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A BEACON OF HOPE

Maiden Address by Gov. Bukar Abba Ibrahim to the People of Yobe State

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A BEACON OF HOPE

MAIDEN ADDRESS BY
GOV. BUKAR ABBA IBRAHIM
TO THE PEOPLE OF YOBE STATE

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National Anthem

Arise, O Compotriots Nageria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One Nation bound in freedom, peace and unity.

O God of creation, direct our noble cause
Guide our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And living just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a Nation where peace and justice shall reign

The Pledge

I pledge to Nigeria my Country
To be faithful, Loyal and Honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity
And uphold her honour and glory
So help me God.

FOREWORD

The maiden speech of His Excellency, the Governor of Yobe State, Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim to the people of the state contains the major policies and areas of top priorities of his administration.

It is because of the vital messages the speech carries that the Directorate of Home Affairs and Information found it necessary to publish it and distribute to members of the public especially the indigens of the state who are the direct beneficiaries of the programmes intended to free them from ignorance, disease, poverty, exploitation and oppression.

(MALLAM ALIYU TURAKI)
Director-General,
Home Affairs and Information.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE GOVERNOR OF YOBE STATE
HIS EXCELLENCY,
ALHAJI BUKAR ABBA IBRAHIM (QS)

His Excellency, Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim was born in October, 1950 at Goniri town of Gujba Local Government Area, Yobe State. He attended Goniri Central Primary School, from 1956 to 1964 and Borno Provincial Secondary School (now Government College) Maiduguri between 1965 and 1969.His search for education continued at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1970 where he finally obtained a BSc. degree in Quantity Survey in June, 1975.

After the successful completion of his National Youth Service Corps with the Federal Ministry of Education in Lagos and later Kano, His Excellency joined the service of the defunct Borno State Government and served in various capacities between 1976 and 1982.

In 1982, His Excellency voluntarily resigned his appointment with the State Government and joined a firm of chartered Quantity Surveyors- Konti-Sab Associates as a partner. Since then, he had been on his own until in 1985 when the then Military Governor of Borno State, Lt. Col. Abdulmumini Aminu appointed him the Commissioner for Works and Housing. His appointment was based on the report of his brilliant performance as a public servant and his remarkable success in the private sector.

During his tenure of office as Honourable Commissioner, the Direct Labour Unit of the State Ministry of Works which was hitherto dormant was reactivated and as a result, over 200 km of township roads and several office and residential accommodation were constructed. Notable among these were the office complex of the Borno State Government Printing Press and the Official residents of staff of the Fire Services Division whose relocation gave room for the development of banking complexes in front of the General Hospital referred to as Manhattan of Maiduguri. Similarly, work was intensified on State designed roads and feeder roads under construction and Maiduguri was given a face lift through beautification to enhance its status as a befitting state headquarters.

At the end of his political appointment in March, 1988, His Excellency went back to his private firm Konti-Sub Associates. When the ban on political activities was lifted, he joined the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and became an active politician as well as a campaign strategist to the party. It was in recognition of his selfless service to the SDP that when the State of Yobe was created, he did not hesitate to contest for the party's flag bearer in the Governorship race which he subsequently won. On 14th December, 1991, the gubernatorial elections were conducted nationwide by the National Electoral Commission which returned Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim as the Governor-elect of Yobe State. On Thursday, 2nd January, 1992 he was sworn in as the first Civilian Governor of Yobe State by the State Chief judge, justice Baba Alkali Ba'aba.

His Excellency is a member of various professional bodies which include the Nigeria Institute of Quantity Surveyors, the Nigeria Society of Quantity Surveyors, the Institute of Cost Engineers (UK).

He is married with six children and is currently the Chairman of Yobe Desert Flickers His hobbies are hockey, Politics and reading.

A BEACON OF HOPE

BEING AN INAUGURAL SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, ALHAJI BUKAR ABBA IBRAHIM, THE FIRST ELECTED GOVERNOR OF YOBE STATE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SWEARING-IN CEREMONY ON THURSDAY, THE 2ND JANUARY, 1992 AT DAMATURU

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS,

THE OUT-GOING MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR OF YOBE STATE,

THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF YOBE STATE,

MY LORD, THE CHIEF JUDGE OF YOBE STATE AND THE GRAND KHADI,

THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF PARTY OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE,

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE STATE HOUSE Of ASSEMBLY,

SPECIAL ASSISTANTS TO THE OUT-GOING MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES,

THE STATE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY,

DIRECTORS-GENERAL,

CHAIRMEN, STATE COMMISSIONS AND PARASTATALS,

CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS,

CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF FEDERAL AND STATE ESTABLISHMENTS

