, the state matched rhetoric with action. The state gave us one hundred percent of their votes.

It is now our turn to tell you that we will not disappoint you. Let me also use this opportunity to express my condolences to those who lost their lives during the Port Harcourt stampede and, of course, those who were injured. We will try our best to see the role we will play to cushion the effects of that accident for those who are still alive and the families of those who are dead.

Let me appreciate the commitment of the governor to the transformation of the state. Between 1994 - when I was in OMPADEC - to 1999 - when I became deputy governor - I used to come to Uyo very frequently. My conviction is that other candidates thinking of becoming governor should wait; I think Akwa Ibom wants Governor Godswill Akpabio to complete the good things he has started. On our way here, they told me about the free and compulsory education at the primary and secondary school levels. That is very significant; if you desire to change people, you have to, first and foremost, educate them.

Equally significant is the fact that the free and compulsory primary and secondary education is not limited to indigenes of Akwa Ibom State. I commend him for that initiative which is clearly consistent with the values of the PDP.

Our commitment is that Nigeria must be united. Gone are the days when tribe and religion are used as divisive tools. If there is poverty in this country, whether you are from Otuoke in the Niger Delta or you are from Maiduguri or Yola, or you are from Ibadan, the problem will get to you. So anybody who

is preaching violence and destruction does not want good for this country.

Even during my governorship campaign in Bayelsa then, I always emphasized that neither my ambition nor anybody's ambition was worth the blood of any Nigerian. That view has not changed; the dual ambition I share with Architect Namadi Sambo is not worth your blood. So, say no to violence, but ensure that you vote.

You don't have to kill anybody to protect your vote. By the electoral commission's regulation, you could stay there and watch and protect your vote. Make sure nobody rigs. We are emphasizing that it is one man, one vote; one woman, one vote, one youth, one vote. Vote and stay at the polling station until the votes are counted; your agent will get a copy of your result, then you can go and sleep.

Violence will not help. Nobody gains when hundreds of people have been killed. So vote and protect your vote, but we urge you that there should be no violence in any election. Nigeria needs you, we need the youths, we need the dynamic young people of this country for the transformation processes that must go on.

We have a very young population and we must creatively think of how to create jobs for them, not how to kill them. We must think of what do to ensure that as they leave school, they should have something to do.

We are rebuilding the power sector and the Akwa Ibom State governor is a good partner in that programme. We don't want to give target, but by God's grace, after the next four years, Nigerians would take power for granted. Without stabilizing power, we cannot expect to stimulate small and medium enterprises. That is the sector which really provides jobs and create wealth.

I have travelled to several Asian countries and I realize that it is SMEs that drive the economy of the so-called Asian Tigers, not necessarily the gigantic factories. The small, family-owned businesses are everywhere, so as you grow up, you have work to do. That is the area of our common interest. We will

also go into agriculture. We must farm and add value to our produce so that we can export. That is why we are setting up food processing centres. We will pursue that vigorously, so that agriculture would add significantly to our GDP, create wealth and also create job opportunities.

Like the governor and other speakers have mentioned, in the next four years, we are going to build the coastal roads that cut across the southern part of this country from Lagos to Calabar. We are going to extend the East-West Road into Cross River State through Ikot Ekpene.

To transform the society, mobility is a major factor, evacuation of goods is a major factor and free movement of people is a major factor. We are going to intervene in all these areas.

We will work with you and make sure that we change this country. We will work with you and make sure that elections are credible. We will work with you and make sure that we improve the economy of this country, so if a Nigerian is travelling to any other country, they won't simply presume that your intention is to live permanently in their country. We cannot achieve that alone, we have to work with you. That is our total commitment: to transform the economy and make all of us proud Nigerians.



*At Ochi Idoma's Palace...*

Let me sincerely thank the Ochi Idoma and members of the Benue State Council of Traditional Rulers for this reception this morning. I came to this palace in 2007 with my former boss. He has left us, and I have taken over the mantle of leadership, supported by the vice president. We are here for a similar mission.

I thank the traditional institution of Benue State for its support. You have shown support for us, you have encouraged us as a government. I would like to thank your subjects in the PDP family for giving us their votes during the primaries of the PDP. The support helped us to emerge as flag bearers of the party. Today we are here in your palace as part of our one-day visit to Benue State for our campaigns.

We don't claim to have absolute knowledge of everything. Development is best when it's from bottom to top. Our plan this time around is to have a five-year development plan, to enable us complete any project we launch before the terminal date of the development plan.

Benue State is the food basket of this country, and in the next dispensation we will work with the government to make that fact even more evident. We must create sufficient incentives for agriculture for us to generate wealth. Some of the huge sum we spend on imports will be retained here.

With regard to giving the traditional institution the prominence it deserves, I assure we have been working on that. Our draft bill is with the attorney-general, for final vetting before we submit it to the National Assembly. Even though the National Assembly has a very short time and might be unable to make a decisive pronouncement on the subject before the lapse of this legislative term, we will make a fresh submission.

I believe they will take a concrete step on the issue of traditional institutions. We need to place the traditional institution where it rightly belongs because the traditional institutions have been solving problems in this country. We have always had to rely on traditional rulers in times of crisis, whether it is political or religious. We will continue to work with you, to make sure that we improve the quality of life of our people. I thank you, Your Highness.



*In Calabar...*

I have listened attentively to your riveting speeches. We are really moved by the various charges you have given, and we promise you that we will run a government that will unite Nigeria. We shall work with all Nigerians irrespective of ethnic nationality, irrespective of religion, and irrespective of language.

We must relate with ourselves as equal partners and work together. The challenge facing leaders today is how to create wealth so that the teeming youth population will have jobs.

We have a population of about 150 million people and more than 70 per cent of this figure are people below the age of 30. Also, more than 50 per cent are people below the age of 19. That shows that in the next few years we would have a major challenge if we don't work hard as leaders to exploit opportunities for job creation.

We may discover that ours has become a society where more than 70 per cent of the youth do not have job. That will be very tragic. It is the reason we are totally committed to working with you to create jobs and improve the economy, so that Nigerians who are leaving universities won't have to fret about getting something to do.

The governor has outlined some of the interventions of the federal government in the state. But in my campaigns, I don't like citing what we have done, because we are not here on account of what we have done; we are here to point out what we intend to accomplish in the next four years. What we have done so far will be a testament to the fact we are committed to doing whatever we say. We are already in government, we know the issues, we appreciate the issues, and we have a plan on how to overcome the challenges.

In the next four years, we will work very hard to ensure that the coastal railway and the coastal road materialize. It is a project that will take enormous resources and we know that we cannot do that with our annual budgeting, so we have already established various committees to look into how that could be done. We have no option; the area must be opened up for development. We are going to intervene in any area that we're convinced has a potential to improve our economy. This is a political rally, so I may not be able to give you minor details. But I will, definitely, before the election.

We must begin to look for ways that will encourage export of our agricultural produce. Very few things are exported from Nigeria, compared to the past few decades when we exported cocoa, palm produce, rubber, cotton and several other items.

The Petroleum Industry Bill will create a lot of jobs for our people. The local content component is designed to give Nigerians increased opportunities. We are going to add value to the petroleum that we export, we are going into petrochemicals so that more jobs will be created and we can also earn more money from our petroleum sector. Some of our ailing industries have taken soft loans from government to help them come on stream again to create jobs.

For any major contract we award at the federal level, the employment component has to be made clear by the contractor. This is to create opportunities for gainful employment for young men and women. In addition, this year we have budgeted N50 billion for direct intervention in roads and similar infrastructure. Through this we would create job opportunities for young entrepreneurs in civil engineering.

I have to commend this state because it is a leading light in tourism. We must commend the government for that vision. Not too long ago, a sitting president came here to spend some days at Obudu Ranch Resort. We would patronize it a lot more. That would help attract more international tourists. We are aware of the situation in Tinapa; the governor and I discuss about

Tinapa frequently. The investment in Tinapa should not be allowed to waste. We also know the challenges caused by the Bakassi incident. The National Boundary Commission will be properly funded so that most of the challenges we have, especially with regard to the Bakassi Local Government Area, will be addressed in a way that benefits our people.



*At Obong of Calabar's Palace...*

Let me thank you for giving me one of your subjects, the director-general of the SSS who is doing very well. Your Royal Highness, Cross River State has been very supportive. This is one of the most peaceful parts of the country. We thank you for that. We have come to seek your blessing and the blessing of other traditional rulers. The vice president and I are propelled by a vision to unify the nation. Whether you are very close to the Atlantic or you are close to the Sahara, we belong to one indivisible country, and we must work together to see how we can move our country forward. We will run a government that will not discriminate against any Nigerian.

We will run an open administration, we will take economic issues very seriously, because we are committed to creating wealth for all. We have identified various ways - through the oil industry and through the manufacturing industry - to create jobs for our teeming youths.

We will also take security issues very seriously, especially given that terrorism has gradually become a reality in Nigeria. By the grace of God, we will overcome it. Your Royal Highness and other royal fathers, this is our mission. We thank you for the reception and we promise you that when we get there, we will not disappoint you. Thank you all.



*In Maiduguri...*

So many people have spoken today, so I would be brief. First and foremost, I have to express my appreciation to you all for coming in these numbers to receive us, to welcome us from the airport, till this time. What we can promise you is that we will work with you to transform this state - and we will not let you down.

We want the party, the PDP, to be united. We want all members of the PDP to work together, because whenever we work together, we achieve more. If we have a united PDP family in Borno State, the sky will be our limit. The vice president has mentioned a number of interventions and intentions in this state. The honourable minister of works, who is one of your sons, has also told you much about the road infrastructure and the bridges that we plan for the next four years. My duty is only to reaffirm the statement they have made, that I would along with the vice president, who is my running mate, run a transparent government.

We are going to explore all sectors of the economy to unleash a new wave of opportunities. That is why we've been saying that petroleum exploration in the Chad Basin will be intensified, because we believe that we have hydrocarbon reserves there. NNPC is carrying out the survey already.

It is not only in the petroleum sector that we are taking accelerated action; we're also equally committed to improved power supply. To be able to create wealth, we must do things that will encourage the small and medium scale enterprises. One of the major challenges we have in that area is power. If everyone has to generate their own power, there is no way the SMEs will generate income, because the turnover will be quite minimal. In most cases, businesses will close down.

We must industrialize and we also have to move away from subsistence

farming to a more of technology-driven farming. To achieve that, we need an educated population that know how to apply fertilizers and insecticides. We must educate our people and that is why we are looking at the total education of our children from primary school to even the university. That is why government is devoting so much resources to the Almajiri education.

One thing I must not fail to mention is the security challenges in Borno State. I can assure my good people of Borno that our security challenges in this state must be confronted. We know there are lots of external influence fuelling the crisis. But soon, these security challenges will be a thing of the past. We are working hard to enthrone peace.



*In Abakiliki...*

My dear people of Ebonyi State, I have to thank you for your patience. Some of you have been in this stadium since 8.00am and you waited patiently for us till now. We finished our rally in Aba, Abia State and came here to find this huge crowd. You waited patiently for us to arrive. That is in itself a bold campaign for us.

We will work with the state government, and that is why you have to support the PDP government by voting for us and voting for the governor and his team at the state level, and also our National Assembly members, so that we will work together to improve the infrastructure in the state.

We know that the Abakaliki–Enugu road is one you would like to dualise. We are intervening in some road infrastructure in Ebonyi State, and we promise you we will complete those road projects and, in the next four years, work with the state government to open up the state completely.

We have been talking about wealth creation through revolution in

agriculture, because if our Vision 20:2020 must be realized, there are two essential steps: first is to commercialize agriculture and, secondly, to industrialize. Ebonyi State has gained repute for rice production over the years. Even as young children, Abakaliki rice was already a famous brand for those of us from the east. Some people from the north may know. We must encourage that industry to ensure we produce rice that won't simply be consumed in Nigeria, but that could be exported as well.

It is important for the states to work with the federal government, so that we complement ourselves because the country is one. Education is for all, whether it is provided by the local, state or the federal government; anything provided is for every Nigerian and we don't have to discriminate. So I have directed the minister of education that between now and the 29th of May, all professional and legal issues that would ensure our medical students from Ebonyi State can use the Federal Medical Centre for their training must be completed.

Ebonyi State is also known for solid minerals. That is a green area and we have promised all the states that have solid minerals that in the next four years, we will revolutionize that because that is a sector that will give us money, and also have a potential to create jobs for our unemployed youths. I was briefed that we are yet to have a federal secretariat here. So, I can imagine what a pressure it would be for the state government. I assure you that we will build a federal secretariat.

I assure you, also, that your support for us will not be in vain; we will not disappoint you. We will work with your sons and daughters to create wealth here just like in every state of the federation. We will work with you to make sure that we improve on the infrastructure; we will make sure that there is peace in this part of the country for people to excel in whatever endeavour they chose.



*Presidential Campaign... in Kano*

When you are in this great and historic city, there are some people that you must remember: our late Mallam Aminu Kano. We know the ideals that Aminu Kano professed; he played politics without bitterness. He was in politics for service. His was politics that gave hope to the downtrodden, politics that gave food to the less-privileged.

I was born by poor parents, and the fact I am here today urging you to vote for me for the next four years, is an indication there is hope for all Nigerians. We bring a message of hope to the Nigerian people, that the vice president, Architect Namadi Sambo, and I will unite this country. We thank you for coming here to support us and we assure you that with your support, we will work with your sons and daughters, we will work with your governor to help ensure that the needs of the people are met.

We are emphasizing the wealth creation and for us to be able to do that, we must meet our power needs. We promise you that there will be adequate power supply in Kano State. The leather industry for which Kano was reputed must come back, because we must generate wealth for our people and we can only do that by revolutionizing agriculture, embracing mechanized agriculture and, of course, resuscitating our industries. That is why I consider solving our power needs priority. Regular power would stimulate small and medium scale enterprises. It is also a sufficient incentive for mechanized agriculture.

All the irrigation projects must be resuscitated. This is essential because we cannot depend almost entirely on rainfall and expect to carry out meaningful agriculture. So we have no choice than to fix all the abandoned irrigation projects, some of which are located in Kano State.

Even in the oil industry, the mainstay of our economy, the Nigerian local

content law is there to benefit Nigerians. In addition to that, the new Petroleum Industry Bill gives a lot of opportunities to Nigerians. We have signed MoUs with major investors in the petrochemical sector with the aim of creating job opportunities for the Nigerian people.

In the petroleum industry, there are limited job opportunities in upstream activities; it is usually at the drilling point that people are employed. Once that is done, the pumping stage is mostly mechanical. It is only when you go into petrochemicals, refining and fertilizer production that you employ. That is where we are going. In the next four years, we will work towards making that segment well established so we could create jobs for our teeming youth population.

We are going into solid mineral exploitation aggressively. In the next four years, we have a robust plan to fix all the federal government roads. Some would be fixed through the PPP model and others we will rehabilitate directly. The rail sector is also being reformed.

Last week, when we got to Ogun State, I took a train from Abeokuta to Lagos, and that should tell you our rail network is coming back on track. After that train ride, I heard someone say that a Nigerian president had not been in a train for 25 years. I said yes, this is a new Nigeria. That is the Nigeria we are planning to build in the next four years - a country where the president could ride a train to Kano instead of flying.

What we ask of you, our teeming population from Kano, is to vote for the PDP. We thank those who have joined us. Our party will not discriminate against anybody because PDP is a party for the people, PDP is the party for the masses, PDP is the party for Nigeria. So we will not discriminate, we welcome you, we thank you and assure you that you have made the right decision today. Work with us and you will see that collectively, we will change this country and create wealth for our people.



### *Rallying Support for Governor Ikedi Ohakim*

I'm here specially to thank my brothers and sisters from Imo State for the love you have shown me since I became the acting president. We want to tell you that everything we say today is the truth and we will never let you down.

We want to create an enabling environment by creating and making electricity available and putting basic infrastructure in place. We intend, also, to guarantee safety by providing adequate security and making sure that our transportation system is up to standard for good and better commercial activities. That way, we would make life easier for us all.

We are working with the governors to solve the problem of gully erosion in the South-east. I assure you that we will aggressively tackle this problem that cut across the entire South-east.

For us to achieve this, you have to cast your vote for the PDP. And I have seen your commitment for the party. In order for us at the centre to give back to the people of Imo State, a vote for Ohakim will do justice and bring about a solid relationship between the government at the centre and Imo State.

I have to work with somebody I trust and someone I believe in, so be certain that the good things already started in Imo State will endure. A vote for PDP aspirants in the House of Assembly election and the gubernatorial seat will be a vote of promise that we will never let you down.



*In Jos...*

We have been going round the country and also paying courtesy visits to traditional and religious leaders in each state which is what we are here for. We have been doing this to so we could interact with PDP members in all states and also Nigerians. That is why we are doing this openly for all to see how we can all come together to move this nation forward.

Your Royal Majesty, we promise you and other royal fathers and also all Nigerians that if you give us your mandate, we will run an open government. A government that will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their tribe, ethnicity or religion because we believe that one of the greatest challenges we have now is the problem of wealth creation.

Poverty does not speak any language and it does not belong to any religion. We want to work with all Nigerians to see how we can curb poverty in our society. That is the reason why we put so much emphasis on power and water especially for farming areas. If our farmers have power and water, it will make things easier for them and lives will change for the better.

Before this time, we all queued at filling station to buy fuel. But that has been taken care of as we can now buy fuel at filling stations much easier. We want to maintain that. We have been discussing with NNPC that Nigeria should not simply be exporting petroleum. We should be talking about exporting petroleum products like petro-chemical. We should be able to add value to gas, and crude oil before we export.

It is well known that security is a major challenge in Plateau. These days, you hardly open the papers without reading about one crisis or the other in Plateau State. Some of which are not meant to be. We will work with the elders and

security agencies to make sure that things are under control.

On our way here, the governor briefed me about some steps that have been taken by the state government and I can see for myself some developments which inspire hope, and which demonstrate that if we all work collectively, we will curb the menace of insecurity in Plateau because without peace, there can never be development. We would not disappoint the people of Plateau State and Nigeria at large. It's a promise.



#### *In Dutse...*

After this rally, the last of the presidential rallies will be the one in Abuja. We chose to round off our state-to-state campaign in Jigawa for some obvious reasons. Jigawa remains a peaceful state under the supervision of a visionary governor.

We are here today because of the level of commitment shown by the governor. So many speakers have mentioned a few things this administration has been able to achieve. We have a committed governor who is working so hard for the good of the state and the nation at large. In terms of education, you have heard from the minister of education that the governor has transformed the educational sector of the state. Our programme which includes the Almajiri programme and also the tertiary education system is in progress. We will intervene very aggressively to find a solution to the congestion we have in our tertiary education system especially with regard to hostel accommodation.

I believe sincerely that you cannot train or get the best of students in a crowded environment. A crowded or boisterous environment is not a good atmosphere for good education.

In the health sector, also, we're worried that almost every day we spend millions of dollars sending people abroad on medical grounds. We believe that if we can partner and work effectively with the private sector in addition with the federal government tertiary health institution, we can at least have one standard hospital in the six geo-political zones that will be privately-managed with federal government's support.

We have very good doctors here in our country, but we have been unable to manage these professionals because we don't have an enabling environment.

Our vision is to put everything in place so that in the next four years, 50 per cent of Nigerians who travel abroad on health grounds will be treated here in Nigeria. We hope the next government will increase that achievement to 75 per cent till we are fully compliant in the health sector.

When I announced that I was going to contest for the presidential office, I said it publicly to Nigerians and the entire world that my parents were among the poorest in Nigeria. My late father was one of the poorest Nigerian men, while my dear mother is still alive and still one of the poorest Nigerian women. I was not born with a silver spoon. Therefore, if we tell you that you should give us your vote and support, you should believe us because we are part of you and we know how it feels to be poor.

We want to assure you that we will work with your leaders to propel this country to the height it ought to have attained. But we cannot do this if you do not vote for us. Please, I beg you, there have been reports that some people are prodding you to carry machete to the voting centres. Do not listen to them. Ignore their advice because anyone who asks you to arm yourself to the election centre does not have good intentions for you. Such advice puts you at grave risk.

We are just coming from Katsina State and we heard that some youths attacked a man and cut off his hand. Those youths have been apprehended and have been handed over to the police. Do not be so manipulated by some morbid fanatics. No one can develop a nation through violence. If at the end of the

election lives are lost, cars, houses, properties are burned, who will help develop our country? Anyone who advocates violence does not men well for Nigeria.



