

...a special signature edition

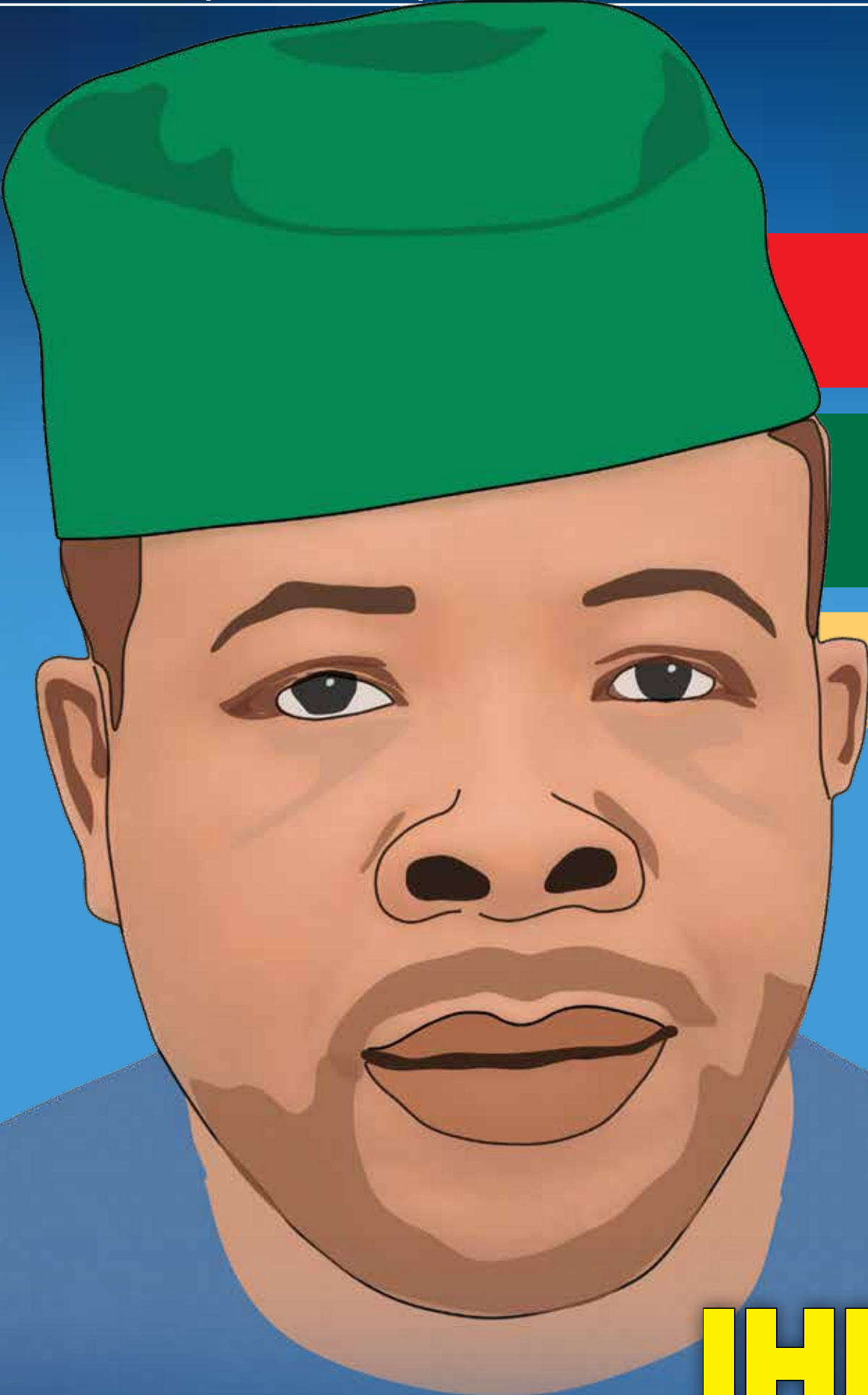
# OrderPaper TODAY

Citizens | Parliament | Democracy

ISSN: 2536-7455

VOL 1. NO. 5

MAY 29, 2019



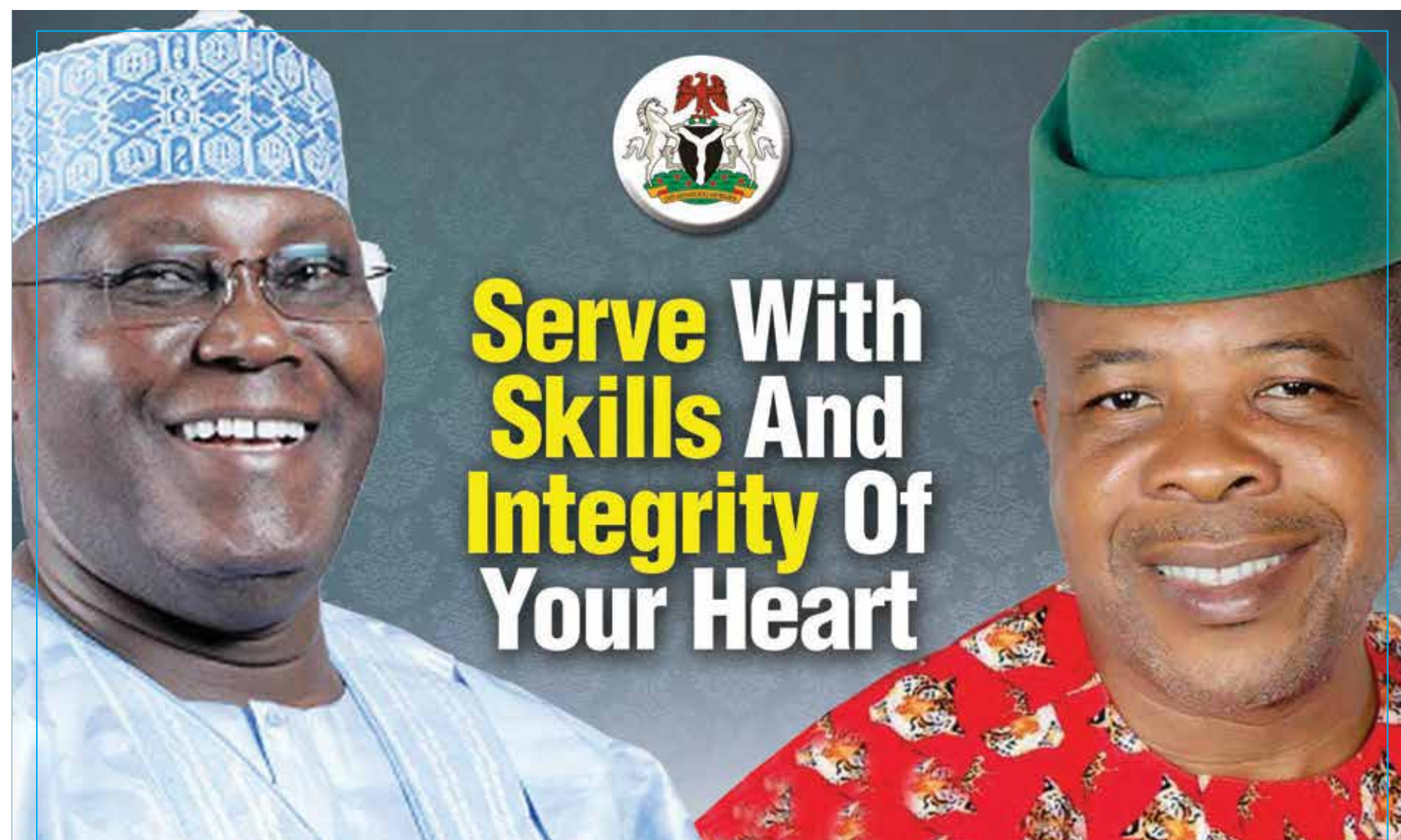
- Intimidating profile  
and performance track  
record of Imo governor

- Atiku, Secondus,  
Mark, others speak  
on new helmsman

- What Imo people  
should expect

# IHEDIOHA: THE RIGHT MAN FOR IMO AT A TIME AS THIS





Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, GCON

Rt. Hon Emeka Ihedioha, KSC, CON

Dear Rt. Hon Emeka Ihedioha, I am delighted to congratulate you once again on your victory at the polls and excited to felicitate with you as you are inaugurated today as the Executive Governor of Imo State.

First, hearty congratulations on your well-deserved election victory which saw you triumph over several other candidates who like you, also wish to govern Imo State. It is a mark of your doggedness, political tenacity and outstanding political agenda for your state and people that eventually enabled you to emerge victorious as Governor of Imo State. Aside your sterling qualities and your tutelage in politics under the PDP political family, it is also right to say that fortune smiled on you as it pleased the creator to lift you above the crowd and make you a Governor at this time.

Imo State, like our beloved country, Nigeria has come a long way in the quest of good leadership that will engender and spread development to its entire people who have had a rough ride for a long time. The people of Imo State and indeed all Nigerians, who wish our country well, expect your tenure to be a turning point in the affairs of the State and in its quest for development and progress.

I am confidently of the view that the positive elements which came together and chose you as Governor of Imo State at this time made a good decision, because of the initial steps you have taken and the agenda you have unfolded. I am sure more lofty policies and programmes for the development and re-positioning of the State will yet come from your stable as time goes on. Meanwhile, Congratulations and best wishes for all that you are set to do.

I remember vividly, the close relationship we shared as members of our party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a party founded on the ideals of nationalism and a united Nigeria. You are also aware, how over time difficult times have fallen on our party and the present efforts made to revitalize the party and right the wrongs of the past. It is gratifying that in the last national elections, our people responded well to the come-back bid of our great party, giving us votes even in places where we did not expect a positive result.

The implication of the above is that elected PDP Governors, like your humble self are beacons of light from whom much are expected. To a large extent, you and other elected PDP governors and lawmakers would be under the radar of the party and the people for good performance and good governance, which have eluded the country for a long time. As expected, if a good chunk of the people of Imo State can be lifted from poverty and destitution under your stewardship, then to a large extent, the purpose of your ascendancy to leadership at this time would have been fulfilled. And if across the country, all Governors are able to put smiles on the faces of a reasonable number of their people, and then Nigeria would be better for it.

That you are elected Governor at this time is a huge call to duty. In fact, it is a 'divine matching order', as Imo State and other States in Nigeria are under the gloom of insecurity of various types which has culminated in making life short and brutish

and a huge nightmare to our innocent citizens. As Governor, you will be expected in collaboration with your colleagues and the Federal Government to put heads together and deal with this endemic security challenge in our country and give opportunity of a better life to our countrymen and women.

In my view, your agenda is a good one and if diligently pursued will yield the desired result. For instance, one of the ways to nail the problem of insecurity, aside a good security strategy and the deployment of men and resources, is economic progress and empowerment. Thus the moves you have already made in the search of investors and in reaching out to the Imo State Diaspora for the same purpose is commendable and shows that you are acutely aware of the security problems that can be caused by hunger, poverty and unemployment. As you know, combating the above three evils has been the focus of my politics and philanthropy over the years.

The task before you would not be made easier by some people who in their minds may feel that they would have made better Governors. There would also be detractors with their distractions, whose stock in trade would be to sabotage and derail the good works or plans of the man at the helm of affairs. However, you would be a step ahead of these people if you make the people and their needs the focus of your administration, making sure that they are carried along by way of adequate information and a feedback mechanism.

The position of governor of Imo State is that of enormous responsibility and a political burden: your people will look up to you for direction, give them a sense of belonging and serve with humility and integrity of heart. Your people are enterprising, strong, competent and talented, put these to the service of the state and Nigeria without favour or ill-will.

In the last twenty years, you have been within the corridors of politics and governance at various levels of our democratic process. Certainly, you have learnt a lot. Practise your good lessons in governance and by so doing, you will be living up to your commitment and the expectations of your people.

As I said earlier in this message, I am thrilled writing these words to you as I recall with pride how we started and how close we are.

Your Excellency, as I wish you a successful tenure, I also urge you to let your people see your good work, for by so doing living up to the true meaning of the traditional title, I learnt your people gave you as the 'Ome Nke Ahuru Anya' of Imo State. I will continue to support you and pray the Almighty God guides and protects you as governor and beyond.

**Atiku Abubakar, GCON**  
Waziri Adamawa  
VICE PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA, 1999-2007



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

When the idea to make this special edition in honour of His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, CON, was mooted, the editorial team immediately swung into an exultant mood. The event of his election and swearing in as governor of Imo State is seen as a validation of our modest contribution at *OrderPaper* to promote the legislature and project public-spirited legislators in positive light.

For 12 years, the green cap man bestrode the hallowed green chamber of the National Assembly with an assertive sense of vision, dogged mission and a bouquet of enviable accomplishments that make some of his contemporaries green with envy. Emeka Ihedioha came to the federal legislature; he saw; and conquered many opportunities that not only made him a toast of his constituency but a darling brand of Imo, nay, national politics. This edition is therefore dedicated to celebrate him and highlight his uncommon political trajectory as inspiration to those who look to serve and are currently serving in public office.

