

Pragmatic Analysis of Peter Obi's Speech at Chatham House, London

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Abstract

Abusive language, rhetoric, propaganda, defamatory speech, political jargon, false promises, persuasive words, and vulgar language are common characteristics of politicians' language use, especially during electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. In the Nigerian political arena, voters are swayed by these speeches and interpret them differently from the politicians' intent. This research aims to provide a pragmatic analysis of the terms used in politics during campaigns, particularly focusing on Peter Obi, one of the presidential candidates in the recent Nigerian general election, titled "Nigeria's 2023 Elections: A vision for policy change and institutional reforms". The study's data was obtained online and analyzed pragmatically from the perspective of the speaker's intentions and the listeners' reactions. The study found a communication gap between politicians and voters, as campaign speeches can convey multiple messages simultaneously, making them highly didactic. The study highlights at least ten pragmatic elements, with some sentence structures serving as persuasive, assertive, and directive tools, allowing the speaker to connect with the audience. Others required inference from the audience. The study recommends that voters/public be aware that the linguistic competence used by politicians during elections differs from superficial meanings. Similarly, politicians must be held accountable for their promises, as voters believe those promises and look forward to the fulfillment of same.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Speech Act, Political Language Use, Chatham House.

Introduction

Every field of human discipline has its own jargon, used by those who practice it, and politics is no exception. This research pragmatically reviews the language used by Peter Obi, an exceptional politician, during the last Nigerian presidential election at Chatham House in London. Chatham House, also known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is a global independent policy

institute based in London, recognized for its authoritative research and analysis on global issues, particularly in international affairs, diplomacy, and geopolitics. Chatham House provides a platform for debate and discussion among political leaders, academics, business leaders, and other stakeholders to address the world's major challenges today.

Linguistic research typically focuses on one or more fundamental branches of linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, morphology, and sociolinguistics. The concepts of sociolinguistics and politics form the basis of this research. Sociolinguistics, which this research falls under, is a branch of linguistics that primarily accounts for language use. Politics is generally considered the set of activities associated with power relations between individuals.

Morris (1938), the father of pragmatics, defines pragmatics as one of the three branches of semiotics. He considered pragmatics as the study of the relationship between signs and their users in communication. In his triadic theory of signs, Morris emphasizes that pragmatics deals with the practical aspects of signs, focusing on how signs function in communication and affect users' behavior. Pragmatics concerns the practical aspects of language use, including speakers' intentions, communication effects, and the social context in which communication occurs.

This research aims to provide an analytical pragmatic study of the types of terms (language use) employed by politicians in our society. It also examines the pragmatic effect of politicians' language use on the masses, investigating the linguistic strategies characterized by persuasive, assertive, informative words used during campaigns that impose moral and ethical values on voters.

Methodology

This research uses a quantitative method, with data obtained exclusively from secondary sources. The analyzed speech was sourced from *The Cable*, an independent online newspaper in Nigeria. The published speech was compared by listening and transcribing from Channels Television's YouTube page (@Channels Television). The data underwent pragmatic analysis to understand the linguistic content and implications of Peter Obi's campaign promises, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party.

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatics serves as the linguistic approach for this research, being one of the main branches of linguistics capable of revealing the meaning of language use, while the Speech Act Theory serves as the linguistic framework. Morris (1938) identifies pragmatics as one of the three branches of semiotics (the study of signs' meaning). He argues that pragmatics is the study of the relationship between signs and their interpreters. Austin's (1962) work on speech acts marked another significant development in pragmatics, studying and classifying speech acts.

Mey (2007:4) highlights that pragmatics incorporates "extra-syntactic and extra-linguistic factors." He defines pragmatics as a linguistic study that "deals with language users in their inter and intra-social contexts." He stresses the importance of investigating language users within their various social interactions and settings. To Akmajian et al. (2008:361), pragmatics is "the study of language use, particularly the study of the relationship between linguistic structure and the context of utterance in linguistic communication." In other words, pragmatics is a field that focuses on how language is used in real-life situations, especially examining how the structure of language interacts with the context in which something is said. This includes understanding how meaning and communication are influenced by the circumstances surrounding the utterance.

