

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S 2023  
INAUGURAL SPEECH: RHETORIC, THEMES, AND NATIONAL VISION**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study conducts a discourse analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech, focusing on its rhetoric, themes, and national vision. Given the speech's context, delivered amidst significant economic, security, and social challenges, this analysis examines how Tinubu's rhetoric constructs a vision for Nigeria's future while addressing pressing national issues. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and thematic analysis, the study explores the use of language, power, and ideology in the speech, drawing on the frameworks of Fairclough (2001) and Van Dijk (2006). The analysis reveals key themes such as national unity, economic recovery, governance reform, and security, alongside rhetorical devices like repetition, metaphor, and alliteration. Tinubu's rhetoric emphasizes resilience, inclusivity, and optimism, aligning with democratic values and his policy agenda. The speech constructs a vision of a united, prosperous Nigeria, while acknowledging the country's challenges. The study also highlights the emotional and religious appeals embedded in the discourse, as well as the focus on diplomacy and international cooperation. Ultimately, the findings suggest that while the speech fosters national pride and set a hopeful tone, its success will depend on the effective implementation of the policies outlined and the ability to navigate Nigeria's socio-political complexities.

**Keywords:** Rhetoric; National Vision; Inaugural Speech; Leadership; Political Discourse

## Introduction

Political speeches, particularly inaugural addresses, hold immense significance in the realm of public communication and governance (Ayoola, 2019). They serve as platforms for leaders to articulate their vision, outline policy objectives, and inspire the nation with their rhetoric (Chilton, 2004). According to Akinkurolere (2015), inaugural speeches are precisely the first speeches presented by people occupying leadership positions. In Nigeria, such speeches serve as a major means of winning people's hearts after a major selection, election, or appointment is announced or confirmed. Especially, to people that were not initially in support of such candidates either by signifying express disapproval or by not casting their votes. Within these speeches, lexical collocations play a vital role in shaping the persuasiveness and effectiveness of the conveyed message. An inaugural speech refers to a significant address delivered by an individual assuming a new position or office, typically as a form of introduction, declaration of intent, or laying out a vision for the future. These speeches are often given during formal ceremonies or events, such as presidential inaugurations, where the speaker takes on a new role or responsibility. In the context of political leaders, inaugural speeches are crucial as they set the tone for their term in office and articulate their vision, goals, and policy directions. They may include reflections on the current state of affairs, an outline of key priorities, and a call for unity or collective action.

Notably, discourse analysis has garnered significant attention in recent decades as scholars have sought to understand how language functions in social and political contexts. Political speeches, in particular, serve as valuable sources of discourse, offering a lens through which leaders communicate their ideas, persuade the public, and outline their policies. One such key speech is the inaugural address of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, delivered on May 29, 2023, following his election as the 16th President of Nigeria. Inaugural speeches are pivotal in any democratic society as they provide the incoming leader with the opportunity to articulate their vision, set the tone for their governance, and unite the nation under a common goal. Tinubu's inaugural speech, therefore, provides an essential starting point for analyzing the discourse strategies employed by political leaders in framing national priorities.

This analysis offers a rich framework for investigating how language constructs meaning in political contexts. It allows for the examination of the various rhetorical devices, language choices, and structures used by political figures to engage with their audiences. In particular, it provides insight into the construction of identity, the appeal to emotions, and the invocation of national symbols and values, all of which are essential in shaping the political agenda and collective national identity. Tinubu's inaugural address, as a significant political discourse, serves as a medium to explore how he attempts to frame his administration's vision for Nigeria. One of the central elements of discourse analysis is the study of rhetoric, which involves the strategic use of language to persuade, inform, or influence the audience. Tinubu's speech is a case study in the use of rhetorical strategies such as ethos, pathos, and logos. By analyzing the rhetoric of the speech, it becomes possible to uncover how the President attempts to establish credibility (ethos), appeal to the emotions of the Nigerian people (pathos), and present logical arguments for his policy intentions (logos). The way in which President Tinubu engages these

rhetorical strategies offers insights into his broader political agenda and the national priorities he seeks to establish.

Another key area for examination is the themes presented in Tinubu's speech. Presidential inaugural addresses often reflect the prevailing political, economic, and social issues within the country, serving as a reflection of the leadership's priorities. Themes such as national unity, economic development, security, and social welfare are common in inaugural speeches, and Tinubu's address is no exception. Analyzing these themes will allow for a deeper understanding of the specific challenges Tinubu highlights as central to his administration, and how these align with the aspirations of the Nigerian people. Furthermore, the study of national vision in inaugural speeches is crucial in understanding how a leader envisions the future of the country. Tinubu's address offers an opportunity to assess how he frames the role of leadership, the expected contributions of citizens, and the broader goals for Nigeria's development in the coming years. Through this speech, President Tinubu positions himself as a transformative leader who seeks to address both the current challenges and the long-term needs of the nation.

In recent years, studies of Nigerian political speeches have focused on the role of language in shaping public perception and in fostering national cohesion (Ojo, 2012; Adegbiya, 2019). This research builds on this body of work, exploring how Tinubu's inaugural speech uses language not only to address national concerns but also to create a sense of shared purpose and collective identity. By examining the rhetoric, themes, and vision articulated in Tinubu's speech, this study contributes to a better understanding of political discourse in contemporary Nigeria and provides a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of such speeches in achieving political goals. The selection of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech as the focus of analysis is justified by its immense impact on political discourse and its significance in the public domain. As the 16th President of Nigeria, his inaugural address marked the commencement of his presidency and set the tone for his administration's policies and priorities. The speech garnered widespread attention from the media, political commentators, and the general public, making it a key subject for linguistic analysis. Furthermore, inaugural speeches are critical moments in a leader's tenure, where they outline their vision for the nation and present their agenda to the public. President Tinubu's inaugural speech was highly anticipated, given the polarizing nature of his candidacy and the expectations surrounding his presidency. As such, analyzing this speech offers an opportunity to gain insights into his

This study will utilize a qualitative approach, drawing on methods of discourse analysis to dissect the speech's linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and thematic elements. The analysis will be informed by the works of political discourse theorists such as van Dijk (2008), Fairclough (2001), and Burke (1969), who have provided frameworks for understanding the intersection of language, power, and politics. Additionally, it will incorporate relevant political theory to contextualize the findings within the broader political landscape of Nigeria.

## Literature Review

### Presidential Rhetoric and Inaugural Speeches

Presidential inaugural speeches are significant tools of political communication and rhetorical analysis, serving as platforms to articulate governance ideologies, national vision, and sociopolitical priorities (Beasley, 2004). They embody the interplay of leadership ethos, pathos, and logos, reflecting the aspirations of both the leader and the people. Scholars have extensively explored inaugural speeches across different contexts, focusing on their rhetorical strategies, thematic constructs, and sociopolitical implications (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). These studies emphasize the importance of such speeches in establishing a moral and ideological connection between leaders and their citizens.

In the Nigerian context, presidential inaugural speeches provide a lens to examine the socio-political and economic aspirations of successive administrations. Works by scholars like Ayoola (2013) and Akinkurolere and Saka (2020) highlight how Nigerian presidents use inaugural addresses to address pressing national issues, foster unity, and project a vision for governance. These studies underscore the evolving role of political rhetoric in navigating Nigeria's diverse and complex sociopolitical landscape.