Ihedioha's story is that of capacity, competence and integrity in politics. It is no mean feat to swim the murky waters of Nigerian politics for about two decades without blemish. Indeed, Imo State is blessed to have him as governor. But he must not take for granted the immense goodwill and confidence of the people which brought into the realm. He must serve with humility and be guided by the pursuit of excellence in spite of the challenge of governance deficit left behind by the immediate past administration in the State. This is one message that runs as a common thread through the specially curated stories, interviews and several goodwill messages contained in this edition.

For full effect, our reporters went in search of those who have related with Ihedioha for long and secured some of the scoops served in the following pages for your delight. But we know that Ihedioha's chronicle in the legislature and politics generally cannot be enwrapped in a single edition. Therefore, we have elected to continue to tell the story of a legislative icon from the past into the present and going into the future so *Ndi Imo* can continue to appreciate the quality of leader they have chosen for themselves. As consistent with the mandate of *OrderPaper*, this venture would be biased in favour of executive-legislative relations in Imo State.

On behalf of my team, I thank friends, associates and aides of His Excellency for the efforts offered to put this edition together. Specifically, I am grateful to Olusegun Adeniyi, Chairman of *ThisDay* editorial board; and long-time friend and ally of the Governor, for providing editorial oversight. The creative team of Andrew Peter, *UDavidson* and Nnakwe Ugochukwu deserve special thanks for the uncommon designs while the reportorial team is also not left out. In all, we count it a thing of honour to make available this special memento edition in celebration of Emeka Ihedioha, the brand new governor of Imo State.

**Oke Epia**  
Executive Director/Publisher,  
*OrderPaper Nigeria*  
May 29, 2019

## OrderPaper Celebrates a Legislative Beacon



Many have passed through the National Assembly but only a few left indelible footprints.

You do not only belong to this few but have also set out to etch your name in gold in the executive branch of government.

Your Excellency, we know you will make the legislature proud. And we are happy to record your strides of good governance in the Eastern Heartland.

Congratulations on your inauguration as Governor of Imo State today, May 29, 2019.

May God Almighty guide you right always.

Signed:  
**Ofordile Tony-Okeke**  
for Management



# Ihedioha will make PDP true shining light in governance of Imo —Secondus



Secondus

Prince Uche Secondus is the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He is a very experienced and dogged politician whose tentacles straddle the length and breadth of Nigeria, overseeing the large-scale network of the party in every nook and cranny of the country. In this interview, he speaks of the newly elected governor of Imo State in glowing terms and expresses confidence that Imo people are set to enjoy excellent governance under Emeka Ihedioha. Excerpts by MAJEED BAKARE:

*How do you describe Emeka Ihedioha in terms of his political ascendancy?*

Governor- Elect Emeka Ihedioha is one of the rising stars that give hope to the country that the future still holds some promise. I have followed his politics closely as a friend and an associate and I have every confidence that he would do well in his new challenges. He has pragmatic approach to politics that I believe will take him far. His network is perhaps the biggest asset in his bag as I hope he would tap on them greatly. Even though young, Hon. Ihedioha is tested and exposed in his politics and these factors will come handy as he takes the mantle of leadership of his state.

*Do you think he will be impeded in fulfilling his campaign promises?*

I don't think so because he approaches politics with some sincerity. Those who face problem with their campaign promises are those who fake and make impossible promises just to win votes. Emeka is not that type. He is a good tailor who cuts his cloths to size and to his pocket.

*What are your expectations of his government in 100 days, one year and two years respectively?*

In 100 days I expect him to have retrieved Imo state from the confusion of the last 8 years and begin to focus it for the needed direction. There is a lot of clearing to do so even his first one year would still be channeled to restoring



Ihedioha

Imo.

*What would be your advice to him?*

Emeka is my friend and brother we share much about abuse of power and I know he would adhere to our philosophy. Power is like marriage, if you bring God into your marriage you will have peace and record successes, the same here, if Emeka remains focused on God in prayer for direction, everything good will fall in and I strongly believe he will.

*How would the PDP help Ihedioha succeed as governor?*

Of course, the party is there for him; PDP is number one adviser to all our elected leaders, particularly state governors. We watch over them, we monitor them closely and come in where necessary. You notice that in the last four years only PDP governors performed; only in PDP states that projects were being commissioned. In eight years of APC in Imo state, President Muhammadu Buhari was never invited to commission any project, the only state they had in the south-east region. Under PDP Ndi Imo will experience

project commissioning by God's grace.

*Do you think the APC being the ruling party at the centre and opposition in Imo will present significant challenge to Ihedioha in government?*

I don't envisage any APC challenge because the party has been an aberration in the state. The people of Imo have always been PDP even when APC was hibernating in government house. The enthusiasm that greeted PDP's victory shows clearly the mood of the people just liberated from bondage. With PDP, Imo is returning to the true tenets of democracy, government of the people for the people and by the people.

*What is the expectation of the party for Ihedioha as governor of Imo State?*

PDP's expectation of Hon Ihedioha as Governor of Imo is simple: deliver democracy dividends to the people in such a manner that the people of Imo state will experience the difference between light and darkness. My plea is for the people of Imo to give him all the needed cooperation he requires to succeed.



Onyewuchi



Governor Ihedioha

# Ihedioha will provide real jobs for Imo people —Senator-elect

Hon. Ezenwa Onyewuchi is the senator-elect for Owerri zone. He won the elections after serving two terms in the House of Representatives. In this interview, he speaks of how the PDP managed to secure victory in the governorship election against the APC/AA combined and expresses high optimism that the governor-elect, Emeka Ihedioha, will do very well in office. Excerpts by LIZZY CHIRKPI:

*How did the PDP pull off the upset against the incumbent governor Rochas Okorocha and his protégé in the AA?*

Let me state it: it was not an upset- Imo is a PDP state. A few things happened in the past and PDP 'lost' elections, but if you look at it, even when we did not produce the governor, we had most of the seats at the National Assembly level, so that shows you that PDP is on ground in Imo state. And in this election, if you are aware and abreast of the happenings in Imo, you will also see that the PDP worked very hard; the PDP put its house in order. The bane of PDP in the past elections have been internal bickering, lack of internal democracy, but this time, we conducted the most transparent primary ever, not only in Imo, but across the country, so, those who lost out in the primary knew that that was the will of our party members, and as such, some of them keyed in; most of them keyed in and supported the winners of the primaries. And in the build up to the election, PDP worked very hard, the other political parties in Imo, I never saw them on the field, I never met anyone on my way to the campaigns, and on my way back. I only met PDP candidates; the other candidates were waiting for the writing of results and federal might to win elections but we kept talking to our people (and) they understood the PDP message, and voted for PDP at all levels. The message is good governance; we preached the message of a new Imo, a new Nigeria. They also could see people they can trust, it a trust issue. When you look at people who ran elections in PDP, you will see that these

are people that can be trusted, according to their antecedents and performance. If you look at the people we fielded, they are people that have done well in their previous assignments, as you know, the reward for good work, is more work: that is what happened.

*Aside from trust, what is the plan for the people of Imo state?*

Let me say this: the outgoing government of Rochas Okorocha as you can see and observe did not do well in Imo- this election is a vote of no confidence on Rochas Okorocha because Okorochas was the man that actually contested the election, not Uche Nwosu. Now, this is a government that has no respect for the Imo people; this is a government that was based on deceit; this is a government that never paid salary as at when due; that never reckoned with the dignity of labour, no infrastructure was put in place, the few roads he built got washed away after a few months, so what kind of government is that? So it's a case of resisting the emergence of the governor's preferred candidate, Uche Nwosu. And at the same time, PDP also produced the best candidate, in the person of Ihedioha. Ihedioha was the most prepared candidate and the most experienced of all the governorship candidates; he is the only one the people can trust, so the issue is about trust, and the people did not look back on the choice of Emeka Ihedioha. And we can see that he won massively, especially in Owerri Zone; I think he won 101 wards out of the 104 wards, so that is a huge endorsement, and

a huge vote of confidence by his senatorial zone and based on that he moved into Orlu Zone and he was able to win a few local governments in Orlu, and if you put that together, that is massive, and today, he is the governor-elect of Imo state.

*Describe the man Ihedioha?*

Ihedioha is very well brought up. When you look at the way he has carried himself, you can attribute it to his upbringing, properly brought up, and went to school, you know that school has a way of taming you, and he is a man that is focused, he is hard working, and he is honest to a large extent, has sincerity of purpose, and very well driven. And if you work with him, you will also know that he is a man that has capacity, capacity to win and capacity to deliver. And he is a man I do not think he will go into deceiving the people, he lives modest life style, and I know he will not be into accumulation of wealth. And I am sure he will use Imo money to develop Imo.

*The name Ihedioha resonates with legislature, how do you now foresee the transition to the executive?*

If you recall, Ihedioha started from the executive, he was special assistant to the former vice President, Atiku Ababakar who is the presidential candidate of the PDP so he also has the benefit of executive experience. If you put together the executive and the legislative experience, there is no doubt that he will do remarkably in all assignments. I worked with him when he was deputy speaker: a cerebral leader, a committed leader, a trust worthy leader, and a reliable leader, and I have no doubt that there would be a new paradigm in Imo, and the people will be better for it.

*What advice would you offer the governor-elect?*

Okorocha came in through popular support but fretted everything away; he

lost the goodwill he came in with. I will advise Ihedioha to be mindful of those pitfalls and also to do the right thing and do the needful and remain who he is and to ensure that he discharges creditably as the governor of Imo state. I have no doubt in my mind that he will do credibly well.

*There are reports that the outgoing governor is making recruitments into the civil service, how do you envisage this will be resolved in the incoming administration?*

It's very unfortunate that the outgoing governor is setting landmines for the incoming governor. A man who never recruited people into the civil service, all of a sudden he is recruiting people at the twilight of his administration. It smacks of insincerity; an attempt to ensure that the governor that is coming after him does not succeed but I can assure you that the matter will be handled by Ihedioha, we will look at the processes of the recruitment, where he has not followed due process, the law will take its cause. Ihedioha will provide jobs for the people of Imo, the teeming youths of Imo, but when due process was not followed, I'm sure the civil service rule has a means of addressing such anomalies. I'm sure that at the right time, the new government will provide jobs for the population. Imo has a vibrant work force, a vibrant population, and the governor will come up with ingenious ways of creating job for the army of unemployed youths in Imo.

*Given the enormous challenges in Imo, how could Ihedioha play significant role in the affairs of PDP or would he just focus on Imo?*

Ihedioha is a politician and as somebody who emerged through a political party, he has a duty and a responsibility to ensure the survival of that political party that got him into the position which he occupies. I do not foresee a situation where he will ignore the party that got him into power. The party remains the party and government remains government, and from time to time they will complement each other, but the business of the party should be separated from business of government. Ihedioha is in a position to understand what he needs to do, give respect to the party and rule the government.



# HEARTY *Felicitations*



**Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha KSC, CON**

I heartily felicitate with my dear brother, colleague and friend, **His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, CON**, on your assumption of office as Governor of Imo State.

Your ascension to the governorship of Imo State at a time like this is divine and auspicious. I am confident that you will deliver remarkable good governance to the people.

Congratulations and I pray God Almighty to guide your steps always.

**Rt. Hon. Ali Ahmad,**  
*Speaker, Kwara State House of Assembly (2015 to 2019)*



# Ihedioha will be a blessing to Imo —Nwawuba

Hon. Henry Nwawuba is the member representing Mbaitoli/Ikeduru federal constituency in the House of Representatives and a staunch ally of the newly elected governor of Imo State. In this interview conducted ahead of the swearing-in of Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, he speaks of the leadership trait and expectations of the new helmsman. Excerpts by **LIZZY CHIRKPI**:

*As someone who has worked closely with Emeka Ihedioha, how would you describe the man?*

In exactly three weeks and five days from now Imo State will be witnessing a dawn of a new era, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha would be sworn in as next executive governor of Imo State. He has had a catch phrase as far as I know him: his word is his bond. That's the best description of Emeka Ihedioha because he is apt and everything is embodied in that catch phrase. A man that when he has agreement he keeps to that agreement with high sense of responsibility. I think he's really going to be a blessing for Ndi-Imo.

*How would you describe his leadership style?*

Since I have known his Excellency, Emeka Ihedioha, I have noted that he runs an inclusive style of leadership. He consults even to a fault where everybody is given a sense of belonging. He is very strategic, forward and involved in long term plans. He is a man that runs a marathon not hundred meters. He would always make everyone that comes around him politically feel like they have something to offer.

