



NOW LET'S KEEP EKITI WORKING
Being the Text of the Inauguration Speech Delivered
by
His Excellency,
Mr. Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji
On the Occasion of his Inauguration as the Fourth Elected
Governor
of
Ekiti State, Nigeria

Ekiti Parapo Pavilion, Ado-Ekiti | Sunday, October 16, 2022

PROTOCOLS

INTRODUCTION

1. Ekiti Kete! Today is a great day for us, and we should all be proud. Today, we are observing history being made, and a new chapter of our story being written.
2. Today, we are witnesses to the reversal of the previous political transitions fraught with tension and strife, and bear testimony to the dawn of peaceful transition of power from one administration to the other – the first of its kind in our history. It also marks the beginning of the implementation of the Ekiti State (Transition) Law, 2019 which effectively provides for seamless transition from one administration to the other
3. I must start by acknowledging the Almighty God whose throne is heaven, and the earth, His footstool. To Him be all the glory and honour.
4. I must pay tribute to the great cloud of witnesses – our forefathers of ages past, upon whose foundations our generation continues to build. They set an example for us of the importance of our pristine moral principles – honour, sacrifice for the



common good, and unity – that *Oun a b'ajoro kii pe kun, Oun a s'epo nileye*. They demonstrated that for us as a people, only in unity can we conquer our challenges.

5. It was in this spirit of oneness that they bound together as a united Ekiti confederacy and emerged victorious against external forces that sought to subjugate us in our own land. In unity of purpose, they fought and contained attempts to dominate us at different epochs in our history.
6. This same spirit of unity has been passed down generations, and guided the founding fathers and mothers who built on efforts made since the Second Republic, and led the successful struggle for the creation of our own Ekiti State. This was a struggle led by our revered traditional rulers and prominent citizens which resulted in Ekiti becoming the only entirely homogeneous state in Nigeria.
7. This day is a very humbling one for me. It is hard to believe that the 27 years old young man who was privileged to serve as the Secretary to the Committee for the Creation of Ekiti State is now standing before you as Governor. I remember with fondness the aspirations and dreams of the committee I served as a scribe, documenting our vision for our State. I remember the long gruelling meetings, and even longer journeys at odd hours to make presentations before the authorities of the day. I remember my determination then to do my best to play my own part and not disappoint those who had given me the opportunity to be part of such a lofty idea and ideal.
8. As I assume leadership of our dear State before God and this distinguished audience today, it is indeed an emotional and historic moment for me, that destiny has now placed upon my shoulders the onerous task of furthering the journey to the actualisation of Ekiti prosperity; which was, and remains, our core mandate.
9. I am deeply grateful to be called upon to assume the seat previously occupied by eminent patriots through various times and seasons, who all gave their best for the development of Ekiti. I, especially celebrate the first civilian governor – His Excellency, Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo – the grandfather of the Ekiti progressive family under whom I started my political career as a public servant. As



the first democratically elected Governor at the dawn of the Fourth Republic, his tenure remains a reference point for all who have come after him. His strength of character, patriotism, humility and simplicity are attributes worthy of emulation.

10. Your Excellency Sir, we honour and celebrate your pioneering role in the challenging mandate of setting the foundation for the progress that Ekiti has witnessed so far. We salute your vision, especially in laying a solid economic foundation and showing forth the way of honour, of excellence, and of service to the greater good, in the governance of the State.
11. I also celebrate your amiable wife and our former First Lady, Her Excellency Erelu Angela Adebayo for being a pillar indeed, and for the legacy of compassionate service she left behind in those early years.
12. We cannot but remember those who have had the honour of presiding over the affairs of this great State under different dispensations and circumstances. I pay tribute to the pioneer Military Administrator Late Colonel Inua Bawa (Rtd.), Navy Captain Atanda Yusuf, (Rtd.), H.E. Dr. Peter Ayodele Fayose, Late Gen. Abiodun Olurin, H.E. Chief Segun Oni, Rt. Hon. Tope Ademiluyi, and Rt. Hon. Tunji Odeyemi, as well as a host of other great leaders of government in the judicial and legislative arms for their service to our dear State.
13. We may have had political differences, but the Ekiti ideal was never lost on us. This is why my esteemed leader, boss and immediate predecessor, His Excellency Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, determined that the God-inspired purpose of his second tenure of office was to get us back on track with the mantra **‘Reclaiming Our Land, Restoring Our Values.’**
14. There is no doubt that this was achieved in his time, and Ekiti has been on a trajectory of stability and inclusive growth, as, the State is today, leading in all indices of good governance and human development. Dr. Kayode Fayemi is a leader of leaders who has led with integrity and compassion, and a unique spirit of excellence that has lifted our profile in the comity of States.



