



DECLARATION SPEECH

Text of the Speech Delivered by H.E. Atiku Abubakar M.A. GCON

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01 Introduction

First, I want to thank you all for being here today and for all your enduring support. I know there are over twelve million Nigerians out there, who may not be here with us today, but they have been with us since the 2019 election. I know these numbers are growing every day. I want to thank you all for believing in our vision.

I want to thank you all for your bravery. Despite the disappointment in the last election, you still believe that this time around, it is possible. For me, I could say there was never a break. Since our last fight in the court, challenging the 2019 election results, I have received several calls and encouragement from you to contest again.

I have listened to your brave voices. Beyond the words coming out of your mouths, I could imagine your frustrations, yet you are hopeful. I admire you greatly for choosing hope over despair.

I know why you are doing this. You are doing this because deeply you believe something good is possible and is coming to Nigeria.

In the face of the worst division, you believe this country can still unite. In the face of economic hardship, you believe prosperity is coming. In the face of the worst insecurity, you believe peace is possible. I also share in your optimism; that is why I am here today to give you an answer.



02 The 2023 Elections

The 2023 election is not just like the usual elections; it is a referendum to decide whether we want greatness or continuous destruction. It is a choice between two paths: the path of unity and progress or the path of division and backwardness.

We need a new kind of leadership that will steer us to a positive path. In 2023, we want a President who has ideas on how to fix Nigeria. We want a president who understands, who inspires and is empathetic.

As the election is fast approaching, we should not be distracted from the devastating conditions we are in now. The ruling party wants to divide us; they want to divide us along the political, ethnic, and religious lines so that we forget to blame them for the rising inflation.

They want to distract us from holding them responsible for the insecurity and rising poverty. They want us to be facing each other and hating one another. We should focus on the issues, not our differences. Let us unite and fight our common enemies: the lack of unity, insecurity, poverty, inflation, and unemployment.

That is what this election is about. I have no doubt in my mind that we as Nigerians can do it. We have done it in 1993. We can do it in 2023. We must stand firm, get our PVCs, come out en-masse, cast our votes, and protect it against any manipulation.

I have contested for the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria a couple of times in the past. My enduring persistence is borne out of my passion to rekindle the Nigerian dream that I was privileged to live.

Nigeria is a land of possibility. There is no challenging background that will make any Nigerian give up. I am a living witness to what is possible in Nigeria.

03 My Story

Who could have ever imagined, an eleven-year-old village orphan, who had to rear other people's cattle to raise money to feed his family, would have the opportunity to go to school for free, rise through the cadre of a decent profession, establish successful businesses, and become the Vice President of this country?

That is the Nigerian dream and that is my story. That is the possibility I want to pass to you and your children. No matter your current circumstances, that should not limit your success in life. There should not be any limit to what you want to achieve if you are willing to work for it.

That is my dream for Nigeria. However, that is not possible without credible and visionary leadership, and that is what I want to offer to Nigerians.



04 The Declaration

You and I know that Nigeria is in dire need of visionary leadership. Our fundamental principles and purpose as a nation have never been challenged as it is today. Presently, Nigeria is a sinking ship; it must be rescued urgently. That is why I am happy to announce my candidacy for the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

I offer myself to rescue the sinking ship. Under my captainship, this ship will sail to a brighter course by the grace of God. However, this journey is not mine alone. It is a journey I am taking for all Nigerians. It is also a journey to a destination I planned with my late great mentor, Major General Shehu Musa Yar'adua, and with my beloved compatriot, the late, and great, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola. May their souls rest in peace.

These two gentlemen helped me find my path in politics, and as a group, we had a vision to run Nigeria in a business-like manner, where, as one nation, we would bid farewell to poverty, by understanding our differences, and harnessing them to do together what we would not be able to do separately.

05 My Plan

Under my presidency, I want to focus on five key areas: Unity of Nigeria, Security, Economy, Education and devolving more resources and powers to the federating units.

Since the civil war, the unity of Nigeria has never been threatened as it is today. Nigerians are losing hope in the oneness of this country. My fellow Nigerians, I am the unifier that is coming to bond the broken union.

We will open doors for dialogue to hear the grieving voices of all Nigerians. Under my presidency, there will be a new Nigeria, where everybody has an equal voice and is heard.

Throughout my life, I have never looked at Nigerians as divided people. In my eyes, all Nigerians are the same. When I see you, I don't see Yoruba or Hausa or Igbo or Fulani or a northerner or southerner; when I see you, I only see a Nigerian, and I expect the best from you.


All Nigerians are equal and should be seen and treated equally. There is no unity without justice and fairness. That is why I will deliver leadership of justice and fairness.

Why is unity a priority? Well, we must work to strengthen our unity as my dear friend and brother, Chief Alex Ifeanyi-chukwu Ekwueme, once said. National integration, he continued, will not come as a gift. It is the role of the government to work very hard and promote it.

The APC administration has failed in its fundamental responsibility of protecting the lives and properties of Nigerians. The most significant human right is the right to life, which has not been protected under the APC administration.

Our military forces are fighting on the front lines without equipment and morale. That is not fair. If we get into power, we will increase the welfare of all security forces. We will use modern technology and intelligence to combat insecurity. We will also increase the number of personnel for our security agencies.





Why security? Because national security is the first sign of a functional government, and where it does not exist, we must not blame those who threaten it. We can only blame a government that allows it to be threatened. And if I am elected as your President, insecurity is one thing I will not tolerate.

All the macro-economic indicators are not favourable under the APC administration. APC inherited single-digit inflation; they now increased it to about 16%. When APC came into power, unemployment was around 9%; now, unemployment is more than 33%.

