

**MANIFESTO OF THE
FRESH DEMOCRATIC
PARTY (FRESH)**

Nigeria will be better with a Fresh Democratic Party Government

The Fresh Democratic Party exists:

- (a) To build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.
- (b) To champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals. We acknowledge and respect the right of every human being to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full.
- (c) To spread and distribute power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the State is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions that affect their lives.
- (d) To build a nation in which all people share the same basic rights, in which they live together in peace and in which their diverse cultures will be able to develop freely.

We believe that at different periods a particular generation should be responsible for the fate of our country and, therefore each such generation must be given opportunity to fully play its role in the governance of the nation.

Upholding these values of individual and social justice, we reject all prejudice and discrimination based upon race, colour, religion, age, disability, sex and oppose all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality.

Recognizing that the quest for freedom and justice can never end we promote human rights and open government, a sustainable economy which serves genuine need, public services of the highest quality, international action based on the recognition of the interdependence of all the world's people and responsible stewardship of the earth and its resources.

We believe that people should be involved in running their communities. We are determined to strengthen the democratic process and ensure that there is a just and representative system of government with

effective legislative institutions, freedom of information, decisions taken at the lowest practicable level and a free and fair voting system for all elections.

We will at all times defend the right to speak, write, worship, associate and vote freely, and we will protect the rights of citizens to enjoy privacy in their own lives and homes.

We believe that sovereignty rests with the people and that Authority in a democracy derives from the people. We therefore acknowledge their right to determine the form of government best suited to their needs and commit ourselves to the promotion of a democratic federal framework within which as much power as feasible is exercised by the regions of the nation. We similarly commit ourselves to the promotion of a flourishing system of democratic Local Government in which decisions are taken and services delivered at the most local level which is viable.

We will foster a strong and sustainable economy which encourages the necessary wealth creating process, develops and uses the skill of the people and works to the benefit of all, with a just distribution of the rewards of success. We want to see democracy, participation and the co-operative principle of industry and commerce within a competitive environment in which the State allows the market to operate freely where possible but intervenes where necessary. We will promote scientific research and innovation and will harness technological change to human advantage.

We will work for a sense of partnership and community solidarity in all areas of life.

We recognize that the independence of individuals is safeguarded by their personal ownership of property, but that the market alone does not distribute wealth or income fairly. We support the widest possible distribution of wealth and promote the rights of all citizens to social provision and cultural activity.

We will seek to make public services responsive to the people they serve, to encourage variety and innovation within them and to make them available on equal terms to all.

Our responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries; we are committed to fight poverty, oppression, hunger, ignorance, disease and aggression wherever they occur and to promote the free movement of ideas, people, goods and services.

Setting aside national sovereignty when necessary, we will work with other nations towards an equitable and peaceful international order and a durable system of common security. Within the African Union we affirm the values of federalism and integration and work for unity based on these principles. We will contribute to the process of world peace, the elimination of world poverty and the collective safeguarding of democracy by playing a full and constructive role in international organizations which share similar aims and objectives.

These are the conditions of liberty and social justice which is the responsibility of each citizen and the duty of the State to protect and enlarge.

Our case is simple: that Nigeria can and must be better.

The vision is one of national renewal, a country with drive, purpose and energy.

The Fresh Democratic Party is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern.

We believe in Nigeria. It is a great country with a great history. The Nigerian people are a great people. But we believe Nigeria can and must be better: better schools, better hospitals, better ways of tackling crime, of building a modern welfare state, of equipping ourselves for a new world economy.

We want a Nigeria that is one nation, with shared values and purpose, where merit comes before privilege, a Nigeria for the many not the few, a Nigeria strong and sure of itself at home and abroad.

We want to renew our country's faith in the ability of its government, people and politics to deliver this new Nigeria. We want to do it by making a limited set of important promises and achieving them. This is

the purpose of the bond of trust we set out to achieve, in which specific commitments are put before you. Hold us to them. They are our covenant with you.

We want to renew faith in politics by being honest about the last 45 years. Some things past leadership got right. We will not change them. It is where they got things wrong that we will make change. We have no intention or desire to replace one set of dogmas by another.