THE CHAIRMAN, NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS, YOBE STATE,

COMPATRIOTS AND PARTNERS IN PROGRESS,

FRIENDS, RELATIVES AND WELWISHERS OF YOBE STATE,

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

May peace and the blessings of Allah be upon you all. I am highly elated in rejoicing with you on this unique, memorable and special occasion which marks, yet another milestone in our search for an acceptable, durable and viable political order for this nation. I must confess that addressing you today as the first indigenous and democratically elected Chief Executive of Yobe State evokes in me a variety of emotions ranging from a deep sense of humility, sincere gratitude and great enthusiasm to a reassuring fulfilment, compelling curiosity, sober and solemn reflections.

These mixed emotions in me arose from a number of concomitant contradictions. On the one axiom, we have every cause to rejoice for belonging to Nigeria, a nation with so much money and richly endowed with many resources and opportunities. We have abundant agricultural, natural and mineral resources to take care of our needs and to support our industrial base as well as other developments without depending on other Countries. Nigeria is often acclaimed to be the most populous and richest black country in the world that is fondly called "The Giant of Africa".

One other axiom, however, depicts Nigeria as a sleeping giant, underdeveloped and plagued by so many serious problems. Hence inspite of our rich endowments most Nigerians are poor and stricken by abject poverty. However, while poverty afflicts the majority, there are a few Nigerians who own fleet of cars, chain of houses, group of companies and a lot of money. On the other hand, the poor Nigerians have to contend with multifaceted problems of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, manipulations and the lack of political power.

Most of the problems and the unfortunate situation of the ordinary Nigerians have emanated from misplaced economic policies and programmes pursued by past governments. Such policies and programmes did not always reflect the interest of the masses who have remained exploited, dominated, manipulated, cheated and poor, thus compounding these problems and threatening even the very corporate existence of Nigeria as a viable, stable and secure nation. Indeed, in our 31 years of independence we have had 22 years of Military rule with almost uncountable coups and counter coups and only 9

years of elected government. Even then, those 9 years of attempted democracy where confusing and violent hence the real masses were not allowed free participation.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, you will surely agree with me that these problems of underdevelopment are even more pronounced here in Yobe State. For instance, Agriculture, which supposedly is the main stay of our economy is dominated largely by subsistence production. Worse still, a substantial expanse of the State's vast arable land from the northern Zone is constantly ravaged by draught, desertification, and famine. These ecological problems are steadily turning the State barren. Inspite of its vast mineral deposits which remain untapped, industrial establishment are almost at zero level in the state, while commerce and trade are yet to reach the required optimum standards. Indeed Yobe is the least developed State in the Federation. I believe it must have been the realization and sympathy for the most neglected part of old Borno State that won the hearts of Mr. President and members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council to approve the creation of Yobe State to accelerate the rate of development. The ultimate question now is 'What should we do to improve the lives of our people?'

We did flash out to you a beacon of hope out of the woods during our electioneering campaigns by prescribing and propagating a five-point freedom charter for regenerating and reconciling our conflicting social order in search of peace and progress. We gave you the choice but asked you severally and jointly to give us the mandate, under the umbrella of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), to lay the solid foundations for just society and to introduce a more responsive culture of governance which in the past, did not involve enough and active particition of the ordinary citizens. The Social Democratic Party provides through its articulate social agenda, the potential, ability, will and capacity for realizing these lofty ideals. As a people - oriented party, the SDP is premised on the basic principle of welfarism "as its modus operandi". That is to say the primary responsibility of SDP Government shall be:

> *"The Welfare and security of all citizens based on the principles of freedom, equality and justice".*

Pursuant to this fundamental principle of welfarism, and in discharging our responsibilities, we shall be guided by the "SDP Charter for a just Society" containing five most wanted freedoms - i.e freedom from disease, freedom from poverty, freedom from ignorance, freedom from exploitation and freedom from oppression - which collectively address the multi-faceted challenges of forging a new socio-economic order. Thus, the freedom charter clearly outlines our broad policy thrust which this government will acidously pursue to implement. In this pursuit, integrated rural development will be one of our focous

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Either by omission or commission Yobe State has so much been neglected for too long that it is appropriate to classify it "rural". The majority of our people live in villages and sub-urban towns that are devoid of modern social amenities. They suffer many hardships. Next to oil, which is God given, these rural dwellers sustain the economy but benefit much less from the fruits of their labour. Ordinarily they fall victims of those problems associated with underdevelopment such as those enunciated earlier in this address. The SDP Government in Yobe State will endeavour to redress these economic and social injustices by anchoring its policy objectives and programmes on integrated rural development which will be directed at eradication of rural neglect, reducing the level of rural poverty by enhancing the level of rural income, reversing rural - urban migration and improving the quality of life of the rural populace.