### Rhetoric in Political Communication

Previous research on rhetorical strategies in inaugural speeches has highlighted the significance of various linguistic devices, including lexical collocations in shaping the discourse. Scholars have explored how political leaders employ these rhetorical devices to communicate their vision, establish credibility, and create emotional connections with their audiences during these momentous occasions. Studies on inaugural speeches worldwide have identified common rhetorical devices such as metaphors, similes, alliteration, parallelism, and lexical collocations (Sharndama, 2016; Nurkhamidah, Fahira, & Ningtyas, 2021; Nurlatifasari, Nababan, Santosa, & Wiratno, 2022; Al-Khawaldeh, Rababah, Khawaldeh & Banikalef, 2023). Nurkhamidah, et al (2022) demonstrated how metaphors in political speeches can frame issues and influence public perception. Similarly, Al-Khawaldeh et al (2023) emphasized the power of parallelism and repetition in creating memorable and impactful messages. In the Nigerian context, researchers have investigated the rhetorical features of political speeches and their impact on public discourse. These studies have examined speeches by prominent Nigerian leaders, including presidential speeches, to gain insights into the linguistic strategies employed to engage the public and convey political messages. Research on Nigerian political speeches has explored rhetorical devices like repetition, parallelism, and lexical collocations. For instance, Fakunle and Adegbite (2019) analyzed the inaugural speeches of Nigerian presidents to understand how they employ rhetorical devices to communicate their policy priorities and visions for the nation. Rhetoric, defined as the art of persuasion, has been a cornerstone of political communication for centuries. Aristotle's triad of ethos, pathos, and logos remains foundational in understanding how leaders use language to persuade and mobilize their audience (Aristotle, trans. 2007). In contemporary studies, political rhetoric is analyzed not only for its persuasive elements but also for its role in constructing identity, ideology, and power dynamics (Fairclough, 2001).

Van Dijk (2006) emphasizes that political speeches are sites of ideological production and reproduction. Through the strategic use of language, leaders can align themselves with public sentiment, project authority, and frame policy agendas. In the context of developing nations like Nigeria, where political communication often intersects with challenges of trust, legitimacy, and inclusivity, the rhetoric of leadership plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and policy discourse (Oboh, 2017).

### **Themes in Presidential Inaugural Speeches**

Thematic analysis of inaugural speeches reveals recurring motifs such as national unity, economic development, democratic consolidation, and international cooperation (Lim, 2002). These themes reflect both the immediate and long-term concerns of the polity. For instance, research on American presidential inaugural addresses by Campbell and Jamieson (2008) shows how leaders use these themes to build legitimacy, inspire hope, and set the tone for their administration.

In the Nigerian context, Ayoola (2013) identified themes of national integration, corruption eradication, and economic revitalization as dominant in inaugural speeches. Similarly, Akinkurolere and Saka (2020) analyzed how Nigerian presidents employ thematic constructs to address ethnic and regional tensions, foster national identity, and project a vision of progress. These studies suggest that themes in Nigerian presidential rhetoric often reflect the country's socio-political and economic realities.

### **Discourse Analysis in Political Studies**

Discourse analysis offers a robust framework for examining the linguistic and ideological elements of political speeches. Fairclough (2001) advocates for a critical approach to discourse analysis that uncovers how language constructs and reflects power relations. Similarly, Van Dijk (2006) argues that discourse analysis can reveal the implicit ideologies and power dynamics embedded in political communication. Language, in itself, is generally meaningless without context. Hence, language use may be said to be (mis)representative and manipulative in different settings. When it comes to political context, language use can be manipulative, deceptive, and persuasive, and always aims at winning people's minds. According to Otieno (2016: 24), political discourse in politics is characterised by attempts to present politicians in a positive light to win over the audience and electorates who then adopt the speaker's perspective on issues. It is believed that politically motivated discourses always contain linguistic strategies of persuasion and manipulation.

With over 250 ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, and 36 states (provinces), Nigeria is home to an estimated 227 million people (United Nations, 2024) of over 500 hundred languages and varieties of languages. One is compelled to assume that individuals with eloquence must practise politics in Nigeria due to the vast number of electorates in the nation. To put it another way, politicians must use a variety of persuasive language techniques to win over voters, particularly in English, which is the universal language. This means that those with stronger discursive strategies may have an advantage in the political arena. Because of these various linguistic techniques, politicians may, more often than not, use

language to manipulate the audience by appealingly portraying their identities. Nigerian politicians use language mainly on printed and social media forms, such as posters, pamphlets, speeches, billboards, and internet sources, purposely selected across Nigeria.