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15. Posterity owes him a debt of gratitude for his remarkable achievements during his tenure as Chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum, and President of the Forum of Regions of Africa, for leading several policy initiatives at intergovernmental and multilateral levels that have become models for elevating sub-national governance in Africa. His reputation and astuteness as a pan-Africanist, nationalist, bridge builder, public intellectual and thought leader is indeed peerless, and we are proud that he is an Ekiti man. I am even prouder to be his successor.
 16. Similarly, I pay tribute to Her Excellency, Erelu Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, our very dear Mother-General for her numerous contributions to the development of our dear State. The State will forever be grateful to her for the policy initiatives, programs and advocacy aimed at bridging gender inequality, promoting socio-political inclusion and attending to the welfare of the vulnerable.
 17. For her tireless efforts at ensuring gender mainstreaming in government's programmes, laws, and policies, Ekiti State is today the undisputable model in Nigeria and beyond in gender advocacy. She has done well to build an army of successors who will continue to carry the banner of her aspiration for an egalitarian and inclusive society long after she has left the stage.
 18. Even though the Fayemis are leaving behind very huge shoes for me and Olayemi to fill, we are confident that with their support, we will assuredly grow into them. I am enthusiastically counting on the generosity of spirit of the Adebayos, Fayemis, Fayoses, and other past leaders, to continue in the service of our homeland by constantly affording us their enormous goodwill, expertise, and experience.

THE CHALLENGES OF THIS NEW SEASON

19. I am well aware of the unique challenges of our time. The world is presently facing one of the most difficult economic crises that was occasioned by a hybrid of post-COVID economic recovery sluggishness and the Russo-Ukrainian war. This is further complicated in Nigeria by the rising cost of living, which is eroding the gains of our economic growth, since we exited the recession as evident in what many economists have called stagflation. Ostensibly, the military faceoff between



Russia and Ukraine has caused an unprecedented energy crisis, reverberating across the world in the form of rising costs of living. Inflation continues to mount beyond what quick-fix economic remedies could resolve. At home, the pressure on the Naira in the face of low foreign exchange earnings is causing a huge burden on the purchasing power of our people.

20. The challenges with government revenues, especially in a State like ours where most income earners are connected to government's expenditure as salary earners, vendors and contractors, or beneficiaries of our social welfare programmes, is a significant one. Although, this problem is global and national, we are aware of its overarching domestic impact in Ekiti State, which requires proactive and compassionate measures to mitigate and provide safety nets for our people.
21. Correspondingly, insecurity remains a major concern of our people. Rural banditry remains an existential affront on our collective survival especially for us here in Ekiti. There is no doubt that the confidence of our people is still low in the security situation, but we need to acknowledge that a lot of work has been done and there is now a drastic reduction in the spate of kidnapping and rural banditry that reached a frightening height at some point.
22. We have the immediate past administration to thank for the improvement in the general security of our dear State. We are confident that we will build on these achievements and contain insecurity within our borders. We will energise the existing security system and come up with new initiatives that can further strengthen their functionality.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

23. My vision is for Ekiti State to be a land of prosperity, opportunity, peace and progress. A land in which transformed people and communities can reap the fruits of their labour in dignity, good health and safety. A land of honour where integrity matters. For this vision to be actualised we need to focus on a roadmap to get there.



The French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher, Frantz Fanon, in his famous quote says: “Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it ...” Ekiti Kete, I do understand my mission and I am here to fulfil it. The import of the mandate you have given to me and the responsibility I now bear is clear.