STRATEGIES

Our strategies for implementing these objectives will include, in part, encouraging community organizations dedicated to community development, promoting and supporting the undertaking of communal projects, providing incentives like marketing grants and basic infrastructures like rural roads, rural electrification and water supply for improving the rural environment. We shall closely monitor the programmes and activities of DFRRI with a view to learning from its successes and failures as a guide for building upon them. We shall also fully involve the Local Governments in implementing the integrated rural development programmes.

EDUCATION

Any genuine development programme has to tackle, first and foremost, human capital and resource development. Education is the only means for satisfying that requirement as it affords every individual the opportunity to acquire knowledge, basic skills and competence that are necessary for normal personal growth, productive living, independent earning and contributing significantly to the common good of society. Good education also guarantees upward social mobility, social integration, unity and the equalization of socio-economic opportunities.

Given its cardinal social functions, therefore education will receive top-most priority attention. The accessability to education opportunities as a fundamental right of every citizen of the State will also be guaranteed. Accordingly, we endorse forthwith the already existing provisions for free, compulsory and fully accessable primary and secondary education for all children of Yobe State. Proper supervision and monitoring of our primary schools will be strengthened to ensure compliance, full enrolment and attendance. Efforts will also be made to employ and train more teachers whose welfare will be high on our educational agenda. We shall endeavour to complete all uncompleted educational projects and establish one post primary school in every Local Government that does not have any at the moment. Scholarships award will be automatic to every deserving student of Yobe State origin on securing admission into any institution of higher learning in Nigeria. Science based schools will be strengthened, science and technology will also be encouraged and education generally will be made more functional and productive through the review, improvement and integration of the school curricula. We shall rehabilitate all dilapidated primary schools and provide adequate instructional materials, feeding and uniforms to our students.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

A state, nay a nation, that cannot feed itself cannot claim to be free. Freedom from hunger and guaranteed food sufficiency are therefore part of the indices to political freedom and genuine development. The SDP as a party in government, attaches great importance

to the development of food and agriculture. In addition to meeting our basic (food) necessity and raw materials to our industries, agriculture also provides employment to the majority of our people. Our agricultural policy will be increasing the production of rain - fed cereals and legumes on commercial quantity, improving the productivity of the small scale village farmer and enhancing the profitability of his products.

Yobe State happens to be situated in the sahel zone with varying and rather unpredictable climatic conditions. Inspite of such constraints, Yobe State still remains the food basket of the sahel zone due to the fertile river systems to the north and the fertile black arable lands of the savannah areas in the southern parts of the State. Farming activities, therefore, paradoxically, take place all year round as irrigation farming begins as soon as the rainy seasons is over particularly wheat production and vegetable gardening.

In intensifying maximum production of gains like corn, millet, rice and wheat for ensuring sufficient food supplies as well as cash crops such as beans, cotton and groundnuts, this government will emphasize agricultural extension, land clearing and preparation services at affordable and subsidized prices, timely procurement and distribution of fertilizers, pesticides and other agro-chemicals also at affordable price. Establishment of equipment hiring unit and the organization of farmers' councils and cooperation at ward levels to facilitate the distribution of farm inputs.

LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

On livestock development, government will encourage individual farmers to engage in animal husbandry, poultry and fish farming and thereby promote the production of cattle, sheep, goats, camels, chickens and fish to ensure adequate supply of protein. These will be supported by the establishment of grazing lands with drinking facilities, provision of veterinary clinics vaccines drugs and advisory services at subsidized rates and establishing or organizing livestock farmers into cooperatives to facilitate profitable marketing of their farm outputs.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

As the saying goes, health is wealth. We are also aware that without health one cannot perform in any capacity or manner. Accordingly, we recognize the rights of every citizen to life and proper health care. To maintain accessibility to health services to all our citizens, government will pursue both the preventive and curative medical care programmes. On the preventive (primary) health care, special attention will be focused on cultivation of healthy living habits, extension of the operation of sanitation exercise to every Local Government, provision of adequate and timely epidemiological services, provision of potable drinking water in order to eliminate the ravages of all water-borne diseases, devising awareness programmes to educate people on the nutritional contents of their diets and immunizing children and pregnant mothers against the six childhood killer diseases. The Local Government Councils will exercise prominent role in this regard.

