



**WELCOME REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR OF
CROSS RIVER STATE, SENATOR LIYEL IMOKE AT THE TWO-DAY
RETREAT FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL WORKING COMMITTEE
(NWC) OF THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) AT THE TINAPA
BUSINESS RESORT, CALABAR, ON THURSDAY, 3RD JULY 2008**

The National Chairman of PDP, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor OFR

Your Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, GCFR

Your Excellency, the President of the Senate,

Distinguished Senators

Distinguished Members of the National Working committee here
present

Distinguished Members of the Board of Trustees

Your Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Cross

River State, Barrister Efiok Cobham

The Hon. Speaker of the Cross River State House of Assembly

The State Chairman of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Hon.
Ekpo Okon

Hon. Members of the State Executive Council

Distinguished Members of our Great Party (PDP)

Distinguished Resources Persons

Distinguished Invited Guests

Gentlemen of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with utmost delight that I welcome all our Distinguished Guests, who visit our shores from far and near to share in the serenity which nature has endowed Cross River State with. On our part, the privilege of having to welcome guests and visitors has become a refreshing activity.

It is in this context that you would apparently, understand why our joy has assumed a greater dimension today. To welcome the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the Senate President alongside members of the National Working Committee of our great party - the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), to our ancient city-Calabar and specifically to, the **TINAPA BUSINESS RESORT**, is not only a unique privilege, but also an honour for which we would ever remain grateful to God.

Permit me therefore to formally say, Mr. President you are welcome to the **Canaan City Calabar**; the "**Nation's Paradise**". Calabar is undoubtedly a unique place. It was the first Administrative Headquarters of this country. Today, it is the one of the fastest growing cities in Nigeria and the foremost tourist destination in Nigeria. Above all, the people of Cross River State are very hospitable.

Mr. President, hosting a retreat of this magnitude in Calabar is indeed a unique privilege. This is so because the retreat which attracts a cream of highly distinguished political leaders in the country, would focus on three key issues of entrenching and fostering Internal Democracy in our great Party, strengthening the Institutions and Norms of the Rule of Law, and increasing the PDP's capacity to understand and guide development policies and programmes, based on our, party's, manifesto and 7 point agenda of Mr. President.

We certainly believe that members of the National Working Committee would reposition their minds and thoughts to effectively brainstorm in order to come up with concrete solutions to these three fundamental issues which are the high points of the retreat.

It is imperative to know that our party which is already doing well, needs to further consolidate on its roles and responsibilities in the strengthening of our internal democratic institutions and values. The Rule of Law which is the main plank, on which democracy rests, equally needs to be entrenched in governance. Besides, there is also the urgent need, now more than ever before, for us to ensure that the 7-point agenda of Mr. President is truly implemented to the letter. And, the only avenue open for us to speak with like minds and chart a new course towards achieving those laudable objectives is through a retreat of this nature.

It is in this perspective that I feel highly delighted to be part of this retreat which would, certainly afford us all, the ample opportunity to rub minds on how to move our Party and country forward.

Mr. President, I cannot indeed satisfactorily end these welcome remarks without expressing our deep gratitude to you, on behalf of the government and people of Cross River State, for your assurance in assisting to expedite the completion and proper functioning of the **TINAPA** Business Resort. We, once again use this opportunity to appeal for the immediate release of operational guidelines and protocols for Tinapa to enable the Resort take off in earnest.

We are optimistic that our distinguished guests here present would take time off to inspect facilities in the **TINAPA** and equally visit our other tourist destinations like the Obudu Ranch Resort and the Marina Resort.

Mr. President Sir, Chairman, Members of the National Working Committee of PDP, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me once again on behalf of the people of Cross River State welcome you all to the **TINAPA** Business Resort and to Cross River State, the “Nation’s Paradise”.

I thank you all and wish you most fruitful deliberations.