In analyzing Nigerian political speeches, researchers have employed discourse analysis to explore how language is used to navigate issues of ethnicity, corruption, and governance. Oboh (2017) examined the linguistic strategies employed by Nigerian leaders to address contentious issues, revealing the interplay between rhetoric, power, and public perception. This body of literature highlights the value of discourse analysis in unpacking the complexities of political communication in Nigeria.

### **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural Speech**

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech marks a significant moment in Nigeria's political history. Delivered amidst economic challenges, security concerns, and heightened public expectations, the speech provides a rich text for rhetorical and thematic analysis. While studies on Tinubu's rhetoric remain scarce due to its recent nature, the broader literature on Nigerian presidential rhetoric provides a foundation for understanding the strategies and themes likely employed in the speech.

Drawing from Ayoola (2013) and Akinkurolere and Saka (2020), it can be anticipated that Tinubu's speech addresses themes of national unity, economic recovery, and governance reform. By applying discourse analysis frameworks such as those proposed by Fairclough (2001) and Van Dijk (2006), this study aims to explore how Tinubu's rhetoric constructs a vision for Nigeria's future while addressing the country's immediate challenges.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly the works of Norman Fairclough (2001) and Teun A. Van Dijk (2006), provides a framework for exploring the interplay between language, power, and ideology in political communication. Fairclough emphasizes the role of language in constructing and legitimizing power relations, while Van Dijk focuses on how discourse reflects and sustains societal ideologies. Applying CDA to Tinubu's inaugural speech allows for an in-depth analysis of the underlying power dynamics, ideological constructs, and socio-political values embedded in his rhetoric. This approach also facilitates an examination of how the speech aligns with the broader socio-political context of Nigeria, including its democratic ideals, economic aspirations, and national unity.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The study uses a descriptive qualitative design, focusing on textual analysis to interpret the content, structure, and context of Tinubu's inaugural speech. This design is appropriate for

analyzing political texts, as it allows for a detailed examination of language use, rhetorical devices, and thematic patterns within the speech.

## **Data Collection**

The data for this study consists of the full transcript of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech, obtained from Dailysunonlinenewspaper. This primary text serves as the sole dataset for analysis, ensuring that the study is focused and specific.

## **Analytical Framework**

The analysis is conducted using two complementary frameworks:

1. **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**
  - CDA is employed to examine the interplay between language, power, and ideology in Tinubu's speech. Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, which includes textual analysis, discursive practices, and social practices, is used as the guiding framework (Fairclough, 2001).
2. **Thematic Analysis**
  - Thematic analysis is applied to identify and categorize the key themes and recurring patterns in the speech, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).
  - Themes such as national unity, economic development, governance reform, and security are expected to emerge as focal points.
  - This approach allows for an organized and systematic exploration of the core messages conveyed in the speech.

## **Procedure**

1. **Data Preparation**
  - The speech transcript is reviewed for accuracy and prepared for textual analysis. The text is divided into manageable sections based on paragraphs or themes.
2. **Textual Analysis**
  - The speech is analyzed using Fairclough's CDA model to examine linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and power dynamics. Special attention is given to word choice, metaphors, and syntactic structures that reveal ideological positions.
3. **Thematic Identification**
  - Using Braun and Clarke's six-step process for thematic analysis, the study identifies, codes, and categorizes themes within the text. These steps include familiarization with the text, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.
4. **Interpretation**
  - Findings from the CDA and thematic analysis are synthesized to interpret the overall rhetorical and thematic framework of the speech. This step focuses on how Tinubu's rhetoric aligns with his national vision and addresses Nigeria's socio-political realities.

## Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical research practices by ensuring the accurate representation of the speech transcript and avoiding misinterpretation or biased analysis. As the data is publicly available, no issues of confidentiality or consent arise.

## Limitations

The study is limited to a single speech, which may not capture the broader rhetorical strategies of Tinubu's administration. However, the inaugural speech is chosen for its significance as a foundational statement of governance and vision.

