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This, then is the Statement of what we intend to do for the Nigerian people. It is our bond. It is the Social Contract we seek to sign with the Nigerian people at this key moment of our history. Let's then fix Nigeria.

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Let's Fix Nigeria

A Presidential Manifesto

Dr. Ike Okorie



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THE STARTING POINT

The starting point in our quest to fix Nigeria is for us to recognize and respect the strengths and abilities, the vitality and resilience that Nigerians already possess. We want to help ourselves: we are well able to help ourselves. What we need is the chance to do so.

A second way of making the same point is by advocating genuinely participatory democracy or politics of inclusion where every Nigerian becomes a stakeholder and has a say. Nigeria is faced with a number of challenges. One of such challenges is the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Despite great wealth, Nigeria is poor and development is limited. It is believed that about two thirds of Nigerians are poor.

THE CHALLENGES

Another challenge is energy supply. Power supply is erratic. We have not been able to meet our domestic energy need. The level of development of any nation is directly proportional to its consumption of energy. The bigger the energy consumption, the higher its level of development and vice versa.

There is also the challenge of lack of basic infrastructure. Our infrastructural facilities are in various stages of decay. We pay lip service to infrastructural development.

We are further confronted with the challenge of de-industrialization. Many of our industries have long closed shop due to lack of sustainable power supply. Cost of production has become unbearable and intolerable for most businesses in Nigeria.

The issue of de-industrialization inevitably leads to the challenge of unemployment, retrenchment and redundancy. Our manpower generation now exceeds its employment. Our graduates roam the streets for years after tedious and long academic studies without work. Often frustration sets in and this results in all aspects of anti-social behaviours.

Closely related to the above is the challenge of non-existence of social safety nets. Where there are no social security benefits, corruption tends to thrive, as self preservation is the first law of Nature.

What do we say about lack of institutional capacities? In participatory democracy, institutional capacities are required to ensure order, peace and balance in the system. Unless we build our institutional capacities, we may have merely created and established moribund organizations.

Lack of defined political space for both the state and non-state actors has over the years posed enormous

obstacle to our quest for development. Politics of Exclusion and state capture will keep us in the vicious circle of under-development. We can as well situate lack of political will on the part of the state within this context. Elected leaders must possess the political will to become agents of change rather than making their people victims of change.

Lack of accountability and transparency has also contributed in no small measure to keeping us castrated as a nation. In a situation where no one takes responsibility for the running of the affairs of government, particularly, where government appears to be failing in its constitutional roles, does not speak well about our national aspirations to become one of the top twenty economies in the world. We must learn to be accountable, transparent and responsible as leaders and as active citizens.

Lack of adherence to the letter and spirit of the grundnorm i.e. the constitution, is a major slap on our face. We cannot expect to see the changes we envisage in our polity if we do not respect our constitutional provisions which are for the attainment of the good life and good governance for our people.

Finally, lack of a sense of history has equally hindered

and limited us even in our foreign relations. We must understand ourselves, respect ourselves and feel good about ourselves as Nigerians. Unless we do this, we may be tossed to and fro with every wind of foreign policy. When we understand ourselves and our place in the global political economy, we will take measures to protect ourselves in all our foreign relations.

THE WAY FORWARD

To overcome the many challenges facing us as a nation requires that both civil society and the State open adequate spaces. In this regard, Civil Society must educate Nigerians for active citizenship, and the state must pass appropriate legislations and establish specific policies and procedures which are necessary steps towards removing the obstacles which block the will and resolve of Nigerians to overcome their conditions of under-development.

Citizens must be educated to become active within the democratic space. Nigerians must be empowered to make informed decisions and demands.

BROAD DEMANDS

One such broad demand is that government should act for the good of all its citizens. Government policies

should not just benefit a few, but all Nigerians should demand three main types of human rights as a realization of their right to a decent and humane standard of living, as a basic right of a society precedes any other rights that may be stated in the laws and regulations of society.

These are individual freedoms guaranteeing protection against infringements by third parties or the state in the sphere of personal freedom:

- Freedom of religion, Conscience and opinion; the right to a fair trial; protection of the private sphere and of marriage and the family; freedom of occupation and movement;
- Rights to political participation, opening possibilities of influencing public life: freedom of assembly and association, the right to vote and to be elected, freedom of the press;
- Socio economic and cultural rights justifying the claim to share in the opportunities of society and secure chances of human development; the right to education and participation in cultural life, the right to life and fair working conditions, the right to property, the right to social security and health care, to decent housing, recreation and leisure.

