

# 'I want to liberate my people from clueless and incompetent leadership'

... *Udengs Eradiri*

I am not participating in this election because I am looking for money or because I want to be Governor. There is a crisis of leadership in Bayelsa and that's why I am contesting. I am pained, I see that there are no teachers in Primary Schools. I am pained, when I travel the world, travel other states and come back to the state, including the people who are listening, watching or reading this and even the people throwing stones at me forgetting that any time they travel and come back they feel bad from the entrance to the state even before they get in. Nobody else will do it for us. We are the ones who will take the action to change the state and make it truly the Glory of all lands that you will be looking forward to. I have a short Agenda. My Agenda is the PEAP Agenda. P-E-A-P. It is the simplest and as Simple as it can be. People, Education, Agriculture and Power. The PEOPLE first, like I said earlier, I have been going to the people. I am not going to be carrying band and beating up and down saying I am doing campaigns. I don't have the money to waste. I don't have that kind of money. I work hard for the resources I generate to do whatever I have to do. So, everyone penny I spend, I want it to go to the right usage. I don't even entertain or receive people coming to visit me at the secretariat instead I go to the people. I am the one who wants to lead the people so I go looking for them, they should not come to me. It's even a wrong style. I am going to be doing things differently. I am engaging the people; I am going to talk to them where they are because once the people understand what the government is doing or wants to do, they will follow him. So, the People are the most important in our Agenda. Their health care is key. There are no hospitals in Bayelsa. It is a less than 40% chance of coming back alive if you go to any hospital in Bayelsa with a critical or terminal illness. Drugs are fake in Bayelsa. Somebody took an injection for typhoid in Bayelsa, and the skin started peeling off. You need to see what is going on. The drug distribution company that was meant to bring in quality drugs in Bayelsa is dead. So, the people's health care is a problem.

'We don't have a livable environment. As we speak, as the rain is falling, the entire Yenagoa is flooded because we don't have a town planning institution in the state. The people who are throwing stones at me, their houses are under water. As it rains, they will be parking their loads, PDP will pack their loads to APC members Houses where there is dry area and APC people will be packing their loads to Labour Party members Houses where there is dry land. It is not about Party; it is about competence of leadership. When the flood will start, we would be talking about the incompetence of leadership that has led our people to where we are today and not about party. So, I want to look at a proper living environment, deal with water and sanitation. There is no portable drinking water in Bayelsa. We will outlaw borehole taking the town in phases. We will process water directly from the rivers and reticulate it to houses and put meters so that we can create jobs with water provision in the state. We are going to start the new towns, new Yenagoa, new Brass Atlantic city, the Sagbama city so that we can upgrade these towns Oporoma and Ekeremor so that more people can reside in the Local government areas. We would bring in Malls, provide 24 hours power, construct the right roads to link the communities.

'In Education we are going to upgrade educational facilities in Bayelsa. It is only in Bayelsa that children are still being taught with chalk and blackboards. Children are taught everywhere in the world now with electronic displays, data that is what children are taught with. I just referred to the fact that there are no teachers in primary schools in Bayelsa. The Governor is ordering all the Youth Corpers to go and teach when you are supposed to employ teachers, train them and use the opportunity to create employment for Bayelsans. Once the welfare of teachers is enviable, it will no longer be a profession that will be looked down on. We have the money to do that, but we have lost it to the point where we are asking corpers to teach. Have you tested these Corpers to see if some of them even went to proper schools that they will now be the ones to teach our children to be doctors, engineers and human beings tomorrow? So' I am going to upgrade the educational facilities, train teachers, pay their arrears. Our government is going to build University villages. Look at the Niger Delta University (NDU), for example, almost every student does not even have a proper campus to habit. So we are going to build a University Village where there will be hostels, accommodation for lecturers and professors, recreational facilities, security, malls, cinemas so that when you hear that your child is going to school, you are rest assured that they are in decent environment. We will review and revive the state student's loans scheme so that more students can have access to it and ensures that it goes beyond our government. So educationally, we are going to



invest in infrastructure, ICT and Information technology will be our focus that will prepare our young people for the challenges of tomorrow.

'We are going to invest in Agriculture. We will revive the economy of Bayelsa through Agriculture. Sugarcane is growing untamed in Bayelsa. We will produce sugar in Bayelsa so that we can create an economy with sugar cane. I saw in Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and in Bahamas how they produce their own sugar. What is the quantum of Sugarcane they have that we cannot plant here in Bayelsa? Leadership is the problem. We have a 60,000 tons cassava processing facility. How many Sagbama and Ekeremor people are planting cassava to supply that facility and earn a living from it. We are going to ensure that we work with the people so that these facilities would be useful to the people and create an economy and jobs for the people. We have a 45,000 Poultry capacity birds' facility in Edebebirri that is dead. We will revive it so that it becomes another means of economic activity and job creation for our people. We will invest and commence the Otuokpoti Rice Production project Instead of Peremabiri and Isampou Peremabiri and Isampou are not traditionally rice growers that is why over the years rice farming in these areas have not produced any reasonable quantity of rice. The original rice growers in Bayelsa are the Otuokpoti people therefore you will see the Otuokpoti rice that we will transform to be an international rice brand. So we will invest in the Otuokpoti rice so that the successes from there will then rub off on other areas of the state where rice growing can also be done. We are going to build a food processing and storage facility in our cargo airport so that people who plant plantain will plant to eat and export those who plant banana would plant to eat and export. People who fish would fish to eat and to export. All these people would begin to earn a living while we still process the excess for storage and export. Once people know that in Bayelsa, there is a food processing and storage facility, that place becomes viable. We would heavily invest in the agro-allied sector so we can export fish, Okporo, etc and other exportable items we have in Bayelsa that are needed globally.

'We are going to invest in Power which is the last "P". Already, the federal government has enacted a law that allows for state to produce power and distribute. Just like the Nigerian Content Development Monitoring Board (NCDMB) bought an 11 Megawatts plant that they have used to produce power for themselves, the houses around them and the government house, the hospital and as well as the secretariat. They have not even used up 4 Megawatts. Is it 11 Megawatts that Bayelsa state cannot buy? We are going to buy two 11 Megawatts Turbines. We are going to dedicate 1 to an industrial area where we will dredge the area, pipe gas

to the area, map out the area, power it up and then we advertise it. We have the River to service Onitsha and other parts of West Africa. Once the people see and know that the government is serious, then the right industries and investments would begin to be attracted to your state. There is no amount of London or America you go to do dinner or cry around saying that you are looking for investors that would make Investors to come to your state. You need to take the action and let people know, they will just go the Internet and check you out and once they see that you are not serious, they will just stop drinking with you clap for you and leave you. You will never see any investor. I am not going to be doing those kinds of things that would just be wasting Bayelsa's money. I will invest in the state, change the mindset, work with them so that Bayelsans become productive. That productivity is what foreigners and investors would begin to see. If we complete the Hotel that has been abandoned for years, it becomes a branded Hotel like the likes of Hilton, Marriot, etc. Once they know that there is a marriot in Bayelsa, every Investor would want to come and see what's going on in the town. Those are the responsibilities of Government not going to host dinners in other countries across the globe with public funds. We are going to Invest in the Industrial areas and these things are not rocket science. Everybody has done it except Bayelsa. What did Ogun do that has made then attract major industries from Lagos to go and set up their sites in Ogun? Because of the Olokola gas that they used to prepare an industrial area and said bring your company, there is gas too reduce your production cost. We have all the gas here. We are just joking. We are the only state that has an oil field – The Atala Field for over 22 years and we did not produce anything even kerosene because we do not have competent leadership. For 22 years we had an Oil Field until they fraudulently went and sold it to themselves again. It is time for us young people to take the leadership in our hands instead of complaining. I have decided that I won't complain again. I will act. That is why I am contesting.