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*Text of the Remarks by  
His Excellency,  
Mr. 'Biodun Oyebanji  
Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria*

at the  
**TURNING OF THE SOD FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
NIGERIAN AIR FORCE OPERATIONAL BASE IN EKITI STATE**  
*Thursday | April 06, 2023 | Igbemo-Ekiti*

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### **Protocols**

1. It gives me a lot of joy to be part of this historic event of the turning of the sod for the construction of the Nigerian Air Force Operational Base in Ekiti State.
2. What we are witnessing today is a result of the several efforts by my predecessor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi and the support of the immediate past Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Saddiq Baba Abubakar. It also speaks to our continuity and prosperity agenda.
3. As the then Secretary to the Government of Ekiti State, I was part of the discussions between the State and the Air Force authorities on the desire of the State to have a military base in our proposed Cargo Airport, which to all intents and purposes, was meant to be multipurpose facility.



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4. As a matter of fact, the discussion for the operational base started in 2020 when the former Chief of Air paid a courtesy visit to the state to inspect the location of the proposed Ekiti Cargo Airport. He was impressed by the level of work done and the vision of the State and then made the promise to establish an Air Defense Unit in Ekiti, due to its strategic position in South Western Nigeria. Since then, there have been continuous engagements between the State and the Nigeria Air Force for the actualisation of the promise.
  5. Consequently, when I assumed office, one of my first journeys to Abuja was to the office of the Chief of Air Force Staff to urge him to hasten the process of establishing their operational base in Ekiti airport as promised.
  6. It, therefore, delights me greatly that today's event is in fulfilment of our strategic vision of expanding security architecture and air military presence in our dear State. It will be recalled that one of the reasons we opted for this airport, which is situated on 4072 hectares of land with the capacity to land any aircraft including military, is to secure our people.
  7. Let me reiterate the fact that the decision to have an airport in our State is primarily for economic, security and tourism development. As a land locked State, we need to open and connect our economy to the rest of the world. As an agrarian economy, one of the ways to expand our economy is to find a way to connect our farm produce to the



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international market and to develop new frontiers of economic opportunities.

8. For example, we want to create an aviation economy where aviation-related services: such as Aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Operation (MRO), Aviation Hospital, Aviation Training, Cargo Handling, and Tourism Marketing, among others are provided in the nearest future.
9. We want to take advantage of our geography as a State with almost equidistant location to the political and commercial capitals of the nation. We understand that without aviation and security infrastructure, our ambition to grow our tourism infrastructure and prosperity agenda will remain a pipe dream.
10. We know that our overall vision of making Ekiti the ultimate medical tourism destination in West Africa with the first class medical services being provided at Afe Babalola Multisystem Hospital and other tertiary medical facilities such as Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti and Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido-Ekiti cannot be realised without the presence of virile aviation sector.
11. We also know that we need a military base in the state to further strengthen our security mix and to ensure that our environment is secure. That is why today's event is very significant to us, as a people.
12. Let me, therefore, use this medium to express my profound appreciation to the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal, Oludayo Amao for



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his commitment to the actualisation of the Air Force Operational Base in Ekiti and in particular for his promise to immediately activate the Air Defense project by establishing an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) operational unit in Ekiti to cater for the air defence needs of the southwestern region of the country.

13. On our part, our commitment to the Nigerian Airforce Base is not in doubt; that is why we have donated and fenced 1, 250 hectares of land for the building of the operational base and granted it a joint user right of the airport. The Chief of the Air Staff has reciprocated by promising the provision of a DVOR (Navigational Equipment) for the airport, and we are grateful for this.
14. In addition, we will also provide some logistics support during the take-off phase in the infrastructural development of the Air Force Base. We are convinced that this type of symbiotic relationship will accelerate the development of our overall plan for the airport.
15. I want to use this opportunity to once again, appeal to the good people of Ekiti in general and the immediate communities to be accommodating and supportive of our plans to bring rapid development to this area. I enjoin you to be protective, cooperative, and hospitable to the construction workers and the military personnel that will be here.
16. For us as Government, we will continue to do everything possible to ensure the airport project is a success. We are also going the extra mile



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to ensure that security of life and property of our people is guaranteed. There is no doubt that when this Air Base is completed, it will further improve security and enhance the operational reach of the Nigerian Air Force and crisis response time for the Nigerian military in Ekiti State and the south west in general.

17. Let me thank all our military and para-military establishments for their patriotic efforts to stamp out insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and other forms of internal and external threats. I also commend the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, for his laudable achievements since he took over the Air Force leadership. Be assured of our support for your team to ensure the timely completion of this project.
18. Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my honour to perform the historic Turning of the Sod for the construction of the Nigerian Air Force Operational Base here in Ekiti State.

God bless Federal Republic of Nigeria  
God bless Ekiti

**Biodun Oyebanji**  
*Governor*