# SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA, PhD, CON, THE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN OFFICE AND MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE "BUILDING YOUR FUTURE" STRATEGIC POLICY

**PROTOCOLS**

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah,

I stand before you today with a deep sense of humility and gratitude for giving me the opportunity to lead our great state for the past two years. My dedication to public service in our state has lived for much longer and my tenure as the Chairman of Charanchi Local Government Area left me convinced that we must become the leaders we want.

This day is a moment of honest reflection, a moment to account for the trust you placed in me and in our government when you gave us the mandate to lead. I made a promise to build a future where every citizen, regardless of background or status, can live with dignity,

opportunity, and security. That promise remains my solemn oath.

We called our development blueprint "Building Your Future" and we meant every word. This was never about building for show; it was about building with purpose, with people, and with permanence. I subjected my plans to rigorous assessment and analysis through our Blueprint Committee which had 11 sub-committees and over 200 of our best people. Some are now members of my administration, and many remain trusted advisers to this government.

In an unprecedent move, I brought members of my team to form part of the State Transition Committee, so they understand the state of affairs and share our vision for the future of Katsina. I would like use this opportunity to thank the past administration of His Excellency Aminu Bello Masari for their support and the work they had done for our dear state. The over 400 pages in the transition report provided insights we have used to navigate the map of governance.

I was elected for a 4-year term and every moment is crucial to achieving our policy objectives. We are now in

our mid-term, and it is important for the people to understand the situation when we took office and the steps, we have taken to address major challenges and turn the tide of development in our state.

The headwinds facing Nigeria as country when we took office were severe and navigating the path of development required new ways of thinking and doing. Upon resumption in office, one of the first challenges I had to deal with was the impact of the announcement fuel subsidy removal on the availability and price of petrol in our filling stations. The floating of the exchange rate and the subsequent inflationary effects caused much hardship, and we were determined as a government to bring relief to our people. This was compounded by rising insecurity in 26 of our 34 local government areas, a general sense of uncertainty, and the challenges of setting up a new government.

I am grateful to Allah for answering my prayer that I should have a clear strategic plan and a good sense of direction if I were to ever become governor. The extensive preparation from the moment I decided to run for office

which continued to the day I was sworn in allowed me and my team to hit the ground running. Every first-time governor can attest that nothing can fully prepare one with the daunting task of leadership, but sincerity of purpose can be the key to success.

The "Building Your Future" strategic blueprint placed public sector administration reform at the forefront of our development agenda. The state civil service is vital to efficient and effective policy implementation and reforms were required to align all ministries, departments, and agencies to achieve our set objectives. We immediately embarked upon an extensive mandate mapping to understand all governmental institutions and their structures. The outcome of the mandate mapping exercise yielded extensive restructuring to align with our vision for development. We established new ministries including security and internal affairs, higher, technical, and vocational education, rural and social development, and merged agriculture with livestock development. Many departments which operated independently were returned to their parent ministries, and new institutions were created to drive our policy objectives.

We established the Katsina State Development Management Board to coordinate development partner activities and align them with the state development plan. The Strategic Policy Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (SPIME) tracks the performance of our MDAs. The Katsina State Irrigation Authority is the first of its kind and the Katsina State Enterprise Development Agency is recognised nationally as a vanguard for MSMEs. We also established the Department for Public Service Reform to thoroughly assess government processes and work with MDAs to drive reforms.

We recognised that institutions are nothing without the people, so we introduced merit-based promotions starting with the competency-based appointment of permanent secretaries. We conducted a comprehensive staff audit and skills gap analysis to inform our recruitment, placement, and capacity building. The two-thousand-page report is now under review and will be implemented. The local governments are instrumental to service delivery, and we are working closely with the Chairmen to ensure we are aligned in our strategic objectives. I joined the newly elected Chairmen during their orientation

program, and we are committed to working together to meet the needs of our people. Local Government Administration reform will be driven by the upgraded College of Public Administration in Funtua, and we are confident we can return to local government secretariats to their vibrant and impactful days. In another unprecedent achievement we cleared the backlog of pension and gratuity for the state and local government allowing the state to focus on the new contributory pension scheme.

The fight against insecurity was a major pledge during my campaign and that I would expend all the necessary resources to fight it. The Katsina State Community Watch Corps was part of my strategic policy objectives, and we did not waste any time in passing the law and setting up the community driven security outfit which has inspired other states. We have made significant gains in the fight against insecurity but much more must be done to eradicate banditry and other forms of criminality. We continue to work with the federal government and the military to bring an end to this menace. For those who doubt our commitment I can assure you that you are

wrong. We have lost many in this battle and we continue to pray for them and their families that Allah will have mercy on them. We will continue our policy of supporting victims rather than paying ransoms to bandits. I call on every one of us to please work with the authorities and provide information where it will lead to the arrest or termination of bandits.

Food insecurity is clear and present danger to our people. My administration has made significant investments in agriculture and livestock development to alleviate malnutrition and provide a source of livelihood for our agrarian society. Our input and farming implement distribution has transformed agricultural productivity in the state. We have also supported thousands of farmers with small-scale irrigation technologies and have concluded plans for major irrigation projects around our key dams. The recently launched Katsina State Agricultural Mechanisation Centre will further support farmers to cultivate more land and increase their incomes. With 400 tractors, matching implements, combined harvesters, planters, mobile irrigation rigs and other equipment we are set to revolutionise the sector.

We grew the number of extension workers from 74 to over 780 with plans to recruit even more. The next step is to establish processing zones to create value addition and consumer products in the sector. Katsina will become a net exporter of processed agricultural products soon. Livestock development is another key pillar of this administration's effort to improve family incomes and diversify our local economy. The national and international demand for meat and dairy present enormous potential for our farmers and my administration will make all the necessary investment required for the sector.

The situation we met in the healthcare sector needed major interventions to improve the quality and affordability of health services. As part of my policy, I was committed to providing one fully functional primary healthcare centre in each of the 361 wards in my first term and we have currently completed 158. Low levels of medical personnel are a major problem for the sector. In two years, we have recruited an additional 638 workers and sponsored at least 41 students abroad to study medicine. Our investment in healthcare saw the establishment of the

best dialysis centre in the country and we have now committed to building the best radiology and laboratory diagnostic centre in the country in partnership with Siemens Healthineers. We are deliberate about turning Katsina state into a primary destination for medical tourism within the country. This is our long-term strategy to ensure our people access the best healthcare at affordable costs. We have also invested in addressing child malnutrition, maternal mortality, and infectious diseases. The Katsina State Drug and Medical Supply Agency has been optimised to provide genuine drugs at affordable prices even in hard-to-reach areas of the state. This government understands healthcare transformation will take time, but we are confident we can accelerate the process by taking the right steps.

Education is the cornerstone of modern development, and we are commitment to ensuring that we improve the quality and accessibility of education in our state. Our children must be competitive in the future and our investments in this sector will give them an edge. As part of my campaign, I pledged to build 3 model schools to become a beacon of our educational reforms and we are

on track to achieve that. With over 150 primary schools and 75 junior and senior secondary schools since we took office, we have built new schools at the fastest rate in our state's history. We are currently building an additional 77 new secondary schools and we have taken steps to bring computer technology to our schools, so our children have an early exposure modern education. We have carried out extensive renovations and invested in WASH facilities in our schools for the comfort of our students and this government has significantly reduced the number of out of school children in the state. Education is a collective responsibility, and we are all accountable. Families and communities must be at the forefront of education reform and quality assurance for our education system to succeed. My administration recruited over 7,250 teachers into the system to boost the ratios and we are committed to ensuring that our teachers have the necessary tools and training to provide quality education.

My strategic policy expressly identified social care as a major component of our governance strategy. While some may not agree with subsidies and palliatives, the challenges times we face mean our most vulnerable must

be supported. We have made unprecedented social investments to lower food prices, provide cash support, and ease the suffering of our people. We will continue to monitor national indices to ensure that the government takes appropriate measures to alleviate the effects of poverty in our state. This is a huge undertaking, but my administration will do its best.

In line with our efforts to grow all sectors at unprecedented rates, we are investing in public infrastructure and utilities. We have completed all the road projects we inherited from the past administration and gone ahead to build new ones to ensure that Katsina remains one of the best interconnected states in the country. We have upgraded major roads in key towns and recently commissioned Eastern Bypass will expand our capital city and serve our people for decades to come. Rural renewal remains a key part of my policy and we will continue to invest in rual infrastructure for sustainable development. We have improved transportation by providing additional buses and we plan to expand exponentially in the next phase with more routes and bus services.

We are building water infrastructure across the entire state to provide safe and portable water to our people. Major rehabilitation has been done to Ajiwa and Zobe waterworks to boost urban and semi-urban water supply. We are on track to double access to water by the end of this year. We have also made significant gains in providing power to our people by improving distribution infrastructure. We have deployed solar mini-grids to power the Amadi Rimi Hospital, state secretariat and the government house all of which will boost efficiency and reduce cost. We will soon move our waterworks and higher education corridors off-grid to improve power supply.

My administration understands the key role that micro, small, and medium enterprises play to boost economic development. We established the Katsina State Enterprise Development Agency and provided seed capital for it to support MSMEs in the state. This fund has helped over 10,000 enterprises and continues to reach even more people. We encourage all MSMEs to improve their value addition and expand the scope of the business as a viable strategy to grow our local economy.

We were quick to embrace technology and launched a fully digitised Treasury Single Account and automated our revenue collection service. This has led to significant growth in revenue generation and improved transparency in governance. Our major hospitals, health insurance, and drugs supply and management have also been digitised to block leakages and increase efficiency.

My administration is focused on bringing service to the people to meet their needs, so we embarked on the most comprehensive community-driven development in the country. Our Community Development Program is designed to take community-based budgeting and community-based monitoring and evaluation to all the activities of my administration. Our budget for 2026 will be designed entirely on community needs assessment and going forward all MDAs will be required to implement their budget strictly based on the priorities of our communities. We remained determined to ensure socio-economic justice and universal development across our state.

The next two years present me and my team with an opportunity to serve our people with even more dedication and resolution to meet our policy objectives. We have been able to start implementing over 90% of the policies in my blueprint and by the will of Allah we will complete them all while introducing new ones. Our strategy for the next two years is to improve the utilisation and optimisation of the investments we met and made over the past two years. Every good action we have taken will be expanded and any misstep will be eliminated to the best of our ability. Governance is a collective effort, and we must continue to work together for the progress of our state. The limitations of what the government can do must be fully understood and supporting the government to be successful can only lead to a better future for our people.

I would like to thank everyone that has supported my administration over the past two years. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to members of the state assembly, our traditional leaders, security agencies, development partners, civil society, and various associations. I also express my appreciation to members of the state

executive council, my team, and the civils servants for your dedication to our vision. I thank all the good people of Katsina state and rest assured that my administration will continue the tireless work of building a better future for us all.

