

'THE GREAT LEAP BUDGET'

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. BAPTUNDE RAJI FASHOLA (SAN), GOVERNOR OF LAGOS STATE, AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE Y2008 LAGOS STATE BUDGET TO THE LAGOS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, IKEJA, ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2007

PROTOCOLS

MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LAGOS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, WE WILL RECALL HOW, OVER THREE MONTHS AGO, SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY CELEBRATED THEIR FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE WITH POMP AND FANFARE.

IN LAGOS STATE WE DELIBERATELY DECIDED TO BE DIFFERENT. OUR COMMEMORATION OF THE DAY WAS LOW-KEYED. THIS WAS BECAUSE OF OUR PERCEPTION THAT THE 100 DAYS TRADITION ACROSS THE WORLD, NOT JUST IN NIGERIA, HAD BECOME MORE OF PUBLICITY HYPE WITHOUT MUCH SUBSTANCE. WE WERE OF THE VIEW THAT THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF ANY ADMINISTRATION OUGHT TO BE A CRUCIAL PERIOD OF PLANNING AND LAYING A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR ENDURING ACHIEVEMENTS.

AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE RESOLVED TO TAKE THE 100 DAYS CONCEPT TO A NEW AND MORE CONCRETE LEVEL BY GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP ON ALL SUBSEQUENT 100 DAYS TILL THE END OF OUR TENURE. THIS IS WHY THIS PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST FULL BUDGET OF OUR ADMINISTRATION CHRISTENED, "THE GREAT LEAP BUDGET", WAS PLANNED TO COINCIDE WITH OUR FIRST 200 DAYS IN OFFICE, WHICH FELL ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15TH, 2007.

I AM, THEREFORE, ADDRESSING THIS AUGUST ASSEMBLY THIS MORNING ON OUR 202ND DAY IN OFFICE AND WILL REPORT ON HOW WE HAVE UTILIZED THE OPPORTUNITY OF OUR MANDATE TO DELIVER DEMOCRACY DIVIDENDS TO THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE SINCE OUR ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE. THIS IS A PRACTICE WE WILL MAINTAIN WHEN WE ARE 300 DAYS, 400 DAYS, 500 DAYS AND SO ON IN OFFICE TILL MAY 29TH, 2011 BY THE GRACE OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS, WHEN I WOKE UP THIS MORNING, I REPEATED A PRACTICE THAT HAS BECOME A REGULAR HABIT FOR ME SINCE MY ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE ON MAY 29TH THIS YEAR; IT IS A HABIT I RECOMMEND TO EVERY MEMBER OF THIS GOVERNMENT. I CHECKED MY CALENDAR TO CALCULATE EXACTLY HOW MANY HOURS WE HAVE SPENT IN OFFICE SINCE WE WERE SWORN IN 202 DAYS AGO. AS OF TODAY WE HAVE EXPENDED 4,848 HOURS OUT OF THE TOTAL OF 34,560 HOURS WE HAVE TO SPEND IN OFFICE BETWEEN MAY 29 THIS YEAR AND MAY 29TH, 2011, WHEN OUR FIRST TERM MANDATE WILL END.

THIS MEANS THAT WE HAVE JUST 29,712 HOURS OF OUR FIRST TERM LEFT TO DELIVER ON OUR MANDATE, POSITIVELY TRANSFORM OUR STATE AND LEAVE INDELIBLE IMPRINTS OF ACHIEVEMENT ON THE SANDS OF TIME.

I MAKE THIS POINT BECAUSE TIME IS THE MOST CRITICAL RESOURCE NECESSARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY INDIVIDUAL, GROUP OR COUNTRY. THIS IS WHY WE ARE WISELY ADMONISHED TO COUNT OUR DAYS THAT WE MIGHT APPLY OUR YEARS UNTO WISDOM. THE USE OF TIME MORE OFTEN THAN NOT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE; BETWEEN REALIZED ACHIEVEMENT AND UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL. THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BUDGET WE ARE PRESENTING TODAY WILL DEPEND SIGNIFICANTLY ON THE PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENT OF EVERY MINUTE OF OUR TIME TO ACHIEVE SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

MY TRAINING AND PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AS A LAWYER HAS TAUGHT ME TO ALWAYS PLACE MAXIMUM PREMIUM ON THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF TIME. THE EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF A COUNSEL IN COURT TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE CLIENT IS A FUNCTION LARGELY OF THE PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENT OF TIME OUTSIDE THE COURT. THIS IS ALSO THE CASE IN ALL OTHER SPHERES OF LIFE, INCLUDING GOVERNANCE.

MY APPRECIATION OF THE VALUE OF TIME HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED EVER SINCE THE APRIL 14TH GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION THAT USHERED US INTO OFFICE. I CAN NEVER FORGET THE MEN, WOMEN AND YOUTHS WHO TURNED OUT IN THEIR THOUSANDS TO EXERCISE THEIR MANDATE AND VOTE US INTO OFFICE. THEY DEFIED GREAT ODDS. THEY WITHSTOOD THE SUN AND WEATHERED THE RAINS. THEY REFUSED TO BE INTIMIDATED AND WERE NOT DETERRED BY THREATS. I WAS PARTICULARLY TOUCHED BY THE ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN WHO PATIENTLY WAITED FOR SEVERAL HOURS TO CAST THEIR VOTE. OUR PEOPLE REPOSED SO MUCH TRUST IN US. THEY INVESTED SO MUCH FAITH IN OUR CAPACITY. THEY DEMONSTRATED SO MUCH CONFIDENCE IN OUR INTEGRITY. THEY TOOK THE BOLD RISK OF COMMITTING THEIR FUTURE INTO OUR HANDS. WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ENSURE THAT THE GOOD PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE ABUNDANTLY REAP THE REWARDS OF THEIR INVESTMENT IN US; IN OUR PARTY; IN DEMOCRACY. TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH IS CERTAINLY AND JUSTIFIABLY EXPECTED; WE MUST NEVER FORGET THIS.

MR. SPEAKER; HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LAGOS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, I WILL SHORTLY PRESENT TO YOU DETAILS OF OUR PLANS, PROGRAMS AND PROPOSED EXPENDITURE FOR Y2008. IN THE COURSE OF MY SPEECH, I WILL EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATE GROUPS IN LAGOS STATE TO PAY THEIR TAXES AND RATES. I WILL RENEW MY CALL ON INDIVIDUALS AND MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PARTNER WITH GOVERNMENT BY INVESTING IN THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. BUT THEN, ARE WE A GOVERNMENT WORTH PARTNERING WITH? ARE WE CAPABLE OF ENSURING THAT TAX PAYERS GET COMMENSURATE VALUE FOR PERFORMING THEIR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AS CITIZENS OF LAGOS STATE?

I CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT WE HAVE IN THE LAST 202 DAYS DEMONSTRATED THE CLARITY OF OUR VISION AND THE PRECISION OF OUR GOALS. WE HAVE SHOWN CLEARLY THAT WE ARE FOCUSED. WE HAVE BEEN PURPOSEFUL, SYSTEMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL IN OUR APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE. THE FRUITS OF OUR EFFORTS SO FAR ARE EVIDENT FOR ALL TO SEE AS I WILL PROCEED TO ILLUSTRATE.

I MUST AT THIS JUNCTURE, HOWEVER, EXPRESS MY PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO THE LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERS OF THE LAGOS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY FOR SHARING OUR VISION AND PASSION. THE TIMELY BUT DILIGENT AND THOROUGH CONSIDERATION AND PASSAGE OF THE Y2007 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET OF N35.9 BILLION AT THE INCEPTION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN THE BEDROCK OF ALL WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS. THE SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ENABLED US NOT ONLY TO CONTINUE ON-GOING PROJECTS INHERITED FROM THE IMMEDIATE PAST ADMINISTRATION BUT TO ALSO IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE FRESH INITIATIVES TO REFLECT NEW PRIORITIES.

JUST AS MORNING SHOWS THE DAY, OUR VIGOROUS AND DISCIPLINED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET IS AN INDICATION OF THE RIGOROUS PACE WE ARE DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN THROUGHOUT OUR TENURE. I CAN ASSURE THE GOOD PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE THAT WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF

SLOWING DOWN; RATHER WE WILL ACCELERATE THE TEMPO OF OUR WORK IN COMING MONTHS.

LET ME ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMMENSE CONTRIBUTION OF MY IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR, THE ILLUSTRIOUS ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU, THE GOVERNOR MENTOR, IN LAYING A SOLID FOUNDATION OVER THE LAST EIGHT YEARS ON WHICH IT IS OUR PRIVILEGE TO BUILD IN ELEVATING LAGOS STATE TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE.

MACRO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

AN ASSESSMENT OF OUR PERFORMANCE OVER THE LAST FISCAL YEAR CAN BEST BE UNDERSTOOD, HOWEVER, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE MACRO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH WE HAVE HAD TO OPERATE AS A STATE. POOR POWER SUPPLY IN THE COUNTRY REMAINS A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO ACCELERATED ECONOMIC GROWTH. THE DECLINING POWER SUPPLY OF ABOUT 700MW AGAINST DEMAND OF 2000MW HAS RESULTED IN 0.2% INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION GROWTH AND HENCE, HIGH COMMODITY, ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT PRICES. THIS UNSAVORY SITUATION HAS RESULTED IN LAGOS BEING RATED BY ANALYSTS AS THE SECOND MOST EXPENSIVE CITY IN AFRICA AND THE 59TH ON THE GLOBAL SCALE IN 2007.

AGAIN, THE UNDP, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT FOR 2007 RANKS NIGERIA'S HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI) AS 159TH OUT OF 177 NATIONS. THIS IMPLIES LOW LEVELS OF CITIZENS' STANDARD OF LIVING, LIFE EXPECTANCY, AND EDUCATION DESPITE THE STATE'S INCREASING COMMITMENT TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE SURGING OIL PRICES AT AN ALL TIME HIGH OF \$93 PER BARREL IN OCTOBER. IRONICALLY, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE PURPORTEDLY DIPPED BY 10.6% OR N1.09 TRILLION IN THE SECOND QUARTER; A DEVELOPMENT ATTRIBUTED LARGELY TO SECURITY THREATS IN THE NIGER DELTA. AT THE SAME TIME, THE COUNTRY'S EXTERNAL DEBT ROSE TO N13.35 BILLION AS AT JUNE 2007.

THE REPORTED FALL IN REVENUE DESPITE SOARING OIL PRICES MAY MASK A MORE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF OUR BEING UNABLE TO TRANSPARENTLY AND ACCURATELY ACCOUNT FOR THE ACTUAL SALE OF OUR CRUDE OIL.

FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE ECONOMIC TERRAIN REVEALS THAT INTEREST RATE HOVERED BETWEEN 18-30% WHILE INFLATION, ACCORDING TO THE LAGOS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, IS CERTAINLY MORE THAN THE OFFICIAL 6% GIVEN 'THE ESCALATING ENERGY COST, DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF ROADS AND THE ATTENDANT AGGRAVATION OF TRANSPORTATION COST'.

IN MAY, INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY UTILIZATION WENT DOWN FROM 55% TO LESS THAN 45% WITH ERRATIC POWER SUPPLY ACCOUNTING FOR 60% OF PRODUCTION COST. WITH THESE CONDITIONS, OVERALL NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH ROSE BY A MODEST 5.73% AGAINST THE ENVISAGED TWO DIGIT GROWTH.

ON GROSS STATE PRODUCTS, LAGOS, ALONG WITH RIVERS AND DELTA STATES, CONTRIBUTE 37% OF NIGERIA'S GDP WITH LAGOS STATE CONTRIBUTING 12% TO PLACE SECOND. HOWEVER, THE STATE EMERGED AS THE LEAD CONTRIBUTOR IN THE NON-OIL SECTOR WITH 19% ATTAINMENT WHICH IS EQUAL TO THE CONTRIBUTION OF 13 NIGERIAN STATES PUT TOGETHER.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVING THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT DISMAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX RATING WILL DEPEND VERY MUCH ON WHAT HAPPENS IN LAGOS. GIVEN THE POPULATION OF LAGOS AND HER CENTRALITY TO THE

NATIONAL ECONOMY, THE IMPACT WE MAKE OVER THE NEXT YEAR IN ROADS, FOOD SECURITY, SHELTER, WATER SUPPLY, JOB CREATION, TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY AND SLUM UPGRADING TO NAME A FEW CAN DRAMATICALLY CHANGE THE NATIONAL HDI FOR GOOD.

IT IS INSTRUCTIVE THAT NIGERIA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY WITH OUR APPALLING LEVEL OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS RANKED AMONG THE SO-CALLED N-11 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH THE POTENTIAL OF JOINING CHINA, BRAZIL AND INDIA AS ECONOMIC POWERS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. OUR RATING IN THIS REGARD IS DUE LARGELY TO OUR OIL RESOURCES, OUR HUGE POPULATION AND THE MASSIVE INVESTMENT POTENTIALS THAT EXIST ESPECIALLY IN LAGOS WITH A GDP THAT REPRESENTS N4.5 TRILLION OF NATIONAL COMPONENTS.

OUR CHALLENGE IS TO CREATE THE CAPACITY TO ABSORB THIS CAPITAL, WHICH WILL OTHERWISE GO WHERE IT CAN REAP A HIGHER RETURN ON INVESTMENT. WE THUS HAVE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY IN LAGOS STATE TO MAKE A CHANGE; WE MUST DO AS MUCH AS WE CAN IN THE NEXT FIVE MONTHS SO THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, LAGOS REMAINS AN OASIS OF HOPE FOR NIGERIA AS A WHOLE.

DESPITE THE DIFFICULT MACRO-ECONOMIC TERRAIN AND THE CONTINUED SEVERE SHORTCHANGING OF LAGOS STATE IN NATIONAL REVENUE ALLOCATION, RELATIVE TO HER INCOMPARABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY, THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS RECORDED IMPRESSIVE STRIDES IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND CREATING A CONDUCIVE INVESTMENT CLIMATE. LET US NOW UNDERTAKE AN OVERVIEW OF OUR PERFORMANCE SO FAR.

ROADS CONSTRUCTION/ REHABILITATION

OUR ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO THE RADICAL MODERNIZATION OF MAJOR HIGHWAYS IN LAGOS STATE BOTH AS A DEVELOPMENTAL END AND A STIMULATOR OF FURTHER ECONOMIC GROWTH. ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE AGGRESSIVELY CONTINUED WORK ON MAJOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS INHERITED FROM THE IMMEDIATE PAST ADMINISTRATION. THESE INCLUDE THE DUALIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF ISHERI- OLOFIN-IBA-OJO-LASU ROAD AS WELL AS AJAH- BADORE ROAD IN AJAH. IN THE SAME VEIN, WORK IS PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY ON THE EXPANSION AND MODERNIZATION OF THE LEKKI-EPE EXPRESSWAY, A PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIP PROJECT INITIATED BY THE LAST ADMINISTRATION, WHICH WILL BE THE FIRST TOLLED ROAD OF ITS SIZE AND COMPLEXITY IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA.

OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A DETAILED WORK PLAN FOR THE PHASED REHABILITATION/ RECONSTRUCTION OF AT LEAST 100 STRATEGIC ROADS ACROSS THE STATE OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

THESE INCLUDE 33 MAJOR ROADS AND SIX PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES IN THE YABA/IDDO AXIS OF LAGOS MAINLAND;
11 MAJOR ROADS IN APAPA CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT;
13 MAJOR ROADS IN THE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ROADS DEVELOPMENT IN ALIMOSHO;
5 MAJOR ROADS IN IKORODU;
5 MAJOR ROADS IN LAGOS ISLAND/IKOYI AND AT LEAST 15 MAJOR ROADS IN SURULERE INCLUDING THE NETWORK OF ROADS WITHIN THE QUADRANT OF ERIC MOORE AND BODE THOMAS.

THESE DO NOT INCLUDE ANOTHER SET OF 52 MAJOR ROADS CUTTING ACROSS ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF THE STATE FOR WHICH TENDERS HAVE BEEN INVITED AND CONSTRUCTION WORK WILL COMMENCE SHORTLY.

AS I ADDRESS THIS AUGUST ASSEMBLY, CONTRACTORS ARE EITHER ALREADY PHYSICALLY AT WORK OR READY TO MOVE TO SITE ON AT LEAST 15 MAJOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THIS HOLISTIC ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. THESE ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ON WHICH WORK HAS ALREADY COMMENCED IN EARNEST IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE STATE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS INCLUDE; REHABILITATION, UPGRADING AND EXPANSION OF BOURDILLON, ALEXANDRA, GERRALD AND OSBORNE ROADS IN IKOYI; UPGRADING AND RECONSTRUCTION OF BROOK, ODUNLAMI, EREKO MARTINS, CAMPBELL AND ADENIJI ADELE STREETS IN THE THIRD PHASE OF THE LAGOS ISLAND CBD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT; REHABILITATION OF FUNSHO WILLIAMS AVENUE, SURULERE; AND REHABILITATION OF AGO-PALACE WAY EXTENSION IN AMUWO-ODOFIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.

OTHER ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, WHICH WE HAVE AWARDED FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE LAST 200 DAYS ARE RECONSTRUCTION OF OKOTA-ITIRE OVERHEAD LINK BRIDGE AND ROAD WORKS; REHABILITATION OF AGO-PALACE WAY EXTENSION IN AMUWO-ODOFIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA; CONSTRUCTION OF OKOTA-ITIRE OVERHEAD LINK BRIDGE AND ROAD WORKS; COMPLETION OF ABULE EGBA-EKORO-MEIRAN ROAD AS WELL AS KARIMU LAKA-BAMISHILE COLLECTOR DRAINS, IN ALIMOSHO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA; CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE TWO OF ADETOKUNBO ADEMOLA STREET, VICTORIA ISLAND; INFRASTRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENT OF YABA (JIBOWU) TO IDDO IN LAGOS MAINLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA; CONSTRUCTION OF PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AT SANYA BUS STOP, APAPA-OSHODI EXPRESS WAY; RECONSTRUCTION OF DAMAGED CULVERT AT AJEGUNLE VILLAGE ALONG OWODE-ONIRIN, IKORODU ROAD AND REHABILITATION OF JOSEPH DOSU STREET, BADAGRY.

