



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

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Statement by

**His Excellency Dr. John Kayode Fayemi** , *CON,*  
*Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum*  
*(NGF)*

on the

**Occasion of the Formal Declaration of His Candidature for the  
Presidential Ticket of the All Progressives Congress (APC)**

on

**Wednesday, 4th May, 2022**

at the

**Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.**

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## **Protocols**

1. I am highly honoured by your presence here today in such large numbers to participate in this town hall event. Your presence reinforces my personal conviction that we are at a moment in the history of our country - and of the world at large - where we must, as a people, make the choices that will ensure that our nation is able to prosper in peace, unity, safety and security in the comity of nations. Trying times such as we are traversing as a nation and which we are witnessing on a global scale can, if properly managed, be converted into transformatory moments that allow both for the achievement of a fundamental national reset and a major leap forward in our affairs.
2. The words that fellow Nigerians from various walks of life have spoken in recent times assure me that as a people, guided by the right leadership coalition, we are determined not to allow tough times to lead us either to lose sight of some of the gains of the six

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decades of our independent statehood or drive us into the cesspool of a self-deprecating pessimism from which there are no exits. Instead, we share a strong desire to seize the moment and strive for a wholesome recalibration that enables us to build upward and higher in unity and unison. That is the Nigerian genius that the world has seen displayed intermittently - though without always sufficiently understanding. Combined with an uncommon spirit of fortitude, this genius has helped us to defy all doomsayers and naysayers to triumph over adversity, anomie, and discontent. It is one reason for hope; it is also partly why, like my fellow travellers, some of whom are here with us in this hall, I am proudly Nigerian and will always remain one.

3. My own journey into public life has taught me that while we must never as a people be complacent about our circumstances, there is also no noble project of national advancement that is beyond our grasp when we act as one with a clear vision and the requisite commitment. I began my journey into the public sphere in earnest as a student leader at the University of Lagos. It was at a time in our national history when we were all fired by genuine and well-founded hopes of the heights to which we could soar as a leading actor in global African and world affairs. It was the time when the roots of my unshakable faith were sunk that our future as a nation, and our place in the global comity of nations, resides in the consolidation of our unity and cohesion. For it is out of unity and cohesion that we have always found the strength to transcend all barriers, defend our freedom and dignity, scale new heights, and provide leadership for Africa.
4. Beyond my early forays into the public sphere as a student leader, my abiding faith in the oneness of our country has been further reinforced by all my subsequent engagements in national affairs as a scholar/public intellectual, civil society voice and institution-builder, political organiser with an unapologetic pan-Nigerian and pan-African outlook, indefatigable advocate for human rights and democratic governance, two-term governor, federal minister, an active member of the Progressive Governors' Forum, and two-term Chair of Nigeria Governors' Forum. I have been privileged to

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witness first hand, the underlying commitment and sense of solidarity which Nigerians from all parts of the country share about the promise of the fatherland. And it has been my singular honour to have been an active part at various times of different detachments of the committed army of compatriots from various walks of life labouring with determination for our national progress to be both sustained and advanced.

5. Compatriots, it is in the spirit of this abiding faith in our country and the promise of its unfinished greatness that I stand before you today, in total humility and with all sense of responsibility, to solemnly declare to all our party cadres and Nigerians at large, my decision to accept for my name to be put forward for consideration by the APC leadership and membership as the party's standard bearer in the upcoming contest for a successor to His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari. This is not a decision which I have taken lightly. Indeed, to arrive at this point, I carried out a a long and deep self-introspection with the help of close family, friends, and colleagues, including my wife and devoted partner, Erelu Bisi Fayemi. I have also traversed the length and breadth of our country to consult and explore with our esteemed elder statesmen and women, traditional rulers, a cross section of party leaders and rank and file members, and various non-partisan leaders of thought and opinion.
6. I embarked on these outreach visits neither with prior assumptions about what they would yield nor with any sense of personal entitlement. However, after a careful consideration of where we are as a nation and the many perspectives which are emerging about the challenges, old and new, which we must gird our loins to tackle and transcend, I am convinced that my entry into the race to bear the standard of the APC will offer our members and Nigerians the opportunity to examine competing visions for national rebirth in the best interest of our country. And it is on the foundation of a clear vision accompanied by a carefully thought out programme of action that I present my candidature. I do so fully convinced on the basis of what I have experienced, heard, and seen about the demands of the times and the aspirations of our people that the

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agenda that I am proposing for our country is one which will find favour with APC members and win resounding traction with the generality of Nigerians.

7. Here then is my motivating testament and confession: I am a patriot born in these climes in the course of the first decade of the independence of our country, and I stake a bold claim to say that I am full-blooded child of Nigeria. I grew up as did many of my generation socialised into the ideals of a united and virile nation. In my life time, I have witnessed some heart-warming moments of nation- and state-building that would make any citizen anywhere immeasurably proud. But we have also seen some truly challenging days in our journey of nationhood which have tested our collective resolve and demanded the exercise of considerable political savvy by our leaders over the years. I have taken as a key lesson from the admixture high and low points we have experienced as a country that when and where we are charitable to another and allow our shared humanity, innate spirit of solidarity, and underlying patriotism to prevail, we always succeed in containing and overcoming adversity.
8. Fellow Nigerians, that is why on this 4th day of the month of May 2022, before this august assemblage of Nigerians from all walks of life and the four corners of this beautiful land, I can boldly and confidently say to our party members and the generality of Nigerians: Let us together, as one people, dig deep into our history and our hearts to revive hope and do the work of faith that will positively re-energise our homes and our lives for the common and greater good. Despair is easy to spread. Hope can be daunting to sustain. And faith can be severely shaken. But while the night may be long, the dawn must come - and it always does. I offer myself as the leadership figure who is willing and primed to work with you, beloved compatriots, to launch and drive the hard work of surmounting difficult times, fostering trust, and building bridges with a view to carrying us in unity, equity, and justice into our new dawn of progress and prosperity.

