

Mimiko Speaks On 2011 And Future Elections In Nigeria

Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko on Thursday appraised the conduct of the 2011 general elections, described the polls as a watershed in Nigeria's elections history, but warned that politics will always be attended by fiercely-competitive and undemocratic means of elections.

Mimiko made the declaration in Abuja at a post-election conference which he chaired on "Re-appraising the losses and gains of the 2011 general elections" organized by the National Think-Tank Initiative.

According to him, "politics will always be attended by fiercely-competitive and mainly undemocratic means of elections that may not be amenable to the control of even the much-heralded and morally-upright Prof. Attahiru Jega.

He also fingered sloppiness in certain aspects of the preparations toward the election which led to the postponement of the first election earlier slated for April 2, 2011 as well as the attendant economic implications.

The governor told the audience the potent ways to abate the losses recorded during the last polls which include the early commencement of the update of Voters Registration to allow for time for claims and objections and cut costs of organizing elections to make them less-expensive.

Mimiko commended the security agencies for their improved impartial role during the polls saying that "significant progress was made in ensuring to a large extent, the neutrality of security agents in the conduct of the 2011 elections. Previous elections suffered serious criticisms on the conduct of policemen and soldiers as strident charges of partisanship in favour of dominant political party were made against them.

On the other hand, he berated the security agencies for not being proactive and plan against post-election crisis particularly in Northern Nigeria which resulted in unquantifiable and unnecessary loss of lives and property.

"The security agencies must do a better and proper assessment of security challenges before, during and after elections. They should be adequately motivated and mobilized to stave off or confront such challenges before they escalate" the governor added.

To consolidate on the gains of the 2011 elections, Mimiko lamented the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria which he said will truncate any security plan if not tackled headlong by all tiers of government.

"We must make the necessary and deliberate efforts to restructure governance towards democratizing the access to the good things of life to make democracy gains visible for all to see. Nagging problems such as the devolution of resources from the centre, establishment of state police, can be tackled by a Legislature that is attuned with the demands of the people"

In his address, the Co-ordinator of the Initiative, Prof. Steve Azaiki said the nation's electoral process, as the foundation of socio-political and economic development, must evolve with other aspects of nation-building in a dynamic relationship.