



**Inaugural Address by His Excellency, Seyi Makinde, the Executive Governor
of Oyo State, during his Swearing-in Ceremony at the Obafemi Awolowo
Stadium, Ibadan on May 29, 2019**

“Ají ẹ̀e bí Òyó lààrí, Òyó ò kí ẹ̀e bí baba ẹ̀nikan.”

Oyo leads and others imitate. We are a state proud of our many firsts. In 1965, just five years after Nigeria’s independence, the first skyscraper was built in the Western region, in an area that later became part of our beloved Oyo State. Well before independence, this same territory hosted the first TV station in Nigeria, the first university, the first housing estate in Nigeria, the first government secretariat and the first modern parliament. Let me also add that we host the first stadium in Africa, the first dual carriage road and more recently, the first private TV station in Nigeria. Reflecting on these firsts makes you realize that there must be something special about this region.

The legendary Oyo greatness, the Pacesetter State, lives on. I am greatly honored to stand before you today to assume the overwhelming mandate you have given me. This inaugural address will not dwell on the past but look to the future because of the urgency and the magnitude of the task ahead of us.

We want all of you to be a part of the implementation as we work together to move our state forward.

We may make decisions that are sometimes uncomfortable but we will try our best to always be just, fair and act with the fear of God. I am here as your governor to serve you. I will work tirelessly and take responsibility for the workings of every sector. While I will delegate effectively, the buck will stop with me. I want you to hold me accountable and I will also hold you accountable as we work as partners to bring Oyo State to glory. We will be a progressive administration; building on the programmes of past administrations that were structured properly and have been beneficial to the masses. When the need arises, we will consult our predecessors and draw on their experiences. We will put aside partisan politics for the good of our state. We will bring in new ideas and explore new initiatives. We will partner with local and foreign investors, some of whom are here with us today. I was drawn to politics because I saw the way the wealth meant for everyone was being siphoned by a few to enrich themselves while leaving the masses in desperate poverty and dehumanizing suffering, and our land in ruin. We have an opportunity to change this and we will. With good governance, we will more than confront poverty; we will usher in an era of progress and prosperity. To do this, I speak to your consciences; we have to shun the way things are currently done. Every one of us in every walk of life must embrace accountability and hard work. I promised the Nigerian Labour Congress during all of our meetings that our relationship will deal with issues openly and sincerely because we are all in this together. We have already started working on our campaign promises. In the area of investments, we promised that our administration will

be pro-private investments, that we will make Oyo State the preferred investment destination in Nigeria. We recognize that one of our areas of comparative advantage is agriculture. I am excited to tell you today, that we have already taken steps to market our potentials. Our farmers will be happy to know that we are in talks with Botswana to export our maize to them. Our African neighbours have in the recent past, imported from Central America, but they are ready to give us a chance. We welcome the delegation from Botswana led by Business Botswana President, Gobusamang Keebine. During our campaigns, as we moved from one local government to the other, we listened to people discuss their concerns. I know that the people of Oyo State are not asking for too much. We spoke to the businessmen who are hurting under multiple taxations, who are pained because the ease of doing business is so bad that Oyo State ranks thirty-five out of the thirty-six states in Nigeria. More businesses are shutting down than are being opened. We spoke to farmers in settlements at Ipapo, Ilora, Eruwa, Ogbomosho, Iresaadu, Ijaiye, Akufo and Lalupon who complained about inability to access credit facilities, poor rural infrastructure especially feeder roads, difficulty in processing harvests, and lack of storage facilities. We listened to leaders and members of the Joint Farmers Association and agropreneurs talk about the challenges in the agriculture sector and proffer solutions which we will implement. Our administration will make providing infrastructure a priority. We spoke with parents of children in public secondary schools who out of their meager resources still have to scrounge N3,000 per child so that their children can get an education and increase their opportunities. Our region that housed the first university in Nigeria now has a state with the seventh highest number of out-of-school children. Over 400,000 children in Oyo State are out of school. Effective immediately, the school fees of N3,000 in state-owned secondary schools is hereby abolished. We want enrollments to go up, we want our children off the streets and in the classrooms. We are throwing the school doors wide open. Whoever opens a school door, opens an opportunity. We are opening opportunities for a brighter future. We also know that education standards in Oyo State are poor. Oyo State recently ranked twenty-sixth in Nigeria in WAEC performance. While we invite the students to come in, we will focus on raising the standard of education in Oyo State. We will work on providing needed infrastructure and man power by increasing Oyo State's education budget to 10% of our total annual budget, increasing yearly until we match UNESCO's recommendation of 15-20%. We will be a pacesetter state in education. We know that quality education is not possible without quality teachers. Quality emoluments and benefits attract quality teachers. We are not ignorant of the plight of our dear teachers. We know the state of the teacher's pension scheme. During my campaigns, I promised to donate my entire salary as governor to the Teacher's Pension Fund. I stand by that promise. We will seek practical ways to reposition the Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho. You are aware that the university is jointly owned by Osun and Oyo State. We will reach out to our sister state and share ideas on how to move the institution forward. Our priority is a total takeover. We spoke with people living with disabilities; successive governments have not paid adequate attention to our people who live with disabilities. We talked about the challenges and neglect they face; the lack of access to healthcare, education, work opportunities and stigmatisation. To people living with disabilities in our state, I say, your relief has come. We will establish a Commission for People Living with Disabilities. The mandate of this parastatal will be to improve the lives of people living with disabilities. In addition, we will develop an institutional framework for enforcing compliance with our equal opportunity principle. We will also encourage the private sector to hire persons with disabilities by offering them tax incentives. We spoke with people facing health challenges. We are planning interventions in the sector under two main headings: providing primary health care and making health insurance more accessible to the people of Oyo State.