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9. Hope such as I offer with my candidature is premised on a shared vision on which we can all agree, and for which we collectively strive, of a nation that is more confidently and uncompromisingly at one with itself, serving as home for all of us regardless of ethnicity, class, gender, age, disability, region or religion. It is a vision of a nation of multiple diversities in which each and every one of us can recognise ourselves in its fabric and workings as equal stakeholders and co-constructors, complete with all the rights, freedoms, and duties provided under the constitution for citizens. The ideal of Nigeria as home to all of us who are its children is one which we can all rally around as a starting point for the work of unfinished national greatness that must taken to its next phase. To give full effect to this, concrete programmes of action will be launched in priority areas that will allow for a revamping of the credibility of the Nigerian state, the promotion of an enhanced social contract, and the revamping of the national identity.
  10. Programmatically, as the standard bearer of the APC, I will be leading the implementation of a wholistic and integrated response to the multifaceted security crises confronting us. To this end, the retooling of our armed forces, intelligence agencies, and border guards will be pursued in tandem with an overhaul of our policing system and the phasing in of bold universal social policies that will enable us decisively to tackle poverty and upgrade human capital and security. In this perspective, the deliberate expansion of employment opportunities, youth entrepreneurship, skills development, and innovation, support to the weak and vulnerable such as we have done in Ekiti State for the elderly, and women's socio-economic empowerment will be treated as just one dimension of our comprehensive response to the costly security crises that have destabilised us, as will the pursuit of broad welfare policies that are embedded into a new state-society bargain and the empowerment of citizens.
  11. The adoption of broad socio-economic measures that enhance our capacity to fight insecurity must be done at the same time as investments in reinforcing the deterrent capacity of the state

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through its armed forces, security agencies, and policing authorities. Authority and legitimacy and deterrence and rapid response go hand in hand, just as we must better interface economic policies with broad social objectives and goals of political inclusivity towards a well-defined outcome, namely, the sustained peace, stability, and progress of our country. And let there be no doubt: For the economy to serve broader social and political purposes that enhance human and state security, stem poverty, and promote national prosperity, my agenda for Nigeria encompasses attention to questions of productivity, diversification, domestic value addition, investments in and incentives for research, development, and innovation, and the expansion of domestic revenue mobilisation, among others.

12. Considerable work is already ongoing on the upgrading and expansion of our infrastructure and one of my prime objectives would be to accelerate this both through public investments and partnerships with the private sector whilst simultaneously ensuring that we enforce accountability and get much greater value for money. By the same token, a major rescue and investment programme for the educational sector, the health system, the civil service, and the local government system will be launched in order to re-orient each of them for the task of overall national development, progress and prosperity. Each of these domains can benefit much more from a deliberate and systematic deployment of digital technologies as appropriate to their context; the opportunities will be followed through as an integral part of our programme of rebirth.
13. I fully understand that we cannot secure our prosperity without ensuring that our agricultural sector is able to deliver self-sufficiency in critical food markets, absorb an important swathe of the unemployed into gainful employment, feed our efforts at agro-allied industrialisation, reinvigorate the rural areas, foster the coordinated expansion of commodity exchanges, and boost the flow of foreign exchange into the economy. We will prioritise the sector for the multiple benefits it can bring to the agenda of national prosperity and transformation that we will be pursuing with

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unrelenting vigour. As part of this commitment, issues of streamlined and transparent access to agricultural finance, and the expanded adoption of agricultural technology by farming populations will rank high in the priority areas for focus.

14. No vision of national prosperity however impeccable or programme of national transformation however comprehensive can deliver the outcomes desired without attention to the planning system of government writ large. We must build on recent successes in restoring our national planning system and statistical capacity in order to open new, forward-looking approaches to development management. This will form an integral part of the new elan that we will be bringing to governance as a whole, driven by a philosophy of efficient service delivery, the enthronement of a civic culture, and the encouragement of an empowered citizenry to engage with public affairs understanding that it is the repository of power. As part of this commitment, a wholistic approach to decentralisation will be embraced and institutionalised so that government and its services are brought closer to the people. Our programme of decentralisation will also feed into the goals of a stronger, more united, and stable Nigeria. These are outcomes which are not only good for our domestic prospects but which will also benefit West Africa, the rest of the African continent, and a troubled international multilateral system.
15. Friends and compatriots! I have, for this occasion, shared just a few snippets of what I hope will be the core of the Nigeria agenda under my watch. The die is now cast. I embark on this journey with a determination to play my part to the end. I do so buoyed by your many good wishes freely expressed and your prayers fervently offered. I want to commit before you that I will in the course of this campaign adhere to the highest standards of decorum, decency, and respect which Nigerians expect of their leaders. As we go along, I will have occasion to share even greater details about my vision for our national prosperity and progress, and the programme underpinning it. For now, I wish to pay tribute to His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari for his fatherly counsel all through the period that I have been privileged to work with him. I wish also

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to thank all our other living leaders who, even out of office, continue quietly to labour for the unity and peace of the country. Above all, I want to thank the everyday Nigerian, male and female, young and old, worker and retiree who have refused to give up on the Nigerian dream. Believe me, Nigeria is worth living for and it is up to us to make the living worthwhile. Be reassured that help is on the way and hope will be restored. This then is my pledge to you today, delivered before man and God: Together, we shall bring that dream to full fruition in our life time and it will blossom to the pride of all Nigerians and the admiration of the world. Let the work begin. I am ready. Are you?.

16. God bless you. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria