**AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF KATSINA STATE BY HIS EXCELLENCY MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD IN COMMEMORATION OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY DELIVERED ON 29TH MAY 2024**

Assalamu Alaikum,

Dear Good People of Katsina State.

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent and the most Merciful.

I am humbled, grateful, and utterly devoted to the trust placed in me and my administration as we commemorate our first year in office. When I was inaugurated, I came in full of hope and ready to deliver on my mandate for our people. The Building Your Future Blueprint became a guiding document for this administration, and you are all welcome to asses my performance against what we set out to achieve.

Governance is not easy, as we constantly balance available resources to meet the needs and expectations of the governed. As a leader, I must align competing interests for the benefit of all and fight the elements within and outside my administration to ensure we succeed in our service to the people.

I wish we could appease everyone in the past year, but the reality is that our utmost best will still not be good enough for some. We understand that and remain committed to ensuring that the Government'sGovernment's benefits are fair and balanced across our dear State. If we still need to meet your needs, please rest assured that we are working arduously towards them.

Although we will use this opportunity to list our achievements in the past year, the work that has yet to be done dominates our agenda. We have set lofty targets for security, agriculture, education, healthcare, utilities, and public sector reforms. There are many challenges ahead, but we are up to the task. Macro factors, including high national inflation, fuel subsidy removal, forex volatility, food and social insecurity, and low trust in Government, will undoubtedly make life more difficult for people. As sub-nationals, we can only take steps to ease some of the suffering, which my administration has done over the past year.

We listened attentively when you asked why the Government spends money on roads instead of feeding the poor. However, the Government must balance humanitarian and development interventions in a manner that leads to sustainable improvement in people's lives and livelihoods. Building your future sometimes requires sacrifice in the present.

**PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM**

The future of Katsina state will require a collective effort from all of us towards sustainable development through community building and good governance. In June last year, we began by setting a new tone for governance and administration when we administered a transparent and inclusive selection process for permanent secretaries. I have now established a Department for Public Sector Administration reform with a clear mission to improve efficiency and effectiveness in public service. The department reports directly to my office.

Within my first 30 days as governor, I formed a mandate mapping committee to review all existing MDAs in the State. The mandate mapping exercise led to the collapse of over ten departments into ministries and the creation of new ministries, departments, and agencies, which include:

1. Upgrading the Department of Security to a full-pledged Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs.
2. Reorganized the Ministry of Lands and Survey to Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning.
3. Restructured the Ministry of Education to Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.
4. Collapsed the Department for Livestock to establish the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.
5. Merged the Ministries of Rural and Social Development.
6. Merged the Department of Youth Development and Ministry of Sports to establish the Ministry of Sports and Youth Development.
7. Merged the Departments of Higher Education and Skills Acquisition to a full-pledged Ministry of Higher, Vocational and Technical Education.
8. Restructured the State Board of Internal Revenue.

We also created some new agencies for the targeted implementation of our strategic policies, which include:

1. Katsina State Development Management Board will coordinate all state development projects.
2. Strategic Policy Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation Department to ensure proper monitoring and implementation of all projects as contained in the blueprint.
3. Katsina State Enterprise Development Agency (KASEDA) will be the focal agency for promoting and coordinating all NSME-related activities.
4. ICT Directorate will facilitate the implementation of E-Governance and simplify its operations.
5. The Katsina State Asset Management Agency manages and maintains all government assets in the State.
6. Irrigation Development Authority is the first of its kind in the country to promote and encourage year-round farming activities.
7. HISBA Board established to inculcate good values and check societal vices.
8. Zakkat and Wakaf Board to promote equitable distribution of wealth and socioeconomic development.
9. Fiscal Responsibility Commission to promote transparency and accountability in governance.
10. Katsina State Erosion and Water Shed Management Agency to sustain, monitor, and execute erosion control projects.
11. Small Town Water Supply and Sanitation Agency to enhance the provision of water in small cities and sanitation-related activities.

