

**PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN DECLARATION**  
**MAJOR GENERAL SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA**  
**FEBRUARY 25, 1992**  
**LAGOS CITY HALL**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. Ordinarily it is customary to evoke the "call to service" cliché as the motive for vying for public office. But having devoted most of my life to the service of this country, my desire to continue to serve in a more challenging capacity is motivated by my innate concern, my vision and my hope for this nation. Although, I am deeply convinced of my ability and preparedness to serve, I am not under any illusion of indispensability.

In the history of Nigeria today, there is no denying that in the course of our march to nationhood and greatness, truly giant strides have been taken. Sometimes errors and mistakes have also been made. **What has continued to elude us as a nation, however, has been the absence of a well-defined national programme built and organized around a motivating sense of NATIONAL PURPOSE.**

What has also been lacking is a sense of discipline in executing such a programme. Consequently, the development of the Nigerian nation over the past three decades has largely been characterized by political instability, economic dependence and the absence of visionary, disciplined, purposeful and responsible national leadership. It is to the credit of the present administration that they have not only understood the problem as basically that of structural derailment, it has also shown the will and the commitment to effect major structural readjustment to correct the imbalances. The regime has also exhibited a lot of courage, since by its very nature structural adjustment is invariably a painful process for virtually every section of the society. However, the present exercise is seen largely as a bitter pill imposed by the armed forces and only tolerated because its sponsors are in control of political power. The temptation for many, which I do not share, is not to see in the programme a basis for continuity in national development and survival.

It is well known, ladies and gentlemen, that sharp tactics and sudden maneuvers are valuable attributes of military operations in which corporate survival is a prime objective. I learned these as an officer and this nation had witnessed their applications. However, after thirteen years in private entrepreneurship, I have also learned that consistency and predictability of operational measures and methods are indispensable in ensuring the emergence of sustainable socio-economic development which in turn, is a precondition for political stability. I believe Nigeria now needs a judicious administration of the right doses of all these sectorally positive attributes in order to guarantee national self reliance. **I am aware too, that a country which cannot guarantee the full and free development of its people, cannot aspire to greatness. This is necessarily so, because the people constitute the driving force with which meaningful development can take place.**

**Furthermore, no nation has been able to attain greatness unless, and until, the great majority of its citizens, regardless of their status or background, have been allowed to freely participate in the development processes of that nation.** I hold the view that national development is indeed the end product of collective vision, guided aspiration, selfless hard work and discipline. At this stage in our national history, ladies and gentlemen, **I believe the challenge before all patriots, the challenge before all of us, is to dream together, plan together and build together.** This is the basic philosophy that will guide my actions and programmes for Nigeria.

#### **The Evolution of a National Purpose**

Everyone knows that this country is abundantly blessed with vast human and material resources. If adequately harnessed and utilized, these resources are capable of sustaining a productive and dynamic national economy as well as a free and prosperous citizenry. If all the resources at our disposal are properly directed, Nigeria is capable of achieving the

status of a developed economy. She will also take her rightful place in the comity of nations.

Ordinarily, every nation has a responsibility to ensure that there is consensus on basic developmental issues; what goals it hopes to achieve; and what methods would be employed to translate these into concrete and desirable results. It is the sum total of all these considerations that ultimately constitutes a NATIONAL PURPOSE.

Today, Nigerians are basically agreed on such issues as federalism, presidential system of governance through party system and secularism. However, our people are yet to achieve visionary and functional consensus on a number of other issues such as the type of national economic system, the role and limits of the state in national development objectives, citizens' rights and obligations, and basic prerequisites for leadership aspirations. As long as consensus is lacking in these areas, meaningful national development will remain intractable.

I shall now proceed to outline my conception of a national purpose for Nigeria.

In our 31 years of political independence, successive administrations continue to insist that they had tried their best and recorded their limited achievements and non-achievements with the excuse that 'Nigeria is a difficult country to govern'. While it is true that Nigeria is a big nation with a landmass vast, and the people diverse, it is not correct to hold that the people are difficult as a consequence of that vastness and diversity.

Nations, especially large ones, combine a lot of varieties and diversities. It is expected that a perceptive, creative and competent leadership will bring these groups together to work for their common good. Thus a unifying leadership factor must be one of the proposed considerations of our national purpose for this decade and beyond.

Secondly, Ladies and Gentlemen, our defined national purpose must resolve the issue of organizing the economy for greater productivity. Recognizing the central role which the economy plays in the organization of human societies, there is strong need to give prime consideration to its management and development. The economy of a nation is the single, most crucial determinant of how the people's aspirations are articulated and fulfilled. While we note the emphasis so far placed on the economy by the incumbent administration, we must however, remind ourselves that the long established inter-relationship between politics and economics underscores the need for greater political considerations in economic decision-making.

