Speech for His Excellency, Mallam Dikko Umar Radda, PhD, CON, (The Executive Governor of Katsina State), at the Grand Official Commissioning of the Coordination Centre for Routine Immunization (30th/09/2024)

Protocol:

Distinguished guests,

esteemed partners,

ladies and gentlemen,

It is with immense joy and a deep sense of responsibility that 1 stand before you today on this momentous occasion. We gather here not only to celebrate significant milestones in our health sector but also to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of the people of Katsina State.

Today, we mark the distribution of 163 motorcycles to support routine immunization. This initiative is not just about mobility; it represents our determination to ensure that every child in Katsina State has access to life-saving vaccines.

Vaccination is a fundamental right of every child, and it is our duty to eliminate barriers that prevent them from receiving this essential service. With these motorcycles, our health workers will be better equipped to reach remote and underserved areas, ensuring that no child is left behind. As we commission our newly constructed Routine Immunization and Primary Health Care Coordination Centre today, we celebrate a significant milestone in our commitment to improving health outcomes. This center will not only serve as a hub for immunization initiatives but will also foster collaboration among health professionals, enhancing our ability to tackle health challenges head-on. It stands as a testament to our dedication to creating a robust health system that serves all our citizens equitably. With this facility, we are taking a significant step towards strengthening our health infrastructure and ensuring that we are prepared for any challenges that may arise.

Furthermore, I am proud to announce the disbursement of livelihood grants to children who have completed their routine immunization. This programme will provide N5,000.00k each to over 800,000 women whose children have completed routine immunization. This initiative is a testament to our belief that health and economic empowerment go hand in hand. By supporting these children and their families, we are not only promoting immunization but also investing in

the future of our state. Healthy children are the foundation of a prosperous society, and it is our responsibility to nurture them.

Moreover, I want to reiterate my administration's commitment to strengthening primary health care in the state. We understand that primary health care is the cornerstone of our health system that is why since assuming office, my administration has remained steadfast in its commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure, access, and outcomes. Our focus has been clear to build a resilient primary health system that is responsive to the needs of every resident in Katsina State. In line with this vision, we have strategically increased funding for the health sector by over 800%, reaching a total of N3.77 billion between June 2023 and April 2024. These funds have been channeled into several key areas:

1. Human Capital Development: We initiated residency training programs in Family Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology (O&G), and Pediatrics, alongside foreign scholarships for medical students. We also provided allowances worth N112.5 million to 546 medical students, both at home and abroad.

2. Equipment and Supplies: We secured 10 containers of medical supplies worth $10 million from the World Medical Relief Headquarters, which includes MRI equipment, CT scans, and other essential medical tools. In addition, we have established a cloud-based Electronic Health Record (EHR) system to enhance transparency and accessibility of medical records in our secondary health facilities. Additionally, we have installed a biometric data capturing machines in all the 34 Comprehensive Health Centers to reverse the ugly trend of perineal lateness and absenteeism by PHC workers. This technology clocks-in and out, PHC workers as they report to work in the morning and as they leave in the evening. This ensured real-time tracking of staff attendance.

3. Infrastructure: We have upgraded and renovated 102 PHC facilities (3 per LGA) with provision of equipment, water supply, VIP Latrine, solar lightening, staff quarters and tricycle ambulances. We are planning to upgrade additional 34 PHC facilities before the end of the year God willing. This is in our quest to have one fully functional PHC per ward across the state. We have completed the construction of a 16-bed Dialysis Centre at the General Amadi Rimi Specialist Hospital and the upgrade of Faskari Comprehensive Health Center to a General Hospital with N599.9 million. We are also completing the Kafur and Zango General Hospitals, with an investment of over N700 million.

4. Immunization Efforts: We have distributed 198 motorcycles for Routine Immunization Officers in collaboration with GAVI and UNICEF, demonstrating our resolve to ensure vaccines reach every corner of the state.

5. Malnutrition and Public Health: My administration has committed over N200 million in counterpart funding to UNICEF for the management of acute malnutrition. We have also secured an extension for the Accelerating Nutrition Result in Nigeria (ANRIN) project, which focuses on preventing malnutrition among children under five and pregnant women.

6. Drug Availability: The perennial issue of drug shortages in our hospitals is now behind us. We have allocated almost N90 million for the construction of a high-quality pharmaceutical warehouse to ensure the consistent availability of medicines.

Despite the significant achievement our administration recorded in strengthening health sector, we know that there is still much work to be done. We will continue to collaborate with our partners, stakeholders, and communities to ensure that our health initiatives are effective and sustainable. Let me use this opportunity to call on all parents and caregivers to present their children for the ongoing polio campaign. This campaign plans to vaccinate 3,045,242 children aged 0 to 59 months across the 34 LGAs of the state. The vaccines are safe and effective.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to all those who have worked tirelessly to make today's events possible. To our health workers, community leaders, and development partners, your dedication and hard work do not go unnoticed. Let us continue to work together to create a brighter, healthier future for our children and our state. NOR

Thank you, and May God bless Katsina State!