SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MALALM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD, CON, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE AT THE 55TH ANNUAL ACCOUNTANTS' CONFERENCE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA (ICAN) HELD ON TUESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2025 AT THE BOLA AHMED TINUBU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA

Protocol:

It is with profound honour and deep humility that I stand before you today at this historic 55th Annual Accountants' Conference, a landmark gathering that coincides with ICAN's Diamond Jubilee, celebrating 60 years of excellence, integrity, and unwavering service to the Nigerian nation.

To the Governing Council of ICAN: thank you for this distinguished invitation. To stand among 13,000 of the finest financial minds in African professionals who safeguard the very foundation of our economy is both a privilege and a solemn reminder of the critical role you play in shaping our collective future.

This year's theme "Building Resilience: Aligning Reforms for Nigeria's Development" could not be more timely or more urgent. In an era of global volatility, fiscal uncertainty, and rapid

technological disruption, resilience is no longer optional, it is existential. And at the heart of that resilience lies accountability, transparency, and sound financial governance, the very pillars upon which your noble profession is built.

As a Governor committed to transformative governance, I have come to understand that you cannot reform a nation without first reforming its finances. You cannot empower citizens without first ensuring that every naira collected is accounted for and every kobo spent delivers value. And you cannot build trust in public institutions without the rigorous, independent, and ethical oversight that only professionals like you can provide.

In Katsina State, we have placed fiscal integrity at the core of our administration's blueprint. We were quick to embrace technology and launched a fully digitized Treasury Single Account and automated our revenue collection service. This has led to significant growth in revenue generation and improved transparency in governance. Our major hospitals, health insurance, and drugs supply and management have also been digitized to block leakages and increase efficiency.

We are digitizing revenue collection to curb leakages and expand the tax net, implementing performance-based budgeting to link spending to outcomes, strengthening internal audit functions across all MDAs, and championing open data initiatives so that every citizen can track how public funds are used.

But let me be candid: these reforms are not easy. They require political will, technical capacity, and above all, partnerships with institutions like ICAN that uphold the highest standards of professional conduct.

My administration is focused on bringing service to the people to meet their needs, so we embarked on the most comprehensive community-driven development in the country. Our Community Development Program is designed to take community-based budgeting and community-based monitoring and evaluation to all the activities of my administration. Our budget for 2026 will be designed entirely on community needs assessment and going forward all MDAs will be required to implement their budget strictly based on the priorities of our communities. We remained determined to ensure socio-economic justice and universal development across our state.

The challenges we face as a nation rising debt, declining oil revenues, inflationary pressures, and weak domestic resource mobilization demand more than technical fixes. They demand a new social contract between government, the private sector, and the citizenry. And accountants are the architects of that contract. You are the ones who:

- Ensure that infrastructure projects are not just built, but properly costed, monitored, and evaluated;
- Guarantee that social investment programs reach the intended beneficiaries, not phantom accounts; and
- Provide the credible data that informs policy, attracts investment, and restores public confidence.

In this digital age, your role is evolving. Artificial intelligence, blockchain, and real-time analytics are transforming how we track, verify, and report financial information. But technology alone is not enough. Ethics must always lead innovation. As ICAN celebrates 60 years of integrity, let us reaffirm that no algorithm can replace professional judgment, and no system can substitute for moral courage.

To the young accountants in this hall: you are inheriting a profession at a crossroads. You have the tools to be more than number-crunchers, you can be strategic advisors, policy shapers, and agents of national renewal. Embrace that responsibility with pride and purpose.

To ICAN: as you enter your seventh decade, your mission has never been more vital. We call on you to:

- Deepen collaboration with sub-national governments to build local fiscal capacity;
- Champion IPSAS adoption across all tiers of government;
- And lead the charge for sustainable finance that aligns with our climate and development goals.

In closing, let us remember that a nation's wealth is not measured by its oil reserves or its GDP alone, but by the strength of its institutions and the integrity of its stewards. You, the chartered accountants of Nigeria, are among our most trusted stewards.

May the Almighty Allah continue to guide your work, strengthen your resolve, and bless this great Institute as it serves our nation for generations to come.