24. You would recall that I campaigned on a manifesto anchored on six pillars, which have been carefully designed to position Ekiti for peace and prosperity despite the challenges of this season. The pillars are:

- Youth Development and Job Creation –Creating employment and income-generating opportunities for the people of Ekiti is a critical component of our administration’s agenda. We have identified some of the drivers, markets and industries that create these opportunities within the system and intend to nurture them and give them the enabling structures and support required to deliver the jobs we need
- Human Capital Development – Ekiti State has the second-lowest number of out-of-school children in the country. Our goal is to build on the progress made by the previous administration by bringing that number as close to zero as possible, making sure that our children are not just in school, but are learning. Therefore, ensuring that all our children can access free and qualitative basic education up to Senior Secondary School 3 (SS3), with curricula that prepare them adequately for further learning or the job market, is our objective. We shall replicate this in all our Social Investment programmes. We will also ensure that gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment continue to be given priority in all policies and programs.
- Agriculture and Rural Development –Agriculture is one of the main contributors to Ekiti’s economy. We will develop the sector further by attracting more investment in agri-business to deepen our processing capacity of both staple and cash crops, which not only provide us food security but will help Nigeria grow its non-oil exports. We have a responsibility to support our farmers with facilitated adequate financing, value chain support, access to



markets, skills and technology to increase productivity within the sector, giving them the ability to provide food for the State and for exports while creating much-needed jobs and opportunities. Priority will be given to strategic crops, including cassava, rice, cocoa, cashew, maize, yam and vegetables.

- Infrastructure & Industrialization –Accelerating the development of key infrastructure that is critical to our economic development will have a vast impact on our progress. Power and transportation are two key priority sectors that will improve our competitiveness and generate positive economic and social impact. We are committed to collaborating with stakeholders to ensure we boost these underdeveloped core sectors. We have made considerable headway within the transportation sector with numerous road projects delivered and the Ado Airport project nearing completion. We will build on this progress to deliver on the vision we have for Ekiti.
- Arts, Culture & Tourism – As we look to diversify our economy, we will focus on tourism, arts and culture. Our rich cultural heritage and locations are steeped in history and provide an excellent opportunity to diversify our State’s economy. Unique attractions like the hot and cold springs at Ikogosi are attractions that can compete on a world stage. We will work hard to actualise this dream
- Governance – We cannot achieve sustainable development without good governance, so this last pillar is the one that brings it all together. It is the pillar that ensures that we are taking adequate care of our civil servants, that our residents are safe and secure, we are operating with transparency and best practices, and collaborating with the right actors to implement our state development plans and the SDGs initiatives. Above all else, this pillar is a reminder that we are accountable to you and that how we govern reflects the trust you have placed in us.



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25. These pillars highlight our priorities as an administration, which I explained in greater detail in my manifesto. Our goal is to safeguard our people's lives, livelihoods, well-being and future. It is to create shared prosperity for all. To grow the economy, equip our people with valuable skills, create jobs, and expand the range of opportunities available for everyone. It is to create a conducive environment for investors to thrive in our economy, and to make Ekiti State the preferred destination to live, work, and invest.
 26. In keeping with the Ekiti State (Transition) Law, 2019, our plan will also build on the foundation laid by the outgoing administration by prioritising the completion of strategic infrastructure projects in the knowledge economy, transportation, agriculture and power.
 27. Our modus operandi will be the establishment of numerous platforms for widespread participation, interaction, and inclusiveness of all stakeholders. We intend to ensure robust dialogue and uncensored expression and consultations across the length and breadth of the state, thereby ensuring the interest and participation of all in the welfare of Ekiti Kete. We assure the people that we will hear you and truly see you. Our outlook is a government of the people, for the people, by the people through active involvement. On this platform I hereby pledge my accessibility to you all.
 28. This is the summary of my manifesto which I presented to you, the basis upon which we earned your trust. With the recently unveiled **Ekiti State Development Plan (2021 – 2050)** midwived by the immediate past administration, all stakeholders in the sustainable development of our dear State, now have a roadmap to Ekiti's prosperity that goes beyond many electoral cycles, around which we will mobilise and coordinate efforts to succeed. Again, I assure you that by God's grace and the support of our people "Together With You, We Will Keep Ekiti Working."