*In Yenagoa...*

We could, ordinarily, have considered skipping Bayelsa State given that it is my state. But we must not take your vote for granted. Every Bayelsan should thank at least 10 Nigerians for accepting me.

PDP primaries at all level especially the level of governor and president are like elections before the elections. You saw that in all the PDP primaries I won in all the six geopolitical zones. For us, that feat shows that Nigerians appreciate and want us. And all what you need to do as Bayelsans is for everyone who has attained voting age to thank 10 Nigerians directly. We are about 500,000 from INEC's record, so if one person can thank 10 Nigerians that will give us about 50 million people, if not more than that. Also we will get 50 million votes as a result and simply allow the others to share the remaining 25 million votes. That is the work you all have to do.

I have been a part of you; everybody here knows me and knows where I was born. You know the schools I attended from primary level to tertiary level. There is nothing about me that is hidden. If I can come from that humble background to talk to you as the president of this country then everyone here has the opportunity to be where they want to be.

I have just three messages that I intend to pass across to you then I will leave because I didn't come to canvass vote here. The first is for the women of Bayelsa State and, by extension, the women of Nigeria. You have been advocating 35 per cent representation. There are three countries in Africa that are aspiring to be

world leaders - Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt. And if Egypt gives 50 per cent to women to encourage them, then Nigeria can give 35 per cent to women.

But there is a target, give us 100 per cent of your vote and get 35 per cent. So, the women must work hard. Today is being celebrated as International Day for Women, so it is quite unique. The theme for this year is *Equal Access to Education, Training and Decent Work Place for the Women*. I assure you that we will surely work with you to see that women are educated, that women are well fed. That, surely, is a pathway for decent work place for the women. For our youth, the message I have for you is one of hope. You will surely attain your desired goal. What we want from you is peace; not just in Bayelsa state, not just in Niger Delta, but I want Bayelsa youth to be the peace vanguard for the nation, to teach peace, practise peace from Yenagoa to Sokoto, from Yenagoa to Enugu, from Yenagoa to Ibadan, from Yenagoa to Kano because where there is no peace there can never be development.

I did not play any partisan role in our party's primary in the state because I consider all the aspirants allies. That is the pride of leadership. Some people may be closer to me than others on account of having gone to the same school I attended or simply on the grounds that we have been friends for a longer period, but as a leader everybody is my ally and I will treat all equally whether you are just knowing me today or have known me for 50 years. That is the cost that we have to pay as leaders.



*At Oba Erediauwa's Palace...*

Let me assure you that we will continue to keep faith with our electoral promises. It was in Edo State that I launched the one-man-one-vote campaign. I'm here to

assure you that I would ensure that ideal is upheld.

Before my election, one of my ministers, a son of this state, came home to pay a visit to the Oba and he would not receive him because he wasn't pleased with the state of the roads.

When I came for the campaign, I told the Oba he should not worry, that after my election the minister will return. The last time the minister of works visited Edo State and came back to Abuja, I asked him if the Oba received him. He said he had, and that the Oba even promised to send the president a gift.



*In Asaba...*

I learnt that some of you have been here since 8.00am and I would not want to keep you too long. That, plus the immense crowd I see here today, validates our electoral quest. So, we thank you for that.

I commend the governor for his micro-credit programme which has become a credible poverty alleviation tool. He has been doing well and we encourage him to continue with that. This is not a forum to enumerate what we have achieved. What I can assure you is that our commitment is that after the election, indeed before the inauguration, we will have a stakeholders' meeting in every state, and privatize projects that will lead to fast economic development and launch a five-year plan for the rest, so that before the end of four years most of them would have been completed. Even for those that have yet to be completed would have progressed to such a level that a new administration would not jettison the projects.

The governor has spoken of the need for youth empowerment. So, first and foremost, we will refocus the Niger Delta ministry and the NDDC to deal with

sustainable development. Some of the infighting in NDDC will be resolved; we don't want a body that would be creating crisis instead of generating projects.

The NNPC is working hard to make Nigeria the nucleus of petrochemical revolution in Africa. Oil has been discovered in quite a number of African countries, so we have to take a step ahead. Over the years, we have been exporting crude and gas without adding any value. We must add value to our crude, we must add value to our gas, and we can only do that through major investment in the petrochemical industry. This is another area that will create a number of jobs for our youth.

I admonish the youth to be law-abiding. Allow peace to reign and in the next four years you will witness development that you could not have imagined.



### *In Kaduna...*

The North-West zone is quite important to this country because of its population density. This zone alone has over 25 per cent of this country's population. That makes it a zone which no politician who desires to win election can trifle with.

When I was in this zone in 2007, I followed a leader, a committed Nigerian, a devoted and principled Nigerian who wanted to make a difference. I would have been here standing beside or behind him, but circumstances beyond our control took him away.

Kindly join as we observe a minute silence in honour of our great leader, the former president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua.

A son of peasants, I stand here amongst you as the president of Nigeria. It is a fact that always renews my hope in the possibilities that exist in Nigeria, and an

inspiring reminder that you can achieve whatever you dream. What we need to do is to work hard to create wealth, strengthen economic activities and improve the people's standard of living.

We are here today to launch our campaign in the North-West zone. We must work hard to win Kaduna State, Katsina State, Kano State, Jigawa State, Kebbi State, Sokoto State and Zamfara State. Luckily for us, out of these seven states, six are governed by PDP candidates and we must work harder to ensure that we triumph in all seven states.

This is the vice president's zone and he has spoken to you extensively. We will work hard with you to take this country forward. In achieving that, there are a few things that must be put in place. There must be power, we must stimulate agriculture, there must be water for irrigation and for domestic use.

I'm sure you will all agree with me that some years back, you could hardly find a fuel station in the North-West that you can drive in and buy petrol. But today, it is possible and easy. So whatever we promise, we are not just seeking to score some political points; we will fulfil our promises because we are totally committed.

North-West is an agricultural belt and that is why we have so many irrigation and dam projects. To create wealth anywhere, most especially in the farming areas, there has to be water.

Our farmers shouldn't have to depend only on rain water. One other issue we are reappraising in the agricultural sector is the issue of fertilizer. We intend to remove all the bureaucracy that has characterized the distribution of this vital commodity.

We must stimulate education and that is why among the new universities this administration has decided to set up, we gave two slots to this zone. We know that there are two states from this zone that are yet to get a degree awarding university. But by the grace of God when you vote us into power, the remaining two states - Zamfara and Kebbi - will each get one next year.



*In florin...*

The people of Kwara State voted for us very massively during the primaries. Governor Bukola Saraki and I have been good friends ever since I was the vice president. He was then the chairman of the Governors' Forum and we always discussed at length on how we could move this country forward. So let no one deceive you that there is a problem between us. We are together, and will continue to work together until this country is transformed.

The population of Nigeria is increasing every day, so we have no choice than to create jobs for our people especially the teeming youths. If we must generate jobs for our youth and create wealth for the economy, there are two areas we must not neglect: farming and industrialization. We have been doing everything within our means to revitalize the industries.

We are very lucky here in Kwara because the governor has done remarkably well in the area of farming. What we can do to assist is to stabilize power supply. To industrialize or contemplate mechanized farming, preserve your produce and transport them, there has to be reliable power. That is our number one priority. We will make sure that we complete all required projects in Kwara State within this period. We are working on the rail system in order to reduce the pressure on our roads. We are rehabilitating the Jebba Bridge and, of course, we will look into the Mokwa Road Phase 1.

In the North where we have a large number of children that are out of school, we are coming up with the Almajiri education. We are building boarding schools that would also have technical schools to enable them acquire professional skill.

We will reduce the poverty level in the country significantly. However, I do not like to use the word poverty. I prefer saying we will generate wealth because that is more positive.



### *In Gusau...*

Whenever I come to Zamfara State, I feel at home because Zamfara State is one of few states that I have been given two traditional titles. I was given this title by the Emir of Gusau. It's so significant that even when I leave the presidential office, I would be summoned to attend meetings.

Zamfara is clearly a very peaceful state. There is no crisis here and I'm quite happy. That is where we want to be as a nation. This is why I often plead with our youths that they should not allow anyone use them to foment violence while their children are safe at home or abroad. Simply tell anyone who approaches you with an offer of money to perpetrate violence and constitute public nuisance to get their children to lead such act.

What we are preaching is love, unity, development and for everyone to realize how expedient it is to create jobs for our teeming youths because that is the best way to take them off the streets. Zamfara is one of Nigeria's richest states in terms of solid minerals which is one of the key areas of our economy. These are areas that have either not been discovered or have not been properly managed. We will invest in the mining of solid minerals. Zamfara State in the next four years will witness great opportunities in terms of employment.

The last time I came to Zamfara State, it was to commission a power station built to stabilize power in this state. We promise to do more so that our small and medium scale businesses can thrive.

We will also look into the area of agriculture because of the massive and very fertile land here. As the deputy governor of Bayelsa State, I was, along with the Ebonyi State deputy governor, co-chair of the National Committee on Rice Production. We visited Zamfara State and it was a pleasant surprise to discover that this state has the potential to produce enough rice, not just for local

consumption, but also an excess quantity that could be exported. We will work with the private sector to make this a reality.

With regard to the MDGs, we are determined that in the next four years Nigeria must have gained impressive heights in the area of maternal health and immunization, while polio which has been a problem for decades would have completely been eradicated. We want our economy to be driven by science and technology. That way, we can achieve more than we can imagine. Already, key players in the private sectors are collaborating with us and before the elections, we would come up with a plan.

The Dangote Group and Jim Ovia have been helping a lot. They have invested millions of naira in helping out. The private sector is helping this administration because they have seen the commitment and sincerity of the government.



### *In Enugu...*

As we speak, we have awarded about 15 contracts worth N11.5 billion to curb the problem of gully erosion in the South-East. We have also conceived a package which would, ultimately, be a more enduring solution to this environmental challenge. I'm sure that in the next four years, the most severe cases will be a thing of the past.

The South-East has earned a reputation as a major showbiz hub, particularly, in relation to Nollywood. About 60 per cent of the key actors are from the South-East. Of course, home video production is one of our major industries.

I was once in South Africa for a bilateral meeting when I was vice president and my South African counterpart spent ample time pouring encomium on our actors and actresses. We are committed to helping that industry. We want to

create a group of young men and women who will have the capacity to create jobs for others. That is one of the ways we can create wealth. I thank you all.



*In Damaturu...*

I was at the Emir's palace in 2007 and was conferred with a title which, I think, has some agricultural significance. Your Royal Highness, the elections are coming again and this time, I and Architect Namadi Sambo have been elected as the flag bearers of PDP to run for the presidency of this country.

We are having rallies across the states to sensitize the PDP family and to use that opportunity to tell other Nigerians why they should vote for us. We intend to run an open administration that will not discriminate against anybody.

We are convinced that we must work collectively to reduce poverty in this country, that we must work collectively to generate wealth in this country. We have a rapidly growing population and if we don't work very hard to create job opportunities, then in the next few years, Nigeria will face a major challenge.

Based on the painstaking study we have carried out, we believe that in the next four years most of these basic challenges would be overcome if we're given the opportunity. It's a message of hope driven not merely by rhetoric, but by conviction rooted in hard work and track record. We would definitely put our country back on the path of growth.



*In Warri... with Leaders of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)*

First, let me thank you for accepting the invitation to have this very brief interaction aimed at ensuring peaceful general elections next month. I have a unique position in the coming elections, and that is why I have reached out to various groups more than any other candidate: I am a candidate in the election, and I am the president of the country who must ensure that we conduct our elections peacefully, and that votes of Nigerians counts.

As we went around during the campaigns, we paid courtesy visits to traditional rulers in all the states. So, we had the opportunity to communicate to these custodians of the people's culture why we need to unite as a people irrespective of political interests.

But we didn't have that opportunity to pay courtesy visits to religious leaders. In the north however, it was somewhat different given that there is a blend between the traditional and religious institutions. But with the Christians, it is different.

Assuming the population is split equally between Christians and Muslims, then you control 50 per cent of the Nigerian population. Fifty per cent of the Nigerian population listens to you almost every day especially on Sundays. So, the message you put across carries weight. That message could influence 50 per cent of Nigerians to act in a certain way. If you give a message that instigates crisis or violence, it implies 50 per cent of the Nigerian population would have been indoctrinated to be so inclined; and if you give message that promotes peace, then, of course, about 50 per cent of Nigerians would likely internalize the values consistent with peaceful co-existence.

I often said during my campaign that no matter the best intention any aspirant may have, if the country is in crisis, whatever ideas you seek to implement will

come to naught. Nobody, either within the country or outside the country, would like to invest in an atmosphere defined by chaos.

We believe that other candidates running for president on the platform of their parties are all good Nigerians, that they are worthy sons and daughters of Nigeria with a capacity to serve the country.

But we feel that in the next four years, we have a better grasp of the challenges ahead, because there are quite a number of things we have already commenced which would certainly benefit Nigerians if completed. However, we have to be voted in to be able to bring that to fruition.



#### *In Kaduna... With Muslim Leaders*

I should have long met with you, but it was delayed due to our across-the-country tour. It was during our state tour that I realized this should have been the first engagement. I apologise for oversight.

Religious leaders have a huge influence because we are largely a religious people. We tend to listen to our religious leaders even more than we listen to our political leaders. Today, we are soliciting your support in terms of prayers and counselling for the country.

As a nation, we have our challenges. And as elections draw near, some politicians will be so desperate to win election. I therefore implore you to try as much as possible to work towards the achievement of peace and stability for the country.

We must be able to conduct free and fair elections and I promise Nigerians that whether I'm running or not, the election will be free and fair. Let Nigerians decide whoever they feel can represent them; nobody should carry weapons to

kill and destroy in the name of politics. What has happened in some states is quite disturbing.

The incident that occurred in Akwa Ibom not long ago cannot be described as politics. How could anyone burn down a secondary school and more than 500 vehicles? It cannot be acceptable in any normal society. As a government, we can use our might and authority to curb this mayhem, but moral persuasion is more potent than force. That is why we want religious leaders and traditional rulers to come help transform attitudes.

As the president of this country, I will work with you to ensure peace and development in all parts of the country without discrimination against any party, religion or individual.

My present status is, essentially, a product of Allah's will. We assumed the mantle of leadership in a substantive capacity about nine months ago, after the terrible and unfortunate illness that took away my predecessor. Within this period, we have seen things, we have drawn our plans and we know that if we pursue them with consistency for the next four years, there are certain things that Nigerians would begin to take for granted.

We have some security challenges, but I'm reassured by the fact that we have very bright security operatives in the SSS, police and armed forces. Without their ingenuity, this campaign probably wouldn't have taken place for fear of people with sinister motives. But it's important to take it a step higher and become a lot more proactive in our security management.

We will conduct this Saturday's national election peacefully and orderly so everyone can glimpse hope and see that Nigeria is now open for more rapid economic development that will reduce poverty in the land.

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME



### *Meeting the Nigerian Community in Germany*

I have to say that we do have a very vibrant Diaspora. The Chancellor and I talked about manpower issue today during our lunch meeting. For sure, there are quite a number of areas where we need expertise, but we have several Nigerian professionals across the world.

In the United States alone, we have over 25,000 consultant medical doctors. That was the figure I was given when I visited President Barack Obama. So we have people and we encourage them to be the best they can possibly be in those countries; and for those who want to return, we encourage them to come back home and join in the effort to build a country that our children will be proud of.

With regard to making the voting process accessible to Nigerians in the Diaspora, I promised we will work hard to remove every hurdle that has made that impossible. I have already discussed with the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission. This is an independent body, so there is a limit to what we can talk. But I've told him, nonetheless, that he should set his sight on 2015 and ensure that Nigeria's Diaspora are able to vote then. I have to find

out, really, how far they have gone. In practical terms, its feasibility does not depend on me; it is the electoral commission. But rest assured that I have given the directive that every eligible Nigerian living outside the country should be able to vote to elect a president or a governor of their choice. It may take a while to be able to do so for the other levels of elections like Senate, House of Representatives, state Houses of Assembly, local government chairmen and councillors.



*Press Gallery, Germany, April 2012*

The relationship between our countries dates back several years. Some German companies have been operating in Nigeria for over 50 years and we are still expecting more companies from Germany to invest in Nigeria. We have a good relationship, and we have been building new ones. Today, we signed a bi-national commission, which means the two countries have teams that will meet at agreed time to review issues of mutual interest. There will, occasionally, be grey areas such as immigration, trade imbalance, and so on, as the countries relate which would require amicable resolution. That is the purpose of the bi-national commission. Ours have been quite a fruitful relationship.

One of the major challenges we have in Nigeria today is in the power sector. We are generating less than we need and that is a disincentive for small and medium scale enterprises that normally create jobs. One of the relationships we have with Germany is what we call the energy partnership, which is quite robust, quite strong. We are simply building on it. We have signed an MoU with Siemens that would result in the construction of medium-size turbines in Nigeria for the West African sub-region. So, we are encouraging more German

companies to come to Nigeria. About 20 per cent of general goods that Europe and America export to Africa ends up in Nigeria.

The Nigerian market is huge and there is no doubt that German investors will find it a very good environment for investment. This media interaction will help highlight some of these issues that you know as media practitioners. I'm here with some governors, legislators and ministers who will help explain certain things if need be.

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It is not only German companies; nobody would want to work anywhere his or her life is at risk. Terrorism is largely an alien experience in Nigeria. Of course, we had security challenges - petty crimes, murder cases, armed robbery; these are the kinds of problem we were dealing with. But the issue of suicide attack where someone would stuff his car with explosives and ram it into a building with an intent to kill himself and others was, for us, a totally strange experience. If you have only daughters, you would not consider it necessary buying men's dresses until you have a baby boy.

But we have adjusted very fast to the new reality, and the result is that we have been able to make significant progress in curbing the Boko Haram crisis. Although there are still occasional explosions, we have been able to check the spread to other states as they had intended. Most of these explosions you heard recently happened in Borno State, Bauchi, Yobe and, perhaps, Gombe.

We are, also, increasing our dialogue with other stakeholders - traditional rulers, community leaders, youth leaders and religious leaders, because members of the sect are Nigerians with wives, parents, siblings and friends and they live within the community. German companies are still operating in Nigeria, they have not moved out. Nigeria is still safer than quite a number of countries. Sometimes, the stories in the media about the sect's activities tend to be sensational. The country is not going down, and we will certainly get over the

security challenge created by Boko Haram.

The second question was about people being arrested in Nigeria and they are hardly convicted for the alleged offence. It could be that their trials have yet to be concluded. Even though you haven't mentioned any specific case, my response is that like most other countries, people are arrested for various offences, and people are arraigned for various offences. The probability of convicting a criminal is usually 9/10, because in the eye of the law it is better for nine criminals to be set free than for an innocent person to be punished. That is the law we operate; you have to prove your case beyond reasonable doubt.

Most of these areas, we are looking at, especially those relating to terrorism. We are strengthening the law so it would be difficult for a criminal to evade conviction. I know that suspects are being prosecuted, but the prosecution has to conform with the law.



With regard to high oil prices, I would say that Nigerians would want oil prices to come down, because high oil prices don't help the country at all. At present, we don't have enough refining capacity; so we import a good percentage of petroleum products - aviation fuel, premium motor spirit and even diesel. When we import, we buy at international market rate and subsidize locally. If we had deregulated completely then the people would pay the international market price. As a government, yes the high oil prices will be to our own advantage. But even if you sell a barrel of oil at \$200, the price of what we sell to our people remains fixed, so the government absorbs the difference. High oil prices don't really translate to that kind of benefit for countries that subsidize petroleum products. Until we get out of it, until we completely deregulate, we won't celebrate high oil prices.

At the same time, we don't want the prices to drop to such an extent that it affects production because that is the lifeline of our economy. But excessively

high prices, as it is now above \$100 per barrel, is not helpful to any country that produces oil and imports petroleum products which it subsidizes.

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This is the second question relating to Boko Haram in just the first six questions. That is understandable given how topical it is. But the premise is wrong. Nigeria is an oil-rich country and we have reasonable reserve of hydro carbon; but in terms of wealth distribution it is not a rich country because Nigeria is a country of 167 million people. If our reserves were divided per head, the reality will be stark. You cannot compare Nigeria with Saudi Arabia and some Asian countries that have populations of between 4 million to 10 million with huge reserve. People tend to look at the kind of reserve that Nigeria has got begin to wonder why development is so slow.

