

Speech delivered by Hon. Anamero Dekeri (Danco) on the occasion of the declaration for the Governorship election scheduled for September 2024 on the platform of All Progressives Congress (APC) on December 2, 2023 at the party secretariat, Benin – City, Edo state.

I am most grateful for the honour done me by attending this epoch occasion for the declaration of my intention to seek the nomination of my party, our party – the **All-progressive Congress (APC)** to run for the gubernatorial elections scheduled for September 2024. It is my hope we will succeed not only in our party primaries but also at the main election for the Governorship seat.

Before I proceed, I must candidly thank our numerous party loyalists, including leaders, critical stakeholders, women, youths and people of disabilities across the length and breadth of Edo state whose encouragement and demonstratable commitment are a source of inspiration. Your support is the source of my desire to stepping out to help rescue our dear state from the shackles of infrastructural decay, economic despair, pervading hopelessness and abysmal leadership totally bereft of noble ideas for sustainable growth and development of a modern state as ours. Let me assure you that your clarion calls to take our state back from the grip of visionless hyenas is not misplaced because I have the capacity, capability, determination and courage to make Edo great again. In this regard I have christen this declaration a **VENTURE OF HOPE**.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we embark on this journey together and marching forward shoulder to shoulder, the little step which our aspiration represents is a giant leap towards a glorious tomorrow.

My dear brothers, sisters, party leaders and party loyalists, my aspiration represent hope for the good people of Edo state. I am confident of this because as a private citizen, I have successfully set up and managed businesses from which I have supported our people. In the past 12 years, my Foundation – **Anamero Idofe Anamero Foundation** have been active in supporting and providing communities with infrastructures and amenities such as schools, roads, community town halls, industrial boreholes, Solar powered street lights, transformers and lots more. I am happy to inform you that through my foundation, millions of writing materials have been distributed across public primary and secondary schools in Edo state; while thousands of students in tertiary institutions have benefitted from our bursary and scholarship awards. We have also empowered women and youths across the state with financial support while a couple of months ago, in fulfilment of my electoral pre-sworn in promises to Etsako people, I made 32 millionaires across the 32 wards in Etsako federal constituency and built an ultra-modern market for the people of south Ibie in Etsako west local government area of Edo state. Ladies and gentlemen, my vision for making our creative youths millionaires to support their businesses and skills is already yielding the desired result as we have started receiving testimonies. To those of you who graced my

father's funeral ceremony two weeks ago, hundreds of birds that were used for that ceremony were procured from the poultry farms of the new "Anamero millionaires".

This initiative I promised to replicate across the 192 wards in Edo state with greater numbers if nominated and elected. There is no doubt that our people are creative if only we summon the political will to give them the necessary support for them to express their creativity and potentials.

I have reeled out these achievements not to amplify my ego, but to let you know that if as a private citizen I willingly placed my resources at the disposal of our people, then I leave you to imagine the all-round development Edo state will enjoy if you give me the opportunity to lead our dear state. We are on a mission to give meaning and hope to Edolites. And God helping us Edo can be great again.

Ladies and gentlemen, on an occasion as this, I am delighted to inform you that our **Venture of Hope** platform will ride on the vehicle of the manifestoes of our great party. We have therefore domesticated it to suit our state.

1. **Education** – at the heart of the development the human race has experienced is education. The English essayist Joseph Addison, 1672 – 1719, puts it succinctly, "Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, and in society an ornament. It chastens vice, it guides virtue, it gives, at once grace and government to genius. Without it what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage". Ladies and gentlemen, it is in appreciation of the noble role education plays in the life of man that my Foundation has invested millions of naira in the education of our children through the building of schools, award of bursaries and scholarships and distribution of writing materials. My multi-billion-naira charity village under construction in Ogute-Oke Okpella my hometown, is a vision to support the education of the less privilege. It was carved out of the virtues my father bequeathed to me to touch lives as the ultimate legacy a man should live behind and not primitive acquisition of worldly materials. I have promised not to fail him.

If nominated and elected, our government will on the first day in office introduce free and compulsory education for our children up to secondary school level while students in tertiary institutions will enjoy bursary support. To ensure quality education, teachers in both primary and secondary schools will be exposed to continuous training that will enhance their teaching delivery. And most important we shall ensure that teacher's benefits will be enjoyed on earth through an emolument package that will give meaning to life and attract competent personnel to the teaching profession. As part of our strategic education policy, we shall pay adequate attention to technical and vocational institutions in the state and make them hubs for the training of skilled labour that will support our industrialization policy which I will explain very shortly. Equally, our tertiary institutions will be encouraged to pursue entrepreneurship development courses that will support value creation, opportunity creation and wealth creation. Ladies and gentlemen, for us

education is and will be a priority. And as the Sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo puts it “only an educated person can play a full and meaningful role in the affairs of society”.

To this end, you will recall that I moved a motion in the house of representatives to urge the federal government to declare 2023 WAEC enrollment free to enable the common man have a direct impact of the subsidy removal palliatives, unfortunately, it was stepped down, not daunted, I shall personally pay the 2023 WAEC enrollment fees for 10,000 intending students in Edo state.

