

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY RT. HON. SHERIFF FRANCIS OROWHEDOR OBOREVWORI, GOVERNOR OF DELTA STATE, ON MONDAY, MAY 29, 2023, AT THE STEPHEN KESHI STADIUM, ASABA.

Her Excellency, Deaconess Tobore Oborevworì,
Wife of the Governor of Delta State;

His Excellency, Sir Monday Onyeme,
The Deputy Governor of Delta State;

Her Excellency, Lady Kate Onyeme
Wife of the Deputy Governor of Delta State;

His Excellency, Senator, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, CON, the
immediate past Governor of Delta State, and your Wife,
Her Excellency, Dame Edith Okowa;

His Excellency, Deacon Kingsley Burutu Otuarò, the
Immediate past Deputy Governor, and Your Wife, Her
Excellency, Engr. Mrs. Ebierin Otuarò;

His Excellency, Dr. Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan CON, The
former Governor of the State, and Your Wife, Her
Excellency Mrs. Roli Uduaghan;

Your Excellencies, former Deputy Governors, here present;

Members of the National Assembly and Members Elect;

Speakers of Bayelsa and Edo States Houses of Assembly;

My Lord the Chief Judge;

The Deputy Speaker, Delta State House of Assembly and
Members of the House and Members elect;

My Lord, the President of the Customary Court of Appeal;

The State Chairman and Executives of the PDP;

The Chairman and Members of the State Council of
Traditional Rulers;

Respected Members of the Clergy;

Distinguished Deltans;

My Fellow Gubernatorial Candidates here present;

Party Leaders;

My Lords Temporal and Spiritual;

Gentlemen of the Press;

Ladies and Gentlemen

I accept with humility the responsibility which the good people of Delta State have bestowed upon me to serve as their governor for the next four years. I accept it with a resolve to do MORE to ADVANCE the State to new heights in leadership and socio-economic development.

2. I stand before you today filled with hope and confidence about our future. As the longest-serving Speaker of the House of Assembly, I have learnt the importance of setting the priorities of government, communicating the goals and outcomes of policies and programmes, and partnering with the executive for their successful implementation. I am therefore, well positioned to deliver good governance to our people.

3. But before proceeding further, I wish to pay tribute to my predecessor, His Excellency, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa for his patriotism and deep sense of public service. Governor Okowa took over the mantle of leadership of this State at a very precarious time in the history of our country. In addition to the massive disruptions caused by COVID-19, the country went through two recessions at different times in the last eight years. But thanks to Governor Okowa's discipline, wisdom, prudent management of the economy, and political insight, Delta

State not only survived, but it also came out stronger. Indeed, I celebrate Governor Okowa for his fiscal discipline, and groundbreaking strides in human capital development, infrastructure renewal, technical and vocational education, as well as peace building.

4. It would be wrong of me if I fail to also acknowledge the roles played by the founding fathers of the State, military and civilian, whose sacrifice and dedication helped to nurture the state from infancy. It goes without saying that the State flourished under the current democratic dispensation that began in 1999. In this regard, their Excellencies, Chief James Onanefe Ibori and Dr. Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan deserve special commendation for their vision and tenacity of purpose.

5. Today marks the beginning not only of a new administration, but of an era that will advance Delta State to greater heights in people-centred policies, human capital development, and infrastructure renewal. With what has been achieved by the immediate past administration, the new government is poised to ADVANCE the state through the MORE agenda, which stands for:

Meaningful development;

Opportunities for all;

Realistic reforms; and

Enhanced peace and security.

6. Consequently, the new administration will seek to:

- Foster sustainable economic growth and private sector job creation;
- Boost human capital;
- Build an enabling infrastructure;
- Enhance governance and accountability systems for improved service delivery; and
- Strengthen public financial management.

7. In furtherance of these objectives, the existing entrepreneurship development programmes will be sustained and expanded to encourage the creation of more small-scale businesses, thus creating jobs and, consequently, reducing crime and anti-social activities among our vibrant youth population.

8. We will also enhance the existing social investment programmes for the benefit of the poor and vulnerable groups, including widows and People Living with Disabilities, through microcredit, training, and business networking. We shall further develop empowerment programmes for women associations, particularly in the rural areas.

9. This administration will ensure the completion of all ongoing projects - roads, bridges, schools, and other physical infrastructure. As you all know, government cannot do it alone. Hence, we shall build a conducive environment for public-private partnership investments in virtually all sectors of the economy.

10. In the agricultural sector, we shall develop the agricultural value chain, which is a major driver of sustainable economic growth. This administration will spare no effort to ensure that the development of agro-industrial parks is accelerated, given their potential to generate employment opportunities, create wealth, reduce unemployment, and improve food security.

11. The recent approval of the Nigerian Export Processing Zone Authority (NEPZA), for Koko and Kwale is a welcome development because this project has the capacity to

unleash the growth potentials of the State. With the Board already in place, we shall immediately take steps to make it fully operational and attract investors to the zone.

12. Delta State has been relatively peaceful in the last eight years. However, recent security breaches in the Warri area are troubling. This administration with the aid of security agencies will take decisive steps to ensure that the situation does not degenerate.

13. Furthermore, Warri the commercial nerve centre of the State, will be given special attention under this administration. The process has already commenced with the establishment of Warri, Uvwie, and Environs Development Agency (WUEDA). Before the ongoing Storm Water Project will be completed, government will commence efforts at giving Warri and its environs a total facelift. Similarly, the ongoing rehabilitation work on the Warri Township Stadium will be expedited.

14. The Civil Service will be accorded top priority to boost its efficiency and enhance its service delivery. In addition, merit will be the yardstick for elevation into top management positions to encourage the entry into and retention of the best brains in the public service. Furthermore, this administration will render all the

necessary support to the judiciary to enable it carry out its functions without let or hindrance.

CONCLUSION

15. Your Excellencies, my dear good people of Delta State, the issues that confront this administration are not new. They are about improving the quality of life of our people, about building bridges of social cohesion, about giving our people the hope of a better tomorrow, and about accelerated development. And it demands creative thinking, proactive action, and exemplary leadership from me and all those who will have the privilege to serve as elected officials and political appointees.

16. I pledge to run an open and responsive government that meets the needs and aspirations of our people. I represent consolidation and advancement; consolidation because I am continuing from where the previous government stopped, and advancement because I am advancing Delta State to greater heights in inclusive economic growth, human capital development, infrastructure renewal, and peace and security. I am committed to making life richer, better, and more fulfilling for our people.

17. To my former colleagues in the Sixth and Seventh Assemblies, I whole-heartedly thank you for your support. My appreciation also goes to the fathers of faith for your prayers and counsel. And to our revered traditional rulers, I thank you for your prayers, words of wisdom and advice. I will continue to count on your support.

18. In conclusion, I covet the prayer of all of you for the wisdom to lead, and the divine enablement to achieve the goals that we have set for this administration. The tasks we face are tough, the choices not easy. But with your support and prayers we shall get the job done.

19. God bless Delta State.

20. God bless us all.

**Office of the Governor
Government House
Asaba.**