

We Endorse Buhari's Candidature for the 2007 Presidential Election

We, The Coalition for Sustainable Democracy and Accountable Governance (COSDAG), made up of pro-democracy groups in Western and Eastern Europe, call on Nigerians at home and abroad to wake up to their obligations as citizens by ensuring the survival of democracy as well as good governance through accountability in the country.

With the main political parties having picked their presidential candidates for the forthcoming presidential elections, it is time to subject the three principal parties, the PDP, ANPP and AC and their candidates to scrutiny using the fundamental criteria of accountability, integrity and patriotism.

In arriving at a verdict on the candidates presented by the PDP, ANPP and AC, Umaru Musa Yar Adua, Muhammadu Buhari and Atiku Abubakar respectively, it was clear to the Coalition that due process was sacrificed by the ruling PDP judging by claims that all PDP Governors were muscled by Obasanjo to withdraw and support Yar Adua and force their delegates to vote for him. The other parties seem to have had fairer conventions.

The Coalition also notes the revelations and counter revelations, allegations and counter allegations from both President Obasanjo and Vice President Abubakar, clearly shows that both the president and his vice have skeletons in their cupboards. In view of these it seem that President Obasanjo is bent on interfering with due process so that he can cover his misdeeds and roles in the injuries inflicted on the Nigerian nation. This situation tells every sensible Nigerian;

1. Obasanjo's desperation, as depicted in both his defeated *'third term agenda'* and the imposition of 'Yar Adua as PDP's candidate, to install a puppet, to protect himself and continue to direct the affairs of Government. Nigerians must shun anything he touches or anoints as morally undeserving of their support.
2. Atiku Abubakar and AC cannot fight and defeat Obasanjo and his PDP even if he were to be a reformed person, after all his atrocities with Obasanjo. In any case at this crucial stage, Nigeria needs a tested person not one to be given a test.
3. That to the extent that Yar'Adua accepted this crude destruction of party democracy in addition to the fact that he had never spoken against nor objected to the unconstitutional tenure elongation makes him an accomplice in this unforgivable unconstitutionality and therefore, a dangerous baggage for Nigeria's democracy.
4. As it stands today, accountability, credibility and selfless leadership are of immense importance. To that extent Buhari remains the only untainted candidate capable of passing the test.

In the light of the foregoing, the Coalition has come to the conclusion that Buhari is the best candidate. We therefore endorse Buhari's candidature for the 2007 Presidential Election and

will from now on sell his candidature at home and abroad for the purpose of moving Nigeria forward and out of the dark days of the Obasanjo/Atiku contraption.

Both Nigerians and the rest of the world know that Muhammadu Buhari today remains the only living ex-Nigerian leader without credibility deficit in so far as accountability and selflessness are concerned. In addition, his performance and conduct in the last elections and after, as depicted in his recourse to courts and abiding by the verdict, notwithstanding the injustice, in the eyes of most Nigerians, of the judgment, will bring fresh air to a Nigerian Presidency where respect for court orders is into an anathema by the Obasanjo-led Government.

Yet such fresh air is not only needed in the Presidency but also in the whole country. It is needed among all Nigerians at home and abroad so that we can all carry our heads high to be proud that we are Nigerians.

Neither ‘Yar Adua nor his Obasanjo PDP can provide Nigeria and Nigerians with accountability and responsible governance that are the landmarks of democracy in the modern world. Obasanjo’s PDP and ‘Yar Adua represent a continuation of the status quo of corruption, unaccountability and unconstitutionality that we must all reject with strong abhorrence.

While the Coalition endorses Buhari’s candidature for what it believes it can deliver to Nigeria, such support must not be taken for granted. The Coalition will follow every bit of utterance and action in the Buhari campaign with keen interest and we will hold him to his promises to the Nigerian people.

To ensure the survival of democracy and enthronement of good governance, we at COSDAG also call on INEC to ensure the conduct of a free and fair election by ensuring that all those qualified to register are duly registered and appropriate mechanisms are put in place to avoid election malpractices. In addition, we urge the police and other law enforcement agencies to stay-clear of partisan politics and they must not allow themselves to be used by the government in power to rig elections or tamper with election results.

We call on all well meaning Nigerians not only to support Buhari for the presidency but to be vigilant and rise up to protect their votes.

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For and on behalf of:

Foundation for Good Governance and Development in Nigeria (FGGN)

Nigeria Watch (NW)

Concerned Nigerians Abroad (CAN)

Forum for Democratic Transformation in Nigeria (FDTN)

Foundation for Sustenance of Democracy and Accountability (FSDA)

Social Advocacy Network for Nigeria (SANN)

Forum for Democratic Empowerment in Nigeria (FDEN)