The new MDAs have been primarily staffed by the existing state workforce and are designed to have a lower net effect on the government's administrative spending.

To achieve success, our communities must become an inclusive part of our strategic policy implementation. As my campaign manifesto stated, we have finalised plans to launch community-driven processes toward socioeconomic development and local government administration reforms. We will establish community support centres to provide humanitarian and social services to our most vulnerable, community learning centres to promote knowledge and morality, and community development centres to design and implement development projects that have a direct impact on the people.

**SECURITY**

Our Community Watch Corps, launched with 1,466 fully trained personnel, is a testament to what we can achieve when we include communities in our policy implementation. Security is paramount for everything we hope to achieve as a state. A year ago, on this day, I called on all criminal elements, especially the bandits and terrorists, to abandon their ways and return to peaceful existence in their communities. I warned them that we will not relent in our drive to bring peace and security to our people. Many of them are not going to be witnesses to my speech today, and those who do not leave this path of killing and kidnapping our people will not be with us this time next year, Insha Allah. Our people have suffered this injustice and indignity for far too long at the hands of those criminals, and I will never accept this. Our expenditure on security is unprecedented, and we will not relent in our primary responsibility to protect lives and livelihoods.

Insecurity has become a business, and I am afraid it means more must be done to fight it. Cattle rustling and kidnappings are multibillion naira criminal enterprises that prey on our most vulnerable youth and women to perpetuate unimaginable atrocities on rural communities. We must also accept that for decades, vast spaces of our State have remained ungoverned, with very little done for their socioeconomic development. Fighting poverty will be a giant leap toward fighting insecurity in Katsina state, and my administration is determined to use kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to solve this problem.

We spent about 1.5 billion on complete tactical combat equipment for the Katsina State Community Watch Corp, and we sustained the payment of monthly security operations allowances to security personnel in the State to the tune of 208 million. This is in addition to 10 units of Armoured Personnel Carriers, 65 Branded Hilux vehicles, 700 Motorcycles, surveillance drones, a communication network, trackers, and other related working materials at a total cost of approximately 11 billion Naira.

In line with our strategy for community participation in the fight against insecurity, the State has engaged 918 Local Government security committee members and 9,747 ward security committee members. Recently, the State administration has established Hisbah Board to teach good values and check societal vices being perpetrated across the nooks and crannies of the State. We also established a committee on encroached cattle routes and grazing reserves to checkmate farmers-herders conflict. Furthermore, a joint Security Operations Communication Centre was established to improve intelligence gathering and assist security agencies in carrying out operations at all the security flashpoints in the State.

We have recorded much success in the fight against insecurity, and I will summarize a few of them. We have drastically reduced the areas colonized by bandits and returned many communities to normalcy. 565 kidnapped victims have been rescued and reunited with their families. 35 armed bandits have been neutralized by law enforcement, over 300 assorted arms, and over 1000 ammunitions have been recovered. We have also recovered motorcycles, vehicles, and a J5 bus from bandits during operations. This is in addition to many we have destroyed as we proactively dismantle this axis of evil. We have also arrested 363 bandits and subjective them to our fair judicial system.

I want to reiterate that in our fight against insecurity we have maintained very high professionalism, abided the rule of law, respect for human rights, and complied with global best practice.

**EDUCATION**

I still remember my days as a teacher and am determined to change the trajectory of the education system in Katsina state. The foundations of education are rooted in civilization, and without quality education, the future of our children will be highly endangered. Education is the first step towards local and global competitiveness for our youth. We conducted a baseline survey of all schools in Katsina state, and we have a long way to go to improve the quality of infrastructure in our institutions. We expended about 5.6 billion under the AGILE project to mobilise for the construction of 75 new secondary schools across the State. An additional 6 billion was distributed as direct grants to 115 schools for improvement projects.