There are people who feel that the Boko Haram crisis emerged because a section of the country is neglected. Although you haven't said so, some people often make such insinuations which I find ridiculous. I'm president of Nigeria from the southern part of the country, and I've been in office for just about two years now. That period includes the unfinished term of the late president which I concluded. These two years couldn't have created Boko Haram. If you talked about the militancy in the Niger Delta, where the youths over the years became restive because the region is not developed despite the fact it produces the oil that gives the country its wealth development, there is at least a link with the oil industry. Even that we have been able to bring to a reasonable control. But the Boko Haram group never talked about the issues of corruption. The group has not just emerged. I was the vice-president when their first leader was killed in 2009. The issue raised then was that they wanted the entire country to be governed by Islamic laws, or at least the north. But our constitution pronounced Nigeria a secular state; it cannot be governed via Islamic laws or according to Christian canons.

Of course, they also voiced opposition to western outlook which they considered corrupt and not in line with the dictates of Allah. But now politics and criminality have seeped in. So, if armed robbers and sundry bandits who operate in the northern part of Nigeria attack a bank, they say it is Boko Haram; if politicians use youths who were not engaged to cause chaos, they say it is Boko Haram. It would be wrong for anyone to claim that Boko Haram arose due to prevailing corruption in Nigeria - or because there is poverty anywhere. The poor cannot possibly afford the sort of weapons wielded by members of this group. You need money to buy those kind of rifles, even if they are smuggled. The same goes for the improvised explosive devices they use; you need money to buy all the content.

However, I do not deny that poverty is a huge problem in the country. Governments exist to make opportunities available to the people. We have identified the huge potential in agriculture and that is the reason we are revolutionizing agriculture. There is very vast land in Nigeria's north, but the rainfall is between three to four months because the region is closer to the desert area and you cannot rely much on rainfall. You have to irrigate and if you have to do that, you have to build a dam. Also, if you must use agriculture to create wealth, then electricity is an essential input. We must provide water to all the farm settlements and we must move farming from its traditional subsistence mode in the rural areas to a commercial scale farming. This will create jobs for number of young people.

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The last question also talked about the issue of unrest. Although he didn't cite Boko Haram so it would not sound monotonous, but the reference is unmistakable. Very few countries have mono-ethnic groups; most have diversity of tribes. Even in the developed countries, very few are culturally homogeneous. Indeed, Nigeria has a number of tribes. In the north for example, Adamawa State

in Nigeria's north-east has more than 50 ethnic nationalities ("87," the governor interjects) even if virtually everybody there speaks Hausa language.

Another north-eastern state, Borno, which is the hotbed of Boko Haram activities, apart from Kanuri which is the major tribe in Borno State, we have other tribes like the Fulani and Hausa. So the issue is not about tribe. One can say religion influenced the sect's beliefs. At the early stage, they did not attack Christians; they felt that even some Muslims did not worship Allah appropriately. From our understanding, the attacks on Christians were aimed at creating a religious war, because terrorists are always eager to find targets that will create the maximum impact for them.

The attack on the UN building in Abuja is a good example. Why would they attack the UN building in Abuja if their grouse was with Nigeria? The UN building and workers had nothing to do with the country's state of affairs, but were attacked nonetheless. That is because the attackers know that is a building housing the largest concentration of people from all over the world. So, if you attack such place, it becomes international news. The attack on churches was meant to create religious conflict, so that the Christians will rise against the Muslims, and they would be happy they instigated it. So, it's not an issue of cultural differences; we have been living together, and we will continue to live together. Nigeria will never separate. The sovereignty of Nigeria is not debatable at all. Even in Borno State, there is a huge population of Christians there, about 15 -20 per cent are Christians. If you go to the south-west of the country, in a city like Lagos which is Nigeria's commercial and industrial headquarters, the population of Christians and Muslims, especially among the indigenous population, is roughly equal.



The present government has really come up with quite a number of policies to aid the development of Niger Delta. But we still have challenges and we will

continue to have challenges because the Niger Delta is a vast area and we have very few deltas globally. People who don't know what a delta is may find it very difficult to picture what a delta could be, but people who have travelled to other deltas in the world will know that delta areas are very challenging areas to develop.

We have the Ministry of the Niger Delta devoted to infrastructural development; we have the Niger Delta Development Commission which also concentrates on infrastructure and manpower development; but to confront the immediate needs of the youths that carry guns and create insecurity through abduction of mostly oil workers and vandalizing of oil installations, we came up with the amnesty programme. The amnesty programme also entailed training of the ex-militants because some of them had no job skills and barely had any formal education. Someone told me earlier today that our programme was working, that he was in South Africa and was pleasantly surprised to learn that some of them had become pilots. We are trying to help a number of them acquire skills, and they are all over the world. I don't know if they are in Germany, but I just came back from South Korea two weeks ago and there is a remarkable presence there. This aspect is an adhoc programme. Once we've rounded off this set of training, it would be phased. But the one that is sustainable is the Niger Delta Development Commission. Their duty is not to train former militants; they would be deviating if they go into that.



With regard to whether my government would negotiate with Boko Haram, I have said that members of the sect are Nigerians. When their improvised explosives are detonated, Nigerians die or their properties are destroyed. So both ways, I lose because they are my people and I'm the president of the country. I would love to do anything that will end this crisis. My government will be ready to discuss with them; but first and foremost, they have to be unmasked because

they are faceless at present. Yes, security agencies have names of key actors, but no one has clearly come out to say, "yes, I represent the interest of Boko Haram". And I would say, "okay, if your grouse is with Western education, you have no business bombing a church, you have no business bombing a market". There cannot be any acceptable reason for those actions. What I find hard to reconcile is how they could be using cell phones if they were so opposed to anything Western. Of course, they also use cars that are produced in the West. Does it make sense?

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On the issue of public finance, yes, when we wanted to deregulate completely. It would save some money for use. We borrowed almost the entire sum we are spending for capital projects.

At the same time, we spent almost the same amount of money or even a little more - as the investigation done by the House of Representatives reveals - than our capital budget to subsidize petroleum products. That is why I am saying we are not a rich country. We are subsidizing Premium Motor Spirit which fuels expensive SUVs and other cars and yet diesel which fuels mass transit vehicles and lorries that convey heavy products to market has been deregulated by the previous administration. We said let us rather develop a mass transit system in the country that will benefit low income earners. I don't think it is proper for a government to subsidize the consumption of the elite; those who need to be subsidized are people who ordinarily use mass transit. That is our target.

But anytime we talked about increasing pump price of petroleum products, it would be resisted, especially in a country where you have a very functional and dynamic labour union. We have political parties also eager to make a name. I am a member of the PDP and so other political parties tend to see everything PDP does as wrong. They would want to do everything to frustrate it because it's the only way they think they can become popular. So there was a lot of resistance

and, of course, we couldn't deregulate completely.

We moved the petroleum pump price from N65 to N97 per litre and we thank God that we were able to do that. If we didn't do that, now that crude oil price is \$124 I don't know how we could have used the money for capital expenditure and part of the recurrent to pay for the consumption of the elite to drive their expensive cars. We have not really saved much; the little that we are saving, we are putting back for capital investment in the area of power, in the area of agriculture and other areas to stimulate the local economy, to create jobs and create wealth.



*At a Dinner with the African Community in Germany*

I was told that you really wanted to come to the airport to receive me yesterday, but the host country for one reason or the other felt we should do it this way. I have to thank you for that interest and African brotherhood. I have to commend you for what you have been doing for the entire continent and urge you to do more and use your position here to attract investors to come to Africa. Africa is the future of the world, because it is still a very green continent.

I have been having a lot of interactive sessions with the business community, using Nigeria as an example, and the story of Nigeria is the story of Africa because we have a lot of openings for foreign direct investments. Meeting African ambassadors here is an opportunity for us to reflect on what the continent is passing through. I was asked at one of the interactive sessions I had today with the Council on Foreign Relations to comment on the philosophical difference between OAU and AU. I said the OAU was formed at a period when most African countries were under colonial rule.

So the interest was to get African countries out of colonial rule for self governance. They were not too keen about the internal affairs of various states, they were not too keen about the development, they were not too bothered about the structure of government and, of course, the guiding principle is that the organization should not even interfere with the internal affairs of any of the member states. So even if you had a dictator who chose to kill half of the population, the OAU couldn't say anything.

But we gradually moved from that level to where we had independence followed by military dictatorship. Now most African countries have been democratized, though different states have different levels of democracy. Generally, we have democratic establishments that are running the affairs of these countries, so this is the period of growth, this is the period of development, this is the period that Africa must compete with the rest of the world. We should not be talking about aid, we should be talking about converting our resources into means of exchange for wealth.

But, of course, we have challenges. We all know the situation in Somalia, and we still have challenges in places like Sudan even with Southern Sudan becoming an independent state. Not too long ago we had challenges in the Republic of Niger, which is our neighbouring country. It is the problem that arises when elected presidents like me want to change the constitution of their country and stay longer than what the constitution that brought them in stipulates. The constitution that brings you into office, if it says ten years, at the end of the ten years, it is better you leave. Even if you change the constitution, it should be effective for another set of people and not benefit you.

A similar thing happened in Niger. The military struck, but we stood our ground and opposed it, especially ECOWAS. We worked with them and ensured that within a year, elections were held and now Niger is being run by a democratically-elected president. We had a similar crisis in Cote d'Ivoire, and, again, ECOWAS stood its grounds. If it was in the OAU era, these countries

would have still been in crisis. But because the AU principle is different, we must democratize, we must encourage good governance.

So, although the AU or sub-regional organization like ECOWAS, SADC and all that, will not move into another country to impose certain things, there are sanctions, and we encourage good governance and we say no to military intervention. We believe that a democratic government, no matter how bad, is better than military dictatorship, because a democratic government has a tenure and the people have an opportunity to vote out governments they do not consider good enough. Democratic governments could be harassed by the media and the civil society, but dictatorial governments crack down on the media and civil society groups. As African leaders, we say no and you can see what is happening, especially in the ECOWAS sub-region.

When the rebellion occurred in Mali, we moved in and said no to the military coup. Fortunately, the military agreed with us, but the former president had to resign and, based on their constitution, the Speaker of parliament took over as acting president. The only problem we have is that their law says as an acting president or interim president, there should be an election in 40 days. In Nigeria, it is 90 days. There is sufficient time to conduct election. The ECOWAS Heads of States and Government was willing to offer assistance so an election could be held even within 30 days, but the problem was worsened by the Tuareg revolution in northern Mali. The northern part of Mali wanted to be a sovereign state, and there are, in fact, rebels in control of that area. Another group which believed Mali should no longer be a secular state also emerged. They wanted the country to be governed with Islamic law. We cannot contemplate having an election there without solving these two problems. The ECOWAS Heads of States and Government would be meeting in Cote d'Ivoire on the 26th this month. We would have met earlier, but we had to postpone the meeting because of my state visit to Germany.

There is also the case in Guinea Bissau where the army seemed to believe

the person who probably would have won the election was not good enough. But, then, we are also talking with them. And they have said their interest is not to run the government, that they are interested in ensuring that the necessary things were done. It is easier to solve that problem, and the ECOWAS Heads of States and Government are working with them to see the issues they have raised addressed. One good story is that when you look at democracy, you would see it is gaining very solid ground in Africa. Look at what has just happened in Senegal; look at what happened in Cote d'Ivoire. Although Gbagbo got the highest number of votes, he couldn't get the two-third majority to win the election. So during the runoff, the candidate who had scored the second highest vote now got the majority and he (Gbagbo) refused to concede defeat and hand over since he was the incumbent. That led to crisis, but we have been able to settle that. A similar thing happened in Senegal, even Liberia, where there was no clear winner in the first round, despite the incumbent having the majority of the vote. They had to go for a second round to determine the winner.

We have to thank Professor Wade, the incumbent president in Senegal then. Even before all the ballots had been counted, when he knew he had lost, he congratulated the winner. So it tells you that democracy has really come to stay. The way we have conducted our last elections has told the world that we are no longer conducting elections that people query. Before this time, elections in Nigeria were usually queried by international observers and even local observers. I remember when the election that brought me in as a vice-president was challenged and eventually went to the Court of Appeal, three of the five justices ruled in our favour while two were against us. When the matter went to the Supreme Court, out of the seven justices assigned to the case, four were for us and three were against us. So, it was a narrow escape. But with the last election, although the matter went to the Court of Appeal, the five justices ruled that the elections were *flawless*. It was not different went it got to the Supreme Court; the seven justices said the elections were clean. So, you really see the difference.

I promised that elections would be free and fair, the ballot must count in all African countries. Until we get to a point when the people would dictate who govern them, either at the national level, regional or state level, even at the local level, until we get to the point when the ballot would count, then we cannot claim we have got democracy.

We also have the issue of security challenges especially after the crisis in Libya. Ghadafi had a lot of weapons and had, more or less, released these weapons after the revolution in the country. Most of these weapons were released to people to protect the incumbent president then, and many of them were non-state actors.

When Ghadafi's regime collapsed, most of these small arms and light weapons got into the hands of non-state actors. This has become a challenging situation in Central and West Africa. It might spread because criminals who move these weapons don't respect boundaries; they move them through the borders. If they could bring them in from outside the continent, they can as well move them to East Africa and Southern Africa. We are working together to confront this situation.

One thing I also have to use this opportunity to reassure you is that African Heads of States are working together. Of course, we had some challenges during the African Union Commission election. Most of you were a bit worried because African leaders met in Addis Ababa and couldn't elect a chairperson for the Commission despite having an election four times.

There were fears that it could polarize Africa, especially given that one of the candidates, Mrs. Zuma, was from South Africa, a major stakeholder in Africa, while Nigeria supported Dr. Jean Ping, the incumbent chairperson. Let me assure everyone, our ambassadors here, that we simply disagreed on principle; it had nothing to do with the individual. Nigeria had nothing malicious against anyone, just as Zuma too had nothing against Nigeria. I said before the election that countries like Nigeria, South Africa, Libya, Egypt and Algeria should not

contest for that position, that the office should be left for smaller countries. It was a matter of principle, and South Africa obviously had a different perspective. It was just a disagreement at that level; we have no problem at all. In the weeks before the recent World Bank election where our finance minister, Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, contested, President Zuma called me to say he will support her.

Another erroneous reason people assume there is division amongst African countries is in regard to membership of the UN Security Council. There are insinuations that Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa are scrambling for it. We cannot fight over something that does not exist.

What we know is that the world is not democratized, the more powerful countries emphasize democracy, they want every part of the world to be governed democratically. And we feel that if only a few countries control the rest of the world, then the entire world has not been democratized, that there should be reform in the Security Council. We feel, also, that such reform should result in Africa being represented by at least three countries. Even if it's on a rotational basis - fine; if it's permanent membership - fine. But we must have a slot. However, we are not fighting over it and we cannot fight over it until the reform has been accepted.

I have said this is not the time to plead for aid, but businesses should invest in Africa because so we can adequately take care of our people. If we work together, we definitely will overcome.



### *An Award Ceremony in Republic of Benin*

It's important to note this: whatever happens here affects us and things happening in some parts of our country would also affect Benin. President Boni Yayi often

jokes that Benin is the thirty-seventh state of Nigeria, and Nigeria is the seventh province of Benin.

The two countries are like Siamese twins that have a number of things in common. Culturally, even with regard to religion, in terms of history, there is a lot of affinity. After the election, I will find time to come, spend the night and discuss things that will benefit both countries.

I have listened to the address of the ambassador, the address of the president of Nigerian Diaspora Organization and the remarks made by my brothers and sisters. We will double our effort to ensure that every Nigerian that needs the e-passport is able to get one. I have also noted the areas where you have problems. In every society we have deviants who do things that are anti-social and expose Nigerians to harassment. I have discussed with the president and we will have time to discuss the issues in detail.

The informal trade between Nigeria and Benin Republic is very huge. Even as we drove, he was pointing out some Nigerian shops; that shows he has nothing against Nigerians and he appreciates what we are doing.

Someone said he wants the next ambassador to come from the South-east or South-south. My response is that ambassadors are posted randomly, although there are places you may need to send people with some unique attributes. But it is not based on one's ethnic group because ambassadors represent their countries.

Perhaps they tend to post more Yoruba-speaking people to Benin because there is a part of this country with indigenous Yoruba population. It's just like if you have to post an ambassador to France, you would want someone who speaks French so it eliminates the need to start learning the language on arrival. So, don't be worried, the most important thing is that the ambassador should be competent enough to solve your problem.

The best thing any president can give is good governance. When the country is run properly, it benefits everyone including Nigerians in the Diaspora.

You would have international respect. Much of the harassment we tend to endure wherever we go arises from the impression that we are not doing well as a nation.

If, for example, we are able to crack down on armed robbery to the extent that this trans-border crime comes down drastically, there will be less harassment of Nigerians. If we improve our economy, people will look forward to having us in their country and we would not be harassed.



*In Addis Ababa*

Let me first apologize for the undue delay we caused you yesterday. We got stuck in discussions till about midnight because of the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. I thought that rather than make you wait till 1.00am or 2.00am, it was better to defer it so we could meet today. We sincerely apologize for that.

I visited here when I was the vice president. I am not sure though if I have been here as acting president. But I can recall I represented President Yar'Adua twice. So it is the first time I'll be visiting as a substantive president of the country. Addis Ababa is one of the most important countries because of its historical relevance as the seat of the Africa Union.

It is a place that you will expect the best from your country, and I am quite proud of Nigerian nationals in Ethiopia because we have not had negative stories. Thank you for your good works. I have listened to the professor who spoke on behalf of everyone and I appreciate your expectation from that government, and the fact that you are also abreast of development back home.

You expressed some concern about our security infrastructure, power and others. A lady wanted to know when Nigerians in the Diaspora would be eligible

to vote. Even if she hadn't raised the issue, I was already determined to speak on that. The present administration will work with all Nigerians including those of you in the Diaspora, because we consider the Diaspora a very significant segment of our economy. In order for us to develop as we should, it's important for us to collaborate with the Diaspora. It is the reason we're working towards forming a special Diaspora commission.

We must build a Nigeria for our children, and our grandchildren. It would be inexcusable if our children and grand children still have to grapple with electricity challenges and the most basic amenities. How do we do that? I will change this country and change it rapidly. We can't still be crawling while others are moving and even running.

I know that for most developed countries, it took quite a long time. But given the level Nigeria has reached now, we don't need such a long period to make changes. In four years, a focused government can make significant changes, and if I cannot make changes in four years, then it means even if were possible to rule Nigeria in another 100 years, I still cannot possibly make the necessary changes.

Definitely, whoever becomes the president cannot achieve that alone; we need people, both at home and in the Diaspora. I believe so much in our Diaspora population given the impressive expertise they often acquire even as they search for greener pastures.

No country should fail to harvest that expertise. I insisted that the nine new universities we are trying to establish, should not simply graduate students. I told the minister of education that out of the nine, a minimum of three of the vice-chancellors and registrars should be sourced from amongst Nigerians in the Diaspora.

The promise to ensure that Nigerians' votes will count can, by no means, be easy. My political odyssey is a fairly recent one: I was involved during the SDP/NRC time, but it was in this dispensation that I got involved fully when I contested election as the deputy governor in 1998. I know how cynical the people

could get. As the deputy governor then, we had to mobilize commissioners, permanent secretaries to the communities, to try and convince people to register. Now Nigerians, of their own volition, are prepared to sleep at the registration point to ensure they are registered.

In the past, a politician may have stacks of voter's card and would usually go to villages to distribute to those who didn't have voter's card. That tradition is certainly dying. We experienced it in the Anambra election; due to increased awareness, people who attempted to snatch ballot papers were almost lynched by women and youth groups.

That leads me, necessarily, to the question whether Nigerians in the Diaspora will be able exercise their franchise. I would have loved for those in the Diaspora to vote this year, but let me be realistic: it is difficult to implement now. Before you can vote, you must first of all be registered. I have said often that if I knew the registration would be done this way, I would have directed INEC to register Nigerians in the Diaspora because it dawned on me that it doesn't take much to make voting accessible to the Diaspora community.

All we need to do is ascertain the number of Nigerians living in Ethiopia through the embassy because we cannot vote outside the embassy. We can create like four or five voting units. It would even be easier because of the direct data capture machine. If we brought two to Ethiopia, I'm sure Nigerians in Ethiopia would be registered and the results of the voting process would simply be transferred. But it was not planned. Also, it has to be part of our local laws, but presently the laws don't allow voting to be conducted outside Nigeria and there is no provision to register Nigerians outside Nigeria. This year Nigerians in the Diaspora will be unable to vote outside Nigeria; but I will strive towards making it possible for 2015.