A WORD ON THE UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS

29. Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in another four months we will be electing a new President for our great nation, and our representatives in the National and State Assemblies. Ekiti State is tied to whatever goes on at the national level, and these elections have crucial implications for us.
30. Our party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has presented to the nation, one of the most impactful political leaders of our time – His Excellency Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as our candidate for the position of President of Nigeria.
31. Asiwaju is a committed nationalist, astute administrator, prolific thinker, and a resourceful manager of human and natural resources, who has paid his dues and demonstrated his capacity to lead Nigeria at such a time as this. Ekiti is best positioned for peace and prosperity under the leadership of Asiwaju Tinubu and I am sure that we would deliver our votes for him.
32. In the same vein, our candidates for the National Assembly, and the State House of Assembly are men and women of honour whom we need in office to actualise our common vision. On my part as leader of Government I will do my best to continue to earn the confidence of our people in our great party.
33. I use this opportunity to appeal to the political class across partisan divides and all stakeholders, to ensure the upcoming elections in our State are conducted peacefully and decently, in the overall interest of our dear State.

APPRECIATION

34. As I conclude my remarks, I sincerely thank every son and daughter of Ekiti, at home and abroad, our highly revered royal fathers, market women, men of faith, all the 239 independent campaign groups - the BAO anchor group, BAO Volunteers as well as the many women and youth groups for entrusting me with your mandate. I know the enormity of expectations you have of us to immediately



start to build on the legacies of those who came before us, and honourably govern our State in trust for the generations coming after us. We will not disappoint you.

35. I thank H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari and other members of the Federal Executive Council; Chairman of our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), H.E. Senator Abdullahi Adamu and the National Working Committee members. Gratitude to the APC Presidential Candidate H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his running mate, H.E. Senator Kashim Shettima; the Chairman, Ekiti 2022 Governorship Primary Election Committee and Governor of Jigawa State, H.E Governor Abubakar Badaru and other members; thanks to Chairman of the Ekiti 2022 National Campaign Council and Governor of Kebbi State, H.E. Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, and other members of the council; their Excellencies, Members of the Progressives Governors Forum, as well as the Chairman of APC Ekiti, Barrister Paul Omotosho and members of the State Working Committee, the Ekiti APC Women campaign council, the Ekiti APC Youth campaign council, and our party members across Ekiti State. I thank you all for building our party into a strong and credible platform, and for your support in making this day a reality.
36. I thank my family and In-Laws for their support. I thank my father Pa Ezekiel Olukunle Oyebanji and my siblings for their unwavering belief in me. I honour the memory of my dear mother, Late Madam Esther Oyebanji and thank her for all her sacrifices to build my character. I also thank my late mother's friends who have stood by me, and stepped into the role of mother, counselling and providing the requisite prayer cover for me. Special appreciation to my mother-in-law, Madam Esther Bolaji Adedipe and all the Adedipe clan for their support.
37. I thank my children for their support, and for being a motivation for me to continue working to build a greater Ekiti State and Nigeria for their generation to inherit. I thank my darling wife – a life partner indeed. I thank you for trusting me on this journey we have embarked on, and for being the wind beneath my wings, and an unwavering pillar of strength. Thank you Olayemi, with you by my side, I am grounded and energised for the task ahead. I love you and will forever cherish your love and partnership.



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38. Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, together with our Deputy Governor, Her Excellency, Chief (Mrs.) Monisade Afuye, I humbly solicit your support, prayers, and patience as the new administration takes proper stock, and concludes our extensive consultations with stakeholders across board, with a view to consolidating our strategy that builds on the achievements of the immediate past administration, and lead us on the path to shared prosperity for all.
39. I use this opportunity to welcome the continued support of Investors, Development Partners and Ekiti Kete all over Nigeria and in the Diaspora. Ekiti is very open to business, and has an enabling policy and institutional framework that will ensure prudence, transparency and accountability in all obligations.
40. I know the task I have been charged with will be the toughest challenge of my life. However, I know that I will not walk alone. Ekiti-Kete, we will do this together. Together with you, we will keep Ekiti working. So help us God.

Thank you all for listening.

God bless Ekiti State! God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

His Excellency

Mr. Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji

Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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