

**INAUGURATION OF THE REVENUE MOBILISATION
ALLOCATION AND FISCAL COMMISSION**

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**SPEECH DELIVERED BY
THE PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
ON THE INAUGURATION OF THE REVENUE MOBILISATION
ALLOCATION AND FISCAL COMMISSION
ON MONDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1999**

Vice-President,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Chairman and Members of the Revenue Mobilisation,
Allocation and Fiscal Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this occasion marking the inauguration of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission. Let me begin by congratulating members of this Commission on your well deserved appointment. In nominating you to the Senate for confirmation, I was convinced that you are all men and women of integrity and vast experience. I remain confident, therefore, that you will discharge your duties satisfactorily.

I must state also at the outset that it is not a coincidence that this Commission is one of the earliest to be empanelled and inaugurated by my Government. It is rather an appreciation of the important institutional role that the Commission must play as we strive to promote respect for the principles of federalism in our dear country as well as revamp the national economy severely battered by the misrule of the past fifteen years.

For the avoidance of doubt, the functions of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission are enumerated in paragraphs 32, part 1 of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution. May I note in this connection, as you all assume office as members of this Commission, that its institutional role is one of its most important functions. For, as we endeavour to nurture our fledgling democracy, a most crucial requirement is that we learn to live by the rules and settle differences by negotiation and compromise. In this regard, your Commission, charged with oversight of one of the most challenging aspects of a federal relationship, that of generating, sharing and managing resources should lead by example by observing such virtues in the conduct of its business.

Transparency and accountability should remain the watchwords of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission as it embarks on its most challenging assignment. This is crucial because the nature of your duties is sensitive and requires trust if the outcome is to be acceptable to all concerned. It is therefore not surprising

that it is a specific requirement of the 1999 Constitution that members of the Commission be persons of unquestionable integrity.

Revenue allocation is very important since it lies at the very core of fiscal relations in any federation. In order, therefore, to ease tensions and achieve mutual understanding, it is essential to get this most crucial of relationships between the constituent units of our Federation right. Your Commission has the duty to advise me on proposals for revenue allocation to be put before the National Assembly. As such, I expect it to be guided by constitutional provisions for the allocation of revenue while making proposals to promote equity in allocation and efficiency in the use of funds.

Of course, in popular consciousness, revenue allocation is seen as the main function of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission. However, as its name shows, this is but one part of its onerous duties. As all tiers of Government grapple with revenue constraints and rising expectations, your Commission will have to come up with innovative means of mobilising resources to enable the provision of social services without killing the incentive to work and invest. In this regard, you are expected to advise on fiscal efficiency and methods by which the revenue of Governments can be increased. Quite naturally, increased mobilisation will require that you monitor accruals to and disbursements from the Federation Account closely to ensure that all revenue is captured and that there is no leakage from the account.

You have the delicate task of determining the remuneration of political office holders at a time that Nigerians are monitoring spending on public officials with an eagle eye. I therefore expect that in arriving at your recommendations you will make proposals that take full account of existing salary structure while providing public office holders with a salary that enables them to live honestly and with dignity. I trust that you will carry out this job with circumspection and all sense of propriety.

As I said earlier, the task before you is a challenging one but I am sure that you will all rise up to the occasion. I wish you every success in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

It is now my honour and pleasure to formally inaugurate the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission.

Thank you.