On the subject of security, there is no doubt that you will be a bit worried if you are outside the country on account of the stories you read. I left Nigeria last Friday and between Friday and now, there has been certain incidents that

are somewhat distressing. But what I can tell you is that terrorism is a global phenomenon, it is an ugly part of world history and it is, certainly, a phase of history. I know that after some years it will no longer be a challenge.

There was a time our oil production dropped by about 50 per cent. Now we are producing our OPEC quota and can even produce more if OPEC grants us a higher quota. That is the indices that offers you a glimpse of the situation in the Niger Delta.

The October 1 bomb blast near the Eagle Square during Nigeria's golden jubilee celebration was the first time that kind of crime would be committed. But all the suspects were arrested and are being prosecuted. Security agents were able to get some of the cars which they were yet to use, and even the innocent car dealers who didn't know why they bought the cars. When they told me they arrested those who sold the cars to them, I told them that they should be released. They didn't know anything about the bombings; as car dealers, if someone comes around to buy you will sell.

Even with regard to the recent bomb explosion at a place called Abacha Barracks in Abuja, we are close to arresting some of the perpetrators. We have the Boko Haram crisis mostly in the country's northeast around Lake Chad and Borno area. The Jos crisis is very disturbing because it is a conflict between two ethnic groups. You can recall that the President Obasanjo administration at a time declared a state of emergency in Plateau State and Governor Dariye was even suspended.

There are still calls for me to declare a state of emergency in Plateau and Borno. But the state of emergency that was declared in Plateau did not solve the problem because the problem is very organic.

The two tribes there have major challenges and we must find different ways of addressing the issues. Besides, there are some legal opinions suggesting that declaring a state of emergency does not imply the governors have to be removed. It is only the parliament that would be dissolved, the governor may even have

more powers. So some people have said that Dariye's removal was illegal. We are looking at it in various ways and, by God's grace, we will overcome the challenge.

I realize there is no way we can talk about agriculture without water. That is why we are committed to putting dams at all the areas that are supposed to have dams, not necessarily to generate electricity, but to create wealth in these areas. There must be water to irrigate the farms and you must supply power to these places, which is why provision of reliable public power supply is one of our main thrust.

Even though our power generation is still rather small, there is appreciable stability. It is improving significantly and before the end of the first quarter of this year, our generation will increase because there are few of our NIPP power generating turbines that have been turned on. If there is one thing we believe we must achieve in the next four years, it is to stabilize power.

Without that, we cannot generate wealth for small and medium scale enterprises to flourish. We're working towards putting certain measures in place that will stimulate the local economy and these include power, water, security, basic infrastructure and rail, so that if we produce goods we can transport.



### *In Gabon with the Nigerian Community*

Gabon has had a good relationship with Nigeria since the civil war which shows that we need to have closer ties. I was briefed about the activities of Nigerians in Gabon and one basic thing that the chairman highlighted is that Nigerian professionals and private businesses have been thriving. Such report makes one very proud.

Nigeria is a well known country globally. And it is a bit worrisome when we are losing to countries with smaller population. Nationals of other countries always tend to think we are not doing enough especially in the area of budget support. We have been doing that. But a country that has a lot of challenges back home can't afford to be spending so much money outside. Although we are improving our relationship with other countries, we have to be a bit careful with spending.

I never knew Gabon has yet to get our Technical Aid Corps team. I will discuss that with the President of Gabon when he comes to Nigeria on October 1 so that next year, we will send members of the corps to also work with you.

A lady named Gladys talked of the challenges in getting a passport. Indeed, we have had a lot of issues about passports. We want to ensure that wherever Nigerians are, they should be able to get their passport issued without any fuss. But concerning the issuance of visa which someone also highlighted, we do not control the Gabonese consular department. But we believe that when we engage Gabon in bilateral talks, it will make things a lot easier for both countries. The last bilateral talks we had with Gabon were held in 1983. It was hosted by Gabon and since then Nigeria has been unable to reciprocate to seal the relationship. That is why some of these consular issues have not been resolved.

When I was the vice president, Nigeria and South Africa had a bilateral discussion. Twice I travelled to South Africa and two of the country's deputy presidents also came to Nigeria. But when you engage with senior government functionaries, you will know that whatever shortcoming is not a state policy. We do not want our own people to suffer. Nigerians travel a lot more than other African nationals.

According to statistics, 20 percent of the total number of blacks that travel around the world are Nigerians. So we must protect that. When I come for the state visit, we will engage the Gabonese authorities so as to get all this issues clearly. We will have preliminary talks and formally write a letter to the president

to state some of these issues. But the impact will be more if I pay that state visit.

I can assure you that we will do our best and make sure that you are protected regardless of where you might be in any part of the world. We are also trying to develop our infrastructure, especially power which is our biggest challenge back home and we are doing everything to make sure we solve our electricity needs as soon as possible.

We believe that if we can stabilize power in the country, most of the small and medium scale enterprises will thrive and that will improve the standard of living of our people.

Someone also talked about national honours; that Nigerians in the Diaspora seem to have been ignored in the conferment of national honours. The awards that were given this year were those we should have given last year. But because of the late president's illness then, we had to postpone it. Initially, I wanted to cancel it and concentrate on the ones for 2010 alone, but the committee headed by Justice Alfa Belgore suggested that since the selection had already been done, and the certificates and medals already printed and procured, respectively, it was wise to proceed with the plan as scheduled.

This time around, Nigerians in the Diaspora will be involved and honoured. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala who may be considered a Diaspora Nigerian got an award at the last ceremony. If we could bring Nigerians in the Diaspora back home to head our key ministries, there is no reason why we would not honour people who have done our nation proud.

The foreign minister will write to all ambassadors where ever we have embassies to help us nominate people who are qualified and eligible for the award. After we receive these nominations, the organizing committee will now screen because it is not every nominee that eventually gets an award. Unlike in the past, people were nominated by some groups, but we have decided to change that in order to avert any controversy in the nominations.

This year, there have been two sets of awards. The regular OON (Order

of the Niger), and OFR (Order of the Federal Republic) will still be conferred. But this year, we will be recognizing 50 special Nigerians because of our fiftieth Independence anniversary. That category of award will be like a personal honour from the president. Though we do not know which criteria to use in selecting or nominating awardees, my initial idea was to give these awards to 50 Nigerians who have played key roles in our journey to independence.

Of course, I am not qualified for such accolade because I never played any key role in that crucial journey. But if we say we will only award those that are part of this country's history or journey to independence, it means we will be giving out several posthumous awards because some of them have passed on.

But from 1960 to date, many Nigerians have played some key roles and have even brought us to limelight. We feel those people too deserved to be honoured. I have talked with the committee to look into the issue and also look at the various sectors like sports, business, and other professional areas where they can select. I'm sure in doing so, Nigerians in the Diaspora will surely be nominated and even win awards.

We are also taking a deep look at the security challenge which is also a major threat to the economy and Nigerians. I'm sure that most of you, particularly those from South-east or South-south, are usually worried when you want to travel back home because of the menace of the militants. The government is aware and we are doing whatever we could to curb the menace.

In terms of elections, I have been campaigning that the votes of Nigerians must count. I believe that if the vote of every Nigerian counts, elected officials will be so serious and mindful of their post because they know it will be easy for the people who gave them their mandate to vote them out of that office.

I urge some of you who believe they can impart what they have learned abroad on their community to please come home and contest for elections. We are more committed and we are hoping more people in the Diaspora will be in our next cabinet.

We are planning to set up the Diaspora Commission. The bill is already before the National Assembly. Once that bill has been passed, the commission will manage the affairs of Nigerians in the Diaspora. Though we have a department of Diaspora issues supervised by the ministry of foreign affairs, we want to make it a bit more robust given the rising population of Nigerians in the Diaspora.

I want to thank you all sincerely for your support and love, evident in the fact that most of you gathered at the airport for about four hours to receive me. I really did enjoy the warm reception and applause from the mammoth crowd; it was simply overwhelming.

I don't think there is much food, but the Muslims will not enjoy this with us because it is the Holy month of Ramadan. I won't too because I usually partake in the Christian and Muslim fast.

Thank you all.



### *Dinner with Nigerians in Brazil 2012*

From the briefing given to me, most of you reside outside Rio. And given that the city is host of the health summit, I know it would be a challenge for some of you to secure hotel accommodation. I appreciate whatever sacrifice you have endured this night. But it is worthwhile because there is some benefit in interaction.

In most developing countries like India, the Diaspora community plays significant role in their home country's economy. Most nationals of countries who go out to study like some of you here tonight who have acquired very sound academic knowledge and very good working experience often remit money back home. They also return with the skills they have acquired to help

transform their various countries. Nigeria has a very huge population in the Diaspora. If we harness all the resources and talent honed over the years we can, at least, transform our country.

We have challenges, no doubt, especially at this period. But they are surmountable. Most of the countries that have changed didn't require a lifetime to change. What we need to do is be consistent in creating good policies for a period of time, say 10 years. Countries are like boats or aircraft; once they have taken off and begin to rev, going backward becomes difficult. So, our country will definitely change.



#### *An Audience with Nigerians in the United Kingdom*

Let me on behalf of my delegation sincerely thank all of you for coming this evening to welcome us and receive us. It's indeed an indication of the love you have for your country. The number had to be kept low since we only came in briefly to attend a meeting called by the prime minister on Somalia. We are arranging for a formal state visit which may entail visiting the UK early or mid-next year. Then I will have the opportunity to interact with a much larger audience. But today will be brief.

For many Nigerians, Britain is like a second home given the relationship between our country and Britain. And we have several Nigerians with diverse background living in the UK. We also have a number of people in the prisons, and that is one of the issues I discussed with the prime minister.

But despite that ugly situation, the prime minister was still full of praises for Nigerian professionals. A similar sentiment was expressed when I met HRH Prince Charles. That means Nigerian professionals are doing quite well,

otherwise, those bad elements would have marred all your good efforts.

Some issues have been raised. One of these is the Diaspora Commission. It is something I had long contemplated even before the election. I have to commend our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora for the role they have played in reshaping perceptions about Nigeria. I did promise that the subsequent elections would be better than what we experienced. When I was the vice president, each time I travelled after our election, I was often faced with questions that seemed to suggest we cannot conduct simple things like elections. We are working on the Diaspora Commission. The reason we had to slow down was that we have so many parastatals; over 400, and a number of these were set up to handle specific programmes or issues that are no longer of critical relevance. But they are still there. Sometime you it's a challenge knowing how the budget fund is spent. We set up a committee to look into it, to harmonize before we expand or before we create more.

I believe we would sort out the issue of the Diaspora Commission in the next one year and once we have done that it will help us address some of these issues you raised. I would also like to make it clear that Vision 20:2020 is still there. Maybe during the planned state visit, I'll come along with the planning minister and he will brief you. We are not saying that Nigeria will be at the top in 2020. Yes, that is the aim, but we realize as well that others are not sitting idly to wait for us. Give us the encouragement to study more and we will get there.

The issue of the Diaspora Investment Fund is quite an interesting story and I believe that you have to activate it. Diaspora plays essential roles, especially in countries like India and Philippines. In these countries and a few others, the Diaspora population remits a lot of money back home and they are used for investment and to stimulate the local economy. You have been doing that from CBN records. That is only with regard to the transfers that go through the normal processes. It excludes those given directly to parents, siblings or others. We know the amount of money that moves in to help the economy and that is why any

problem with the European economy affects everywhere. So we will surely engage more Nigerians. We have a number of ministers from the Diaspora in my cabinet. When we were launching the nine new universities, I insisted that at least three of the vice-chancellors and registrars should come from the Diaspora, but later there was pressure from the ministry of education that registrars have to be individuals quite conversant with the local environment. So we limited it to the vice-chancellors.

I insisted that the idea that vice-chancellors have to come from states where they are sited is very retrogressive. Universities are international centres of learning. Our labour laws here is that the vice-chancellor must come from Nigeria. When we were in primary school, hardly any of the headmasters then was from the village where such school is located. But at the tertiary level, people still insist vice chancellors must come from their state, local government or village. These are things we are gradually correcting.

Another issue that I need to comment on, although no one has yet mentioned it, is the issue of deregulation. Those of you who are outside the country watching the demonstrations in Lagos would think the entire country was really in flames. But you know more than I do that in any society you must come up with policies that will protect the lower income people. The major problem we have in Nigeria is that we don't have a developed mass transit. People have to go to work in taxis, people have to go to the market in taxis, children have to go to school in taxis. Taxis are not for mass transit.

The Obasanjo administration had deregulated diesel that fuels big buses, but because we have not developed that mass transit culture, there was no sustainable framework. At the time of the protest we spent about N1.3 trillion on our capital budget, and subsidized petrol by the same amount - N1.3 trillion. We borrowed about N1.3 trillion, which means we borrowed to subsidize. It would be tenable if we were subsidizing with excess money.

Also, the kind of malpractices associated with subsidy claims is a compelling

basis for deregulation. Removing the subsidy would stimulate the downstream sector of the oil industry. Production of crude oil Nigeria began in 1956 while export commenced in 1958. From that time to date, we haven't been refining enough fuel. It is shameful, and that is because government monopolizes the downstream.

The absence of deregulation also means that the licenses we had given to investors to build refineries have never worked. We are still importing kerosene, importing diesel, importing PMS. My target is to get competent Nigerians who can manage these refineries that will give government a guarantee that when they take over, in about 12 months, there would be sufficient kerosene for our use. We must produce enough diesel, we can do that; for PMS, we cannot, due to the capacity of the refineries. When you are producing, there is a measure of control; the round-tripping that is being perpetrated will stop. If you are producing within the country and it is smuggled out of the country, the impact on the economy is minimal, because we are not using our forex; but when you take that forex from the Central Bank, import it and smuggle it out, we lose so much. Most people agree that deregulating is the best thing to do. Even the labour unions agree. The snag is that it has been smeared by politics. It is not that those who oppose it say it's wrong; they argue that people have not been properly informed and are not prepared.

Definitely we will get over it. We have set up a committee comprising some state governors and some ministers who would come up with solid framework for mass transit that will cover about 65 per cent to 75 per cent of the country, so that even if pump price of PMS is increased, it will not affect the people's movement across cities, and students' movement. Gradually, it would be phased out completely, so that people interested in investing in the downstream activity of the petroleum industry will feel very free and be sure that their investment will not be a waste. Some of are quite ready, and had promised that after a year of taking over the refineries, they will produce sufficient kerosene and diesel for

local use. They have promised they would produce about 60 per cent to 65 per cent of PMS, and all the aviation fuel required locally. Their projection is that in two years, importation of PMS would end.



### *With Nigerians in South Africa*

Like the high commissioner did mention, this should be my third visit to South Africa since I became president. We would have had a meeting in South Africa in January and February, but we could not because our president was ill. I couldn't travel out as a result. So the meeting was deferred. Now that I have been sworn in as president due to the ill-fated death of my late boss, I believe that meeting will hold soon.

I know for sure that Nigeria's Diaspora is quite critical. We know their importance and we must tap from what they have. We will note whatever suggestions you have or issues you raise and when we get back home, look into them and see how we can key them into government programmes. Response to the issues is not necessarily important because there is no doubt that you will applaud. But that does not solve Nigeria's problem.

The president of Nigerians in Diaspora raised an issue and I would like to respond this way: we believe that Nigerians in Diaspora will help the country significantly. That is why we are urging the National Assembly to ensure the department that handles Diaspora affairs should no longer run as a department in the foreign ministry, but as an autonomous commission. We will work towards getting the bill passed so that most of the issues you raised will be resolved.

Almost every day, a Nigerian travels to India for medical reason. If those who specialize in health economy or other related areas can compute the capital

flight, the figures will be very scandalous for a country like Nigeria. In almost every developed country, you will find at least a Nigerian as one of the leading surgeons in some big hospitals. We have resources which we can tap from; what is lacking is coordination.

The National Hospital was established by the government with very good intentions aimed at ensuring that most of these illnesses for which Nigerians travel abroad will be treated at home. It's a surprise that such a well-equipped hospital is not giving us the needed service. This is why I believe that if we work with the Diaspora population, we will be able to do very well.

When I visited Boston in 2007, I was informed that the city had about 40 universities. I was amazed, so I asked if those 40 universities are funded by the American government. The reply was in the negative. I do not know how many universities there are in the United States that could be said to be doing very well, but I know the government of the United States is not responsible for funding the likes of Harvard. We cannot continue to run our university system the way we have been running it in past years.

We realize that the relationship between Nigerian traders in some African countries have been less than wholesome, especially in Ghana where Nigerian traders are having challenges operating there. We will look at it and see how best we can solve the problems.

The chairman of the Niger Delta Association raised the issue of xenophobia and a lady voiced her doubts about the e-passport. I have already discussed with the high commissioner concerning the e-passport and he has assured me they are working on it. I can also promise that we will fast-track it for your benefit.

Let me use this opportunity to tell all Nigerians in Diaspora if your children say things like "we can't go back to Nigeria because NEPA will always take light". You should tell them to go back to Nigeria because they should consider themselves among those who will help ensure that "NEPA" won't take light anymore. We should always strive to tell our children living outside Nigeria that

any good thing they see on earth, that any good country they visit are built by people. Your sons and daughters may be one of those few that will build Nigeria. Always encourage them to be close to home and be in touch because one day they may be the next governor of their state, a minister or even the President of this country.

We must always accept that we have our problems as a nation. And if others can help build their country, Nigerians must also help in the development of our own country as well.

Talking generally on issues, the key thing we know is that government plays a significant role in the development of our economy. Even if the private sector drives the economy, government must provide an enabling environment for the private sector to thrive. That is why government is pivotal in anything we do.

The first thing to do to make sure that you get a responsive government is through a reform of our electoral system. That underpins our commitment to ensure that from 2011, Nigerians who will be holding electoral offices are properly elected and, also, that the votes of the electorate count.

We must conduct our elections properly, so it would be clear to Nigerians and every foreign observer that whoever emerges as president, governor, member of House of Representatives, or Senator will all have been duly elected into their various offices. We are totally committed and we will do just that.

The emergence of Professor Attahiru Jega as the Independent Electoral Commission Chairman is not expected to wrought magic in an instant, because we all know the decadent depth to which our electoral process has sunk. But we will do everything in our power to make sure he succeeds.

I did not even know he had rough days during General Babangida's military rule during his time as president of the Academic Staff Union of Universities. It was when I read through the papers that I got to know he was such a radical. But in the course of my consultations, his name kept coming up. I have never had any discussion with or ever encountered him. Though he has worked for

government in some committees, and on that basis, we might have seen probably in a group. But we never had any interaction. There was a recent newspaper headline that read: "A radical at INEC." If a radical is at INEC, we believe he will do something good for the country.

Let me use this medium to thank you for the warm reception given to our national football team, the Super Eagles. We believe that you will continue to support them even if they are losing. Patriotism should not be expressed only when we are succeeding. We should support them till the very end.

I thank you all.



#### *With the Nigerian Community in Uganda*

In Nigeria, it seems that with regard to elections it is odd for one not to go to court, whereas in South Africa, it is odd for you to go to court.

We believe that we need to look at our electoral laws and follow it strictly, so that anyone who loses an election will have no reason to go to court, and those who win an election can celebrate with their head up. We are committed to that. You did mention Professor Jega. Of course, I did not interact with Jega. I remember a newspaper asking rhetorically how I could have appointed Jega if I did not sufficiently know him.

You have to be an extraordinary being to know 150 million people. Besides, if a president has to know you before he gives you appointment in a country where you have over 150 million people, then I don't think any Nigerian is qualified to be president of Nigeria, because you can't possibly know everyone. The case of the finance minister is an example. I told my aides to get me someone with a certain level of exposure. I know we have several people with the requisite knowledge in finance back home; but to be a finance minister in a country like Nigeria, we

need someone with vast international exposure. They recommended someone who I saw for the first time the day he took the oath of office. It's a similar tale for a number of ministers some of who hold key offices. You don't need to know someone before you appoint them to an office.

A number of people recommended Professor Jega and a few other individuals. We looked at their record and we realized they could help solve the problem that assails us.

I concede that we have challenges, especially with regard to power and infrastructure; but we will always ensure we do our best. Nigeria will continue to improve, we will no longer slide backward; everyday, we want to move forward no matter how little the distance we move. And as a nation we are committed.

