



ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT, DR. GOODLUCK JONATHAN, GCFR, AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE NEW NATIONAL DRIVERS LICENSE AND NUMBER PLATES AT FRSC NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ABUJA ON FRIDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2011.

PROTOCOL

1. Today marks another step in our transformation journey. The launch of the new driver's licence and number plates today is the culmination of three years of hard work which started with a discussion I had with the Corps Marshal in my office then as Vice President on the need to improve our driver's license for it to meet international standards.
2. Today's launch has acquired greater significance following last Friday's unprovoked attack which led to the loss of lives and has left in its trail gory images of the threat terrorism now poses to the peace and security of our nation and the safety of our citizens.
3. Since the last bombing episode on October 1, I had directed the hastening of efforts to build a credible database of drivers and vehicles in order to improve public safety. The importance of this project is reaffirmed by the consistent use of vehicles in the conduct of the recent bombing episodes.
4. Let me use this occasion to reassure Nigerians and members of the international community that we now have strong leads as to those involved in this terror war on Nigeria and Nigerians. I have directed security operatives to go after them no matter where they may be hiding.
5. Also I am using this opportunity to warn that those who choose to hide under our new freedoms to perpetuate evil against our people shall have no hiding place. This administration is fully determined and able to deal with

all threats and agents of instability who continue to test the resolve of our nation and its democratic institutions and leadership.

6. As President and Chief Security Officer of the nation, I will employ every means and instrument at my disposal to secure this nation against forces of evil, which seek to divide and sabotage our country. There shall be no sacred cows in our efforts to expose, contain and defeat this network of terror and its sponsors.
7. I have directed a review of our national security architecture to lay greater emphasis on intelligence and citizens' participation in security surveillance.
8. It is in this regard that government is pleased that FRSC has delivered on the promise to introduce a credible driver's license that meets international standards. This is a positive development, which demonstrates FRSC's commitment to the government's transformation agenda and a testimony that we can get it right in this country.
9. Restoring the integrity of the driver's license aligns fully with the transformation agenda of this government, it is at the heart of the efforts to alter a culture of recklessness, impunity and lack of consideration for other road users and to transform these negative traits to a positive affirmation of a rule - driven society.
10. Today, a new era has begun with the introduction of the new driver's license and number plates. The government has invested in technology, people and processes that will not only restore the integrity of the driver's license but also provide the nation with a credible database of drivers and vehicles.
11. This administration, in line with the reform agenda, acceded last December to the Vienna and Geneva Conventions on road signs and markings. The accession to these conventions, which have been in existence since 1949, imposes new responsibility on Nigeria to ensure that the driver's license is a competency-based certificate.

12. Therefore, I am happy to announce that part of what we are launching today is the immediate implementation of the Driving Schools Standardization Programme (DSSP) that stipulates that only accredited driving schools must sponsor all fresh applicants for driver's licence. Also a new regulatory regime of mandatory test and continuous drivers training has been introduced for commercial drivers.
13. Let me assure the FRSC of my total support in ensuring that enforcement of road traffic rules does not exempt or accord any undue respect to positions, ranks and status of any select group of road users. I will therefore like to see greater enforcement on indiscriminate use of siren by unauthorised persons on our roads and removal of tankers and trailers that are indiscriminately parked to obstruct the roads.
14. I charge the Corps Marshal to come up with an immediate action plan in conjunction with other stakeholders for ensuring that adequate parks are provided for trailers and tankers on our highways nationwide.
15. In the last five years, government has increased FRSC's budget and has observed appreciable decline in road traffic crashes and fatalities. Government will continue to support the FRSC in its quest to sustain the decline in road crashes and attendant injuries in order to achieve the objectives of the Accra Declaration of reducing road crash fatalities by 50% by 2015 and the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety (2011 - 2020) which hopefully will make Nigerian roads to rank among the world's 20 safest roads by year 2020.
16. The international dimension of driver's licence and number plates imposes on us as a country the need to ensure that they are not used as instruments of terrorism. I want to reassure Nigerians and members of the international community that terror groups will be defeated in our land. This administration will spare no effort or resource in containing this latest threat to the unity and stability of our nation. Terrorism has no conscience and spares no one. We must all stand together against terror in its destructive manifestations.

17. We are in touch with all international agencies, involved in the global war against terror. We will work in tandem with all organizations and partners towards the timely and eventual containment and defeat of terror and their sponsors in our land.
18. I therefore appeal to all State governments, law enforcement agencies, transport unions and institutions, non-governmental organisations, the organised private sector and of course, the general public to be resolute in their support for the FRSC in their quest to reform motor vehicle administration in Nigeria for our collective good.
19. I hereby launch the new National Driver's Licence and Vehicle Number Plates to the glory of God and for the safety of all road users and promotion of national security.
20. Thank you.