Politically, I think he's a guru because despite all the kind of politics that was played in the National Assembly yet his Excellency Ihedioha still came up on top. While in the House, he chaired one of the grade 'A' committee- Marine Transport committee and from there he became Whip of the House and then leadership came up. He always plays politics with all sense of understanding. Since 1999 Emeka Ihedioha has never done anything else outside politics. He does not even own a company name so has devoted all his time to politics and it has played out for him.

*How well do you think his political*

*background will bear on the governance of Imo state?*

I always think that before people go into governance (in the executive) they should have taste of the legislature. The governor-elect coming from the background of a legislator; I think Ndi-Imo should expect rule of law under his administration. We can also expect a vibrant and thriving state legislature under him and we can also expect a vibrant local government system with constituted councils. If you look at Ihedioha's political career, you will agree with me that everything has been preparing him for a position like this over time. Recall that in 2015 Imolites voted for him en-mass but he was robbed and this time around God has answered the prayers of Ndi-Imo. I think all of these would build up to how he is going to be relating with the people.

*Do you think he'd have some difficulties delivering on his campaign promises?*

If you took a snap shot of when governor Rochas Okorocha took over Imo and a take snap shot now that Ihedioha is about to take over, you would realise that we are inheriting a lot of baggage and the terrain is going to be rough. He might not be able to deliver all of his campaign promises but you can be sure he is going to turn the ship around. Don't also forget that since his declaration there have been in this positive vibes going on in the State. He has started looking the way of foreign investment in the State; he has also made moves on dialogue. He has reached out to the Commonwealth of Nations and as I speak with you now, he is also in Germany exposing the potentials of our State and of course the East in general. However, speaking on his campaign promises, I think he said he was going to carry out some reforms of the local government system. If he can deliver on two or three of his core campaign promises then there would be a trickle-down effect. There is going to be a period of reconstruction in our civil service because it has been decimated. A lot of persons have been owed pension and other allowances. Looking at the pedigree of Ndi-Imo that are assembled in the transition committee, you will agree with me that we are headed in the right direction. Though as a word of caution, you know that a ship on the high sea does not make a complete



Nwawuba



Ihedioha

return except the captain with experience uses 180 degree to take it back to the right course.

*You seem to know so much about what his plans for Imo State are; is he already consulting with stakeholders like you?*

Everybody that turns to know his Excellency, the governor- in-waiting would know that he likes to consult in everything that he wants to do. He dialogues a lot and he is always available for advice and all of that. I have had the privilege of working with him closely throughout this 2019 campaign and I know his manifesto. I have also been with him at several fora and he is always passionate about discussing the challenges of the State. We have to close the infrastructure gap in Imo; I believe that working in close relationship with members of the national assembly would close all these infrastructural gaps. It is also important that we have federal government presence in our State, if not for anything, our schools, roads and hospitals and other critical basic human development infrastructures. You would agree with me that Ihedioha is highly experienced and connected.

*What do you expect of his government in 100days; one year; and two years?*

Yes, four years is not a long time but in the next 100 days the people of Imo needs to know what is on ground. In the next 100 days Imo needs to know what he has inherited. What we have financially and otherwise. We need to know how bad it is. In the next 100 days or one year we should seek people that would build a team. We have to start looking at those campaign promises whether he has met our expectations. We also need to increase our ideas but getting round pegs in round holes. We have a very large informal sector and we need to look into that too so that we can harness the potentials that are lying fallow. His Excellency needs to clean up the State by also tackling the issue of abandoned projects. If he can only come up with clean and green initiative while embarking on construction of roads in rainy season in the state so that would it would not affect motorists plying those roads. Most importantly, if only Ihedioha can expose the rot in the system so that the people can know what

has been going on in the last eight years.

*Without any strings attached and in a very objective sense what advice would you give to him going forward?*

The governor must be careful in terms of carrying excess baggage because victory brings a lot of relatives. When we were working a lot of people sat down on the fence and some worked against the system underground but today everybody is coming out to say they contributed one thing or the other. Let him be careful about that otherwise like you said four years is a very short time. Let him be concerned with building bridges and bringing the people on board. The governor needs to find a way to get people to queue into where he is going and we the people need to be patient with him. Above all he needs to be weary of extra baggage and where he is going so that he would not be distracted along the way.

*And how do you think stakeholders like yourself in the national assembly can help him succeed?*

I'm already serving in the national assembly and by the grace of God I would be chairman of a very good committee and of course I would partner with the agencies under it to attract development to my State. I will also work in tandem with my colleagues to see how we can develop a State or regional agenda. There's no reason why we cannot bring in agency of government by way of interventions through the budgetary provision every year to make sure that we have a hand shake with the State government by assisting in some of those critical areas that need our attention. For instance, a road that is very critical in the State, there's no way we can't bring in an agency of government to construct such a road. In fact, we are all partners in progress in making sure that the State is carried forward.

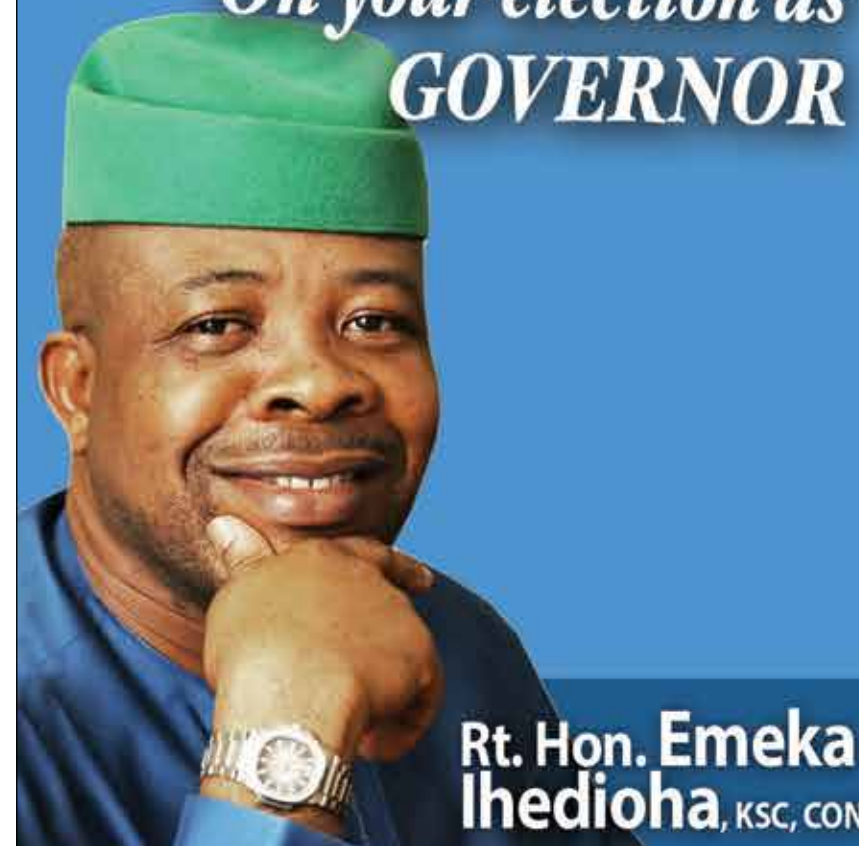
*If you are to domicile your zonal intervention fund in a particular project in another constituency in your State will you be willing?*

Absolutely, there's nothing wrong in synergizing to make sure that we achieve a common purpose. We would definitely want to work with our governor to ensure that we aggregate our zonal intervention fund into one piece of critical infrastructure.



**Rt. Hon. (Barr) Samson Raphael Osagie** (FCIA)  
LL.B (Hons) B.L. LL.M, MPA, M.Sc.  
Former Minority Whip, House of Representatives (2007-2015)  
National Assembly

## Felicitations On your election as GOVERNOR



**Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, KSC, CON**

The news of your victory at the recently conducted gubernatorial election in Imo State was received by me with excitement.

For me, it underscores your tenacity, consistency and God's unfailing commitment to his desire for you to serve the people of Imo State in the capacity as Governor.

Having worked closely with you in the House of Representatives, in the 6th and 7th Assembly, although not many will easily appreciate your impeccable leadership skills, but I can unequivocally say that you deserve your election as Governor.

Consequently, while congratulating you on this auspicious moment of your inauguration as the Governor of Imo State of Nigeria, I believe Imolites, regardless of political differences will accord you the necessary support to affect their lives in the most profound manner.

Your elections has inspired in me and many of our colleagues' great deal of hope and inspiration as we individually navigate the murky waters of the Nigerian political landscape.

Let me assure you that I shall continue to pray and support you in any way possible to ensure your success as Governor.

Once again, congratulations and do accept the assurance of my family's esteemed regards.

*Yours Sincerely*  
*Samson R. Osagie*  
15/05/19

**Rt. Hon. Samson R. Osagie (fsm, fcia)**



House 81, 4th Avenue, Citec Villas, Gwarinpa Estate, Abuja.  
Tel: +234(0) 803 081 4530. E-mail: samsonraphaelosagie@yahoo.com

## Interview

# Ihedioha's word is his bond -Ekeh

Hon. Bede Ekeh is the member representing Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala federal constituency in the House of Representatives. In this interview, he speaks of the capacity and preparedness of Emeka Ihedioha, the new governor of Imo State, to deliver good governance. Excerpts by LIZZY CHIRKPI.



Ekeh

**How would you describe the governor-elect in person of Emeka Ihedioha in one sentence?**

Of course as you well know I succeeded him and he represented us for 12 years. He is someone I know very well and I'm happy that such a person is coming into Imo at this critical time. However, in one sentence, I would like to say 'he is a very straight forward man, his word is his bond'.

**This is the first time an Mbiase person would emerge as governor of Imo State, how do you feel about it?**

It is not about Mbiase here; it is about the people of Ndi-Imo; common, we are not trying to be clannish here. Yes the governor-elect is from Aboh Mbiase but he is the governor of Imo people. However, there's nothing wrong that when you win an election your people would be happy, your family members would be happy and also your friends. I must say we are very elated by this win and even me personally I'm so grateful for the people of Imo for what they have done. And I believe the people of Imo have not made a mistake because Ihedioha would make us proud.

**Do you believe in him fulfilling his campaign promises?**

I said it earlier, his word is his bond. I know Emeka Ihedioha is not God but I believe in everything he tells people because if he tells you anything you can go to the bank with it. Anything he says whether you are there or not believe it.

**What are your expectations of his government?**

As you well know Imo has a lot of challenges but like I said we can trust him and I believe in the knowledge and wisdom God has given to him. Though, the roads are terribly bad especially internal roads within Owerri city. There are also some substandard roads constructed by this outgoing administration so I expect that things should be done expressly to salvage the situation. We also have high expectations in the area of education, health and other sectors but let's focus on rebuilding the internal roads for free flow of traffic. I think there's need for him to move quickly and renovate some primary schools because sometimes you see pupils learning under trees. When we see these things on Facebook it touches us. The primary health centres must be revived.

**Do you see him having challenges in delivering on his campaign promises?**

Oh yes, the challenges are so enormous because nothing is working in Imo as far as Bede Ekeh is concerned. So nothing is really working so these challenges are there. Just imagine a situation where a state administrator comes out to



Ihedioha

tell the world I'm not owing anyone and just the other day Zenith Bank comes out to say, you are owing us N10 billion. So he doesn't even know the enormity of the challenges until he gets in there.

**How do you think he can overcome all these challenges?**

Well, Ihedioha would have to think outside the box, we are not saying it would be rosy but God would be with him.

**Do you see him working with other political parties both the main opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC)?**

Yes, look at his transition committee; it is made up of people from different political parties. I can tell you he is already collapsing all political parties and that is why people are complaining. Though, I believe he is going to engage technocrats irrespective of political affiliations.

**How can you lawmakers from Imo State assist his government to succeed?**

If we have the opportunity why not? We tried it with the outgoing administration but it never worked so we can still try same with him. Rt Honourable Emeka Ihedioha is prepared and he has all the contacts. He has the strength across the divide. We all come from different constituencies and these constituents are Imo people so if we are in alliance, we see any project that can be attracted all we need do is to sit with him and tell him there's an opening here and we need you to find a way so that our people can benefit. It is just to come together and agree viola and it will be done. However, good enough he is a legislator and once a legislator is always a legislator.

**Would you want to domicile you zonal intervention funds in a particular project in a particular constituency?**

That would be very nice because I remember while he was here as the Chief Whip of the House of Representatives he sponsored the Owerri/Elele road which was not even under his constituency and it was done and today that road is beneficial to almost everybody that plies the road. What he did then was to get the Imo caucus in the House to agree and approval was given and today everyone is enjoying the road and not only people from Imo.

**What advice would you like to give to the governor?**

I would say to whom much is given much is expected. The people of Imo came out en masse in the last election to vote for him. People were offered money but they looked the other way and voted him out of love and trust so he should reciprocate same by remaining focused.

# Happy Felicitations!



**Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha KSC, CON**

Your heroic journey to liberate Imo is now officially on course.

As you assume the mantle of leadership as Governor of Imo State today, I pray God Almighty to guide your steps, imbue you with wisdom and bless your efforts to make Imo great again.

I believe your administration will no doubt make the State fiscally healthy and look forward to enactment of a Fiscal Responsibility Commission as a milestone achievement during your tenure.

Congratulations Your Excellency sir!

**Chief (Barr) Victor Muruako, Esq**  
Acting Chairman,  
Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC)





# Ihedioha is well prepared to govern Imo State —Ekwunife



Ekwunife



Imo State Governor, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, receiving his Certificate of Return from INEC officials in Abuja

Sen. Uche Ekwunife (Iyom) is a long-time associate of Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha. She served with him in the House of Representatives before her election to the Senate in the 8th and 9th assemblies respectively. In this interview, she speaks of his leadership capacity and urges Imolites to support the governor to take Imo to greater heights. Excerpts by TITILOPE FADARE:

*Describe Emeka Ihedioha man in one sentence?*

Emeka Ihedioha is a kind and compassionate man who derives pleasure from the service of his people and nation building.

*How would you describe his leadership style and objectives?*

He has an inclusive style of Leadership which strives to harness and bring out the best in everyone, regardless of their political affiliations, for the ultimate achievement of a common goal. He is also result-oriented person. He has a very high and commendable political acumen and a political net-worth which reflects his widespread acceptance across political divides.

*How well do you think his political background will bear on the governance of Imo state?*

I believe his very rich and impressive political background will definitely bear positively on his governance of Imo State. He will bring his wealth of experience in public office to bear in ensuring that Imolites, under his administration, get the best possible governance. I have no doubt in my mind that he will do very well as the Executive Governor of Imo State.

*Do you think he'll have some difficulties delivering on his campaign promises?*

I do not think he will have any difficulties delivering on his campaign

promises. His positive track record as the Deputy Speaker House of Representative of Nigeria will go a long way in ensuring purposeful leadership for his people. He has a good head start by securing the overwhelming mandate of the people in the election. I trust he can leverage on this situation to build a very healthy working relationships with the other organs of government within the state. It is always advisable to anticipate and expect the usual bureaucratic bottlenecks that may delay the pace of delivering on the campaign promises. But I believe with his rich experience in governance, he would have no difficulty navigating through these bottlenecks.

*What do you expect of his government in 100days; one year; and two years?*

Well, that depends on his administration's priorities, in line with their evaluation of the specific needs of the people of Imo State. However, having said that, I expect in the next 100days to two years, that

the people of Imo State would be able to point to tangible physical and operational changes in the governance of their State. I expect to see very positive and progressive changes in Imo State within the first 100days of the administration of His Excellency Governor Emeka Ihedioha.

*Without any strings attached and in a very objective sense what advice would you give to him going forward?*

The advice I would give to him going forward is to build upon those personality and character traits that have enabled him achieve such commendable success in both his personal and political life. To always continue to prioritize the interests and welfare of the good people of Imo State who voted him into power. And to endeavor to harness the best and most qualified people to assist him in the governance of the State, without regards to their political affiliations. And finally of course, I would advise him to trust and rely on God's direction in his day to day activities.

## The man Ihedioha and how he will make Imo great again

BY OPARA BASIL NDUBUISI

His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, CON, is a man with diplomatic mentality. I have known him for many years. He is someone who will prefer to teach you how to fish rather than give you fish. He is a mentor.

In terms of his political activities, he is in-charge at any point in time being very coordinated and visionary.

I believe he will set a new pace in state governance across the country. As chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Marine Transport, he made noticeable impacts by sponsoring 8 bills some of which eventually became laws. As Chief Whip, he was great; as Deputy Speaker wonderful!

He sponsored the bill that led to the establishment in 2007 and kick off in 2009 of the Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (CRFFN). The Council has



Opara



Ihedioha

created employment both directly and indirectly. It has supported the enhancement or improve of the custom import duty collection because freight forwarding have been professionalised and integrity inputed in practitioners. On infrastructure, the Council can boast of 6 zonal offices and more than 20 outpost offices at port (sea & air)

and the land stations across the country. The Council is a participant to the TSA which adds to the GDP. Finally, with the dynamism in the maritime sub-sector, another agency could be created from this through raising another bill as the case may be.

As governor of Imo State, I do not anticipate any challenge for him in governance because he is a born 'go-getter' and will start well and finish well by the grace of God. Progressively there will be a difference in governance during his tenure because that is why he is "Ome nke ahuru anya."

He also recorded several constituency intervention projects including a jetty at Okpala, dredging of Oguta-Egbema inland waterways corridor, and many others too numerous to mention.

Opara is Director, Regulation and Enforcement and former Acting Registrar/CEO, Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (CRFFN)

# Congratulations!



Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha KSC, CON

With extreme joy in my heart and gratitude to Almighty God, I use this medium to express joy with my bosom friend, dear brother and political associate of many years standing, **His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, KSC, CON,** as he mounts the saddle of leadership in Imo State. Your swearing-in as Governor today, is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our sight. I believe in your capacity and destiny to perform beyond expectations of the people of Imo and beyond.

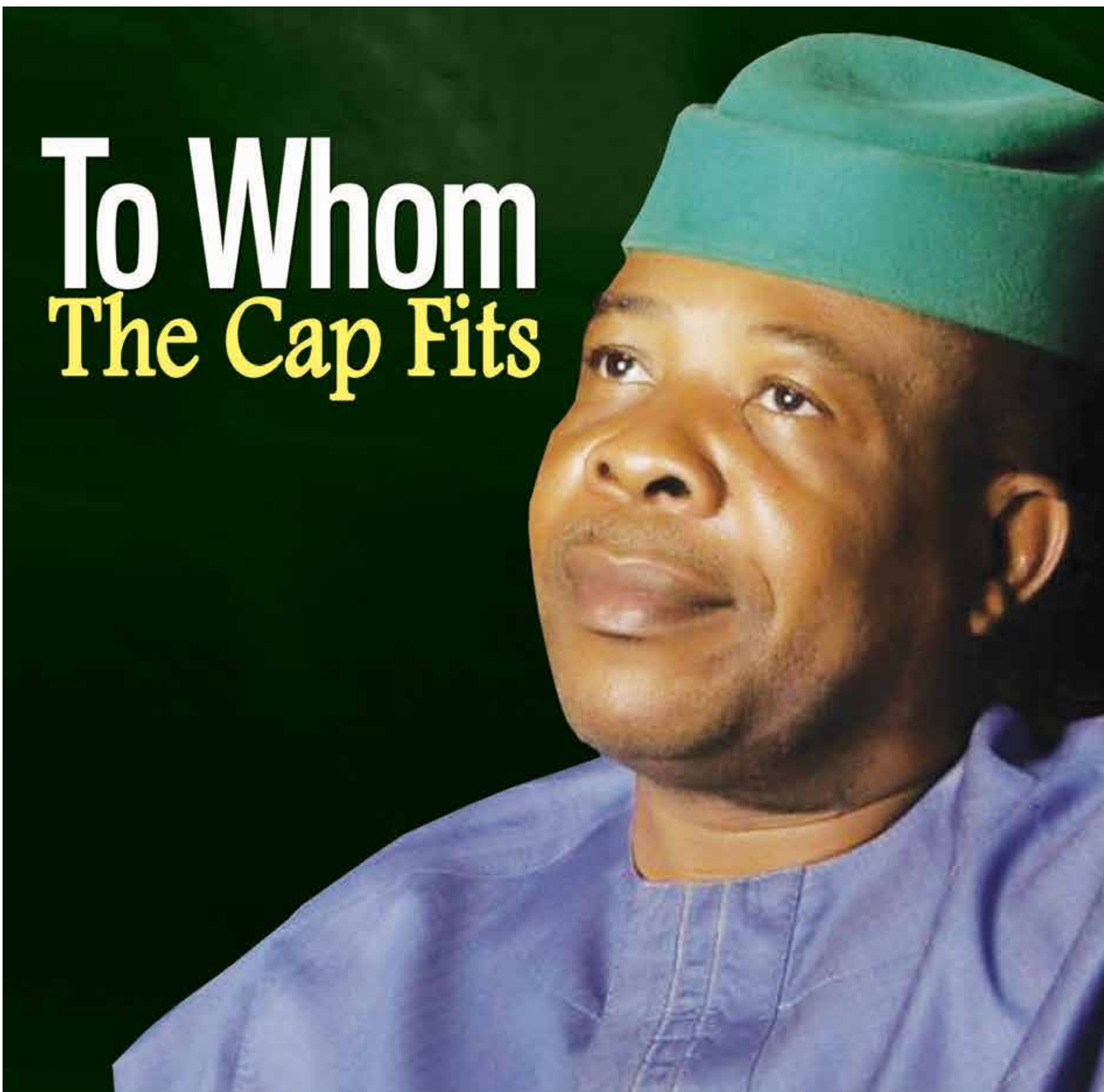
*Congratulations Sir!*



Hon. Ndudi Elumelu  
Member, House of Representatives



# To Whom The Cap Fits



On behalf of the good people of  
**MBAITOLU/IKEDURU FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY**,  
I am most delighted to congratulate  
His Excellency, Rt. Hon.  
**Emeka Ihedioha**, KSC, CON  
on his swearing-in as Governor of Imo State.

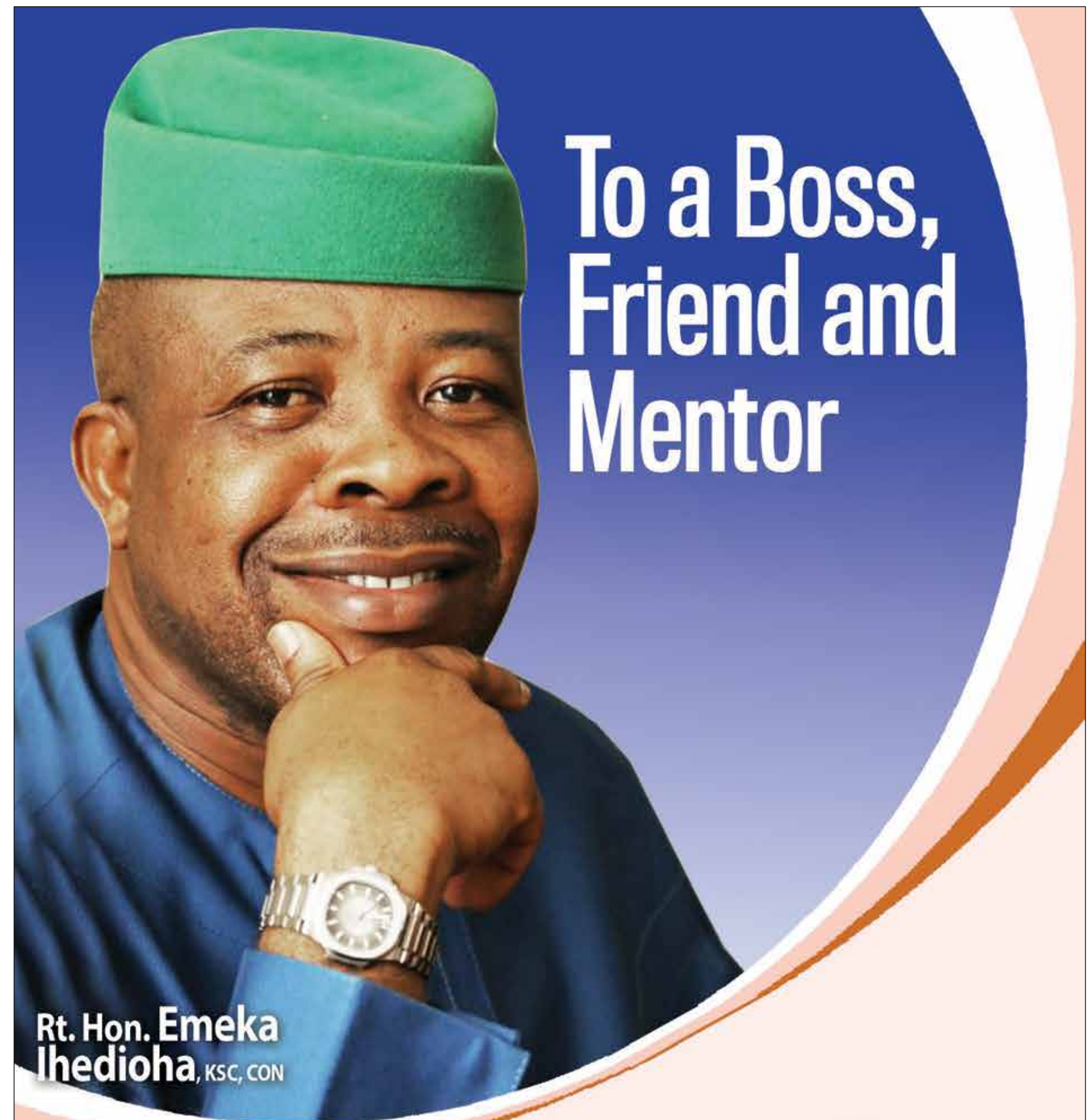
Indeed, our dear state will not only be rebuilt but  
will ascend its rightful place as first among equals  
in the comity of states in Nigeria.