On the curative (secondary) Health care service, government will respond to health problems by providing free drugs for the treatment of major diseases such as tuberculoses, cerebro-spinal meningitis, the Acquired immuned deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the like, and to children below the age of 13 as well as students and adults who attain the age of 65 as stipulated in our party manifesto. Where medical facilities are non-existent, attempts will be made to establish at least one general hospital in each Local Government Headquarters; a Comprehensive Health Centre in every town or village with a population of 10,000 residents or above and a Health Clinic in such towns or villages with less than 10,000 people.

The recently reviewed condition of service of medical doctors and Health workers will be fully implemented in addition to the stepping up of the training of Medical Doctors and Para-medical staffs. A special package of student - doctors' allowances have been worked out and will soon be operational, while overseas training in specific areas will be considered. The drug revolving fund scheme which is currently in operation will be sufficiently funded to ensure constant supply of drugs to our Health institutions at affordable prices. I am happy to note that our Local Governments are fully aware of this scheme and are already actively participating.

THE STATE CAPITAL

Perhaps what may be bothering the minds of some of guests and may interest others is the in-coming government's programme for Damaturu, the State Capital which is be set with multiple problems in the form of floods, poor drainage lack of roads and telecommunication systems. What is even more pressing is the insufficient accommodation and acute shortage of drinking water. I would like to assure this distinguished and historic gathering that we have great plans, not only for Damaturu, but even for the other urban centres such as Potiskum, Nguru, Gashu'a and Geidam. This administration believes continuity of Government. We therefore find the efforts of the out going Military Administrator and his team most commendable and praised-worthy, and we will continue from where they have stopped. In this regard, a master plan for the development of Damaturu, the State Capital, which had already been produced by the out-going Administration, will be implemented in stages.

As I mentioned earlier, the most immediate problems facing the increased population of Damaturu is lack of adequate accommodation, especially for the Civil Servants. It has come to our notice, for example, that as many as six Government officials share one house. The same is the case with office accommodation. Though these problems cannot be eliminated at once or even within a short period of time, the efforts of AIG Sani Daura-Ahmed in trying to reduce the problems is exemplary. For instance he has launched the installation of 100 units of prefabricated houses which will go a long way to reduce our housing problems. We will pursue with vigour a housing programme which will guarantee accommodation for every eligible civil servant in the long run. However, in order to set example for the use of local resources for our development, we will experiment on the use of laterite blocks which are already in use in the older States like Borno. This has the double advantage of Local sourcing, in addition to the use of very much reduced cement content, thereby drastically, reducing cost of the buildings.

WATER: The supply of adequate and potable water to the inhabitants of Damaturu is another area of immediate

concern to all of us. As an interim measure, the under ground water will be tapped by providing more bore holes to the already existing ones provided by the Military Administration. However, the long term solution might be to look for an area where surface water could be harnessed in a place like Katarko, where there is a natural water collection area, around a system of some small rivers and streams. A feasibility study will immediately be conducted to ascertain the feasibility of such a project and implemented if found suitable.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE):

Ladies and Gentlemen, I think what remains to be mentioned in this inaugural address is the ever-burning issue of the promotion, development and funding of economic projects generally and industrialisation in particular. in absence of any industrial establishment, Yobe State can best be described as "rural" as opposed to 'Cosmopolitan' States like Lagos and Kano. There are therefore constraints that are peculiar to the State. These include:-

- as I just mentioned,
- Low level industrial base;
- Low level economic activities,

compared to especially oil - producing States of the Federation;

- In addition to the above constraints, even the abundant Agricultural and Natural Resources of the State have not been tapped effectively. Coupled with these problems are the perennial, uncontrollable climatic factors that render production and bumper harvest highly unpredictable.

However, this government will do all it can to pursue a coordinated economic development programme that will put the State on the path of development.

THE CIVIL SERVICE

Another area worthy of mention is the civil service. No government which claims to be responsive to the yearnings of its citizens can neglect the very class of

people that implement its policies and programmes. Because of our ardent desire to implement our laid down programmes within the shortest possible time, we need a loyal, efficient, dedicated and reliable public service. We of course, realise that it is not possible to have such a service unless there is an effective machinery for recruitment, promotion and disciplines of personnel, and on the whole ensuring fair treatment to all. We will therefore give full support to both the civil and local government service commissions to perform their constitutional roles without interference from arm of government.

As for the civil servants of Yobe State, let me seize this opportunity to assure each and every loyal and hardworking officer that full protection of his tenure of office will be guaranteed.

As I earlier mentioned there are teething problems in the new State Capital, but with the full support, and sense of sacrifice from every civil servant these teething problems will soon be things of the past.