We want to renew faith in politics through a government that will govern in the interest of the many, the broad majority of people who work hard, play by the rules, pay their dues and feel let down by a political system that gives the breaks to the few, to an elite at the top increasingly out of touch with the rest of us.

We want, above all, to govern in a way that brings our country together, that unites our nation in facing the tough and dangerous challenges of a new economy and changed society in which we must live. We want a Nigeria which we all feel part of, in whose future we all have a stake, in which what we want for our own children are what we want for the children of all.

People are cynical about politics and distrustful of political promises, because talk is cheap and leadership in the past have only talked without the slightest intention to stand by the talk. There have been many broken promises. That is why we have made it our guiding rule not to promise what we cannot deliver; and to deliver what we promise. The Politics of FDP is not the politics of a 100 days that dazzles for a time, then fizzles out. It is not the politics of a revolution, but of a fresh start, the patient rebuilding and renewing of this country - renewal that can take root and build overtime.

That is one way in which politics in Nigeria will gain a new lease of life. But there is another. We aim to put behind us the bitter political struggles of tribe and ethnic nationality that have torn our country apart for too many decades. Many of these conflicts have no relevance whatsoever to the modern world. It is time for this country to move on and move forward. We are proud of what our founding fathers achieved, however,

not very proud of what we have achieved in recent times - but we must learn from our history, not be chained to it.

Every General Elections offers opportunity for the Nigerian people to give their verdict upon the last four years of the ruling Government. Let the people vote; let us work together again.

Our people face a series of interlocking crises. Prices are rocketing. Past Leadership have brought the country to the edge of total collapse and breakdown. More and more people are losing their jobs. Firms are going out of business. Housing costs are out of reach for so many families. The environment now threatens us with still higher prices of commodities, of higher prices of the basic necessities of life, of higher prices of food; and with a further loss of Nigeria's control of its own affairs. We will correct this.

Fresh Democratic Party's call to action: the nations opportunity

The 2007 General Election is a decisive opportunity to the nation to reconstruct the foundations of its life.

The 2007 election will decide whether our country is to be a United Nigeria or a divided Nigeria; one that is brought together by proper provision, prudent investment and concern for the interests of the whole nation, or one that is pulled apart by poverty, increased corruption and privilege for the few who have been in leadership and neglect for the rest.

Proper support for education, strengthened research and development and long-term, low interest finance for industrial growth are all essential if Nigeria is to gain the vitality necessary to outpace nations who have been building these assets for years.

These are essential too if we are to generate the wealth needed for the security, care and opportunity fundamental to the individual freedom of women and men of all ages and origins. When our country faces the common pressures on the environment, the common dangers of crime, the common costs of unemployment, under-investment and under-performance together, our country has every commonsense reason to meet those challenges together.

The Fresh Democratic Party is a broad-based movement for progress and justice. The FDP is the political arm of none other than the Nigerian people as a whole. Our values are the same: the equal worth of all, with no one cast aside; fairness and justice within strong communities

We want a country in which people get on, do well, make a success of their lives. We have no time for the politics of envy. We need more successful entrepreneurs, not fewer of them. But these life-chances should be for all the people. And we want a society in which ambition and compassion are seen as partners not opposites - where we value public service as well as material wealth.

The Fresh Democratic Party believes in a society where we do not simply pursue our own individual aims but where we hold many aims in common and work together to achieve them. How we build the industry and employment opportunities of the future; how we tackle the division and inequality in our society; how we care for and enhance our environment and quality of life; how we develop modern education and health services; how we create communities that are safe, where mutual respect and tolerance are the order of the day. These are things we must achieve together as a country.

The vision is one of national renewal, a country with drive, purpose and energy. A Nigeria equipped to prosper in a global economy of technological change; with a modern welfare state; its politics more accountable; and confident of its place in the world

Nigeria Will Win

Nigeria is crying out for change. Only a Fresh Democratic Party government can bring it about.