Pragmatic Analysis of Peter Obi's Speech

Several key elements and concepts in pragmatics help understand how language is used in real-world communication, beyond the literal meanings of words and sentences. Pragmatic analysis is essential for interpreting the intended meaning of utterances and understanding how language functions in different social and cultural contexts.

The analysis divides the speech into 23 paragraphs with corresponding subtitles. "Par" in the analysis means "paragraph."

Speech Acts: Speech acts refer to actions performed through language. Utterances can be used not only to convey information but also to make requests, give orders, make promises, give opinions, etc. All through the speech, the speaker passes information across to his listeners on the current situation of the country and the possible future situation if elected into power.

He also uses speech acts to make promises to the electorate as the speech is littered with promises of intentions to do and to act. Phrases such as "*We will ...*" indicates a promise being made.

- Example:

"We will embark on effective macro-economic and fiscal restructuring to quickly restore fiscal viability..." (par 15)

"We will patriotically reform our institutions..." (par 7)

"...my promise is that Nigeria's resources will be most prudently used and as the Commander in Chief, I Peter Obi sincerely pledge that Our Pact with Nigeria will be diligently pursued..." (Par.16)

Through the examples above, the speaker conveys the action of "making a promise" through words, which is an element of pragmatics.

The speaker also gives directives in his words *"...this is unacceptable and needs to change!"* (Par 4).

What the speaker describes as unacceptable, to him, has to change; hence the directive that it needs to change.

By closing with this statement, the speaker is committing himself to future actions:

"... I Peter Obi sincerely pledge that Our Pact with Nigeria will be diligently pursued to create a new Nigeria characterised by sustainable/inclusive growth and development." (Par 23)

Presupposition: Presupposition is the assumption that the speaker and listener share certain background knowledge on an utterance. They are often implicitly stated. Presuppositions can reveal a lot about the speaker's beliefs, the shared knowledge between speakers, or the context of the conversation.

- Example: *"What prompted this turn-around, we may ask ourselves?"* (Par.3). This presupposes there has been a turnaround situation. By this statement, it can be inferred that both the speaker and the listeners have a common knowledge on the prevailing circumstances in the country that warrants a turnaround.

- *"It is not to be doubted at the global scene that Nigeria is blessed with some of the most entrepreneurial youths in the world, in science, in business, in art and entertainment."* (Par 7).

Here, the speaker banks on the common knowledge he shares with his listeners on the ability of Nigerian youths to distinguish themselves in excellence the world over.

- *"The Nigerian state is captive to an elite gang-up and a rentier political economy that has concentrated political power in the hands of those who came to power and influence mainly through their own contrivances and not through the affirmation of the people, ..."* (Par 2).

The above presupposes that there is an existing issue with political and economic structures dominated by an elite class whose ascent to power must have been against the wishes of the electorate.

- *"Even after exploiting ethnic and religious cleavages and sentiments to ascend to political power..."* (Par 3) presupposes that political leaders have previously employed the use of divisive tactics (ethnic and/or religious) to gain power, and it presupposes that this tactics has worked over time as they indeed ascend to power.

Implicature: This refers to the inferences that listeners draw from an utterance based on what is said and what is suggested. Grice's maxims (quantity, quality, relation, manner) are often used to analyze implicature.

- Example: *"The growing insecurity in Nigeria is not because the enemy is formidable; it is rather because of lack of focused leadership."* (Par. 10).

This example suggests that leadership is a significant issue in the growing insecurity in Nigeria. By this statement, the speaker gives room for the listeners to infer the relationship between the lack of focused leadership and the growing insecurity in the country.