WE HAVE EQUALLY AWARDED THE DESIGN CONTRACT FOR THE UPGRADING OF LAGOS-BADAGRY EXPRESS WAY INTO AN 8-LANE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY COMPLETE WITH BUS ROUTES, RAIL LINES AND PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY AMONG OTHER AMENITIES. A BRAND NEW, MODERNIZED AND EXPANDED LAGOS-BADAGRY EXPRESS WAY IS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR OUR PLANNED TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENTIRE BADAGRY CORRIDOR INTO A PRIME TOURISM, CONFERENCE, ENTERTAINMENT AND COMMERCIAL DESTINATION IN AFRICA. LAGOS IS SURELY FAST BECOMING THE INCOMPARABLE CONSTRUCTION CAPITAL OF AFRICA AND WE WILL KEEP IT SO.

LET ME SAY THAT WE ARE BUILDING ROADS OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY COMPARABLE TO THE BEST IN THE WORLD. ACCORDINGLY, SERVICE DUCTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO ALL OUR ROAD DESIGNS TO MAKE THEM DURABLE. I THEREFORE CALL ON ALL COMPANIES PROVIDING UTILITY SERVICES, INCLUDING PRIVATE TELEPHONE OPERATORS, TO DESIST FROM CUTTING OUR ROADS AFTER HUGE RESOURCES HAVE BEEN EXPENDED ON CONSTRUCTING THEM. IF IT BECOMES INEVITABLE FOR A UTILITY PROVIDER TO ENGAGE IN ROAD CUTTING, IT MUST FIRST OF ALL OBTAIN THE REQUISITE RIGHT OF WAY FROM THE LAGOS STATE INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE AND REGULATORY AGENCY (LASIMRA).

TRANSPORTATION

ROAD TRANSPORTATION ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN 90% OF DOMESTIC PASSENGERS AND FREIGHTS FROM WHICH THE NATION LOSES ABOUT N50BILLION EACH YEAR IN THE VALUE OF ITS ROAD ASSETS AND MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATING

COSTS' ACCORDING TO THE BUREAU OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (BPE). IN LAGOS STATE, THE PERVASIVE AND CHAOTIC NATURE OF OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS MORE EVIDENT IN ROAD TRANSPORTATION WHICH DAILY HAULS SIX MILLION PASSENGERS BETWEEN THE LAGOS MAINLAND AND ISLAND IN 75,000 UNREGULATED MINI-BUSES, AMONG OTHERS AS REVEALED BY A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE LAGOS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (LAMATA).

ON OUR PART, WE HAVE EMBRACED THE INTER-MODAL MASS TRANSIT OPTION WHICH HAS SEEN THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) SCHEME BEING IMPLEMENTED BY THE LAGOS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (LAMATA). WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE STRESS AND INCONVENIENCES SUFFERED BY COMMUTERS ON THE 22KM IKORODU BRT CORRIDOR CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION, I WISH TO ASSURE THAT THE EVENTUAL ROLL OUT OF THE 100 BRT BUSES, WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN DELIVERY OF, WILL BRING SUCCOR TO INTRA-CITY TRAFFIC, SHORTLY.

TO COMPLEMENT THE ROAD WORKS IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER TRANSPORTATION FOR WHICH WE ARE REHABILITATING AND CONSTRUCTING TRANSPORTATION JETTIES. AS A TAKE-OFF, THE IPAKODO (IKORODU) – CMS (LAGOS MARINA) FERRY SERVICE HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED WITH FOUR FERRIES. WATER TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT SERVICES ARE ALSO TO BE PROVIDED AT THREE MAJOR ROUTES: OJO – MARINA; IJEDE – BADORE; AND FALOMO – MARINA. TO INTEGRATE THE SYSTEM, LAMATA HAS ATTRACTED A SUM OF \$240MILLION INVESTMENT FOR THE STATE LIGHT RAIL PROJECT WHICH IS TO START AFTER THE CONCESSION OF ROUTES BY THE NIGERIA RAILWAY CORPORATION. INDEED, THE LAGOS STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS AWARDED THE DESIGN CONTRACT FOR THE LAGOS RAIL MASS TRANSIT “BLUE SCHEME” ROUTE, WHICH WILL RUN FROM MILE 2 TO OJO AND OKOKOMAIKO. THIS ROUTE IS PROJECTED TO HAVE AN ANNUAL PASSENGER CAPACITY OF 200 MILLION PEOPLE WITH AN ANNUAL REVENUE POTENTIAL OF \$200 MILLION.

I CAN ASSURE THE GOOD PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE THAT WE WILL ACTUALIZE AN EFFICIENT, QUALITATIVE AND ULTRA-MODERN LIGHT RAIL MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM AS A FACILITY THAT WILL MAKE OUR FUTURE TRULY BRIGHTER AND MORE REWARDING IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.

LET US NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS ONE THING TO BUILD QUALITY ROADS AND OTHER FACILITIES OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD FOR EFFICIENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. BUT IT IS ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY FOR SUCH FACILITIES TO BE USED IN A SAFE, DISCIPLINED AND LAWFUL MANNER THAT PROMOTES THE COLLECTIVE GOOD OF SOCIETY. THE BEST ROADS IN THE WORLD OR THE MOST ATTRACTIVE AND IMPRESSIVE VEHICLES BECOME A VERITABLE WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION IF THE HUMAN BEINGS WHO MAKE USE OF THEM HAVE NO RESPECT FOR TRAFFIC RULES AND REGULATIONS.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS, WE WILL NOTICE THAT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON OUR ROADS HAS RISEN TO UNPRECEDENTED HEIGHTS. OF COURSE, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER THE CAUSE. AT THIS FESTIVE PERIOD, LAGOS IS BUSIER THAN EVER. THOUSANDS OF VEHICLES ARE BRINGING ASSORTED GOODS- VEGETABLES, PEPPER, YAM, FRUITS, CATTLE, POULTRY AND OTHER FOODSTUFF; CLOTHING; ELECTRONIC GADGETS, PLASTICS, FOOTWEAR – AMONG OTHERS INTO LAGOS ON DAILY BASIS. HUNDREDS OF TRUCKS ARE MOVING GOODS MASSIVELY OUT OF THE PORTS. TONS OF BEER, SOFT DRINKS, HAMPERS AND ASSORTED GIFTS ARE BEING MOVED BY CORPORATE BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS FROM

ONE PART OF THE CITY TO THE OTHER. FAMILIES ARE MOVING DAILY TO VARIOUS RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT SPOTS. THE TRUTH IS THAT WE ALL CONTRIBUTE OUR QUOTA IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER TO THE CONGESTION. FOR BOTH GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE, THIS TYPIFIES THE CHALLENGE OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL THAT WE CANNOT RUN AWAY FROM.

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE CANNOT BUILD OUR WAY OUT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION. IN ANY CASE, OUR RESTRICTED LAND MASS LIMITS THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE CAN BUILD NEW ROADS. AND EVEN WHEN WE EMBARK ON NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO COMPLETE THEM. WE HAVE NO CHOICE, THEREFORE, BUT TO APPRECIATE THAT THE ROAD IS A RESOURCE THAT MUST BE SHARED AND JUDICIOUSLY USED. LIKE ALL RESOURCES, ROADS ARE NOT LIMITLESS. EACH TIME WE WANT TO PUT OUR VEHICLES ON THE ROAD, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SERIOUSLY ASK OURSELVES IF WE REALLY NEED TO MAKE THAT TRIP. CAN THE SAME PURPOSE BE SERVED BY MAKING A PHONE CALL, SENDING A TEXT MESSAGE OR ANE-MAIL?

SIMPLY PUT, WE CAN BEGIN TO MAKE USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY TO HELP REDUCE THE CONGESTION ON OUR ROADS IN OUR COLLECTIVE INTEREST.

AND WHEN WE HAVE TO PUT OUR VEHICLES ON THE ROAD, OUR JOB OF TRAFFIC CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT WILL BE MADE MUCH EASIER IF WE LEARN TO BE PATIENT AND TOLERANT. THE DEGREE OF IMPUNITY EXHIBITED BY ALL CATEGORIES OF DRIVERS ON OUR ROADS IS SIMPLY ALARMING AND UNACCEPTABLE. I HAVE PERSONALLY APPREHENDED CIVILIANS AND UNIFORMED PERSONNEL; MEN AND WOMEN; NIGERIANS AND EXPATRIATES; ILLITERATE AND HIGHLY EDUCATED PEOPLE DRIVING AGAINST TRAFFIC OR DISREGARDING TRAFFIC LIGHTS OR DRIVING ACROSS TRAFFIC MEDIANS. OUR HIGHWAYS HAVE BECOME THEATRES OF ANARCHY WHERE ANYTHING, NO MATTER HOW OUTRAGEOUS IS POSSIBLE. WE CANNOT CONTINUE THIS WAY.

IT CANNOT BE SAID TOO OFTEN THAT THE WAY WE CONDUCT OURSELVES ON THE HIGHWAYS IS A SIGNIFICANT BAROMETER OF OUR COLLECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH AS A SOCIETY. TRAFFIC LAWLESSNESS HAS DONE TOO MUCH HARM TO US ALREADY. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS DETERRENENTS TO THE SMOOTH INFLOW OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT. IT HAS LED TO THE AVOIDABLE LOSS OF NUMEROUS PRECIOUS LIVES. IT HAS RENDERED MANY MORE USELESS TO SOCIETY BY MAIMING AND CONFINING THEM TO HOSPITAL BEDS AND WHEEL CHAIRS. IT RESULTS IN THE LOSS DAILY OF VALUABLE ECONOMIC MAN-HOURS THROUGH AVOIDABLE TRAFFIC HICCUPS. IT NOURISHES STREET TRADING, HINDERS SECURITY PERSONNEL FROM EFFECTIVELY FIGHTING CRIME AND MAKES EFFICIENT AND TIMELY RESPONSE OF FIRE AND MEDICAL SERVICES DIFFICULT WHEN EMERGENCIES OCCUR. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE ACTED DECISIVELY TO CHECK THE MENACE OF LAWLESSNESS ON OUR ROADS OVER THE LAST 200 DAYS.

WE HAVE RECRUITED AND TRAINED AN ADDITIONAL 1000 NEW STAFF TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE LAGOS STATE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (LASTMA) TO ENFORCE TRAFFIC DISCIPLINE. TO FURTHER ENHANCE EFFECTIVE TRAFFIC MONITORING AND CONTROL BY LASTMA, WE PROCURED 50 NEW HIGH CAPACITY MOTORBIKES AND THEIR REQUISITE ACCESSORIES FOR THE OUTFIT WHILE LASTMA WILL SOON TAKE DELIVERY OF ANOTHER SET OF 50 MOTORBIKES. WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED THE LAGOS STATE SPECIAL TRAFFIC MAYORS TO COMPLEMENT LASTMA AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFIC CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT. ALL OF THESE ARE TO BE COMMISSIONED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. I MUST NOT FAIL TO COMMEND LASTMA FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF TRAFFIC

ALONG THE OWODE ONIRIN - IKORODU ROAD FOLLOWING THE RECENT COLLAPSE OF THE CULVERT AT AJEGUNLE VILLAGE.

THE INDISCRIMINATE PARKING OF TANKERS AND TRAILERS ON OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES ESPECIALLY IN APAPA AND IJORA CONSTITUTE A GRAVE DANGER TO THE ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY OF LAGOS STATE. WE HAVE THUS COMPLETED AND COMMISSIONED THE NEW TRUCK TERMINAL IN APAPA TO CHECK THIS MENACE AND PROTECT THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE. OUR STANCE OF ZERO-TOLERANCE FOR THE CONVERSION OF OUR BRIDGES AND HIGHWAYS INTO MOTOR PARKS AND MARKETS REMAINS FIRM AND IRREVOCABLE. WE HAVE RECENTLY CLEARED CARTER BRIDGE AND THE TRAILERS ON ORILE AND IGANMU INTO THE NEWLY COMMISSIONED TRAILER PARK WHILE WORK ON THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PARK IS IN PROGRESS.

OUR ADMINISTRATION HAS FURTHER ELEVATED THE ALREADY VERY HIGH STANDARD OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES IN THE STATE THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF AUTOMATED HACKNEY PERMIT AND AUTOMATED VEHICLE INSURANCE. THESE INITIATIVES WILL COMPLEMENT AND CONSOLIDATE THE EARLIER SUCCESSES RECORDED WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF AUTOMATED VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL OF VEHICLE LICENSE TAGGED AUTOREG. THE RESULT WILL BE EVEN GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY IN OBTAINING THESE CRITICAL DOCUMENTS, ELIMINATION OF TOUTING AND FAKING, HIGHER SAFETY STANDARDS OF VEHICLES AND IMPROVED REVENUE GENERATING CAPACITY FOR LAGOS STATE.

WE HAVE EQUALLY AWARDED DRIVER EDUCATION INSTITUTES WITH CONTEMPORARY TRAINING FACILITIES FOR CONSTRUCTION IN THE FIVE DIVISIONS OF THE STATE. DRIVERS IN LAGOS STATE WILL BE TRAINED AND RE-TRAINED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS AT THESE FACILITIES ON TRAFFIC SIGNS, TRAFFIC RULES AND REGULATIONS AND BASIC VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AMONG OTHERS. A LAGOS STATE WHERE TRAFFIC EFFICIENCY, DISCIPLINE AND SANITY PREVAIL IS SURELY POSSIBLE AND WE WILL NOT RELENT UNTIL THIS IS ACHIEVED.

BEFORE I LEAVE THIS MATTER, LET ME SAY A WORD ABOUT THE USE OF SIREN. SIREN DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM, IT AGGRAVATES IT. EXCEPT PROBABLY FOR AMBULANCES, THE FIRE SERVICE OR POLICE ON LIFE SAVING MISSIONS, THE USE OF SIREN IS INTOLERABLE AND UNLAWFUL. PERSONALLY I DO NOT USE IT BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT IS UNCIVILIZED. MY COLLEAGUES IN THE CABINET ABHOR IT AND WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE WHO MEANS WELL FOR OUR GOVERNMENT AND LAGOS STATE WILL DO AWAY WITH IT. IF WE SUFFER THE TRAFFIC SNARLS FROM TIME TO TIME, IT SERVES AS A REALITY CHECK FOR US AND KEEPS THE ISSUE ON THE FRONT BURNER TILL WE ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY.

THE ENVIRONMENT

THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES AS HUMAN BEINGS IS SUBSTANTIALLY A REFLECTION OF THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH WE INHABIT. JUST LIKE FISH ARE ENDANGERED IN POISONED WATER, WE CAN NOT LIVE TRULY PRODUCTIVE AND FULFILLED LIVES IN AN UNHEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. IT IS CERTAINLY NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THE ENVIRONMENT, LIKE KOLA IN IGBO CULTURE, IS LIFE. BUT THE ENVIRONMENT CAN ALSO SIGNIFY DEATH IF IT IS ABUSED AND DEFILED. TO PERSIST IN LIVING IN AN UNSANITARY, UNPLANNED AND INHOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT ONLY TO SHORTCHANGE OURSELVES PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY AND PSYCHICALLY; IT IS TO DIE PREMATURELY BY INSTALLMENT.

OVER THE LAST 200 DAYS, WE HAVE INVESTED TREMENDOUS TIME, ENERGY AND RESOURCES IN REDEEMING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCING ITS VALUE.

FOR US, THE ENVIRONMENT IS A CRITICAL VARIABLE IN RE-DISCOVERING OUR SELF-ESTEEM AS A PEOPLE OF HONOR AND DIGNITY. WE HAVE THUS RESOLVED TO TRANSFORM OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB AND WEALTH CREATION. THIS IS WHY THE AGGRESSIVE GREENING AND BEAUTIFICATION OF OPEN SPACES, DECREPIT LOOPS, VERGES AND MEDIANS ACROSS THE STATE HAS BEEN A MAJOR PRE-OCCUPATION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION. THE FRUITS OF OUR BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS ARE ALREADY BEING SEEN IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE STATE RIGHT FROM ALAUSA SECRETARIAT AND ITS ENVIRONS THROUGH THE OLD TOLL GATE TO THE LAGOS – IBADAN EXPRESSWAY, OWORONSOKI, DOWN TO IKEJA, ILUPEJU, SURULERE, SIMPSON AND ADENIJI ADELE INTERCHANGE, LAGOS MARINA WATERFRONT AND IKOYI.

WE ARE ACHIEVING AT LEAST FOUR CRITICAL OBJECTIVES THROUGH OUR INTENSIVE GREENING AND BEAUTIFICATION OF OPEN SPACES PROGRAM. FIRST, WE ARE RESTORING THE AESTHETIC APPEAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE ENVIRONMENT. SECOND, WE ARE MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING THROUGH CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSION CONTROL. THIRD, WE ARE STIMULATING THE MARKET FOR SEEDLINGS, FERTILIZER AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL AND GARDENING IMPLEMENTS. FOURTHLY AND MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, WE ARE CREATING THOUSANDS OF NEW JOBS FOR PREVIOUSLY IDLE YOUTHS WHO NOW EARN A LIVING BY PLANTING, NURTURING AND PROTECTING THE SEEDLINGS AND BEAUTIFIED SPACES.

MOST OF THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN THAT WE SEE DAILY TENDING THESE SEEDLINGS WITH SUCH CARE AND PASSION WERE ONCE DERIDED AND WRITTEN OFF AS MISCREANTS. TODAY, THEY ARE USEFULLY ENGAGED IN BEAUTIFYING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THEREBY EXTRICATING THEIR LIVES FROM THE UGLINESS OF IDLENESS. THEY ARE ADDING VALUE TO SOCIETY AS PRACTICAL EMBODIMENTS OF THE DIGNITY OF LABOR. NOTHING I MUST CONFESS GIVES ME GREATER SATISFACTION THAN THIS.

WE WILL IN THE COMING YEAR SIGNIFICANTLY EXPAND THE SCOPE AND INTENSITY OF OUR GREENING LAGOS PROJECT. THE IMPACT OF OUR BEAUTIFICATION EFFORT IS BEING COMPLEMENTED BY THE NEW STREET DIRECTIONAL SIGNS AND CONTEMPORARY ADVERT BRANDING, WHICH ADD TO THE BEAUTY OF OUR CITY.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

OUR ADMINISTRATION HAS CONTINUED TO ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF THE LAGOS STATE WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (LAWMA) TO EFFICIENTLY MANAGE THE PROCESS OF WASTE COLLECTION, TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL IN THE STATE. IN ADDITION TO INTRODUCING DINO BINS IN 2000 LOCATIONS ACROSS THE STATE TO FACILITATE BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS, WE ALSO PROCURED ADDITIONAL VEHICLES TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR MORE EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF THE ENVIRONMENT. LET ME ALSO COMMEND THE RELENTLESS EFFORTS OF THE HIGHWAY SANITATION UNIT OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT IN EFFECTIVELY CLEANING AND MAINTAINING PRESIDENTIAL ROUTES AND MAJOR HIGHWAYS IN THE STATE. IN THE SAME VEIN, OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS IS PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY. UNDER THIS PROGRAM, THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS CURRENTLY PROVIDING TOILETS IN 22 SCHOOLS, BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS IN 12 SCHOOLS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS IN ANOTHER 12 SCHOOLS.