We will as a priority tackle the immediate tragedy and waste of unemployment. We will commit resources to modernising and strengthening the industries and services that earn Nigeria a living. We will ensure the expansion that is necessary for a lasting economic recovery. That is our strategy.

It begins from the understanding that people are Nigeria's most precious resource, It is rooted in the confidence that, with the right skills, the right equipment and the backing of a government that is committed to

encouraging enterprise and innovation, Nigeria's people can make our country more efficient, more competitive and more socially just.

We do not believe that everything could or should be done by government. But we know, from our own history and from the example set by developed economies, that national economic success cannot be achieved without government.

Nigeria will win with a Fresh Democratic Party government that invests to enable people to use their abilities and to stimulate modern training, research, development, production and marketing. These are the ingredients of economic vitality, and the foundations of fairness.

Immediate Action for National Recovery

Nigeria faces a huge task of national reconstruction. From day one, the Fresh Democratic Party government must start to get Nigeria working again. It must get the economy out of recession, it must lay foundations for the future. Recovery must be based on investment, for only investment will create lasting prosperity.

Today millions of people have lost their jobs, their home or their business. The Fresh Democratic Party government's National Recovery Programme will start to remove that fear with immediate action on investment, jobs and training. It will combat recession now and build sustained and sustainable recovery for the future.

Nigeria's economic problems are deep-seated. We will not be able to do at once everything that we would like to do. But we will get down to business right away. And as with any properly-run business, our immediate programme will be part of a strategy for long-term success.

Freedom and Fairness for All Nigerians

We are determined to make Nigeria a fairer and freer society. To us and to the majority of the Nigerian people a civilised community is one in which citizens band together to provide, out of community resources to which all contribute, essential services like health, education and pensions that the great majority of people can not afford to provide for themselves at time of need.

Fresh Democratic Party's objective is to broaden and deepen the liberty of all individuals in our community: to free people from poverty, exploitation and fear; to free them to realise their full potential; to see that everyone has the liberty to enjoy real chances, to make real choices.

Enhancing Rights, Increasing Freedom

Under the military dictatorship, Nigeria has been a harsh place to live in. Freedoms built up during the short period of our early democracy in the 60's have been removed. Fresh Democratic Party will restore and enhance those freedoms in a Nigeria where life can be more pleasant and fulfilling.

We believe that positive steps are needed to help women and ethnic minorities get a fair deal, and to attain more democracy in the workplace.

Women's Rights

More than half of Nigeria's people - the women of our country - are still denied many essential rights. The FDP Government will create Ministry for Women, whose portfolio will include making sure that, in framing their policies, all government departments listen and respond to women's needs and concerns.

In particular, women must have the right to work and equal rights at work. In addition to our new provision for training opportunities and protection against discrimination, a Fresh Democratic Party Government will help the large number of women who are unemployed to get employment. We will legislate that a particular percentage of jobs are reserved for women.

Democracy in the Workplace

Workers' rights have been eroded, or in some cases removed entirely in our nation. Fresh Democratic Party's policy will be one for new rights and responsibilities which means legislation to foster good industrial relations and democratic participation in industry and trade unions. We believe that the law should be used to enlarge, not diminish, the freedom of workers to control their environment.

We will:

1. Improve the protection available against unfair dismissal. We shall make the legislation apply from the time of employment. Reinstatement will be the normal outcome of a successful finding of unfair treatment. We will ensure that justice is done in cases where workers have been unfairly dismissed.
2. Extend employment protection to all workers and abolish all forms of casual labour in industries and companies.
3. Improve statutory protection in respect of health and safety at work.
4. Legislate on new provision for fair pay in our labour laws.
5. Strengthen the mediation process to put more emphasis on conciliation and arbitration.
6. Take steps to develop stable and effective negotiating machinery, promote trade union membership and organisation, and encourage union recognition by employers.
7. Restore the right to belong to a trade union to every employee.
8. Ensure that the law guarantees the essential legal freedom of workers and their unions to organise effective industrial action.
9. Provide a statutory framework of measures to underpin the participative rights of union members, for example by laying down general principles for inclusion in union rule books. These will be based on a right for union members to have a secret ballot on decisions relating to strikes, and for the method of election of union executives to be based on a system of secret ballots.
10. In consultation with the labour Unions, we will establish a new independent tribunal, presided over by a legally-qualified person. This will have the duty of acting on complaints by union members if they consider that these statutory principles have been breached.