We procured equipment worth 1.8 billion under the BESDA program, while 2.2 billion was spent on rehabilitation, construction, and furniture supply under the UBEC program. In a bid to ease the burden of examination fees payment by parents and students, the government paid about 1.4 billion as examination fees for WAEC, NECO, NBAIS, and NABTEB for the year 2023 within the period under review.

My administration has recruited over 7,000 teachers permanently to bolster quality education in the State. We have trained over 12,000 teachers in the past year and remain committed to improving the quality of teachers and lessons delivered in our schools. Education reforms are holistic, and we must lay new foundations for the sector. My administration will launch a new and inclusive education service delivery charter to transform our education sector more effectively in delivering knowledge and nurturing talent in our young people.

**HEALTHCARE**

They say health is wealth. I envision readily accessible healthcare and life-saving interventions in all 361 wards through our primary healthcare centres. Our secondary healthcare centres should have high diagnostic and treatment capabilities for more complex cases as we transform Katsina state into a major destination for healthcare in Nigeria.

Even before assuming office, I knew we had to tackle the issue of healthcare personnel in Katsina state. The number of doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, specialists, and other health professionals in the State could have been higher relative to national and global standards. We commissioned a baseline study of all healthcare institutions in the State, and it is clear that we have a huge obstacle to overcome. However, we started with the sponsorship of 41 medical students to study MBBS, and we have disbursed 744 million for their two-year tuition fees and upkeep allowances. We have also recruited an additional 94 health personnel for the Secondary Health facilities in the State, including Medical Doctors, Nurses, Midwives, Medical Lab Scientists, and Pharmacists. We upgraded the entry point for medical doctors and reviewed residency allowances upwards.

A problem known is half solved, and diagnostics can be a major challenge in healthcare. I have concluded plans to begin one of the best diagnostic centres in Nigeria, Insha Allah, and we will begin as soon as resources allow for it. In my first year in office, I built and equipped a 12-bed kidney centre that will provide dialysis and other care for patients with renal diseases at a cost 680 million. The facility will expand with more dialysis beds and other care facilities. We have also invested about 600 million to upgrade Faskari Comprehensive Health Centre into a General Hospital. We embarked upon wide-reaching improvements and provided equipment to various hospitals to improve patient's quality of care in our various healthcare centres.

In my blueprint, I laid out my plan for a partnership for a health program. I am pleased that we have been able to engage with UNICEF on nutrition, where we provided counterpart funding of 200 million. We also expended 217 million to purchase motorcycles in our partnership with UNDP to improve the capacity of ward focal persons and LGA officers to improve immunisation outreach in the State. We have also engaged World Medical Relief in the U.S. and have secured donations of medical equipment worth over 10 billion for the State.

We continue to fight polio in our State, reaching over 2 million children last year. We have focused on childcare by training more personnel in integrated childcare. We have conducted a training program for transitioning Voluntary Community Mobilizers to Community Health influencers, promoters, and service providers to improve access and equitable coverage of primary healthcare services**.**

**WATER & SANITATION**

Potable water has been a significant problem for the State. Our climatic conditions do not allow easy access to groundwater, and many rely on expensive boreholes for water. Tackling water problems involves developing water sources and treating raw water, transporting treated water across the State to communities, and establishing distribution networks to bring clean water to homes.

In the past year, we have made significant investments in making clean water available to our people. We have spent about 400 million to upgrade the Ajiwa water treatment plant and pumping station with new high-lift pumps, raw water submersible pumps, and pipelines, among other improvements. The provision of clean water comes with high recurrent costs. We have spent about 1.4 billion on water treatment chemicals and diesel in the past year across 9 water treatment plants. We are now looking at renewable energy to reduce diesel consumption over the long run.