- *"What Nigeria needs is a Great Escape..."* (Par 4). Drawing on shared understanding of the speaker and his listeners on the need to escape a problematic situation, the statement implies that Nigeria is currently in a state of entrapment or difficulty.

Deixis: Deixis concerns words or phrases that depend on the context for their meaning even though their semantic meaning is fixed but their denoted meaning varies depending on time and/or place and context in which they are used. Deixis is the use of general words and phrases to refer to a specific time, place, or person in context. Deictic expressions often include pronouns like "he, she, it", demonstratives and time adverbs like: "here," "there","now," "then," "soon," etc and even certain verbs.

- Example: *"We will embark on effective macro-economic and fiscal restructuring to quickly restore fiscal viability..."* (Par. 15).

The word "we" refers to the speaker and his running mate Senator Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed.

"... the very people on whose sentiments they grabbed power often become the primary victims of such political fraud that has rendered Nigeria a failing state ..." (Par 3).

"They" in this sentence and in this context, refers to former political aspirants who have come into power by working on the sentiments of the electorate and have repeatedly failed at seeking the good of the same people who elected them into power.

"... and the diminished opportunities in Nigeria in an age of globalization when the Internet easily reveals to them the prosperous homes of those who live in better-led and governed countries." (Par 3).

"In an age of globalization" relates to time adverbial deixis, stating the contextual timing of that statement.

"Today a new wind of change sees the ballot box as being iunstrumental to changing bad leadership." (Par 6)

The use of the word 'today' situates the discssion in the present and emphasizes the urgency of the change.

Context: This includes both the linguistic context (the words and sentences surrounding an utterance) and the situational context (the physical and social environment) in which the speech takes place.

- Example: *"We have alarming insecurity that has led to loss of many lives and properties, significant decline in food and economic output, immense trauma that has compromised the mental health of communities, ..."* (Par 2).

The insecurity and loss of life in this context, has resulted not only in decline of the mental health of the people, but also in the poor economic output.

Politeness: This explores how people use language to maintain social harmony and show respect in communication.

- Example: "*In agreement to the primacy of gratitude among human virtues, please allow me to begin today with words of gratitude ... to Chatham House, Dr. Alex Vines and his team...*" (Par.1).

This statement expresses gratitude and acknowledges the contributions of the hosts in fostering a positive global relationship.

- "*As our erudite Professor Chinua Achebe stated...*" (Par 21).

In making reference to respected figures, it adds formality and shows deference to established authorities, thereby rendering his speech authoritative and persuasive.

Appeal to Demographics: This pragmatic approach recognizes the importance of demographics and public sentiment in politics and governance.

- Example: "*The reasons for these very high stakes are lurking in facts of demographics, with our dominant population (the youths) frustrated and unhappy with the status quo and the diminished opportunities in Nigeria ...*" (Par.3).

The speaker by this statement, acknowledges the frustration of youth with the current situation and recognizes their feelings and concerns as a significant demographic group. This engagement is crucial, considering Nigeria's young population and their potential influence on future development.

- "*We will turn our youth bulge to a demographic dividend, rather than today's harvest of a time bomb of violence and insecurity from the uneducated, unemployed and marginalised.*" (Par 9).

This highlights a commitment to transforming the potential challenges of a large youth population into positive economic and social benefits.

- "*We will use merit to assemble competent Nigerians from all sections of Nigeria to form an effective Government of National Unity.*" (Par 8).

The focus on meritocracy and inclusion reaches a wider range of people, addressing concerns that border on regional and ethnic representation in governance.

Rhetorical Questions: Using rhetorical questions to engage the audience provokes reflection on the issues raised in the speech, and the proposed solutions.

- Example: *"What prompted this turn-around, we may ask ourselves?"* (Par.3).

Here, the speaker indulges his listeners into the act of thinking about the circumstances that led to the said turn-around.