You spoke of the challenge you experience procuring Kenyan visa. I discussed that with the high commissioner. We were, in fact, supposed to meet with the president. We did meet today eventually, but at the meeting we had no time. There was also the request to have your own passport machine. It's a request that has been made in a number of places. I thought that in Uganda, you have no problem; but it is good you mentioned it.

The issue of Bilateral Air Service Agreement as it relates to Nigerian-owned airlines are things we are going to handle. As a government, we will strive to make sure Nigerians living outside the country live happily. This is particularly so for those of you in Uganda, who has made us proud in not being associated with any antisocial behaviour capable of smearing our image.

Once again, I thank you all for this warm reception. When we get back home we are going to look at all the issues you raised. Those we can solve, we will solve; those that may require some sort of committee to handle it, we will also set up relevant machinery to handle it.

No government can provide jobs for every Nigerian; but government has to create the enabling environment so that people will get jobs through the private sector. I have been home virtually all my career, and I know that once we have

stable power supply, we can double the number of jobs we have, our economy will begin to grow, and we will begin to get jobs. That is why we are doing all what we can to improve our power generation. I personally meet with the group every week, if it gets too tight for me, the vice president meets with the group. There is no need rationalizing why things are the way they are; I just want to see that we are moving forward.

## ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD



### *Bilateral Talks in Turkey in 2011*

First, let me thank the president, government and the good people of Turkey for the warm reception given to me and members of my delegation since we arrived. Some of us have been here for a few days to negotiate some of the issues with extensive technical details. Some of us came in yesterday, and all along, the reception has been very warm.

Just like Mr. President did mention, I am here with very senior government functionaries - 10 ministers, five state governors, and some members of our House of Representatives and the Senate and other senior government officials that handle various responsibilities, because we are here for a serious business. We didn't come with this number just for the fun of it. Nigeria believes that the robust relationship we have with Turkey needs to be strengthened, so both countries could benefit both at the political and at the economic level.

We have a good diplomatic relationship and, currently, we are members of many organizations like the D8 and OIC; at the UN, incidentally, both countries were members of the Security Council at the same time. So relationship

between Turkey and Nigeria will surely help not just both countries, but also help reshape issues of global interest. We are here to strengthen that political ties and, at the same time, strengthen the economic relationship. There are some areas where Nigeria's comparative advantage is evident especially in terms of oil and gas, but we really need the assistance of Turkey in quite a number of areas like technology.

Thank you Mr. President and the government of Turkey for the work you have done with us. You have over the years offered scholarships to Nigerian students. At present, we have about 25 such students in Turkey. We also have to thank you for the investment in the educational sector in Nigeria. You have a school that trains people at the nursery, primary, secondary and, of course, the university which is about two years old.

We are here also with a number of top businessmen; a few of them are here with us, but most would be with us in Istanbul. The Nigerian economy has been liberalized and we would like Turkish investors to come in and play key roles in some areas like road infrastructure and in the area of power. For long, the power sector was a government monopoly, but we have liberalized it now. Power generation has been privatized, though the generating plants that were controlled by government are at a transitional phase in the process of privatizing. We are also privatizing distribution, which was an exclusive monopoly. The government will only retain the transmission aspect because of the strategic importance. But even in maintaining this transmission, we would collaborate with private sector consultants because we want to ensure there is efficiency in that area. Turkey has a lot of experience in the power sector because years back you had some challenges in that area. However, you overcame that through your ingenuity and commitment. Your businessmen who had invested in that area can also take advantage of the liberalized environment in Nigeria.

In the petroleum sector, the minister of petroleum resources will have a discussion with her Turkish colleague. We are shedding the monopoly that the

government once had in that sector and we have a new petroleum industry bill which would help make the sector less bureaucratic when passed into law.

Mr. President graciously stayed behind in Nigeria last June when we had the GS meeting for an official state visit where we had a number of discussions. The result is some of the memorandums of understanding that we have signed. We will pursue these jealously and make sure these visits are not mere ceremonies; but that they are visits that will translate to economic benefits for citizens of both countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for this visit. Amongst the Nigerian delegation are three powerful women; so Nigeria is a very gender-friendly country. Thank you all for this reception, for the assistance you have already agreed to offer and for the warm relationship.



*At CHOGM in Perth, Australia, 2011*

As a nation, we have quite a number of sectors that are yet undeveloped. We are known more as an oil and gas producing country, but we have a vast land that traverse different ecological zones where almost every crop could be cultivated. Yes, we can grow wheat in Nigeria, but not yet in commercial quantity.

One other area with huge potential is solid minerals. During Nigeria's colonial era, activities in this sector were quite pronounced. There were tin mines in Jos, but when oil was discovered in 1956, and became dominant later in the sixties and seventies, the interest of the central government in other sectors began to drop.

We have a very huge population. When we did our head count in 2006, Nigeria was 140.4 million people. Based on about 2.3 per cent growth rate projection, by

the end of this month, we would be about 166 million people. That is a huge population, and about 70 per cent are people below 35 years. These are people for whom you must find schools and jobs, because if you cannot engage them, then they would of course engage you.

So government has to contemplate different options. When we were planning the trip to Australia, I pointed out it would be nice if we're able to have an interactive session with the business community given that your country is well known for solid minerals. We're convinced Australian businessmen and women will have a lot to do in Nigeria, especially in the area of mining our solid minerals. That is why the minister of mines and steel development arrived here much earlier than the delegation. I'm glad he has been interacting with some of you. We know you are also into oil and gas, because you have a very good gas reserve, just like Nigeria. From estimates, we have about 187 trillion cubic feet of gas; but conservative estimates suggest we have about 600 trillion cubic feet yet to be discovered in the Niger Delta. But solid minerals is an area we are quite passionate about.

To develop agricultural potential we must be able to feed our huge population. If we have to depend on food import, it would be a huge challenge meeting the foreign exchange demand. So we are pursuing a radical turnaround of our agriculture. We want to aggressively exploit our solid mineral resources and through that, create job opportunities and stimulate the local economy. So we thank you for this beautiful evening. I'm particularly happy for today, because of the opportunity to host my wife for a dinner on her birthday. I'm sure she will always remember that her birthday was celebrated in this beautiful city.

We have a number of things in common: we are here because we both belong to the Commonwealth of Nations. Nigeria and Australia have been involved in a number of struggles especially with regard to global peace. We contribute troops for peace keeping all over the world and we continue to do that. Nigeria will continue to collaborate with Australia to ensure peace in the

Commonwealth countries and, indeed, the world. I appreciate all the statements you have made about my presidency and my country.

The government of Nigeria is totally committed to reform. Not too long ago, our economy was almost wholly managed by the federal government; but that has changed now due to privatization.

We believe that to transform our economy, the private sector has to take the lead while the government creates the enabling environment. My administration is totally committed to creating that enabling environment. That is why we are restructuring our economy to make sure that we emphasize agriculture and solid mineral for which Australia is reputed.

In terms of trade relations between Nigeria and Australia, we had some brief bilateral talks and we're confident we would build on that and see how we will increase the trade between Australia and Nigeria.

We have to thank the Australian government because you are providing educational facilities for quite a number of Nigerian students. Some of them are studying mining, some are even on the scholarship of the Australian government and we believe that the relationship between the two countries in these current areas will continue to soar.

But some challenges like polio still remain. I promise that we must eradicate polio. Another thing I always promise is that before I conclude my term we will be producing enough food for local consumption, especially cereals, because we produce rice not just for our country, but also for export. Yet, we spend some good money importing rice.

Our commitment is that before 2015, we should be self-sufficient in rice production; that will give us reasonable food security even though we may import some other minor food items. But that is the commitment.

A robust agricultural programme can also create jobs in addition to food security. It is inconceivable that government alone can create jobs for 167 million people.

My first visit to Australia was in 2000, during the Sydney Olympics. I was the deputy governor of my state then, but I had no opportunity to come to this beautiful state of Western Australia. I had a formal interaction with the premier of Western Australia this morning and he has briefed me about the region, its asset base, the resources and so on. I was quite interested and told him I would want a robust relationship between Australia and Nigeria. I thank you all.



### *In Australia... Planning an Onslaught against Polio*

His Excellency, our host, the honourable prime minister of Australia, and other prime ministers that are here. It's gratifying to be here this morning with Commonwealth leaders to talk about how we can eradicate polio in the world.

Nigeria, sadly, still has vestiges of polio and to be with leaders of this esteemed body this morning to plan complete eradication of polio is a major achievement for us. When I met Bill Gates early in the year, I promised that Nigeria will strive hard to eradicate polio in the next two years.

We had very bad cases of polio, but government had worked so hard that of the 36 states of the federation, polio is now limited to seven states. As at 2010, we scored a 95 per cent success. Last year, only 11 cases were recorded. But, rather surprisingly, last year, we recorded about 38 cases and we were worried.

I insisted that I had to set up a special task force and I'm going to inaugurate it November. It would be chaired by my minister of state for health. I will work with the governors, our traditional leaders and I promise the world that by the next two years surely we will eradicate polio.

We are stepping up our funding in polio eradication from 17 million dollars to 30 million dollars annually. The aim is to ensure that given the global assistance

we will get, we will be able to eradicate polio. We have no choice because polio is very debilitating; it kind of separates the victim from the rest of the society, and can make the family rather miserable. As a leader, you wouldn't want to see that among your children especially knowing that it is a disease that we could completely eradicate.



### *Forging Economic Ties at an ECOWAS Summit*

We have had a lot of crises within the sub-region but, thanks to the intervention and commitment of ECOWAS, most of these crises have been drastically reduced. In terms of economic integration, though we have yet to get to the height we hope to attain, but I can assure you that we will get there.

Most of the countries represented here attained sovereignty about 50 years ago, compared to some other countries that have been independent for over 200 years. It is always difficult to create political boundaries, but negotiations have been going on.

On the first day of this economic summit, we discussed about some key issues especially security in the sub-region. We cannot achieve most of these things overnight. The issue of power, like the president highlighted, would require collaboration from engineers and financial experts from all countries in the sub-region. We talked about human trafficking, security, agriculture and Millennium Development Goals.

These are areas where we can't possibly expect the benefits tomorrow. If you are conversant with the history of the West African Sub-region from 1975 to date, you will notice that despite challenges, problems are being solved and we are developing. I am urging everyone to cast away pessimism because the

developed nations did not attain their impressive status overnight. They also experienced difficulties as a nation.

I was in Norway sometime ago and they were celebrating 200 years of peace in Europe. I believe so many African countries can also achieve this as time goes on. In Nigeria, for instance, we now boast a stable government. But before 1999 when democratic governance returned, the military had been in power for about three decades. Military governments seldom have time to plan because its promoters are always preoccupied with how to stave off potential coup attempts.

1999 to date is barely 11 years and you cannot compare this with countries that have been running a peaceful democratic government for 200 years. I agree that we need to move faster, but our leaders are definitely moving and we shall realize our dreams.



### *Rallying to Save Lake Chad*

First, let me thank the president of Chad, the government and the beautiful people of this country for hosting us at this ceremony. I will also like to thank the president for holding these twin events: *The 8th African Session of the World Forum on Political Development and Safeguard of Lake Chad* and *The 13th Summit of Heads of States of Lake Chad Basin Commission* that will be opened tomorrow.

For the past twenty five years or so, environmental issues have understandably caught attention across the world. Environmental challenges like global warming and its effect on earth dominate global discussions. African countries according to studies tend to suffer the consequences of environmental changes more because of the low level of technological development and economic stagnation.

Global warming is quite worrisome especially with regard to coping with the heat that results in excessive evaporation of water, melting of ice in some parts of the world. And since the globe is in a kind of dynamic equilibrium, when the water evaporates into the atmosphere, it comes down inevitably as excess rainfall which leads to flooding.

For communities in the valleys and those occupying very low areas, it's a terrifying experience as farmlands are washed away and economic activities decline significantly. In Nigeria, we have seen in some parts of the country where house and farmlands have been wiped out due to excessive flooding caused by heavy rainfall. Sadly, it's likely to stay that way.

That is why this summit today is quite critical. Though we are talking about Lake Chad, but the situation at hand goes beyond Lake Chad, and I believe the suggestions we come up with today will lend some perspectives as we ponder these global threats and how it affect Africa.

The importance of Lake Chad is quite obvious and we do not need to over-emphasize. Lake Chad is situated in the part of Africa that is relatively dry with very few months of rain.

In the sixties, Lake Chad was about 25,00sq/km, and water level has stopped to the level that presently we are talking about just 2000sq/km. That is very dangerous. It is a signal that in another 30 to 50 years, if nothing is done, the whole Lake Chad will become extinct. That is why I am quite happy about this discussion and I have to thank you all for your contributions because if this happens, the effects will not be limited to the countries bordering Lake Chad alone. Like someone mentioned earlier, "when there is major environmental impact in any part of the world, there will be issues of migration and immigration, and there will be a lot of social conflicts globally".

Environmental issues don't respect national borders, and that is why we are quite happy that there is ample interest in Lake Chad. Let me sincerely thank the scientists who have been discussing this for the past two days. I believe they will

present their report to us as soon as possible. My chairmanship of the Lake Chad Basin ends tomorrow and I will formally hand over to my dear brother. But I'm convinced that all of us - heads of states and governments - especially for the countries that border Lake Chad, will take the recommendations very seriously. Indeed, we have no choice. We have to collectively safeguard Lake Chad because we cannot allow the lake to go into extinction.

We are happy that some international organizations are committed to assisting us to see how we can salvage the lake. We need their support, we need the support of individuals and friendly countries.

My dear brothers and sisters, Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, let me everyone for their various contributions and assure you that as the heads of states and governments of the most affected countries, we will do our best to ensure we preserve these recommendations including what we have on ground concerning the Inter-basin Water Transfer Project which has been completed as a remedial step.



### *Business Group Meeting with John Atta Mills*

First let me thank Professor John Atta Mills for personally coming to the airport to receive me today and for the warm reception given to me and my entourage since we arrived. We are quite pleased to be home in Ghana.

For me, whenever I meet Ghanaians, I just feel as if I'm home. I have an aunt that married a Ghanaian, I have cousins from Ghana, and when I was a youth corps member, there were a lot of Ghanaian teachers who were quite friendly on the staff of the secondary school I thought in the South-west. I also recall a good Ghanaian friend, Dr. Dabba - I think he is here with us - with whom I did

master's in Nigeria. Even as a lecturer, there were a number of Ghanaian lecturers with whom I worked.

So I have been interacting with Ghanaians for a time now and I find them very hard working people, very warm people, very receptive people, very friendly people.

Although Nigeria and Ghana are not boundary neighbours, these two countries have more affinities than some of the boundary neighbours we have. Politically, we know what our revered leader, Kwame Nkrumah, did not just for Ghana, not just for West Africa but for the rest of Africa. Ghana was one of the first countries that got independence, and others soon followed and became independent nations. Even in the political sphere, Ghana's party politics and democracy have become shining examples to emulate.

I have to personally thank Atta Mills for the commitment he has shown since he became the chair of ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments. All the meetings to which I have invited him, he has personally attended all both the formal meetings and the emergency meetings.

I know the decisions we took, some of them were quite hard, especially when you have challenges in Ivory Coast and others, but we are happy that today Ivory Coast is stabilizing. A good partnership between Nigeria and Ghana will surely strengthen ECOWAS, AU and the Commonwealth. Ghana and Nigeria in the spirit of ECOWAS protocol really need to work together and indeed we have been working together.

It is gratifying to see Ghanaian and Nigerian actors and actresses in films that are either shot in Nigeria or in Ghana. This is an industry that is bonding the younger generation a lot.

As political leaders, we will continue to show political leadership, but we also want our businessman and women to exploit that and work together for the development of the two nations. One of the reason I'm here is to cement this relationship.

When I was told we were to be given the honour, this state banquet, I was surprised because our mission was to come quietly, have some personal discussion with the president about the interest of the two countries, ECOWAS issues, continental issues and UN issues and, of course, attend the programme tomorrow and go back. From the airport, I was given a full military reception and this evening again, full state banquet. I remain grateful Mr. President.

We discussed issues related to ECOWAS, we discussed things about the UN, we discussed the coming elections in the United Nations. Nigeria and Ghana are interested in a particular position and we said no, we would talk to our foreign ministers for them so find an amicable solution.

We don't want to go into a contest that pits Nigeria against Ghana in a fight over one office, so we are trying to see how we could ensure that election into some of these offices are by negotiation, so we don't create a situation that breeds acrimony. We have also agreed at the economic level to encourage the Bilateral Commission meeting. We held a meeting in Nigeria early this year, so we have to come to Ghana.

The Bilateral Commission headed by the two countries' foreign ministers has helped nations forge better understanding. Even within families, within countries, within states, within local governments, certain issues arise; but if they meet and hold regular dialogue, those issues are resolved very quickly. So we have agreed that those meetings will come up very quickly and they have to be continuous. Nigeria and Ghana have a big role to play in stabilizing the ECOWAS and indeed the AU. If ECOWAS is strong economically, politically, and in terms of security, then we can rest assured of sub-regional and continental development.

ECOWAS emerged in 1975, but along the line enthusiasm began to wane somewhat until Ghana and Nigeria rallied commitment from members states. Today, the organization is one of the strongest economic bloc within the continent.



### *Press Gallery*

*Question: Your Excellency, you announced a number of initiatives: you talked about free movement of goods and persons in the sub-region, a protocol which has been on the cards for a while; do you think you have enough time to do this given that you have about one year as ECOWAS chair?*

**Jonathan:** By the grace of God I will continue to be president of Nigeria till May 29, 2015. You don't need to be the chair of ECOWAS Authorities of Government and States to make changes. We are all equal, the chair is just given the privilege because a meeting has to be coordinated, that the president of this country should coordinate within this period, just like AU. It does not make the chairman superior to any other president. So my duty now is the coordinator, and whether I'm still coordinating or not, any issue I strongly believe in, I will present. Also, before I leave - I'm supposed to formally hand over in December - I will articulate those positions very clearly.

At the time ECOWAS began in 1975, the challenges we have now were not there. You cannot talk about trade if you cannot move goods and services easily, you cannot board a vehicle from Accra to Lagos or to port Harcourt, to Ibadan or to Calabar freely without meeting bandits. How do we protect such movement? So, you must address security within the sub-region. Yes, we talked about infrastructure, but even if you have the best infrastructure, you must talk about your security. I will still be a member of ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments; I don't need to be the chair to introduce those ideas.

*Question: What is the relationship between Ghana and Nigeria within the ECOWAS community?*

**Jonathan:** I just mentioned that Ghana and Nigeria are very critical members of the ECOWAS community. ECOWAS started in 1975, and at a time experienced a lull. Ghana and Nigeria decided to come together to push the organization forward and it regained momentum. We will continue to cooperate. Yes, we do play football, Black Stars may win, Eagles may win; rivalry in sports is normal. We have a solid relationship and as presidents we relate very well. President Atta Mills had visited me, in fact, even towards my elections, he came and made his statements clearly because we encourage stability within the sub-region. We don't encourage excesses in the polity, and that is why I say that if I suddenly decide, as president of Nigeria to become a despot, an emperor, it would be an invitation to ECOWAS to pursue me out if Nigerians are not strong enough to do that.

We want stability, because without that you cannot have economic development. One of the things people ask is why some African states have not developed like some of the Asian states with whom we started roughly the same time. Without reducing corruption, it is difficult for public funds to be available for investment. There is a lot of money in public hands and economic development is mainly in the hands of the private sector, but what hinders development in most cases is insecurity in terms of political instability in our states. We still have challenges in a number of states, but we are gradually having stable political environments. In the next 10-15 years, the economies of most African states will improve.



*At a UN Press Briefing*

I want to thank you all, especially my friends from the press for coming to this brief interaction. I'm here to participate in the debate on HIV/AIDS, and to

attend the ongoing meeting on the subject. I'll also use that opportunity to participate in the debate of the Security Council with regard to HIV/AIDS. Tomorrow I will also take part in the Bill Clinton Global Initiative and the launch of the Global Fund for the Elimination of AIDS in the new born child, and how to ensure their mothers live. The emphasis will be on mother-to-child transmission. We are going to look at how that should be done and how funds would be raised to handle that.

About three million people in Nigeria are carriers. That figure excludes cases of full blown AIDS. We are totally committed to reducing this number. In the beginning, people were largely indifferent and assumed the problem was limited only to homosexuals or drug addicts. But once commitment grew in 2001, the prevalence dropped from 5.8 per cent, as at last year, to 4.1 per cent. I believe that at the end of the MDG period of 2015, it will come down drastically and that is one of the reasons why I had to be in New York for this programme.