The World Bank SURWASH project has greatly assisted our water sector. The project, which has strict standards and provides funding for water and sanitation projects based on performance, has provided support of about 5 billion Naira towards improvements in water supply for urban, semi-urban, and rural areas. You will be pleased to know that Katsina State is Nigeria's best-performing State for this project. We have begun preparations to expand under the SURWASH project to ensure our people have access to clean, potable water.

**SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The goal of socioeconomic development is to balance humanitarian and developmental investments. Our humanitarian support to the people over the past year is unprecedented despite our budgetary constraints. While we wish to see a Katsina state where people have vibrant and prosperous incomes, the reality has necessitated that we provide food to our people. The primary factor behind this remains the country's high level of food inflation.

The Government used bumper funds to provide grains and rice worth 10.6 billion at subsidized rates to our most vulnerable through a transparent and equitable process. We also spent 2.1 billion as part of a more comprehensive social intervention program and distributed them to our vulnerable women, older people, and those with special needs. We have also provided monetary support to victims of banditry, and we are currently updating the State's social register to ensure that those in need get the support they require.

Sustainable social support is critical to long-term socioeconomic development. Under the State Social Intervention Program, 3.4 billion has been approved as an MSME Revolving Fund to be managed in partnership with the Bank of Industry (BOI). The state government has also contributed 2 billion for the NG-Cares program under three results areas, which KASEDA, FADAMA, and CSDA implement. 6,100 beneficiaries have already received grants worth 300 million as we seek high impact for the project. The state government has also approved 800 million to re-capitalize the state-owned micro-finance bank and optimise it for MSME development in the State.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The greatest threat to our State is climate change. The consequences are wide-reaching and unpredictable, from flooding, soil dehydration, low farm yields, and deforestation to less obvious economic and health impacts. We have expended about 570 million for various flood and erosion control measures across the State. Again, we thank the World Bank for funding the Acresal Project to construct stormwater drainage management infrastructure. Katsina Metropolis Phase II is progressing for 11.2 billion. At the same time, the construction of Phase II intervention Riverbank protection for Jibia town, a flood control emergency site, is also being done for 10.8 billion. The State has also developed a Climate Policy to ensure that it proactively keys into the global climate change agenda and implements measures towards fighting climate change and environmental degradation.

**AGRICULTURE**

I am an agriculturist, and we are an agrarian state. However, farming alone does not lead to sustainable development. America and many European countries still subsidize agriculture to a large extent. We must invest along the entire agricultural and consumer goods value chain for maximum impact. My administration understands that agricultural productivity begins with high farm yields, so we redesigned extension services and expanded the number of extension workers from only 72 to over 700 within a year. We have also provided them with motorcycles and equipment.

We asked farmers what they needed and invested about 1 billion towards providing equipment and input for over 12,000 farmers across the State. We spent about 2 billion in direct irrigation support for dry-season farmers and 300 million on small earth dams. If we do not get our people to farm all year round, we can never achieve agricultural development. I want to single out food security as a significant issue facing our State and country. It is a primary focus of this administration as we battle food shortages and inflation. We will continue working hard to improve food security in our dear State.

We are currently seeking funding from various sources for agricultural development. Once these funds are approved, we should be able to bring about the agricultural revolution we promised in our blueprint. We will increase productivity, value addition, and mechanization and boost supply chains while attracting investment in the sector.

One of the most significant expenditures for the Government is the procurement of fertilizers. We have spent about 21.6 billion to procure fertilizer for this year’s farming season. The high cost has to do with inflation, Naira depreciation, increased cost of logistics, and the targeted land areas for coverage. Our soil analysis has also shown that we need high amounts of organic and inorganic fertilizers for optimal yield in many parts of our State. What we plan to do differently is to educate farmers through our expanded extension services on ways for efficient use of fertilizers.