HERE, I MUST PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE COMMITTEE OF WIVES OF LAGOS STATE OFFICIALS (COWLSO), UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MY EVER SUPPORTIVE WIFE, THE FIRST LADY OF LAGOS STATE, MRS. ABIMBOLA FASHOLA, ALHAJA ABIBAT MOGAJI AND VARIOUS MARKET WOMEN GROUPS AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE RECONSTITUTED MARKET MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR THEIR UNTIRING EFFORTS TO ENSURE THE CLEANLINESS OF OUR MARKETS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE WEEKLY MARKET SANITATION DAYS HAVE APPRECIABLY IMPROVED THE ENVIRONMENT OF MARKETS ACROSS THE STATE. HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL A LOT TO BE DONE FOR US TO FULLY AND IRREVERSIBLY WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST REFUSE IN THE STATE. TOWARDS THIS END, WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING POLICY OBJECTIVES:

- REHABILITATION OF THE THREE EXISTING DUMP SITES AT OLUSHOSUN, SOLOUS AND ABULE EGBA
- ESTABLISHMENT OF THREE ADDITIONAL MECHANIZED LAND FILL SITES IN BADAGRY, MOWE AND IKORODU
- THE FULL TAKE-OFF AND CONSEQUENT EXPANSION OF THE WASTE- TO- WEALTH REFUSE CONVERSION PLANT IN IKORODU
- CONSTRUCTION OF THREE ADDITIONAL TRANSFER LOADING STATIONS AND
- IMPORTATION OF 100 NEW REFUSE COMPACTOR TRUCKS.

FLOOD CONTROL

THE SCOURGE OF INCESSANT FLOODING IS ANOTHER SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE WE HAVE TO COPE WITH IN LAGOS STATE. TO SOME EXTENT, THE PHENOMENON OF FLOODING IS ONLY A NATURAL AND PERHAPS UNAVOIDABLE CONSEQUENCE OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF LAGOS BELOW THE SEA LEVEL. IT IS EQUALLY TRUE, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY COMPOUNDED BY WIDESPREAD ACTS OF INDISCIPLINE INCLUDING DROPPING OF REFUSE INTO CANALS OR CONSTRUCTION OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ACROSS DRAINAGE CHANNELS.

IN THE LAST 200 DAYS, WE HAVE INTENSIFIED THE DREDGING AND CLEARANCE OF EXISTING DRAINAGE CHANNELS AS WELL AS THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ONES IN THE MOST FLOOD-PRONE PARTS OF THE STATE. BETWEEN JULY AND DECEMBER 2007, THE EMERGENCY FLOOD ABATEMENT GANG (EFAG) CLEARED 75KM OF DRAINS OF VARIOUS SIZES THROUGHOUT THE STATE. SIMILARLY, 270,000 CUBIC METERS OF SILT WAS EXCAVATED AND EVACUATED TO DESIGNATED DUMP SITES COVERING MOST OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS.

SINCE OUR ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE, THE OFFICE OF DRAINAGE HAS DREDGED, CONSTRUCTED OR REHABILITATED NO LESS THAN 41 MAJOR DRAINAGE PROJECTS ACROSS THE STATE. SOME OF THE MAJOR DRAINAGE PROJECTS EXECUTED IN THE LAST 200 DAYS INCLUDE:

- DREDGING OF OWODE ELEDE CHANNEL, AJEGUNLE
- DREDGING OF ITOWOLO/AJEGUNLE CHANNEL, KOSOFE
- DREDGING OF ASOLO/IKORODU CHANNEL, KOSOFE
- DREDGING OF KETU/ALAPERERE (DOWN STREAM) CHANNEL, IKORODU

- CONSTRUCTION OF IKOSI/ALADELOLA COLLECTOR CHANNEL, KOSOFE
- CONSTRUCTION OF ONISHIGIDA CHANNEL, IKORODU
- DREDGING OF JUBILLEE OMOLE CHANNEL, KOSOFE
- DREDGING AND CLEARING OF SYSTEM 2 FROM APATA TO UNILAG 1ST GATE, SHOMOLU
- REHABILITATION OF ODI-LOWO CHANNEL, MUSHIN
- CONSTRUCTION OF ALAFIA EXTENSION DRAIN, MUSHIN
- CONSTRUCTION OF OLUFUNMI/EJIGBO DRAIN, IDIMU
- CONSTRUCTION OF OSHODI DUCT, APAKUN, OSHODI
- DRAINAGE/SHORING OF ALAMUTU/KOBITI CHANNEL, IDI-ORO
- CONSTRUCTION OF MARTINS/ERUNTOLA CHANNEL, MUSHIN
- DRAINAGE OF EKORO DRAINAGE CHANNEL, ALIMOSHO
- DRAINAGE OF SHOMOLU CANAL/IGI OLUGBIN/JOHNSON/BAWALA/GBAGADA CHANNEL
- CLEANING OF GUINNESS/MANGORO CHANNEL, AGEGE
- DREDGING OF GUINNESS DOWNSTREAM/ ABEOKUTA EXPRESSWAY/MM AIRPORT DOWNSTREAM CHANNEL, ALIMOSHO
- DREDGING OF ERELU/ABORU/COMMAND DRAINAGE CHANNEL, AGEGE
- DREDGING OF EBINPEJO/AROWOJOBÉ CHANNEL, ANTHONY,
- DREDGING OF OWORONSHOKI CHANNEL, SHOMOLU
- DREDGING OF OLOWO-IRA CHANNEL, KOSOFE
- REHABILITATION OF IDIMU ROAD/ABEOKUTA TO KOGBEREGBE RIVER COLLECTOR CHANNEL, ALIMOSHO
- CONSTRUCTION OF CONDUIT DRAIN AT REGINA OLAORE/ISHERI HOLIDAY INN, KOSOFE
- RECONSTRUCTION OF DAMAGED DRAIN AT COMMAND BRIDGE, IPAJA, ALIMOSHO
- PARK VIEW DRAINAGE REHABILITATION, ETI-OSA
- REHABILITATION OF BELL STREET DRAIN, ETI-OSA
- CONSTRUCTION OF SONIBARE DRAIN AND CULVERT, ETI-OSA
- REHABILITATION OF HOGAN BASSEY AND COLLECTOR CHANNEL, SURULERE

- CONSTRUCTION OF IWAYA MAKOKO DRAIN AND CULVERT, MARYLAND
- REHABILITATION OF JAMES GEORGE/ALAGBON IJEH COLLECTOR DRAIN, IKOYI
- SHORING OF GBAGADA CHANNEL, SHOMOLU
- DREDGING OF IREDE IRA CHANNEL, OJO
- DREDGING OF SYSTEM IV CHANNEL, TEJUOSHO-ALAKA, SURULERE
- DREDGING OF OLOGOLO CHANNEL, AJAH, ETI-OSA
- CLEANING OF PELEWURA CHANNEL, APAPA AND
- DREDGING OF SYSTEM V CHANNEL UPSTREAM, SURULERE.

PERMIT ME AT THIS POINT, MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS, TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF ONE OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST PUBLIC SERVANTS EVER TO SERVE IN THE LAGOS STATE PUBLIC SERVICE; A RARE GEM, WHO DEPARTED THIS EARTH ON SUNDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 2007. I SPEAK OF NONE OTHER THAN ENGINEER OLUBUNMI SANTOS, WHO UNTIL HIS DEATH WAS THE PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE OFFICE OF DRAINAGE SERVICES. ENGINEER SANTOS WAS A MOBILE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE INTRICATE DRAINAGE NETWORK OF LAGOS STATE. I NEVER MET A MAN MORE COMMITTED TO HIS JOB OR MORE PASSIONATE ABOUT SALVAGING THE LANDSCAPE OF LAGOS FROM THE MENACE OF FLOODS.

ENGINEER SANTOS SERVED LAGOS STATE WITH UNCOMPROMISING COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION ALL HIS LIFE AND HIS DEPARTURE IS A DEEP PERSONAL LOSS TO ME AT THIS CRITICAL PERIOD WHEN HIS EXPERTISE AND PASSION ARE SO BADLY NEEDED IN THIS STATE. ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE, I EXPRESS OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCE TO HIS WIFE, CHILDREN, AGED MOTHER AND OTHER LOVED ONES. WE PRAY THAT GOD ALMIGHTY WILL COMFORT AND STRENGTHEN THEM IN THIS HOUR OF PAIN. MAY I REQUEST US, WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER, TO RISE AND OBSERVE A MINUTE OF SILENCE IN HONOR OF A TRULY GREAT MAN WHOSE TENURE ON EARTH ADDED TREMENDOUS VALUE TO OUR LIVES...

MAY HIS NOBLE SOUL REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

WE SHALL CONTINUE TO AGGRESSIVELY EXPAND AND MAINTAIN OUR DRAINAGE NETWORK TO EFFECTIVELY CHECK THE DESTRUCTIVE EXPERIENCE OF FLOODING. BUT THEN, A LOT DEPENDS ON THE SANITARY HABITS OF OUR PEOPLE AND THE VIGILANCE OF THE COMMUNITIES THROUGH WHICH THE CANALS AND DRAINAGE CHANNELS ARE LOCATED. THE DUMPING OF FOOD STUFF AND PURE WATER SACHETS AND TYRES AND EVEN THE CARCASSES OF VEHICLES IN CANALS AND DRAINS MUST STOP IN OUR OWN INTEREST. OUR VARIOUS COMMUNITIES MUST POLICE THEIR WATER FLOW CHANNELS CLOSELY. THEY MUST APPREHEND THOSE WHO ACT IN ANY WAY TO BLOCK THE DRAINS AND CANALS AND HAND THEM OVER TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS. ANYONE WHO AIDS AND ABETS FLOODING THROUGH SHEER INDISCIPLINE AND CALLOUSNESS IS AN ENEMY OF THE COMMUNITY AND MUST BE TREATED AS SUCH. ALL OF THESE ASSETS CONSTITUTE OUR COMMONWEALTH BECAUSE THEY ARE BUILT FROM OUR TAXES. ANY PERSON WHO THREATENS OR DESECRATES THEM THREATENS OUR SURVIVAL AND MUST BE RESISTED.

IN THE SAME MANNER THAT EUROPEANS PREPARE FOR WINTER BY HEATING AND CHANGING TO WARM CLOTHING, WE WILL BEGIN TO DELIBERATELY AND

METHODICALLY PREPARE FOR THE RAINY SEASON. WE WILL UTILIZE THE DRY SEASON, WHEN THERE IS NO FLOODING, TO LAUNCH A MASSIVE CAMPAIGN FOR ACTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACROSS THE STATE IN THE CLEARANCE OF ALL WATER FLOW CHANNELS SO THAT THE ONSET OF RAINS NO LONGER TAKE US BY SURPRISE. AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE ARE UNIQUE IN HAVING THE CAPACITY FOR REASONING, ANALYTICAL THOUGHT AND PROACTIVE INITIATIVE. WE MUST NO LONGER ALLOW A NONE-REASONING; NON-LIVING PHENOMENON LIKE FLOODING TO OUT-MANEUVER AND RENDER US HELPLESS. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

BAR BEACH RECLAMATION AND RESTORATION

DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ATLANTIC OCEAN HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF LAGOS STATE; A STATE I FONDLY DESCRIBE AS THE BRIDE OF THE ATLANTIC. THE BAR BEACH IN PARTICULAR IS INTIMATELY INTER-TWINED WITH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL LIFE OF VICTORIA ISLAND; ONE OF THE MOST VITAL ECONOMIC NERVE CENTERS OF LAGOS STATE. ANY INVESTMENT IN THE BAR BEACH IS THEREFORE AN INVESTMENT IN THE PROSPERITY AND SECURITY OF LAGOS STATE AS A WHOLE.

ACCORDINGLY, WITHIN OUR FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE, WE HAD MOBILIZED A CONTRACTOR TO SITE TO COMMENCE WORK ON EXTENSION OF THE SEA DEFENSE WALL BY CONSTRUCTING AN ADDITIONAL 500 METERS TO THE 1000 METERS OF SEA DEFENSE WALL OF THE BAR BEACH. THIS IS TO FURTHER INSULATE VICTORIA ISLAND AND IKOYI AGAINST DESTRUCTIVE OCEAN SURGES AND ENABLE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR BAR BEACH RECLAMATION PROGRAM.

OUR EFFORTS HAVE REVIVED THE BAR BEACH WATER FRONT BECAUSE PROPERTIES HITHERTO ABANDONED DUE TO THE THREAT OF THE SEA HAVE COME BACK TO LIFE; THEIR VALUES HAVE SOARED IN THE MARKET AND THEY ARE ALREADY BEING DEPLOYED FOR PRODUCTIVE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY. WE ONLY SEEK A RECIPROICATION OF OUR EFFORTS AND INSPIRATION TO DO MORE BY APPEALING TO THE OWNERS OF THOSE PROPERTIES TO COOPERATE WITH US BY PROMPTLY PAYING THEIR PROPERTY TAXES UNDER THE LAND USE CHARGE LAW.

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BAR BEACH PROJECT, WHICH WE HAVE CHRISTENED THE EKO ATLANTIC CITY PROJECT, WILL SOON LEAVE THE DRAWING BOARD AND HIT MOTHER EARTH IN WHAT WILL BE THE LARGEST CIVIL WORKS PROJECT EVER UNDERTAKEN IN AFRICA.

PHYSICAL PLANNING AND SLUM UPGRADING

THE RIGOROUS CONCEPTUALIZATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT LAWS IS INDISPENSABLE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF A HEALTHY, APPEALING AND SANE ENVIRONMENT. A CARDINAL PRIORITY OF OUR ADMINISTRATION IS THE ELEVATION OF PHYSICAL PLANNING STANDARDS IN LAGOS STATE AS WELL AS ENSURING STRICT COMPLIANCE BY ALL CATEGORIES OF CITIZENS; RICH AND POOR; HIGH AND LOW; WITH OUR PHYSICAL PLANNING LAWS.

WE ACHIEVED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN THIS RESPECT WHEN WE RECENTLY SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE RELOCATION OF SAW-MILLERS FROM OKO-BABA IN EBUTE-META TO AGBOWA-IKOSI IN EPE DIVISION.

SIMILARLY, WE HAVE RELOCATED THE RESIDENTS OF OLUWOLE AREA OF LAGOS, ALL OF THESE IN READINESS FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF OUR URBAN RENEWAL PLAN FOR LAGOS.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS ACHIEVEMENT IS UNDERScoreD BY THE FACT THAT SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS HAD TRIED FOR OVER 27 YEARS SINCE 1987 TO RELOCATE THE SAW-MILLERS FROM OKO-BABA. THE OLUWOLE RE-SETTLEMENT HAD LINGERED SINCE 1951. FORTUNE HAS CERTAINLY SMILED ON US AND WE INTEND TO MAKE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITY. WE IMPLOR E MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO COMPLEMENT OUR EFFORTS BY INVESTING IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT WHERE THE ROADS, DRAINAGE AND ALL RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE HAVE BEEN RENEWED, AND DEVELOPING NEW OFFICE BLOCKS, MALLS, SHOPS, CONVENTION CENTERS AND OTHER FACILITIES THAT WILL CHANGE THE SKYLINE OF LAGOS FOREVER. EKO MUST ALWAYS BE FOR SHOW OF EXCELLENCE RATHER THAN FOR SLUMS OF DESTITUTION.

IN RESPONSE TO THE MEGA CITY STATUS OF LAGOS, GOVERNMENT IS UNDER TAKING THE PREPARATION OF MODEL CITY PLANS TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS WITHIN 10 YEARS, FROM 2007 TO 2017. ALREADY, VICTORIA ISLAND AND IKOYI MODEL CITY PLANS HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED AND LAUNCHED, WHILE THOSE OF LEKKI, SURULERE, APAPA/AJEROMI, ALIMOSHO, AND OJO/AMUWO ALONG WITH MASTER PLANS FOR IKORODU AND BAGADRY ARE PROGRAMMED FOR PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN 2008 AND BEYOND.

EQUALLY, A MASSIVE SLUM UPGRADING, INVOLVING TRUNK INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY, IS SET TO COMMENCE IN 760 HECTARES OF SLUMS COVERING – AGEGE, AJEGUNLE, AMUKOKO, BADIA, IWAYA, MAKOKO, ILAJE, BARIGA AND IJESHATEDO/ITIRE, UNDER THE LAGOS METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE PROJECT (LMDGP). THE \$200 MILLION WORLD BANK-ASSISTED PROJECT CONSISTS OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT, DRAINAGE SERVICES, WATER SUPPLY, ROADS AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AMONG OTHERS. WE HAVE ALREADY AWARDED CONTRACTS FOR THE FIRST PHASE IN THE REGION OF N1.01 BILLION.

SIMILARLY, THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME (SLGP) OF THE BRITISH DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID) IS SET TO TACKLE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AT OBALENDE ROUNDABOUT WHILE THE RENOVATION OF THE OBALENDE PRIMARY SCHOOL, IJEH-IKOYI, IS ON-GOING IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

ADDITIONALLY, THE STATE IS TO UNDERTAKE COMMUNITY SLUM UPGRADING STUDY FOR IMPROVEMENT OF ABULE OJA, IDI-ARABA, IJORA-OLOYE, SHOGUNLE AND ORILE-IGANMU. AND FOR REASONS OF ORDERLY PHYSICAL GROWTH, EXCISION GUIDES AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ARE PROPOSED FOR MOLADE (EPE), AJARA (BADAGRY), OGOMBO (ETI-OSA), AND BAIYEKU/IGBOGBO (IKORODU). THE IMPACT OF THESE INTERVENTIONS ON THE SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY DEGRADED AREAS AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS OF THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY WILL RE-ESTABLISH THEM AS FUNCTIONING HUBS OF THE LAGOS MEGA CITY.