## Analysis, Result and Discussions

Category	Description	Examples from the Speech
<b>Context and Occasion</b>	The setting, audience, and purpose of the speech.	Delivered at Eagle Square, Abuja, on May 29, during the presidential inauguration to set governance agenda and unify the nation.
<b>Opening Address</b>	Expression of humility, gratitude, and commitment.	"I stand before you honoured to assume the sacred mandate you have given me."
<b>Tone</b>	The emotional quality and attitude conveyed.	Hopeful, patriotic, conciliatory, and determined.
<b>Themes</b>	Key ideas and recurring motifs in the discourse.	Unity, democracy, governance, economic reform, security, and national development.
<b>Rhetorical Devices</b>	Literary techniques used to persuade and engage the audience.	- <b>Repetition:</b> "We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people..." - <b>Metaphor:</b> "We lift high this torch..." - <b>Alliteration:</b> "Compassion, brotherhood, and peace."
<b>National Identity</b>	Affirmation of Nigeria's resilience and diversity.	"We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble."
<b>Acknowledgment</b>	Recognition of predecessors and opponents.	"Permit me to say a few words to my predecessor... you are a worthy partner and friend." "To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide."
<b>Democratic Values</b>	Emphasis on democracy, rule of law, and unity.	"The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition."
<b>Policy Priorities</b>	Outline of key governance and reform plans.	- <b>Security:</b> Reform of security doctrine. - <b>Economy:</b> Job creation, industrial policy, budgetary reform. - <b>Infrastructure:</b> Continuation of projects.

Category	Description	Examples from the Speech
		- <b>Fuel subsidy removal:</b> Reallocation of funds.
<b>Appeals to Unity</b>	Calls for solidarity among diverse groups.	"The South must not only seek good for itself but must understand that its interests are served when good comes to the North."
<b>Optimism and Hope</b>	Positive outlook on Nigeria's potential and future.	"Today, let us recommit our very selves to placing Nigeria in our hearts as the indispensable home for each and every one of us."
<b>Moral and Religious Values</b>	Reliance on faith and divine guidance.	"My faith in God Almighty, absolute."
<b>Foreign Relations</b>	Commitment to regional stability and international cooperation.	"My primary foreign policy objective must be the peace and stability of the West African subregion and the African continent."
<b>Conclusion</b>	Reiteration of mission and collective responsibility.	"On this day, Nigeria affirms its rightful place among the world's great democracies. There, Nigeria shall reside forever."

## Discussion of Findings

The discourse analysis of President Bola Tinubu's inaugural address reveals key thematic, rhetorical, and structural patterns. These findings are discussed in relation to the overall purpose, tone, and potential impact of the speech.

### 1. National Unity and Identity

The speech repeatedly emphasizes national unity, portraying Nigeria as a resilient, indivisible entity. Phrases such as "as long as this world exists", "Nigeria shall exist" and "all I see are Nigerians" promote inclusivity across regional, ethnic, and political divides.

- **Purpose:** The focus on unity is a deliberate strategy to consolidate support and foster a sense of shared destiny, crucial for a country grappling with socio-political divisions.
- **Impact:** This rhetoric reinforces a collective national identity, appealing to citizens' pride and hope.

### 2. Leadership and Governance Philosophy

President Tinubu's address highlights a participatory approach to governance, asserting that the administration will "govern on your behalf but never rule over you" and prioritize consultation over imposition.

- **Purpose:** This aligns with democratic ideals, setting a tone of humility and service.

- **Impact:** The message signals a commitment to inclusive leadership, potentially fostering trust and engagement among citizens.

### ***3. Acknowledgment of Challenges and Resilience***

The speech acknowledges Nigeria's socio-economic and security challenges, emphasizing the resilience and diversity that have sustained the country. References to past hardships and victories, such as "we have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble," evoke a shared history of overcoming adversity.

- **Purpose:** This creates a narrative of hope and resilience, positioning challenges as surmountable.
- **Impact:** The acknowledgment of difficulties, coupled with optimism, may galvanize citizens toward collective action.

