SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MALALM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD, CON, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE AT THE NIGERIA UNION OF TEACHERS (NUT) AWARD OF EXCELLENCE CEREMONY HELD ON SUNDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 2025 AT EAGLE SQUARE, ABUJA

Protocol:

It is with profound humility and deep gratitude that I receive this prestigious Award of Excellence from the Nigeria Union of Teachers—a union that has, for over seven decades, stood as the unwavering conscience of our nation's education system.

To be recognized by the very men and women who shape young minds in classrooms across Nigeria is not merely an honour; it is a sacred validation of purpose. This award is not mine alone—it belongs to every teacher in Katsina State who rises before dawn to prepare lessons, who teaches under trees when roofs leak, and who believes in the potential of every child, even when resources fall short.

Comrade President, your leadership continues to inspire a national reawakening to the critical role teachers play in nation-

building. Today's ceremony is more than a celebration—it is a powerful reminder that education is the bedrock of democracy, the engine of development, and the soul of our collective future.

The State Government has put much emphasis and committed a lot of resources for the development of Education in the State. Over 120 dilapidated Primary Schools have been fully rehabilitated including provision of furniture and construction of staff quarters and perimeter fencing to restore dignity to early learning. 75 Public Secondary Schools have undergone major rehabilitation, with emphasis on science laboratories, libraries, and ICT rooms.

In a bold move to set new standards of excellence, the present administration established 3No. Special Model Secondary Schools at Radda in Charanchi Local Government Area, Jikamshi in Musawa Local Government Area, and Dumurkul in Mai'adua Local Government Area. These schools are fully boarding institutions equipped with modern STEM laboratories, ICT and robotics centers, Libraries and e-learning hubs, Sports complexes and hostels as well as Solar-powered electricity and water systems

Designed to serve as centers of academic excellence, they will admit top-performing students from across the state on merit, with full scholarships covering tuition, feeding, and accommodation.

In partnership with World Bank and the Federal Ministry of Education, Katsina State successfully implemented the AGILE Project across the States. The project provided safe learning spaces for 12,000 out-of-school girls, psycho-social support and remedial education, distribution of learning kits and menstrual hygiene materials and training of 320 teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy

Under the TESS Project, Katsina State upgraded 60 schools with WASH facilities (toilets, boreholes, hand washing stations), trained 1,800 teachers in modern pedagogical methods, introduced digital learning tools in 30 pilot schools and improved learning outcomes by 32% in participating schools within 18 months.

In alignment with to our reform agenda, we have sponsorship of 68 brilliant Katsina State indigenes to study Artificial Intelligence and Biotechnology Engineering in China.

Another set of 41 students under the State sponsorship are currently studying Medicine in Egypt.

But let us be clear: investment in infrastructure alone is not enough. True educational transformation requires investment in people in the dignity, professional growth, and well-being of our teachers. You are not just civil servants; you are nation-builders. And as such, you deserve competitive remuneration, continuous training, and the respect of a grateful society.

I commend the NUT for its relentless advocacy, not just for better pay, but for a better system. A system where curriculum aligns with 21st-century realities. Where girls are not left behind. Where every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to quality, inclusive, and equitable education.

This award is both a recognition and a responsibility. It strengthens my resolve to do more to ensure that no teacher in Katsina State is demoralized by neglect, and no child is denied the right to learn.

To my fellow Governors: let us recommit ourselves to the Abuja Declaration on Education. Let us fund education not as an

expense, but as the highest-return investment a nation can make.

Finally, to the teachers of Nigeria: thank you. Thank you for your patience, your passion, and your perseverance. You plant seeds in minds you may never see bloom—but we, as a nation, reap the harvest.

May the Almighty God continue to guide and strengthen you in your noble vocation.