

**GOODWILL MESSAGE DELIVERED BY MR PETER OJO, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, EKITI STATE CHAPTER DURING THE INITIATION OF STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP FOR THE EKITI STATE PEER REVIEW MECHANISM ON 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2011.**

First and foremost, I want to appreciate the almighty God for granting the initiators i.e. the brains behind this programme, the caring heart wisdom to initiate and carryout this programme, most especially for their initiative to mainstream persons with disabilities in Ekiti State i.e. caring for and considering the views of the Disables.

The collaborative efforts of the Ekiti State Government with the Nigerian Governors' Forum and the Department For International Development is Commendable. So also, I salute the courage and appreciate the administrative mechanism and machineries of the Ministry of Integration and Intergovernmental Affairs of the State for their array of initiatives to actualize the 8 point agenda of the State Government, to positively affect the lives of the entire people of Ekiti State especially the hands of fellowship extended to the people with Disabilities. This transcends the good governance and leadership of His Excellency, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, on his people.

It is worthwhile to enumerate the array of initiatives designed and carryout by the Ekiti State Government through the Ministry of Integration and Intergovernmental Affairs as it has positively affected the lives of the disables in the State in so many ways which are not limited to the following:-

✓ Creating and upgrading of the Rehabilitation Department in the Ministry of Youth and Sports which was formally a unit under the Ministry of Women Affairs.

✓ For the first time in the history of Ekiti State, Mr. Governor initiated and bankrolled the head count of all persons with disabilities in Ekiti State with their statistical data to each towns and local government area.

✓ Free health for all persons with disabilities in the state.

✓ It is worthy <sup>to</sup> note that the present Administration has approved the automatic employment for all qualified persons with Disability in the State.

✓ Four blind persons are presently being sponsored for training at the farm craft centre at Ikeja, Lagos at the expense of the state government.

✓ To crown it all, it is gratifying to say that all requests on matters relating to Persons with Disability in the State have received blessings from the present Government.

With utmost sense of responsibility, we also want to use this medium on behalf of the entire Persons with Disabilities in Ekiti State to express our profound gratitude and sincere appreciation to the present Government of Ekiti State under the leadership of Dr. John Kayode Fayemi for their caring heart for the entire people of the State most especially the Disables.

To further better the lives of Persons with Disabilities in the state, assistance can also be given in the following areas:-

- Provision of serviceable buses for six Disable Associations in Ekiti State for easy transportation and accessibility.
- Reinstating the subvention to the six Disable Associations in Ekiti State, this had been abolished in the State since 2003.
- Creating Disability Desk in the Governor's office to be managed by a Disabled person.

It is with great delight that we once again say a big thank you to our Able and Dynamic Governor, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, but remember to show EMPATHY not SYMPATHY to the Disables, assist them where and when necessary. There is nothing about DISABLES without Involving the DISABLES.

If you have one, do not hide him/her; encourage him/her to develop his/her ability/abilities as there are ABILITIES in DISABILITY if properly harnessed.

Thanks and God bless.