ACTUALIZING OUR RIGHTS

To actualize these rights, it becomes imperative that good governance should be strategic and conducted in the interests of all Nigerians and movement.

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It must be borne in mind that women in general, under the provisions of laws, have been made subordinate to men in all respect, thus denying them of their rights and human values and dignity. Unless the very basic values and women are established, the much desired development of Nigeria will remain illusory and delayed.

It seems to us credible that social market economy will embody the aggregate mix of the development matrix we seek to enthrone in ensuring the good life for our people. We will encourage and promote qualified privatization to the extent it is for the good of Nigerians.

We are strengthened in our conviction by the inherent weaknesses and contradictions in the global neo-liberal economics on the majority of our people.

We are further emboldened in our preference for social market economy as the basis for demanding corporate

social responsibility of the transnational Corporations towards Nigerians. This, no doubt, will require social audits. We submit that self-imposed codes of practice as claimed by the Transnational Corporations are not enough.

What we should Do

We must as a matter of necessity re-establish the culture of solidarity as opposed to the culture of individualism, if we must overcome the challenges of under development in Nigeria.

Fundamentally, we shall ensure that we enthrone and sustain democracy and social justice at all times.

- We recognize and affirm that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria. Therefore, the powers and authority which government wields are held and exercised in trust for the generality of Nigerians.
- We affirm that the security and welfare of Nigerians are paramount and promise that failure on the part of government to provide these is a breach of this social contract.

- We recognize our unity in diversity and we shall strive at all times to apply this principle in all our dealings in the discharge of government functions.
- We shall provide political space to foster a sense of feeling of belonging and participation among the people of Nigeria.
- Corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of our development. Accordingly, we shall have zero-tolerance for all corrupt practices and abuse of power in Nigeria.
- In affirmation of the economic and political sovereignty of the people of Nigeria over their resources, we shall ensure that we harness the resources in promoting prosperity among the Nigerian people.
- We shall, on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity, intervene in the management of the national economy to secure maximum welfare, freedom and

happiness of every Nigerian.

- To serve the common good of every Nigerian, we must ensure that the economic system is operated in a just and socially responsible manner as to permit every Nigerian, irrespective of circumstances of birth and status, unhindered access to the formal economy. No Nigerian will ever again be marginalized or disenfranchised from the formal economy. Our economy must be fully diversified in practical terms.
- We shall tackle the challenge of power and energy frontally by harnessing this from gas turbine, geo-thermal, wind, solar, bio-fuel, hydro and nuclear energy to generate the power needs for our industries and domestic uses.
- Industrialization remains an indispensable factor in our quest to attain full employment. Therefore, we will give industrialization the required full impetus.
- We shall create the enabling environment for proper industrialization to take off in Nigeria. This, we will do, by having recourse to provision

of constant power supply to all our industries, low interest rate and tax holidays for infant industries. To protect our infant industries, we shall encourage massive consumption or use of the products and services of our industries. Our industries must operate at full capacity.

- Since ours is the government of Nigerians and by Nigerians and for Nigerians, all projects must be relevant to the communities where they are sited. There will no longer be elephant projects.
- To consolidate this assertion, we shall encourage the establishment in every ward, cottage and light industries which will be run for the benefits of our people. Periodic reports of the state of affairs of such business and economic activities will be received at the monthly Town Hall meetings.
- We shall task the creativity and ingenuity of our Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and technicians to find solutions to our infrastructural problems. We will, as a matter of national priority, give them all necessary support

they require to fix our infrastructure. We expect them to manufacture our brand of Cars, buses, computers, motorcycles, tricycles, bicycles and even heavy machineries etc.

- We shall, in conjunction with the organized private sector, generate employment for all our employable graduates. This, we shall do, by incorporating capacity building and entrepreneurial courses into our education curricula.
- In this connection, we shall undertake employment opportunities audits prior to graduation of our students so that immediately they finish their NYSC service year, they are gainfully employed or self employed. We hope to achieve this lofty goal in collaboration with the National Directorate of Employment and the organized private sector. We shall make unemployment history in Nigeria.
- As part of our efforts to ensure food security, we shall ensure that every state of the Federation is encouraged to carve out Agricultural Production Area. Every Nigerian will also be encouraged to

cultivate and produce crops and vegetable for domestic consumption.

