

ATIKU ABUBAKAR GCON



PROFILE

Atiku Abubakar is a public servant whose name rings a bell in the ears of Nigerians, a man with a proven record of service and dedication to the good of the Nigerian people. He is so well regarded, so well known that in most parts of this country, that he is simply called Atiku. His Excellency Atiku Abubakar (GCON), Waziri Adamawa, former Vice President of Nigeria and presidential candidate of the PDP in the 2019 election is a living example of the truism that hard work can take you where parentage may not.

Born in Jada, Adamawa state, on the 25th of November 1946 to Garba Atiku and Aisha Kande Abubakar, the young Atiku endeavoured to get an education although he was orphaned very early in life. He attended Jada Primary School from 1954 to 1960. Afterwards, he attended Adamawa Provincial Secondary School, Yola, from 1961 to 1965. He commenced studies for both his Advanced Level and Royal Society of Health but eventually proceeded to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1967, graduating with a Diploma in Law in 1969. His leadership skill was first observed at the School of Hygiene, Kano. He was elected President, the School of Hygiene Students Union, thus beginning his leadership training and political career during the radical students' union politics of the sixties. While in ABU, he was elected Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Institute of Administration, Kongo Campus, Ahmadu Bello University Students Union.

On graduation, he joined the Customs and Excise Department in 1969, serving in Kano, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Seme, Ibadan and Lagos. He rose to the rank of Deputy Director before retiring meritoriously in 1986. During and after his service, he was privileged to go for further training and education. He attended courses in Leadership Management, Drug Enforcement and Control, in Finland, Egypt and the United States of America.



On retirement, he went into private business, with interests in Oil Services, Agriculture, Food and Beverages, Print Media, Banking, Insurance, Fast Food and Pharmaceuticals.

He embraced active politics in 1986 under the influence of soldier-turned-politician, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. Atiku was one civilian of his era who never believed in military rule. He knew that a truly all-around development is only possible when committed civilians are free to elect their leaders and not when they are coerced by the barrel of the gun to accept their fate by hook or by crook. Consequently, he played a prominent role in the pro-democracy movements of the 90s. He was elected to the National Constitutional Conference of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, representing Ganye/Mayo Belwa constituency in Adamawa State from 1994 to 1995. Due to his insistence on the exit of the military, he survived an assassination attempt during the brutal military regime of Sani Abacha. He was harassed and chased into exile in 1995. He lived briefly in the United States and tried to ensure that his businesses stayed afloat despite the military regime's attempts to ruin them.

He was a founding member of the People's Front of Nigeria; the Social Democratic Party; the Peoples Democratic Movement and the Peoples Democratic Party.

He contested and won the Governorship Election of Adamawa State in 1999. However, just before he could be sworn in as Governor, he was nominated as the Vice Presidential Candidate of the Peoples' Democratic Party. He was thereafter elected Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and sworn in on May 29, 1999. He was re-elected for a second four-year term as Vice President and sworn in on May 29, 2003.

Atiku Abubakar is a world citizen. He has served not only his country but the world for the betterment of life and the promotion of virtue. He is the sponsor and member of the Finance Committee of the World Constitution and Parliament Association; a Member, the World Citizens group, (based in France) a group dedicated to the promotion of world peace and understanding.



At the national level, Atiku Abubakar has served as Chairman, National Economic Council; Chairman, National Council on Privatisation; Chairman, National Planning Commission; Chairman, National Boundary Commission; Chairman, Presidential Committee on the 8th All Africa Games; Chairman, Presidential Task Force on the Visit of Queen Elizabeth 11 during the Commonwealth Summit, in Abuja 2004; Chairman, Presidential Committee on Desertification and Deforestation; Chairman, National Emergency Management Agency; Chairman, Border Development Agency and Chairman, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Atiku Abubakar is well respected across the country. His generosity has been felt in many parts of Nigeria. His influence is undeniable even by his enemies. Traditional institutions across the country have loudly echoed his name and have done so in the highest ways possible. In 1982, at the tender age of 36, he was appointed to the enviable position of Turaki Adamawa, and nearly five years later, elevated to the Waziri Adamawa, a position of honour, and a position of high responsibility. Since then accolades have been bestowed on him from various monarchs across the six geo-political zones of the country.

He is Sardauna of Ganya; Aare Adimula of Ile Ife; Maiyederu of Lagos; Ekwueme of Anambra; Atayese of Ijeshaland; Zanna Zantaelma of Borno; Zege Mule U of Tivland; Shettima of Biu; Suka of Ogoniland; Unuamani of Adamawa; Baagbile of Oke Ona Egba, Egbaland; Omekaojuora of Igbuzo and Otun Balogun of Mopaland.

