SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD, CON, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE AT THE ONE-DAY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON THE REFORMATION OF THE ALMAJIRI MODEL OF EDUCATION IN KATSINA STATE HOLD ON MONDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER 2025 AT THE CONFERENCE HALL, LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMMISSION, KATSINA

Protocol:

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

It is with a heart full of hope, and a spirit of deep responsibility, that I welcome you all to this historic and critically important gathering, the one-day Stakeholder Engagement on the Reformation of the Almajiri Model of Education in Katsina State.

This is not just another meeting. This is a call to conscience. A call to action. And a call to reclaim our heritage, restore our dignity, and rebuild the future of our children.

Katsina, as we all know, was once known across Sub-Saharan Africa as a beacon of Islamic scholarship and intellectual excellence. The Gobaru Minaret stood not just as a tower of stone but as a symbol of enlightenment, discipline, and divine knowledge.

Our ancestors built a system where Qur'anic education was holistic where children memorized the Qur'an, studied Hadith

and Fiqh, learned Arabic grammar, and were taught ethics, agriculture, trade, and community service. The Almajiri was not a beggar, he was a student, a future scholar, a leader. But today, that noble system lies in ruins.

What was once a structured, respected institution has, over decades, degenerated into a cycle of neglect, poverty, and despair. Thousands of our children who are bright, gifted and full of potential are now roaming on streets, hungry, exposed, and vulnerable. They carry wooden bowls, not books. They beg for scraps, not knowledge.

This is not Islam. This is not our culture. This is not the Katsina we inherited and certainly not the Katsina we will leave behind.

We are here because we believe that every child whether in a public school, a private school, or a Qur'anic school deserves safety, dignity, and opportunity. We are here because reform is not optional, it is urgent.

And we are here because this cannot be done by government alone. It must be done with you the Ulama, the traditional rulers, the parents, the development partners, the community leaders and all of us, as one Ummah, one community, one state.

Under the Building Your Future, we are committed to a comprehensive, culturally-sensitive, and sustainable reform of the Almajiri system. Our vision is clear.

We will not abolish the Almajiri system. We will reform and elevate it. We will reintegrate Qur'anic education with modern basic education literacy, numeracy, science, and life skills so that no child is left behind in the 21st century.

We will establish and upgrade Integrated Qur'anic Model Schools across all 34 LGAs with classrooms, hostels, feeding programs, uniforms, and trained teachers where children can learn the Qur'an by day and acquire foundational literacy by evening.

We will train and certify Qur'anic teachers equipping them with modern pedagogical skills, child protection protocols, and financial support so they can lead with dignity and professionalism.

Every community will be mobilized to take ownership of its Almajiri children. Through Ward Development Committees and Community Education Councils, we will ensure that no child sleeps on the street and every child is accounted for.

We are grateful to UNICEF, USAID, and the World Bank for their support. We invite more partners to join us not with imposition, but with collaboration to fund infrastructure, teacher training, learning materials, and monitoring systems.

No child should be forced to beg. We will enforce child rights laws, provide school feeding, free uniforms, and healthcare and establish a tracking system to ensure every Almajiri child is safe, enrolled, and progressing.

To the Ulama and Islamic Scholars: You are the custodians of this system. We need your guidance, your endorsement, and your active leadership in the classrooms and the communities.

To the Emirs and Traditional Rulers: Use your influence to mobilize communities, enforce bylaws against child begging, and champion the return of children to structured learning.

To the Parents: Your children are your greatest trust from Allah. Do not send them away to suffer. Bring them home or enroll them in a reformed, dignified Qur'anic school.

To the Development Partners: Walk with us not ahead of us, not behind us but beside us. Support our vision with resources, technical expertise, and patience.

To the Federal Government: We call for a National Almajiri Reform Compact where states like Katsina, with bold plans, receive matching grants and technical support to scale what works.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."

Let us teach it — not in the dust of the roadside, but in the dignity of the classroom.

Let us teach it — not with empty stomachs, but with nourished bodies and minds.

Let us teach it — not in isolation from the world, but as a guiding light within it.

Today, we begin the journey to restore Katsina's legacy — not just as a center of Islamic learning, but as a model for the entire nation.

Let no child be left behind.

Let no Malam be unsupported.

Let no community be unengaged.

Together, we will build a system worthy of our history — and worthy of our children's future.

Wa Akhiru Dawalina, Alhamdulillahi Rabbil 'Alamin.

Wassalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.