



YEAR OF STRONG BEGINNING & GIANT LIFT

Being the Text of New Year 2023 State Broadcast

by

His Excellency,

Mr. Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji

Governor

of

Ekiti State, Nigeria

Government House | Ado-Ekiti | Sunday, January 1, 2023

INTRODUCTION

1. Ekiti Kete, it is with a heart full of thanksgiving that I address you today on the celebration of the beginning of the New Year 2023. We all are grateful to God for making us to see the dawn of this year which promises to be a glorious year of strong beginning for us - it is also a year of our great lift across board.
2. I want to heartily congratulate you on making it to the New Year in spite of the numerous challenges and threats that daily confront us as human beings. The miracle of daily existence in good health itself is a grace that must never be taken for granted. I therefore thank God for seeing us through into the year 2023 despite all the odds of the past years.
3. Let me also express my appreciation to you, the good people of Ekiti State for the privilege of electing me to serve you at this time as your governor. Since you elected me in June and my assumption of duty in October, it has been an exciting seventy-five days of service to Ekiti kete.
4. I therefore want to appreciate those who have been governors before me, and especially my immediate predecessor who handed me the baton, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, *CON*, Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo, *CON* and Dr. Peter Ayodele Fayose.



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5. I also like to thank prominent sons and daughters of Ekiti State who have been of a great encouragement to our administration. I have visited many of them and I am deeply grateful for their offer of support to our administration in whatever ways we have requested of them.
 6. Similarly, I want to express my sincere appreciation to federal ministries and agencies, and departments many of whom I have visited and solicited their support for us in terms of collaboration and intervention. I am very grateful for their reception which is already yielding positive results for us. We are also thankful to development partners for their sustained interest in our quest to meet and surpass the Sustainable Development Goals mandate. We will continue to strengthen our bond and collaboration in the New Year.
 7. I want to sincerely register my profound appreciation to our people both home and abroad for their enthusiasm and cooperation since I assumed office. I am deeply touched by your show of love and solidarity through advice, prayers, suggestions and constructive criticisms.

STAYING THE COURSE OF OUR VISION AND MISSION

8. Ekiti kete, you would recall that I campaigned on a manifesto that was anchored on six pillars, which have been carefully designed to position Ekiti for peace and prosperity. As I had indicated in my inauguration speech and at every forum, I have consistently reiterated that we are committed to these agenda because we are convinced they summarise our needs as a people and signpost our path to progress.
9. Consequently, both the supplementary budgets and the 2023 budget, already passed by the Ekiti State House of Assembly, have been projected to reflect the six-pillars and their actualisation. Already, the passage of the supplementary budget has empowered us to urgently intervene in some critical infrastructural renewal in the State. And just two days ago, I assented to the 2023 Appropriation Law as passed by the House of Assembly, an indication that we can hit the ground running from today. I want to thank the



Speaker, Rt. Hon. Olubunmi Adelugba and her honourable members for their cooperation.

10. Ekiti kete, since I assume duty, we have focused on our promises to you as contained in campaign manifesto. While it is too early to reel out our achievements in the last seventy-five days, I will want to assure you that we remain committed to our promises.
11. For the purpose of accountability, I will like to highlight the six-pillars, our efforts so far and the focus for the New Year.

Youth Development and Job Creation

12. We understand that the energy and creativity of the youths are the catalysts for the future greatness of our State, accordingly, plans are already in place on how to harness this resourceful segment of our population. Our objective is to enable employment and income generating opportunities that will engage our youths productively. In the New Year, our plan will begin to crystallise into policy and programmes that will create these opportunities for our youths.

Human Capital Development

13. We are proud to note that Ekiti is one of the most educated and literate States in Nigeria. We are also proud of our record as the leading State in students' enrolment in primary schools and the State with the best gender equality and mainstreaming policies and records. We hope to strengthen our hold in these areas and to ensure no one is left behind.
14. We will keep investing in our schools to make them globally comparable and competitive. To this end, we are working with different international partners, especially, World Bank's IDEAS and AGILE programmes and other initiatives which have seen our schools receiving funds for renovation, training, equipment and infrastructural upgrade as well and digital and innovation development funding for both formal and informal educational system.



