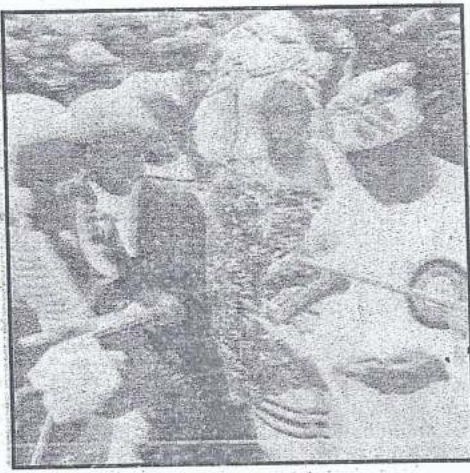


# 'My Vision for Lagos State'

## ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED FIRST BROADCAST TO THE PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE

A little over eight years ago, specifically on May 29th, 1999, the third democratically elected Governor of Lagos State, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was sworn into office at the Tafawa Balewa Square. We reproduce below the maiden broadcast to the state by the man who was destined to steer the ship of Nigeria's most populous and economically vibrant state for eight years between 1999 and 2007. This broadcast clearly outlines the vision of Asiwaju Tinubu for the state, it provides a contextual framework for appreciating the legacies of his eight year tenure as one of the most outstanding public administrators of this political dispensation.

My good people of Lagos State  
On Saturday the 29th of May, 1999, I took the oath of office as your democratically elected Governor, to serve you for the next four years. Immediately after, I spelled out the philosophy of our government, urging you all to join our grand alliance to tackle the monumental problems of development that our state confronts. Six months into a new millennium, it is sad to note that most of the social amenities that are taken for granted in the developed world and that are essential for good and modern life are now scarce commodities in our country. In fact, it is regrettable that we are all daily confronted with a high level of urban decay and degeneration of infrastructure to the extent that our big metropolis is scorned as one big African village. The most glaring of our infrastructural problems is electricity supply. It is epileptic and erratic. Many areas of our state are thrown into perpetual darkness for weeks and for months. The situation is so frustrating that it cannot but compel our immediate and far-reaching intervention. As you all know, the provision of electricity is so essential to our daily existence. It is fundamental to business, to lighting our homes, our streets and our highways, our hospitals, the traffic lights, the telephone system and interconnection to the outside world. Our government is seriously concerned about this problem. We believe that power supply is pivotal to our socio-economic life. We shall also address seriously the inadequacy of water supply in the metropolis. It is a shame that our people roam about in search of water every day. This is quite depressing and unacceptable. Equally sad is the decay in our educational system, especially at the primary and secondary levels. Our hospitals also cry for improvement, emphasis in healthcare delivery will shift to preventive and community based healthcare delivery system. In the next four years, we intend to devote our energies and resources to solving all the problems of infrastructure in our state. Our belief is that without functioning public utilities, our dreams of attracting investments and laying a solid foundation for growth will continue to elude us. You will recall that after my election on the 9th of January, 1999, I set up a Transition Council. It had twenty-three (23) Sub-Committees, which examined all the problems that need to be addressed in our state, sector-by-sector, facet by facet. The Council completed its work some weeks ago, with far reaching and ground-breaking recommendations. Let me seize this opportunity to thank all members of the various committees. You did a good and thorough job. You provided fresh perspectives on our social and economic problems and how we might solve them. Our government has adopted the blue-print that came out of the months of painstaking work. This will be the thrust of the agenda we intend to pursue as a government in the next four years. Before I outline our programmes, I must pay tribute to all my pre-decessors, some of whom have worked hard to ensure that our State remains the leading State in the country. In particular, we should thank Brigadier Mobolaji Johnson, who was the first Military Governor when Lagos State was created in 1967. He laid the foundation for the growth of our State. The era of the first civilian Governor of our State, Alhaji Lateef Jakande, witnessed phenomenal strides in educational development and housing. Air Commodore Gbolahan Mudashiru, excelled by setting standards. He will forever be remembered for the quality houses and schools built by his administration. My immediate predecessor, Brigadier-General Mohammed Buba Marwa, deserves our praise for his efforts. His contributions speaks for itself. Ebunike Ukiwe, Ndubuisi Karu, Commodore Lawal, Raji Rasaki, Mike Akhigbe, Michael Ottedola, Olagunsoye Oyinlola, all left their marks in the state as well. Our government intends to build on all of their legacies. We also plan to break new grounds to meet the challenges of the new millennium. Because of the large population of our State and the heavy concentration of industry and commerce, our state, like other industrial hubs of the world, is faced with the problem of security of lives and property. Our immediate task therefore, is to guarantee residents of Lagos, that they are safe at all times. Our environment must be made unattractive to bandits, so that we can make it investor friendly. In the past, government created Operation Sweep to arrest this problem. It was a multi-disciplinary approach to crime combating, as it involved the police and the Armed Forces. Few days ago, Armed Forces members of the Squad were withdrawn in line with the democratization programme. The police have now taken effective control of the forces. There is need for us to retain such a special force, in order to be able to combat the armed banditry in our midst, which gets more sophisticated everyday. We have since Saturday been in contact with the Police Commissioner in the State on how we can sharpen Operation Sweep. In consequence, I have now decided to reconstitute Operation Sweep into what will be known as "Rapid Response Squad (RRS)". With your cooperation and contribution, our government will make the necessary resources available, to make this squad effective. The Rapid Response Squad (RRS) will receive additional charge and mandate. It will be reinvigorated and infused with a new philosophy and orientation. It will be repackaged as an efficient force. Discipline will be given the greatest emphasis in the RRS. We shall not permit a continuation of the situation where anti-crime Squad frequently attacked and molested our innocent citizens. Nor shall we allow the situation where the squad violated fundamental rights of the citizens they were set up to protect. I have assurances of the Commissioner of Police that extortion of motorists and road users done at roadblocks will stop henceforth. Our goal is to make Lagos, the smallest State, the Taiwan of Africa. A little corner of Nigeria bustling with industrial activities, some of which will be export oriented. We cannot do this on our own without a massive injection of foreign investment. In the face of competition from other regions of the world, where enabling environment is friendlier to businesses, Nigeria in the past was unable to attract a fair share of foreign investments. Thanks to the recent significant shift of international opinion about our country, there are hopes that foreign investors may soon be rushing here.



