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**INDUCTION OF NEW AND RETURNING GOVERNORS**

**GOVERNOR’S FAREWELL DINNER HELD ON SUNDAY, 28TH APRIL, 2019 AT THE CONGRESS HALL, TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL ABUJA**

The 2019 induction programme commenced with a farewell dinner on Sunday 28th April 2019 at Congress Hall, Transcorp Hotel, Abuja. The event was attended by about 200 participants - mostly former governors, including H.E. Abdulaziz Abubakar Yari , Governor of Zamfara State and Chairman of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum, Mr. Bill Richardson, former Governor of Maryland USA, , H.E. Abdullahi Adamu, former Governor of Nassarawa State, H.E. Obong Victor Attah, H.E. Lucky Igbinedion, former Governor of Edo State, H.E Adamu Muazu, former Governor of Bauchi, H.E. Donald Duke, former Governor of Cross River, H.E. Ibrahim Shekarau, former Governor of Kano State and H.E. Segun Osoba, former Governor of Ogun State. The Guest of Honour at the event was H.E. Dr. Bukola Saraki, Senate President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**OPENING REMARKS**

The evening’s event commenced with a cocktail at the lobby of the Congress Hall. Thereafter, invited guests were ushered into the hall for the commencement of the farewell dinner.

Mr. A.B. Okauru Esq, Director General of Nigeria Governors’ Forum, in his opening remarks thanked the out-going Governors and welcomed the in-coming and returning Governors to the farewell dinner. He also welcomed the former Governor of Maryland, Mr. Bill Richardson and acknowledged the impact that the United States National Governors Association (NGA) has had on the formation and development of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF). Finally, Mr. Okauru welcomed all invited guests to the dinner.

H.E. Abdulaziz Yari Abubakar, Chairman of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF), in his welcome remarks indicated that the farewell dinner was not a night for speech making as most of the speeches would be delivered tomorrow at the main event. He welcomed everyone to sit back and enjoy the dinner, most especially former chairmen of NGF and members of the American Governors Forum that are collaborating with NGF to facilitate the event .

**REMARKS ON LIFE AFTER OFFICE**

The following former Governors took turns to give brief remarks about “life after office”: Obong Victor Attah (Akwa Ibom), Chief Lucky Igbinedion (Edo), Alhaji Adamu Muazu (Bauchi), Malam Ibrahim Shekarau (Kano) and Chief Olusegun Osoba (Ogun).

His Excellency, Obong Victor Attah, indicated that he had just turned 80. He reminded the audience that he became Governor at the age of 60 and left at 68, after two-terms in office. He stated that there is life after service as he has been busy since he left government house. Noting the dysfunction in the current presidential system including the “winner takes all siege”, H. E. Attah called for a return to the parliamentary system of government which he averred would truly empower the electorate. He also advocated for the restructuring of the federating units that make up Nigeria.

Chief Lucky Igbinedion advised Governors on the essence of having a strong team while in office and the need to complete projects inherited from their predecessors before or while embarking on their own new projects. The former Governor of Edo State also emphasized the essence of effective time management by Governors in and out of office.

H.E. Adamu Muazu, former Governor of Bauchi State, in his remarks, reiterated the need for Governors to assemble competent teams while in office, especially the Secretary to the State Government. The former governor also distributed a book detailing his service to Bauchi State to all participants.

H. E. Ibrahim Shekarau, former Governor of Kano State, commended the Nigeria Governors’ Forum for its resilience and continued relevance. In his words, the organization is “growing from strength to strength”. Advising Governor’s on the subject of “Life after office”, he admonished them to prepare for life after office, right from the first day of inception of the administration. H.E. Shekaru noted that “a peaceful ending begets a peaceful beginning”. He further pointed out that a Governor that prepares for a peaceful ending at the beginning of their administration would have “peace in between” the beginning and the end of the government.

Governor Shekarau further advised the Governors to ensure that they have sincerity of purpose and exhibit exemplary conduct among other attributes. In concluding, he charge them not to be deterred by accusations as they will always be made in a polity like Nigeria.

H. E. Olusegun Osoba, former Governor of Ogun State drew the attention of Governors to the trappings of office. He illustrated this with indiscriminate use of sirens by his colleagues when he held sway as Governor for about a year and half before the military regime of General Abacha terminated the government. H.E. Osoba advised Governors to be warry of two types of staff - Protocol and Security details who are usually overzealous. He advised the Governor’s that are bowing out of office to be prepared emotionally, as being out of office can be traumatic, especially after the security and protocol arrangement they were used to becomes a thing of the past. To the in-coming Governors, he cautioned against probing their predecessors. Rather, he advised them to be more focused on their own administration. In concluding, he advised the Governors to “be yourselves, discard vendetta and be focused”.

**PRESENTATION OF GIFTS**

In recognition of the tremendous support they received from Governors in running the Forum, the staff of the Secretariat presented gifts to the three outgoing Governors present at the event. These are:

1. H.E. Ibikunle Amosun (Ogun);
2. H.E. Abdulfatai Ahmed (Kwara); and,
3. H.E. Abiola Ajimobi (Oyo).

In an emotional event, the staff joined the Chairman of the Forum and the DG of the Secretariat in presenting the gifts to these outgoing Governors.

**REMARKS BY THE GUEST OF HONOUR**

In his remarks, the Guest of Honour, Dr. Bukola Saraki congratulated the Chairman of the Forum, Governor Abdulaziz Abubakar Yari, for building on what previous Chairmen of the NGF had done. He equally congratulated the Director General of Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF) for his dexterous handling of the Secretariat. The Senate President advised outgoing Governors, to always prepare their exit plans immediately they assume office. In fact, it should be right from day one on assumption of office. Going down memory lane, he recalled their visit to American Governors Association, the experiences garnered and how the relationship has blossomed. While in office, if Governors want to get things accomplished, he informed them that the most important person in their office is their schedule Officer. Finally, he commended the Chairman of the Forum, Abdulaziz Abubakar Yari and the Director General of the Forum for taking the Forum to new heights in the last four years.

**VOTE OF THANKS**

Dr. L.O.T. Shittu, Executive Director, Strategy and Research of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), on behalf of the Chairman, Management and staff of the Forum, thanked the Senate President, the Governors and all the distinguished guests for gracing the event.