I was inaugurated barely one month ago and, ordinarily, ought not to be here. I have not even appointed my ministers; but the issue of HIV is quite critical because if one is infected, the person becomes prone to different kinds of diseases. We must protect our soldiers who are involved in peace keeping missions across the world. That is why the Security Council has to discuss this matter extensively. It is important to us as a nation.

My biggest worry is in relation to raising sufficient funds to combat HIV/AIDS. I wouldn't want to cite it as disappointment, or perhaps blame the developed nations for not meeting up with their promises. They made promises based on their expected income, and probably they couldn't get the expected income, and so we did not receive what we were supposed to receive.

And that is why as African countries, we are trying to appraise it from a different perspective: how do we fund these AIDS-related expenses? How do we get other funds to complement what we are getting from the development partners? These are the issues, and some of the key things we may discuss when

I meet with Clinton tomorrow.

You also drew my attention to the explosion we experienced on the evening of May 29. We did not, initially, believe we had terrorists amongst us, until it became so obvious that we have some elements of terrorism. Explosions in Nigeria first started from the Niger Delta, then gradually moved north, especially the North-eastern part. We have been able to contain the situation in the Niger Delta. I thought the question would be about what happened last year when we celebrated our fiftieth independence anniversary.

The May 29 explosion occurred at a remote location from the federal capital. We have those challenges, but it has nothing to do with the elections. This issue of explosions has been with us, and we are doing all what we can to contain it. I can assure you that as a government, we are committed, we are equal to the task and we will bring it down. All over the world, terrorism is not something you can easily eliminate. It definitely has nothing to do with the elections or whether I am a Christian president or a Muslim president; but it is something that we must deal with. It is part of the global terrorism scourge.

Terrorism is part of the ugly history of the world and I always tell people it will be all over, probably in the next few years, globally. That is one thing that Nigeria and countries of the world are committed to. We will collectively fight terrorism wherever we find it.

I have already mentioned that we have to look inwards to complement whatever we have from our development partners who probably would not meet up with their pledges and promises towards procuring drugs for persons living with HIV/AIDS. I'm meeting with President Obama today, and there are about 30 bilateral meetings to look at global issues. Nigeria is one of the countries expected to play some key roles in global matters, so whenever we have the opportunity to be in the United States, we compare notes, talk about issues, but it has nothing to do with foreign policies of both Nigeria and the United States because Nigeria's foreign policy has not changed; we still maintain

the same foreign policy, we have not changed at all. The relationship between Nigeria and the United States will be the same; we are only looking at areas where we can solve global issues as it affects all mankind.

The election violence had nothing to do with religious dichotomy. The population of Nigeria is split roughly equally between Muslim and Christian population. And if you look at the spread of how I won the elections, you would see that I won almost in the entire country. It was only in about four states that I got less than 25 per cent. According to our constitution, you have to score at least 25 per cent in two-thirds of the states. But I got 25 per cent in about 32 states out of the country's 36 states. If you include Abuja, it is like 35 out of 37. Even in the states that I didn't score 25 per cent, the margin was quite low; the least I got was 16 per cent.

So unlike previous elections where you find some regions completely voting for one candidate while the other regions voted for another, it was not the case in our election. There is usually the misconception that Nigeria's north is entirely Muslim, and that the southern population is Christian. We have Christians both in the north and south. The south-western axis of the country, for example, has almost 50 per cent Muslims and 50 per cent Christians. Even in Borno State where the explosions have been severe, we have significant percentage of Christians even though there are more Muslims there. It's certainly not Christians versus Muslims.

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect but they also attack Islamic groups as well as non-Islamic groups. Anybody who embraces Western civilization is an enemy and they are more antagonistic to fellow Muslims who they perceive as having embraced the western way of life.

## MATTERS OF STATE



*On a visit to Ibadan to commiserate with flood victims*

On behalf of the federal government and my family, I express my condolences to the governor and good people of Oyo State. Our visit here, first and foremost, is to commiserate with all the people of Oyo State for this disastrous flood that affected the state immensely.

I felt terribly worried especially as the president of the country. Given that the entire country is my constituency, I couldn't possibly want any disaster in any part of the country, as you would rightly imagine. We flew over some of the places, we also inspected some of the places and have seen the extent of damage it caused. We have also watched the video clips and saw how quite high the water level had been through photographs.

Sadly, also, we saw some of the dead bodies that were recovered and do feel your pains. It is a natural disaster and we pray that God should give the state and families of the victims the fortitude to bear the loss. We commend the director-general and other officers of NEMA for intervening very quickly; we also commend the state government for the response and also the UN for their

assistance in helping to cushion the effect of this natural disaster on our people.

I have told the governor that we will still send some officials with technical expertise while NEMA will be assisting with relief materials to cushion the impact as it directly affect the people.

We will send some technical crew from the ministry of works, ministry of water resources, and the ministry of environment to come and survey this place and also study the footage with the Oyo State government to see the areas the federal government will assist the state. That would enable the federal government assist the state in fixing some collapsed bridges, culverts and collapsed buildings.

Some of the places we've seen, especially the video clip, paint a pitiable picture and we pray that God will give all of you the fortitude to bear the loss. Once again, I thank you all for receiving us.



### *At the Palace of the Olubadan... a condolence visit*

High Chiefs and other members of the Olubadan's cabinet, very senior government functionaries here with us, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. Your Royal Majesty, today is a sad day for me in many respects because I visited your palace twice as we were preparing for the elections. I came here when we were consulting members of the PDP for our primaries, and you received me warmly, prayed for me and blessed me.

The other occasion was during my campaign after we had rounded off the primaries. When we came to Oyo State, we paid a courtesy call on you, and, again, you prayed for us and blessed us. Because of your blessings and because your people listened to you, and because Nigerians also listened to you, we won

the elections. I was thinking that immediately the government stabilizes, I would go round and thank some of the key leaders of this country that made it possible and you are one of those.

Unfortunately, before that journey, disaster struck in your kingdom. The flood was quite unfortunate and I'm sad because my first visit shouldn't have been to commiserate with you. But as they say, man proposes and God disposes; that is the wish of God, that is the wish of Allah.

Your Excellency, we are here to commiserate with you and bring the condolences of the federal government and my immediate family for what has happened in Ibadan. I mentioned in government house that for me, Oyo State is a second home because I was here as a youth corps member for one year. That memory will never leave me, and even when I'm dead that fact will still be reflected because it has been documented. So, I am a member of your kingdom and we are quite sad about what happened.

When we tried to look at the history of flooding here, the last ones that were recorded occurred in 1948 during the colonial period. The ones that happened in the 1930s were not properly documented. Since then we've been witnessing flooding in Ibadan, during the Second Republic when the late Bola Ige was governor of this state, we witnessed major flooding twice in Ibadan and the frequency has been five years or sometimes less.

So it is something that is predictable; we know it will occur and can, as a result, plan very well in order to avert it. That is one of the reasons I came with the minister of environment, the minister of water resources the minister of works and, of course, your own daughter, the minister of state for the Federal Capital Territory.

We also want to look at the areas the federal government can work with the states to see how we can reduce the flooding and its negative impacts because, as we have seen, it's likely to happen again. We use this opportunity

Thank the state government for its rapid response, and also NEMA that came immediately to assist and mitigate the effects on the people. We pray that God should give Your Majesty, the Olubadan-in-Council and all citizens of this great state especially the families of those who have died the fortitude to bear the loss that we can never replace.

Your Majesty, once again, I thank you for the warm reception you continue to give to us whenever we call and we pray for God to give you more years to serve us.



### *In Enugu... At Governor Chime's mother's burial*

Let me on behalf of my wife and the vice-president express my condolences to you. The vice president himself would have been here, but he had to be somewhere else for an official engagement. I listened to the message and even without reading her biography, you would appreciate what our mother, Theresa, meant to her immediate children and to every other person.

The comments of her personal physician show that she touched the lives of so many people. She was a leader in so many respects, and of course we learnt of how she saved the union's money during the war when several people could easily have held on to the money and claim it had disappeared.

So our mother must have played a significant role in the children's upbringing. Perhaps, that is the reason Chime is a governor today. One of the biggest challenges for families today is the gradual loss of parental affection either due to commitments to business, work or politics.

Most of us no longer have the time to manage our homes. I have a personal example. When I was a child, I used to cough a lot and my mother would

often tell me: look, as you grow up, please don't ever smoke; if you smoke you will die.

She had no knowledge of medicine at all, but she believed that since I coughed a lot, I would worsen my problem if I smoke and I might not live long. That message became internalized. So, when I grew up and some of my friends were smoking, I remembered my mother's warning that I would die if I smoke. Because of that, I kept away from cigarette.

In such occasion, it is for us all to emulate her and live the kind of life she lived. Even if Udi were a much bigger town, it couldn't have attracted the sort of diverse crowd that we have seen here today. I grew up very close to the Atlantic sea, while the chairman of our great party, PDP, comes from very close to the desert; so people from the sea to the desert, from the west to the east are all gathered here in this city of Udi because of our mother, because of the kind of life she lived and because of the way she nurtured her children. We should all emulate her.

I have to also appreciate the priest who gave us the message because, sometimes, when people criticize the government, there is a tendency to say "yes, he is talking to them". But what we promised we will do is that this country has to change. While he was preaching, I began to wonder what must have gone wrong from 1914 when the northern and southern parts of this country were amalgamated, and were under colonial rule, to 1960 when we started governing ourselves.

I don't think it is the two years that President Jonathan has been in the saddle that our problems started. So, something must have gone wrong. And all of us, citizens of this country, must re-assess ourselves, our journey from independence to date, the areas that we have not done too well.

Let us not allow the occasional frivolities of politics to meddle with the development of the country. Let us collectively work to change our country because we have no other country.



### *At the Launch of a Locally-Built Warship*

This is not a day for long speeches. I thank the navy for what they have done. We have formally commissioned NNS Andoni built by our officers here. I am particularly impressed that a number of retired naval engineers participated in the project. When you are good, you cannot possibly retire; even if you are no longer receiving regular salaries from your place of work, the exceptional people will continue to contribute to the development of the country.

Some of the countries that were at par with us are building aircraft, choppers and other remarkable things. The government is repositioning the country to encourage Nigerian content even in the oil industry.

As a result, a number of things are being fabricated locally. I was in Lagos not long ago and was pleasantly surprised to see that equipment for drilling are now being built. When I was in Kaduna during the Air Force Day, I also saw the creativity and innovation the engineers were able to bring to bear on the air force. We have now seen what the navy has been able to achieve. I have also been properly briefed about what the army is doing.

The defence minister has also just informed me that in a couple of weeks, I will be commissioning something ground-breaking. This is the beginning of transformation; you cannot transform without technological revolution. And I believe that probably in another 10 to 15 years, we could be talking about starting a project that will launch Nigeria into the air.

We have men and women who are intelligent and that is the reason we came up with a special scholarship programme. I am not saying only those who made first class are creative; some of the people we celebrate globally were school dropouts. But they became very creative.

We will also encourage the Nigerian Defence Academy so they could select

the best amongst them in some specialized areas of engineering and send them to the best universities in the world. We cannot continue to remain import-dependent, we have a very large market. The fact is that what we can consume is sufficient to support our industry. We have the market, we must exploit it, we must use it. I am quite pleased with the armed forces, I am pleased with the navy, chief of defence staff, chief of naval staff and other service chiefs; we thank all of you for this creativity.

On behalf of our great country, let me congratulate you and wish you more record-breaking feats. I believe the defence industry will help launch Nigeria to technological advancement as has been the case in a number of countries. We have started.



*In Anambra... at project launch*

Anambra is a state known for industrialisation. I was in Anambra before election for a state visit and here I am in Anambra again. These two visits make Anambra unique; it is a state with a vibrant private sector. I am quite pleased to be here at this unique ceremony. The minister of transport has said it all and I don't want to bore you by repeating my prepared speech, because I would be simply repeating almost everything he had said. We are quite pleased that we are today commissioning this inland ports, it is a signal for more things to come.

We need cooperation between the executive and the parliament to ensure this nation moves forward. We have to plan and scrupulously implement the plan, albeit gradually. As a nation, one essential thing we need to do overcome challenges in the transport sector is to exploit all the potentials available. When we tried to adjust the pump price of petroleum products, there was resistance

case of the resulting hike in the cost of commuting. We believe that both rail transport and marine transport must be enhanced. For us to be able to do that is imperative to have terminal ports, normal ports and marines ports. And, of course, we need the inland ports like the one we are commissioning today.

Like the minister had mentioned, we also have the inner container terminals. The goal is that every cargo would not necessarily have to be cleared in our seaports or seaports; they should be moved to inner container terminals for clearance. Our target is to link up all these ports by roads and rail so that doing business in Nigeria will become a lot easier. As a country, we must encourage this, along with the need to export our farm produce.

We have to export our flour and other perishable items. So linking up all these ports is an imperative. Today we are just flagging off the process; I'm optimistic the other ones being constructed would be completed. Moving cargo by water is cheaper than doing so on land apart from the fact that it also reduces the negative effects on our roads. It's unusual for heavy cargo that ought to be moved by train are carried by trucks on the roads, cargo that are supposed to be moved by vessels are carried on the road.

Our commitment to transform the economy is in all the sectors, and I plead with Nigerians to understand that things cannot change overnight. You need a minimum time to build. Happily, we are on the right course, and we assure all Nigerians that we will not relent until we fulfil our electoral promises. We will strive to work with the private sector in our transformation agenda and the work done in this regard is quite reassuring.

When we get to the town hall meetings, we would be speaking on the second Niger Bridge because I know it's an issue that means a lot for people from Anambra and, indeed, the entire South-East and South-South.

I have commissioned a federal government project today - that is the Onitsha Inland Port; I have commissioned state government project; but what made me extremely happy is the number of projects associated with the private sector:

from Orient Oil to Orange Drugs and others. Our transition programme is built on cooperation between the government and the private sector. All over the world, the private sector creates the job, the private sector has the money, what the government has to do is to come up with policies and programmes that will create what Governor Obi described as a level-playing ground and also assistance in form of incentives.

The coordinating minister goes all out to encourage the private sector in Nigeria and we are all committed. We must create the enabling environment for the country to develop. Governor Peter Obi has been outstanding in encouraging the private sector.

The second Niger Bridge is very important. It is a promise that I have to fulfil. It would be indefensible if I'm unable to build a second one. There could be some divine imprint here: the first Niger Bridge was built by our own Azikiwe; the second Niger Bridge will be built by Azikiwe.

Someone also raised the issue of Orient Oil. We have seen the flare, we have seen the crude oil; so Anambra State is now in the league of the oil-producing states. I know why the question was asked. I'm glad the National Assembly members are here with me and they saw the flare.

There was also question of road infrastructure and power. I have been discussing with the ministers in that sector, including the finance minister. As we approach December this year, we are working hard to make sure that the experience of last year does not repeat. We want Nigerians to be able to celebrate Christmas with reasonably stable power; we want Nigerians to drive home and back, not stopping for hours because a road was cut into two, or because the potholes had become so big that vehicles can no longer manoeuvre. We believe that before we get to the end of 2013, most of our roads will be resurfaced and our power sector too will stabilize.

Let me also use this opportunity to speak about Bart Nnaji because I am in the South-East. The former minister has not committed any offence. His

er stands him out. He is a product of the World Bank, a professor of  
s engineering, very competent in the sector. But we are privatizing the  
er sector and that is what happens in all civilized societies; when certain  
happen and certain questions are raised, to ensure that you have credibility  
e process, somebody has to say let me step aside.

That is why he had step aside because we wanted everybody to know that  
e process is credible. But he did not commit any offence. Definitely, we will get  
e other minister, we will get a competent person to do it because power is so  
e need to our development.

On the issue of security, I have always said that we will work very hard and  
e are working very hard to make the country a much safer place. I'm assuring  
e women who voiced concern about erosion, that we are looking at erosion  
ontrol in the South-East and the river bank control in the South-South, and the  
e pper erosion we have in some parts of the South-West and North.

Let me thank Professor Ike whose books, particularly, *The Naked Gods*,  
I always enjoy reading. I want to thank you for what you have done for this  
e great country, as a teacher in the first place and as an administrator and now as a  
e traditional ruler. I agree with you that we must deploy our best brains to develop  
e our country.

Indeed, we have Nigerians everywhere. The last time I had discussions  
e with President Obama, he told me we have over 25,000 medical doctors and  
e consultants from Nigeria in the USA across diverse areas of medicine.

So we must work hard and create an environment where some of these, we  
e don't say all of them, would come even as visitors to solve some of our medical  
e problems.

So, let me thank you all for coming and reassure Nigerians that we are  
e committed to gradually bringing reasonable changes to the land, that our  
e economy will be re-positioned for growth, and that we will encourage the  
e private sector to create jobs.



*At a meeting with leaders of National Union of Teachers*

I am a member of NUT and also a member of the Science Teachers Association. For about a year, I worked in the old Rivers State Ministry of Education where I was the Science Inspector of Education. I took part in several workshops in places such as Port Harcourt, Owerri and Badagry to develop curriculum and teaching materials for primary school science and mathematics. So I'm part of you.

Let me sincerely thank the president and everyone of you who found time to come out and meet with us this afternoon. To come in such large number from across the country is no easy thing given the challenges that often come with travelling. It clearly shows how determined you are to ensure that this critical sector is carefully nurtured for the good of our children and the society at large. I'm really gladdened.

I'm quite happy because the president's speech is timely. We actually need a comprehensive address and even if it was longer than it is, I would have had no qualms about that.

The president mentioned that you have already submitted your position to the technical committee which is the task force set up to examine the outcome of our two-day workshop. In fact, I wanted to say I would submit the address to that body. But this would, nonetheless, still be submitted because there could possibly be some critical political issues here that may not be in the technical presentation you submitted.

As a nation we must work together because the country belongs to everyone. The positions we occupy are privileged positions and we cannot claim that Nigeria belongs to the president; and neither can we say the state belongs to the governor or that the local government belongs to the chairman. By no means.

We will all reason together and do what is best for our country.

My position is clear on issues that affect Nigerians. The laws are meant for good governance and that is why we have the National Assembly, an enduring institution for that matter. It will continue to strive to make new laws and amend existing ones. So, if any given subject is deemed to be of utmost interest and that would necessitate changing the laws including the constitution - which we just amended because of the election - we will do so to protect the teaching profession and ensure that we produce students that will have qualitative education.

Even if the constitution says the local government should be responsible for primary schools, it did not say the state government cannot take steps to ensure that particular sector works very well. As we speak, in some states, the governors have taken over some of the primary schools.

I remember within the brief period I was governor of Bayelsa State, we were confronted with the spectre of unpaid salaries in primary school. I told them I cannot justify a situation where civil servants and secondary school teachers receive their salaries every month whereas the primary school teachers do not. So I took over and told them the state government will make up for it and pay. As a matter of fact, I insisted the primary school teachers should receive their salaries even before the civil servants. That is the quality of leadership at the state level and why you all should elect people you believe will deliver.

For instance, some governors like in Rivers State, have taken over the payment of salaries and even building primary schools. It's also a similar case in Benue and Zamfara where the states are building primary and secondary schools which I have seen.

We cannot talk about qualitative tertiary education without a sound foundation at the primary school level. A major problem of our tertiary education is that there are too many people in our universities who do not have the basic knowledge that should ordinarily be taken for granted as a result of the weakness in the secondary school system. But, somehow, they find themselves

there. People like these tend to assume that to be socially-relevant or pass their exams, they have to join a cult group. And soon such students become a menace to the society.

So for us to strengthen our tertiary education system, we must first strengthen both the primary and the secondary education. The Vision 2020 has to be anchored on a firm foundation which can thrive if the society is a knowledge-based one. It is not sustainable to continue to import nearly everything we consume; we have to develop our indigenous technology, and not simply go on importing because we think we have oil money. Some of these countries now have oil too.

What do we do? We have to, first and foremost, invest in education. When I took over as the governor of Bayelsa State, I said it's important to ask ourselves what we think this state would look like in the next twenty-five years. You can construct roads and construct bridges, but what will be the quality of the people of Bayelsa in the next twenty-five years?

That was because I wanted a situation where, for instance, if I went to a federal government-owned hospital outside the state and they told me the best heart surgeon or the best brain surgeon is a Bayelsa indigene. It wasn't just in the medical field I had such dream; it was in all fields of human endeavour.

