

GOVERNOR SEYI MAKINDE'S REMARKS AT THE COMMISSIONING OF THE 34.85 KM OYO-ISEYIN ROAD.

15 September, 2023

Being the Remarks by His Excellency Seyi Makinde, the Executive Governor of Oyo State, at the Commissioning of the 34.85 km Oyo-Iseyin Road on Friday, 15 September, 2023.

It gives me great joy to be here today as we commission one of the key projects that will open Oyo and Oke-Ogun Zones to further investments and economic stimulation. When our administration came in a little over four years ago, we had clear plans for accelerated development in our dear State through improving our road infrastructure.

We knew that if we were to compete favourably with other States in Nigeria and become key players in our West African subregion, we had to interconnect all the zones by road. We were able to quickly identify where our competitive advantage lies and to come up with a strategy for harnessing that advantage.

Oyo State has arable land for agriculture, and the question for us was: how do we get the big players to come and site their agribusiness where we had land? The answer was to open up the zones through road projects.

Yes, we had a choice between doing what previous governments had done, which was to concentrate efforts in Ibadan to repair inner roads which would be easily visible to the people in the capital.

But we chose to take the path less travelled. These days, when I read comments on social media saying all roads in Ibadan are bad, what is Seyi Makinde doing? I smile because, the people doing business in Ibadan know what we are doing, and our investors know what we are doing. The people who used to avoid going to Oyo through the Oyo-Iseyin Road or to Iseyin through the Moniya-Iseyin Road because of how bad these roads were know what we are doing.

And so, with travel time on the Oyo-Iseyin Road reduced from two hours to 25 minutes, commuters and businesses located in this area know what that cost savings means to their overall bottom line.

Of course, this is not to say we will not do something about inner roads in Ibadan and other parts of Oyo State. In fact, as I have repeatedly said, we are prioritising the repairs of inner roads under Omituntun 2.0. If we had all the resources we needed, we would have been able to tackle both issues at the same time; the repair of inner roads and the major roads. But the truth is, we do not have the resources to meet all expectations at the same time.

So, we prioritised interconnectivity through roads such as the 65 km Moniya-Iseyin Road, the 76.67 km Iseyin-Fapote-Ogbomoso Road, the 48 km Ido-Eruwa Road and of course this 34.85 km Oyo-Iseyin Road. With industries moving to these areas or expanding their operations because of the infrastructure, we quickly increased our IGR and generated funds to do the last-mile roads.

So, here we are today to celebrate another milestone. When this project commenced in July 2021, we had an expected completion date of July 2022. However, the construction of the Ogun River Bridge caused delays, and we had to recalibrate our expectations. But we are here now and with the joy I can see on the faces of our people, all is well that ends well.

As I mentioned earlier, this 34.85 km Oyo-Iseyin Road has high economic significance, not just to the people of Oyo and Iseyin but to the entire State and region. The fact that it is a Federal Road

highlights its importance, but as we will find out as we move on to inspect the former Fasola Livestock Farm, this road hosts one of our biggest assets in Oyo State.

Our first agribusiness industrial hub, which I have been told will be completed in about a month or two, is domiciled on this route. I do not want to pre-empt what we will be seeing there, but going by what I have been told, our vision of creating an industrial hub in this zone is becoming a reality. We already have at least five agribusinesses operating out of the hub and expect more.

Our vision is to have an agrotourism site here, and I am looking forward to seeing the Ministry of Culture and Tourism work with the Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency (OYSADA) to make this place a tourist destination in the shortest possible time. I look forward to seeing what horizontal synergies can be created between the ministry and OYSADA to achieve this.

We will be going over there soon, but I just wanted to say before we go, that the way we fixed this Federal Government road is the way that Local Government Councils should be able to fix State roads. This is our long-term vision of how the LGAs should run. The Chairmen should come up with strategies for the development of their LGAs through the interconnectivity of their LGAs. This is how we will provide sustainable development in our dear State.

So, as we commission this landmark achievement, we could not have wished for anyone better to celebrate this day with us than an extraordinary man who has given a good part of his life in service to our great nation. I call him Daddy. Please permit me to yield the podium to His Excellency, the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR, as he speaks to us before we proceed to commission the 34.85 km Oyo-Iseyin Road to the glory of God and for the benefit of the good people of Oyo State.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Seyi Makinde