- Agricultural Scientists, Agronomists, farmers and Agricultural Extension workers will be given the necessary encouragement and incentives to ensure the success of our food security programme.

It is our hope that given the necessary encouragement Nigerians can rebuild their lives and national economy. With this in mind, we intend to bring back the groundnut pyramids of the North, the palm oil of the East, the Cocoa bags of the West, strings of fish of the South south

- With respect to the Petroleum Industry, we will undertake qualified privatization as wholesome or total privatization will hurt and impoverish our people.
- With respect to the downstream sector, we shall encourage private companies and multinational companies to refine petroleum products for domestic use, industrial use and exports.
- Our public refineries must be made to operate at installed capacities. No longer shall we allow

Nigerians to suffer humiliation and abuse, queuing up endlessly for petroleum products due to scarcity. We will make fuel scarcity history in Nigeria.

- Government shall, in conjunction with all stakeholders of natural resources, work out acceptable formula for prospecting and exploiting of these endowments with which we have been blessed.
- Organized Labour will receive the required impetus, incentives and rewards to enhance the productive capacity of every Nigerian worker. We shall make strikes and pickets history as we will always listen and dialogue with labour on all issues, afterall, we count labour as our allies in this project.
- It is the duty of government to ensure peace and harmony in the society. But frustrations can cause disharmony and frictions where there are no provisions for Social Safety Nets, otherwise referred to as Social Security Benefits. Therefore, we will provide such Social Security benefits as shelter, food security, a national minimum

wage of one hundred thousand Naira, Elderly Care benefits, Child care benefits, Pensions, Nursing Mother Care benefits, unemployment benefits, free health care for all, free education for all, up to first degree level including free adult literacy programme anchored on Lifelong Learning principle, free legal aid to all who require it, Sports men and women care benefits, special duty benefits and the physically challenged welfare benefits.

- We shall abolish all forms of personal Income taxes for income below one million Naira per annum. We shall be able to fund all government activities and functions through other forms of taxation. Nigerians must be allowed to enjoy the full measure of dividends of democracy.
- We shall build a virile and combat ready armed forces. We shall accordingly equip our Armed Forces. We shall go a step further by ensuring that we take good care of those Nigerians who have volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces. However, we will ensure that our Armed Forces are people-friendly. The Nigerian people must in turn respect and support members of the Armed Forces.
- In the same vein, the Nigeria Police, Customs

Services, Immigration Services, EFFC, SSS, Prison Services, Civil Defense Corps and the like will be well equipped and motivated to enable them carry out their respective duties more effectively.

- However, we insist that all of them must become people-friendly in the same way we urge Nigerians to support and respect them.
- Having regard to the above, we will strengthen the institutional capacities of our security and law enforcement agencies and all such agencies, we reiterate, must become people friendly. We will discourage impunity actions against any Nigerian. The centrality of transformative justice must be pursued and sustained.
- We recognize equality of rights whether these refer to economic, political, religious and social of every Nigerian before the law and we shall jealously guard all such rights.
- We shall, at all times, maintain and uphold the sanctity of the human person and dignity. Accordingly, all government actions must be humane and people- friendly.
- Since this Social Contract, between the State and

the Nigeria People, is anchored on law, we shall ensure that the independence, impartiality and integrity of the Courts of law are jealously guarded.

- We shall promote social life of every Nigerian whether this relates to just and humane conditions of work, adequate facilities for leisure, and promotion of religious and cultural life.
- Our foreign policy thrust shall fundamentally be informed by the need for the promotion and protection of our national interests. No Nigerian anywhere in the world shall again become the subject of abuse and ridicule on account of his or her nationality.
- We shall respect International Law and Treaty Obligations to the extent that they promote and incorporate our national interests and aspirations as well as promote world peace. Anything less, is, unacceptable to us.
- It is the duty of government to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air, land, forest and wild life. To this end, we will actively seek climate justice and ensure we do not contribute to environmental degradation. All government activities shall henceforth be environmental-friendly.

- Transparency and Openness shall be encouraged in order for us to promote unity, solidarity, peace and prosperity of Nigerians. Accordingly, the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media, shall, at all times, be free in order to promote and sustain freedom of Information management.
- Our ethical values shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social and religious tolerance, self-reliance and patriotism.
- We shall encourage active citizenship and promote transparent electoral system in order that the sovereignty of the Nigerian people is preserved.

Therefore, elected leaders must be accountable to the Nigerian people since the power to change elected leaders resides in the sovereign will of Nigerians.