### ***4. Policy Focus Areas***

Key policy priorities include security, economic reform, job creation, agriculture, infrastructure development, and monetary policy. These are framed as practical steps to achieve the "Nigerian ideal."

- **Purpose:** Highlighting specific initiatives demonstrates a proactive and detailed governance strategy.
- **Impact:** While the ambitious scope of policies inspires hope, their feasibility will depend on effective implementation.

### ***5. Emotional and Religious Appeals***

The speech employs emotional appeals and invokes faith in God to connect with the audience. Statements like "My faith in God Almighty is absolute" and "This nation's journey has been shaped by the prayers of millions" resonate in a deeply religious society.

- **Purpose:** This rhetoric builds a moral and spiritual dimension to leadership, appealing to a shared cultural context.
- **Impact:** While strengthening the emotional connection, it may also invite scrutiny about delivering tangible results beyond faith.

### ***6. Diplomatic Outlook***

The foreign policy segment reflects a commitment to regional stability and continental leadership. The emphasis on working with ECOWAS and the African Union aligns with Nigeria's historical role as a regional power.

- **Purpose:** Positioning Nigeria as a peace and prosperity advocate reinforces its leadership aspirations.
- **Impact:** This enhances the country's image internationally, though it demands significant diplomatic effort and resources.

## ***7. Inclusivity in Leadership***

The recognition of opponents and their concerns, as well as promises to prioritize women and youth, reflects an effort to create a broad-based administration. Tinubu's statement, "my victory does not render me any more Nigerian than my opponents," highlights this ethos.

- **Purpose:** Promoting inclusivity aims to reduce political polarization.
- **Impact:** This approach can build goodwill across political lines if actions match the rhetoric.

## ***8. Aspirational Vision vs. Pragmatic Execution***

The address balances aspirational ideals with pragmatic policy proposals. While it inspires hope, the execution of policies such as subsidy removal, agricultural reforms, and security restructuring remains a critical determinant of success.

- **Purpose:** To project confidence and a roadmap for national progress.
- **Impact:** Citizens' responses will depend on how quickly and effectively promised changes are implemented.

## **Summary of Findings**

The discourse analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech reveals several key rhetorical, thematic, and structural patterns that shape the speech's national vision. The findings can be summarized as follows:

Tinubu's speech strongly emphasizes the importance of national unity, portraying Nigeria as a resilient, indivisible entity. He uses inclusive language to appeal to citizens across regional, ethnic, and political divides, aiming to create a collective national identity and foster a sense of shared destiny.

The president promotes a participatory approach to governance, emphasizing humility and service over authoritarian rule. This democratic ethos sets a tone of inclusivity, aiming to build trust and engagement with the Nigerian populace.

Tinubu acknowledges Nigeria's socio-economic and security challenges while highlighting the nation's resilience. He portrays past hardships as surmountable, invoking a narrative of hope and strength in the face of adversity.

The speech outlines a range of key policy priorities, including security reforms, economic recovery, infrastructure development, and job creation. These are framed as practical steps toward achieving the "Nigerian ideal" and are positioned as central to the administration's mission.

The speech invokes religious faith and emotional appeals, resonating with Nigeria's deeply religious society. This rhetorical approach seeks to strengthen the moral connection with the audience, positioning Tinubu as a leader guided by faith and divine will.

## Conclusion

President Tinubu's inaugural address skillfully combines emotional appeal, policy direction, and national pride to foster unity, inspire hope, and set the tone for his administration. However, the ultimate measure of its success will rest on translating rhetoric into tangible outcomes, addressing citizens' expectations, and managing the socio-economic challenges facing the country.

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## APPENDIX

### First Inaugural Address by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Delivered on May 29, 2023 at the Eagle Square, Abuja

My Fellow Citizens,

I stand before you honoured to assume the sacred mandate you have given me. My love for this nation is abiding. My confidence in its people, unwavering. And my faith in God Almighty, absolute. I know that His hand shall provide the needed moral strength and clarity of purpose in those instances when we seem to have reached the limits of our human capacity.

