

# Ahmed is no stooge

By Joseph Ebum Folayan

on May 29, 1999 as the third civilian governor of the state. Since he took over from a military regime, he started from the scratch to fashion out projects and ideas that would move the state forward. Unfortunately, his administration was enmeshed in a crisis in the third year of his regime, which led to the ousting of his administration and another party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), took over power in the state on May 29, 2003 with Dr. Bukola Saraki as the new governor.

From the above history of succession in the state, there was nothing like continuity. There was never a situation where the outgoing governor happily handed over to the incoming governor like the one we witnessed on May 29, 2011 where, in a colourful ceremony, Dr. Bukola Saraki handed over to the incoming governor, Alhaji Ahmed. The baton has never publicly changed hand in the history of Kwara State.

Dr. Saraki made history by being the first governor to rule Kwara state for two terms of eight years. He made tremendous impact in all the social, economic and political spheres in the state. Towards the end of his tenure he put in place

continuity agenda which was campaigned through the length and breadth of the state during the electioneering campaign programmer of 2011. The electorate imbibed the idea of continuity and voted massively for the arrow head of the project-Alhaji Ahmed, who is now the Executive Governor of Kwara State.

In keeping faith with the continuity agenda, Alhaji Ahmed completed a good number of projects embarked upon by the last administration which are of great benefit to the masses. These projects include roads, water projects, electricity, schools rehabilitation and a host of others. All these within his first hundred days in office. The immediate past governor, Dr. Saraki, was even invited to commission one of the road projects. This looked unusual to some people who have been used to the history of former and present governors throwing brick bats at each other. These elements now coined the word stooge for this cooperation agenda between Dr. Bukolala Saraki and Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed.

I would not know what this group of people would call the novel idea of Kwara State Empowerment

Scheme designed by Governor Ahmed which saw two thousand jobless people receiving letters of employment within his one hundred days in office. Did someone force him again to fashion out this programme? No, not at all. It came from his own initiative.

One of the dividends of continuity agenda could be seen in the award of Best Investment in Community Health Insurance won recently by Kwara State when it beat two nominees, Lagos and Bauchi States. This was during the West Africa Healthcare Investment Summit (WO AHIS) organized by Health Africa and held in Abuja. In the past, the health care projects of the immediate past administration which added to the ones under the new government to make the award, would

have been abandoned and money spent on it going down the drains.

From the little we have seen in the first 100 days of Governor Ahmed, one could come to the conclusion that continuity must be encouraged by all state governments and the Kwara model should be emulated. It is through this system that developments can move fast and reach the nooks and crannies of the state without delay. Those who hate the idea call it stooge but the progressives see it as a continuity agenda which is a novel experience in Kwara State.

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