SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD, CON, (THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE) AT THE NIGERIA FOR WOMEN PROJECT (NFWP) SCALE-UP SUMMIT HOLD ON TUESDAY, 2ND JULY 2025 AT BANQUET HALL, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KATSINA

Protocol;

It is with great honor and a deep sense of purpose that I welcome you all to this historic gathering, the Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP) Scale-Up Summit, hosted here in Katsina State.

This summit is not just another meeting. It is a powerful statement of intent — a declaration that the time for inclusive development, women's empowerment, and community transformation.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to our partners — the World Bank, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, and all stakeholders who have made this summit possible. Your commitment to advancing gender equity and

women's economic empowerment is not only commendable but essential to the future of our nation.

We are gathered at a pivotal moment in our national development journey, a moment when we must rethink how we approach growth, inclusion and sustainability. For far too long, the voices and potential of women have been overlooked or undervalued.

But let me be clear that excluding women from development is not only unjust, but economically unwise. Because the evidence is overwhelming. When women are empowered with access to education, training, finance and decision-making platforms; families thrive, economies grow and communities become more resilient and peaceful.

This is not theory. It is reality. And it is realities we have seen unfold across many communities where intentional investments have been made in women's lives. Today, we

are here to scale that success — to take what works and bring it to more women, in more places, with greater impact.

Katsina State is proud to host this summit, not just as a venue, but as a committed partner in this mission. Under our administration, we have taken deliberate steps to integrate gender-responsive policies into our development framework. These include:

- Expanding access to quality education for girls;
- Strengthening maternal and child health services;
- Supporting female entrepreneurs through grants and capacity-building programs;
- Engaging traditional leaders and civil society to dismantle harmful practices and promote gender equity.

Our goal is simple yet transformative: to ensure that every woman and girl in Katsina State has the opportunity to reach her full potential — not as a recipient of aid, but as an architect of change.

The presence of delegates from Kano, Jigawa, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Taraba and Ogun States underscores that this is not merely a state-level initiative — it is a national movement gaining momentum. A movement that recognizes women not as beneficiaries, but as leaders, innovators, providers, and change-makers.

As a region, we face complex challenges — poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and limited access to basic services. But these issues cannot be solved without the full participation of women. That is why projects like the Nigeria for Women Project are so vital. They empower women to lead solutions, create jobs, and build stronger communities.

In Katsina, we have witnessed directly the power of collective action through women-led cooperatives and savings groups. We have seen how small investments can transform lives enabling women to start businesses, support their families, and even contribute to local

infrastructure. These are the stories that inspire us to do more and they must guide our next steps.

For our efforts to be sustainable, we must ensure that the systems we build today are strong and enduring. This requires:

i. Comprehensive training and mentorship programs;
ii. Access to microfinance and credit facilities;
iii. Effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
iv. Strong partnerships between government, financial institutions and civil society;
v. And above all, political will and policy consistency.

This summit must go beyond dialogue. It must lead to action — clear, measurable and well-resourced actions that translate vision into impact. I urge all participating states to make renewed commitments to the goals of the NFWP. Let us share best practices, identify challenges honestly, and leave this summit with concrete plans for implementation.

To our development partners, thank you once again for your technical expertise and financial support. Your role has been instrumental in shaping this initiative. Moving forward, we look forward to deepening collaboration particularly in strengthening data systems, building grassroots capacity, and enhancing accountability through robust M&E mechanisms.

And to the women leaders here today and to the countless others across our communities I salute your courage, resilience, and leadership. You are the reason this summit exists. Your voices are guiding our policies. Your dreams are fueling our progress. We hear you. We see you. And we are committed to walking this path with you.

In closing, let me assure you that the Government of Katsina State remains fully committed to the success of the Nigeria for Women Project. We see it as part of our broader vision for a fairer, stronger and more inclusive society, one

where every woman can dream freely, work proudly, and succeed fully.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you all a productive and impactful summit.

God bless you all.
God bless Katsina State.
God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.