This day is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit, as is our precious nation.

As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope.

The question we now ask ourselves is whether to remain faithful to the work inherent in building a better society or retreat into the shadows of our unmet potential.

For me, there is but one answer. We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to rob ourselves of our finest destiny.

This nation's journey has been shaped by the prayers of millions, and the collective sacrifices of us all.

We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble.

Yet, we have shouldered the heavy burden to arrive at this **SUBLIME** moment where the prospect of a better future merges with our improved capacity to create that future.

To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we have more firmly established this land as a democracy in both word and deed.

The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition. This handover symbolizes our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be.

Here, permit me to say a few words to my predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari. Mr President, you have been an honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love. On a more personal note, you are a worthy partner and friend. May History be kind to you.

For many years, Nigeria's critics have trafficked the rumour that our nation will break apart, even perish.

Yet here we are. We have stumbled at times, but our resilience and diversity have kept us going.

Our burdens may make us bend at times, but they shall never break us.

Instead, we stand forth as Africa's most populous nation and as the best hope and strongest champion of the Black Race.

As citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause, that as long as this world exists, **NIGERIA SHALL EXIST**.

Today, Fate and Destiny join together to place the torch of human progress in our very hands. We dare not let it slip.

We lift high this torch so that it might shine on every household and in every heart that calls itself Nigerian. We hold this beam aloft because it lights our path with compassion, brotherhood, and peace. May this great light never **EXTINGUISH**.

Our administration shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you. We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate. We shall reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own.

We are here to further mend and heal this nation, not tear and injure it.

In this vein, may I offer a few comments regarding the election that brought us to this juncture. It was a hard fought contest. And it was also fairly won. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has not held an election of better quality.

The outcome reflected the will of the people. However, my victory does not render me any more Nigerian than my opponents. Nor does it render them any less patriotic.

They shall forever be my fellow compatriots. And I will treat them as such. They represent important constituencies and concerns that wisdom dare not ignore.

They have taken their concerns to court. Seeking legal redress is their right and I fully defend their exercise of this right. This is the essence of the rule of law.

Over six decades ago, our founding fathers gave bravely of themselves to place Nigeria on the map as an independent nation.

We must never allow the labor of those who came before us to wither in vain but to blossom and bring forth a better reality.

Let us take the next great step in the journey they began and believed in.

Today, let us recommit our very selves to placing Nigeria in our hearts as the indispensable home for each and every one of us regardless of creed, ethnicity, or place of birth.

My supporters, I thank you. To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide. I ask you to grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood. For me, political coloration has faded away. All I see are Nigerians.

May we uphold these fitting and excellent notions as the new Nigerian ideal.

My fellow compatriots,

The Nigerian ideal which I speak of is more than just an improvement in economic and other statistics. These things are important; but they can never convey the fullness of our story.

Our mission is to improve our way of life in a manner that nurtures our humanity, encourages compassion toward one another, and duly rewards our collective effort to resolve the social ills that seek to divide us.

Our constitution and laws give us a nation on paper. We must work harder at bringing these noble documents to life by strengthening the bonds of economic collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural understanding. Let us develop a shared sense of fairness and equity.

The South must not only seek good for itself but must understand that its interests are served when good comes to the North. The North must see the South likewise.

Whether from the winding creeks of the Niger Delta, the vastness of the northern savannah, the boardrooms of Lagos, the bustling capital of Abuja, or the busy markets of Onitsha, you are all my people. As your president, I shall serve with prejudice toward none but compassion and amity towards all.

In the coming days and weeks, my team will publicly detail key aspects of our programme. Today, permit me to outline in broad terms a few initiatives that define our concept of progressive good governance in furtherance of the Nigerian ideal:

The principles that will guide our administration are simple:

1. Nigeria will be impartially governed according to the constitution and the rule of law.
2. We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our subregion.
3. We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation, food security and an end of extreme poverty.
4. In our administration, Women and youth will feature prominently.