- *"How did we (Nigeria) plunge into such economic decline that we have overtaken India as home to the biggest pool of the absolute poor in the world?"* (Par 4)

This puzzles the minds of the listeners as he makes global comparisons with international economy as it accentuates the severity of Nigeria's economic decline and encourages the audience to question the underlying causes.

- *"But what provides Quality Health and Educational Systems for a society?"* (Par 4). This question sets the tone for the subsequent explanation that committed and focused leadership are panacea for quality health and educational systems which bridges the gap between the rich and the poor in the society.

Problem Identification: Obi pragmatically discusses various issues, such as insecurity, economic challenges, poor politics, and ethno-religious sentiments, highlighting their impact on the society.

- Example: *"We have alarming insecurity that has led to loss of many lives and properties..."* (Par.1)

- *"The economy is in crisis with a troubling debt profile worsened by oil theft ..."* (Par 2).

- *"Nigeria today is at a critical juncture and the people, led by the youths brutalized by bad leadership, ..."* (Par 8).

Obi expresses these problems through out his speech, proffering solutions to each problem sited.

Political Engagement and Vision: Obi presents his policies and procedures in a pragmatic way, outlining key priorities and their potential impact on Nigerians' quality of life.

- Example: *"We are determined to do everything that needs to be done to rescue and lead our beloved country to prosperity, freedom, security, and peace."* (Par.8).

The speaker expresses his engagement/commitment to rescuing Nigeria from problems earlier enumerated in his speech.

- *"This forms the first and most important thrust of my governance priorities without which the rest may not be achieved: To secure Nigeria, end banditry and insurgency, and unite our dear nation to manage our diversity, such that no one is left behind"*. (Par 10).

Here, the speaker outlines the cardinal points which are pivotal to his administration, if elected into office.

Conclusion

Political speeches are generally delivered orally or in written form, using carefully chosen words to convince, shape opinions, and possibly control the audience. This careful selection of language in political speeches stems from the recognition that language can be strategically wielded to achieve goals such as enhancing self-image, overthrowing governments, or reducing the influence of opposing factions. Consequently, language serves as a tool within political discourse, allowing politicians to effectively engage and persuade their audience. It is a means that compels listeners to reflect on the state of society. By examining how campaign speeches depict and satirize individuals and sociopolitical issues, insights are gained into the strategic use of language in political contexts.

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ANNEXE

Chatham House Presentation

Opening

1. In agreement to the primacy of gratitude among human virtues, please allow me to begin today with words of gratitude. I am most grateful to Chatham House, Dr. Alex Vines and his team for the global impact of their mission and commitment to engagement with Nation building in Nigeria. In providing this global platform to interrogate the vision of those seeking to lead Nigeria, at this time when clear existential threats as I will discuss shortly are pervasive across our dear country, this Chatham House event challenges us to new thinking.

Security issues

2. We have alarming insecurity that has led to loss of many lives and properties, significant decline in food and economic output, immense trauma that has compromised the mental health of communities, and in some cases, irredentist pressures and disaffection with the Nigerian project. The economy is in crisis with a troubling debt profile worsened by oil theft of proportion once hard to even imagine, two economic recessions in six years and a lamentable power sector that significantly constrains manufacturing and social life. The Nigerian state is captive to an elite gang-up and a rentier political economy that has concentrated political power in the hands of those who came to power and influence mainly through their own contrivances and not through the affirmation of the people, and therefore, do not have the incentive to serve the people's interest.

Ethno-religious sentiments

3. Even after exploiting ethnic and religious cleavages and sentiments to ascend to political power, the very people on whose sentiments they grabbed power often become the primary victims of such political fraud that has rendered Nigeria a failing state with a worsening leadership crisis. Consequently, Nigeria's Democracy has been on the wane, evident in the Afrobarometer longitudinal tracking which reveals low voter turnout and apathy in the current Republic. But this seems to have turned around dramatically last year, allowing Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to register over 12 million new voters, with many more complaining they wished to register but were unable to make INEC deadlines. What prompted this turn-around? The reasons for these very high stakes are lurking in facts of demographics, with our dominant population (the youths) frustrated and unhappy with the status quo and the diminished opportunities in Nigeria in an age of globalization when the Internet easily reveals to them the prosperous homes of those who live in better-led and governed countries.