*Signed:*

**Hon. Henry Nwawuba**,  
Member, House of Representatives



# To a Boss, Friend and Mentor



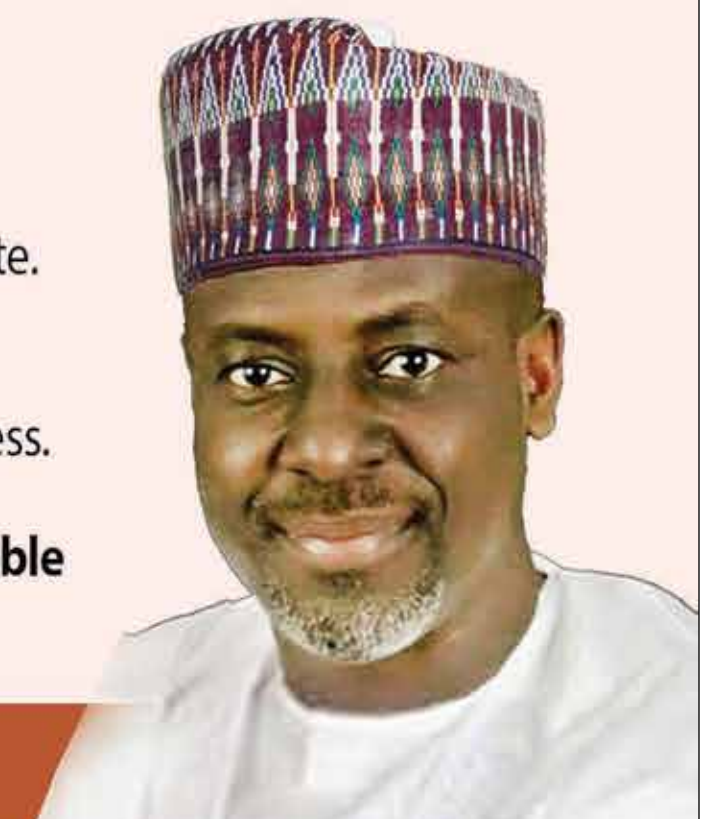
**Rt. Hon. Emeka  
Ihedioha**, KSC, CON

I am most delighted to congratulate you on the  
occasion of your swearing-in as Governor of Imo State.

You are obviously the best man for the job.  
Imo will, no doubt, witness a leap forward to greatness.

Hearty felicitations Your Excellency, the **Rt. Honourable  
Emeka Ihedioha**, CON.

**Hon. Sani Kutigi**







# Ihedioha: Rise of a legislative icon from National Assembly to Imo Govt House

BY DAMILOLA ADENIRAN

**O**rderPaperToday – For many politicians, getting into the Senate or House of Representatives would be the peak of their careers and perhaps the highlight of a lifetime. In a country with an estimated population of 190 million people, only 469 persons (0.00026%) make it to the National Assembly every four years.

However, within this elite group, a select (or elected) few manage to accomplish the feat of graduating from the National Assembly to elected executive positions as examples of successful leadership recruitment. Former Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Emeka Ihedioha, has just joined this graduate class following his victory at the Imo State governorship poll held on March 9 and subsequent swearing-in as governor of Imo State on May 29, 2019.

## Who is Emeka Ihedioha?

Emeka Ihedioha was born in 1965 and hails from Mbutu, Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. He began his primary education at Town School, Mbutu in Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State, completed same at SDA Primary School, Abule Oja, Yaba Lagos in 1976. He then moved on to St. Ephraim's Secondary School, Owerri in present day Abia State for his secondary education, rounding off his academic sojourn in Nigeria with a Bachelor of Science (B. Sc.) degree in Food Technology from the University of Lagos. This was in 1988. He has also since taken courses at Stanford University and Harvard University, respectively, both in the United States of America as well as Oxford University Business School, London School of Economics and the University of British Columbia, Canada.

## Sojourn to the National Assembly

Ihedioha's first taste of the National Assembly came in 1992 when he emerged as Press Officer to the then President of the Senate, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu. Within three months of this appointment, he was promoted to the position of Chief Press Secretary to the Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Albert Legogie, now late.

Following the truncation of democracy by the military in 1993, Ihedioha returned to his public communications practice as Chief Executive Officer of First Page Communications. In 1995, he became Director of Publicity of the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) which later metamorphosed into the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) alongside four other organizations.

Following the return to democratic rule in 1999, Ihedioha again found relevance. First, he was appointed Special Assistant to the Presidential Adviser on Utilities (July 1999); Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the President of Senate (November 1999); and eventually Special Assistant on Political Matters to the Vice President (September 2001). It was from this last assignment in the Office of Vice President Atiku Abubakar that he contested election and won a seat into the House of Representatives as Member representing Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala Federal Constituency of Imo State in 2003 under the platform of the PDP.

## 12 years of sterling legislative achievements:

During his spell at the House of Representatives from 2003 to 2015, Ihedioha recorded tremendous achievements in his legislative duties in Abuja and in enhancing the fortunes of his constituency back home.

**First International Maritime Summit:** Ihedioha was the Chairman of the House Committee on Marine Transport between 2003 and 2007. In April, 2004, he convened the first International Maritime Summit, in Abuja, an event that brought together for the very first time to the shores of Nigeria, international and local resource persons in the maritime sector. Among the dignitaries that attended the summit were the then Vice President of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar, then Secretary General of IMO, late Admiral Mike Akhigbe and Obi of Onitsha among

several personalities. The Summit provided a veritable opportunity to chart the much-needed road-map for the advancement of the sector that had suffered due to lack of statutory support.

**Adherence to International Conventions:** Ihedioha led the way in ensuring that Nigeria complied with International Maritime Organization (IMO) Conventions and that these conventions became part of our Municipal Laws, through their domestication. These laws include:

- The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (Ratification and Enforcement) Act 2004
- The United Nations Convention on Carriage of Goods by Sea (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, 2005
- The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (Ratification and Enforcement) Act 2005
- The International Convention on the Civil Liabilities for Oil Pollution Damage (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, 2006
- International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for the Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1979 as amended (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, 2006
- International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code

Under his watch, two key legislations which reformed the maritime industry to allow for increased participation of Nigerians were passed. The legislations are: the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Act, 2007 and the Merchant Shipping Act, 2005. It is worthy to add that he also personally sponsored and facilitated the passage into law of the bill that established the Council for Regulation of Freight Forwarding (CRFFN) in Nigeria. It must be satisfying to him to see what NIMASA has become as a vibrant and important agency of government today.

**Chief whip of the House:** Following a brief stint as the first Chairman, House Committee on Cooperation and Integration Ihedioha was later elected Chief Whip of the House. He held that position from 2007 – 2011.

In his capacity as Chief Whip, Ihedioha served as Chairman of various Ad-Hoc Committees of the House, including Chairman, Ad-hoc Committee on Constituency Projects (2007-2008); Chairman, Ad-Hoc Committee on the Celebration of Ten Years of Unhindered Legislative Practice in Nigeria (1999-2009); Chairman, Ad-hoc Committee on Process and Procedure for Obtaining Local and Foreign Loans; and Chairman, Sub-Committee on the Review of Police Act.

**Tenure as Deputy Speaker:** On the 6th day of June, 2011 Ihedioha was elected unopposed as the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representative by his colleagues even though the PDP had zoned the position to a different region of the country. The principled stand of the House members was seen as an affirmation of implicit confidence in the leadership credentials of Ihedioha.

**Chairman House Ad-Hoc Committee on Constitution Review:** As Deputy Speaker, Ihedioha served as Chairman, House Ad-Hoc Committee on Legislative Agenda. However, it was his role as Chairman House Ad-Hoc Committee on Constitution Review

that really exemplified his sterling qualities. Under his leadership, the constitution amendment process progressed remarkably with new innovations to make it a bottom-up exercise that placed a premium on the wishes and aspirations of the people. The Committee and indeed, the House, made a landmark record of amending 71 Sections of the Constitution, which if adopted as part of Nigeria's Constitution would have represented the single largest amendment of any Nigerian Constitution in history. The highlight of the process was the highly acclaimed Peoples Public Sessions held all over the country on November 10, 2012. This was a landmark achievement as Nigerians in their various constituencies had an opportunity to express their views on how they should be governed.

**Constituency Projects:** Throughout his stay at the National Assembly, Emeka Ihedioha attracted and facilitated several infrastructure projects and development programmes to his immediate constituency, Imo State and the South East geo-political zone at large. These include interstate and intra city roads, power transmission/injection stations, vocational/training centres, healthcare facilities, schools, telecommunications, and so on.

It is to Ihedioha's credit that the federal government embarked on the dualization of the Owerri-Elele road (Imo-Rivers state) and the construction of the 59 km, Mbaise ring road as well as the Isinweke-Ihitte Uboma-Okigwe road just to mention a few.

In the area of capacity building, Ihedioha used personal and official contacts to facilitate the empowerment of several women and youths through skills acquisition, scholarship and trading support.

## International Engagements

As Deputy Speaker, Ihedioha was the Leader of Nigeria's parliamentary delegation to the Third Legislative Session of the ECOWAS Parliament (2011 – 2015). He also doubled as the Deputy Leader of the Nigerian delegation to the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) between 2011-2015.

In the 6th National Assembly, Ihedioha was at the head of several delegations of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to many Commonwealth nations in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, in his capacity as the President of the Nigeria chapter of

CPA. He was the Leader of the Nigerian Delegation to the 6th General Assembly of the International Parliamentary Association for Information Technology, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2008; Member, Executive Committee of the CPA, Africa Region; and Leader, Nigerian Delegation to the 41st CPA, Mpumulanga, South Africa.

## Honours & Recognitions:

Ihedioha holds the national honour of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON). He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Shipping and also received the Distinguished Service Award of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations. He was voted one of Nigeria's 50 Most Outstanding Legislators (1999-2009) and has also been conferred with the Fellowships of the Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology and Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC).

He also holds several traditional titles and is a Knight of the Order of St. Christopher of the Anglican Communion.

## Journey to Douglas House and hope for the People of Imo

Ihedioha first shot at Imo government House also known as Douglas was in 2015 when he lost in controversial circumstances to Rochas Okorocha.

Ihedioha returned to the ring in 2019 and emerged as Imo State governor-elect following his victory at the poll. He scored 273,404 votes to defeat 69 other candidates including Uche Nwosu of Action Alliance, son-in-law to Governor Okorocha who scored 190,364 votes.

Despite voting overwhelmingly for the former Deputy Speaker, it is not unexpected that some might harbour doubts over the ability of Ihedioha to wield the proverbial magic wand to restore Imo state to the path of prosperity after a chastening era of "iberiberism".

Nevertheless, if previous accomplishments, track record, integrity and leadership experience at the very highest level are anything to go by, Imolites can undoubtedly look forward to a new dawn under the stewardship of Emeka Ihedioha. As shown above, Ihedioha has excelled in every position he has held and looks set to leave an

enduring impact in what is arguably his highest "calling" yet.





# PROUD OF YOU EMEKA!



Our prayer for you is that your star  
shines brighter enough to light up Imo....  
We are confident that your administration  
will dismiss all doubts and fears about the  
future of the Eastern Heartland...

Congratulations our dear friend,  
**His Excellency, Rt. Emeka Ihedioha, CON**  
as you assume the office of Governor, Imo State.