right environment. One of the steps we are taking is our proposal to set up a "Business Information Desk for Visitors" at the Airport. We hope we shall get the cooperation of the Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria in this area. The desk shall be run in collaboration with the organized private sector. Officers manning the desk at the Airport will assist foreigners entering or leaving our country through Murtala Mohammed International Airport. Further details will be announced in due course. The world is shrinking daily and inter-connectivity via the information super highway is getting faster and faster. We intend to take advantage of this advancement in information technology to sell Lagos as an investment haven to the world. My predecessor Brigadier-General Mohamed Marwa commissioned a web site for Lagos State several weeks ago. Our government will ensure that the site is deployed to promote investment opportunities in our State and provide necessary information for a first time visitor. Government is determined to establish an Investment Promotion Board, composed of members of the public and private sectors, to advise government on commercial and industrial matters. I must mention that we have had preliminary discussions with international development agencies and financial institutions among others, with a view to assisting our State. A very important reason for capital flight in Nigeria is the issue of corruption. Many foreign investors have stopped business activities in Nigeria because of the reported cases of high level corruption in our public life. I shall sponsor anti-corruption bill in the Lagos State House of Assembly. As a government, we shall live above board. We shall demonstrate probity and accountability in our conduct. Since it takes two to tango, foreign investors themselves should cooperate by keeping to the civilized standard of business conduct. This brings me to what we consider to be the centerpiece of the policy of this administration, our policy of privatization. The global trend is the realization by governments that some public utilities are better left to private business initiative. Such examples are in the area of the provision of water, electricity, telephone and so on. Governments worldwide have found their involvement in these areas of service as obstructionist and are divesting their participation. We intend to practice the same credo in Lagos State, to ensure that our people are given better services. This is the beginning of our efforts to unlock the potential enterprises of our people, to promote employment opportunities and economic prosperity. In the next few weeks, our government shall announce the companies and parastatals that will be privatized and in which all of you will be encouraged to buy shares as stakeholders. Least all of you will be encouraged to buy shares as stakeholders. Our people are misunderstood, we are not selling the heritage of our people, as we plan to retain some stockholding in some of the strategic and vital companies. As a demonstration of our concern for the worker's interest, those in the employment of any of the businesses, considered for privatization shall be involved in the negotiation and such workers shall be encouraged and assisted to acquire and own shares. Thus, they become part owners. Our party's programme on this vital area is already well known. Our party remains free, qualitative education at all levels. But more policy remains free, qualitative education at all levels. But more than this, we shall concentrate our energies on developing the infrastructure in all our schools, libraries and laboratories. We also plan to make computers and internet service available on a phased-basis. We hope that, at the end of our first term we should have achieved the UNESCO standard of not having more than thirty (30) pupils in class, at the primary and secondary school levels. As from today, and in accordance with our party's programme, free education is now back into our primary and secondary schools. In tertiary institutions, tuition is hereby declared free from today. Scholarship will be provided for declared students, as the case may be, so that no student will be denied educational opportunities because of financial constraints or poor parental income. I seize this opportunity to appeal to all striking teachers to return to the classroom in the interest of our pupils and their parents. And especially in the spirit of the new dawn of renewed hope. Our government understands your problems. We promise share your plight and identify with your aspirations. We promise you that we shall respond positively to all needs. During the campaigns, I promised to return schools to all willing former owners. This policy is anchored on the premise that the former owners of these schools should be rest assured. A committee will be set up to liaise with the relevant voluntary agencies and the Nigeria Union of Teachers to discuss details and modalities of implementation. We are determined to improve and enhance welfare package of teachers, as a means to guarantee improvement in the standard of education all through the state. I am aware that many of our youths that had graduated from the universities and other colleges are roaming about without jobs. Our state has the additional burden of attracting job seekers from other states of Nigeria and the West African Sub-region. We are concerned about this joblessness and the danger of idle youths. A