- The Fix Nigeria Project must be founded on justice and solidarity. We must strive to discourage politics of patronage and State Capture. We must not allow our geo-political perspectives becloud our sense of responsibility and actions. We recognize the existence of both challenges and opportunities. It is our intention to

rise to the occasion as demanded by the exigencies of our time. On this note, we expect every Nigerian to make input, participate and share information about how to fix Nigeria as an active citizen.

- In our efforts to overcome the challenges of under-development, we should not think that we will have to deprive some of our citizens their wealth in order to attain our national goals. There will be no need to deprive anyone of his or her wealth. For we hold that there are enormous resources in this country to create enough wealth for every Nigerian.

What is required is good governance with responsible, sensitive, pragmatic, dedicated leadership which will ensure prudent allocation of resources for improved living conditions for our people. This, no doubt, will require political will. It will also require a sense of direction, duty and accountability. In short, it requires informed decisions by leaders.

- We are aware that it is difficult to change Nigerians without changing the system which has limited our political and economic space. Every system needs reforms and transformation at every critical moment. For it is only when the system is healthy that it becomes inclusive rather

than exclusive. Interestingly, the ethic of our transformative justice and reforms will operate in a way that listens, responds, affirms, explains and lets Nigerians know they are heard and valued.

- We affirm that yesterday's answers may not be appropriate for today's questions. Therefore, we will constantly dialogue with all stakeholders in the Nigeria project to find answers to the questions of today. We must secure our tomorrow today.

CONCLUSION

Above all, we must stand together as a people, take responsibility for each other, in families and communities, and also learn to reconcile our own self-interests with the common good. The values we promote must be upheld in our own style of life. What we demand of others, we must expect of ourselves. It is not enough to speak out against corruption. We must even take a step further by ensuring that we set up procedures and systems that are transparent and beyond question.

In the face of hopelessness and frustration, we must build hope and activate our disposition to personal and collective efforts to overcome the challenges of under-development, and promote equal, unhindered access to

the good life in the most creative ways. This, then, is the Statement of what we intend to do for the Nigerian people. It is our bond. It is the Social Contract we seek to sign with the Nigerian people at this key moment of our history. Let's fix Nigeria. The time to do it is NOW! So, help us God.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Today marks a turning point in our lives. Not because elections were held, won or lost. Not because we have fulfilled our civic obligations. It is a turning point not for us alone, but also for generations unborn. It is significant as it is momentous. For I hold that we stand not only at the threshold of the history of our past but also the history of our resilience, of our persistence, of our ability to move forward; not as a crowd but as one indivisible people, united in our common quest for the good life, not for ourselves alone but for all nations and people of good will. The most momentous hour of the long march towards our emancipation has come. The journey has been tough and rough. The road has been strewn with difficulties, with thorns and thistles. Emboldened by vision of what we can be, we trudged on, unshaken in our convictions that today is better than yesterday and the beginning of tomorrow. Tomorrow is not yet in our hands. But we must secure it today. Yesterday is gone. But today inspires us to let go of yesterday and to lay a solid foundation for tomorrow.

We must choose at this key moment of our history to strengthen our institutional capacities, not committed to preserving their own prerogatives but to meeting needs for which the institutions were created; namely serving the interests of the Nigerian people.

We must resolve to generate the capacity to overcome the grinding combination of poverty, exclusion, lack of opportunity and choking socio-economic space that have held so many Nigerians back from reaching their full potentials.

I have come to the presidency with no credentials but one: I love Nigerians, and I love to serve them. This credential has been my chief inducement over the years in seeking elective office and I hold this social contract sacrosanct and unassailable.

I promise, therefore, to uphold your expectations of the good life and a New Nigeria where we shall stand together in solidarity.

Our nation is moving toward two societies, one rich and powerful, another poor and powerless. And they are separate and unequal. This anomaly we must remedy as a matter of national security and priority.

My understanding of progressive politics has led me to

believe that development and advocacy of both policies and fundamental values with far-reaching change and social stability are necessary prerequisites for our nation. We shall therefore, ensure that changes in policies are made to give our leadership a sense of direction.

We must give our nation effective leadership which is willing to sacrifice self-interests in order to achieve national objectives. As leaders, we should know what our national priority is and then go for it with single-minded determination. A new era has begun. Welcome New Nigeria of our dreams. As we usher in this new era today, may we rise as one nation to say **FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER**. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



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