

**REMARKS**  
ON  
**LIFE AFTER OFFICE**

BY  
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AT THE  
**2023 NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM INDUCTION FOR NEW AND RETURNING GOVERNORS**  
Abuja. 14<sup>TH</sup> – 17<sup>TH</sup> May, 2023

## PROTOCOLS

1. I will like to start by thanking the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, His Excellency, Governor Aminu Tambuwal and the Forum's leadership for this opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences with these distinguished Nigerians who have been elected to be Governors of their various States for the next four years.
2. As one of the main drivers of the NGF at inception, I am proud of the noteworthy strides that the Forum has recorded over the past 23 years. It has become a major platform for the interrogation of critical policy and development issues across party lines at the subnational and national levels. It is only apt that I seize this opportunity to salute the commitment and focus of the entire leadership.
3. This Induction Programme is one of the many ways that the Forum has sought to live up to its core mandate of enhancing the governance process and driving democratic consolidation in our nation. The set-out objectives of the Induction clearly outline subject areas that emphasise this point.
4. My responsibility here today is to join you in taking a look at what life looks like after you would have completed your tenures, and how best to prepare for that inevitability.
5. I will commence by advising that **you mentally begin to prepare for your exit from Day One in office!** Because the job necessarily takes all of your time, you hardly can find the time to focus on planning for life after office. From the moment you are sworn in, the countdown starts. Your every waking hour is planned and scheduled to the minutest detail.

6. Realising that there is a definite terminal date on the horizon helps you to focus on doing your utmost to deliver on your mandate, and hope that posterity judges you positively. As I like to put it, *'you write your testimonial everyday'*.
7. Secondly, **when you bow out, do not look back**. I know it is not easy to transit from being the number one citizen in the State to becoming just another citizen. There is always the temptation to want to 'remain in control' of things after you leave office. Your Excellencies, please do not let that bug bite you! It leads to avoidable conflict with your successor and creates needless tension in the system.
8. If your successor seeks your counsel, you should be gracious enough to offer helpful advice. If he does not, let him be. That way, you keep your self-respect, you retain his respect, and you are free to focus on the next stage of your life's journey.
9. In or out of office, the core essence of one's personality never really changes. I am an ardent believer in the saying that **power doesn't change people, it only reveals who they truly are**. We should never make the mistake of burning the bridges that tie us to our roots because of our enhanced status as Governors: family and friends are key in this regard. Ultimately, we need those same ties and bonds to help us settle back in to life out of public office.
10. From personal experience, I can assure you that **friends of the office are usually birds of passage. The day you leave office is the terminal date of their fellowship with you**. Those who used to call you five times a day will not even bother to take your call, not to mention calling you.

11. Believe me, it will happen! That is when you need to leverage on your inner strength, and invest time and focus, first, on your immediate family who not only provided you the requisite support but also bore the brunt of your total commitment to the responsibility of governance; and those friends and acquaintances who have proven to be worthy and dependable allies through the trials and triumphs of life as the number one citizen of your State.
12. You can do this when you are at peace with your conscience, knowing that you have done your job to the best of your human capacity.
13. Leaving the office of Governor can be a destabilising experience, especially when one allows one's sense of self-worth to be intertwined with the influence and prestige of the office. However, it should not translate to the end of the road. Instead, it should free you up to redirect your resources and energies to your chosen vocation, at your own pace – **after a period of deserved rest and reflection!**
14. With the right mental attitude, you can find the means of giving new meaning and purpose to your life. If you are like me, you will even find time to play football. I see some of you smiling 'wickedly': go and ask those that have seen me display my soccer skills!
15. The reality of our governance system is that, by virtue of your having served as a Governor, you remain a leader by default. Many will still look up to you for guidance and mentorship. You owe them, you owe yourself, and more critically, you owe God and posterity an obligation to give back to society. It is not only the right thing to do, it is also self-fulfilling.

16. On a final note, I would like to remind you that the oath of office is usually sworn to, using either the Quran or the Bible. The implication is that we generally believe to varying degrees in Almighty God. As we leave office, if we are humble enough to realise that it was by His grace that we got there in the first place, if we are gracious enough to recognise that His grace sustained us in office, and that His favour will keep us post-office, we will have no cause to fret over our future.
  
17. My dear brothers, as you prepare to mount the saddle as Chief Executives in your various States, I can only wish you unqualified success and a fulfilling tenure in the service of the people.
  
18. Thank you.