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15. More importantly, we want to aggressively pursue the Ekiti Knowledge Zone agenda which hopes to create a smart city where technology, science and creativity become the currency of exchange.
 16. We want to create an innovation and knowledge incubation ecosystem where our young people can hone their ICT competence and creative ingenuity. To achieve this, multipronged engagements are ongoing with investors, content creators, power providers and other stakeholders. Our hope is that in 2023, we will have begun the journey into creating a new economic landscape where knowledge is the black gold.
 17. Similarly, our secondary health facilities are all undergoing serious upgrade and retooling so as to be able to functionally respond to the health needs of our people. For us, sound health and access to health facilities are central to wealth creation and prosperity. In the New Year, we will expedite effort on this and ensure all our health facilities at all levels are accessible, available, affordable and in good shape. We want to jealously preserve our record as the state with the highest life expectancy rate in Nigeria, we will continue to strengthen our primary, secondary and tertiary health system to keep this trophy.
 18. Government is deeply concerned about the exodus of our health and medical professionals to other climes due to obvious present challenges. I am however glad to assure them that Government will look into the issues with a view to reversing the trend in the New Year. We appreciate their enormous sacrifices and will be willing to see to how things can be made better.
 19. We are also in discussion with critical government agencies to facilitate access to cheaper funds to support the growth of MSME in the State. The vision is to ensure that our Artisans, Market Women and Private Sector Players are linked up with cheaper funds to support their businesses. The



State Ministry of Investment, Trade and Innovation (ITI) is working on a comprehensive strategy to be unveiled in due course.

20. We are also working on a comprehensive sport development strategy that will re-position sporting activities in the State. I am using this medium to congratulate our sport Ambassadors for their commendable outing at the just concluded National Sport Festival. Our promise of a Sport Commission is on course. The Office of the Attorney-General is working on the legal framework for implementation.

Agriculture and Rural Development

21. Agriculture remains the mainstay of our economy in Ekiti. It employs a large number of our people but it contributes abysmally to our internally generated revenue and remains a profession of last resort for many people.
22. Presently, our focus is to continue to attract more commercial farmers who have the financial capacity to acquire the necessary technologies that can cultivate large expanse of land and engage in profitable agriculture venture. This will positively impact our smallholder farmers who can benefit from off-taker deal and access to financing, technology transfer and collaboration. This is expected to create massive employment and lead to prosperity in this sector.
23. We are thankful to investors who are already in Ekiti for their confidence in our State. We will continue to create the enabling environment for them to thrive without let and hindrance. Already, our team is working assiduously to ensure that both our native and commercial farmers are given the necessary support to increase their productivity.
24. In 2023, plans are ongoing on how to further bring more agripreneurs to the State, this will lead to the full realisation of the thinking that led to the establishment of the Ekiti Cargo Airport. Our long term goal as a



State is to make our State the foremost entity for agro-allied export to the international market.

Infrastructure & Industrialization

25. Accelerating the development of key infrastructure is critical to our economic development plan. Power, water, sanitation, hygiene and transportation infrastructure are critical to the realisation of our prosperity goal. We cannot go far without deliberate investment in these sectors. They are the key priority sectors that will improve our competitiveness and generate positive economic and social outcome for our people.
26. Our commitment is evident in the administration's aggressive pursuit of road infrastructure renewal in Ado Ekiti metropolis which has seen to the ongoing rehabilitation of major and nodal roads. Similarly, we are currently undergoing massive deployment of street lights in the capital city as the first port of call in the Light-up Ekiti Initiative. We will begin to replicate the same in all towns and villages as we progress into the year 2023.
27. In addition to our infrastructural initiatives, we are keeping faith with the quick completion of ongoing projects which are all important to the growth and development of our dear State.

Arts, Culture & Tourism

28. As we look to diversify our economy, we will focus on tourism, arts and culture to grow our economy, provide employment and create jobs for our people. Our detailed tourism strategy will be announced soon. It is also a thing of pride that Ekiti Performing Company has continued to win laurels and applause to the admiration of all in major national art competitions. Beyond this however, is the commendable transformation that is currently happening at the Ikogosi War Springs which has been concessioned to a private company to rebuild, expand and manage. I am very excited about the progress that has visited the Springs within this



short time. I am using this opportunity to commend *Glocient Hospitality* for the ongoing transformation of the resort and to promise strong government support going forward.

29. The Warm Springs remains Ekiti's most iconic tourism springboard for the tourism potential of the State. With the level of work going on, I am convinced that Ikogosi Warm Springs and Arinta Water Fall will be back in the international tourism site in 2023, bigger and better. We shall also embark on the development of other heritage sites in the State.

Governance

30. For us, governance is the totality of what we do and how we do it to achieve our set objectives. Therefore, governance, is the connecting rod of all other pillars. It is the bedrock upon which all our plans are situated. We are working on innovative reforms that will lead to gradual and full digitisation of government activities as we inch towards implementation of e-government as part of our aspiration to bring about transformative and innovative solution to government businesses.
31. We are committed to open and transparent processes that ensure government businesses are conducted in an effective, smart and efficient manner, and that government is very responsible and responsive to the yearnings of stakeholders. In the New Year, as we implement some of the reforms, our workers, who are the greatest assets in the development mix of our State, will continue to get the best in trainings, exposures and improvement courses to get them up-to-date.
32. We are also irrevocably committed to the welfare of our workers as we will continue to ensure that salaries and allowances are paid as and when due. Indeed, it is our greatest desire that our workers receive more decent wages and live better life in this year. Therefore, the welfare of our workers remains an item of first priority for us at all time.



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33. On the issues of outstanding salaries and allowances, government is working out a modality to address this issue. We believe that people deserve their wages which they had sweated to earn. We are therefore working hard to create a more labour friendly working environment for our workers. Similarly, we have started engaging the pensioners and labour leaders generally, on the best way to address the burden of outstanding salaries, promotion, bonuses, allowances, pension and gratuity. I am sure an amicable and workable solution is on the way.
 34. We need to cooperatively come to a workable and honest conversation on how to deal with our revenue challenge going forward. I must however note that there is no easy ways without making sacrifices where necessary. We must also be ready to support the efforts of the State Board of Internal Revenue Service at increasing the State's Internally Generated Revenue by performing our civic responsibilities willingly.
 35. The Judiciary will also be given adequate attention to ensure quick dispensation of justice through a systematic approach to the condition of service of judicial officers and the provision of conducive atmosphere to aid smooth administration of justice.
 36. We shall continue to support and retool our security architecture to adequately respond to the current challenges as it relates to criminality and kidnapping in the State. We are very concerned at the rate of kidnapping, especially in Ipao, Itapaji, Irele, Oke Ako and Iyemero axis of the State. We shall not rest on oars until we put an end to their activities in the State. While commending the security agencies for their gallantry, I therefore enjoin them to scale up their responses to make the State safer.

CONCLUSION

37. Since we came on board seventy-five days ago, we have focused our energy on connecting and mobilising all available human and material



resources that are necessary to the actualisation of our plans. I have brought on board a team of proven professional of very solid accomplishment to help lay the policy and strategy foundation for the administration. I am proud of what they have done so far and I look forward to greater successes in the coming year.

38. We hope by the time we bring on board more people to function in government as political heads of ministry, boards and departments of government, we will have created the necessary mandate structure and operating system that will be of tremendous benefit to our people.
39. Ekiti-kete, as you are aware, year 2023 is an election year. I hereby appeal to all political parties to maintain absolute peace as we embark on electioneering.
40. I also solicit your support for our presidential candidate Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and our National and State House of Assemblies candidates. There is no gainsaying the fact that these elections will aid the implementation of our policies and programmes in Ekiti State.
41. I am very optimistic that 2023 will be a year of giant lift for us and our State. We are going to witness massive improvement in security, infrastructure and government services than we have ever seen.
42. As I end this first New Year address as your governor, I want to thank our traditional, religious and community leaders for the critical roles they play at all times. I would like to continue to solicit their support and cooperation in the New Year. I thank everyone who has been of help in the past, just as we look forward to more opportunities for assistance and cooperation in year 2023.
43. Let us remain united in our efforts to keep Ekiti working.
44. Thank you. Happy and prosperous New Year for you all.



God bless Ekiti State!

Biodun Oyebanji

Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Sunday, January 1, 2023 | Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria