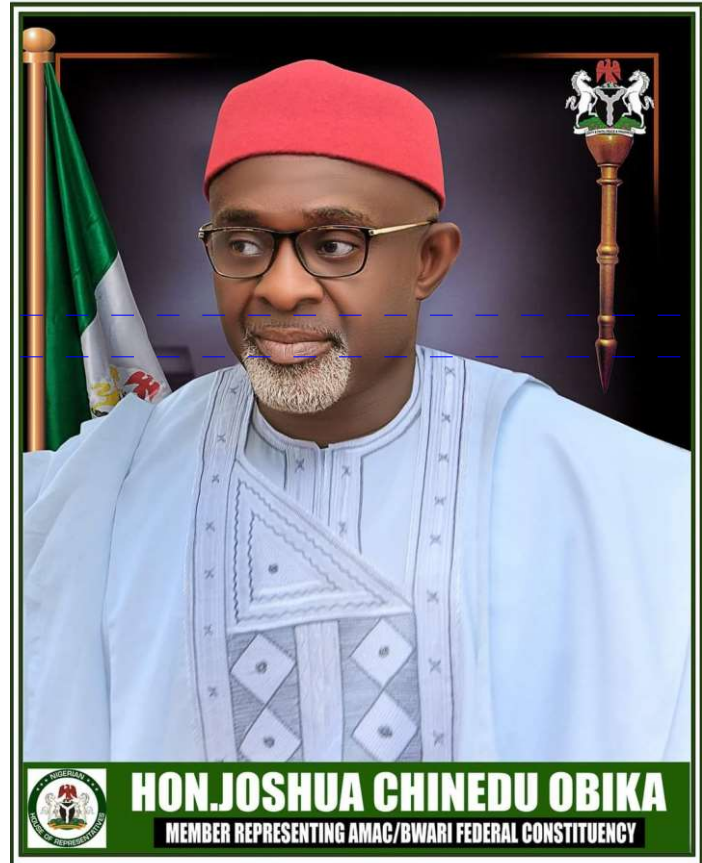


# 'WE ARE FULLY DETERMINED TO DELIVER TO NIGERIANS'

... *Hon Chinedu Obika*

*Hon Chinedu Obika a Member of the Federal House of Representative Representing AMAC/BWARI Federal Constituency of FCT the centre of Unity. He spoke to our Editor-In -Chief, Peter Emuekpere of myriads of challenges facing his constituency. He blamed the Legislature for the rot in the system and pledged that the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly will deliver to the people of Nigeria. Below is the excerpt of the exclusive chat.*



**HON. JOSHUA CHINEDU OBIKA**  
MEMBER REPRESENTING AMAC/BWARI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY

***Can we meet you briefly, who is Hon. Chinedu Obika?***

Hon. Chinedu Obika is first a Nigerian representing AMAC/BWARI Federal Constituency in the Federal House of Representatives. I know that I have a state of origin which is Anambra state but today I don't talk of state of origin, I am a Nigerian, Abuja is my state now because I have been living here for the past twenty seven years. I came to Abuja in 1996 and I have been elected to the position of Councilor in 1988 where I served for five years. I have held the positions of party Secretary in ANPP, Chairman of South East APC and today I am in the Labour Party.

***What do you see as the expectations of your people from you as a legislator?***

My brother before we talk of expectations let us take a brief look at the problems that FCT have as a Federal Capital Territory. People look at Abuja and think that all is well but that is far from the truth. I have 22 wards under my Constituency. Out of these 22 wards only 4 of them are in the urban area that Government is really paying attention to. Another 5 wards are at the borderline and out of these only three are experiencing some level of development. The other 12 wards are grossly neglected. I mean in these 12 wards nothing there shows that they are in the Federal Capital Territory. In these 12 wards there are no motorable roads, no hospitals, no good schools. It may surprise you to know that we still have schools in Abuja where students study on bare floor, where there are no teaching and instructional materials, neither are there enough teachers in the classrooms. During a visit to one

of the schools during my campaign I was surprised to see a primary school with 620 children with only nine teachers and only five were on duty and one of them was even backing a child. So, on the average how can one teacher take charge of 120 children. You can see the situation is very deplorable. This is the kind of situation we have in some of these wards. The same thing applies to other infrastructure like roads, hospitals and others. So, you can see that the expectations are high because the people lack the basic amenities of life.

***Now how do you think that your representation in the National Assembly will help ameliorate some of these challenges they are facing?***

Change will come because I believe that those who occupied these positions in the past did not do the needful. I am not a member of the Executive. I am a Legislator, that means we are the ones that makes the budget as well as the ones that carry out the oversight. This is where the problem lies, and therefore I blame the legislature for most of the rot in the system. It is our responsibility as lawmaker to ensure that the budget that we make is properly implemented and therefore we carry out oversight functions. When an item has been inserted in the

budget for the benefit of the people, it is our responsibility to follow up with the release of the funding and ensure the full implementation of the project. This has been the lacuna. Do we allow people to cart away the money earmarked for projects like schools and roads that will impact fully in the lives of our people? This has been the problem. The legislature has failed in her oversight functions. Look at most of the hospitals we have today in Abuja, they were built by the Military. The ones in Garki, Asokoro, Maitama, Wuse, Bwari and life camp. Since 1999 till date the subsequent civilian administration has not deemed it fit to build a single additional hospital even despite the population explosion in the Federal Capital Territory. Even the maintenance of the hospital is neglected. Where are the results of the oversight functions?

**Hon. Sir, this take us to the issue of oversight function which is one of the major function of the legislature, It is on record that oversight functions has become jamboree for lawmakers to make money at the expense of Nigerians who are supposed to benefit from these projects. What do you think the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly will do differently?**

Irrespective of political parties' affiliations or differences everybody in this country knows that it is no longer business as usual. Everybody is suffering from the bandwagon of bad governance and Nigerians are no longer ready to be taken for a ride. And so, I blame the legislature for the past errors the country has made. It is our duty to carry out oversight functions to ensure that things that are wrong in the system are corrected and made right. But unfortunately, we are watching the system collapsing under our hands. If we take our oversight functions seriously and ensure that monies budgeted are properly used to implement what it is meant for there, we can never have abandoned projects littered here and there. But I assure you that the current crop of lawmakers knows how important it is for us to step up our game. I can speak for myself and of course our current Speaker because I know his antecedent and his passion and commitment for the upliftment of the cause average Nigerian. I am committed to the good of this country and my Federal Constituency to change it different from what it used to be. So, if you ask me what will change, because I have been elected, I will ensure that the money budgeted for the maintenance and improvement of our public institutions according to the Abuja master plans is properly utilized and implemented. The budget to build cottage hospitals as well as roads and other infrastructure especially in the densely populated areas will be properly monitored to ensure full implementation so that the people will feel the impact of governance. I am convinced that the present crop of lawmakers knows and understand the enormity of the challenges on ground and I believe that all of us will put in our best. I have spoken to many of my colleagues in this 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly and we are fully determined to deliver to Nigerians

**Hon. Sir, how will you access our democratic experience so far since the advent of this present political dispensation?**

I must confess we still have a long way to go. When we take one step forward, we take thirty steps backwards. That is how it had been. The only good thing we have done is to manage to keep the Military in check. If we are really determined to change things in this country, we must reform our electoral system. If the people

cannot choose rightly who they want to represent or preside over them then we are still far behind. Our electoral process must be fixed for our democracy to grow. When the true will of the people is what translate to the votes and who is elected then thing will begin to get better? But from what we are seeing and experiencing now we are not yet democratically mature. I pray that someday we will get there.

**Hon. Sir. Many people are of the opinion that Nigerian politicians are not men of honour. Do you agree with them?**

Well when people say that I don't blame them because to whom much is given much is expected. But even in our private businesses as individuals have people demonstrated integrity? There is so much rot in the system even in families. This is not to say that the politicians have met the expectations of the people but there is still room for improvement. But everyone of us must be involve making Nigeria better. It must be a collective effort.

**Hon. Sir, what is your greatest motivation in life?**

I came into politics because I have been a community person. I belong to every community structure that adds value to the activities and development of the community right from childhood. I love to see things been done rightly and everybody getting his/her right dues. I hate injustice. These are the two component that makes me what I am today. I don't tolerate anything that will not add value to my community or the lives of my people. I am a good fighter for any good cause.

**Hon. Sir what do you do at your leisure?**

Politicians play politics all the time but as a person at my leisure I like to travel to know places and exchange ideas because ideas rule the world, I love to interact with like minds. The best education I have had in life is not in the four walls of a school. I am just a diploma holder but my exposure, interaction, exchange of ideas and experience have taken me this far.

**What is your favourite meal?**

(He laughs) Well I will say I have two. I cannot do without rice; I am a rice person and my best soup is well garnished and served OHA soup. I love it.

**As a father how have helped to promote family values?**

For me everything is about family. If we as a nation had promoted family values the nation would have been a better place. This is because nation building starts from the family. If the family is not in order, there is no way the nation will be well. I have four kids, two boys and two girls and I try to do my best for them by bringing them up in the proper way. But like my father used to tell me 60 percent of what becomes of a child is determined by the personal choices of the child while the remaining 40percent is determine by external factors and what he or she imbibes from others and the society. I believe that the family plays a big role in one's life and if not for family I will not be where I am today.

**What message do you have for your constituency?**

My message for the people of my constituency is that there is hope. I have been with them for over 27years. I was first elected by them over 25years ago as Councilor. I am from the grassroot