Economic issues

4. How did we (Nigeria) plunge into such economic decline that we have overtaken India as home to the biggest pool of the absolute poor in the world? While the poverty rate in India is about 16%, that of Nigeria is about 63% with about 133 million Nigerians classified as multidimensionally poor! This is unacceptable and needs to change! What Nigeria needs is a Great Escape as the 2015 Noble prize winner in Economics Angus Deaton of Princeton University elucidated, that what

separates poor & rich is attributable to Health & Education. But what provides Quality Health and Educational Systems for a society? Committed and Focused Leadership that can Build and Sustain Public Wealth as I was told by Professor Donald Jacobs of The Kellogg School of Management.

5. In many ways, this is at the heart of my remarks today which are deeply rooted in my upbringing, particularly my mother's counsel that I live a life of positive impact and manage both personal and public resources most prudently for sustainable/inclusive growth and development of the society. It is the principle that guided my stewardship as Governor of Anambra State, Nigeria and led to our much-commended performance with some prized awards to show for it. Some of the awards were for outstanding accomplishment in key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is the same counsel and principle that is guiding and motivating me to offer to serve in a New Nigeria!

6. The answer lies in an understanding of Leadership, Institutions and Demographics. The good news is that demography is driving the change we are seeing in Africa with election after election in the last year in Africa, in which the establishment parties are being upturned by new or small parties. It is for this change that my vision of policy change and institutional development is rooted in the push for a broadened scope of social mobility and freedom for Nigerians, particularly our children and youth. Like Former British Prime Minister Harold McMillan said at the start of the Independence decade, a wind of change is blowing through Africa. Today a new wind of change sees the ballot box as being instrumental to changing of bad leadership.

Political commitment

7. Senator Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, my running mate, and I are committed to a new politics that starts with the ethics of servant-leaders and anchored on the marriage of clean hearts and skilful hands. We know that unless we change our politics by changing our political leadership, we are stuck with this terrible state of underdevelopment and misery. We will patriotically reform our institutions particularly ones directly responsible for implementing Government policies to make them fit for purpose. It is not to be doubted at the global scene that Nigeria is blessed with some of the most entrepreneurial youths in the world, in science, in business, in art and entertainment. We believe that what remains is to change the leadership class from predators to creators of value; from those whose wealth and power derive from the destitution of the nation and its peoples to those who have demonstrated the competence, character and capacity to invest in human development, create prosperity, and instill the right values and ethical conduct deserving of servant leaders.

8. Nigeria today is at a critical juncture and the people, led by the youths brutalized by bad leadership, are awake and leading the movement to transform Nigerian politics and restart the engine of economic growth and social stability. We count ourselves honoured to be trusted especially by the youths, to lead this democratic revolution and we deeply pledge to do so with sincerity, accountability and unquenchable love and desire for a better Nigeria. We are simply, the symbol of the Nigerian youths' struggles to reverse the ugly trend that keeps driving them into social anomie, despair and rejection of their beloved country. We are determined to do everything that needs to be done to rescue and lead our beloved country to prosperity, freedom, security and peace. We will use merit to assemble competent Nigerians from all sections of Nigeria to form an effective Government of National Unity.

9. At the heart of my goal here today is to look at our Labour Party's key policy planks and how they will drive up the quality of life of the average Nigerian, dramatically reduce poverty and return Nigeria to a place of strategic relevance in a world that needs a thriving and well governed Nigeria stabilizing the continent of Africa, making it a high value add for a planet imperilled by environmental challenges, terrorism and inequity. I also plan here to speak on institutions and how the leadership we offer can facilitate the evolution of stronger institutions, with the rule of law a key anchor of Nation building in Nigeria. I have no doubt that the policy choices we favour, and the strong institutions Labour Party will facilitate, will move Nigeria from a country of rent seekers sharing Oil receipts and consuming conspicuously, to one that produces, based on vast factor endowments whose value chains can move us towards a high employment economy. We will turn our youth bulge to a demographic dividend, rather than today's harvest of a time bomb of violence and insecurity from the uneducated, unemployed and marginalised.

