

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU,
GCFR, PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 63RD INDEPENDENCE
ANNIVERSARY OF NIGERIA ON SUNDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 2023**

Dear Compatriots,

It is my unique honour to address you on this day, the 63rd anniversary of our nation's independence, both as the President of our dear country and, simply, as a fellow Nigerian.

On this solemn yet hopeful day, let us commend our founding fathers and mothers. Without them, there would be no modern Nigeria. From the fading embers of colonialism, their activism, dedication and leadership gave life to the belief in Nigeria as a sovereign and independent nation.

Let us, at this very moment, affirm that as Nigerians, we are all endowed with the sacred rights and individual gifts that God has bestowed on us as a nation and as human beings. No one is greater or lesser than the other. The triumphs that Nigeria has achieved shall define us. The travails we have endured shall strengthen us. And no other nation or power on this earth shall keep us from our rightful place and destiny. This nation belongs to you, dear people. Love and cherish it as your very own.

Nigeria is remarkable in its formation and essential character. We are a broad and dynamic blend of ethnic groups, religions, traditions and cultures. Yet, our bonds are intangible yet strong, invisible yet universal. We are joined by a common thirst for peace and progress, by the common dream of prosperity and harmony and by the unifying ideals of tolerance and justice.

Forging a nation based on the fair application of these noble principles to a diverse population has been a task of significant blessing but also serial challenge. Some people have said an independent Nigeria should never have come into existence. Some have said that our country would be torn apart. They are forever mistaken. Here, our nation stands and here we shall remain.

This year, we passed a significant milestone in our journey to a better Nigeria. By democratically electing a 7th consecutive civilian government, Nigeria has proven that commitment to democracy and the rule of law remains our guiding light.

At my inauguration, I made important promises about how I would govern this great nation. Among those promises, were pledges to reshape and modernize our economy and to secure the lives, liberty and property of the people.

I said that bold reforms were necessary to place our nation on the path of prosperity and growth. On that occasion, I announced the end of the fuel subsidy.

I am attuned to the hardships that have come. I have a heart that feels and eyes that see. I wish to explain to you why we must endure this trying moment. Those who sought to perpetuate the fuel subsidy and broken foreign exchange policies are people who would build their family mansion in the middle of a swamp. I am different. I am not a man to erect our national home on a foundation of mud. To endure, our home must be constructed on safe and pleasant ground.

Reform may be painful, but it is what greatness and the future require. We now carry the costs of reaching a future Nigeria where the abundance and fruits of the nation are fairly shared among all, not hoarded by a select and greedy few. A Nigeria where hunger, poverty and hardship are pushed into the shadows of an ever fading past.

There is no joy in seeing the people of this nation shoulder burdens that should have been shed years ago. I wish today's difficulties did not exist. But we must endure if we are to reach the good side of our future.

My government is doing all that it can to ease the load. I will now outline the path we are taking to relieve the stress on our families and households.

We have embarked on several public sector reforms to stabilize the economy, direct fiscal and monetary policy to fight inflation, encourage production, ensure the security of lives and property and lend more support to the poor and the vulnerable.

Based on our talks with labour, business and other stakeholders, we are introducing a provisional wage increment to enhance the federal minimum wage without causing undue inflation. For the next six months, the average low-grade worker shall receive an additional Twenty-Five Thousand naira per month.

To ensure better grassroots development, we set up an Infrastructure Support Fund for states to invest in critical areas. States have already received funds to provide relief packages against the impact of rising food and other prices.

Making the economy more robust by lowering transport costs will be key. In this regard, we have opened a new chapter in public transportation through the deployment of cheaper, safer Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses across the nation. These buses will operate at a fraction of current fuel prices, positively affecting transport fares.

New CNG conversions kits will start coming in very soon as all hands are on deck to fast track the usually lengthy procurement process. We are also setting up training facilities and workshops across the nation to train and provide new opportunities for transport operators and entrepreneurs. This is a groundbreaking moment where, as a nation, we embrace more efficient means to power our economy. In making this change, we also make history.

I pledged a thorough housecleaning of the den of malfeasance the CBN had become. That housecleaning is well underway. A new leadership for the Central Bank has been constituted. Also, my special investigator will soon present his findings on past lapses and how to prevent similar reoccurrences. Henceforth, monetary policy shall be for the benefit of all and not the exclusive province of the powerful and wealthy.

Wise tax policy is essential to economic fairness and development. I have inaugurated a Committee on Tax Reforms to improve the efficiency of tax administration in the country and address fiscal policies that are unfair or hinder the business environment and slow our growth.

To boost employment and urban incomes, we are providing investment funding for enterprises with great potential. Similarly, we are increasing investment in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Commencing this month, the social safety net is being extended through the expansion of cash transfer programs to an additional 15 million vulnerable households.

My administration shall always accord the highest priority to the safety of the people. Inter-Service collaboration and intelligence sharing have been enhanced. Our Service Chiefs have been tasked with the vital responsibility of rebuilding the capacities of our security services.

Here, I salute and commend our gallant security forces for keeping us safe and securing our territorial integrity. Many have paid the ultimate sacrifice. We remember them today and their families. We shall equip our forces with the ways and means needed to perform their urgent task on behalf of the people,

We shall continue to make key appointments in line with the provisions of the Constitution and with fairness toward all. Women, Youth and the physically challenged shall continue to be given due regard in these appointments.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate the National Assembly for its role in the quick take-off of this administration through the performance of its constitutional duties of confirmation and oversight.

I similarly congratulate the judiciary as a pillar of democracy and fairness.

I also thank members of our dynamic civil society organizations and labour unions for their dedication to Nigerian democracy. We may not always agree but I value your advice and recommendations. You are my brothers and sisters and you have my due respect.

Fellow compatriots, the journey ahead will not be navigated by fear or hatred. We can only achieve our better Nigeria through courage, compassion and commitment as one indivisible unit.

I promise that I shall remain committed and serve faithfully. I also invite all to join this enterprise to remake our beloved nation into its better self. We can do it. We must do it. We shall do it.!!!

I wish you all a happy 63rd Independence Anniversary.

Thank you for listening.

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.