2. **Health** - A healthy society is a productive society. There is nothing anyone can do in the absence of good health. Therefore, as part of our **Venture of Hope movement**, qualitative health care delivery system for Edo people shall be a priority if nominated and elected. On a personal level, I witnessed the parlous state of our health care system during my recent campaign tour of Edo North in the last general election. In one of our trips, we ran into a scene of accident somewhere in Iyounge in Etsako East local government area. One of victims was lying helplessly at the point of death. While trying to rescue him, we had to travel for about 10 km within populated communities before we could locate a private hospital to attend to the victim. And guess what the two medical facilities within that environ including the gigantic Fugar General hospital were looking, so derelict and abandoned, such that there was no one to even attend to us not even a gateman. I am told that this deplorable state of our health facilities pervades the entire state. It is a situation that is not acceptable and will be speedily addressed through the rehabilitation and equipment of existing healthcare centers and the establishment of functional ones across the communities in the state. We shall ensure that the right drugs are available at all time with well-trained health workers, we will ensure that in a demography of 1000 habitants, there are minimum of 4 medical facilities. Our ministry of health shall be purpose driven. Pregnant women will enjoy free ante-natal care and free health care for babies up to the age of 6. Similarly, anyone from the age of 70 in Edo state will enjoy free health care services.
3. **Agriculture and Food security** – my late father use to sing it into my ears that food security is the foundation of wealth. And indeed, the importance of agriculture and food security to man cannot be over-emphasized. Food is a key sustenance for life. We shall be very deliberate and strategic in our agricultural policy formulation and implementation. We will commit a minimum of 6.5% of the state annual budget to the development of agriculture and its value chain, while moving the state from the current peasant farming to mechanized industrial farming not just for self-sustainability, but also export for foreign exchange. We will leverage on our fertile soil and rain forest suitable for virtually all crops, we will train our farmers on modern farming including greenhouse farming for the production of arable and cash crops. Improved seedlings and fertilizers will be supplied to farmers regularly, while encouraging the masses to embrace modern farming technique. Interested individuals will be encouraged to go into poultry and livestock farming. We shall deliberately set out to return Edo to her lost glory as one of the leading Cocoa producing state in Nigeria. Edo state has all it takes to be an agricultural hub that will maximize the

full potentials in agricultural value chain. Mark my words we will create a minimum of 400,000 jobs through this initiative in our first term in office.

4. **Infrastructural Development** – Providing infrastructure such as roads, hospitals, schools, water, and electricity for the economic development of our state and the well-being of its people is not rocket science. It is the basic for any government at whatever level. However, as basic as it is, our dear state is presently inflicted with the worst infrastructure decay it has ever known since its creation in 1991. I have transverse the nook and cranny of our state and I have a first-hand understanding of the unwarranted pains been inflicted on our people. With your support, our government will declare a state of emergency on all Edo Roads – both state and federal roads. I am aware of Edo citizens but yet to see a federal citizen. So, I will not hide behind one finger or shift blames to whoever. They are our roads and we will fix them because we need good roads to restore commerce and prevent our farm produce from unnecessary waste. Our transporters will bounce back to business, while the maintenance cost on our vehicles as a result of bad roads will drop. On water, we will resuscitate the existing dams in the state. Ojirami Dam in Akoko Edo, Ughoha water works in Esan south east will work again. And where necessary, we will build new dams for Hydro energy and irrigation farming. My administration will not embark on endless MOUs on projects, or hire social media bloggers to build Edo schools on social media platforms and fix our roads on Facebook to cover up failure.

5. **Industrialization** – Conscious of the strategic importance of industrialization to employment generation and economic development, we shall give special priority to the industrialization of Edo state through public-private partnership arrangement. To adequately deal with the hydra-headed challenge of unemployment and its attendant social and security implications, we will implement Federal government ease of doing business policy and create an enabling environment for business to thrive and make Edo state the prefer destination of choice for investors. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the engine room of industrialization. We shall therefore create a dedicated fund to support start-ups and SMEs. As the saying goes “an idle hand is the devil’s workshop” hence we considered it too risky to allow our youths to roam about the street or idling away in street corners or engaging in crimes. Our industrialization initiative will engage our youths and improve the standard of living of our people. This is the goal of our **Venture of Hope**.

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot bring this address to a close without appreciating our leaders from whom we draw inspirations and for providing a level playing field for all the aspirants. I must specially appreciate our own Comrade – his excellency, Senator, Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole for his fatherly role. I want to thank our party state executives for their exemplary service and devotion to the growth of our party. All party men and women thank you for standing by us and our mission represented by **VENTURE OF HOPE**. Permit me to pay personal gratitude to the President and Commander-in- Chief of the Armed forces of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR) for his unparalleled leadership qualities.

As we commit this project into the hands of Almighty God, who alone determines the affairs of men, let us be cautious of the entitlement mentality by some aspirants who are ill prepared for governance, taking into account that the leadership quality we bequeath the younger generation today will ultimately determine our society of tomorrow. Let me be clear, those of us that have been privileged to lead at one time or another will give account to God our creator at the end of our journey on planet earth. As we embark on this aspiration and contest to lead Edo state, let us also have in our consciousness that the greatest contest is our position in history.

Once again, I thank you for your esteem presence and attention.

God bless The All-Progressives Congress (APC)!

God bless Edo State!!

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

Hon. Anamero Sunday Dekeri – (the promise keeper)

Member Representing Etsako Federal Constituency.