That was the vision that guided the number of projects I started then. The dream was to ensure we got very standard secondary schools. But before then I thought we should select the best one hundred students every year from among the primary schools in the rural areas and send them to all those international schools our people cannot afford. That way we help them realize their dream. But since I left, I am not sure that project has been sustained. The first beneficiaries from the programme are still there because when we sent them to those schools, we paid their school fees for the six years.

One of my special advisers sent a note to me in respect of the National Secondary School Commission. I want to assure you that something is being done.

If we must go on with the 6-3-3-4 system, we thought it's wise to set up a body that will make sure we implement it as it was conceived. The current law before me has to do with the upper secondary, which does not cover up for the junior secondary. But I believe those who are in charge of it are professionals and I expect them to give Nigerians the best.

Once again, let me thank you and assure you that I would resolve all the issues we talked about today, especially with regard to the salary issue. We will do our best and God will help all of us.



#### *On a Visit to Emir of Kano after a Bomb Blast*

I visited your palace last year, about the 13th or the 16th of March, before the presidential election. Then, I did promise a number of things I intend to accomplish in the next four years if I was elected into office. But I'm deeply saddened that I'm offering my condolences today, instead of bringing joyous news of what we have been doing or what we have been able to achieve so far. As humans, we could plan. But God has some other reasons why certain things happen and we cannot blame God.

I come here today to sympathize with you and the good people of Kano on the dastardly act of some elements in our society who have decided to create havoc to retard us. God willing, they will never succeed.

Kano is a great city and a city of enterprise; a commercial centre not just for Nigeria, but Africa at large. It is a city comprising very hard working men and women. It's instructive that the people of Kano have been living in peace even at the outset of the Boko Haram crisis which has been with us for quite some time. We never experienced any explosion in Kano. So what happened here on Friday

was naturally shocking. Our thoughts are with you at this trying period. I assure you that the federal government will not rest until the perpetrators of this act are arrested and prosecuted. They live among us, they are not spirits.

All we seek is your cooperation, for you to give the security agents every relevant information. Let me re-emphasize this point: any attack on any individual or on the country is an attack on all of us because you will never know when it will happen to you. It helps for everyone to fight this terror collectively. They cannot defeat Nigeria; we will surely conquer them.

This is a major setback, but we will make sure that those who have lost their lives will not lose it in vain. We will invigorate the security agencies to even fight more.

Your Royal Highness, I have listened to your brief remarks and I assure you that we will strengthen the security in Kano and other parts of the country. This act of suicide bombing and terrorism is relatively new to us. Some years back we thought it was inconceivable that a Nigerian will detonate a bomb with the intention of killing himself and taking some other lives along in the process. But we are faced with the basic reality and we must confront it.

You also cited the issue of the dam which was part of our campaign promise in Kano. We promised to revamp the dams and our irrigation projects so that agriculture will flourish. We, also, did promise in the budget speech that in the next few years there would be some categories of crops - some of which Kano produces - in abundance. We must produce not just enough for our consumption in this country, but also for export. That will create jobs for our young men and women and will also bolster source of income. We are truly committed to that and we will make sure that we follow our plans to fruition.

It is equally unfortunate that you were outside the country for treatment, but had to rush back because of the fuel deregulation issue. We never knew that we would be confronting the sad and morbid act by some cruel people who live with us.

This is an eye-opener for every Nigerian and underscores the need for everyone to look at their neighbours and know what they do on a day to day basis. If you suspect your neighbour, quietly inform the security operatives so that we will weed these miscreants out of our population. But as long as we allow miscreants to live amongst us, one day they will attack us. The best thing we can do is to work with the security services and make sure that we police ourselves. By doing so, we will be able to get these people out.

You should monitor someone who lives in your neighbourhood and have no means of livelihood and let the security service know early enough so they could carry out checks on such individuals and, perhaps, apprehend them before they cause damage to us.

Your highness and the good people of Kano, on behalf of the federal government and my family, and, of course, people from all parts of the world, friends of Nigeria who have expressed their concerns about this bombings, I am here on behalf of everyone to encourage the families that have lost dear ones. We pray that Almighty Allah would give them some closure and provide for them.

The federal government will work with the Kano State government to see how we can be of assistance.

Once again, I thank you for the reception. I assure you that we will not rest until terrorism is wiped out from this country.



### *Playing host to former Service Chiefs*

I would like to welcome the Senate President, Senator David Mark, Honourable Ministers, the National Security Adviser, the Chief of Defence Staff and other

Service Chiefs and our ex-service chiefs, and also use this medium to recognize the spouses of everyone who is here for this ceremony.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is on occasions like this that everyone would wish they were orators. I would have loved to speak for an hour but, unfortunately, I don't have that gift of words. So I will be extremely brief.

Some people may wonder why the president is organizing a dinner party for the service chiefs. It's hard to say if it's a tradition or novelty. But I do know that when my late boss, the former president was around, whenever new service chiefs were appointed we always thought of having this kind of warm appreciation for them. But somehow we couldn't do that. So I believe it is an appropriate gesture and, indeed, it is the norm in some societies.

I felt I had to have this dinner - which is by no means formal - with the former service chiefs. They were appointed when I was the vice president by the late president and so I have worked with them. I would later interact with them as the acting president and, also, as the president and I can say with all sincerity that they are fine officers. They are extremely patriotic Nigerians, wholly committed to protect us as a nation. They are people for whom the interest of the country far outweighs their personal interest.

They all served half their tenure and it was quite difficult for me to see them leave. In fact, the day I told them I was appointing new service chiefs, I went back home feeling so sad because of the good relationship I had enjoyed with them. So I felt the only way I can express my profound gratitude to them is inviting them with their spouses to say thank you and show that I appreciate what they have done for this country, and, especially, what they have done for me. I wouldn't want to bore you, but you all know the challenges this nation faced when they were in charge. It takes people like them to stabilize this country.

If we didn't have people of their character, the country probably would have drifted. There is no way I would write my memoirs without them. If anyone were to write a biography on Goodluck Jonathan and the key role they played

in my government is not reflected, I would consider it a substandard work. My destiny and theirs have been intertwined and I will continue to remember them and their dedication to duties till the day we all depart from this earth.

We sincerely thank you for your service and humbly pray that God should give you long life and more opportunities to serve the world - not just Nigeria.

I thank all of you who found the time to attend this wonderful occasion, and we sincerely thank the spouses of these gentlemen who have made Nigeria proud.



*At Boxing Day Church Service*

If I was asked why I decided to worship here, I would simply say it was God that brought me here. That is because I would normally worship in the Villa's chapel.

Usually, during the Christmas season we have this tradition of shutting down the chapel so people could worship anywhere else they choose. It always affects Christmas Day, New Years Day and the two Sundays within this period. At such periods, I try to attend different churches to worship with my brothers and sisters. Yet, I believe we worship the same God irrespective of the denomination. I was born an Anglican; it is not a matter of choice but by birth.

I have since remained an Anglican, but I attend other churches; I don't discriminate, I don't believe that one should be attached to any particular church. That is my belief. Yesterday my aides wanted to know where we would be worshipping. I said I didn't want anyone to know just yet. Probably, that is why you were not told. I have to thank everyone for their prayers for the country and for me. Each time I have an opportunity to talk to a Christian congregation like this, I often feel obliged to thank them.

Someone once told me a story about a church in a remote community in the South-east or so, how some elderly women have been fasting and praying for me and for the country.

They are doing that not because they expect to see me physically someday; they have been doing that not because they expect some favour from me; but it just dawned on them that they should pray for the country.

I thank you and other Christians in Nigeria for this because I believe the prayers have helped the country to forge ahead as a cohesive unit. We should be thankful when we consider the unrest in Cote d'Ivoire. It should remind us that God truly loves Nigeria and that despite our challenges, we shall attain the heights we have long dreamed for our country.

I am a politician, so whenever I listen to sermons, I try to make my speeches very brief, knowing that my accession to this position is largely divine. I know some people get to the zenith of their career assuming it is their own might; for me, it is not as a result of my own strength, it is not because of any level of intelligence, not because of any level of education, it has nothing to do with knowing the right people. But God wants it that way.

My request is for you to continue to pray that God should guide me and give me the wisdom to know what is bad and what is good, and that God should give me the courage at all time to do what is right for Nigeria.

I remember when I was approached to be the deputy governor of Bayelsa State, I said I didn't want to become a deputy governor because I didn't particularly like the life of politicians. I simply wanted to be a civil servant. Today, I didn't just become a deputy governor,

I'm here as the president of the country. So I have to thank you specially for your prayers and to assure you that I will try and do my best to transform the country, to improve our economy, to improve our welfare. We have our challenges - security, power, infrastructure - but we are committed, and with your prayers we will get to where we want to be.



### *Celebrating Democracy*

I always avoid talking about the opposition in order not to stir controversy. But one fact here is incontestable: I have not seen anyone yet across the world who contested presidential election and won 100 per cent of the votes. In some cases, even securing victory at the first ballot is difficult. At least we have seen that in Liberia and in Senegal.

You hardly get 60 per cent of the votes. But in a democratic setting, whoever is declared winner based on the laws of the land should be allowed to do his work because he has a tenure.

I'd like to speak briefly about separation of powers which sometimes sound absurd. One of the first thing you are taught as a government student in secondary school is the theory of separation of powers. But when you are in government you begin to see how separate these powers are. Yes, you can separate the judiciary to a reasonable level, but can you really separate the parliament from the executive and have a stable government?

That is one of the biggest challenges we have, especially in Nigeria. It's my conviction that if the legislators and the executive arm maintain that theoretical separation of power as if there were a wall, this country will continue to have problems. We all belong to political parties, but the judiciary does not belong to any political party. Every political party has a manifesto and those who contest election on a party's platform, whether in the executive arm or the legislative arm, ought to campaign based on the party's manifesto.

My view is that both arms are supposed to work together to ensure that our actions are guided by the party's manifesto. If then that is true, how do you separate these people? For example, if it is the policy of the PDP to have a specific agricultural project, it is the executive that will come up with the programmes.

My presumption is that the legislators who are mostly members of the PDP are supposed to support that programme because the positions we occupy are premised on the fact that we were elected on the platform of a particular political party.

Not too long ago it was major news when a senator in the United States voted against the president who is a member of his political party. But in Nigeria, it would be news if a member of the National Assembly in your party supports your programme. It is acceptable to admonish us - not to overheat the system. We are barely one year in office for a government that has a four-year tenure; why should we be talking about 2015? Someone has gone to court to seek whether Jonathan can contest or not. He was making it an issue as if I had said I wanted to contest election.

I have said that we should refrain from commenting on whether anybody would contest election or not; let us concentrate on governance first. It is not yet time for anybody to declare interest - or not - in any office. So I believe very sincerely that both the parliament and the executive must work together for us to succeed, for Nigerians to get the dividends of democracy and for us to even have good governance.

When we consider the evolution of government from monarchies to the classical separation of power, presidential system appears to be at the top of the evolution in terms of governance, where you have the judiciary, the legislature and the executive. Formerly, the kings exercised these three powers; one king makes the law, sits over the judgment and enforces it. Now the powers are exercised separately. But, to me, it is merely theoretical. I will plead with our legislators now and those that will come, it is for us to continue to work together.

Today, Nigerians are complaining about the cost of running government is so huge. We have so many parastatals and you sometimes wonder what some of them actually do. A number of them have overlapping responsibilities. We saw that there is a lot of money wasted on overheads, not salaries per say, because

if we pay salary to Nigerians, you could rationalize it with the argument that they will use it to take care of themselves. But too many parastatals create unnecessary overheads.

So, at the executive level we are exploring how we could reduce the number of parastatals. But on a regular basis, people go to the National Assembly to call for the creation of new parastatals. These are things that we need to discuss because we belong to the same political party; we are here because the people want us here and we are obligated to do the best for them. I believe this can easily be done if the legislators and the executive work as a team.

Luckily, the National Assembly is amending the CBN law. I wouldn't want to comment on the law because I don't want to go into unnecessary controversy. But these are the issues you encounter as the head of the executive arm of government, because you are also thinking about the resources.

Another area of conflict which I believe is unnecessary is in regard to budgets. A budget is a law, and the National Assembly must make laws; but the constitution says the president has to plan and manage the economy of this country, and for you to plan and manage the economy of a country your budget has to be planned. If you send a budget to the National Assembly and they literally tear it into pieces and repackage whatever they desire, how does that connote planning or managing the economy?

I remember our first budget in 2008 had so much changes that we even wanted to go to court. Our belief then was that the Supreme Court should tell us if it is the duty of the National Assembly to plan the economy, prepare the budget and pass it on to us. But if it is our duty to plan the budget, then they should listen to us.

The executive arm of government has a ministry for national planning, the ministry for finance and usually works with the CBN. Budgets are based on projection, based on commitment, based on funding, and whatever we see sometimes could be so disturbing. This would have been a major conflict

between the National Assembly and the executive and I'm simply raising the subject because the speaker had mentioned it.

One other area that I find unsettling in relation to some people's understanding of democracy is the tendency to assume presidential power is dictatorial. In fact, I sometimes think people expect the president to take a cane and whip wrongdoers into line. But no matter how bad you feel about any situation, you must act within the ambit of the law. When an elected president ceases to follow the rule of law, then there is no democratic setting again. As we are talk, we have about N185 billion judgment debts against the government, most of them the result of not properly thought through decisions taken by government.

I have told the attorney-general that we must stop this; we don't want to take a decision and the next day somebody goes to court and the government will be indicted. We will respect the rule of law in doing things, and I expect Nigerians to encourage that. We can say we have tried; the first one year in any government is more often than not a planning year. Once again, let me thank all of you for coming, I thank members of the National Assembly and plead with them that for us to succeed we must work together.



#### *At an Executive Retreat*

Much has already been said, so let me be extremely brief. Listening to the various speakers, the governor of Rivers State and chairman of Governors Forum, and others convinces me once more of the need to dialogue. That takes me to the issue of the Federation Account, the issue of Excess Crude and the issue of Sovereign Wealth Fund. I've heard that Lagos State may lead the team challenging the creation of the Sovereign Wealth Fund.

But I want us to understand that if we become too obsessed with the norm, so many things will go wrong in this country. The ALGON chairman just raised some of these issues. I supervised the local government councils when I was governor and I knew what happened. Before this time, the office of the vice president used to supervise the local governments, but when I became the vice president, I said that for local government to be functional, it must be well supervised and the effective body that can supervise the local government will be the state.

I believe as we progress, some of these issues will be resolved. Some of the states also abuse the constitution. For some of our friends that are state governors, the constitution guarantees a local government by an elective representative; so a governor cannot dissolve that and appoint a sole administrator. But for peace to reign they are going on. Lagos State had 20 local governments, the state created 37 more, taking the number to 57. Of course, Bayelsa State also created local governments and some other states, but they were not using local government funds to run them. I believe Lagos State is redistributing the funds meant for 20 local governments to these 57 local governments.

Let us assume the federal government had to challenge that. If the Lagos State government is right in redistributing the funds, so be it. But let us assume that this matter gets to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court now says the additional 37 local governments are not known to the constitution, and the state had been allocating money to them, then whoever did that appropriation has committed offence - the attorney general of Lagos State, those who have been commissioners of finance in Lagos State, governors of Lagos State. Then the federal government now brings it under the EFCC Act. Do we now send the governors to jail? It is so complicated.

It is only in Nigeria that we do not plan for the future; every country plans for their great grandchildren. It is only in Nigeria that you expect all the monies you make this month to be spent this month. We have to plan for our grandchildren.

If we don't plan even for next month, it is very dangerous and disastrous. Yes, we have a limit by the law, if we decide to be very legalistic, the court will make a pronouncement, then any money we make in day one, we will finish in day one. Now if we have a disaster, how do we intervene?

I find it absurd that we produce oil and even when oil prices are going up, our foreign reserve don't rise. In other countries, immediately the oil price is going up, the foreign reserve goes up because they save. They have a budget that guides them and once they sell above that budget, they reserve, they keep it. It is only in Nigeria that somebody will say immediately we earn, we must share.

Please, let us not exploit some provisions of the constitution to create crisis in the country.



#### *During a Courtesy Visit at Ramadan*

Honourable ministers, service chiefs, Chief Imam of Abuja, very senior citizens that are here with us today, my brothers and sisters, let me sincerely congratulate all the Muslims for successfully completing the Ramadan fast in line with the tenets of the Islamic religion. We believe that this is the period, being a holy month, that will transform us as individuals and as a nation.

I interacted with quite a number of Muslims within this period. I hosted some people during the breakfast sessions, I listened to radio and television comments and the conviction is that we have to be our brothers' keepers, irrespective of the language we speak, irrespective of the part of the world or country we come from. If we look at ourselves, some of us are tall, some are short, some are light-skinned, some are dark-skinned; if Allah wanted all of us to be of the same height, we could have been of the same height.

So there is a reason for the diversity and the diversity should be used to help us develop, not to separate us. We know as a nation that we have challenges at this period. Nigerians are clamouring for development, we need employment for our young people, we need power for our domestic use, for commercial and industrial activities, we need food for our people, we need security, because people want to move safely from one point to the other. All these are possible if we call on Allah to make it possible. In all the breakfast sessions, I often urged our Muslim brothers to pray for the development of the country, for the economic growth of the country, for peace and security in the land so that we will have foreign direct investment, because no one nation is an island.

For us to be attractive, we must maintain peace and security. We urge you to continue to pray even though the Ramadan has come to an end, continue to pray that the commitment of this government to transform this country comes to a fruition. So I thank all of you for this Sallah visit and wish you very warm Eid el Fitri.



*Receiving a Book Written by  
Former Presidential Spokesman, Olusegun Adeniyi*

It is an honour to receive a copy of this book before the public presentation. It is a rare privilege because you would, ordinarily, have done the presentation before bringing this copy. I believe this book will attract a lot of attention, I believe journalists will be looking forward to quickly read through. It reminds me of the accounts of the civil war; I think there was a publication titled *My Command* written by former President Obasanjo. After that, another one came out and Ojukwu now published his own, *Because I am Involved*\*.

\* *'Because I am Involved'* recounts Ojukwu's life in exile after the war.

So I believe when people read this book, key actors will also come up with a similar title because they were involved. That will now give Nigerians the opportunity to glimpse details because, I totally agree with you, the circumstances of the late president's death reduced a number of things that were done to footnotes and the death now became the issue. We are all mortals, we must die; but the contribution people make, whether in a day, a week or a decade, is critical, more critical than their death or the circumstances of the death.

We thank you for putting this together, the title itself is quite attractive: *Power, Politics and Death*. It will surely attract people with critical minds to read. We encourage you to do more. I thank you and wish you a more robust journalism practice as you continue with the work God has bestowed on you to do for our great country.



#### *A Goodwill Visit from the South-East*

I sincerely appreciate and thank my brothers and sisters from the South-East for the massive support given to me and the vice-president during the past election. I always say any where I go without any fear of contradiction that in terms of geo-political support I had the greatest support from the South-East, even stronger than the South-South, my home zone.

The indices are very clear. I used to tell people during the campaign period that if you saw anyone removing my poster in the South-East, he is not mutilating it; he is simply taking it to his house. But in some places they mutilated the photographs. In the South-South, my campaign office was burnt down in Akwa Ibom State. Let me sincerely thank all of you for taking me as one of your own. I shall remain grateful even after I have left office. Let me also thank you for

donating some of your best to work with me in the government; we have the coordinating minister of the economy, we have Professor Bart Nnaji who is one of the best in the power sector, the professor in charge of health, the aviation minister, and of course the professor in charge of foreign affairs and especially the secretary to government.

Campaigns are over; this is not the time for promising. I have raised all the issues during the campaign. For now of works to come up with a plan so we could commence work on that bridge. The coordinating minister will take it as one of her priority projects for the next three budget year or so. God willing, we should delivered this bridge before we conclude in 2015.

Of course, you have also highlighted some road projects. The issue of road network in the whole country is pitiable, not only in the South-East. We must have a robust plan to look into all of our roads. This time around we want to work with the National Assembly so that we have planned budget. The way we the budgets come out so far does not really give the federal government sufficient funds to intervene in these areas.

We have security challenges everywhere, we have the issues of kidnapping around Port Harcourt to Abia State, Imo and so on, but the security challenges we have in the South-East are quite minimal and I believe the various steps the government is taking now will solve the problems. Please convey our appreciation to our brothers and sisters back home, that we will continue to remember them.



