



Text of the May Day Address Delivered by

His Excellency
Mr. Biodun Oyebanji
Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria

at the

**OCCASION OF THE YEAR 2023 WORKERS' DAY CELEBRATION IN
EKITI STATE**

Ekiti Parapo Pavilion | Ado-Ekiti | Monday | May 1, 2023.

Protocols:

1. I am highly delighted to attend the first May Day celebration as the Governor of Ekiti State. Aside from my inaugural address, this event is my first opportunity to address the entire workforce of Ekiti State. I therefore seize this opportunity to thank you for your overwhelming support during the gubernatorial election that ushered me in as your Governor and the presidential election that produced Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as our incoming President. I join all workers in Ekiti State and across the globe to commemorate the International Workers' Day. It is my joy to show solidarity to the organised labour and workers at large for their struggles, commitment to the elevation of work, and accomplishments in liberating their fellow workers.



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2. It is worthy of note that May Day Celebration started in 1889 as a mark of honour to the struggle of the Labour Movement for fair treatment and better condition of service which began on 1st May, 1886. This historical and significant achievement kicked off a culture of celebration of the roles of unsung heroes, and the contributions of individual workers who struggle to improve workers' welfare, the world over.
 3. I congratulate the Labour movement under the auspices of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in the State for joining their colleagues all over the world to celebrate the dignity of labour and value of productivity, as exemplified by the labour force. The organised labour in the state has displayed maturity, courage and understanding, and has continuously given valuable support to the government as a major stakeholder in the development of the state in spite of our daunting challenges.
 4. Without labour, there is no prosperity— as you are aware, labour is the driving force behind productivity. The tranquility being experienced in the State since the inception of this administration can be largely attributed to the collaborative disposition and pro-development approach of Labour. The labour unions have demonstrated harmonious industrial relationship by opting for meaningful dialogue in the interest of workers and the State at large. It is



hoped that the Labour Movement in the state would continue to remain a propelling force towards the implementation of this Administration's policies and programmes.

5. Let me use this opportunity to appreciate and commend the workers for their immeasurable contributions to the state's development since inception. The commitment displayed, the patriotism exhibited, and the integrity and hard work shown truly confirm the fact that the workers are the engine-room of government. I therefore urge you to continue in the same spirit so that, together we can move Ekiti State to the realm of sustainable growth and development.

6. Within the few months of this Administration, efforts have been made to ensure that priority is placed on workers' welfare. Let me assure you that our Administration will continue to fulfill its obligations to workers. We are not going to renege on our promises as captured in our road-map to Ekiti prosperity. The policy thrust of our administration is to create wealth and a better living standard; improve human capital development; transform the agricultural sector, and reduce rural-urban drift with the provision of necessary infrastructural amenities at the rural level; industrialize the state to create job opportunities for our teeming youths, and attract more investors/tourists to the State.



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7. It is our desire that Ekiti State becomes a reference point for success in the comity of states. This administration has taken steps that will positively impact the service in spite of our limited resources. This government is sensitive to the yearnings and aspirations of our people. As a people, we all deserve the best at all times, and with God on our side, we shall get the very best.

 8. Let me reiterate, once again, that our administration will continue to make determined efforts to improve workers' conditions of service within available resources. As you are aware, arrears of salaries of Local Government Workers and their State Civil Service counterparts have been paid. Prompt and regular payment of salaries remains our priority. Payment of deduction arrears has been completed, while all the 2018 deduction arrears have also been paid. The implementation of 2019 promotion has equally been approved, coupled with hazard allowances and residency training allowance for Medical Doctors. All these clearly show that workers' welfare remains a top priority for our administration and all other outstanding issues shall be addressed in due course.

 9. At this juncture, I wish to salute the workers for keeping faith with our Government. In spite of the current economic challenges where payment of salaries has become a herculean task for many, this Administration has continued to fulfill this critical obligation. I wish to place on record that as an Administration, we have paid a total sum of ₦30, 606, 198, 988.31 as salaries



to all categories of worker and pensioners since we assumed office. Similarly, a sum of ₦4, 180, 081, 726. 53 was used to defray 2018 outstanding salaries to both state and local government workers. In addition, the Government has approved the sums of ₦700, 000, 000: 00 for the payment of gratuities to the State retirees and another ₦235, 000, 000: 00 for the local government retirees. Similarly, the sum of ₦6, 214, 563, 734. 01 has been released so far, to our subvented higher institutions of learning, including payment of outstanding arrears.

10. Not only that, we have also released the sum of ₦267, 070, 000:00 as Housing Loan to 1, 901 beneficiaries comprising both state and local government workers including teachers, while another sum of ₦228, 300,000:00 was disbursed as car loans to all categories of workers. You are undoubtedly aware that payments of deductions have contributed, in no small measure, to the disbursement of car and housing loans to workers. This has helped workers to continue to meet their personal obligation and improve the economy of the State in general.

11. As an Administration, we are committed to the actualisation of a merit-based and service-driven public service. We firmly believe that favouritism and nepotism should have no place in the selection of candidates for positions in the public service. We will therefore continue to insist that merit and capacity to deliver should be the major yardstick for hiring people into Government's



services. It is only through merit that we can achieve optimal performance and excellent service delivery.

12. The theme of this year's celebration: **'Workers' Right and Socio-Economic Justice'** is a timely reminder that workers are at the heart of social progress and their rights must be deemed fundamental and crucial. The choice of the theme shows that the organised labour has a great sense of its place, its rights and obligations in the society. It also speaks to the consciousness of the labour movement regarding the state of the nation.

13. You are aware of the need for all hands to be on deck to unify the country and rid it of insecurity, corruption and economic instability. I therefore call on the workers to join hands with Government to ensure that we enjoy peaceful environment and socioeconomic stability through harmonious relationship with the Government, especially, as the nation is ushered into a new administration in a couple of days. As we head towards a new era in the history of our nation, let us imbibe the spirit of unity, cooperation and selflessness.

14. Let me appeal to the organised labour to continue to sensitise the citizens and the federal government on the need to imbibe the spirit of fairness and equity in the distribution of national resources. The position of Ekiti State as it pertains to the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) allocations is worrisome. Our share is extremely meagre to meet the number



of obligations we are saddled with. I believe the abundant resources of the country should be properly and equitably distributed to the federating units. Therefore, this administration will continue to strive for equity, fairness and inclusiveness. Please be our partner in this crusade for justice and fairness.

15. I enjoin workers to continue to abide by the rules and regulations guiding the operation of the service. To build a virile and enduring service, we have a collective obligation to adhere strictly to extant rules and regulations in order to protect the image of the service.

16. Once again, I congratulate you on this year's remarkable celebration and hope to continue to enjoy your support in building our dear State.

Thank you for listening.

Biodun Oyebanji.

Governor

Ekiti State

Ado-Ekiti | May 1, 2023