

## IN SEARCH OF A VISIONARY-LED NATION

Being the welcome address of Dr Damian Ogbonna, National Chairman of Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) on the occasion of the meeting of the party's National Executive Council on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 in Abuja.

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Dear Friends and Comrades,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you today to this august event; the first 2018 meeting of the National Executive Council of our great party, the Peoples Progressive Party.

It has been a rough ride since 2012 when we woke up that fateful day on December 13th and read on the pages of newspapers that our great party was barred from contesting elections in Nigeria; an action riddled in lawlessness and gross unfairness. Many amongst us lost hope. Some faltered. Others moved on. Yet, many of you here today, the fathers and mothers of our great movement remained undaunted. You believed in the party. You believed in our ideology. You believed in our cause. You believed in the salvation of Nigeria. You believed so much that you stood as common bulwark against political oppression and corruption. You fought hard won judicial battles for our cause. Today, thanks to all of your efforts, we are back and in full force as a registered political party in Nigeria. It was a tough fight, but I will not dwell on that today.

Today, I want to talk about Nigeria; where we are; where we are going; and what we need to do as a party to save our beloved country and deliver our impoverished people.

These are unfortunate seasons for our country and our people. Things could not literally be any worse. As a nation, we have approached remarkable times; a season of trials, travails and persecutions; a season of poverty, joblessness and hunger; and yes, my friends, a season of deaths, mass murders, religious genocides and ethnic cleansing.

Our nation is at a turning point. We are at a crossroad. It is now or never. There are two paths before us. The one of courage to push back the enthroned forces of oppression and suppression. This path is difficult, but the end thereof is life, hope, equity and liberty. If we take this path, we will go on to do greater works; to heal our land, rebuild our nation, and reclaim our sovereignty. However, if we shrink from this struggle; if we cowardly retreat to the other path; the path of least resistance; then these ungodly forces will succeed; and with that our nation will be doomed. The mess that we have today will spiral into anarchy; of the type that will make Somalia, Yemen, Iraq and Syria pale in comparison. ALL IT TAKES FOR EVIL TO PROSPER IS FOR GOOD MEN AND WOMEN TO DO NOTHING. We must not be of that stock ...the stock of them that do nothing.

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Our failed political and economic structures give Nigeria a unique chance to confront persistent challenges and the many constitutional and structural defects in our federation. Our country, after many decades of purposeless drift, must now set itself to confront the important tasks and higher goals of facing up to these painful truths:

1. We must correct constitutional and structural imbalances that make it possible for people of bad faith to easily turn our republic into a dictatorship, once they secure presidential power.
2. We must remove State-erected barriers against self-reliance, economic emancipation, and the people's inherent rights to sovereign controls.
3. We must instill constitutional frameworks to eliminate the current welfare-driven federation and replace it with self-sustaining, workfare-based federating models. In other words, we must enshrine a workfare economy.

If we must reclaim our country from these neo-colonialists, who have oppressed us and imprisoned our common destiny from the days of their colonial British mentors to this day, three things must happen:

1. Our country must be restructured to eliminate the concentration of economic and internal security powers at the center.
2. We must repose in the federating units the solemn duties as guardians of our common rights; the rights to life, liberties and properties. State legislatures have to be empowered as guardians of the people's liberty against tyrannical federal encroachment.
3. We must enshrine in the constitution, the rights of the people to truly choose their leaders with or without political parties; and the rights of the people to directly control the country's constitution and laws via referendum and plebiscites.

I have taken the time to enumerate these solutions, even though I am aware that you know these to be the ideologies and tenets of our great party. But, we are at a time in our country, where we need to remind ourselves of why we came together in the first place; why we formed the Peoples Progressive Party; why we fought the government of

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Nigeria to regain our place as a political party; and why we can't afford to sleep or slumber. My friends and comrades, Nigeria is burning. This is not the time to fiddle. This is a call to action!

PPP was founded on a platform of returning government, electoral control, spending control, policing, and political authority to the teeming masses and communities of Nigeria. Our people has been systematically and institutionally abused, disenfranchised and enslaved. We have been rendered powerless and politically irrelevant in our own land by the corrupt political class from the times of their colonial mentors to the present day. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

In these trying times, PPP should and is providing the vision and leadership required to address these burning national issues. Our platform is uplifting and visionary. It reflects the views of countless Nigerians all across this country. We believe in prosperity with a purpose. We believe in wealth begotten through enterprise. We believe in Renewing Nigeria's Purpose.

Our party has three special callings - to advance the principles of freedom; to decentralize governance; and to ensure the dignity and worth of every individual. These principles form the foundation of our agenda for Nigeria this decade and beyond.

We are the peoples' party; focused on the single purpose of lifting up the poor and oppressed Nigerians in the forgotten streets and villages across our country; those left to suffer, rot, die or be killed by the corrupt political establishment; an uncaring government who see the masses as nuisance, rather than resources.

**WE ARE THE PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY!**

**TRULY NIGERIA!**

**TRULY PROGRESSIVE!**

**TRULY, THE ONLY REAL PARTY OF THE MASSES, FOR THE MASSES AND BY THE MASSES!**

Thank you and God bless Nigeria!