SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA PHD. CON AT THE KATSINA MSME STAKEHOLDERS ROUNDTABLE ON THE 24TH OCTOBER, 2024 AT THE TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL, ABUJA

Protocol

It is indeed a great honour to welcome you all to this MSMEs stakeholders Roundtable Meeting. This gathering represents an important milestone in our journey to transform the economic landscape of Katsina State through the empowerment and growth of Nano, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (nMSMEs). Today, I will share with you our vision for the future, the progress we have made, and the crucial role each of you can play in helping us achieve our collective goals.

Katsina State's vision for MSMEs development is rooted in the belief that a vibrant MSMEs sector is the key to inclusive economic growth, job creation, and

long-term prosperity. We aim to build a dynamic ecosystem where businesses can thrive, innovate, and compete not only locally but globally. Our approach is based on creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, facilitating access to finance, fostering skills development, and providing the infrastructure needed to unlock the full potential of our people.

With this vision in mind, our efforts are centred around establishing an ecosystem where every small business has the opportunity to grow, every entrepreneur is empowered with the right tools, and where collaboration between the public and private sectors paves the way for sustainable development.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, today's roundtable meeting is not just a forum to present our achievements, it is a platform to engage with you, our valued stakeholders, showcase our progress, gain your support and foster dialogue and partnerships.

This gathering represents a unique opportunity for us to collaborate on innovative solutions and initiatives that will shape the future of small businesses in Katsina. Together, we can chart a course towards a brighter, more prosperous future.

Upon assuming office, we met numerous challenges that hindered the growth of the MSME sector in Katsina State. These challenges included:

i) **Difficulty in Accessing Finance**: Small businesses struggled with accessing affordable financing due to stringent loan conditions and the lack of tailored financial products.

ii) **Limited Access to Business Development Services (BDS)**: Entrepreneurs had limited access to advisory services and business support, leaving many without the guidance needed for growth.

iii) **Inadequate Data for Decision-Making:** There was a critical gap in reliable data on the

number, distribution, and needs of MSMEs in the state, making it difficult to formulate targeted interventions, measure their impact, and effectively plan for their growth.

iv) **Lack of Market Access and Linkages**: Businesses faced challenges in accessing broader markets, restricting their ability to scale and compete.

v) **Skills Gap and Capacity Constraints:** A significant portion of our workforce lacked the skills needed to thrive in today's economy.

vi) **Absence of Institutionalized MSME Support:** There was no dedicated structure to coordinate MSME activities, leading to a fragmented support ecosystem.

vii) **Poor Infrastructure and Unfriendly Business Environment:** The absence of critical infrastructure, alongside regulatory hurdles, limited the potential of many small enterprises.

viii) **Barriers to Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** There were insufficient structures to encourage creativity and innovation, which are vital for MSME success.

ix) **A Weak MSME Ecosystem:** These issues combined to create a weak MSME ecosystem that hindered job creation and economic growth, leaving many aspiring entrepreneurs without a path forward.

In response to these challenges, we took swift and decisive action. Today, I am pleased to share the progress we have made in transforming the MSMEs ecosystem in Katsina State.

1. **Establishment of Katsina Enterprise Development Agency (KASEDA):**

- We created KASEDA, a dedicated agency to serve as the central hub for MSME support and development in Katsina State.

- We appointed a proactive leader, Aisha Aminu, as the Director-General, who has laid a strong foundation for the agency's future.

2. Access to Finance and Financial Inclusion:

- We launched a ₦5Billion Matching Fund with the Bank of Industry (BOI), a significant milestone, as this was the first time such a fund was secured despite a BOI presence in Katsina for 8 years.
- We partnered with SMEDAN and Sterling Bank for a ₦1Billion Matching Fund, ensuring more financing options for small businesses.
- In collaboration with UNDP, we established a ₦542 Million Matching Fund to support SMEs in frontline local governments affected by conflict.

3. Strengthening Institutional Structures:

- We re-inaugurated the MSME Council, making it a vibrant platform for shaping policies that directly impact MSMEs.

- Our administration has developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Human Resources Policies, Operational Manuals, Job Functions, and KPIs, providing a clear operational framework for KASEDA.
- We are remodelling the Katsina Industrial Development Centre and have established Common Facility Centers for fashion, printing, food processing, and ICT.