Towards this goal, it will be necessary for example, to institute enabling economic modalities to protect our indigenous agricultural and manufacturing industries, as well as guarantee that our national currency is not undervalued. That it is not undervalued to the extent that it undermines basic economic growth, investment opportunities and rapid development.

Finally, our defined national purpose must seek to correct the present tendency to segment rather than integrate the various sectors of our national life. We must invest in healthcare, education and training, housing, transportation and communication, water supply and energy, social welfare and environmental protection. Furthermore, since technology invariably plays an important role in increasing productivity, we must seek to improve our technological know-how in order to sustain our economy. There is, therefore, a dire need to overhaul our present conceptions of policy making and the policy environment to meet the challenges.

### **NEITHER NORTH NOR SOUTH, EAST NOR WEST: JUST NIGERIA!**

As committed patriots and Social Democrats, we have always rejected and shall continue to reject in all its ramifications, attempts to perpetuate the political and socio-cultural polarization, as well as the national misdirection of our collective will and destiny.

We are resolutely committed to the formulation and adoption of a well defined, disciplined and progressive social order to which all sections of our society can identify with, be committed to, and can be held responsible for. This new order shall form the basis for building a new, just and democratic society which can guarantee equality, national integration and development, as well as peaceful co-existence of our diverse peoples, irrespective of place of origin, religion, creed, ethnic, linguistic or any other parochial considerations.

**Our vision is for a new Nigeria, with a common sense of purpose and a common destiny. A Nigeria that is neither North nor South, West nor East but dedicated to a common good for all. Ultimately, however, it is leadership that gives life to dreams, meaning to vision and action to conceptions.** This is the reason why we have worked and shall continue to work tirelessly openly and fearlessly to create the basis for the regrouping of all truly democratic and nationalist forces.

In this regard, ladies and gentlemen, it is our firm conviction that only the Social Democratic platform can provide the basis for the protection, consolidation and sustenance of the foundation of a progressive people's democracy. Social democracy is the only option for the development of our country today. If we are to be empirical and scientific in our response to very grave issues of national development, we should not allow sentiments of ethnic affiliations to hold and weigh our nation down. We need to build an assured, humanistic and bright future for all of us and all our children.

### **FOREIGN POLICY**

Ladies and gentlemen, no nation can isolate itself from the rest of the world. No nation can be indifferent to the developments in the rest of the world, and Nigeria is not going to be an exception. I intend to put Nigeria back in the mainstream of international politics. I intend to stop the marginalization of Nigeria in the world today.

Words alone will not achieve this purpose. Since independence, Nigeria has anchored its foreign policy on its anti-apartheid posture. Today the apartheid struggle is virtually over. Nigeria can take pride in the outcome and in its contributions to that outcome but Nigeria must move on.

The Foundation of an active and virile foreign policy must be based on a democratic, united and economically developed Nigeria. Nigeria must be a democratic country, not because democracy has become a fanciful word in the world today, but because democracy is the only wise, and correct option to adopt.

Nigeria must be united in all respects. Unity should never be taken for granted. We are a nation of diverse peoples but we must turn that diversity into strength. We will seek to build and reinforce our unity, not on one issue but on all issues. To do this is a challenge that we welcome because our sincerity is to ensure our success. The marginalization of Nigeria in the world is a direct consequence of the disgraceful state of our economy. We must and we will reverse this trend.

The Nigerian economy must be rebuilt, the currency must be rescued with the aim of making it strong and convertible and we must pursue a rapid industrialization programme based on free enterprise and the minimum government regulations.

Against this background, I am sure that we will be able to restore Nigerian pride at home and abroad, and we will be able to restore Nigeria to the main stream of world politics.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have gone to this length to thoroughly situate our vision of stability, progress and development in the **firm belief that only a carefully thought out programme can lay the basis for our eventual emergence as a first class nation that is sustained by a technology driven economy and a highly motivated citizenry.**

The other important requirement, the Leadership Factor will come in as a fitting compliment from the programme. **What we need today is a leadership that is selfless and just, firm and decisive, humane and caring, experienced and wise.**

In the light of the foregoing, ladies and gentlemen, I offer my humble self to you all in my unshaken faith that this nation deserves a leadership that will ensure a stable civil polity, a necessary ingredient for rapid social and economic progress; which the people of this country are yearning for and deserve.

I hereby solemnly declare my intention to seek the nomination of my party, the Social Democratic Party, for the office of the President of our great country.

I implore you to join me in praying to Almighty God, for divine protection, guidance and support that we may together possess the collective political will and strength which is a basic prerequisite for guaranteeing success and mutual benefit for ourselves and our great nation, Nigeria.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for your patience, understanding and support. Thank you very much.