*With YouWin, Everyone is a Winner*

Consistent with the effort to actualize the YouWin programme, a business plan competition was launched with the aim of harnessing the brilliant ideas,

innovation and drive that we know our vibrant young men and women possess. At the end of the first cycle, 1200 award winners were selected across the six geo-political zones. They have since begun to receive the main benefit of the programme comprising the first part of their award grant. Each of the awardees would have received between N1 million and N10 million and, also, attended several training programmes at the end of that cycle.

It is important to note that beneficiaries of YouWin are putting the resources they have received into productive use. Some have actually expanded their businesses and are seeking fresh opportunities and also creating new jobs. Building on this encouraging output and also recognizing the increasing central role that our women play in our economic development, this second annual YouWin business plan competition specially targets women to help address the their relatively low participation.

Just about 17 percent of winners in the first run were women. But in this phase, 1200 winners shall entirely be women in order to increase the number of female participants. They will receive between N1 million – N10 million in the next 12 to 18 months.

In addition to the grants provided for the 1200 winners each year, at least 6000 aspiring youth entrepreneurs will be selected, trained and receive intensive business skills training this year. This will enable them hone their entrepreneurial skill. We recognize that our youth constitute a large proportion of work-age Nigerians, that is why we have made job creation a core component of our economic transformation agenda so we could lay a new foundation to our economic growth.

Let me emphasize that the YouWin programme is meant for all our youth in the six geo-political zones irrespective of political or religious affiliation. It is my expectation that this programme will bring together the vast potential that lies untapped in our teeming population. If well implemented, it will bring financial benefit to the business owners, create more jobs and stimulate more economic

activities to complement our development effort. Government will monitor the programme's three annual cycles of implementation aggressively over the next three years. This will ensure that it is adopted and made responsive to the actual needs of Nigerian youths, both men and women. I urge all stakeholders including our youth and their leaders in private sectors, as well as international development partners, to join hands with us as we expand this laudable initiative and give fresh hope to our young people.

Of course, we know this administration is committed to creating jobs in Nigeria, a goal which our parastatals and agencies has been serving through direct employment, but we believe that a more sustainable approach to job creation is by encouraging the private sector. And to do that we need to build young entrepreneurs that will be able to employ five or more people.

The multiplier effect will give us more job opportunities than an expansion of parastatals can possibly achieve. In fact, that will even make the workforce less productive. That is one of the cardinal point of YouWin - give opportunities to some who would employ others.

If only 25 percent of the over 1000 that benefited in the first cycle, and the 1200 benefiting now, succeeds and five percent thereof becomes top business men and women, that would employ 100 and more people. You can therefore imagine the number of jobs that would be created in the next 10 years. That is the driving force of YouWin.

As I was driving down here, Ngozi was interviewed and she was asked why women? I would like to add to the explanation she gave: the first reason is that globally, the welfare of women and children has become quite a topical point and Nigeria must not be an exception. So we must create programmes that will help women and protect the lives of children. We should also be doing things that other nations will copy and not simply copy from others.

It should be noted, also, that in terms of using small money to create opportunities, woman have a better record in comparison to men. We are using

those who this programme benefits to create jobs for Nigerians. So, we want maximum success.

I was a pioneer staff of Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) which has been changed to Niger Delta Development Commission. When we started, the commercial department gave out various classes of loan and when it monitored the rate of refund, it emerged that more than 70 percent of women paid back the loan. But the one given to men had less than 20 percent repayment.

There is an old joke that if a man gets a loan he uses it to marry more wives. The women should not laugh just yet because I recall, also, a common saying that women tend to buy even those things they don't want. So, please buy only what you need. But, seriously, listening to the young ladies who spoke today has filled me with optimism.

We have become accustomed to the mindset that to get something done in Nigeria, you have to know somebody who will talk to somebody; or you have to know somebody who will know somebody that will talk to somebody. That must be change. And, gradually, we are changing.

YouWin is one of those clear areas that would be used. Yes, there is so much outrage about corruption in this country and sometimes the criticism seems more strident even among the corrupt ones. We are tackling the malaise gradually.

In agric sector, the purchase of fertilizers and tractors had always fed corrupt practices in the past, but we have stopped that. We cannot change the society overnight; you have to take it step by step. We promised Nigerians that we would sanitize the society and ensure our young people are empowered, so they could help this country to grow.

That is the spirit of YouWin.



### *Bayelsa Special School Graduation... A Dream Takes Flight*

I thought I would be here for eight years but, you know, you want something but God has a different plan for you. In 2007, shortly before I left for Abuja, I decided to tour some of the schools. I was very impressed by what I saw. The principals took time to explain what they had been doing, how they have been winning medals and accolades.

We felt that we have the potential and given that our population is very small, we had to create a system whereby everywhere you go in this country, you should see a Bayelsan excelling. For those who were with us, you remember when we celebrated our anniversary in 2006, we asked the secondary schools to write an essay on the topic: "What Will Bayelsa State be Like in the Next Twenty-Five Years?"

At the time, twenty-five years would be in 2031. Governor Dickson was giving scholarships not because of elections in 2015 or 2016. By no means. It is part of our plan to ensure that our vision for a brighter future for the state and its people is realized. We felt that to planning a state for the future, we had to prepare the young pupils who are the future of this state.

When we introduced this programme, some of our elders came to me and said, "Governor, you can't waste so much money on very few people. All our primary and secondary schools are in bad shape and the buildings are dilapidated." I told them, "yes, I know", and explained that our commitment is to make sure that we upgrade all our institutions from primary to tertiary level. You cannot wait until you get the best everywhere before you encourage the best. What I started at Bayelsa State is also ongoing at the Centre, and we are starting it.

First and foremost, they spoke about the special schools we are building. Indeed, we have the vision that every child must be encouraged in areas that God has given them potential. For the people who are intelligent, let us encourage them academically. I would like to point out though that it's not everyone that will make a First Class because not everyone is so endowed.

Others are very skilled in different areas. For example, our Olympics team came back from London without a medal. If one of our athletes had won a Gold medal, everyone would have rushed to welcome that person. We have people who are so skilled, gifted and talented that it will be a crime to neglect them. As we are giving opportunities to those who will take us to the moon, we are also planning for those who possess these natural skills, but may not be intelligent to succeed academically.

Every child has the opportunity to excel in their field of talent if kindled with an ember of purpose. Our plan is not to leave any child behind; we intend to carry every child along in this vision. For example, we were looking at our universities and we realize that about 60 percent of our lecturers don't have PhDs. So we are considering making the PhD as a minimum requirement to be a lecturer at the university. We are working on that.

In addition to that, we feel that as a nation with so many intelligent people we need to give out scholarships to the exceptionally bright ones in our society. We came up with a programme christened, "Scholarship for Intelligent People." To qualify for this scholarship, you have to make a First Class in your university. You don't need a First Class Honours to be a lecturer. Some of our best lecturers don't make First Class.

In the sciences, we only give out scholarships to students who study biology, agricultural science, molecular biology and genetics. In the social sciences, we give scholarships to only economics students and also in the engineering and applied sciences.

I have not been officially briefed, but from what I've read so far, only about

400 Nigerian graduates are qualified for the scholarship award. We don't want everyone of them to be lecturers. Though some of them will prefer to lecture, some will be persuaded to work with the research institute.

Nobody should be discouraged. We will always encourage our best brains. Even if it were in my undergraduate years, I wouldn't have been eligible for the scholarship because I made a Second Class Upper. Whenever I travel to technologically-advanced countries and I'm speaking with some of their heads of government about giving us some slot for our special secondary school students, I often ask if they have a special university. It was always a surprise to learn they don't have such universities. You can only see those special programmes in schools like Oxford, Cambridge and the likes.

Let me not bore you with more talk; I want to congratulate you all on your graduation. Even if there are failures, I believe the percentage will be minimal. I know the governor is doing his best in order to give you the best. The federal government will also support you so you can pursue your university dream anywhere in the world.



*At a Lecture Commemorating Nigeria's 51st Anniversary*

Let me first appreciate our former Head of State, His Excellency, Ernest Shonekan. On my way up the podium, I told the secretary to the government to move up for him presence to be recognized. But as I was observing the protocol, I couldn't see him again. However, thank you, Sir, for gracing us with your presence.

Let me sincerely appreciate Richard Dowden, Michela Wrong and Odia Ofeimun for their contribution today. When the issue of who should be the

guest speaker for our 51st independence anniversary came up, the Executive Council mentioned Richard Dowden. I quickly recalled that the last time I travelled to Uganda somebody gave me a copy of your book, *"Africa, Altered States, Ordinary Miracle."* Flying back to Nigeria from Uganda, I read through the pages, particularly the Nigerian section and I was quite fascinated by your analysis on Nigeria.

I glimpsed a great deal of research in the book, which was aided by the fact you travelled across the continent. You even came to my own local government; you mentioned a particularly remote community and some locals with whom you interacted. I knew you did not write that book based on what you read on the papers. It was rather written based on your own research.

I was quite interested, so I ordered for some copies to be paid for, but one book supplier said since it was for the use of the Federal Executive Council he will graciously give us the number of copies we needed free of charge. The most important thing about your analysis lie in you criticism of the ills that assail Africa, Nigeria inclusive. In your conclusion, you offered some insights which gave me hope that if we do certain things well, Nigeria will be a great nation.

You didn't write only about Nigeria; your book covered almost all African states. When we held discussions about bringing you down here, some who had read your book were like: how can we allow someone who has written that kind of thing about Nigeria to speak to us on our independence day? But I rationalized the choice. We believe you have understood us, you know what is happening in Africa, in Asia and the rest of the world, and you will be in the best position to enlighten us more.

One of the things highlighted in your book is the imprecise - and sometimes conflicting - nature of the Nigerian population. I remember as vice-president I was worried that the minister of finance, the Central Bank governor and national planning minister usually gave different statistics even at the same

occasion. I called a meeting then and told them it was unacceptable; that for us to move forward we must get our figures right.

Before the 2006 census, there were some discussions in 2004/2005 whether individuals' religion would be among the data. If you look at what we did in the 2007 election, there was no column for religion. In Malaysia, for instance, a cab driver could tell you the population of Malaysia, and even tell you the figures of all the tribes and foreigners in their country. The average educated person can tell you the statistics of the country. It was finally agreed that religion should be removed from the data. I believe we are moving and we can only get better.

Richard Dowden made good comments about our election and a few heads of states have commended us that we did well in our elections. But one more thing I need to work on is corruption. I did not conduct the election. I only participated in the election. But because we strengthened INEC and also the security services, they were able to conduct the election that has received praises globally.

I'm convinced that when we strengthen our institutions, the system will work well. The ministry does not need to see me for it to work well. If the system is working well and even if I am sick for six months, the ordinary Nigerian will not even know that the president is sick. Ministers have a budget approved by the National Assembly for them to run their ministries for both recurrent and capital projects. So, even if the ministers don't see Mr. President for four years, if that minister has the requisite competence he can run the ministry effectively.



*At the Dana Air Crash Site in Lagos*

Let me again use this opportunity to express my personal condolences to those who have directly lost their dear ones. It is a sad event for the whole country and we are all deeply saddened. That is why the federal government had to declare a three-day mourning period.

You will all agree that aviation is an international business and that all the laws that govern aviations are international. So as a nation this is a very sad event, and we have been working very hard to improve the aviation condition in the country. The frequent travellers would have noticed the ongoing improvement at our airports. So the government has a total commitment to improve the quality of aviation in the country.

This particular incident is a major setback to us as a people. I'm here with some members of the National Assembly because we will thoroughly investigate this. Those with the technical knowledge will tell us what went wrong. But we will also look at the administrative issues. The National Assembly will play a part, the government will also play a parts, in order that this sort of thing does not repeat itself again in this country. We recall that only on Saturday we also had an incident in Ghana, where a Nigerian-registered cargo plane had a similar incident. But that was not as devastating as this.

We will do our best for this country and for the world so that the Nigerian airspace will be a safe place. Let me specially thank the governor of Lagos State - with whom I have been in constant touch - and the government of Lagos State for what they have being doing since the crash yesterday.

Let me also thank all the federal government agencies and private sector operators like Julius Berger and others who are working with us voluntarily for these rescue operations. I have interacted with all of them and they are

progressing satisfactory. Let me commend them and assure them that the federal government and the state government will continue to provide what is required for their safe operations.

My brothers and sisters who are here, and members of the press, let me also commend you. Some of you have been here 24 hours and so will be in a position to communicate what is happening to the rest of our brothers and sisters. Thank you all for your commitment and the sense of justice and commitment to serve your fatherland.



### *Inaugurating Jigawa's Rimi Housing Project*

It is a thing of joy and pleasure to be part of this success story - the commissioning of this beautiful estate comprising over 500 houses. I asked the governor if there were any other cities down the road and he said the road was built to service the estate. So you can see that he put in a lot of energy, planning and developing this estate.

There are some instances where you see housing estates without adequate access road. If they exist, at all, they will be so narrow and you would be baffled they were designed at all. But the network of roads and the lighting we have seen here show clearly that the governor of Jigawa State has a vision for the state. We are happy to be part of this success story.

In the next four years, we would like to see a situation where business people will be able to fly to all our state capital. The federal government will work with the states to see there is at least a domestic airport in every state. Jigawa State will be one of our focal points.

I cannot give a specific timeline; but that is one of our plan in the next four

years as we expand the economic base of the country to encourage people to come and invest in the country. Jigawa is a very peaceful state and I have no doubt that people would like to spend their weekends there because of the serenity we have noted.

We are happy that you have also built this estate to immortalize a son of Nigeria, someone who has paid his dues, a man who had a vision and was quite committed to improving the welfare of the downtrodden.

I'm happy that two of Abubakar Rimi's sons are here with us today. We thank you for your insight as we commission this estate for the people's use to the glory of Allah.



#### *Signing the Amended Constitution*

This is a unique day and its uniqueness could be glimpsed from the fact we're giving speeches after signing this bill into law. Ordinarily, I would simply have signed the bill quietly in my office as part of my responsibility as president to sign bills brought by the National Assembly. But since this present democratic journey began in 1999 to date, this is the first time we have conclusively amended some sections of the 1999 Constitution. That is significant.

Laws are made by people under given circumstances; but sometimes these circumstances change. And for a society to grow, you must run a dynamic system, which might entail amending your laws, adjusting the way you do things in line with societal changes. We have operated this constitution since 1999 and, luckily for me too, I was a deputy governor from the first day we started operating this constitution and I am still in government. So one is quite conversant with some of the provisions that are a bit worrisome - some of the provisions that we cannot implement properly.

Today, I want to sincerely thank the leadership of the National Assembly, the

Senate President, the Speaker, the principal officers of both Senate and House of Representatives for their ability to complete this first phase of their amendment. Amending a constitution is not an easy task.

On the surface, you would imagine it is something that could be easily accomplished. But this is not an ordinary law; you need two-thirds of the National Assembly by voting, not just voice vote. And you need two-thirds of the states Houses of Assembly. So, it is an enormous task.

We have to also commend the executives, both at the federal level, and at the state level. That the National Assembly succeeded in amending the constitution is an indication they must have been working with the executive. If one group opposes the other, it is always difficult to get to this level.

It has always been my view that you cannot separate the parliamentarians from the executive, even if you are running a presidential system. You can separate the judiciary because of course, you don't see any judge here; they don't belong to any political party. But the members of the executive and parliamentarians belong largely to the same political parties, holding the same political meetings. So how can we separate such people? It is theoretical, they must work together for the country to progress and we have been working together. That is why despite the controversies about the signing of the amendment into law, I refrained from making any comment. It was not an issue because we all agreed that the laws of the land have to be followed, if only for the subsequent generation.

So, today, we formally sign this few amendments. There are, I believe, more amendments. I know that as we inaugurate the National Assembly this year, one of the first executive bills we will submit will be to amend some other sections of the constitution. We have to do that with the cooperation of Nigerians until we have a constitution that will reflect the thinking and the aspirations of Nigerians. We must have a constitution that is amended by us, so we can run the state government and the federal government and even the local government the way governments should be run. Thank you all.



### *Receiving a Report on the Hajj*

Let me on behalf of government sincerely thank the Amir Hajj and all of you who has made this trip successful. Although the address did not highlight the key recommendations, but I can assure you that I will study it and do all we can to make sure that our activities in the Holy Land are streamlined and our Muslims go to the Holy Land to perform their annual religious ceremonies without pains.

One of the reasons government decided to institutionalize the position of the Amir Hajj is to enable us learn from experience. I believe that as we progress with this new arrangement, the annual pilgrimage will be well regulated. For me it is an opportunity to appreciate the contributions of religious leaders in the country - both the Muslims and Christians.

I believe that religious leaders have a role to play in shaping our politics. They are better placed to admonish faithful to keep away from politics of tribalism, politics of ethnicity, and to inculcate the spirit of religious tolerance. We are receiving this report at the most auspicious time because of the political activities going on in the state. But I have to commend you as someone who has been interacting with religious leaders, both the Muslims and the Christians.

Allah that brought us together knows the best. We will continue to live as an indivisible nation. Poverty does not know ethnicity, does not even speak any language, does not belong to any ethnic nationality. So, once again, I thank you all especially for your recommendations; government will take them very seriously. Indeed, the office of the SGF has started preliminary work on it, and he has shown me what he has done so far. We thank you for your service and urge you to oblige us whenever you are called again to serve.



### *The President Gets Voter's Card*

The voter registration is the beginning of good governance because we have all agreed that we will elect whoever will represent us at all levels, from the councillors to the chairpersons of local governments, the houses of assembly, the state governors, the House of Representatives, Senate and, of course, at the presidential level.

We have been emphasizing that in order for us to govern our states, local government and country as they ought to be governed, the people must elect their leaders. For that to happen, the voting must be done remarkably well and the only way to do that is to get a proper voter registration exercise.

When the current leadership of INEC noticed that the voters' register can only give us 10 per cent acceptability, it was felt that the best thing to do was to do it afresh. But, in some cases, people who criticize the system don't even register, don't even have voter's card.

This time, we will ensure that your votes count. So everyone should register. I came home to register because of the political expediency. But other Nigerians don't need to go to their villages to register. If you are in Lagos, register in Lagos; if you are living in Port Harcourt, register in Port Harcourt; if you are living in Abuja, register in Abuja. You don't need to go home and register.

Nigerians must not to go to their communities of origin, they are to register wherever they are residing because it's important you have a say in deciding who governs the state where you live. So people are expected to register in their place of residence.

We are calling on all Nigerians to register; the exercise is only two weeks. Let me also us this opportunity to plead with proprietors of private schools who are complaining about INEC's request for a two-week break to please bear with

the government. We know it hurts; but it is for the country's sake. We believe the two weeks will not make the children lose so much or make them suffer so much.



President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is many things to many people. In the opinion of some analysts, he speaks better when he is not reading from a prepared address. This, however, is not uncommon for many leaders.

There is a belief that prepared speeches constrain many public speakers, as they are better off talking straight from the heart and gesticulating naturally, without the strict regime of looking up and down from a script.

In his service to Nigeria as vice-president, acting president and president, Dr. Jonathan has had to make speeches, both prepared and extempore, to explain his policies, defend his programmes, make pronouncements on important issues and, of course, undertake political campaigns. He has also granted interviews to local and foreign media, many of them without preparation.

This book is a compilation of speeches he made since 2010, when he became Acting President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

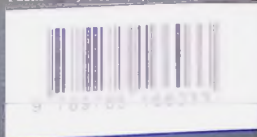


Dr. Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan, GCFR, was born on November 20, 1957, in Otuoke, Bayelsa State. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology, a Master's in Hydrobiology and Fisheries Biology, and a Ph.D. degree in Zoology from the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. After working as an education inspector, lecturer, and environmental-protection officer, he entered politics in 1998 and was voted deputy governor of Bayelsa State, a position he held from 1999 till 2006 when the governor, Chief DSP Alamieyeseigha, was impeached. Jonathan became the governor.

In 2007, he was picked as the running mate to Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in the presidential election. The pair won the election, but President Yar'Adua died on May 5, 2010, paving the way for Jonathan to be sworn in as the new president. In 2011, he was elected the 14th Head of State and President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by an overwhelming majority, winning 25 of Nigeria's 36 states.

He is married to Dame Patience and they have children.

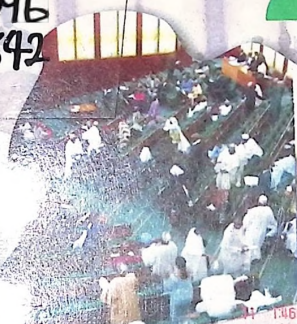
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