The Jobs Programme

The FDP Government will as a matter of priority after its inauguration, call together a National Economic Summit to assess fully the condition of the economy and set the recovery programme in motion - producing the jobs that need to be done by people who need to do them in a country that wants them done.

The Summit will establish the first stage of the National Economic Assessment. This will identify the concerted action that will need to be taken by government, employers in the private and public sectors and

trade unions to increase investment, contain inflation and achieve sustained recovery.

The Anti-Poverty Programme

The spread of poverty in the past eight years has stained the whole nation, and widened misery and disadvantage amongst old and young. Much of it is the result of deliberate government policies. Millions of poor people endure it in despair. The Fresh Democratic Party government will combat poverty directly.

New Strength for Industry

For many years the Nigerian industry has been left to drift and decline, our oil revenues have been wasted and the business community has concentrated upon short-term movements of capital at the expense of Nigerian manufacturing industry.

FDP is committed to rebuilding our industrial base. Our country must make the best use of computers and information technology to develop the modern means of making a living as the oil runs down and the pressures of technical change and international competition intensify.

The Fresh Democratic Party Government will create a new Ministry of Science and Technology to promote a major increase in research and development, it will co-ordinate the activities and budgets of government departments involved in these areas and will encourage, in conjunction with industry and the scientific community, the full application of science to industrial processes and products.

Plan for Training

For modern, wealth-creating industry we need a well-trained workforce. Nigerian industry is hardly involved in any form of training of its workforce. Fresh Democratic Party will therefore establish a national training programme to bring about a major advance in the spread and standard of skills

A Sensible Energy Policy

Efficiency in industry and security in the community both depend on reliable and safe supplies of energy available at acceptable cost. The FDP will look for alternatives for energy i.e. coal and work to make the

energy industry more competitive and efficient. We will pursue a privatization policy of the energy sector. Nigeria's oil reserves have a limited life. FDP's co-ordinated energy programme will ensure the most sensible use of our reserves while protecting our environment and stimulating employment.

Prosperous Agriculture

A more efficient agricultural industry can clearly make a valuable contribution to Nigeria's recovery. We will support good environmental practices in agriculture.

To give Nigeria's producers the backing they need, the burden of agricultural support must be shifted from consumers, The direction of support must be shifted away from blanket support for commodities, towards helping the farmers who need it most, such as those who work on agricultural lands. To help bring this about we will introduce new, long-term programmes for agriculture.

Investing in Health

The FDP Government will create National Health Service (NHS) programme that is modern and will meet the aspirations of the Nigerian. The FDP Government will establish the NHS in its rightful place as a high quality service for the prevention and treatment of illness, free at the time of use to all who need attention, equipped to meet the changing pressures of need as they relate, for instance, to an aging population and the requirements of proper provision for people suffering from mental illness.

A Caring Community

The quality of life of the elderly and of disabled people can and must be improved by community services. We believe that retirement should be comfortable and interesting - a time of freedom and choice, not anxiety and loneliness. We believe that disability should not be a disqualification from good standards of living and liberty.

Education for Nigeria's Future

Our children are our future. We have a moral and material duty to see that children and young people are fully equipped to deal with the complexities and challenges which face them now and which they will

meet as citizens; parents and workers in the future. Our children must be provided with a system of education that enables them to control that future.

We will ensure that our system of education is democratic and just, that it is creative and compassionate, and that it is one in which our youngsters can fully exploit the advantages of science and technology with confidence and in safety.

In pursuit of those objectives, the FDP Government will invest in education so that the abilities of all children and adults from all home back grounds and in every part of our country are discovered and nourished.

The FDP Government values the research and teaching contribution made by Nigeria's higher education system. We will ensure that our universities and polytechnics get the resources they need to restore and expand the opportunity for all qualified young people seeking higher education to secure places. We will ensure that more adults have access to higher education to give them the 'second chance' of personal development.