ALREADY, THE STATE IS WORKING WITH SEVERAL MULTI AND BILATERAL INSTITUTIONS TO FINANCE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$50BILLION. TO DEEPEN THE PROCESS, AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN THE NEW LAGOS PROJECT, A STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM ON FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE IN LAGOS STATE, WAS RECENTLY HELD AS A PRELUDE TO THE INTERNATIONALLY ACKNOWLEDGED EHINGBETI FORUM (LAGOS STATE ECONOMIC SUMMIT) SCHEDULED FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2008.

I URGE ALL COLLABORATORS TO DEEPEN THEIR PARTICIPATION TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF A FUNCTIONAL AND VIBRANT LAGOS MEGA CITY.

I MUST ALSO MENTION OUR DECISIVE MOVE IN COMPULSORILY ACQUIRING THE DEFECTIVE BANK OF INDUSTRY BUILDING ON LAGOS ISLAND THAT HAD BEEN UNACCEPTABLY ABANDONED FOR TOO LONG AND CONSTITUTES A MENACING DANGER TO LIVES AND PROPERTY. I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT A REPUTABLE FIRM OF ENGINEERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA, WITH EXPERIENCE IN SUCH WORK, IS SET TO MOVE TO SITE FOR THE CONTROLLED DEMOLITION OF THE BUILDING AND SOME OTHER ADJOINING STRUCTURES. WE WILL SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFER THE SPECIALIZED SKILLS FOR SUCH INTRICATE ENGINEERING OPERATIONS TO OUR INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONALS. THE GOOD PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE CAN BE ASSURED THAT WE WILL NEVER SHIRK OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A GOVERNMENT TO ACT BOLDLY IN SAFEGUARDING THEIR PRECIOUS LIVES AND VALUABLE PROPERTY AT ALL TIMES.

IT IS TIME TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTION TO STEM THE AVOIDABLE SPATE OF FLOODING, FIRE DISASTERS, BUILDING COLLAPSE AND LEAKY OIL PIPELINES WITH DESTRUCTIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITY LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION. CONSEQUENTLY, COMPLIANCE WITH BUILDING CODES AND PHYSICAL PLANNING REGULATIONS IS IMPERATIVE IF WE ARE TO REDUCE THE HIGH INCIDENCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS. IN RESPONSE, OUR MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED AND DECENTRALIZED ALONG REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LINES TO BETTER MANAGE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT. IN ADDITION, THE LAGOS STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (LASEMA) WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE YEAR TO COORDINATE DISASTER RESPONSE. WE WILL WORK HARD TO GET THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO COLLABORATE MORE CLOSELY WITH US TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY AND SAFETY OF OIL PIPELINES AND RIVERINE COMMUNITIES IN LAGOS STATE.

WATER SUPPLY

POOR POWER SUPPLY REMAINS A MAJOR HINDRANCE TO ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF POTABLE WATER IN A SPRAWLING MEGA CITY LIKE LAGOS. THE LAGOS WATER CORPORATION IS, THEREFORE, BEING EMPOWERED TO CONSTRUCT A 12.5MW INDEPENDENT POWER PLANT AT AKUTE. THE FACILITY, WHICH WILL BECOME FUNCTIONAL IN 2008, WILL INCREASE OPERATING CAPACITY. DURING THE CURRENT YEAR, FIVE MICRO-WATER WORKS INCLUDING THE 4.4 MILLION LITRE IJORA-BADIA FACILITY, WERE COMPLETED AND WATER NETWORK EXPANSION UNDERTAKEN AT IWAYA, OJO, IJORA-BADIA, OWORONSOKI, OTTO-AWORI AND IGANDO.

IN 2008, NEW MINI WATERWORKS ARE TO BE PROVIDED AT IKATE, LAGOS ROAD (IKORODU), BADOBE, (ETI-OSA), ANTHONY/MENDE (IKEJA), AND AGRIC-EPE. EQUALLY, THE REHABILITATION OF IJU, ADIYAN AND AKUTE WATER WORKS ARE TO BE UNDERTAKEN.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

WE BELIEVE THAT THE QUALITY OF ITS MARKETS IS AN INDICATOR OF THE DEGREE OF DECENCY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIETY. OUR ADMINISTRATION THEREFORE REMAINS COMMITTED TO UPGRADING EXISTING MARKETS AND BUILDING NEW ONES TO STIMULATE HIGHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AND WEALTH CREATION.

RECENTLY, WE COMMISSIONED THE NEW BALOGUN MARKET COMMENCED BY MY PREDECESSOR AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO ENSURE THE COMPLETION ON SCHEDULE OF THE OLUWOLE URBAN MARKET AND MULTI-FUNCTIONAL CITY COMPLEX COMPRISING STALLS, SHOPS, ELEVATED CAR PARKS, RESTAURANTS, WHICH IS BEING DEVELOPED IN TWO PHASES. AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY, THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY, HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO CARRY OUT OVERSIGHT FUNCTION

ON THE EMERGENT INFRASTRUCTURE. WE HAVE ALSO AWARDED THE CONTRACT FOR THE RE-DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF THE OYINGBO MARKET AND EXPECT THE CONTRACTORS TO MOVE TO SITE EARLY IN 2008 WHEN THEY COMPLETE THE FORMALITIES OF THE CONTRACT.

OTHER MARKETS, WHICH WE PLAN TO RE-DEVELOP, INCLUDE TEJUOSHO, JANKARA, ELEDU, SANDGROUSE, IPONRI AND MANY OTHERS.

LAGOS MORTGAGE SCHEME

IN THE LAST 200 DAYS, WE HAVE BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION LAID BY THE IMMEDIATE PAST ADMINISTRATION TO WAGE A RELENTLESS ONSLAUGHT AGAINST POVERTY THROUGH OUR POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN DIVERSE SECTORS INCLUDING EDUCATION, HEALTH, HOUSING, JOB CREATION AND JUSTICE TO NAME A FEW.

THE NEW LAGOS STATE MORTGAGE SCHEME, WHICH WE HAVE INSTITUTED TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSES FOR LOW AND MEDIUM INCOME EARNERS, IS ONE OF THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY AND POTENT WEAPONS FASHIONED AGAINST POVERTY IN THIS POLITICAL DISPENSATION. UNDER THE SCHEME, WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH FIVE BANKS TO INJECT OVER N40 BILLION TO ENABLE OUR PEOPLE PAY TO OWN THEIR HOMES OVER A 25-YEAR PERIOD AT A MAXIMUM INTEREST RATE OF 10%.

THE BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR QUALIFICATION IS THE PROOF OF A JOB AND A STEADY STREAM OF INCOME SATISFACTORY TO THE BANKS, WHETHER YOU ARE IN THE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE LAGOS MORTGAGE SCHEME HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RAISE MILLIONS OF POOR PEOPLE OUT OF THE EXTREME POVERTY BRACKET BY TRANSFORMING THEM FROM TENANTS TO LANDLORDS IN A MOST CONVENIENT FASHION. I AM GENUINELY EXCITED AT THE ENORMOUS MULTIPLIER EFFECT WHICH THE MORTGAGE SCHEME WILL HAVE ON SEVERAL OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. IT WILL BOOST THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY THROUGH INCREASED DEMAND FOR MORE HOUSES BY THOSE FINANCIALLY EMPOWERED THROUGH THE SCHEME.

IT WILL STIMULATE DEMAND FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE; ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES; PLUMBING EQUIPMENT AND TEXTILES FOR BED SHEETS, PILLOW CASES, CURTAINS, CARPETS AND RUGS AMONG OTHERS.

IT WILL EVEN CREATE A LARGER MARKET FOR PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES, CARVINGS AND OTHER FORMS OF HOUSE HOLD DECORATIVE ART WORKS THEREBY ENLARGING THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THOSE WITH THE NECESSARY ARTISTIC SKILLS. IT WILL CREATE NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAWYERS, INSURANCE EXPERTS, ESTATE VALUERS AND ARCHITECTS AMONG SEVERAL OTHER PROFESSIONALS. THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE SCHEME TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND BOOST PROSPERITY ARE PRACTICALLY LIMITLESS. MUCH MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT WILL HELP US TO BEGIN TO CREATE A LARGE POOL OF DECENT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSES AND FACILITATE FASTER ELIMINATION SLUMS FROM OUR LANDSCAPE. ON OUR PART, WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS MORTGAGE SCHEME WILL DEEPEN THE DEMAND CURVE FOR HOUSES AND WE ARE RESPONDING TO THE SUPPLY IMPERATIVES THROUGH VARIOUS METHODS. THESE INCLUDE PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIVATE PROPERTY COMPANIES AND DIRECT CONSTRUCTION BY GOVERNMENT TO BUILD NEW HOUSES IN IKORODU, BADAGRY, IGBOGBO, LEKKI II, ABIJO AND EPE TO NAME A FEW.

WHILE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF CONCLUDING THE FORMALITIES TO ENABLE OUR FIRST BATCH OF CIVIL SERVANTS ACCESS THE FACILITIES, WE IMPLORE EMPLOYERS

OF LABOUR IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FACILITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THEIR EMPLOYEES.

EKO MICRO-FINANCE INITIATIVE AND JOB CREATION

OUR NEW EKO MICRO-FINANCE INITIATIVE WILL EQUALLY HAVE A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY IN OUR SOCIETY. WE HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED A SEED SUM OF N250 MILLION FOR THE TAKE OFF OF THE FUND, WHICH WILL PROVIDE CREDIT AT MINIMAL INTEREST RATE TO ENABLE INDIGENT PERSONS ESTABLISH SMALL SCALE ENTERPRISES. TO ENSURE ITS SUSTAINABILITY, OUR TARGET IS TO RAISE THE CAPITAL BASE OF THE SCHEME TO N5 BILLION.

THE EKO MICRO-FINANCE INITIATIVE WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO GRADUATE FROM OUR EMPOWERMENT AND SKILLS ACQUISITION CENTERS TO MAKE PROFITABLE USE OF THEIR EXPERTISE ON A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BASIS. INDEED, AS PART OF OUR POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY, SEVEN NEW OF SUCH VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS WERE ESTABLISHED THIS YEAR AT IGBOYE, LAGOS ISLAND, KOSOFE, EJIGBO, AMUWO-ODOFIN, OJO AND SURULERE.

I MENTIONED EARLIER THE CONVERSION OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL CHALLENGES INTO JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOUSANDS OF OUR YOUTHS; THEY ARE ENGAGED IN GREENING AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT OR WORKING ON VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION SITES. IN THE SAME WAY, WE HAVE USED THE REVIVAL OF DIFFERENT SPORTING ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY FOOTBALL, TO CREATE GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT FOR SO-CALLED AREA BOYS AND GIRLS; THEY ARE ALWAYS VERY PROUD TO SERVE AS SECURITY, CROWD CONTROL AND TRAFFIC CONTROL STEWARDS AT SUCH SOCIAL EVENTS.

IT WILL ALSO BE RECALLED THAT WITHIN OUR FIRST THIRTY DAYS IN OFFICE, WE CREATED 4500 HOLIDAY JOBS FOR STUDENTS ON VACATION ON A MONTHLY STIPEND OF N10,000.00 TO CUSHION THE FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THEIR PARENTS. MAJORITY OF THEM WERE ENGAGED IN OUR ENTERPRISES REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION AGENTS PROGRAM WHILE OTHERS WORKED IN DIVERSE AREAS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE. WE INTEND TO SUSTAIN AND EVEN EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE HOLIDAY JOB CULTURE IN FUTURE AS ANOTHER POVERTY ALLEVIATION MEASURE. WE WILL BE REACHING OUT TO MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZED PRIVATE SECTOR TO OPEN THEIR DOORS TO THESE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN DURING VACATION; TO HELP US KEEP THEM PRODUCTIVE AND MENTOR THEM WHILE THEIR PARENTS ARE BUSY AT WORK.

EDUCATION

FOR US, EDUCATION IS ANOTHER CRITICAL INSTRUMENT IN THE BATTLE AGAINST POVERTY. IT EMPOWERS THE INDIVIDUAL WITH THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND SET OF SKILLS TO ACTUALIZE POTENTIAL AND MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES IN LIFE. WE HAVE THUS SUSTAINED THE PROVISION OF FREE EDUCATION IN ALL PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE SO THAT NO CHILD WILL BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY SIMPLY BECAUSE OF A DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND. WE RECOGNIZE THAT WE CANNOT FIGHT POVERTY UNLESS WE GIVE PEOPLE JOBS AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO SKILLS CANNOT BE EMPLOYED; HENCE THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION.

OUR ADMINISTRATION IS EQUALLY CONTINUING THE AGGRESSIVE REHABILITATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF LAGOS STATE WITH THE TARGET OF BUILDING 15000 NEW CLASSROOMS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. WITHIN OUR FIRST HUNDRED DAYS IN OFFICE, WE PROCURED INTRO-TECHNOLOGY

AND SCIENCE EQUIPMENT WORTH N256 MILLION FOR 40 JUNIOR AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE STATE. AND UNDER OUR SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME, 166 SCHOOL STRUCTURES, MADE UP OF 51 PRIMARY, 43 JUNIOR SECONDARY AND 72 SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS RESPECTIVELY HAVE BEEN REHABILITATED IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS. WE EQUALLY UNDERTOOK THE REHABILITATION OF SIX PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ISOLO, EPE, ILUPEJU, IKORODU, BADAGRY AND IKEJA WHILE ALSO COMMENCING WORK ON THE REHABILITATION OF 1000 CLASSROOMS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF 2,500 NEW PROTOTYPE CLASSROOMS ACROSS THE STATE.

ALSO, BETWEEN MAY AND NOVEMBER, 2007, WE PAID N231.7 MILLION AS SCHOOL FEES AND BURSARY AWARDS FOR 8,883 LAGOS STATE INDIGENES AT THE LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY (LASU) AS WELL AS THE NIGERIAN LAW SCHOOL.

IN ADDITION TO THE PROGRAMMED MASSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CLASSROOMS, 3,000 CLASSROOMS IN SECONDARY AND 1,000 IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE EARMARKED FOR REHABILITATION IN 2008. ALSO, THE UPGRADING OF FOUR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: OKE-ODO HIGH SCHOOL (ALIMOSHO), OKE-AFA COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE (ISOLO), IKOGA GRAMMAR SCHOOL (BADAGRY), AND EWU-ELEPE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL (IKORODU) TO MODEL COLLEGE STATUS IS TO BE ACHIEVED. IN THE SAME VEIN, THE REHABILITATION OF THE EXISTING FIVE TECHNICAL COLLEGES AND THEIR ANNEXES IS ALSO SLATED FOR EXECUTION ALONG WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPECIALIZED MECHANICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, WORKS YARD, IKEJA, TO EXPAND ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

A MEASURE OF THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION IN LAGOS STATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE THE FOLLOWING RECENT AWARDS WON BY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS:

- OVERALL WINNER IN THE 2007 NATIONAL PHYSICS COMPETITION IN ENUGU
- BEST STATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR SCIENCE OLYMPIAD
- THE STATE WON TWO GOLD MEDALS AND ONE SILVER MEDAL AT THE INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR SCIENCE OLYMPIAD
- 16 LAGOS STATE PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WERE SHORT LISTED FOR THE BEST TEACHER BOURNVITA AWARD
- OVERALL WINNER OF Y2007 BEST TEACHER BOURNVITA AWARD.

WE WILL DO EVERYTHING TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE ON THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION AND FACILITIES IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE. IN THIS RESPECT, OUR ADMINISTRATION HAS EMBARKED ON A MASSIVE PROGRAMME OF TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING OF TEACHERS WHO ARE CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR. OUR OWN FUTURE CERTAINLY DEPENDS ON THE AMOUNT OF SKILLS AND EDUCATION THAT WE GIVE TO THE GENERATION BEHIND US. THEY WILL NEED THE KNOWLEDGE TO RUN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND PAY OUR PENSIONS AS WELL AS MAINTAIN THE ROADS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WE BUILD. IN PROVIDING QUALITATIVE EDUCATION FOR THE GENERATION BEHIND US, WE ALSO SECURE OUR OWN FUTURE.

HEALTH

THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE HEALTH SECTOR IN ANY SERIOUS EFFORT TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY AND PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELL BEING OF THE POPULACE CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASIZED. THIS IS BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS MUST FIRST OF ALL

BE ALIVE AND WELL BEFORE THEY CAN PURSUE OTHER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, INTELLECTUAL OR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY. WE MUST IN THIS REGARD COMMEND THE EFFORTS OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST ADMINISTRATION IN BEQUEATHING TO LAGOS STATE A QUALITATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM THAT HAS EARNED THE COMMENDATION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

OUR CHALLENGE IS TO RAISE THE BAR EVEN HIGHER AND ESTABLISH LAGOS AS AFRICA'S PRIME MEDICAL TOURISM DESTINATION. IF CUBA, WITHOUT OUR LEVEL OF RESOURCE ENDOWMENT, CAN HAVE A HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM THAT COMPARES WITH THE MOST ADVANCED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, WE CAN HAVE NO EXCUSE FOR NOT ASPIRING TO RANK AMONG THE BEST. THIS IS WHY WE ARE NOT RELENTING IN OUR EFFORT TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES PROVIDED IN OUR PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE.

OUR VISION IN THE HEALTH SECTOR IS TIED TO EXCELLENCE AND IN LINE WITH THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THESE GOALS FOCUS ON THE HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN AND MOTHERS AS THEY HAVE BEEN THE WORST HIT VICTIMS OF OUR POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT. IT IS FOR THIS REASON I DIRECTED OUR MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO COME UP WITH A UNIQUE HOME GROWN CONCEPT THAT WOULD ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM AND REDUCE THE INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES DRASTICALLY.

IT IS THEREFORE WITH PRIDE THAT I ANNOUNCE THAT WE HAVE DESIGNED A 106 BED INTEGRATED MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE CENTRE THAT WILL BE BUILT IN STRATEGIC AREAS ACROSS THE STATE. THESE INCLUDE IKORODU, ISOLO, IFAKO IJAIYE, AMUWO ODOFIN, GBAJA IN SURULERE AND AJEGUNLE IN AJEROMI.