Olusegun Adeniyi | Ijeoma Nwogwugwu | Dan Akpovwa | Paul Ibe  
Sam Omatseye | Paul Mumeh | Richard Mammah | Eric Osagie

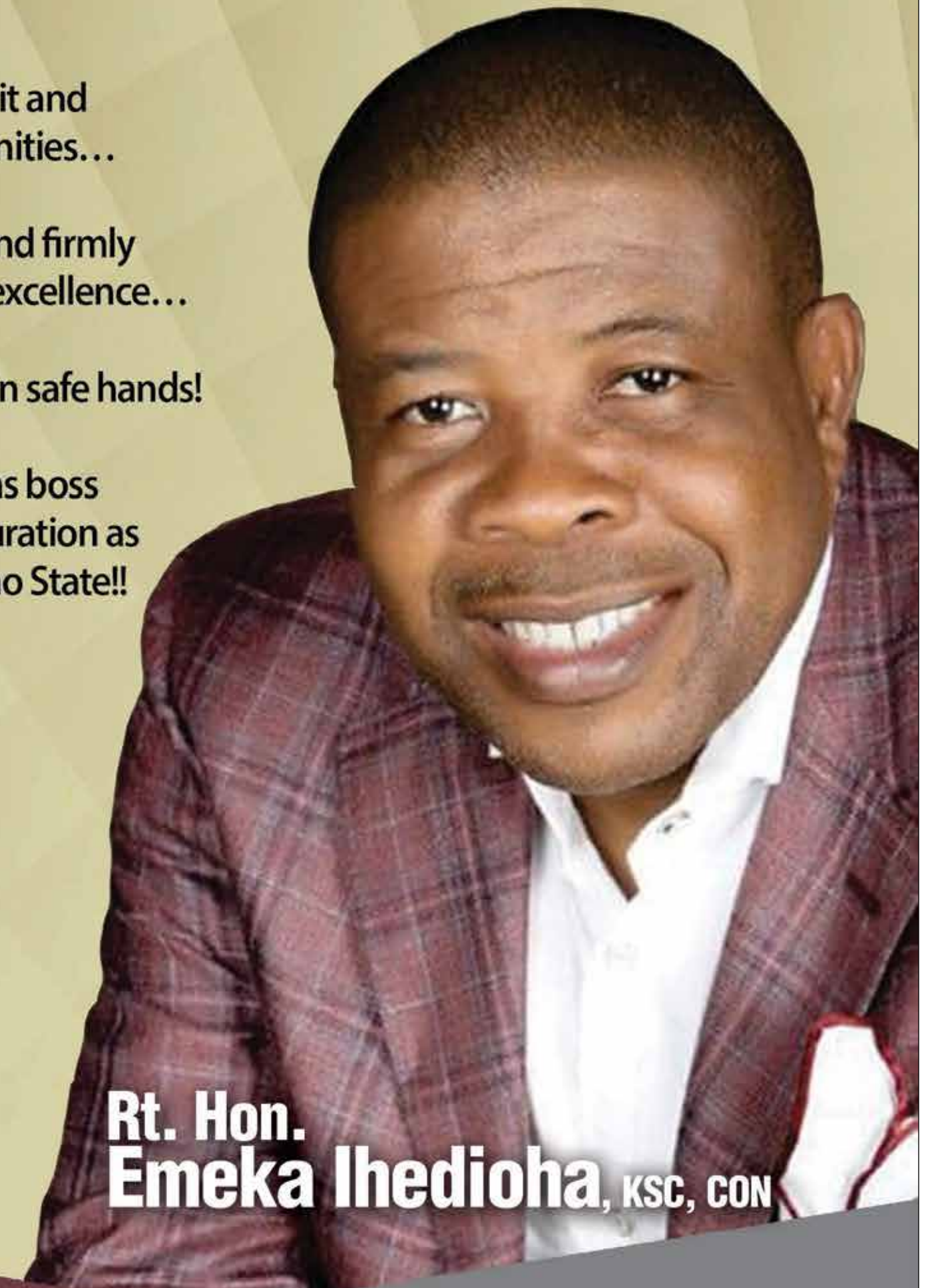
# A staunch Democrat...

Believer in merit and  
equal opportunities...

Detribalized and firmly  
committed to excellence...

Imo is indeed, in safe hands!

Congratulations boss  
on your inauguration as  
Governor of Imo State!!



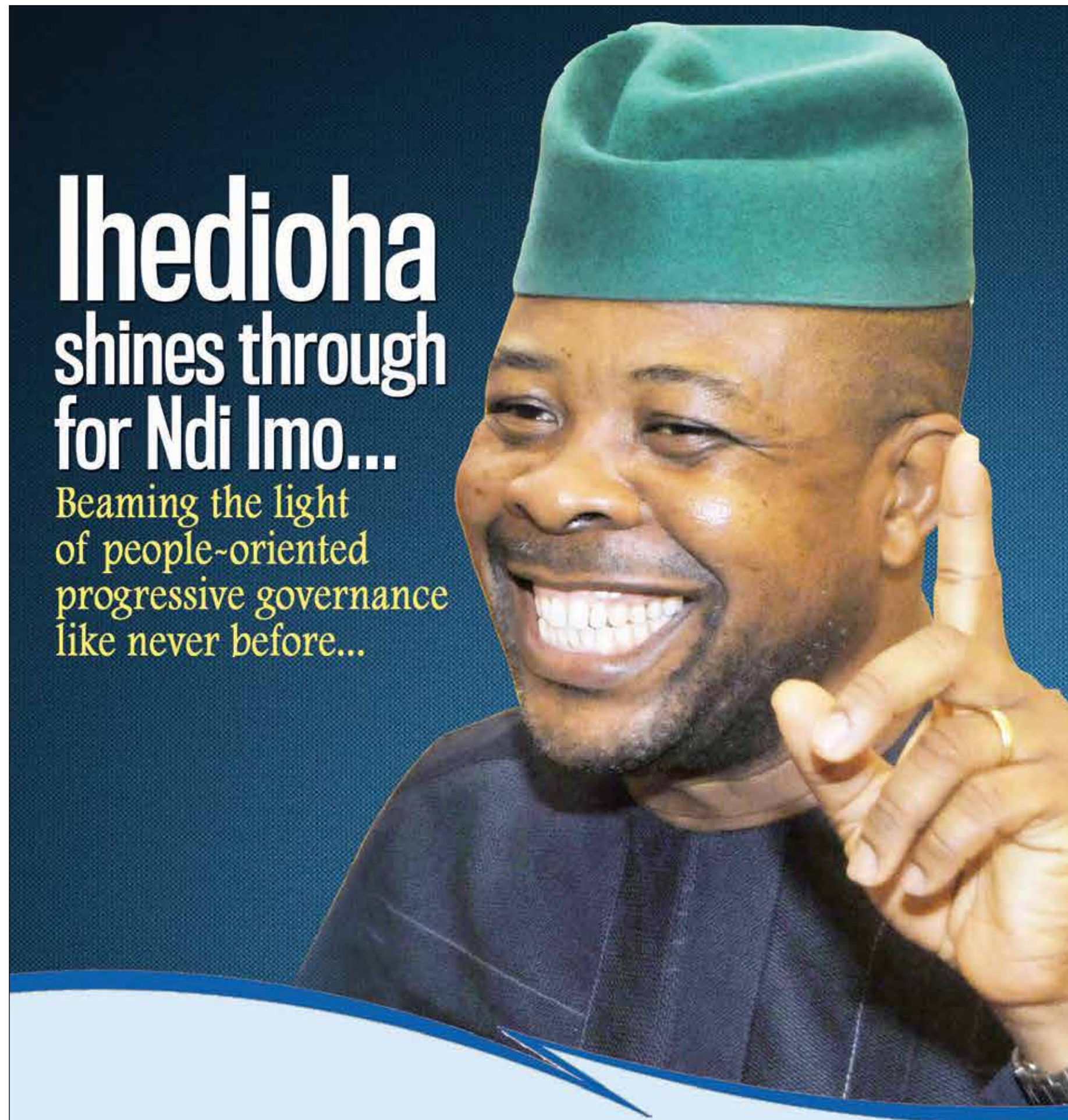
**Rt. Hon.  
Emeka Ihedioha, KSC, CON**

John Oru Etta, KSJI | Ghali Ma'aji Abdulhameed | Ahmed Gwadabe | Oke Epia



# Ihedioha shines through for Ndi Imo...

Beaming the light of people-oriented progressive governance like never before...



On behalf of the good people of **Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala federal constituency**, I whole-heartedly congratulate our son and brother, **His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, KSC, CON**, on his historic inauguration as Governor of Imo State.

*Signed:*

**Hon. Bede Ekeh,**  
*Member, House of Representatives*

# Meet Gerald Irona, Imo State Deputy Governor

BY WALTER DURU

**R**t. Hon. Engr. Alphonsus Gerald Irona, a Chemical Engineer by training, was born to the family of Irona, Okorua of Umuoyata village, Oguta and Nwayiafor Irona (nne) Uneanya, on August 1st, 1966.

As a young man of promise caught out for greatness, Hon. Irona Alphonsus Gerald ventured into politics and during his early years in politics, was elected a two-term Councilor representing Oguta Ward A in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Later in 1998, he became the youngest State Secretary of the All Peoples Party (APP), which later became all Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).

In 1999, Hon. Irona contested and won a seat in the Imo State House of Assembly to represent Oguta State Constituency. During the period, he was Chairman of the House Committee on Petroleum, Environment and Energy; a position he used to conceptualize, initiate and midwife the first ever Memorandum of Understanding between Oil Companies operating in Imo State and their host Communities, notable among which were: the Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and Oguta/Etekwuru Communities; Chevron Oil Company Izombe/Rumuekuneke communities, Addax Petroleum Limited and Izombe/Ezi-Orsu communities.

Hon. Irona, as a result of his robust contributions in the state legislature (Imo State House of Assembly) was appointed member, Presidential Committee on Verification of Oil Wells in the Niger Delta, where he made enormous and spectacular contributions to the process of the identification, demarcation and return of ceded Oil Wells in Egbema and Oguta Oil fields back to Imo State.

He was also one of the pioneer vanguards for the establishment of the 13% Oil Derivation, which later metamorphosed into Imo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ISOPADEC). He also led the struggle for the inclusion of Imo State as member state of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

In the later part of 2003, Hon. Irona was appointed Chairman, Transition Committee of Oguta LGA. He later made history as the first Executive Chairman in Oguta LGA to be elected un-opposed between 2004 and 2007. During the period, Hon. Irona brought life into governance of Oguta Local Government Council through his people-oriented programmes. He systematically changed the way the local government was run by making a shift from the existing bureaucratic red-tapism to a vibrant entrepreneurial administration that empowered and developed the entire Oguta LGA.



Irona

Erudite, versatile, intelligent and knowledge-driven, Hon. Irona, in 2011 contested and won election to represent Oguta/Ohaji Egbema/Oru West Federal Constituency in the Hallowed Chambers of the House of Representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Soon after the inauguration and proclamation of the 7th National Assembly on June 6, 2011, Hon. Irona, no doubt, as a result of his charisma, experience, humility, exposure, courage and contact was privileged to be selected by the leadership of the House of Representatives to be a member and the sole representative of the entire South East Geopolitical Zone comprising of Imo, Ebonyi, Abia, Enugu and Anambra States, in the very important and sensitive

SELECTION COMMITTEE. This Committee was saddled with the responsibility of dividing the entire House membership into different committees to oversight the different ministries, departments, agencies (MDAs) and activities of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He was also the Deputy Chairman, House Committee on Gas Resources, as well as a member of other strategic Committees like Power, NDDC, Petroleum Upstream, Local content, Sports, Privatization and Commercialization, Housing and Habitat in the 7th National Assembly.

More so, following the initial withdrawal of fuel subsidy by the Federal Government, there was a nationwide strike that almost

paralyzed the socio-economic and political activities of Nigeria. The House of Representatives rose to the occasion and set up an 8-man Ad Hoc committee to investigate the fuel subsidy payment. Hon. Irona's integrity and outstanding qualities also won him membership of this committee whose activities were topical and dominant discourse in Nigeria. It is heart-warming to note that Hon. Irona executed his duty in this committee with good sense of responsibility and as a man of proven integrity, was not involved in alleged bribery scandals that involved the leadership of the committee.

## MOTIONS SPONSORED

Hon. Alphonsus Gerald Irona, no doubt, proved his legislative imprints, though a first timer, with several people-oriented motions. He also co-sponsored numerous other motions, such as:

- Motion of urgent national importance on the need for Federal Government's Intervention on devastation of Ohaji/Egbema/Oguta/Oru West communities by flood disaster of 2012
- Shell Livewire Nig. Ltd. Programme aimed at empowering the Youths of Oil Producing Areas in Nigeria but regrettably excluded Oil producing areas in Ohaji/Egbema-Oguta Oru West Federal Constituency and Ukwia in Abia State. The Motion which received unanimous consent and approval by members of the Federal House was meant to correct the anomaly in the exclusion of Imo and Abia States.
- Motion in respect of Minimum Wage, aimed at ensuring the various state governments do not renege on the minimum wage agreed with Labour Organization in Nigeria.
- Motion on the need to halt incessant selling of Federal Government's assets by multinational Oil companies.
- Motion on incessant killing of human beings and wanton destruction of property by rival cult groups at Obiakpu Egbema in Ohaji/Egbema-Oguta-Oru West Federal Constituency.

Etc. All these motions received express approvals by members of the Federal House and were referred to appropriate committees for action

Hon. Irona focused on the most pressing problems of the federal constituency and has a robust scorecard. He is a Christian of Roman Catholic faith and married with children.

Irona is a brilliant, transparent and visionary leader. With him as Deputy Governor, Chief Emeka Ihedioha is sure of a dependable ally that shares in his vision.

Imo is indeed liberated.