involve investment in skill development and creation of job centres. Unemployment is a creation of an economy in recession. We believe that with our programme on the economic front, we shall be solving some of these problems, in collaboration with the private sector. As a government, we are determined to play our part as facilitator and creator of employment opportunities for our people. To make things easier, we plan to develop a database for all residents of our state. This programme will begin before the end of the year. I appeal for your cooperation. Our government is concerned about the unplanned development in our state, the unhealthy, unwholesome and fast deteriorating situation of urban squalor. This problem is manifested in poor refuse collection, poor waste management, poor drainage, noise pollution, air pollution and widespread building of unapproved structures on any available space. It is a challenge we intend to confront in collaboration with the various local councils. As democrats, we shall respect the human rights of our people, improve the welfare of our magistrates and judges and address the problem of delay and congestion in courts. No longer shall we tolerate the arbitrary arrests and detention of people by all manners of taskforce. The rule of law shall now go the full course. A Human Rights Monitoring Unit will be established within the Ministry of Justice. Our goal eventually will be to make the judiciary independent and self-accounting. Our government inherited 5,000 uncompleted housing units. We intend to complete them. Our programme is to build 10,000 units per year, with 70 percent targeted at the low income group, 20 percent for medium income group and 10 percent for high income group. The cost is estimated to be N22 billion a year. And our plan is to make the houses available to our people on a long term mortgage basis. This goal will be achieved with the cooperation of the private sector and foreign investors. A technical committee to monitor, plan and implement the housing programme will be constituted in due course. The houses we plan to build will borrow a lot from technology developed in Nigeria and abroad. Our government is committed to continue rehabilitation and maintenance of the roads, thus alleviating the hardship being encountered by motorists and commuters alike. We already have a comprehensive programme on what we want to do. We shall announce the details soon. Another area that we intend to focus on is traffic control. Daily, many man-hours are lost in traffic jams, especially in the metropolis of Lagos. Business appointments are not met. People spend agonizing hours in traffic, caused usually by broken-down vehicles or the sheer indiscipline of drivers. This should no longer continue. Our government considers the problem of traffic as very important and strategic in boosting commerce in our state. Very soon, we shall deploy road mayors on our roads to keep the traffic moving, especially at peak periods of 7 am to 11 am and 3 pm to 9 pm daily. Markets, Garages, Bus stops and motor parks shall be restructured and redesigned so that they do not, any longer, constitute obstruction to the free flow of traffic. Road markings and road signs will be done vigorously. Vehicular routes at peak periods will be redesigned. Traffic rule will henceforth be enforced and fines imposed. And all motorists are hereby asked to exercise greater discipline on our roads. Our State has the highest density of population in Nigeria, 22 times more than national average. Despite that, more and more people flood our state at an average of 60 per minute. Nothing less than a mass oriented transportation system, in our view, will be adequate to take care of the heavy flow of human traffic, especially in our metropolis. The revival of the abandoned metro-line project has therefore become the cornerstone of our transportation plan. We absolutely believe that with metro-line in place, we will lift Lagos from its present traffic chaos, to join the league of other mega cities in the world. The metro-line is a long term project, we will pursue it. But in the interim, we shall revive and execute the World bank approved Alagbado-Iddo Lagos Island Light rail project. This, we believe, will immediately relieve our teeming masses of the frustration they confront, commuting daily from their various homes and their workplaces. We shall also exploit our abundant water ways around us for more effective and efficient movement of our people. Towards this, a new authority to manage the water ways and our government's plan will be established shortly. As you are aware, the provision of free health services is a cardinal programme of the administration. We shall facilitate the continued provision of free health services. This will include the introduction of comprehensive health insurance scheme. As I said earlier, our focus will be on preventive and community based healthcare delivery system. All abandoned hospital projects in each local government shall be completed and equipped by our government. Other details of the scheme shall follow in due course. The pillar thrust of our new Lagos State Government shall be creation of farm settlements and cooperative schemes. We shall do the following among others:-

- § The new administration shall carry out a new review of Agricultural land allocated in the past, with a view to increasing the length areas of land under cultivation, clearing a target of not less than 20,000 hectares of land annually for the various fiefs.
- § Our government shall pursue accelerated production programmes for the vegetables, rice, coconut, oil-palm, cashew, fruits etc. We shall invest in farm mechanization and irrigation to ensure that agriculture can be practised year round.
- § Our government shall ensure proper selection and multiplication strategy for adequate breed of cattle, sheep, goat and poultry. Our government promises to establish accelerated fishing production programme including establishment of fish, farm estates and community fish farms of nothing less than 650 hectares over a three (3) years period. We shall provide financial assistance to small scale farmers' cooperative to increase fish supply to the market.
- § Our government shall ensure that afforestation project done with oil-palm and coconut trees, to enhance economic construction. Our government is committed to encourage increased public and private sectors investments in storage preservation and processing facilities of Agriculture products.

My dear good people of Lagos State, when you elected me on January 9, 1999, you cast with your ballots a lot of expectations, hopes, government and the people are joined in a social contract. We intend to honour our entire social contractual obligation to you. I want to assure you that by the Grace of God, with your cooperation, patience and understanding, your expectations and hopes will not be vain. You have given me a big challenge.