4. Market Access and Business Development Services:

- Through the Dikko BDS Corp, we provided technical support to businesses, ensuring they meet the requirements of financial institutions while offering necessary guidance for success.
- The KASEDA Database Portal serves as a data bank that warehouses crucial data from our

nMSME Census and Cluster Mapping—an essential resource for informed decision-making.

- Our SME Fairs and Clinics have become key platforms for businesses to access markets and meet regulatory requirements, thereby expanding their reach and opportunities.

5. Skills Development and Capacity Building:

- We have commenced restructuring of the Katsina Youth Craft Village (KYCV) to be a Center of Excellence for Skills Acquisition, providing practical training and skills to our youth.
- Our Employability Projects focus on providing our youth with the skills they need to secure jobs or start their own businesses, addressing unemployment and building a skilled workforce.

6. Reliable and Accurate Data:

- We conducted a Katsina nMSME Census. This extensive survey provided us with valuable

insights into the number, size, and distribution of MSMEs across our state. This data-driven approach is already proving to be a game-changer, allowing us to tailor our interventions and ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most.

- In addition to the census, we also undertook Cluster Mapping to identify geographical concentrations of similar businesses across Katsina State. This exercise helped us pinpoint areas with strong economic potential and those that require additional support and investment. We will be unveiling these reports today.

Building on these efforts, it is my pleasure at this memorable event, today, to flag off another ambitious project for the identification, enumeration, and support of nMSMEs situated along major road corridors in the 34 local government areas of Katsina State. This project aims to map out businesses in

strategic locations, ensuring that no enterprise is left behind. By providing these businesses with access to soft loans, training, and grants, we are working to boost their resilience and competitiveness in the market. This initiative demonstrates our commitment to empowering grassroots enterprises and fostering sustainable economic growth across our state.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen Looking ahead, our plans are based on the insights and findings of the various projects we have implemented, and we intend to:

a) **Expand the Reach of the Dikko BDS Corp**: We aim to extend technical support to more communities, ensuring that every entrepreneur has access to the necessary resources for growth.

b) **Implement the KASEDA 5-Year Strategic Plan:** This plan will guide us in creating a sustainable MSME sector with targeted initiatives that address critical needs, fostering long-term growth.

c) **Transform the Katsina Youth Craft Village:** We will continue positioning the KYCV as a premier hub for skills training and youth development, with modernized facilities and innovative training programs.

d) **Deepen Support for SMEs in Conflict-Affected Areas**: We will help businesses rebuild and recover, fostering resilience and economic stability.

e) **Facilitate Market Access and Linkages:** By leveraging our Cluster Mapping and Database Portal, we aim to connect more businesses with local and international markets, creating opportunities for increased trade.

f) **Expand Common Facility Centers:** We will continue to enhance and expand Common Facility Centers in strategic sectors like fashion, printing, food processing, and ICT to support MSMEs in leveraging shared resources.

g) **Full Implementation of the SME Policy**: We are committed to implementing the Katsina State nMSMEs Policy, which will streamline support for nMSMEs and create a more conducive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.

h) **Strengthening Partnerships:** We plan to deepen our collaboration with commercial banks, development financial institutions, and international partners to bring more resources and expertise to the MSME sector.

Before I conclude, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all of you present today for accepting our invitation and for being part of this important journey to make Katsina great again. Your presence here today demonstrates your commitment to the economic transformation of our state and the empowerment of our people. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who put in the hard

work to organize this event your dedication has made today possible, and I thank you for your efforts.

This MSME Sector Roundtable is the first in a series of sectoral roundtable meetings. Our intention is to bring together stakeholders in various other sectors in the future, where we will share our progress and outline areas where we need your support. We believe that this approach will ensure a holistic development strategy for Katsina State, allowing us to tackle sector-specific challenges with targeted solutions.

As we move to the next item on our program, gathering feedback and commitments, I look forward to hearing from each of you about how you will support the Katsina State Government in achieving its goals. We recognize that we cannot do it alone, and your partnership is crucial to our success. Your insights, commitments, and investments will help us

achieve our vision of a more prosperous and inclusive Katsina State.

Thank you all once again, and I look forward to the fruitful discussions that lie ahead. Together, we can make Katsina the preferred destination for business, innovation, and sustainable growth.

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria; God bless Katsina State.