The Exchange Rate was N197 to a Dollar in 2015, but in the hand of APC, Naira suffered the worst devaluation ever. As we speak, the exchange rate is more than N400 to a dollar, the official rate.

That was not the change we wanted. If we get elected, we will create alternative sources of foreign exchange supply to Nigeria and reduce importation to increase the value of the Naira.

They said we should go back to the farmlands. How can you ask people to go to the farms while you have not secured the farms? People cannot go back to the farm because they are afraid, they could be kidnapped or killed.

Under my leadership, we will ensure absolute security because that is the number one condition for economic prosperity. We will provide access to mechanized farming systems and develop the agricultural value chain. We must diversify our foreign exchange sources through exports of processed agricultural products.

When APC came into power, Nigeria's debt was N12 trillion, and now they increased it to N32 trillion. They still want to borrow more. Under my leadership, we will reduce government borrowing. Too much borrowing comes at the detriment of future growth.

We will operate a liberal economy that allows small businesses to grow through lower taxes and charges for small businesses and low-income earners. We will encourage the expansion of the private sector to spur economic growth.

For our population to have a positive impact, we must equip our people with modern competitive skills and provide the right environment for them to thrive. As Chief Abiola once said, "we in Nigeria must not allow ourselves to be left behind." If you look at our present state, you will agree with me that the world, and sadly, even the rest of Africa has left us behind.

More than 100 million Nigerians are either unemployed, underemployed, or unemployable. How could our ever-increasing population be of added value if we do not create opportunities for our people?

I know how to create jobs. I built several successful businesses and companies within Nigeria, and as a result of which thousands of people are gainfully employed. If I can manage my businesses well, I can manage the Nigerian economy well.


Education should be given free to every Nigerian, at least up to the secondary school level. I know the value of education; if not because of education, what kind of value would someone like me, a poor child from a small village would have added to Nigeria?

That is why I established an educational community in my hometown, where I built schools from Kindergarten to University all in one place to provide education to the promising younger generation.

The success of any educational policy is not measured based on the number of bodies in classrooms or schools alone but also the quality and relevance of the education. That is why we will invest in improving access and quality of education.

Nelson Mandela once said, "No country can really develop unless its citizens are educated."





Every Nigerian must have access to affordable and decent healthcare. No Nigerian should be afraid of falling sick just because they cannot pay for the hospital bill. We will strengthen our health care programs so that every Nigerian can have access to the required minimum healthcare quality.

Nigerians cannot afford to pay high petrol prices. That is why we must ensure sufficient refining capacities within Nigeria. If we do that, petrol will be cheaper because it is locally produced. In the meantime, we will protect Nigerians from higher petrol prices through a new comprehensive Energy Policy.

To provide an adequate and affordable electricity supply for every Nigerian, we will ensure sufficient investment in the sector. We will leverage renewable energies to power homes and commercial centers.

And that is why we must provide opportunities for our people. When the citizens of any nation have the opportunity to progress at their own pace, they themselves will help make insecurity a thing of the past. We must remember that terror only thrives where there is local support and crime flourishes where it is profitable.

If we introduce opportunities for Nigerians to express and progress themselves, we would have depressed the insecurity.

06 My Policy Document

As you are aware, I am a man of policy. I will never be that kind of a president operating based on impulse. My administration will be guided by a consolidated and timely policy document.

You and I will be working together to update and review my existing policy document. We should consolidate our ideas into a unified people's policy that will reflect the realities and possibilities of the current time. The consolidated and reviewed people's policy document will be announced in due course. It will also serve as an input into the PDP manifesto.

07 Style of Governance

I am confident in my ability to deliver inclusive governance. I invite every well-meaning Nigerian to join me in rescuing Nigeria. I don't have to be the most qualified Nigerian, but I should be wise enough to bring together the most qualified Nigerians to work with them even if I don't know them previously. I will summon the best brains and work with them.

I would like to work more with young people. Young people are more agile, creative, and conversant with contemporary opportunities and challenges. I too, feel like I am a young man. So, you can call me a youth too.

Our administration is going to be a transition of power from the senior generation to a younger generation.

We will cut down the cost of governance because leaders must sacrifice first for the benefit of the people. We will set our fiscal budget within a realizable and realistic level so that we can reduce government debts. We will support and actively engage the private sector in building infrastructure and creating more job opportunities.



08 Conclusion

In the end, this campaign is not about me; it is about you; it is about the future of this country. Let our stories be told for generations to come that we are the ones that rescued Nigeria when it was on the verge of fatal destruction. This is our last opportunity to write our names with the golden ink of history. It must be now or never.

This time around is different; our journey will not end at the poll; we will get to work and rescue Nigeria. I invite every Nigerian to join me in this mission to save our dear country. I believe together we can do it. This is what we owe to Nigeria and the future generation. I have never been this optimistic, and with your support and God's grace, we will get to the promised land.

The late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, did say that "after rain comes sunshine. After darkness comes the glorious dawn." We have experienced rain, and the darkness has enveloped us for too long. Now is the time for sunshine. The hour of our glorious dawn is finally here.

Let me take this opportunity to especially thank the executives and members of the North-East Business Community for not only encouraging me to contest once again but also for going ahead to purchase the Expression of Interest and the Nomination Forms for me.

My appreciation also goes to all the members of TEECOM chaired by the High Chief Dr Raymond Dokpesi, for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to this project. I pray that God will crown our efforts with success.

AS ONE WE CAN GET IT DONE.

Thank you
God bless you
And may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Atiku Abubakar