Political stance I

10. This forms the first and most important thrust of my governance priorities without which the rest may not be achieved: "To secure Nigeria, end banditry and insurgency, and unite our dear nation to manage our diversity, such that no one is left behind". The growing insecurity in Nigeria is not because the enemy is formidable, it is rather because of lack of focused leadership, ineffective security governance structure and poor coordination from the centre. All these need to be addressed by first, projecting strong leadership signals that allow both state and non-state actors to be mobilised around a single vision. Then, by pursuing a robust reform of the security governance structure with a strong coordinating mechanism that assures that all levels of government – federal, state, and local (with 3-level policing structure) – are aligned with strong collaboration with partners from both the private sector and development groups to provide the required services and deliver results for every Nigerian. Once this is done, it is also important to have a single, clear, coherent, and consistent communication system to keep the government accountable, citizens engaged and involved in the development process. It is important for institutions to be able to provide strong leadership, coordination capability, partner and engage collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders in an environment that mutually reinforces values.

Political stance II

11. The second plank of my policy thrust is to "Shift emphasis from consumption to production by running a production-centered economy that is driven by an agrarian revolution and export-oriented industrialization". With about 70 million hectares of arable land, we will pursue an agricultural revolution through proper segmentation of Nigeria to activate and harness the factor endowments of different parts of the country for both rapid and mechanized agricultural development and as a pillar for Nigeria's other sectoral development and industrialization. We will incentivise and invest in agro-cluster and industrial cluster development across our geo-resource zones to take advantage of agglomeration and scale effects particularly in North-West, North-East and North-Central regions of Nigeria. We will dredge both Rivers Niger and Benue, build dams and massively support the planting of economic trees across the country for local usage, poverty elimination, export and revenue generation.

12. A key task is to sequentially but decisively, dismantle the inefficient and anti-market distortionary structures restraining the Nigerian economy from creating the preconditions for a dynamic pro-market economy. We will employ entrepreneurial governance to dismantle

impediments to free trade and ease of doing business and implement radical economic policies that will drastically reduce our debt service – a major drain on government revenue today. Our Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) will be robustly supported. Further borrowing will be strictly for productive purposes. While we will aggressively pursue the activation of all opportunities in the oil and gas value chain, we will use targeted incentive schemes that will be professionally administered to diversify our non-oil export portfolio with proper consideration and management of climate change risks and opportunities.

Political stance III

13. The third pillar of our governance priorities is to “Restructure the polity through effective legal and institutional reforms to entrench the rule of law, aggressively fight corruption, reduce cost of governance, and establish an honest and efficient civil service”. Reducing the cost of governance in Nigeria is an effective way to fight institutional corruption. In addition to reducing cost of governance and streamlining government operations for efficiency and effectiveness, we will ensure that reforms are pursued in a way that protects the livelihood of our hardworking and efficient civil servants.

14. Critical to fighting corruption, we shall install a new budgeting system founded on the cardinal principles of public accountability, objective setting, and program implementation. This is against the extant budgetary principles of revenue mobilization, expenditure allocation, borrowing without emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and feedback. We will enforce the principle of performance auditing and institutionalize monitoring and evaluation process of the entire public service delivery as the primary means of actualizing our vision of a new Nigeria. This reform will institutionalize the personal involvement of the President in setting budgetary objectives of MDAs, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation process through the Office of Regulatory Review in the Office of the President. Budget monitoring and evaluation capacity will be strengthened within the Presidency.

