

# Gov Mimiko Is Unstoppable – Akinmade

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*Leadership News Papper*



*Mr. Kayode Akinmade is the Commissioner for Information and Strategy in Ondo State. In this interview with VICTOR ORIOLA, he said Governor Segun Mimiko had been able to change the face of governance in the state. He also maintained that the exit of the former chairman of the Labour Party in the state, Dr. Olaiya Oni and Senator representing Ondo North, Professor Ajayi Borroffice to the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) will not affect the governor's changes for re-election.*

## **THREE YEARS ON, WOULD YOU SAY THE DR SEGUN MIMIKO ADMINISTRATION HAS KEPT FAITH WITH THE PROMISES HE MADE TO THE PEOPLE?**

I can say with all sense of responsibility that Mr. Governor has kept faith with the promises he made to the people of the state when he told them at the inception of this government that he would work for them. Almost three years on, the people of the state can look back now and say they did not make a wrong choice because the governor has not deviated from his promises. Mr. Governor has worked and he is still working for the people. In fact, the passion and aspiration he has for the state would not allow him to rest on his oars. Mr. Governor has kept faith with his promises. He aspires to set a template for enduring governance in the state.

**MR. GOVERNOR PROMISED THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE THAT HE WAS GOING TO BRIDGE THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN THEM AND THE GOVERNMENT. I CAN SAY WITH ALL SENSE OF MODESTY THAT BY THE GRACE OF GOD, GOVERNANCE HAS BEEN RE-INVENTED FOR OUR PEOPLE AS THEY NOW PERCEIVE GOVERNMENT IN A NEW LIGHT.**

They see their everyday concern as the central concern of the government. Street traders are being taken off streets and relocated into new modern markets. Pregnant women are no longer statistics relevant only when maternal mortality is being computed! They are now being monitored from conception to delivery.

Pregnant women in the state now deliver their babies in clean functional facilities, irrespective of their social status free of charge, and Mr. Governor has vowed that never again will pregnancy be a death sentence in our state.

The Integrated Rural Community Programme of the government has given new relevance to folks in the rural communities where over 250 life changing programmes have been executed in collaboration with the people in the last two and half years.

Government has been able to give new hope to the unemployed youths and the government is fully poised to explore the agriculture value change to create more sustainable jobs for the people.

**OUR SCHOOL CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SYSTEM HAVE NOT BEEN LEFT OUT OF GOVERNMENT'S INFRASTRUCTURAL AGENDA.**

The Mega schools being constructed across the state by Governor Mimiko was deliberately conceived and put on ground to show that human capital development which remains key to rapid social economic development in a knowledge driven global economy remains a priority for this government. Actually, the state's education re-engineering programme is all inclusive including the sensitization of the teaching staff.

**WHAT HAS CHANGED IN ONDO STATE IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?**

So many transformations have been witnessed in the state. A trip to Akure, the capital city, now will clearly show that the government's urban renewal programme is working. The road -side slums and ghettos have been transformed into beautiful greenery and scenery. Ramshackle sheds and make-shifts have transformed unbelievably to a 21st century neighborhood markets where our women who were formerly trading under the scorching sun now cool off under beautiful roofs, enjoying fresh air of the day while transacting their businesses.

In Akure alone, there is one neighborhood market in NEPA, another at the Afunbiowo, one in Isikan. There are other little ones within our immediate neighborhoods, while another multimillion naira market complex has sprang up yet in the NEPA area of Akure. The newly constructed Ikare regional market is now a safe haven, compared to the death-trap location of the old market at the base of 'Oke - Alabojuto' hill in Ikare. This market is by far the biggest as it was designed and constructed to capture trading activities in all of Akokoland and neighbouring states. Yet another similar magnitude is now operational at Okitipupa.

The Caring Heart International Automart in Akure is first of its kind in Nigeria. Others include the road dualisation projects in Akure, Ondo and Owo, as well as the beautification projects that have transformed our environments and many more under the urban renewal initiative.

There is also the age-long turbulent, chaotic Arakale road which successive administrations would not touch with a long pole. It is miraculously being dualized - product of constructive engagement with the people as well as prompt payment of compensation.

