

# Governor Abubakar Bukola Saraki's Inaugural Address

Your Excellency, The Deputy Governor of Kwara State, Chief Joe Ogundeji, Honourable Members of the Kwara State House of Assembly, Your Royal Highness, Our leader, Turaki of Ilorin, Dr. Olusola Saraki, Our Distinguished Party Chairman, Alhaji Abubakar Zubair Party Elders, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Auzu-Billahi Mina Shaytani Rajim, Bismillahi Rahmani, Rahim.

In the name of the Almighty Allah the Master of all destinies, the one who gives power to whomever He pleases and takes it when He pleases, the one who protects and guides when mortal grope in the dark. I stand before you today in solemn praise of that ultimate power, and the Lord bounties unbounded. It is with deep sense of humility that I welcome all distinguished guests from far and near to this historic event. Our victory today is the one that is hard won. It certainly would not have been possible without the tireless contributions and sacrifices of many. I am first and foremost grateful to Allah who decrees and makes all things possible. My special appreciation goes to my father, mentor and role model, Dr. Olusola Saraki, and my beloved mother, Mrs. Florence Saraki for making me what I am today and for standing by me in the course of pursuing my political career. I thank my wife, Mrs. Toyin Saraki for being there for me all the time, every time. I really appreciate you. To my friends and family, far and near, I say thank you for believing and standing strong. I also thank the State Chairman and members of the State Executive Committee of our Party and party elders for their support, wise counseling and guidance. I am similarly grateful to the ever hard-working members of the "Mandate and Great Hall Group" not only for providing strategic direction for our cause but also for the tenacity of purpose they displayed toward realizing this mandate, the time they spent and the resources they committed. I must show my dept of gratitude to all Kwarans for the overwhelming mandate they have given to me. Indeed, I feel highly humbled by the goodwill and support, which they my Deputy and I received from workers, the market men and women, our farmers, religious and community leaders and our revered Royal fathers. Today proves it has all been worth it.

I pay tribute to our people who sacrificed their lives and limbs in the course of our struggle. We will not forget the massacre at Ajase-Ipo and those who lost their lives there. We shall not forget Musa Pele. We shall not forget Yekini Gobir. We shall not forget Alhaja Lasiele. We shall not forget all the gallant people who lost their lives and those who were injured or maimed. Today's victory is indeed theirs.

I salute our leaders in all the Wards, in the Local Governments and throughout the State for their tireless efforts in mobilizing our people and thus ensuring that this day was born. Our women deserve very special mention for their resilience, their patience and their courage. Today belongs to you all. On behalf of the people of Kwara, I would like to thank specially our great leader, the Oloye himself; Words fail me in expressing our gratitude. For all that you have done over the years, for all that you have so gallantly fought; for the hope you brought at the time of despair, for the comfort you brought to many homes, for the happiness you have brought to the homes of many, for leading us out of tyranny and oppression and for passing the torch to a new generation, we wish to all say thank you. I only have left to say, "More is thy due and more than all can pay".

What

we celebrate today is not a victory of party or of individuals. What we celebrate is a beginning as well as an end; a change as well as a restoration. A beginning to end poverty, and misery; a beginning to end ignorance and hopelessness; and a beginning to restore all that is good, beautiful and sublime in our lives as one people under God.

Ladies

and Gentlemen, I stand before you today to swear to the same oath that many governors before me had sworn to in the past. But let the word go forth from this time and place that the torch has been passed on to a new generation. A generation that is acutely aware of its unique destiny as the hope of our long-suffering people. A generation that is desperately challenged by the rapid developments taking place all over the world, a generation that is encouraged by all the possibilities of technology, a generation that is determined to earn its place in history; a generation of hope. The challenges before my government are numerous. I am aware that central to those challenges is the need to reconcile the people and restore the confidence of the citizens in the government.

Many

times in history, people have voted our people they didn't want and ended up with people they didn't need. But let me assure you that you have not voted out one bad government only to end up with another. You are all aware of how much we have lost in the last four years but we shall not hang our heads in misery and continue to cry of restoration and reconstruction. There are enormous backlogs to clear in all areas: education and health, agriculture and industry, water and sanitation, rural development, women empowerment, youth development, unpaid salaries, pensions and many more. I do not pretend to have quick fix to all those problems nor do I intend to work on them single-handed. I therefore ask you not to expect any miracles of me, even though you have reasons to do so. I ask you not to expect all answers to all problems from me, even though you expect me to lead the way. I ask you not to expect me to solve all your problems, even though you voted for me to do that.

I

only ask you to join hands with me to be the best we can be, and together lay foundation for a future that is more secure and certain for our children and generations to come.

