



***Speech delivered by His Excellency, Rt. Honourable Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, Executive Governor of Rivers State and Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Retreat of the Nigerian Governors Sokoto State, on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2013.***

His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,  
His Excellency, Professor Amos Sawyer, Former President of Liberia,  
His Excellencies, my brother Governors here present,  
His Royal Highness, Sa'ad Muhammad Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto,  
His Lordship, Bishop Matthew Kukah, Arch Bishop of Sokoto Diocese,  
Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Professor Wole Soyinka,  
Justice M.L. Uwais, Former Chief Justice of Nigeria,  
Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, Former Chairman of the EFCC,  
Brigadier General Ephraim Lapid, Former Israeli Defence Minister,  
Other Distinguished guests here present,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed an honour to welcome all of you to the 2<sup>nd</sup> retreat of the Nigerian Governors hosted by His Excellency, Dr. Aliyu Magakarda Wamakko, Executive Governor of Sokoto State. The first retreat was held in 2007 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki. Governors organised that event as a way of preparing for the challenges ahead, due to an all important need to identify and articulate the problems confronting the nation as a whole and states in particular, with a view to finding lasting solutions.

Today's event provides yet another opportunity for an in-depth deliberation on the state of the nation as well as challenges confronting the States. Governors meet regularly under the NGF platform not to deliberate agenda issues in a politically partisan fashion, but to have objective discussions, reach some consensus on matters of national interest and strategize on viable and responsible implementation options. In the same vein, it has become imperative to leverage on the wisdom and experiences of some of our speakers/experts today, as a way of giving broader perspectives to the issues to be discussed.

Nigeria is faced with a lot of challenges which can only be overcome if her leaders make conscious efforts to do the right thing at the right time. This retreat is coming at a crucial time when we as leaders must live up to the expectations of the electorates, a time when our insecure population looks us up to us for security and social justice. As we brainstorm on the way forward for these emerging critical issues such as good governance and the imperatives for managing and leaving sustainable legacies, the role of states in deepening democracy in Nigeria, the economy, national security, constitutionalism, rule of law and human rights and the future of the Nigeria Governors' Forum as a non-partisan body that upholds democracy, it is my sincere hope that our resolutions would provide answers to the many questions plaguing our dear nation.

Finally, to all the Governors and our distinguished guests, I thank you specially for making out the time to embark on the long journey in order to make it here today.

**God bless you all.**