And in June 2017, he was elevated to Waziri Adamawa, second in command only to the Lamido of Adamawa.

Atiku identified education as a major area of his passion and investments and stands out as a unique man who spends money wisely to impact positively on his people. As his most visible and largest charity, the American University of Nigeria has arisen in only twelve years from the empty fields of rural Nigeria to become an institution of 1500 students with a faculty from over 40 countries. Because of its focus on sustainable development, it is widely called Africa's first "Development University," and it is most recently the winner of an award from the American Library Association for its pioneering work in the development of one of the world's most sophisticated e-libraries. It is the only American-style University south of the Sahara and is already recognized as one of the leading universities in West Africa.



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The establishment of this world-class university in the insurgency prone North East of Nigeria is the strongest proof of Atiku's passion for education. Though a private university founded by the former Vice President, he personally provides 60 percent subsidy by his own direct intervention. This affords both the children of the rich and the children of the poor access to a world-class education. Specially gifted children, regardless of their parental backgrounds are also afforded the opportunity to better their future through this first-class university. Even the vulnerable, among them the Chibok girls who escaped Boko Haram captivity, have found accommodation in the academy operated by AUN. The university not only helps students acquire first-rate degrees but promotes entrepreneurship courses to meet the challenges of the Nigerian realities. By giving its students the skills for entrepreneurship, Atiku is helping them to stand on their own in life. Inspired by his awesome early life experiences when he had to struggle for himself because he was an orphan at a vulnerable age, Atiku Abubakar is using education as the key to transforming people's lives. And to underscore the premium he places on education; the man only recently commenced and completed a Master's degree in International Relations at the Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. The takeaway is that education is the game-changer.

Considering his unquantifiable contribution to the education sector, his burning desire to put the leading light of learning in the hands of the poor and underprivileged, many Nigerian Universities have thought it fit to honour Atiku Abubakar with honours well deserved, conferring him with the following: PhD Honoris Causa, Universities of Maiduguri; PhD Honoris Causa, University of Calabar; PhD Honoris Causa, Igbinedion University, Okada; PhD Honoris Causa, Federal University of Technology, Yola; PhD Honoris Causa, Imo State University, Owerri; PhD Honoris Causa, Bayero University, Kano, and PhD Honoris Causa, Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun.



Atiku has long been concerned with issues of national integration as well as potential threats to it. In fact, he has been a vocal voice for the restructuring of Nigeria since as far back as 2004, long before the idea became a national preoccupation. Reading through his book entitled *Thoughts on Restructuring Nigeria: Selected Speeches of Atiku Abubakar*, will leave one with a lasting impression: that on the issue of restructuring, Atiku has been quite articulate.

Atiku Abubakar is a man with a large heart. Giving for him is not an event or a series of events. It is a way of life. He has built hundreds of schools and social-cultural infrastructure all over the country.

He has sponsored and supported the treatment of prominent and ordinary people with medical problems.

He has awarded local and overseas scholarships to hundreds of Nigerians. He has supported Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria with all his might.

He employs and supports thousands of Nigerians through his businesses. Indeed he is the second largest employer of labour in his home state of Adamawa State, second only to the state government. In other parts of this wonderful country, politicians are known to invest in Switzerland, invest in England, invest in Finland but not invest in this land. They can all borrow a leaf from the book of Atiku, who puts Nigeria first.

In this country, where the profligacy of the political prodigals has elevated terrorism to the rank of martyrdom, increased the restiveness of the hopelessly unemployed young people, and increased militancy of all kinds across the nation, if only they could borrow a leaf from the book of Atiku.



Prevention is better than cure, the English man says. Education is not only the cure of terrorism; it is particularly the prevention of it. By investing heavily at all levels of education in the restive North East, Atiku hopes, and we hope, that before long, Boko will no longer be Haram in that part of the world. Indeed Atiku is Boko Hala to Boko Haram, his recipe in promoting education as a major for socio-economic development is the antidote for the destructive tendencies of the extremism promoted by Boko Haram. If only the political class will borrow a leaf from the book of Atiku.

They don't come any better Atikulated than this: a statesman, a man of honour, a family man with a mind for the nation, a former customs officer with eternal respect for the custom of the Nigerian people, a civilian with a civil heart, a man with a heart so large and a hand so open, a giver and a forgiver, an indefatigable promoter of education, a lover of people, and a man with a passion for good governance.