On my own part, I

promise to be Governor for all the people of Kwara State, those who voted and those who did not; those who voted for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and those who did not.

I am Governor for all of you, the people of Kwara State. I am prepared to pay any price, suffer and hardship, bear any pain and make any sacrifice to justify the confidence that you have reposed in me. I expect you to do the same, because a leader is only as good as the quality of his fellowship. You have given me the chance to lead you; I will also expect that you follow with all diligence.

My government shall be open and participatory and anybody that has any value to add shall be given the opportunity to do so. This government will also be truly merit driven, not only because it is the only way to make a break with the unproductive past and set our feet firmly on the path of progress.

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This government shall run on the cardinal principles of good governance, transparency, accountability, efficiency, rule of law and social equity. Towards this end, we have commenced the process of ascertaining the state of our finances. As soon as this is completed, I will let you know how much assets and how much liability we are inheriting. We shall also ensure that all government transactions are brought in line with the due process. My government will also regularly put the account of the government in the public domain to ensure that government is not only transparent but it is seen to be so.

There will be zero tolerance for corruption. Today, I make a personal pledge to every Kwaran that I shall set a personal example. My government shall make conscious efforts to ensure that no part of this state is marginalized. If I give to one, I shall give to the other. I will be guided by equity and good conscience, believing that even with our meager resources; the dividends of democracy can go round.

## PRIORITY AREAS

Our state is not a rich state. While we must devise effective strategies to broaden our revenue base, we would be careful not to outstretch the limited resources that we have by attempting to take on all our problems at the same time. Therefore, the government has identified a few strategic sectors that will attract our priority attention. These include the provision of water, good roads, and employment, especially for women and youth through agriculture and agro-allied industries and education.

## CIVIL SERVICE

It is not possible for the government to operate without an efficient, well-mobilized and result oriented civil service.

My government shall take urgent steps within the first one hundred days to restore the dignity and credibility of the civil service, to rebuild a civil service that is goal-driven and well positioned to advise and support the government.

In this direction, we shall take urgent steps to ensure prompt payment of salaries and improve their general working environment. However, to whom much is given, much should be expected. While my government will do everything possible to make workers in the state happy, I will also demand in return, full commitment and high productivity from all workers.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH LEGISLATURE

In line with our commitment to rule of law, my government shall at all times be guided by the principles of separation of powers, which is a fundamental canon of democracy. My government will therefore seek to hold the legislature in high regard, recognize the honourable men and women as worthy partners in realizing the objectives of the state. I expect them to understand that while we may not agree at all times, we

should at all times be united in the service of our people.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH TRADITIONAL RULERS

My government shall treat the traditional rulers with the utmost respect. I am deeply convinced that the richness of tradition and heritage, which they represent, must be preserved. I will respect our royal fathers, not only because I am convinced that the vigour of youth must be tutored by the sublime wisdom of the elders.

## YOUTH VIOLENCE

One of the unfortunate fallout of our recent politics is the explosion in youth violence in the State. My government shall take urgent steps to address this problem. Our State of harmony must from now on, reclaim its name. It is only an atmosphere of peace and security that industry, enterprise, and investment can thrive. My government is therefore determined to recover makes or descriptions in the hands of all unauthorized persons in the state.

I hereby announce a 14-day moratorium for anyone in possession of such weapons to hand them over to the police. In addition to guaranteeing amnesty to anyone who hands in such weapons within the specified time, such individuals shall also be enrolled in the programme of employment for youths, details of which shall be announced soon.

## KWARA AND THE NATION

In my recent solidarity visit to the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, I made a case against the marginalisation of Kwara not only within Nigeria, but also within the North Central Region. It is my hope that Kwara becoming a member of the family of People's Democratic Party (PDP) state on April 19, Kwara State will now enjoy more Federal support and feature more prominently in the reckoning of the PDP-led Federal Government. On my own part, I shall continue to strive for adequate and effective representation of Kwara State in all Federal appointment, because it is only when we have quality voices at the center that we can win more benefits for our State.

Your royal highness, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the task before us is enormous. It is not that which can be finished in the first hundred days, nor will be finished in the first year, nor in the life of this administration. But let us agree to start now.

Fellow Kwarans. I feel a great sense of urgency to achieve this agenda. It may not be the best of times, but it is our time, and this is our State. This is the time we have. Let us all accept that we need to make sacrifices and to work hard. Let us collectively resolve to build a lasting foundation for tomorrow and a new sound future for our children.

For those who have journeyed mercies from afar, I bid you journey mercies as you return home and than you so much for coming to our

State. For those of us who are here, I say this "our future begins today!"

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you so much for listening.