SPEECH DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MAL. DIKKO UMARU RADDA Ph.D., CON, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, KATSINA STATE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE REMODELED KATSINA IDC COMMON FACILITY CENTRE AND FLAG OFF OF THE FIRST KATSINA SME CLINICS AND FAIR, WEDNESDAY; 26th JUNE, 2024.

Protocols,

Distinguished guests, esteemed artisans and entrepreneurs, representatives of our development partners, ladies and gentlemen.

I am highly delighted to be here to address you at the official commissioning of the remodeled IDC Common Facility Centre for Tailoring, Leather Works, Packaging, ICT and other crafts, as well as the flag-off of the maiden edition of the Katsina SME Clinics and Fair. These represents a significant step forward in our mission to empower our local artisans and boost the creative economy of Katsina State towards attaining our broad socio-economic developmental objectives.

It is worthy of note that this event is coming on the heels of the World MSMEs Day, 27th June, 2024. A day set aside annually to celebrate entrepreneurs, recognize their importance, shed light on their contributions and promote their growth and sustainability. As a state grappling with the challenges of insecurity and poverty, among others, this year's MSMEs Day theme "Leveraging the Power and Resilience of MSMEs to Accelerate Sustainable Development and Eradicate Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises" is quite relevant and call for our collective effort. Hence the purpose for our gathering today.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our administration has acknowledged the important role our artisans and craftsmen play in institutionalizing the desired change needed to remove our youth off the streets. That is why we are not only investing heavily in building and up scaling their skills and capacity but providing shared facilities for them to optimize their productions.

The facility we are commissioning today is a Public Partnership between the Katsina Government and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). I would particularly like to express our deep appreciation to SMEDAN for providing the space and fostering a collaborative relationship towards the establishment of this Shared Facility Centre. Your support and partnership have been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition, and we look forward to continuing our work together to support and grow our local SMEs and artisans.

The Purpose of remodeling the IDC with a functional Shared Facility Centre is to reiterate our commitment to fostering an environment where micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and local artisans can thrive. This center has now been equipped with modern tools and machinery that are often beyond the financial reach of individual artisans. This will enable them to produce higher quality products more efficiently and compete effectively in the market. The center will further provide a platform for enhancing skills and knowledge by training and learning new techniques, and stay updated with industry trends. Based on the report of our cluster mapping, we intend to extend such common facility to the remaining 2 senatorial districts of the state as soon as possible.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen the scope of work carried out include:

i) Renovation of workshops to create a conducive working environment for our artisans.
ii) Provision of State-of-the-art computer labs and a call center to provide digital skills training and customer support services.
iii) Installation of 30KVA hybrid inverter with batteries to ensure an uninterrupted power supply, enabling continuous production and training activities.
iv) iv) Upgrading of toilet facilities to ensure cleanliness and hygiene for all users of the center.
v) v) Creating drainage and surface dressing of 1.7Km access road from the Tudun Matawalle main Junction to the IDC to improve connectivity and accessibility to the center.
vi) Provision of Tailoring Machines: To enhance our tailoring capabilities.
vii) Provision of Garment Printing and Sequencing Machines: For high-quality garment production.
viii) Provision of Leather Works Equipment: To support our leather artisans.
ix) Provision of Various Packaging Machines: For grains, powder, paste, and liquids, ensuring high standards in packaging.
x) Provision of Agricultural Processing Machines: Including dryers, spice blenders, industrial dry and wet grinders, to support our agricultural entrepreneurs.

I have directed the management of KASEDA to develop an action plan that will ensure the optimal utilization of the center to ensure that the state derive maximum benefits from the shared facilities. This include but not limited to enhanced market access and patronage of goods produced in the center thereby boosting incomes and contribution to the overall economic growth of our state.

In addition to commissioning this state-of-the-art shared facility, it is my distinct pleasure to also flag off the maiden Katsina MSMEs Clinics and Opportunity Fair. This fair is designed to equip our entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills they need to grow their businesses. Whether it's financial management, marketing strategies, or technology adoption. The clinics are conceptualized to create an enabling environment for stakeholders in the MSMEs ecosystem to interact easily with government with a view to providing on the spot solutions where possible

and also share information on policies, programs and initiatives available for supporting and encouraging MSMES. This maiden edition of the fair and clinics will serve as a platform for our entrepreneurs to create visibility for their products and services, network, collaborate, and explore new business opportunities while providing the expertise that our SMEs need in terms of regulatory support, counselling and mentorship. Let us use this fair as a platform to learn, collaborate, and innovate. Together, we can create a prosperous future for our state and for our people. Let me use this opportunity to announce that this fair will henceforth be held annually and it will subsequently be complemented with an annual MSMEs Award Dinner.

In view of the foregoing, I sincerely want to encourage our young people to embrace entrepreneurship and innovation. The future of our state depends on the creativity, energy, and determination of our youth. The government is committed to supporting young entrepreneurs through various initiatives, including easier access to the funds needed for business expansion and development that I launched some weeks back, mentorship programs and business incubators. In view of our resolve to support export expansion, I also want to encourage our women and youths to go into agricultural production and agribusiness. The Government of Katsina State is fully committed to supporting our local artisans and SMEs. We recognize the challenges that you face and it is our priority to address these challenges and provide the necessary support to ensure that you thrive and compete effectively. The Shared Facility Centre and the SME Clinics and Fair are just two of many initiatives we are undertaking to create a conducive environment for business growth and development.

I encourage all our artisans and entrepreneurs to make the most of these resources. They are designed for you, to help you grow and succeed. Your creativity, hard work, and dedication are the building blocks of a prosperous Katsina State. Together, we can build a vibrant economy that benefits all our citizens.

Our vision for the future is one where every artisan and SME has the opportunity to thrive, where our local crafts and businesses are celebrated globally, and where the economic benefits of these industries are felt by all. The Shared Facility Centre and the SME Clinics and Fair are significant steps towards realizing that vision. Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude my remarks, I would also like to commend the management and staff of Katsina State Enterprise Development Agency (KASEDA) for their dedication to improving the development of the MSMEs sector in the state. It is worthy of note that a well nurtured MSMEs sector can guarantee inclusive growth and shared prosperity. Consequently, I urged the Agency not to rest on its oars.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate my profound gratitude to everyone who has played a role in bringing these projects to fruition. Let us seize this opportunity to work together, innovate, and build a brighter future for Katsina State.

May this Shared Facility Centre and the SME Clinics and Fair be beacons of progress and prosperity for our artisans, entrepreneurs, and the entire community.

Thank you all for your presence and support.

May God bless Katsina State and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank You.