EACH OF THESE CENTRES WILL HAVE 5 CLINICS FOR MOTHERS, THEIR BABIES AND CHILDREN, WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES; A LABOUR WARD WITH DELIVERY ROOM; A THEATRE FOR DOING CAESARIAN SECTION IN COMPLICATED DELIVERIES; WARDS FOR MOTHERS WHO SUFFER COMPLICATIONS BEFORE DELIVERY; ADDITIONAL WARDS FOR MOTHERS WITH THEIR BABIES AFTER DELIVERY; A FULL FLEDGED WARD FOR BABIES AND CHILDREN AND A NEONATAL UNIT FOR PREMATURE BABIES. THIS UNIQUE DESIGN IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN OUR COUNTRY AND HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH AS A NOVEL IDEA. AS USUAL WE ARE SETTING THE PACE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. WE WILL SPREAD THESE MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE CENTRES ROUND MORE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.

WE HAVE IDENTIFIED TRAUMA FROM ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, COLLAPSED BUILDINGS, GUNSHOT WOUNDS AND BURNS AS A MAJOR CAUSE OF MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN OUR BELOVED STATE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE HAVE DESIGNED SPECIAL INTEGRATED 50 BED TRAUMA AND BURNS CENTRES TO BE STRATEGICALLY PLACED AROUND LAGOS. THESE WILL BE SITUATED IN LEKKI, IKORODU, ALIMOSHO, EPE AND BADAGRY WHILE A DEDICATED EMERGENCY CENTER WILL BE BUILT ALONG THE LAGOS-IBADAN EXPRESS ROAD. THESE CENTRES HAVE BEEN RE-MODELED AROUND THE DESIGN OF OUR LASEMS SURGICAL EMERGENCY UNIT IN LASUTH, IKEJA.

EACH TRAUMA AND BURNS CENTRE WILL HAVE A RESUSCITATION AND TRIAGE AREA, 12-BED OBSERVATION WARDS EACH FOR MALE AND FEMALE PATIENTS, 4-BED INTENSIVE CARE UNIT, THEATRE WITH 3-BED RECOVERY ROOM , X-RAY ROOM , LABORATORY , PHARMACY, RECEPTION AND A RECORDS UNIT ON THE GROUND FLOOR. THEY WILL ALSO HAVE A 20-BED BURNS UNIT, CALL ROOMS FOR DOCTORS AS WELL AS AMBULANCE DRIVERS (OR WHAT WE NOW CALL FIRST RESPONDERS) CONTROL UNIT AND TRAINING ROOMS.

THESE FACILITIES WILL BE SUPPORTED BY THE INJECTION OF A NEW FLEET OF THE STATE-OF-THE-ART MOBILE INTENSIVE CARE UNITS FOR LASAMBUS. WE HAVE ALSO MADE A PROVISION FOR A MOBILE FIELD HOSPITAL WHICH CAN BE DEPLOYED IN THE EVENT OF ANY DISASTER. THIS WOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH FACILITIES SUCH AS A THEATRE, INTENSIVE CARE UNIT, LABORATORY AND OPEN WARDS. ADDITIONAL SHELTERS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ADDITIONAL CASUALTIES TO ENSURE THAT THE FIELD HOSPITAL CAN COPE WITH LARGE NUMBER OF CASES AT ANY GIVEN TIME BEFORE EVACUATION TO OUR HOSPITALS.

A VERY STRONG COMPONENT OF OUR PROGRAMME IS THE PROVISION OF TRAINING FOR ALL CADRE OF HEALTH WORKERS. THAT IS WHY WE WILL CONTINUE TO INVITE AND ENGAGE EXPERT TRAINERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO TRAIN OUR STAFF. IN 2007 WE PROVIDED ADVANCED TRAINING FOR 36 DOCTORS, 86 NURSES AND 35 DRIVERS ON PRE-HOSPITAL AND HOSPITAL EMERGENCY CARE. THE SYLLABUS RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION INCLUDE JOINT ROYAL COLLEGE AMBULANCE LIAISON COMMITTEE, AMERICAN SAFETY AND HEALTH INSTITUTE AND ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL AMBULANCE PERSONNEL EDUCATION.

OUR AMBULANCE DRIVERS ARE NOW FIRST RESPONDERS AND HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE MEDICAL TEAM. WE WILL CONTINUE WITH THIS IN 2008. OUR TRAINING PROGRAMMES TARGET ALL GRADES OF HEALTH WORKERS INCLUDING THE CLEANERS WHO ARE AT THE ENTRY LEVEL AS FACILITY MANAGEMENT STAFF. IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN OUR HEALTHCARE THERE IS A NEED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS ESPECIALLY NURSES. IN LINE WITH THIS WE HAVE PLANNED THE SETTING UP OF 6 NURSING SCHOOLS IN STRATEGIC AREAS AROUND THE STATE OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS.

OUR STATE IS A MEGA CITY AND THEREFORE OUR NEEDS AND CHALLENGES ARE PECULIAR. THIS IS WHY OUR SOLUTIONS MUST BE UNIQUE AND GLOBAL. OUR FOCUS ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE HAS NOT SHIFTED BUT OUR APPROACH IS DIFFERENT AND MORE APPROPRIATE TO OUR NEEDS. WE HAVE SUPPORTED THIS WITH SEVERAL PREVENTIVE PROGRAMMES SUCH AS OUR DIABETES AND HYPERTENSION INITIATIVES, IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME, HIV/AIDS PROGRAMME AND BREAST SCREENING FOR CANCER TO NAME A FEW. WE ALSO PLAN TO TAKE HEALTH CARE TO THE PEOPLE BY PROVIDING SOME STATE-OF-THE-ART MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS AND MOBILE DENTAL CLINICS IN OUR BUDGET FOR 2008. THESE UNITS WILL PROVIDE BOTH PREVENTIVE AND CURATIVE SERVICES IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS IN THE PROVISION OF SECONDARY HEALTH CARE THROUGH OUR GENERAL HOSPITALS. APART FROM INSERTION OF THE MCCS (MATERNAL AND CHILD CENTRES) AND TRAUMA AND BURNS CENTRES INTO SELECT HOSPITALS, WE HAVE PROVIDED FOR A SCHEDULED AND SYSTEMATIC REHABILITATION OF ALL OUR GENERAL HOSPITALS. LAGOS ISLAND IS OUR PRIDE AND HERITAGE. WITH THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PROJECT EMBARKED UPON BY MY PREDECESSOR, ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO UPLIFT THE WHOLE ENVIRONMENT. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I HAVE DIRECTED THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO COMMENCE PLANS IMMEDIATELY FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE LAGOS GENERAL HOSPITAL INTO A MULTI-STOREY GENERAL AND MULTI-SPECIALIST HOSPITAL BEFITTING THE ON-GOING DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ISLAND. WE HAVE THEREFORE MADE A PROVISION FOR THIS ICONIC HEALTH PROJECT THAT WOULD FURTHER SHOWCASE OUR STATE AS A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE. THIS PROJECT WILL BE INITIATED IN 2008 BUT WILL TAKE 2-3 YEARS TO COMPLETE.

OUR VISION IS NOT DRIVEN BY THE INFRASTRUCTURE BUT BY THE REAL IMPACT ON OUR CITIZENS. THIS WILL ONLY COME THROUGH THE FOCUSED AND CONTINUED

DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PERSONNEL. THIS IS WHY IT HAS BEEN A CONTINUOUS PRIORITY OF THE PREVIOUS AND NOW MY GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP THE CAPACITY OF OUR HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND STUDENTS THROUGH TRAINING AND THEIR INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING. MEDICINE, ANY DOCTOR WILL TELL YOU, IS TAUGHT AT THE PATIENT'S BEDSIDE AND THEREFORE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR TEACHING HOSPITAL CAN NOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED. ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU, MY PREDECESSOR, STARTED WITH THE REHABILITATION, EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF LASUTH AND LASUCOM TO ENSURE THAT LAGOS STATE MEETS THE ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAL AND DENTAL COUNCIL AND TURNS OUT THE BEST TRAINED DOCTORS IN THE COUNTRY.

WE ARE DETERMINED TO COMPLETE THESE PROJECTS IN 2008 AND THEREBY INCREASE THE BED CAPACITY OF LASUTH FROM 520 TO 750 IN THE NEW YEAR. OUR ADMINISTRATION WILL ALSO COMPLETE AND COMMISSION NEXT YEAR THE BT HEALTH AND DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE THAT IS A STATE OF THE ART COMPLEX AND MATCHES THE SERVICES OF ANY CENTER IN THE WORLD. THIS BUILDING WITH ITS MR, CT SCAN, FLUOROSCOPY, GENERAL RADIOLOGY UNIT, MAMMOGRAPHY, ULTRASONOGRAPHY UNITS WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO DO ANY IMAGING INVESTIGATION LOCALLY AND SAVE THE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS SPENT TO SEND PATIENTS ABROAD. IT ALSO HAS ONE OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED INTEGRATED LABORATORIES AND ADVANCE SCREENING CENTRES FOR YEARLY MEDICAL CHECK-UP.

THE OTHER 2 PROJECTS TO BE COMPLETED AND COMMISSIONED INCLUDE THE 144 BED BT WARD COMPLEX FOR OUR SPECIALTY UNITS SUCH AS CARDIOTHORACIC, ORTHOPEDICS, ENT AND OPHTHALMOLOGY AMONG OTHERS AS WELL AS THE 110 BED PEDIATRIC COMPLEX WITH 10 CLINICS , PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY UNIT AND WARDS.

TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE AND BEFITTING FACILITIES FOR THE PROFESSORS AND CONSULTANTS AT THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, WE EMBARKED ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 4-STOREY OFFICE BLOCK COMPLEX FOR THE FACULTY OF CLINICAL SCIENCES. THIS FACILITY ON COMPLETION WILL HAVE 64 OFFICES, DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES AND TUTORIAL ROOMS. IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT WE FULLY ACCOMMODATE OUR MEDICAL STUDENTS, WHICH IS A PRE-REQUISITE OF THE MEDICAL AND DENTAL COUNCIL, WE WILL CONSTRUCT A 178 BED STUDENTS' HOSTEL WITH ALL THE FACILITIES TO ENSURE THEIR CARE AND COMFORT. THESE INCLUDE KITCHEN AND DINNING ROOM TO SIT 100 STUDENTS AT A TIME, MULTI-PURPOSE HALL FOR MEETINGS AND INDOOR SPORTS, LAUNDRY ROOMS, BUTTERY, SHOPS, BUSINESS CENTRE, STUDY ROOMS, JANITORS' ROOMS AND STUDENT UNION OFFICES.

DUE TO THE CONGESTION AT LASUTH, OUR GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO DEVELOP AN ANNEX FOR LASUTH AT GBAGADA GENERAL HOSPITAL. THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS COMPLETED THE MASTER PLAN AND VARIOUS FACILITIES WILL BE SITED HERE. THESE INCLUDE THE CARDIAC CENTRE, CANCER CENTRE AS WELL AS THE EMERGENCY AND DISASTER TRAINING CENTRE. PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE 2008 BUDGET FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE CARDIAC AND DIALYSIS CENTRE. WE HAVE ALREADY SENT A COUPLE OF OUR SENIOR STAFF FOR SPECIALIST TRAINING IN VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS ABROAD TO GET SET FOR THE CENTRE.

WE ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE HIGH AND INCREASING PREVALENCE OF CANCER IN NIGERIA CAUSING GREAT SUFFERING TO THOUSANDS OF CANCER PATIENTS. ONE IN EVERY 5 ADULTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 50YEARS WILL DEVELOP A FORM OF CANCER IN OUR GENERATION. THERE ARE VERY FEW TREATMENT CENTRES WITH OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT, DEPLETED COBALT SOURCES AND FEW POORLY TRAINED STAFF. THIS IS FURTHER COMPOUNDED BY THE FACT THAT TREATMENT CENTRES ARE VERY EXPENSIVE TO SET UP WITH NEGLIGIBLE PRIVATE SECTOR

CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE SUCH SERVICES. THEREFORE, THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP LOCAL CAPACITY TO TREAT CANCER.

OUR ADMINISTRATION OWES IT AS A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO LAGOSIANS TO ALLEVIATE THEIR SUFFERING FROM CANCER. WITH MODERN TREATMENT, CANCER IS NO LONGER A DEATH SENTENCE. IN MODERN CENTRES WITH FACILITIES, 45% OF ALL CANCERS CAN BE CURED WITH EARLY DIAGNOSIS. ALSO, RADIOTHERAPY WILL PROVIDE PALLIATIVE TREATMENT ALLEVIATING PAIN IN PATIENTS WITH TERMINAL CANCER, ALLOWING THEM TO DIE WITH DIGNITY. IT IS IN LINE WITH THIS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND IT NECESSARY TO SET UP A CANCER CENTRE IN THE LASUTH ANNEX IN GBAGADA OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS.

TO SECURE THE WELFARE OF OUR DOCTORS WE HAVE ALSO MADE PROVISION TO BUILD ONE BLOCK OF 24 UNITS OF 3-BEDROOM AND 48 UNITS OF 1-BEDROOM DOCTOR'S FLATS AT THE LASUTH ANNEX GBAGADA.

OUR MOST PRECIOUS ASSET IS OUR PERSONNEL THAT HELP RUN THE AFFAIRS OF OUR BELOVED STATE ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS. IT IS THEREFORE MY PRIORITY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR WELFARE IS PARAMOUNT ON OUR LIST OF PRIORITIES. I HAVE, THEREFORE, DIRECTED THAT THE OLD STAFF CLINIC HERE AT THE ALAUSA SECRETARIAT BE PULLED DOWN IMMEDIATELY AND REPLACED WITH A STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY THAT BEFITS OUR STATE OF EXCELLENCE. THIS FACILITY WILL HAVE A GRAND RECEPTION, 4 CONSULTING ROOMS, AN EMERGENCY RESUSCITATION ROOM, AND 8-BED OBSERVATION WARDS FOR MALE AND FEMALE STAFF, AN AMBULANCE BAY FOR 2 AMBULANCES, X-RAY ROOM, LABORATORY AND PHARMACY AMONG OTHER FACILITIES ON THE GROUND FLOOR. IT WILL ALSO BE EQUIPPED WITH OFFICES AND A 100-SEAT EXECUTIVE SEMINAR ROOM WITH FULL MULTI-MEDIA FACILITIES IN ADDITION TO AN EXECUTIVE LOUNGE WITH PRIVATE OFFICES FOR VERY SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS. WE WANT OUR TEAM TO BE WELL CARED FOR AND HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

EVEN AS WE VIGOROUSLY PURSUE OUR PLAN FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEALTH SECTOR OF LAGOS STATE INTO THE BEST IN AFRICA, WE HAVE IN THE LAST 200 DAYS SUSTAINED OUR FREE HEALTHCARE PROGRAMES IN PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE STATE TO THE BENEFIT OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AS THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS SHOW:

- OVER 5 MILLION PEOPLE BENEFITED FROM THE EKO FREE MALARIA TREATMENT
- 235,000 INSECTICIDES TREATED NETS WERE DISTRIBUTED FREE IN IKEJA, ETI-OSA, AJEROMI-IFELODUN AND IFAKO-IJAIYE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS
- 100,000 DOSES OF FREE MALARIA DRUGS WERE ADMINISTERED TO ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN VARIOUS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS.
- 38,865 PEOPLE WERE SCREENED FREE OF CHARGE FOR HYPERTENSION AND DIABETES. 22% WERE FOUND TO BE HYPERTENSIVE AND 4% DIABETIC. THE SERIOUS CASES WERE IMMEDIATELY HOSPITALIZED AND TREATED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT.
- 5,932 PERSONS WERE RESCUED BY LASAMBUS FROM MAY 30TH – DECEMBER 4TH, 2007
- OVER 57,520 PUPILS BENEFITED FROM THE LAGOS STATE FREE SCHOOL MILK PROGRAM

- 20,812 PUPILS WERE SCREENED IN PRIMARY 1,3, AND 6 FOR EYE TREATMENT, DENTAL TREATMENT AND OTHER MEDICAL SERVICES
- 48,000 PEOPLE WERE GIVEN FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT IN PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS
- 1,124 PERSONS BENEFITED FROM THE SUSTENANCE OF OUR FREE LIMB DEFORMITY CORRECTIVE SURGERY; FREE CLEFT LIP PALATE CORRECTIVE SURGERY AND FREE BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMS AND
- WE EMPLOYED 748 NEW MEDICAL PERSONNEL INCLUDING MEDICAL DOCTORS, PHARMACISTS, CONSULTANTS, RADIOGRAPHERS, DENTAL CONSULTANTS AND NURSES TO ENHANCE EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES.

EVEN THOUGH OUR RECORD IN LAGOS STATE SPEAKS ELOQUENTLY FOR ITSELF IN THE HEALTH SECTOR, WE ARE NOT RESTING ON OUR OARS. WE WILL CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE OURSELVES TO ATTAIN NEW HEIGHTS OF EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE DELIVERY TO OUR PEOPLE.

JUSTICE

AS STAUNCH BELIEVERS IN THE RULE OF LAW, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE JUDICIARY TO FUNCTION WITH INTEGRITY AS THE PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY AND THE LAST HOPE OF THE COMMON MAN.

IN CONTINUATION OF THE ON-GOING JUDICIAL REFORMS TO CREATE A FIRST CLASS JUDICIAL SYSTEM THAT HAS THE INTEGRITY AND COURAGE TO SAFEGUARD THE SANCTITY OF BUSINESS AGREEMENTS, NEW INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE OPENING OF THE BILLS OF SALE REGISTRY AND THE OFFICE OF REGISTRAR OF LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS WERE ESTABLISHED. A MORTGAGE DIVISION OF THE STATE HIGH COURT HAS BEEN CREATED AND A LAGOS COURT OF ARBITRATION IS DUE TO COMMENCE SEAMLESS ADJUDICATION ON BUSINESS DISPUTES, WHILE A CORONER INSTITUTE IS SLATED FOR THE STATE UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL (LASUTH), IKEJA.

TO REINVIGORATE THE MAGISTRACY AND RESTORE ITS DIGNITY IN THE DISCHARGE OF JUDICIAL DUTIES, 19 KIA CARS WERE PRESENTED TO MAGISTRATES WHILE A STATE-WIDE MAGISTRATE COURTS RE-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME ALONG WITH DIVISIONAL HIGH COURTS DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE PROSECUTED.