PRUDENCE

As public trustees in charge of government resources, accounting officers must be fully conscious of the need to inculcate the culture of prudence. This is absolutely necessary in order to maximally utilize the minimum resources available in order to ensure a reasonable spread of "the greater good to the greatest number" of our communities. That is why one of the first things we have in mind is to conduct a prioritisation study to enable the State benefit from money and capital markets, as well as various agencies of development. In this regard, all hands should therefore be on deck to make this young state a reality and a BIG success. And SUCCESS, In sha Allah, we shall achieve.

THE MANDATE

Whereas the December, 14th 1991 general elections kept us on course of the transition programme by enthroning your authentic representatives in the second of the three tiers of government, we are happy to note that you have given us your solid mandate. The victory you bestowed upon us of the SDP in Yobe State

is a very clear testimony of the confidence you reposed in us and our party whose policies and programmes you must have found most appealing. Your mandate and the verdict of the elections have provided us with the necessary support and confidence with which to proceed in establishing the new democratic principles and processes as well as the social justice we promised to put in place. If we are correct in perceiving our victory to mean your mandate for progress and change, then change shall you have.

My dear Compatriots, party activists, members, supporters and indeed all the electorates of Yobe State, we sincerely acknowledge how indebted we are to you and salute you for the courage, good sense of judgement and wise decisions for voting us into office. You must be commended too for the orderly and peaceful manner in which you conducted yourselves throughout the campaign and electioneering period. The conduct and results of the election not only demonstrated your total commitment to the new grassroots democratic system and its capacity to turn up leaders who enjoy your support and confidence, but also reaffirm your faith in the new political dispensation. I would like to assure you that we shall not fail you in your faith, hopes and aspirations and will discharge our duties with every sense of responsibility. We shall remain committed to the democratic ideals and a just society which are in consonance with out party principles, policies, programmes, aims and objectives

The courteous and disciplined profile of the police, other security agencies, MAMSER and National Electoral Commission (NEC) officials also deserve sincere and honest commendation. Our recent election was generally devoid of the past rancour and adverse relationship between the law enforcement agent and the public. The success story nationwide thus epitomizes a new era of maturity, patriotism, integrity, high level of commitment and cooperation on the part of these agencies which the SDP will reinforce, even though there were aberrant behaviour from a few elements.

TRIBUTE TO THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR

Acknowledging our electoral victory will not be complete without paying tribute to the Military

Administrator, A.I.G. Sani Daura-Ahmed, who in line with his scheduled assignment, helped in laying the foundation and in establishing the infrastructural frame-work for smooth transition and effective take-off of the new State, We appreciate his determination and dedication with which he addressed this taxing job within so short a time but with remarkable success.

The role the Federal Military Government played in advancing the democratic process this far cannot also pass unnoticed. We should therefore continue to support, enrich and jealously guard the democratic process by cooperating with the Babangida regime in its determination to hand-over power to elected civilian Government. We salute Mr. President and members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council for their wisdom and steadfastness in reshaping the foundations of our government culture under the transition process.

TEAM UP

The SDP victory and the comfortable majority it will enjoy in the in-coming government not withstanding, we are conscious that some few assembly and local Government Council seats went to the other party, the National Republican Convention (NRC). Having obtained the mandate to form government however, I must appeal to members and supporters of both parties, the NRC and the SDP to come together to form a team for the sole purpose of building our beloved State. Partisan politics should be put on the shelve until another round of electioneering campaigns. I would therefore like to invite the NRC elected representatives to come forward to feel at home and to cooperate with us in the SDP in developing our young State. Amongst us they will have good friends and a working team willing to assist in all aspects of development. Our mandate entails heavy responsibility to Yobe State and its indigens first and foremost a responsibility we pledge to discharge honest, faithfully and fairly without fear, favour or discrimination on the basis of political affiliation or sympathy, ethnic or religious backgrounds, geographical affinity or social status. The whole of Yobe State is our constituency where in all Local Government Areas, Assembly Constituencies and Local council wards are our service delivery points against none of which shall we

discriminate.

Finally, I would like to thank you very much Ladies and Gentlemen, for honouring our invitation and being with us on this historic occasion, and staying with us till the end. I also once more most sincerely thank the good people of Yobe State, friends and welwishers who stood by me and saw me successfully through the election period. We are here as the servants of the people, not lords or masters over them. We will therefore always remember with humility that our duty is not only to serve, but to be seen to serve honestly, diligently, and with every sense of responsibility.

May the Almighty bless this Young State, and shower upon us all, His Choicest Blessings - Ameen. Thank you.

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