5. Our government will continue to take proactive steps such as championing a credit culture to discourage corruption while strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the various anti-corruption agencies.

### **SECURITY**

Security shall be the top priority of our administration because neither prosperity nor justice can prevail amidst insecurity and violence.

To effectively tackle this menace, we shall reform both our security DOCTRINE and its ARCHITECTURE.

We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number. We shall provide, better training, equipment, pay and firepower.

### **THE ECONOMY**

On the economy, we target a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment.

We intend to accomplish this by taking the following steps:

First, budgetary reform stimulating the economy without engendering inflation will be instituted.

Second, industrial policy will utilize the full range of fiscal measures to promote domestic manufacturing and lessen import dependency.

Third, electricity will become more accessible and affordable to businesses and homes alike. Power generation should nearly double and transmission and distribution networks improved.

We will encourage states to develop local sources as well.

I have a message for our investors, local and foreign: our government shall review all their complaints about multiple taxation and various anti-investment inhibitions.

We shall ensure that investors and foreign businesses repatriate their hard earned dividends and profits home.

### **JOBS**

My administration must create meaningful opportunities for our youth. We shall honour our campaign commitment of one million new jobs in the digital economy.

Our government also shall work with the National Assembly to fashion an omnibus Jobs and Prosperity bill. This bill will give our administration the policy space to embark on labour-intensive infrastructural improvements, encourage light industry and provide improved social services for the poor, elderly and vulnerable.

### **AGRICULTURE**

Rural incomes shall be secured by commodity exchange boards guaranteeing minimal prices for certain crops and animal products. A nationwide programme for storage and other facilities to reduce spoilage and waste will be undertaken.

Agricultural hubs will be created throughout the nation to increase production and engage in value-added processing. The livestock sector will be introduced to best modern practices and steps taken to minimize the perennial conflict over land and water resources in this sector.

Through these actions, food shall be made more abundant yet less costly. Farmers shall earn more while the average Nigerian pays less.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

We shall continue the efforts of the Buhari administration on infrastructure. Progress toward national networks of roads, rail and ports shall get priority attention.

### **FUEL SUBSIDY**

We commend the decision of the outgoing administration in phasing out the petrol subsidy regime which has increasingly favoured the rich more than the poor. Subsidy can no longer justify its ever-increasing costs in the wake of drying resources. We shall instead re-channel the

funds into better investment in public infrastructure, education, health care and jobs that will materially improve the lives of millions.

### **MONETARY POLICY**

Monetary policy needs thorough housecleaning. The Central Bank must work towards a unified exchange rate. This will direct funds away from arbitrage into meaningful investment in the plant, equipment and jobs that power the real economy.

Interest rates need to be reduced to increase investment and consumer purchasing in ways that sustain the economy at a higher level.

Whatever merits it had in concept, the currency swap was too harshly applied by the CBN given the number of unbanked Nigerians. The policy shall be reviewed. In the meantime, my administration will treat both currencies as legal tender.

### **FOREIGN POLICY**

Given the world in which we reside, please permit a few comments regarding foreign policy.

The crisis in Sudan and the turn from democracy by several nations in our immediate neighbourhood are of pressing concern.

As such, my primary foreign policy objective must be the peace and stability of the West African subregion and the African continent. We shall work with ECOWAS, the AU and willing partners in the international community to end extant conflicts and to resolve new ones.

As we contain threats to peace, we shall also retool our foreign policy to more actively lead the regional and continental quest for collective prosperity.

### **Conclusion**

This is the proudest day of my life. But this day does not belong to me. It belongs to you, the people of Nigeria.

On this day, Nigeria affirms its rightful place among the world's great democracies. There, Nigeria shall reside forever.

The course of our past and the promise of the future have brought us to this exceptional moment. In this spirit, I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy such that the Nigerian ideal becomes and forever remains the Nigerian reality.

With full confidence in our ability, I declare that these things are within our proximate reach because my name is Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and I am the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

May God bless you and May He bless our beloved land.