Moreover, the Gani Fawehinmi Diagnostic Centre in Ondo is a "promise fulfilled." The Olympic size swimming pool that started 33 years ago with only 20% work done by successive administrations is now completed into a beautiful Olympic size swimming pool, second only in size to the swimming pool at the Abuja National Stadium.

A practical approach to wealth Creation, Food production and Empowerment is now evident in Ore Farm City. Over 2,000 acres of land are under cultivation in Ore and Epe in Ondo, 3 water dams, 90 chalets, fully completed to house the young graduate farmers and 1 million oil palm seedlings imported from Malaysia to kick- start an oil palm revolution. The Auga Farm Centre, located in the northern senatorial district of the state, is now taking shape, having taken delivery of over a thousand cows.

A corollary to this approach is the industrial policy of Dr. Olusegun Mimiko which has found resonance in the physical manifestation of Alpha 3D company, Ikare. The Tomatoe paste industry in Auga, through a public- private partnership initiative, has now been resuscitated, 25 years after it had been abandoned.

Today, a number of projects chosen by the people have been executed by the government, from 80 Quick- win high - impact projects in the first one year, rising to 230 projects across 230 communities by the turn of the second year, to 308 projects, across 308 communities in less than three years. These Quick-Win projects, otherwise known as Confidence - Building projects came on the platform of a 3i initiative which is Infrastructure, Institution and Industry. The Infrastructural facilities provided in the 308 communities include basic health centre, town hall, block of classrooms, skill acquisition centre, solar powered borehole, mono pump, open market stalls, cassava processing industry, high court complex, rural electrification, rural feeder roads and culvert.

## **WILL ONDO PEOPLE CAST THEIR LOT WITH DR. MIMIKO IN THE NEXT ELECTION AND WHY?**

An average Ondo State person knows what is good for him or her and their level education and awareness do not make it possible for them to be easily brainwashed by any self-seeking individual. I am confident that the indigenes of the state and those of other state who are residing in the state will determine who will be their governor in the next election. They are living witnesses to the great transformation across all sectors currently going on in the state. They know that Governor Mimiko is a leader they can trust any day because he has not disappointed them in the last three years. His urban renewal project is changing the face of our cities especially Akure, the state capital, while his administration has touched the lives of rural dwellers in about 350 communities across the state by executing projects demanded by the people as their priorities. Governor Mimiko's intervention in the health, education, commerce and industry, agriculture, social infrastructure and housing development among others is what every resident of the state could see and appreciate.

The people already know those who made a promise and fulfilled it and they also know the antecedents of self seeking politicians who are currently making promises which they know that they can never fulfill. Our people will not put their destiny in the hands of strangers.

## **BUT THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) AND THE ACN ARE THREATS TO THE RE-ELECTION OF DR. MIMIKO?**

To the best of my knowledge and gauging public opinion, it is certain that the individuals that make the PDP thick had defected to the Labour Party because most of the people that joined the PDP from the Alliance for Democracy, prior to the 2003 general elections, did so because Governor Mimiko also defected to the party and they trust his leadership style and self discipline. The leadership of the party also defected with Gov. Mimiko to the LP when he wanted to contest as governor in 2007. As for the ACN, those who are joining the party in the state now are doing so to contest elective positions. At the last count, no fewer than 18 so-called defectors to the party are contesting as governor. Apart from that, the party did not have any structure on ground.

## **WHAT IMPACT WILL THE EXIT OF DR. AJAYI BOROFFICE AND DR. OLAIYA ONI HAVE ON THE FORTUNE OF THE LABOUR PARTY?**

Dr. Ajayi Boroffice, with due respect, is a green horn in politics. He is a new entrant into politics. He has no political antecedents. He won the election to represent the people of Ondo North at

the Senate because the Akoko monarchs pressurized Governor Mimiko and the LP leadership to field him. He is not strong politically and so his defection has no impact at all because the people voted for the party and not for Boroffice. So he left the LP alone. The people of Akoko are still solidly behind Governor Mimiko. As for Dr. Olaiya Oni, his defection from the LP could be likened to a snake that crawled through a rock. It has no impact whatsoever on the party. He left and nobody followed him. Let us consider when Governor Mimiko left the PDP for the LP. The entire leadership of the party, including the Chairman, the Secretary and other officials, defected with him. Now it was not the case with Dr. Oni who left alone.