We will also invest in research in higher education, in order to provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to sustain standards of excellence, to retain and attract the highest talents and to encourage the industrial and commercial application of research output.

Strengthening Democracy

We will seek to strengthen our young democracy and introduce state aid for political parties.

Rural Area

Under previous governments, the problems of the rural areas have become steadily more serious - the lack of jobs, the poor housing, and the lack of transportation, post offices, shops and schools.

Fresh Democratic Party will give our rural communities the chance to thrive again. Our policies include better public transport, new mobile

facilities for health care and social services and extra help to keep open local schools and post offices.

Towards a Fuller Life

Life is not only work. Fresh Democratic Party will make provision for the coordination and development of **leisure amenities and the leisure and cultural industries**.

Our Sport programme will provide resources for physical education and training through more playing fields and facilities, better equipment and well-trained teachers and instructors. We will nourish special talents and encourage wider participation in sport.

We will encourage schools to develop recreation facilities and to open up such recreational facilities to the whole community and prevent the selling off of school and other sports grounds.

We will set up a Sports Trust to channel resources into the development of community sport, community sporting facilities and the attraction of major international sporting events to Nigeria.

Gripped by the lack of visionary leadership in the past, Nigeria needs a government with a clear sense of direction and purpose. A government with the people and the policies to get Nigeria working again and to achieve sustained recovery - strength with staying power. The FDP Government will be such a government.

An election is not only a choice between policies, important though policies are. An election is also a choice between values and at the core of our convictions is belief in individual liberty.

We therefore believe:

First, that for liberty to have real meaning the standards of community provision must be high and access to that provision must be wide.

Second, that those rights of the individual must, like all others in a free society, belong to all men and women of every age, class and ethnic origin and be balanced by responsibilities of fair contribution and law-abiding conduct.

Third, that for rights and responsibilities to be exercised fully and fairly, government in Nigeria as in other democracies, must work to build prosperity by properly supporting research, innovation, the improvement of skills, the infrastructure and long-term industrial development.

Our vision for Nigeria is founded on these values. Guided by them, we will make our country more competitive, creative, and just; more secure against crime, aggression and environmental danger. We want government to serve the whole nation - using its power to realise this vision. The FDP Government will be such a government.

We shall empower people as citizens and as consumers of public and private services. We will strengthen equality before the law and equality of opportunity for the majority of the population -women. Neither their legal status nor their chances in education, training and employment are full or free. We will ensure that the barriers to fairness are removed.

A government which business can do business with

Modern government has a strategic role not to replace the market but to ensure that the market works properly. Nations across the world recognise that industrial policy must be at the heart of economic policy. It is the government's responsibility to create the conditions for enterprise to thrive.

Business needs sustained and balanced growth, with stable exchange rates, steady and competitive interest rates and low inflation. We will deliver them.

Business must have a high level of education, science and skills, incentives for high-tech investment, modern transport, strong regional economies for new developments. We will deliver them.

We will invest in modern transport

Nigerians and the business community need fast, safe transport, the Fresh Democratic Party Government will act to make sure they get it. We will look for possibilities for alternatives to road transport. We will seek Private finance for future high-speed rail network which will eventually link every region with proper environmental and security safeguards.

In industrial relations, there will instead be basic minimum rights for the individual at the workplace, where our aim is partnership not conflict between employers and employees. In economic management we accept the global economy as a reality.

On **crime**, we believe in personal responsibility and in punishing crime, but also tackling its underlying causes - so, tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime, different from the approach of the past.

Over-centralisation of government and lack of accountability was a problem in previous governments. The Fresh Democratic Party will be committed to the democratic renewal of our country through decentralisation and the elimination of excessive government secrecy.

In addition, we will face up to the new issues that confront us. We will be the party of welfare reform. In consultation and partnership with the people, we will design a modern welfare state based on rights and duties going together, fit for the modern world.

We believe in a F.R.E.S.H Nigeria where F stands for Faith, R for Responsibility, E for Equality, S for Security and H for Hope.

This is our COVENANT with the Nigerian people.