**WORKS**

When the Government decides to build infrastructure, it must consider the long-term benefits of such investments. I decided early on during my bid to become governor that if I got the chance, I would expand Katsina with an Eastern Bypass to benefit future generations. Populations will continue to move from rural to urban areas for decades, and our state capital must be ready to absorb this inevitable shift. The construction of 24km Eastern bypass dual carriage road from Dutsin-ma Road - Kano Road - Mani Road - Daura Road - Yan Daki Town and dualisation from Katsina Central Mosque - Kofar Marusa - Kiddies - WTC Roundabout at the cost of 34.6 billion has commenced and about 13.8 billion has been paid out as mobilization fees. The Dualisation of Kofar Soro - Kofar Guga Roundabout at the cost of 3.5 billion has also commenced. We have also cleared over 3 billion outstanding liabilities from the last administration for ongoing road projects across the State. We will also continue to support all local governments in their infrastructural development efforts.

**LAND REFORMS**

My administration promised a world-class Geographic Information System for land administration, which we have been able to actualize. We passed the relevant laws and provided the funding for the operationalization of KATGIS. We did it without tying our State to long-term revenue-sharing contracts. We also restructured the Urban and Regional Planning Board to effectively monitor developments across the State. We will soon embark on the complete digitization of all land records, and I urge you to comply with the guidelines for updating your land documents. This exercise is not designed to be punitive; instead, it should bring peace of mind to land owners and ensure that your properties are well documented. We will also begin full enforcement of planning rules and regulations, and those who do not comply will face demolition. We must start to do things the right way and in the best interest of all. I appeal to you to please comply with building regulations and codes in the State. We will also expand semi-urban planning to major towns so this message should be taken seriously in all local government areas.

**REVENUE & EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT**

We promised a Treasury Single Account for transparency and delivered on it. I have given the green light for the state Revenue Management System to go live on June 1st, 2024, and the Budgeting and Expenditure system will go live on July 1st.

In the past year, we have overhauled our state tax law to be more effective and have now put systems in place to help us improve our financial management capabilities.

Our Revenue Management System has a Taxpayer Management System to ensure eligible taxpayers are served well, a central billing system to make it easier for the general population to pay government dues, and the TSA to ensure that all state revenues from all sources are accounted for in totality. The new technology will change the State's revenues and help us attain our goal of using internal revenues for all recurrent expenditures.

We have gone one step further by fully automating our budgeting and expenditures for greater accountability and resource management across all MDAs. We will continue to update these systems to block leakages and ensure that resources that accrue to the people are managed per global best practices. Again, ladies and gentlemen, we have done this without tying the State to long-term revenue-sharing contracts.

The digital transformation across Government will continue over the coming months and years as we boost efficiency and effectiveness in public administration. So far, about 4 billion has been internally generated in the first quarter of 2024, as 1.7 billion was collected in the same period of 2023.

One year ago, I promised to lead and govern with sincerity of purpose, and I hope that I have achieved that. We have done much more than I can list here, and I did not intend for my address to be about expenditure. I aim to remind you that I have kept to my blueprint and improved on it. The journey is difficult, and many macroeconomic factors are beyond our control. However, we will always do our best with the resources we have.

My pledge is to continue expanding community involvement in our policies and programs as we bring socio-economic development to our people. I will also continue to expand my working relationships with the North-West Governors and development partners in pursuit of greatness for our dear State.

I would like to thank the Legislative Arm of Government members for their excellent cooperation with the Executive in the interest of the people of Katsina State. The timely passage and signing of the 2024 Budget indicate our collective commitment to earnestly pursue the programs laid down for optimum service delivery to the citizens of the State.

Therefore, governance is a collective responsibility that requires all hands on deck for more significant results. Accordingly, I express our appreciation to the Judiciary, Public Servants, Traditional Institutions, Religious Bodies, the business community, women and youth groups, and all relevant stakeholders in the Building Your Future Project. Katsina State will witness tremendous progress, growth, and prosperity by working together. Let's, therefore, endure and work as a team for a befitting legacy for our people and subsequent generations.

Thank you very much, and May Almighty Allah Bless you all.