Access to good healthcare is non-negotiable. It is the responsibility of government to ensure there are adequate medical and healthcare facilities for all persons. Therefore, in the first two years of our administration, no new healthcare centre will be built. The focus will be to upgrade the existing ones by renovating and equipping them. In the same vein, our strategy for implementing the health insurance scheme will involve updating existing interventions and making them more accessible. By November, we would have completed a needs assessment and identified local associations willing to participate in the health insurance scheme and use them to get insurance benefits to the most vulnerable in the state. We will also embark on extensive reformation of the Hospital Management Board for more effective service delivery in our hospitals. The biggest issue facing the people of Oyo State is poverty. We need money to confront poverty. Oyo State needs money. Right now, Oyo State's income stands at 33% from Internally Generated Revenue and over 60% FAAC allocations. This is why we are constantly in a cycle of debt and liability. This model is unsustainable. It has to change. We will reduce government overheads, increase the efficiency in tax collection, simplify the tax payment system and cut down on debt accumulation without concrete repayment plans. We cannot do this without your support. I am taking this opportunity to solicit your support. We are going to be taking decisions that may be tough in the immediate but will have long-term benefits. We want you to look at the big picture. We want you to focus on the goal. For example, I have always said that the Oyo State civil servants deserve to earn a whole lot more for their dedication and service to the state. Recently, the Federal Government announced a new salary scheme in which the lowest cadre of civil servants are expected to earn at least N30,000. I know how access to this type of money will improve the lives of many of the families that I have had direct contact with. However, with the way the Oyo State account currently stands, I will be deceiving you if I said we are capable of taking on this burden. I believe in true Federalism. I believe the states should decide the minimum wage of their workforce based on individual realities. All states are not created equal, so it is against the principle of fairness to apply a blanket rule to govern them all. That being said, our plan is to make Oyo the first state to pay above the national minimum wage. We know this is possible. We have already set our plan in motion to make this possible. But, this requires time. We propose staggered increments. I met with organized labour during my campaigns and made a pledge to an open relationship. I intend to stand by that promise. We will have a sincere conversation and arrive at the best possible decision. Rest assured that the decision will put your overall best interests first. We will set up a committee in due course to look into all cases of those who believe they have been wrongly dismissed from the civil service, including those whose cases have been decided in their favour in court who have not been reinstated. We have interacted with students, workers, artisans, young and elderly people; the story is the same. Everyone wants something better. Our focus as a government will be to implement policies which will give our people the tools they need to lift themselves out of grinding poverty and lack. We published our Road Map for Accelerated Development, 2019-2023, three months before the elections. We want you to hold us to our promises. In that document, we set forth our policies for tackling the infrastructure deficits, enabling an efficient health sector, improving security, youth empowerment, social inclusion and protection. Our policies reflect an understanding of the magnitude of problems Oyo State people face and our determination to use the instruments of focused leadership to tackle them. We are not promising miracles, we promise that results will happen if we work together, and that you will see the results, some in a matter of weeks. I cannot end this address without expressing my gratitude to God and the good people of Oyo State, the leaders and members of our great party, the PDP as well as the coalition of parties; ADC, SDP and ZLP who worked together to ensure we were successful. I also thank members of my campaign organisation

including volunteers all over Oyo State who believed in our vision and worked tirelessly to achieve success. My darling wife, Ominini has been a pillar of support, thank you so much. As I promised in my open letter to the people of Oyo State in December 2018, I will be the people's governor. I will run an all-inclusive government for the benefit of everyone in our dear state regardless of their tribe, religion, social class or political affiliations. I believe that being a leader should not be seen as a leeway to dominate and dictate but as a privilege and opportunity to serve, leaving a lasting legacy of positive change and continued growth. Oyo State is the pacesetter state. We are determined to continue setting the pace. We are poised to continue moving forward by focusing on the right priorities. As governor, my duty is to create opportunities for all Oyo State citizens, regardless of where they live, and that starts with education and jobs. A good job and a great education are not rural or urban issues; they are Oyo State issues. As governor, I will not rest until good jobs, thriving businesses, and quality education are the standard in Oyo State. Together, we can do this! I promised 'omituntun' it is time to experience 'omituntun.'

**Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Long live Oyo State.**

Engr. Seyi Makinde
Executive Governor of Oyo State.