SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD, CON, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE, DURING THE RETREAT FOR THE NEWLY SWORN-IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHAIRMEN OF THE 34 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS HELD ON MONDAY, 28TH APRIL, 2025.

Protocols

It is with profound gratitude to Almighty Allah and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the newly sworn-in Chairmen. Your emergence is both a privilege and a solemn call to service.

Leadership, particularly at the grassroots level, is a sacred trust. It demands from you not just competence, but character. Not just action, but vision. Not just position, but purpose.

This retreat is organized to deepen your understanding of these principles and to lay the foundation for a tenure that will be remembered for service, development, and transformation.

Local governments form the bedrock of any functional democracy. You are the bridge between the people and the higher tiers of government. Your success or failure reflects directly on the performance of the entire State.

The health clinic in a remote village, the quality of primary schools, the maintenance of rural roads, the cleanliness of our towns, the vibrancy of our markets, these are all your responsibilities. The people do not first see the President or the Governor; they experience governance through you. Thus, the task before you is monumental — but it is also achievable if approached with sincerity, diligence, and the fear of God.

As you all know, I was once the Chairman of Charanchi Local Government under the leadership of our beloved President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, who was both my mentor and political inspiration. There is

a lot from his lessons that drives our vision, and I hope all of you will study it and help us deliver on it.

Please permit me to outline the pillars that must define our partnership.

1. Shared Vision under the "Building Your Future" Policy

Our administration's strategic framework sets concrete targets across key sectors, including public sector reform, education, health and social care, agriculture, land administration, MSMEs, and finance. From the outset, let us be clear: the policy is not optional—it is our administration's contract with the people. In what was an unprecedented feat in our political history, candidates for the Katsina state governorship election in 2023 debated policy, and we must remain on the better side of that debate to maintain moral authority in governance.

2. Operationalising the Community-Driven Development Model

Evidence from our flagship Community Development Programme confirms that projects identified and implemented by communities achieve more substantial ownership, lower costs, and faster delivery. More importantly, we have reported improved socio-economic justice and transparency in our interventions. I ask all of you to resist the urge to interfere with the community-driven approach. It is not designed to remove your role or influence but to complement and make it more visible to your people. CDP is here to serve your constituents by improving budget efficiency and ensuring that the state government can maximise the impact of its projects in your various wards.

3. Integrated Security Coordination

Insecurity remains the greatest obstacle to progress, and our shared responsibility is to protect lives and livelihoods in Katsina State. We speak of frontline local governments, but the fact is that one of us is safe, and until all of us are safe. Our people deserve to live in peace and prosperity, and we must protect the dignity of our women and children. The Katsina State Community Watch Corps is our homegrown initiative, and its funding will always remain a collective responsibility. You will soon begin to receive briefings on the security situation in your various local governments, and you must take action when required to support all security outfits. You must also engage your communities and traditional institutions for a more proactive approach to peace and security. You will always have my undivided attention and support when fighting insecurity.

4. Transparent and Accountable Fiscal Management

Effective immediately, each local government shall operate a dedicated Treasury Sub-Account within the State Treasury Single Account. All statutory allocations and internally generated revenues will transit through this sub-account. Quarterly budget-performance dashboards will be shared, and the Auditor-General has my authority to conduct unannounced compliance checks with all financial and procurement rules. This protects you from unknowingly breaking laws or allowing people working under your office to abuse their trust. Please give your full cooperation in this endeavour, and you will be on the right side of history.

5. Public-Administration Reform and Service Professionalism

Local governments will migrate to the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System by the end of this year to eliminate duplication and enhance

efficiency. Uniform performance-appraisal templates, cadre structures, and disciplinary procedures are being standardised across state and local services. Capacity-building programmes for all local government staff will commence soon, starting with your vice-chairmen and heads of the local government administration. We are upgrading the College of Public Administration in Funtua to serve your capacity-building needs. We have also established the Local Government Inspectorate, led by a seasoned expert in local government affairs, to support our efforts in running an efficient local government service.

6. Institutionalised Partnership Mechanisms

Today's engagement inaugurates the partnership between the state and local governments. We will have many forums to engage in, including the State Economic Council and the Joint Planning Committee

of the Community Development Program, led by His Excellency the Deputy Governor. You will be presented with data and given the opportunity to participate actively in the governance architecture on a strategic level. Please utilise these channels to provide solutions for your constituents and contribute to our statewide development agenda.

Let me share with you the key pillars around which your leadership should revolve:

1)Transparency and Accountability: The era of impunity is over. The people demand transparency. Every naira that comes into your treasury must be accounted for. Public funds are not for personal enrichment. Set up effective financial management systems. Publish your budgets. Hold regular town hall meetings. Let the people know what you are doing with their resources. Remember: Trust, once broken, is almost impossible to regain.

2)Service-Oriented Governance: You were elected to serve, not to rule. Leadership is a call to sacrifice. Your success will not be measured by the size of your convoys or the grandiosity of your offices, but by how many boreholes you dug, how many classrooms you built, how many women and youth you empowered. Your first thought every morning should be: "What can I do today to make the lives of my people better".

3)Security and Peace Building: We are living in challenging times. Banditry, kidnapping, and communal clashes threaten the peace of our dear state. You must take proactive steps — engage the vigilante groups, work with security agencies, support conflict resolution at the grassroots, and promote dialogue among communities. A peaceful local government is a foundation for development. You must be peacemakers.

4)Inclusive Leadership: Governance must not be selective. You are to serve all men and women, young and old, supporters and opponents alike. Consult widely. Include traditional rulers, religious leaders, women, youth, and persons with disabilities in your governance process. The wisdom of the community must guide your leadership.

5)Focus on Agriculture and Local Economic Development: Katsina is blessed with fertile lands. Agriculture remains our comparative advantage. Provide support to farmers — access to fertilizers, seeds, and equipment. Facilitate cooperatives. Encourage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to stimulate local economies. Imagine a Katsina where every local government is self-sufficient in food production. It is possible.

6)Youth Empowerment and Skills Acquisition: Our youth are our future. They are energetic, creative,

and full of potential. Instead of allowing idleness to breed crime, empower them. Establish skill acquisition centers. Promote sports and creative arts. Invest in ICT hubs. Give them hope. Give them opportunity. Let them dream again.

7)Innovation and Digital Transformation: Even at the grassroots, we must embrace technology. Adopt digital solutions for record-keeping, revenue collection, healthcare, and agricultural extension services. Data-driven leadership is smart leadership. The future belongs to those who innovate.

As your Governor, I pledge our full support. We will work with you hand-in-hand to drive progress in every ward, town, and village of Katsina State. However, our support will be tied to performance. We will monitor, evaluate, and reward excellence. Similarly, negligence, corruption, or non-performance will be met with appropriate sanctions. There will be

no hiding place for mediocrity. I urge you to uphold the following ethical principles:

- Integrity — Always do what is right, even when no one is watching.
- Humility — Power is transient. Serve with humility.
- Courage — Take bold decisions in the interest of your people.
- Compassion — Feel the pain of your people; let it drive your actions.
- Vision — Always think beyond today; lay foundations for the future.

Distinguished Chairmen, you have been given a golden opportunity. Lead with purpose. Serve with passion. Govern with wisdom. Let the history books record that in your time, Katsina's rural communities blossomed, peace returned, youth found hope, and every citizen, no matter how poor or distant, felt the impact of governance.

May Allah guide you, protect you, and bless your efforts.

May Katsina State continue to prosper.

May Nigeria continue to grow stronger.

Thank you, and God bless you all.