INDEED, THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF IGBOSE, EPE AND AJEGUNLE MAGISTRATES COURTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN AWARDED WHILE THOSE OF MUSHIN, BADAGRY, SURULERE, OGBA, IKORODU, IKEJA AND EPETEDO-LAGOS WILL FOLLOW SHORTLY. FURTHERMORE, THE MAGISTRATE COURT PROCEDURE RULES ARE BEING REFORMED TO ENABLE US GRANT OUR PEOPLE MORE EFFECTIVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND ALSO INCREASE OUR CAPACITY TO ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER, WHICH IS CRITICAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF OUR DEMOCRACY.

PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

THE ISSUE OF PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES HAS CONTINUED TO RECEIVE DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT. SEQUEL TO THE LAGOS STATE PENSION REFORM LAW, 2007, THE STATE PUBLIC SERVICE CONTRIBUTORY PENSION SCHEME TOOK EFFECT IN MID 2007 WHILE A PENSION COMMISSION IS TO TAKE-OFF IN 2008. ALSO, A BIOMETRIC FACILITY TO AUTHENTICATE THE INTEGRITY OF PENSION RECORDS AND REDUCE STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH PENSIONERS VERIFICATION EXERCISE IS TO BE INTRODUCED.

IN A RELATED VEIN, AND EMPLOYING THE PLATFORM OF OUR ORACLE ICT SYSTEM, THE STATE GOVERNMENT IS INTRODUCING AN E-PENSION SYSTEM TO DISBURSE PAYMENTS ELECTRONICALLY TO PENSIONERS AND TRACT TRANSACTIONS. FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PENSION SCHEME, A SINKING FUND OF N1.0BILLION, WITH INVESTMENTS OF N507.765MILLION WAS MADE IN 2007.

ON ACTUAL PAYMENTS FOR THE CIVIL/TEACHING SERVICE PENSION AND GRATUITIES, THE SUM OF N1.503BILLION WAS PAID AS AT SEPTEMBER 2007, WHILST OUTSTANDING VALUE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHARE OF GRATUITY DURING THE PERIOD WAS ABOUT N109 MILLION. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE KEPT FAITH WITH THE PAYMENT OF THE 142% ARREARS ON PENSION AND THE 25% PENSIONS INCREASE RESPECTIVELY, ARISING FROM THE NATION-WIDE SALARY INCREASE.

ECONOMIC PLANNING

ECONOMIC PLANNING ROOTED IN CREDIBLE DATA IS THE KERNEL OF OUR DELIVERABLES. THEREFORE, IN OUR BID TO REALIZE OUR DREAM OF LAGOS AS A COMPETITIVE GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC HUB, WE ARE DEVELOPING A STATISTICAL SYSTEM THAT RESPONDS TO THE VARIABILITY OF THE LAGOS ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE. TO THIS END, THE STATE CENTRAL OFFICE OF STATISTICS (COS) IS BEING REPOSITIONED AS A STATISTICAL BUREAU WHILE THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED LAGOS STATE RECORDS AND ARCHIVES BUREAU (LASRAB), THE FIRST LAGOS PUBLIC INFORMATION WAREHOUSE SINCE THE EMERGENCE OF LAGOS AS A POLITICAL ENTITY IN 1861, IS TO COMMENCE OPERATION IN 2008.

EQUALLY, THE STATE IS PARTICIPATING IN THE DFID/WORLD BANK INVESTMENT CLIMATE PROGRAMME (ICP) FOR FOUR NIGERIAN LEAD STATES. TAGGED THE 'GROWTH POLE PROJECT,' THE STATE-LEVEL ECONOMIC REVIVAL PROGRAMME, WHICH IS TO LAST FOR SEVEN MONTHS, WILL ASSIST THE STATE ADDRESS SOME OF THE EMERGENT CHALLENGES OF DOING BUSINESS AS REGARDS TRADE FACILITATION; TAX ADMINISTRATION; LAND REGISTRATION, AND CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT.

TO STRENGTHEN THIS AND MANAGE EXPENDITURE FOR GROWTH, WE ARE POISED TO REINVIGORATE OUR PROCUREMENT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY MECHANISMS WHILST STEPPING UP COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE LAGOS STATE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (LASEEDS) TO PRODUCE LASEEDS-2. I AM EQUALLY PLEASED TO STATE THAT WE HAVE COMMENCED PREPARATORY WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIUM TERM SECTOR STRATEGIES (MTSS), 2008-2011, FOR THE STATE, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME (SLGP) OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID).

REVIEW OF Y2007 BUDGET

FOLLOWING THE INAUGURATION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION ON 29TH MAY, 2007, AND A REVIEW OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT IN LINE WITH OUR RESOLVE TO BEQUEATH A BETTER, REWARDING FUTURE FOR OUR PEOPLE, A SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET WAS PASSED BY THIS HONORABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. BY THIS ACT, THE STATE Y2007 BUDGET ROSE FROM N240.866 BILLION TO N274.762 BILLION THROUGH THE RE-ORDERING OF PRIORITIES AND OUTRIGHT SUPPLEMENTATION IN A FEW AREAS, TO SET THE TONE FOR THE ACTUALIZATION OF OUR PEOPLE-ORIENTED RENEWAL PROGRAMMES.

PERMIT ME, THEREFORE, TO ACQUAINT YOU WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE 2007 BUDGET, WHICH WITNESSED OVERALL BUDGET PERFORMANCE OF 62.58%. WHEN MEASURED ON PRO-RATED BASIS OF TEN MONTHS (JANUARY-OCTOBER, 2007), A PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF 75.09% IS ACHIEVED.

Y2007 ORDINARY REVENUE

THE CUMULATIVE REVENUE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY – OCTOBER, 2007 WAS N179.982 BILLION, OUT OF WHICH A TOTAL OF N113.653 BILLION, REPRESENTING 75.78% WAS REALIZED. OF THIS SUM, TOTAL INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE (IGR) FOR THE PERIOD STOOD AT N67.540 BILLION OR 67.52% OF THE TARGET. SIMILARLY, STATUTORY ALLOCATION PERFORMED AT N29.863 BILLION AGAINST A PROJECTED CUMULATIVE ESTIMATE OF N31.913 BILLION, REPRESENTING 93.58% PERFORMANCE.

I MUST STRESS HERE THE SIGNIFICANT POINT THAT OUR BUDGET PERFORMANCE OF 75.09% CORRELATES CLOSELY WITH OUR CUMULATIVE REVENUE PERFORMANCE OF 75.09%. THIS SHOWS CLEARLY THAT OUR LIMITING FACTOR IN ACHIEVING MAXIMUM BUDGETARY PERFORMANCE IS AVAILABILITY OF REVENUE RELATIVE TO THE HUGE SOCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL CHALLENGES WE FACE. BUT IF WE HAVE THE MONEY, WE HAVE THE CAPACITY, EFFICIENCY, CREATIVITY AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO USE IT MAXIMALLY IN ADDING VALUE TO OUR STATE. THIS THEREFORE PRACTICALLY ANSWERS THE TWO QUESTIONS I ASKED EARLIER: ARE WE A GOVERNMENT WORTH PARTNERING WITH? CAN WE BE TRUSTED TO ENSURE THAT TAX PAYERS GET THE REQUISITE VALUE FOR PERFORMING THEIR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES AS CITIZENS? YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME THAT THE ANSWER IS AN EMPHATIC YES.

RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

A TOTAL SUM OF N24.324 BILLION WAS RELEASED FOR PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES RESULTING IN 125.82% PERFORMANCE. THE ATTAINMENT WAS DUE TO INCREASES IN PUBLIC SERVICE SALARIES AND SEVERANCE BENEFITS OF POLITICAL OFFICE HOLDERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVENUE MOBILIZATION ALLOCATION AND FISCAL COMMISSION (RMAFC).

IT IS ALSO, INSTRUCTIVE TO STATE THAT PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES TO BOTH CIVIL AND TEACHING SERVICES AMOUNTED TO N3.764 BILLION, OUT OF A CUMULATIVE PROVISION OF N3.314 BILLION, IMPLYING A 113.57% PERFORMANCE.

IN THE SAME VEIN, OVERHEAD COST ACHIEVED 112.04% PERFORMANCE WITH AN ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF N43.010 BILLION, OUT OF A PRO-RATED BUDGET OF N38.388 BILLION. THE AMOUNT WAS APPLIED FOR MAJOR SERVICES, SUPPLIES, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND OPERATIONAL EXPENSES OF UTILITY AGENCIES AND TERTIARY HEALTH/EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. ADDITIONALLY, THE STATE GOVERNMENT EXPENDED A SUM OF N6.133 BILLION AS SUBVENTIONS TO PARASTATAL ORGANIZATIONS AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW. OTHER OVERHEAD COST OF N2.048 BILLION, REPRESENTING 148.23% OF TARGET WAS EXPENDED ON LANDS, SURVEYS AND NEW TOWNS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

ON PUBLIC DEBT CHARGES, ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AMOUNTED TO N23.224 BILLION, OUT OF A PRO-RATED SUM OF N24.701 BILLION, REPRESENTING 94.02% PERFORMANCE. IT IS ALSO INSTRUCTIVE TO STATE THAT A SUM OF N15.200 BILLION, BEING THE PARIS CLUB EXIT PAYMENT (NON CASH) HAS BEEN RECORDED IN FAVOR OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ON EXTERNAL LOANS OBLIGATIONS. OVERALL, TOTAL RECURRENT PERFORMANCE AMOUNTED TO N145.791 BILLION OR 120.35%

CAPITAL RECEIPTS

TOTAL ACTUAL CAPITAL RECEIPTS AS AT OCTOBER, 2007, STOOD AT N58.284 BILLION AGAINST A CUMULATIVE SUM OF N78.983 BN OR 73.79% PRO-RATED PERFORMANCE. IN SPECIFIC TERMS, A SUM OF N18.365 BILLION WAS COLLECTED ON VALUE ADDED TAX BY OCTOBER, 2007 AGAINST A PRO-RATED ESTIMATE OF N18.333 BILLION, AMOUNTING TO 100.17% PERFORMANCE. MOREOVER, AN ACCRUED INVESTMENT INCOME FROM STATE GOVERNMENT'S DIVESTMENT FROM V-MOBILE (NOW CELTEL) AMOUNTED TO N18.622 BILLION.

OF THE N42.795 BN INTERNAL LOANS PROJECTION FOR THE YEAR, A SUM OF N17.768 BILLION HAS SO FAR BEEN RAISED, WHILST CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION ON PRIME LANDS AND OTHER ESTATES YIELDED A SUM OF N3.126 BILLION OR 68.83% PRO-RATED PERFORMANCE.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

THIS HONORABLE HOUSE WILL RECALL THAT A REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET OF N129.395 BILLION WAS APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES. OUT OF THIS AMOUNT, N101.950 BILLION WAS EARMARKED FOR CORE-CAPITAL, WHILE N7 BILLION WAS APPROPRIATED FOR SPECIAL EXPENDITURE. IN CONSEQUENCE, ACTUAL TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE WAS N55.430 BILLION, MADE UP OF CORE CAPITAL - N43.893 BILLION; PRIME LANDS AND OTHER ESTATES - N0.795 BILLION; OTHER CAPITAL - N7.366 BILLION AND SPECIAL EXPENDITURE - N3.376 BILLION.

PROPOSED Y2008 BUDGET

AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE POLICY THRUST OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, WHICH IS: POVERTY ERADICATION AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND DEVELOPMENT, AND TAKING COGNIZANCE OF OUR OVERRIDING COMMITMENT TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY, A N403.401 BILLION, Y2008 "GREAT LEAP BUDGET" IS HEREBY PROPOSED AND PRESENTED TO THIS HONORABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL.

BUDGET FOCUS

ACCORDINGLY, THE Y2008 BUDGET WILL FOCUS PRINCIPALLY ON THE FOLLOWING KEY SECTORS: ROADS/TRANSPORTATION; ENVIRONMENT; INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT; HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT [HEALTH; EDUCATION]; WATER; PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM; CAPACITY BUILDING FOR INFORMAL SECTOR GROWTH/POVERTY ERADICATION; REVENUE GENERATION; PROMOTION OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR; AND THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SECURITY AND ORDER.

CORE PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS

DERIVING FROM THE FOREGOING, AND THE CORE OBJECTIVE OF THE Y2008 BUDGET, DEEPENING THE TEN POINT AGENDA (TPA) AND LASEEDS TO FAST-TRACK MDGS AND GROWTH, PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS THAT WILL RECEIVE MAJOR ATTENTION IN Y2008 INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ROADS, BRIDGES, AND OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, ETC
- 2 UPGRADING AND MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING ROADS, BRIDGES ETC
- 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED MASS TRANSIT PROGRAMME
- 4 COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- 5 FLOOD CONTROL, GREENING AND BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMME
- 6 SYSTEMATIC PHYSICAL PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- 7 IMPROVED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF SANITARY LAND-FILL SITES AND TRANSFER LOADING STATIONS
- 8 SUSTAINING SECURITY INITIATIVES, (LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM)
- 9 CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF SCHOOLS INCLUDING LABORATORIES AND LIBRARIES.
- 10 TEACHERS' WELFARE ENHANCEMENT.
- 11 COMMUNITY-BASED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.
- 12 IMPROVED ACCESS TO FREE AND QUALITY HEALTHCARE
- 13 AFFORDABLE MASS HOUSING SCHEMES.
- 14 STATE-SPONSORED HOME OWNERSHIP MORTGAGE SCHEME
- 15 EMPOWERMENT OF FARMERS/FISHERMEN FOR FOOD PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING.
- 16 EXPANSION/CONSTRUCTION OF NEW MICRO-WATER SCHEMES.
- 17 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE RENEWAL OF SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
- 18 FACILITATION OF LIBERALIZED MICRO-FINANCE SCHEME.
- 19 INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

THE N403.401BILLION Y2008 BUDGET IS MADE UP OF N159.447 BILLION AS RECURRENT EXPENDITURE AND N243.954 BILLION AS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE. COMPARATIVELY, THE PROPOSED Y2008 BUDGET IS N128.639 BILLION HIGHER THAN THE REVISED Y2007 BUDGET OF N274.762 BILLION. HOWEVER, A DEFICIT OF N44.290 BILLION, EQUIVALENT TO ABOUT TWO PER CENT (1.95%) OF LAGOS STATE'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) IS PROVIDED IN KEEPING WITH ACCEPTABLE FINANCIAL STANDARD AND GLOBAL NORM. IT IS HOPED THAT WITH INCREASED IGR DRIVE, INVESTMENT INCOME, GRANTS/DONATIONS FLOWS, ETC THE DEFICIT WILL BE MODERATED OR ELIMINATED.

ORDINARY REVENUE

A SUM OF N212.432 BILLION IS PROPOSED AS ORDINARY REVENUE: COMPRISING INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE (IGR) OF N151.251 BILLION OR 71.20%; STATUTORY ALLOCATION OF N42 BILLION OR 19.77%, EXCESS CRUDE OF N13.436 BILLION OR 6.32%, AND OTHER REVENUE (DEDICATED) OF N5.745 BILLION OR 2.70%.

THE REVENUE PROJECTIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE REFORMS BEING CARRIED OUT TO BOOST THE STATE INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE (IGR). ACCORDINGLY, ALL REVENUE GENERATING AGENCIES (RGAS) ARE TO REDOUBLE THEIR EFFORTS NOT ONLY TO MEET REVENUE TARGETS BUT TO SURPASS THE PRESENT LEVEL OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.

INDEED, IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR ALL REVENUE AGENCIES TO BE MORE AGGRESSIVE IN Y2008, SUCH THAT ENOUGH FUNDS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE EXECUTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND PEOPLE-ORIENTED PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS WITHOUT UNDUE RELIANCE ON STATUTORY ALLOCATION FROM THE FEDERATION ACCOUNT AND INTERNAL/EXTERNAL LOANS.

SIMILARLY, WITH OUR RESOLVE TO REDUCE THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN THE STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE URGED NOT TO IMPOSE INDISCRIMINATE TAXES AND LEVIES OUTSIDE THE APPROVED COLLECTION LIST OR AS DETERMINED BY A LAW OF THE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. IN CONSIDERATION OF THESE FOR BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION AND MORE PARTICULARLY, FOR ADDRESSING MUTUALLY AGREED DEVELOPMENT FOCUS, WE HAVE HARMONIZED DONOR SUPPORT TO CORE PRO-POOR

AREAS OF NEED IN AN INCLUSIVE PACKAGE CALLED COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY (CPS).

RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

THE SUM OF N159.447 BILLION IS PROPOSED FOR THE SERVICING OF STATE GOVERNMENT'S MACHINERY AND THE PAYMENT OF SALARIES, ALLOWANCES, PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE, AMONG OTHERS. DETAILS OF THE RECURRENT COSTS ARE:

TOTAL PERSONNEL COST	-	N46.602 BILLION
TOTAL OVERHEAD COST	-	N112.845 BILLION
SUBVENTIONS	-	N15.029 BILLION
OVERHEAD COST	-	N75.587 BILLION
TRANSFER TO OTHER FUNDS	-	N0.050 BILLION
PUBLIC DEBT CHARGE	-	N22.179 BILLION

CAPITAL RECEIPTS

THE TOTAL CAPITAL RECEIPTS PROPOSED FOR Y2008 IS N199.664 BILLION AS AGAINST N86.600 BILLION APPROVED FOR Y2007. THE MAJOR CAPITAL RECEIPTS COMPONENTS IN Y2008 INCLUDE: INTERNAL LOANS OF N12 BILLION (8.18%), BOND ISSUE - N75 BILLION (51.12%), AND VALUE ADDED TAX - N25 BILLION (17.04%). OTHER CONTRIBUTORY ITEMS INCLUDE RECEIPTS FROM MATCHING GRANTS (DONOR AGENCIES) – N8.013BN. (5.45%), CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION (PRIME LANDS/OTHER ESTATES) – N3.500BN. (2.04%) CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION (OTHERS) – N9.415BN (6.42%), AND RECURRENT SURPLUS OF N52.985 BILLION

AS EVIDENT FROM THE ABOVE, THE RECOGNITION OF AN APPARENT FINANCING GAP AS A MAJOR CONSTRAINT TOWARDS ACHIEVING SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES MAY RESULT IN THE STATE DRAWING ON LOANS AND BOND ISSUE. OTHER CREATIVE OPTIONS BEING CONTEMPLATED ARE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, CONTRACTOR FINANCE, AND DEEPENING OF COOPERATION WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND DONOR AGENCIES NOTABLY THE WORLD BANK GROUP, DFID, UNDP, UNICEF, ETC

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

CONSISTENT WITH THE POLICY OF SHRINKING OVERHEAD COSTS TO FREE MORE RESOURCES FOR FIXED INVESTMENTS, A SUM OF N243.954 BILLION HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE. THIS COMPRISES: CORE CAPITAL- N218.407 BILLION, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT/OTHERS -N9.415BN, MATCHING GRANTS - N8.013BN, COUNTERPART FUND -N3.119BN, AND SPECIAL EXPENDITURE -N5.000BN.

