

## PROTOCOL

Let me, on behalf of the Vice President and on behalf of myself, thank all of you wonderful people gathered here in our national capital city of Abuja for this Special Presidential Nomination Convention.

We thank all Nigerians, and friends of Nigeria everywhere, who have consistently supported our campaign with prayers, counsel and other forms of encouragement.

The success of this presidential primaries has confirmed the resilience of the democratic spirit within the PDP. The dynamism of the electioneering makes us optimistic about the future of national democracy which is still nascent after a mere three and a half years of transition from the darkest episode in the governance of this country.

I thank all fellow contestants for the Presidential ticket for their enrichment of the democratic process. I thank especially Dr Alex Ekwueme, Chief Barnabas Gemade, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, all of

whom deserve appreciation for the vitality of their participation. Their participation has made the competition keener.

I commend the leadership of our great Party, the PDP, from the ward to the national level for their untiring efforts in continuing to nurture and sustain democracy within our Party. I commend, in particular, the Chairman of our Party, Chief Audu Ogbeh, who is a promoter and defender of what is best for the Party. I commend and congratulate members of the Executive of the Party who spent their time and energy and contributed immensely to organize these successful primaries.

Let me thank all Committee Chairmen and Committee members but particularly the Chairmen of the Planning Committee and the Election Committee. With Jos in 1999, and Abuja in 2003, the PDP is gradually but surely and firmly establishing a culture of open, transparent, credible, fair, free and non-violent presidential primaries. The practice and culture at the presidential primaries should permeate to all other levels of primary elections in our Party.

Fellow Party Members, the victory we have here today is not victory for Obasanjo/Atiku ticket. It is not defeat for any individual or group. It is victory for PDP: victory for the ordinary members as well the chieftains of the Party who have sustained this Party from

its inception till today across the nation.

It is also victory for democracy - the form of government to which we aspire and for which many Nigerians have paid in sweat, tears and blood. We, as a nation of diversities have no choice other than democratic federalism as the best political formula that can adequately address the multi-dimensional nature of our polity and existence.

We also claim today's victory for all those principles and beliefs that we have stood for, namely continuity, stability and development.

We note that all elections, even intra-party ones, generate friction, give rise to tension, and cause fraying of nerves. As the leader of this great Party, I see as my immediate task after these primaries the urgent need to work with the National Chairman, the Vice President, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and all other leaders of the Party to bring about reconciliation, soothing of nerves, easing of tension and generally to restore harmony in the Party without losing discipline. To this effect, we aim to adopt a policy that would be all-inclusive of various interest groups within our Party. It is with this spirit of all-inclusiveness that we shall develop our programme for the elections ahead: the Presidential, National Assembly, the Gubernatorial, the State Assemblies, and

the Local Government. We must ensure that we have a disciplined and focused Party with loyal, committed and dedicated Members. Politically, the PDP is the pillar of the nation today, and to strengthen PDP is to strengthen our nation.

To you Members of our great Party, I ask of you of this: let us join hands together to rededicate ourselves to the service of our country and to the unity of our people; let us heal our wounds and let us together continue to build the faith and confidence of our people in our fatherland; let us continue to earn and retain faith and confidence in our leadership and in our governance. **In short, let us move forward sure footedly!** And let us do so with honest, just, transparent, dedicated and courageous leadership that is equally responsive and accountable to the electorates.

Long live the PDP!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Thank you. And God bless you all.