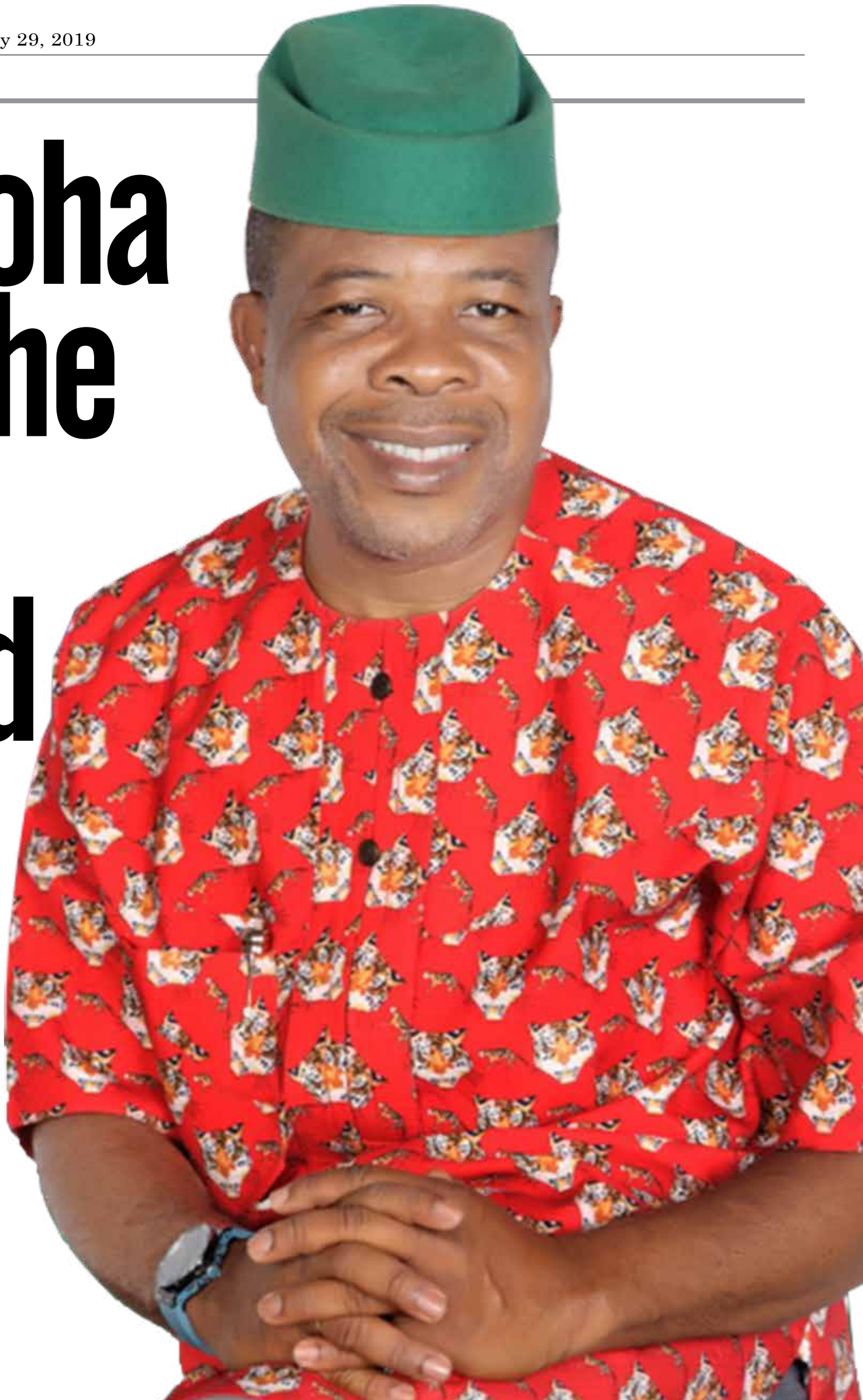
# Ihedioha and the Task Ahead

BY OLUSEGUN ADENIYI

After eight years of 'Iberiberism', a meaningless term which nonetheless could be interpreted as in-your-face cronyism and total disregard for process and the rule of law, the people of Imo State expect a new lease of life beginning from today as Hon Emeka Ihedioha takes over from Chief Rochas Okorocha as their Governor. For Ihedioha, the public expectation is huge even with all the landmines that have been laid by his predecessor. But he also has a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the people of a state that has been badly governed.

Governor Ihedioha, as he becomes today, has set out an ambitious agenda for revamping several critical sectors with the mission to "rebuild, reposition and transform Imo state into a modern ecosystem for agriculture, education, health, industry, tourism, sports, entertainment, human capital development, science and technology; thereby creating an enabling environment for sustainable economic growth and quality life for our people". He will need all the help and resources he can get to accomplish that task. Fortunately, he has in Hon. Irona Alphonsus Gerald a deputy who is both brilliant and cool-headed and will compliment him in the task of repositioning Imo State for peace and prosperity.

The immediate challenge is dealing with the legacy of Okorocha. Last week, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) revealed how Okorocha fiddled with part of the N8 billion Paris Club Refund from the federal government to assist in the payment of workers' salaries in Imo state. "Within two days, N700 million was withdrawn in cash; N200m on the



Ihedioha

first day and N500 million on the second day and all these monies were disbursed in a manner that was honestly unpalatable," said the EFCC's South East Zonal Office, Usman Imam, who disclosed further that Okorocha warehoused the money until the election period, apparently in a futile bid to install his son-in-law as successor.

I am sure that the new administration will find a lot more scandals in a state where the main preoccupation in recent years has been to erect monuments to waste and where everything revolved around one family. While

questions should be asked about how Okorocha abused power to feather private interest, Ihedioha and his team must also understand that looking back while running, as conventional wisdom teaches, can also be catastrophic. So, while I have no problem with interrogating the past, the main preoccupation should not be about what Okorocha did or did not do; it should be about changing the paradigm of governance in the state and creating new dynamics. The EFCC should be allowed to complete what it has started on making Okorocha

accountable for the money of Imo State he held in trust while Ihedioha's efforts are geared towards fulfilling his campaign promises.

On a final note, let me state that I have many friends in public offices across Nigeria, including in the position of governor. But there is none so close to me as Ihedioha and his wife, Ebere who is now the First Lady of Imo State. They are both good people saddled with enormous responsibility. I will be praying for their success.

Adeniyi is chairman of *THISDAY* editorial board

# Ihedioha will definitely rebuild Imo as promised during the campaign —Ogulewe

*Tell us about how the Ihedioha machinery pulled through the governorship campaign?*

We visited the 305 electoral wards in the state twice: once before the primary, and another after the primary. No other candidate did that: we were able to interact with ordinary people at the grassroots; we sat down with them in the town halls, in their villages, we discussed with them, we tried to find out what were their expectations, challenges, we were able to harvest their concerns about governance generally in the state, and gave them assurances, and they believed in us. And they deposited their votes, we did not play elite politics, the people themselves were the people who defended their votes, we did not pay anybody money to defend the votes. You can imagine that after the elections, people bused themselves to Owerri; we had over 6,000 people at the INEC's office, chanting songs, saying look, we must have our results, give us our results, the support we enjoyed from the ordinary people is unimaginable, if the result had gone the other way, Imo would have been caught in crisis.

*What was the message that connected with the people?*

The message was that: look, this is your own government, so already, there is concern that this government, the Okorocha government in the state, has performed very badly, the people were alienated, they only hear about government on the radio, it was not reaching them, infrastructures break down, the free education was in the realm of propaganda, workers were not paid as at when due, and when paid, they receive half salaries, pensioners were not receiving anything, and the people said, what kind of governance is this? Let us have a government that will listen to us, that can deliver on the promises; that can deliver democratic dividends, because Rochas came with so much hype and eventually he failed the people. People lost their lands; people lost their properties; Court judgments were disregarded; there was general discontent among Imo citizens and they felt that there must be a change, and they bought into our agenda that we need to retake our state back, and rebuild it.

*As a man that has worked closely with him, who is the man Ihedioha?*

He is a very honest person very action-driven, very focused, development-oriented, the man who would tell you this and do it....he is not a politician (in the strict sense of the word). I do tell him that he is not a politician because while politicians will promise you aircraft and not even give you a beetle (Volkswagen beetle), Emeka will tell you, I cannot give you an aircraft but I can give you a bicycle, and people believe him, that is Emeka for you, very honest person, very focused person, very articulate and very deliberate in action, very bold and fearless person.

*Beyond honesty, Ihedioha has spent a better party of his political career in the legislature. How is the transition going to be like in the executive?*

I do not think it's going to be a difficult one. While as a member of the National Assembly, he was first a principal officer

Dr. Sunny Ogulewe is an astute administrator and technocrat in politics. He has worked very closely with the Governor-elect of Imo State, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, for a decade and understands his idiosyncrasies and personality. He also played very vital roles in securing victory for the PDP in the last general elections in the state. In this interview, he assures that the newly crowned leader of the state will deliver democracy dividends to Ndi Imo. Excerpts by MAJEED BAKARE:



Ogulewe



Imo State Governor, Emeka Ihedioha

of the House, being the Chief Whip of the House, before becoming the deputy speaker, and in that positions, there are elements of executive powers, managing people, managing resources, managing conflicts, and I can tell you that the 6th and 7th Assemblies where he was the Chief Whip and Deputy Speaker respectively, those assemblies are still regarded as the best ever that has ever been produced till today. If you ask anybody now that who is the deputy speaker of the House, they would still believe that it is the man with the green cap, because, he glamourised the office; he really gave life to that office, in fact, his accomplishments as the deputy speaker of the House still resonates today. Remember he was the Chairman of the constitutional amendment committee and was able to drive the House to visit every constituency across the country to know their views about the constitutional amendment. Those views were collated and formed the part and parcel of the constitutional amendment proposal. So it (executive) is not a strange area for him. Besides, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha has this capacity to shop for people with capacity to help him do his job, is not enough to be a Chief executive, but you must have the capacity to shop for the people that will help you to do the job; you cannot do it alone, it is about the people

*What should Imo people expect in his first 100 days in office; what are the 3 key areas of impact?*

The first thing we discovered during campaign was the dearth of trust in governance; people no longer trust their leaders again because they have been told lies over and over again. The first step is to make the people believe in the new government, make them buy into the new agenda that this government is about them, we will make them believe us, trust us, when you do this, government becomes much more easier. What we discovered during the campaign is that our roads are in terrible situation, our access roads to the rural areas,

these are not issues you will carry out all at once, but there are critical access roads that we must address. If it rains today, the whole street will be flooded, there are several roads that when you open them up, it will ease traffic, the roads are already there, but they are in bad shape. We should be able to take care of small roads; we should be able to create access. Secondly, Rochas claimed he built 27 hospitals across the state which is a fallacy; what we saw during the campaign was block works, none of the 27 hospitals is functioning. Today Imo has no primary hospital that is functional, that is why you can hardly find a bed space at the Federal Medical Center Owerri. Our people are suffering, people die of minor diseases that could be solved by doctors, so one of the issues we must address is primary health care services, if we are able to get them working, people can have access, so that the burden on FMC could be less. So these are the three key areas that are important and we are going to address them. As it is, Rochas is busy creating problems for us, he is employing people into public service, last week he employed over 300 people in one of the agencies of government, and backdated it to 2016, giving command promotions, he wants to do that this week, he is trying to pull funds out of the state, from banks, under fictitious guise, put debt upon the incoming administration, we have the issue of labour issue, how do you reconcile that people who are just employed a month to the end of a government, will you sack them?

*What will you advise the government to do?*

It is a problem the government must find a way around; we must be transparent in what we are doing, we must give justice, but we must be transparent and deliberate, no government can succeed by leaning to sentiment, we must be deliberate, if the actions he has taken so far are legitimate, and backed by law, well and fine, but if they are

not backed by law, we must take deliberate steps, and legal steps, constitutional steps to address them. Imo is not a poor state; it is a potentially rich state if the resources available are properly harnessed and properly channeled our young men and women are very skilled; when you talk about unemployment, people are looking at government work, unemployment are of different types, an artisan can be unemployed if there are no constructions going on anywhere, he is unemployed, a carpenter can be unemployed if there are no jobs to do, a graduate can be unemployed if there are no government jobs to do. It is a general problem, but when you create an enabling environment for small businesses to thrive, unemployment will go down, under this administration, he (Okorocha) spent billions to import desks for primary school students from China, imported school uniforms from China, imported shoes from China, if he had given these contracts to our carpenters in Imo state, they will buy the wood from Benin, bring it to Owerri, they would employ extra hands to assist, the woman selling puff puff, people will patronize her, the women selling pour water, people will patronize her, the people who sell fuel, they will gain, because they will buy fuel into the generators to work, people who will load the desk inside buses will get engaged, the only thing our people got was offloading those items; he has denied our people employment and tax, because if you give somebody contract, he will pay tax, you imported these things at your own price, it was not competitive, the people were not given value for their money, if you give people contract, people will pay their dues, people will be engaged, revenue will be generated, several businesses have left Imo state because of insecurity, if there is security, people will bring their businesses; for instance, the poultry built by Mbakwe, if that poultry is functional, it will employ between 500-1000 people, outside other ancillary employment that will come out. Government should only employ a limited percentage of the people.

