

## **We owe our youths a pathway to leadership capacity**

*Remarks by Malam Nasir El-Rufai, Governor of Kaduna State, at the announcement of the first set of Kashim Ibrahim Fellows, held at the Sir Kashim Ibrahim House, Kaduna, on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018*

### PROTOCOLS

It is with utmost delight that I join the Governing Board of the Sir Kashim Ibrahim Fellowship Programme to announce the candidates that have emerged as the first set of Kashim Ibrahim Fellows. This programme is conceived as a leadership training platform for young people, offering the fellows one-year of immersion at the heart of government. During this one year, the fellows will also be engaged in reflection, lectures and seminars on leadership. This packed programme will enable the fellows to build wider networks and share ideas with distinguished leaders from various sectors. The programme is administered by a Governing Board of accomplished persons, and is run day-to-day by a programme secretariat, headed by Zainab Mohammed, the Senior Special Assistant on Economic and Investment Matters.

The Kashim Ibrahim Fellows Programme is an initiative of the Kaduna State Government to develop and nurture leadership ability across Nigeria, with a specific focus on the promising leaders of the future. The one-year programme aims to create a network of high potential young Nigerians who are expected to rise to top leadership positions in the public sector and other spheres of activity over the next decade.

The overall mission of the non-partisan programme, as I explained in February 2018 when introducing the programme is *"to raise the next generation of leaders who will most likely be absorbed into the Nigerian public sector having had a first-hand experience of its workings and challenges"*.

There is no doubt in my mind that leaders in Nigeria must device and sustain deliberate pathways to build youth capacity for leadership in the public service. Most Nigerians are younger than 35, and in Kaduna State, youths constitute 89% of the population. Therefore, we owe them a duty to make the necessary investments to enable them to acquire the skills, the steel and the exposure for effective public service. The world of today is changing fast, with new challenges and opportunities arising. It is time that we become quite deliberate in building leadership capacity, recruiting the most talented and promoting a meritocratic culture. If we prepare these young people with sufficient rigour, they will be better at helping our people to productively navigate an increasingly confusing and competitive world.

I have been inspired and impressed by the quality of many of the candidates. Their submissions reinforced our conviction that youthful talent abounds in Nigeria, and that we can productively engage these smart young people for the benefit of our country. Each of the 31 persons that made the last stage of the selection process was superbly qualified.

The Steering Committee did an excellent job sifting through the 1377 applications. In this task, the committee encountered both the uplifting and the deplorable, as is likely in such a wide pool. But they have selected the very best. I thank the Governing Board for ensuring that our fellows represent the diversity of our country, including the gender balance.

The Governing Board has designed a commendable leadership development programme aimed at producing the next generation of inclusive, patriotic and results-oriented managers of human and material resources in the public sector. I therefore call on the first set of fellows to seize the moment, and apply themselves with the energy and wit required to make a success of this opportunity.

I wish to thank all the members of the Governing Board, and I will for this purpose mention their names: Hakeem Belo-Osagie, Dele Olojede, Hadiza Bala-Usman, Chinelo Anohu-Amazu, Bilya Bala, Barbara Barungi, Japheth Omojuwa, Muhammad Sani Abdullahi, Jimi Lawal, Iboroma Akpana and Segun Adeniyi. Arc. Mohammed Kashim Ibrahim is representing the family of late Sir Kashim Ibrahim.

As advertised in the request for applications, the selected fellows – all aged between 25 and 35 years - will spend the next 12 months working in various branches of the Kaduna State Government, engaging in leadership seminars, community service and study tours. They will be exposed to public service challenges and opportunities at the highest levels of sub-national governance. They will be accommodated in a manner to ensure continuous interaction and bonding that are likely to result in greater understanding of our strength in diversity, lasting friendships and lifetime of solidarity. We have our trust in Almighty God that these talented young men and women – the best and brightest among the over 1,300 applicants will benefit from the programme and grow into committed public leaders.

On behalf of the government and people of Kaduna, and the blessed memory of the first Governor of a self-governing Northern Region of Nigeria, Late Sir Kashim Ibrahim, and with gratitude to Almighty God, I thank all the applicants and the successful fellows, the Governing Board and our KIF secretariat for making this joyous day possible.

Thank you for listening.  
God Bless Kaduna State.  
God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.