Economic stance 1

15. We will embark on effective macro-economic and fiscal restructuring to quickly restore fiscal viability by discontinuing unaffordable subsidies which have left a black-hole in government finances. Fiscal and monetary policy will be properly coordinated, with each deploying conventional tools transparently instead of distorting markets to favour a few privileged persons. For the avoidance of doubt, we will collaborate with the Central Bank of Nigeria for the transparent liberalization of the foreign exchange market and the dismantling of the opaque multiple exchange rate regime which effectively subsidises a few privileged persons.

16. We will also seek to boost the supply side, rather than continuing to concentrate exclusively on demand management of the foreign exchange market. When unaffordable subsidies are removed, some carefully calibrated transfers will be used to cushion any adverse impact on the economically weak. If the competitiveness of a sector is to be enhanced, then that will be done via the enactment of transparent and specially targeted fiscal and trade policies designed to stimulate investment and growth. Revenue shortfalls and leakages such as oil theft will be dealt with decisively by holding persons in positions of authority fully accountable.

Economic stance 11

17. The fourth plank of our governance priorities is to “Leapfrog Nigeria into the 4th Industrial Revolution through the application of scientific and technological innovations to create a digital economy”. Building on the gains of the agriculture-led manufacturing and export, we will pursue the development of knowledge and skills to leverage on the emerging disruptive digital technologies, automation, Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, robotics, virtual reality, block chain technology, biotechnology and data science – all of which are at the heart of the fourth industrial revolution.

18. The fifth plank of our governance priorities is to “Build expansive infrastructure for efficient power supply, rail, road and air transportation, and pipeline network, through integrated public-private partnerships, and entrepreneurial public sector governance”. Our solution to the perennial power problem in Nigeria is a comprehensive one that covers transmission, distribution, generation and financing as detailed in our Manifesto. However, we will immediately complete the \$2.3b Nigeria-Siemens network improvement deal to achieve 7,000 MW stable capacity by the end of this year (2023), 11,000 megawatts by 2024, and 25,000 megawatts by 2025. We will support local manufacturing capacity of power technologies and encourage and expand local R&D in universities, training centres, and workshops through which many jobs will be created.

19. Our 6th priority programme is to “Enhance the human capital of Nigerian youths for productivity and global competitiveness through investment in education and research, quality healthcare, and entrepreneurship education”. The World Bank’s Human Capital Development Index ranks Nigeria 168 out of 173 countries. To move Nigeria right to the top bracket of the index, we will pursue a Marshall plan-type programme on education that incorporates compulsory technical and vocational skills, sports, entrepreneurship, programming, and digital skills from the primary to the secondary level. In line with this commitment to transform our educational sector, we will prioritize the funding of this critical sector. Our tertiary institutions will be remodelled to serve as hubs or centres for research, development, and commercialisation of ideas for the quick industrialization of Nigeria.

20. Finally, our 7th priority is to “Conduct an afro-centric diplomacy that protects the rights of Nigerian citizens abroad and advances the economic interests of Nigerians and Nigerian businesses in a changing world”.

Conclusion

21. In concluding, let me say that the problem with Nigeria is at once complex and simple. It rests on leadership. As our erudite Professor Chinua Achebe stated, “The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership”. In Achebe’s view, there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. ‘The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of leading in the front by example which is the hallmarks of true leadership’.

22. When people of competence, character, commitment, and compassion take over leadership and pursue their mission and task with the seriousness required, a New Nigeria characterised by peace, unity, prosperity, inclusiveness will be achieved and sustained. That is what is driving Datti Baba-Ahmed and I to join and offer to lead this desire and crusade of Nigerians, particularly our youths, for an inclusive and sustainable Nigeria that works for all.

23. In line with my upbringing, especially my Mother's counsel, my promise is that Nigeria's resources will be most prudently used and as the Commander in Chief, I Peter Obi sincerely pledge that Our Pact with Nigeria will be diligently pursued to create a new Nigeria characterised by sustainable/inclusive growth and development.