ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE, MALLAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA Ph.D AT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF FOUR (4) NEW JUDGES OF TRHE STATE HIGH COURT HELD ON 15TH AUGUST, 2023 AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE KATSINA

Protocol,

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Him by Whose grace we are gathered to witness another milestone in the advancement of the State Judiciary with additional capacity to improve on Justice delivery. We have witnessed the swearing-in of 4 new High Court Judges.

The overriding objective of every Legal System is to deliver justice which is the pivot and pillar that upholds the very best of decency and the best guarantee for peace, prosperity and good governance. The age-long adage that "Justice Delayed is Justice Denied" has been of concern to the Government, thus there is urgent need to address the speed of justice delivery among all stake holders in the justice sector.

In our determination to improve justice administration in the State this administration is considering amendments to the two principal legislations; the **Katsina State Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) 2021 and the Katsina State Penal Code Law, 2021** with a view to ensuring speedy dispensation of Criminal Justice in the State. The proposed amendments will address the shortcomings observed in the 2021 laws and with this development, all actors and stakeholders in the Justice Sector will now work in a coordinated approach to ensure speedy disposition of criminal cases which involves arrest, investigation and prosecution.

The Government is seriously disturbed with the trend of blame shifting by the Justice Sector Actors and has therefore given a marching order to the State Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring and Coordination Committee to discharge its statutory mandate by ensuring that all criminal cases are handled with deserved dispatch. The Committee is to further ensure that the ugly trend of releasing suspects with prima-facie records of crimes on bail is checked. I have discussed with the Chief Judge on improved logistics to Courts, the Ministry of Justice, Police and Prisons with a view to achieving the objectives.

The Nigerian Bar Association must call to order its members that are in the habit of supporting bandits, rapists and Armed Robbers to secure release of such suspects through the instrument of fundamental right enforcement to be ethical and avoid compromises under cover. We are in an unusual times of serious security challenges and must therefore put heads together to address

these unusual challenges. We have had incidences where suspected bandits, terrorists, armed robbers and rapists were released on bail only for them to commit same offence with dire consequence of more kidnappings, abductions and loss of lives. Such ugly incidences could have been averted if bail was not granted at all.

Hon. Chief Judge will issue special Practice Direction to fast-track investigation and prosecution of serious criminal cases between the Security Agencies, the Ministry of Justice and the Courts with each agency given a frame of time to handle issues concerning the agency. With this development, the end of justice will be met timeously and criminals appropriately punished for their crimes which will also serve as deterrent to those who may go into crimes.

I am delighted to note that the State High Court, has in response to the current security challenges, came up with the noble idea of establishing "Community Conflict and Dispute Resolution Centers" across the State. This initiative falls in line with the Government's resolve in addressing the lingering security challenges bedeviling the North-west zone in general and our State in particular. The Local Government (amendment) Law has provided for the establishment of at least one such Centre in each Local Government as well as in major markets. The Centers will in addition to settlement and resolution of minor domestic and community disputes serve as community and neighborhood watch that will perform such functions as screening and approving tenants and landlord agreements as well as persons wishing to buy Houses within the neighborhood. This initiative would allow security agencies and the courts to attend to more serious and demanding cases.

In to respond to the heighten insecurity, the Executive Order **"Security Challenges (Containment) Order"** will be reviewed to ensure that Informants not captured under the law are made to face the law as persons aiding and abetting banditry. While appreciating the sacrifices of all citizens and residents of Katsina State so far on these measures, I would like to appeal for continued support, understanding and cooperation of all in supporting Government's efforts of containing the security challenges. I have always maintained that security is the business of not only the security agencies who have human and logistic constrains but of all citizens who should all be security conscious of their immediate environments.

It is gratifying to note that the just sworn-in High Court Judges are individuals with track record of professionalism, dedication and integrity as confirmed through the rigorous, competitive and painstaking process that led to your appointment. I therefore urge you to consider your appointment as a call to duty that requires more dedication, professionalism and above all fear of Allah. You must appreciate that the society has very high expectations from you. Integrity, transparency and good conduct are qualities you must imbibe and maintain in the course of your career as Judicial Officers. You must be ready to take advantage of technology to improve justice delivery. The Government has in this regard given approval for the State Judiciary to continue with the process of transforming the courts and judicial process into technology driven. I would like to assure you that this Administration will continue to give all necessary support to the Judiciary to perform optimally.

With these remarks, I once again congratulate you and wish you Allah's guidance in the discharge of the responsibility.