OF THE TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, THE CORE CAPITAL (AGENCIES) PROVISION, CONSISTING OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENT/REGIONAL PLANNING AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION SECTORS RESPECTIVELY, IS N214.907 BILLION. THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF N112.957BN AGAINST THE REVISED APPROPRIATION OF N101.950BILLION FOR YEAR 2007.

THE ECONOMIC SECTOR, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR N81.172BN OF THE TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL, IS DOMINATED BY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT (ROADS, BRIDGES, ETC), TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND LAMATA-ROADS, RAIL AND FERRY SERVICES RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL ACTIVITIES, ALL REPRESENTING 33.27% OF TOTAL CORE CAPITAL

THE SOCIAL SECTOR IS ALLOCATED A PROVISION OF N59.878 BILLION, OR 24.54% OF THE TOTAL CORE CAPITAL PROVISION TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS). MAJOR EXPENDITURE AREAS ARE: MASSIVE REHABILITATION AND UPGRADING OF HEALTH/EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES TO MEET WORLD CLASS STANDARDS; CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SCHOOLS AND PURCHASE OF SCHOOL BOOKS. OTHER KEY AREAS ARE YOUTH, SPORTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, POVERTY ERADICATION, AND STRENGTHENING OF FIRE FIGHTING AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL/
REGIONAL PLANNING SECTOR HAS A TOTAL PROVISION OF N50.092 BILLION REPRESENTING 20.53% OF THE TOTAL CORE CAPITAL PROVISION FOR Y2008. KEY PROJECTS ARE WATER SUPPLY; DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT/FLOOD CONTROL, SLUM UPGRADING, DREDGING/CLEANING OF INLAND WATERWAYS; CONSTRUCTION OF JETTIES; GREENING OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES, SEWAGE SERVICES, AND AFFORDABLE MASS HOUSING PROGRAMME AMONGST OTHERS.

ONE OF THE CARDINAL POLICIES OF THIS ADMINISTRATION IS THE PROVISION OF AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR INVESTMENTS AND GROWTH. THEREFORE, TO UNCOVER AND SECURE POTENTIALS THROUGHOUT THE STATE, GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING MORE RESOURCES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING, AND SECURITY OF LIVES AND PROPERTIES IN Y2008. FOR THIS AND OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES, THE ADMINISTRATION SECTOR, IS ALLOCATED THE SUM OF N23.765 BILLION REPRESENTING 9.74% OF THE TOTAL CORE CAPITAL.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS Y2008 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROFILE LIES IN THE FACT THAT CAPITAL EXCEEDS RECURRENT EXPENDITURE BY A RATIO OF 61%:39%; A RADICAL GROWTH-ORIENTED APPROACH TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND GREATEST IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE. THIS IS INDEED AN UNPRECEDENTED INNOVATION IN BUDGETING IN NIGERIA, WHICH REFLECTS A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT FROM A PRE-OCCUPATION WITH UNPRODUCTIVE CONSUMPTION TO INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE AS THE SPRING BOARD TO MASSIVE AND SUSTAINED GENERATION OF WEALTH.

THE Y2008 BUDGET, JUST PRESENTED, IS THE FIRST FULL FISCAL PLAN UNDER THIS DISPENSATION AND UNLIKE THE PREVIOUS YEARS, IT IS PREPARED USING THE ZERO-BASED BUDGETING (ZBB) APPROACH WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY DOVE-TAIL INTO THE MULTI-YEAR BUDGETING SLATED FOR 2009. THIS INITIATIVE IS WITH THE VIEW OF MAKING BUDGET MORE IMPACT AND ACTIVITY-DRIVEN, AND IT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LASEEDS, THE 10-POINT AGENDA (TPA) AND THE MDGS.

AGAIN, THE Y2008 BUDGET TOOK COGNIZANCE OF THE NATIONAL OIL PRODUCTION ESTIMATE OF 1.55MILLION BARRELS PER DAY, AN OIL BENCHMARK PRICE OF \$53.8 PER BARREL, AND AN ESTIMATED PROVISIONAL FEDERATION ACCOUNT REVENUE OF N4.49TRILLION OF WHICH FEDERAL SHARE IS PUT AT N1.986TRILLION.

SECURITY

MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS, IT IS NECESSARY FOR ME TO TOUCH BRIEFLY ON FOUR CRITICAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT OUR STATE BEFORE I CONCLUDE. THE FIRST HAS TO DO WITH THE SECURITY OF LIVES AND PROPERTY, WHICH IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR STATED SOCIO- ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES. WE ALL KNOW THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SECURITY, LAW AND ORDER IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF GOVERNMENT AND AN INDISPENSABLE PREREQUISITE FOR GROWTH. OF COURSE, LIKE ANY MEGA CITY OF ITS SIZE AND COMPLEXITY ACROSS THE GLOBE, LAGOS STATE FACES IMMENSE SECURITY CHALLENGES.

THESE HAVE BEEN MADE MORE PRONOUNCED BY THE PROTRACTED NATIONAL ECONOMIC CRISIS, WHICH MAKES LAGOS A MAGNETIC OASIS OF OPPORTUNITY SURROUNDED BY VAST DESERT OF WANT AND DEPRIVATION. THE RESULT IS THE DESPERATION BY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE NIGERIA TO LIVE IN LAGOS BY ALL MEANS IN SEARCH OF THE GOLDEN -FLEECE. WE CAN THEREFORE BEST IMAGINE THE PRESSURE ON INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE FACE OF INADEQUATE RESOURCES AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFECTIVELY SECURING LIVES AND PROPERTY.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, OUR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LAGOS STATE SECURITY TRUST FUND AND AN INDEPENDENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO MANAGE IT REPRESENTS AN UNPRECEDENTED PARADIGM SHIFT IN ADDRESSING THE SECURITY CHALLENGES OF THE STATE.

EVEN MORE REMARKABLE AS A MODEL OF SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IS THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE INITIATIVE. IN LESS THAN THREE MONTHS, CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS CONTRIBUTED OVER N1 BILLION IN CASH AND KIND TO THE FUND. WE EXPRESS OUR PROFOUND APPRECIATION TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE GIVEN THEIR UNRESERVED SUPPORT TO THIS AND OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT. THIS IS OF COURSE ALSO A REFLECTION OF THEIR TRUST IN OUR INTEGRITY AND CREDIBILITY AS A GOVERNMENT; AND WE PROMISE THAT EVERY KOBO WILL BE JUDICIOUSLY EXPENDED AND ACCOUNTED FOR.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUND HAS ENABLED US TO PROVIDE 231 NEW OPERATIONAL VEHICLES, NEW TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT, 1,766 SECURITY VESTS, NEW SETS OF UNIFORMS AND BETTER DUTY ALLOWANCES FOR OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE RRS. THIS HAS ALSO FACILITATED THE EXPANSION OF THE OUTFIT INTO 34 NEW POLICE SECTORS AND 211 NEW RRS POINTS TO COVER THE ENTIRE STATE. THIS IS TO BE COMPLEMENTED BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF 10 ADDITIONAL POLICE POSTS, RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAMAGED AREA C POLICE COMMAND ALREADY AWARDED AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SECURITY CONTROL CENTRE WHERE DISTRESS CALLS CAN BE RECEIVED AND PROCESSED FOR RESPONSE. WE EQUALLY PLAN TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE RRS FOR SURVEILLANCE AND COUNTER INSURGENCY IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF THE STATE

FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND THIS IS VERY SIGNIFICANT, WE CAN THROUGH THE SECURITY TRUST FUND EQUIP AND MOTIVATE THE POLICE ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS WITHOUT HAVING TO WAIT ON THE SOMETIMES WHIMSICAL PLEASURE OF GOVERNMENT.

I HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT THE CRIME RATE IN LAGOS STATE IS RELATIVELY LOW COMPARED WITH MEGA CITIES OF HER POPULATION SIZE AROUND THE WORLD. BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THE CRIME RATE CAN BE EVEN LOWER THAN IT CURRENTLY IS IF WE DO A FEW SIMPLE BUT NECESSARY THINGS.

THE TRUST FUND HAS CREATED A HIGHER CAPACITY FOR US TO MORE EFFECTIVELY COMBAT CRIME. BUT IT IS UP TO US TO MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF THAT CAPACITY. IF THE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER LOGISTICS SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO THE POLICE IN LAGOS STATE ARE TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED OBJECTIVE, THERE IS THE URGENT NEED TO DEPLOY AT LEAST 2000 ADDITIONAL POLICEMEN TO LAGOS STATE. I KNOW THAT MR. PRESIDENT MEANS WELL FOR LAGOS STATE. HE DEMONSTRATED THIS BY PROMPTLY DIRECTING THAT OUR SEIZED LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS BE RELEASED.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HIM AND I URGE THIS HOUSE AND THE GOOD PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE TO JOIN ME IN APPEALING TO MR. PRESIDENT TO IMMEDIATELY DIRECT THAT AT LEAST 2000 ADDITIONAL POLICEMEN BE POSTED TO LAGOS. IF NECESSARY, OUR ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARED TO PAY THE SALARIES OF THE ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICERS WHO WILL BE STATIONED PERMANENTLY IN LAGOS BUT BE UNDER THE OPERATIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL CONTROL OF THE POLICE AUTHORITIES. THE TIMES DEMAND PROACTIVE THINKING AND BOLD ACTION AND I TRUST THAT MR. PRESIDENT WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY IN THE INTEREST OF LAGOS STATE AND NIGERIA.

POWER SUPPLY

THE SECOND CRITICAL ISSUE I MUST TOUCH ON IS THAT OF POWER SUPPLY. IT HAS BECOME IMPERATIVE TO URGENTLY RE-ACTIVATE THE POWER INFRASTRUCTURE OF LAGOS STATE AS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR RAPID ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION.

WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF SUFFICIENT, SUSTAINABLE, GOOD QUALITY ELECTRICITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRE-REQUISITE FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR STATE AND THE CONCOMITANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE LIVES OF OUR CITIZENS. THEREFORE, OUR ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE THE DEVELOPMENT OF POWER INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS A PRIORITY FOR Y2008 AND BEYOND.

THE COUNTRY CURRENTLY PRODUCES AN AVERAGE OF BETWEEN 2,500MW TO 3,000MW OF ELECTRICITY. HOWEVER, LAGOS STATE RECEIVES LESS THAN 40% OF ITS ELECTRICITY NEEDS FROM POWER HOLDING COMPANY OF NIGERIA (PHCN). LAGOS STATE CONSUMES NEARLY 45% TO 50% OF THE ELECTRICITY THAT IS BEING GENERATED IN THE COUNTRY AND EQUALLY ACCOUNTS FOR ALMOST THE SAME PROPORTION OF PHCN REVENUE. THIS SUPPLY IS OBVIOUSLY NOT ENOUGH AND PRELIMINARY STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT LAGOS STATE NEEDS ANOTHER 3,000MW TO MEET DEMAND.

THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS SUPPLY GAP ARE WELL-KNOWN. THEY INCLUDE: LOW CAPACITY UTILIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY, RELATIVELY HIGH PRODUCTION COSTS AND HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. ALSO, THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF USING INDIVIDUAL GENERATORS AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY TO REPLACE PHCN CANNOT BE OVER EMPHASIZED.

I RECALL THE HUGE AND HEROIC INTERVENTIONS OF THE TINUBU ADMINISTRATION IN THE POWER SECTOR, WHICH COMMENCED IMMEDIATELY UPON ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE IN 1999. APART FROM SUPPORTING THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES WITH CASH FOR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT AND UNDERTAKING RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECTS, THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT PIONEERED THE ERA OF INDEPENDENT POWER PROJECTS, WITH THE AES/ENRON PROJECT. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS EFFORT DID NOT BENEFIT THE BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS OF LAGOS STATE CITIZENS AS ANTICIPATED, DUE LARGELY TO THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON THE PROJECT.

THE CURRENT 270MW PRODUCED BY AES IS SUPPLIED TO THE NATIONAL GRID WHICH, IN TURN, IS SUPPLIED TO THE WHOLE COUNTRY, WHILE, PERVERSELY, LAGOS STATE IS MADE TO BEAR 21% OF THE GENERATION COSTS.

THE PARTIAL, UNILATERAL AND IN MY VIEW WRONG, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT FOR THE AES/ENRON PROJECT HAS, OVER THE YEARS, RESULTED IN A

MASSIVE TRANSFER OF RESOURCES FROM LAGOS STATE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IN EFFECT, OVER THE YEARS LAGOSIANS HAVE BEEN SUBSIDIZING ALL OTHER ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS IN NIGERIA. OUR GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY TAKING STEPS TO STOP FURTHER DEDUCTIONS FROM OUR FAAC ACCOUNT AND RECOVER MONIES DEDUCTED TO-DATE. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE LAW WILL PREVAIL. MORE SO AS THE SAVINGS GENERATED WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVELY USED IN THE IMMEDIATE FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE POWER INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE STATE.

WE MUST ALL BE AWARE THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE FUNDAMENTALLY THE POWER SECTOR IN LAGOS STATE THROUGH SHORT TERM ACTION. THIS IS BECAUSE LAGOS STATE NEEDS IMPORTANT INVESTMENTS IN THE GENERATION, THE TRANSPORTATION AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRICITY WHICH NEED TO TAKE PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY. EVEN IF THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES WERE READILY AVAILABLE, IT WOULD STILL TAKE SOME TIME BEFORE ALL THE PEOPLE IN LAGOS STATE COULD ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF FULL ADEQUATE POWER SUPPLY.

THIS SITUATION NOTWITHSTANDING, MY ADMINISTRATION IS READY TO COMMIT TO A NEW ENERGY PLAN FOCUSED ON ACHIEVING THE FOLLOWING SHORT AND LONG TERM GOALS:

LONG TERM GOALS

- * THE CREATION OF NEW POWER GENERATION PLANTS WITHIN THE LAGOS STATE AREA
- * REINFORCING AND EXPANDING THE TRANSMISSION NETWORK ON THE LAGOS STATE TERRITORY
- * REINFORCING AND EXPANDING THE EXISTING DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS IN THE WHOLE OF LAGOS STATE
- * REDUCING THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY UNFRIENDLY AND COSTLY INDIVIDUAL POWER GENERATORS
- * INTRODUCING SOCIAL TARIFFS FOR THE LOW INCOME ELECTRICITY CUSTOMERS IN LAGOS STATE.
- * PROMOTING THE USE OF SOLAR POWER AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE POWER SUPPLY FOR A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTIONS.
- * DEVELOPING SMALL HYDRO-POWER PLANTS IN CONJUNCTION WITH AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION
- * ANALYZING THE POSSIBLE SYNERGIES BETWEEN PRO-ACTIVE TREATMENT AND POWER GENERATION.

SHORT TERM GOALS

- * IMPROVING THE DISTRIBUTION NETWORK THROUGH IMMEDIATE PURCHASE OF TRANSFORMERS BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT;
- * ADDING TO GENERATION CAPACITY BY ENCOURAGING AND FACILITATING INVESTMENT IN

NEW PLANT THROUGH PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS – INCLUDING A DEDICATED POWER PLANT FOR LAGOS STATE WATER CORPORATION AND A 540MW THERMAL PLANT AT MOROGBO;

* INTERVENING IN THE DISTRIBUTION SECTOR BY PARTICIPATING IN A CONSORTIUM THAT IS SEEKING TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATING AND MAINTAINING EKO AND IKEJA ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES.

THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING THIS NEW ENERGY PLAN THROUGH APPROPRIATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH NIGERIAN AND INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS FROM THE ELECTRIC POWER SECTOR THROUGH PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES. A KEY PARTNER IN ALL THIS WILL, OF COURSE, BE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THUS, THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO START DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE RELEVANT NIGERIAN INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE ONGOING PRIVATIZATION PROCESS IN THE POWER SECTOR SUCH AS NERC, BPE, THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND STEEL, TO ACTUALIZE THE ENERGY PLAN THROUGH THE ACQUISITION OF THE IKEJA AND EKO ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES BY WAY OF A PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIP (PPP)

THE THIRD ISSUE IS OUR QUEST FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP IN THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ACHIEVING OUR ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES AS A STATE WILL DEPEND SIGNIFICANTLY ON OUR SUCCESS IN ATTRACTING THE REQUISITE INVESTMENT PARTICULARLY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. EVERYWHERE I HAVE GONE OUTSIDE NIGERIA, THERE IS SO MUCH INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM BY INVESTORS WHO WANT TO DO BUSINESS IN LAGOS STATE.

WE THUS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DISCARD THOSE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIORS THAT DISCOURAGE THOSE WHO WOULD LOVE TO INVEST IN OUR STATE. WE MUST BEGIN TO OBEY TRAFFIC RULES. WE MUST DESIST FROM BLOCKING CANALS WITH REFUSE AND ILLEGAL STRUCTURES, WHICH CAUSE FLOODING. WE MUST STOP DEMANDING ILLEGAL FEES FROM PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BUILD ON LAND THEY HAVE LEGALLY ACQUIRED. EVERYWHERE I GO PEOPLE TELL ME THEY WANT US TO CREATE MORE JOBS. LET US STOP BEHAVING IN WAYS THAT WILL DISCOURAGE INVESTORS FROM BRINGING IN THE FACTORIES AND BUSINESSES THAT WILL PROVIDE THE JOBS.

TAXES

FOURTHLY, IS THE NEED FOR US TO WILLINGLY AND VOLUNTARILY PAY OUR TAXES AND RATES AS INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATE BODIES. THERE IS NO MAGIC WAND THAT CAN BRING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT MONEY. INDEED, I AM ALARMED BY THE PREVALENCE OF THE CULTURE OF BEGGING ALL OVER LAGOS TODAY. I GREW UP IN A LAGOS WHERE MOST PEOPLE WERE TOO PROUD TO BEG. TODAY, YOU HAVE BEGGARS EVERYWHERE. OUR MOTHERS AND FATHERS CARRIED THEMSELVES WITH PRIDE AND DIGNITY EVEN IF THEY WERE POOR. THEY WOULD RATHER DRINK GARI WITH SELF RESPECT IN THEIR HOMES RATHER THAN BEG.