*How is Mr. Ihedioha going to handle these issues as they relate to rule of law and liaison with the legislature?*

I was privileged to be part of the meeting he held with the newly elected members of the state House of Assembly- PDP members, about 13 of them and he made it clear to them, he is a legislator up till now, it is an institution that made him what he is now, and that he is prepared to work with them, that he will respect the separation of powers, he will respect it, and he expects them to respect the principle of separation of power and he will do everything to encourage them, to do the right thing. And he will not fear to scold them when they do the wrong thing, at the same time, he is going to respect the autonomy of local government, he will encourage them to spend their funds within the bounds of the law. So he is going to respect separation of powers, that he will do, and he expects them to respect the same principle.





# Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria

Established by Act 16 of 2007



## Congratulations!



**Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha** KSC, CON

The Governing Council, Management and Staff of **Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (CRFFN)** felicitate with you on your resounding victory at the 2019 election as Governor-Elect of Imo State.

This honour is well deserved given your established pedigree in leadership and governance. We acknowledge your role in sponsoring the Bill that gave birth to the Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria during your time in the House of Representatives.

We pray that the Almighty God will continue to grant you knowledge and wisdom; guide and energize you for the work ahead.

Accept, Your Excellency, our hearty Congratulations.

**Barr. Samuel Nwankohu**  
Registrar/CEO

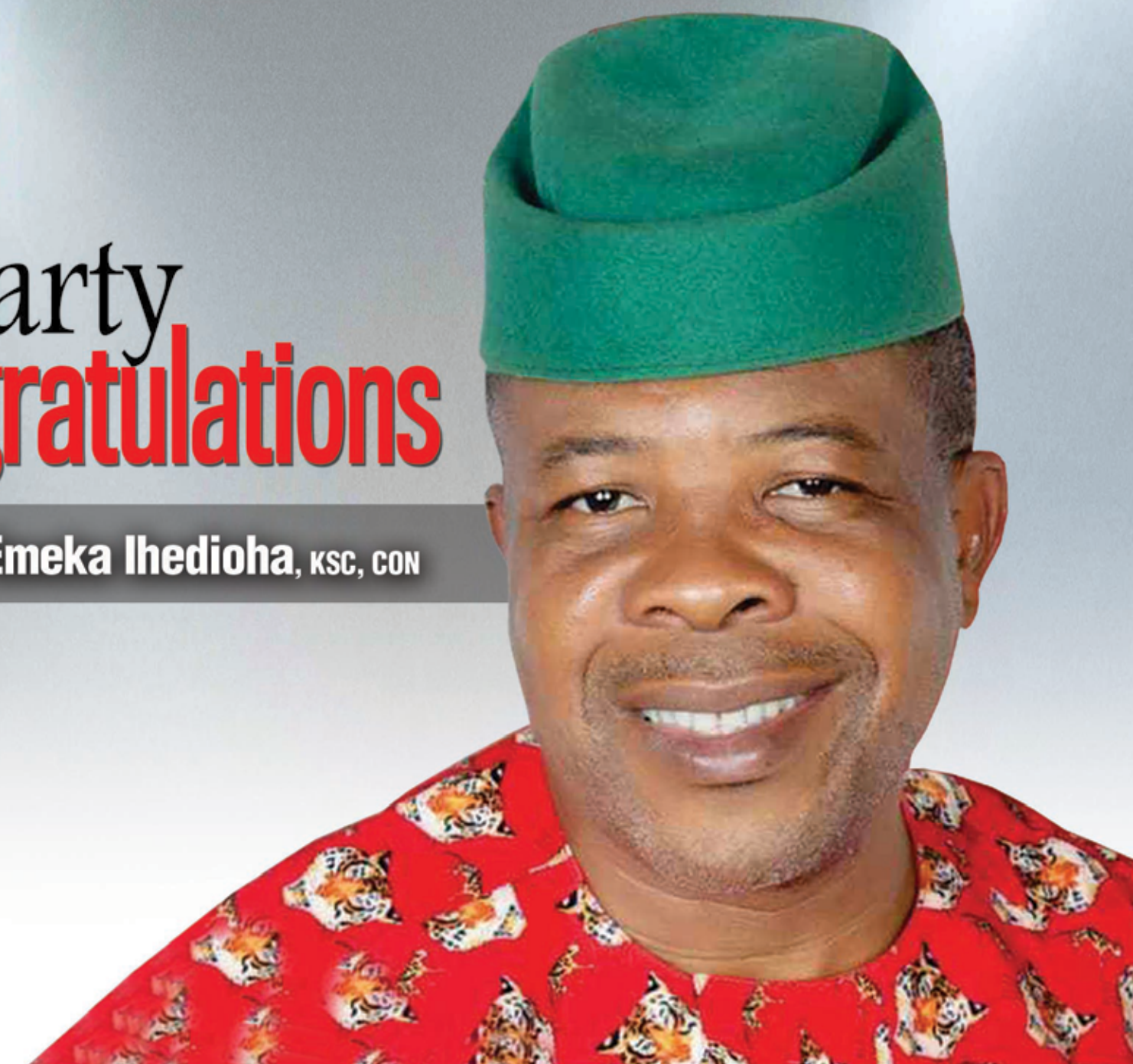
No. 1 Joseph Harden Street, Off Marina, Lagos, Nigeria  
[www.crffn.gov.ng](http://www.crffn.gov.ng)



Senator (Dr.) David A.B. Mark **GCON** *fnim*

## Hearty Congratulations

**Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, KSC, CON**



I heartily congratulate you on your hard won victory at the Imo State 2019 governorship election.

I am proud of your steadfastness and unwavering commitment towards the emancipation of Imo State.

Having known and worked closely with you over the years, I can attest without any fear of contradiction that you are a patriotic Nigerian committed to the ideals of nationhood. I have no doubt that you will work for Imo people and bring dividends of democracy to the doorstep of every citizen of the State.

I can only remind you that the journey you are about to begin requires that all hands must be on deck. You need the support and cooperation of all stakeholders in Imo State to succeed.

I therefore urge you to be magnanimous in victory and strive to bring all stakeholders on board. You will be writing your name in gold if all Imolites have a sense of belonging under your administration.

I am confident that you will bring your wealth of legislative experience to bear in the administration of the state.

Be assured of my constant prayers. I know you will succeed.

ONCE AGAIN, CONGRATULATIONS!

**Senator (Dr.) David A.B. Mark, GCON, Fnim, Fnipr,**  
President of the 6th and 7th Senate, Federal Republic of Nigeria.





May 29, 2019



- Waste and Revenue Leakages Hamper Development
- Stand Up for Fiscal Discipline
- Stand Up Against Corruption
- Support Government to Serve You Better

This message is by the  
**Fiscal Responsibility  
Commission (FRC).**



# Ihedioha: From the Green Chamber to Douglas House

**W**hen the Imo state electorate chose the Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha as their next governor, at the last election, it was a bold statement anchored on an informed judgement. Their action was a clear message that “leadership is a serious business that is sustained by trust and evaluated by its level of responsibility and responsiveness.”

That apparently was the verdict that ensured that the people openly rejected Uche Nwosu, the son in-law of the outgoing governor, Rochas Okorocha, who he had presented as his preferred candidate, on account of the perceived recklessness of the administration and its apparent disconnect from the people.

The election presented the needed platform for self examination in retrospect, for the people of the state, over the mandate they had given to the governor in the past. And in what could be likened to a referendum, they spoke in unison about the path they desire the state to travel, going forward, especially as they were obviously dissatisfied with how the affairs of the state was managed by Governor Okorocha, in the past eight years.

And their collective resolve was a nod for a new order. New vision. New direction, inspired by the belief that Imo state deserves better. And that with a more responsible leadership that would make the interest and wellbeing of the people the overriding priority of government, Imo would, in no distant time, regain its pride of place in the nation.

Urbane, savvy, articulate and astute, Ihedioha presents a fresh hope for this collective desire for fresh reinvention, reinvigoration and re-engineering of the creative energy of the state that would engender development, prosperity and progress in the state.

The choice of Ihedioha, the candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), therefore, was a consensus endorsement for quality leadership, doggedness, loyalty, creativity, and perseverance. It was a vote for a man whose aspiration came with years of strategic networking and preparedness for leadership. And given his well-known antecedent as a trust bearer, Ihedioha's fidelity to genuinely be of service to ndi Imo cannot be of any doubt.

The nod given to Ihedioha to pilot the affairs of the state, however, didn't come on a platter. He worked hard and



Ihedioha

triumphed over 60 formidable opponents from other political parties and persuasions, which included a former governor, former ranking senators, boardroom titans, businessmen and even the clergy.

Many commentators have, therefore, posited that all eyes would be on Ihedioha and Imo state, especially as the pre election controversies that engulfed the state and the controversial public image of his predecessor have combined to turn Imo into a state of interest in national political discourse.

Notably, Ihedioha is not unaware of this unpleasant narrative. He understands, through his training and practice as a veteran journalist, frontline legislator and former Deputy Speaker, House of the Representatives, that this mandate comes with big responsibilities and very high expectations.

Speaking recently during the inauguration of his transition committee, he promised to turn what he called the bad news of the state to a good story. Adding that he would be leveraging the experiences of many professionals who were indigenes of the state to change the “bad news of the state.”

In doing that he assured that his administration would consult widely and

work as a team as he disclosed that in the course of the campaign, “we promised good governance while stimulating development in all sectors and across all the zones of our dear state.”

And because of the urgency to turn around the fortunes of the state, the passion, apprehension and interest of many Imo indigenes to see that the pitfalls of the past were avoided, have become very palpable.

I think I am in agreement with one of such Imo sons, Obi Nwakanma, who had proposed in an open letter to Ihedioha thus: “I think that irrespective of what your technical committee provides for you, you already have some distinguished templates from which to design your programs. I think you must borrow and hybridize five playbooks – Azikiwe's “Eastern Nigerian Economic Development and Reconstruction plan, 1954-1964” which was fully implemented by Dr. Okpara, for its visionary impetus, the Ojukwu War Action plan authored by Dr. Pius Okigbo, which turned the East into a vast workshop, the Ukpabi Asika postwar Reconstruction program, with its bold economic and social initiatives, and the Imo state Economic Development plan of the Mbakwe administration. These plans, with a few contemporary tweaks, are still profoundly brilliant, far-reaching and relevant.”

It is imperative to note that any meaningful future programmes and projections could benefit from the values and wisdoms of history, as Nwakanma, has suggested. The late Dr. Sam Mbakwe, for instance, remains a positive reference point in administrative acumen, leadership and development foresight, in the recent history of Imo state.

In fact, it was documented that “At creation in 1976, Imo was completely bare and bereft of infrastructure, on account of the 1967 – 1970 Civil War, which affected most communities in the old Eastern Region. But with Mbakwe's election in 1979, in a period of four years, the state had outpaced even the older counterparts, including those that did not witness the war in terms of development. That deployment of energy and exhibition of committed leadership

in piloting the affairs of the state by Mbakwe, is still celebrated by the people, years after his demise. That has also formed the benchmark for assessing successive administrations in the state.”

Beyond fashioning a suitable economic template that take Imo state out of the woods, this is the time, Your Excellency, to deploy your leadership skills and talent to unite, mobilize and galvanize the good people of Imo state for the good of the state.

It is already a consensus among the people that Imo needs healing. There is an urgent need to rebuild trust among the people, for them to have faith in your leadership. This trust building must begin with consultations and listening to the people in order to appreciate their unique challenges, wishes and aspirations which will in turn guide the policy thrust of your government.

By carrying the people along, giving them sense of belonging and working for their common good, you will be strengthening their belief in democracy and its uplifting principles that make the people the bedrock of democratic practice.

Let fairness, justice and equity shape your leadership ethos. But I don't have any iota of doubt that you will make your people proud, as your time in the leadership of the House of Representatives have sufficiently prepared you for the task ahead, the same way it prepared your good friend, Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, former Speaker of the House, in taking Sokoto state to a path of sustainable development.

So, my dear brother, boss and former colleague, I urge you to roll up your sleeve, and get to work, because the task ahead, going forward, calls for total commitment, focus, courage and dynamism, that will have no room for distractions that may arise from avoidable bickering, rancour and other inanities of politics.

Widely hailed as Igwe during his time as deputy speaker, Ihedioha is instructively, not associated with the traditional red cap which defines royalty; instead, he adorns the Green cap, which symbolises vegetation and regeneration.

Therefore, as he mounts the saddle on Wednesday, May 29, 2019 as Governor - with his traditional green cap perched on his head - Imolites can be rest assured that the urgent task of Rebuilding Imo has started in earnest!

**Hon. Ogene, a former newsmagazine Editor, was Deputy Chairman, Media & Public Affairs committee, House of Representatives, Abuja, 2011-2015.**