BUT TODAY IT IS NOT JUST THE POOR THAT BEG. THERE IS ALSO A NEW CATEGORY OF EXECUTIVE BEGGING THAT I PERSONALLY FIND VERY UNPATRIOTIC. YOU FIND EVEN PEOPLE OF MEANS BEGGING FOR ALL KINDS OF WAIVERS THAT THEY ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO PAY EITHER IN ACQUIRING PROPERTY OR CONDUCTING ONE TRANSACTION OR THE OTHER WITH GOVERNMENT. IN A SIMILAR WAY, MANY PEOPLE PREFER TO EVADE TAX THEN RESORT TO BEGGING GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THEM

WITH AMENITIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES. NO, WHEN YOU PAY YOUR TAX YOU EMPOWER GOVERNMENT TO LIVE UP TO ITS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. AND YOUR TAX IN TURN EMPOWERS YOU TO DEMAND, NOT BEG, THAT GOVERNMENT FULFILLS ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU AS A CITIZEN.

WE MUST EMBRACE THE CULTURE OF PAYING TAX IF WE ARE TO MAKE RAPID PROGRESS. INDEED, WHEN PEOPLE PAY TAXES AND KNOW THAT THE MONEY GOVERNMENT SPENDS COMES FROM THEIR POCKETS, THEY WILL BE MORE CONSCIOUS IN MONITORING GOVERNMENT AND HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICERS MORE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRACIES IN THE WORLD WHERE GOVERNMENTS ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE ARE THOSE SOCIETIES WITH A STRONG TRADITION OF PAYING TAXES. THAT GREAT LEADER, CHIEF OBAFEMI AWOLowo, PUT THE MATTER WITH CHARACTERISTIC CLARITY ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES HERE IN LAGOS ON 16TH AUGUST, 1954, WHEN HE SAID:

“...I WOULD THEREFORE WIND UP BY SAYING THAT WE, ON THE THRESHOLD OF THIS NEW CONSTITUTION, ARE ON THE CROSS ROADS; THERE IS THAT BROAD, SMOOTH ROAD, WITH PROMISES OF NO- TAXATION, AND EFFORTS TO GET MONEY FROM OTHER PLACES, LEADING NOWHERE BUT TO PERDITION, POVERTY, DISEASE AND ECONOMIC ENSLAVEMENT; AND THERE IS THE OTHER ROAD – PEOPLE WHO GO THEREIN PAY TAX. THEY ALSO HAVE TO APPLY SELF-HELP AND SELF-SACRIFICE TO GET WHERE THEY WANT. BUT THIS ROAD, MR. PRESIDENT, LEADS TO SUCCESS, TO PROSPERITY AND TO THE EXPLOITATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY”.

I COMMEND THESE EMINENTLY WISE WORDS FOR THE CAREFUL REFLECTION AND THOUGHTFUL ACTION OF EVERY ONE OF US. ON OUR PART, WE WILL CONTINUE OUR DRIVE TO DEPLOY KNOWLEDGE AND ICT IN ENSURING PROMPT AND EFFICIENT COLLECTION OF TAXES DUE TO LAGOS STATE.

SOME HAVE CRITICIZED OUR USE OF TAX CONSULTANTS FOR REASONS, WHICH ARE LARGELY MISINFORMED AND WHICH I SOUGHT TO CORRECT AT THE RECENT STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT ON TAXATION. AS A RESULT OF THE CRITICAL ROLE THAT TAXATION PLAYS IN OUR COLLECTIVE QUEST FOR A BETTER LIFE, I WILL REITERATE THAT THE EFFORTS OF THESE CONSULTANTS HAVE HELPED TO RAISE OUR REVENUE BASE FROM N600 MILLION TO N7.5 BILLION MONTHLY AND IT IS GROWING.

THE FUNCTION OF THE BOARD OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR), NOW LAGOS INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (LIRS), IS NOT HAMPERED IN ANY WAY BY TAX CONSULTANTS. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY COMPLEMENT THE EFFORTS OF THE AGENCY AND BRING THEIR FORENSIC AUDITING, VERIFICATION AND EXTERNAL CONTROL SKILLS TO BEAR ON THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT. TAX CONSULTANTS DO NOT COLLECT TAXES. THESE ARE PAID DIRECTLY TO OUR ACCOUNTS IN OUR COLLECTING BANKS. VERY RECENTLY, A TAX CONSULTANT HELPED THE STATE RECOVER ALMOST ONE BILLION NAIRA WHERE WE POTENTIALLY COULD HAVE GOT ONLY ABOUT N200 MILLION.

SOME OF THESE AUDITORS, ACCOUNTANTS AND OTHER FINANCE EXPERTS ARE PEOPLE WHO LOST THEIR JOBS AS A RESULT OF RETRENCHMENTS, PRIVATIZATION, MERGER OF BANKS AND OTHER VAGARIES OF THE ECONOMY BUT ARE NOW LEADING A PRODUCTIVE LIFE BY USING THEIR SKILLS IN A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL WAY. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THIS APPROACH IN LAGOS HAS BEEN MOST BENEFICIAL TO THE STATE AND NATIONAL ECONOMY; FOR EXAMPLE IT BROUGHT WITH IT THE SWIFT ICT SYSTEM OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS PUT IN PLACE BY THE LAST ADMINISTRATION AND WHICH VIRTUALLY ALL BANKS NOW USE IN NIGERIA.

CONCLUSION

WITH THE EXPECTATION, MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS, THAT Y2008 WILL USHER IN ANOTHER PLANNING PHASE IN LASEEDS II, WHICH UTILIZES THE MEDIUM TERM EXPENDITURE FRAMEWORK (MTEF) AS WELL AS THE MEDIUM TERM SECTORAL STRATEGY (MTSS), THIS BUDGET REPRESENTS THE AGGREGATES OF OUR PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS AS WE MARCH ON TO REMODEL LAGOS AS THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL HUB OF WEST AFRICA. IN CONSEQUENCE OF THIS, WE WILL INTENSIFY THE USE OF E-GOVERNANCE AS A STRATEGIC SERVICE DELIVERY TOOL. CONSEQUENTLY, THE PUBLIC SERVICE WILL WITNESS PROFOUND APPLICATION OF ICT AND REVIEW OF SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES.

SEQUEL TO THE ABOVE, AND WITH DUE RECOGNITION OF EXPECTED REVENUES, AS WELL AS CONFORMITY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ZERO-BASED BUDGETING, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BUDGET IS TO BE STRENGTHENED THROUGH A REVIEW OF THE ORACLE-BASED INTEGRATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (IFMIS) AND THE STRENGTHENING OF EXPENDITURE CONTROL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT.

BESIDES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS BUDGET IS ALSO PREDICATED ON MAINTENANCE OF MUTUAL CO-OPERATION WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS AGENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAGOS MEGA CITY. IN ADDITION, WE WILL BE ACTIVELY PROMOTING PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIP (PPP) AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE.

AS I SAID EARLIER, IN THE FACE OF OUR MEGA CITY CHALLENGES, INCLUDING AN URBAN GROWTH OF OVER 6%, THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT MUST BE EMPOWERED BY HER CITIZENS THROUGH TAXATION TO SERVE THE COMMON GOOD. HOWEVER, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE APPROPRIATENESS OR OTHERWISE OF THE PROPOSED VAT REVIEW BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, IT IS THE WELL-CONSIDERED VIEW OF LAGOS STATE, AS IS THE CASE IN OTHER STATES AND ESTABLISHED DEMOCRACIES THAT VAT, AS A FORM OF SALES TAX, IS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE REGION OF ORIGIN WHICH PROVIDES THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS GENERATION.

FOR INSTANCE, LAGOS STATE AND HER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD HAVE THE GREATEST SHARE OF VAT AND MARITIME RECEIPTS FROM THE APAPA AND TIN CAN PORTS CUSTOMS COMMAND WHICH GENERATED N48BILLION IN VAT DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2007. THEREFORE, THE IMPERATIVE OF APPLYING THE DERIVATION PRINCIPLE TO FISCAL TRANSFERS IN OUR FEDERATION IS IN THE INTEREST OF EQUITY AND PROGRESS.

ON THIS, I WISH TO COMMEND THE POSITION OF THE LAGOS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN ITS Y2007 SECOND QUARTER REPORT ON THE ECONOMY (18TH SEPTEMBER, 2007) TO WIT:

'LAGOS STATE IS THE COMMERCIAL CAPITAL OF THE COUNTRY. WE KNOW AS A FACT THAT THIS STATUS HAS A PRICE WHICH HAS IMPOSED TREMENDOUS PRESSURE ON THE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE STATE SUCH THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS UNDERSTANDABLE DIFFICULTY IN COPING WITH THE INHERENT CHALLENGES. IT IS THEREFORE, ONLY FAIR THAT A PORTION OF THE REVENUE THAT ACCRUES FROM THE VARIOUS COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE, AND INDEED, THE OTHER STATES OF THE FEDERATION, SHOULD BE GIVEN BACK TO THE STATES FROM WHERE THE REVENUE WAS GENERATED IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE ISSUE HERE IS THAT OF EQUITY AND FAIR PLAY.

WE THEREFORE, RECOMMEND THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF DERIVATION SHOULD BE APPLIED AS A NATIONAL POLICY TO REVENUE FROM COMPANY TAX, VALUE ADDED TAX, AND IMPORT DUTY, USING THE SAME PERCENTAGE CURRENTLY BEING APPLIED TO THE OIL PRODUCING STATES. WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE OIL PRODUCING STATES IS ALSO GOOD FOR OTHER STATES.'

OUR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER NIGERIA, ALL OF WHOM ARE REPRESENTED IN LAGOS, STAND AT THE THRESHOLD OF HISTORY TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR LAGOS AND THEIR PEOPLE. THERE IS NO CITY IN AFRICA THAT HAS SEEN MORE IMMIGRANTS THAN LAGOS. PEOPLE CONTINUE TO FLOCK HERE IN LARGE NUMBERS TO SEEK FREEDOM, OPPORTUNITY AND PROSPERITY. IN EVERY CORNER OF LAGOS YOU WILL FIND PEOPLE YOU KNOW. THIS IS NOW THE TIME FOR COMMONSENSE TO PREVAIL; THE TIME TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE PLACE WE ALL CALL HOME; LAGOS, THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE AND THE LAND OF AQUATIC SPLENDOR.

HONORABLE SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF THE LAGOS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, IN HIS BOOK, " DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM" , AMARTYA SEN, WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR ECONOMICS, ARGUES FOR A RADICAL RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT AS ESSENTIALLY A MEANS OF EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF INDIVIDUAL HUMAN FREEDOM. IN HIS WORDS: " DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES THE REMOVAL OF MAJOR SOURCES OF UNFREEDOM: POVERTY AS WELL AS TYRANNY, POOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS SYSTEMATIC SOCIAL DEPRIVATION, NEGLECT OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AS WELL AS INTOLERANCE OR OVER ACTIVITY OF REPRESSIVE STATES". THE ECONOMIST'S WORDS CAME TO MY MIND AGAIN AND AGAIN IN THE COURSE OF OUR RECENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOUR. I AM INDEED HAPPY THAT THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THAT TOUR AT LEAST IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONSTITUENCIES.

FOR A LITTLE OVER THREE MONTHS, WE TRAVERSED THE ENTIRE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF LAGOS STATE MEETING THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY, LISTENING TO THEM AND ASSESSING THEIR NEEDS FIRST HAND. THAT TOUR OPENED OUR EYES AFRESH TO REALIZE THE DEPTH OF THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING OUR PEOPLE AND OUR STATE. WE SAW STARKLY THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT MUST SURELY TASK OUR INGENUITY AS LEADERS. WE MUST THEREFORE GIRD OUR LOINS WITH RENEWED DETERMINATION TO FREE MILLIONS MORE OF OUR PEOPLE FROM HUNGER, IGNORANCE, FILTH, JOBLESSNESS, DISEASE AND EVERY OTHER THING THAT IMPRISONS THE DIGNITY OF MAN; THAT IS THE GOAL OF DEVELOPMENT; IT IS THE SOLE PURPOSE OF THE BUDGET WE HAVE PRESENTED TODAY.

IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THEN THAT BEING IN PUBLIC OFFICE FOR US CANNOT BE A TEA PARTY. IT CANNOT BE A PICNIC. RATHER, IT DEMANDS THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF DISCIPLINE, SACRIFICE, COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION TO MAKE ENDURING CHANGES.

I NOTICED THAT EVERYWHERE WE WENT DURING THE TOUR THE PEOPLE RECEIVED US WITH LOVE, WARMTH AND ENTHUSIASM. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY AND WILL ABIDE BY OUR WORD AS OUR BOND. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LET THEM DOWN.

I WANT TO THANK THE PUBLIC SERVANTS OF LAGOS STATE FOR THE WONDERFUL JOB YOU HAVE BEEN DOING TO HELP REALIZE THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THIS STATE WAS CREATED. WE ARE ENTERING A CRITICAL PERIOD THAT WILL DEMAND EVEN MORE COMMITMENT, INDUSTRY, DISCIPLINE AND SACRIFICE ON YOUR PART IN THE BEST

INTEREST OF OUR STATE. I CHARGE YOU TO AIM ALWAYS FOR NEW HEIGHTS OF EXCELLENCE AND SHUN ALL FORMS OF TARDINESS.

YOU MUST ALWAYS PLACE PREMIUM ON TIME BECAUSE THE HOPE OF 18 MILLION PEOPLE DEPENDS SUBSTANTIALLY ON WHAT 48,000 PUBLIC SERVANTS DO OR REFUSE TO DO. ALWAYS BEAR IN MIND THAT WHATEVER YOU DO NOW, YOU DO FOR YOURSELVES.

I REMIND MYSELF ALWAYS THAT ONE DAY I WILL NO MORE BE IN OFFICE. ONE DAY I WILL NO MORE BE YOUNG. SURELY, I WANT TO LIVE IN A CLEAN, SECURE ENVIRONMENT IN MY OLD AGE. WHATEVER GOOD I CAN DO TODAY; THEREFORE, LET ME DO IT. IF WE DON'T DO WHAT WE NEED TO DO TODAY, OURS WILL BECOME A TRAGIC TALE OF FAILED, UNUTILIZED OPPORTUNITIES, WHICH WILL COME TO HAUNT US WHEN IT IS TOO LATE. LET US SEIZE OUR OPPORTUNITIES NOW.

AND FOR THE GOOD PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE, MY MESSAGE TO YOU TODAY IS ONE OF HOPE. LET US LOOK FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE, FAITH AND DETERMINATION BECAUSE ALL WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FEAR ITSELF.

IT HAS PLEASED GOD ALMIGHTY TO PLACE US AT THIS CHALLENGING TIME IN THIS BLESSED STATE, STRATEGICALLY LOCATED BY THE ATLANTIC OCEAN; MAGNETICALLY ATTRACTING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE EARTH. HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE. WHAT A GREAT MOMENT IN HISTORY TO BE ALIVE. YES, WE FACE DIFFICULT CHALLENGES. BUT THEN, ARE WE A WEAK PEOPLE? NO, WE ARE STRONG AND RESILIENT. WE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO SCALE EVERY MOUNTAIN AND WADE THROUGH EVERY VALLEY AND COME OUT TRIUMPHANTLY HOLDING ALOFT THE BANNER OF VICTORY.

LET ME EXPRESS MY PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO THE LEADERS AND TEEMING MEMBERS OF OUR GREAT PARTY, THE ACTION CONGRESS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AT ALL TIMES. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT AND STEADFASTNESS. THANK YOU FOR BEING AS RELIABLE AND CONSTANT AS THE NORTHERN STAR. WE WATCH WITH PATIENCE AND FAITH, THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS AT SEVERAL ELECTION TRIBUNALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT JUSTICE SHALL ULTIMATELY PREVAIL. BUT HERE IN LAGOS, WE ARE PROUD THAT OUR VICTORY WAS UNBLEMISHED AND TRULY REFLECTED THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE. I URGE US TO REMAIN UNITED, VIGILANT AND EVER FAITHFUL TO THE PROGRESSIVE IDEALS OF OUR PARTY.

MR. SPEAKER, HONORABLE MEMBERS, DEAR LAGOSIANS, FELLOW COUNTRYMEN, WOMEN AND FRIENDS, AS THE YEAR COMES TO AN END, LET ME INSPIRE YOU WITH A MAGNIFICENT CHALLENGE. SHALL YOU AND I LEAVE THIS EARTH WITH THE BLACK MAN STILL THE HUMILIATING UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND INCOMPETENCE? OR WILL WE DO ALL WE CAN NOW TO SHOWCASE, WITHIN OUR LIFETIME, OUR STATE AND OUR COUNTRY, AS UNDENIABLE EVIDENCES OF THE BLACK MAN'S GENIUS? SURELY THE CHOICE IS OURS AND THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

LET US THEREFORE USHER IN THE COMING YEAR WITH A NEW SPRING IN OUR STEPS, A FRESH BOUNCE IN OUR WALK, A BURNING VISION IN OUR MINDS AND A CAST IRON DETERMINATION IN OUR WILL.

SURELY, THE NEXT GENERATION WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK TWO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS OF OUR GENERATION. THE FIRST MAY BE TO ASK "WHAT WERE THEY DOING IN THEIR TIME AND WITH THE OPPORTUNITY THAT THEY HAD THAT THEY NEGLECTED TO PREPARE FOR OUR FUTURE?" THE SECOND OF COURSE MAY BE TO

MARVEL AND WONDER HOW WE FOUND THE COURAGE AND THE VISION TO DELIVER FOR THEM A BRIGHT AND REWARDING FUTURE.

WITH OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT, PASSION AND DEDICATION, I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE WORTHY OF BEING ASKED THE SECOND QUESTION. LET US JOIN HANDS TOGETHER, THEREFORE, IN UNITY OF PURPOSE; HARMONY OF VISION; CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS; CONFLUENCE OF STRENGTHS AND WITH FAITH IN THE ALMIGHTY THAT EKO AND NIGERIA O NI BAJE.

THANK YOU.

GOD BLESS YOU.

I WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY EID-EL KABIR, MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A MOST PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR IN ADVANCE.

Mr. BABATUNDE RAJI FASHOLA (SAN)
Governor of Lagos State

17TH December, 2007