NIGERIA IS THE GREATEST BLACK NATION IN THE WORLD'

...Sen. Osita Izunaso

Distinguished Senator Osita Izunaso Spoke with our Editor in Chief, Mr Peter. o Emuekpere at the sideline of the reception held by the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament Rt Hon. Mémounatou Ibrahima, for the Senegalese President and Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Bassirou Diomaye Faye at the seat of Parliament in Abuja Nigeria. Below is an excerpt on the chat



On Nigeria @ 66

'Nigeria is a country of cultural diversity, a country of over 400 languages. And this country has remained united for 66 years now. Not that we haven't gone through turmoil or through disagreements, but the difference between Nigeria and other countries is that when we pass through these things, we get stronger and better. So, my vision for Nigeria at 66 is that this country will grow from strength to strength. We have enormous mineral resources, but the greatest of our strength is in the human resources that we have. So, I believe that we should be able to galvanize our human resources, complement it with our natural resources, and then Nigeria will be a country to watch. Before we get to 100 years, this country will be the country to watch globally because it's the final destination of investment in the whole world. We are the greatest country—the greatest Black nation in the world, and when you come to that greatest Black nation in the world, the nearest destination for investment is Nigeria. If Europe is developed, America is developed, Asia is developed, and Africa is not yet developed—but when you come to Africa, where is the greatest country, the Black, the greatest Black country in the world? It is Nigeria. So, that is the final destination for investment. So, I believe it is a country to watch in the next couple of decades.

On how his presence in the National Assembly has impacted the lives of the people of Imo-West Senatorial District whom he represents?

'Well, we are here in the Senate to represent our people in all these ramifications. We are here to attract developmental projects to our people; we are here to make laws for the betterment of the country. So, my—I'm not the one to praise myself. It is for my people to assess what we have done in the last couple of years, but I believe that we have delivered the goods and we are still delivering the goods. But I won't be able to give myself an assessment; I'll like the people to assess me by themselves'.

On his message to the people of Imo West Senatorial District as the 2027 General Election is coming? what do you have to tell them?

'Well, just for them to vote my party, which is All Progressives Congress, so that we can continue to do all the things that we're doing for this country. Four years of this administration might not be enough for us to deliver all the things that we promised Nigerians. So, with another term, we're going to deliver all our promises, which we're already doing. But it is important that we are allowed to continue.'

On his thought on what the ECOWAS as a body has achieved over the past 50 years as a sub-regional body?

Well, as far as I'm concerned, much as ECOWAS is about 50 years old, it is still work in progress. ECOWAS is still work in progress. You can see the disintegration in the last three—two, three years, where three countries have pulled out of ECOWAS. That is not very encouraging. And, the only thing that I believe that we have achieved so far in ECOWAS is uniformity of purpose to create a direction of where we're going to. But as for whether we have achieved our aim in ECOWAS, we have not. We should be able to have a very strong legislature, independent legislature. We don't have an independent ECOWAS—I mean, parliament. The parliament, to me, is a quasi-parliament; it's not a full independent parliament. So, we should work towards creating an independent parliament. And the regional cohesion that we're talking about, we should have a harmonized security arrangement within the region. It is not only when it affects one country, other countries will come for intervention, because there is no other place that is affected if it's not within the ECOWAS region. If it is happening in Niger, Nigeria is affected. If it is happening in Mali, Nigeria is affected. So, we should have a comprehensive, cohesive security approach towards tackling insecurity in Africa. And we should also strive towards one currency. They have done it in Europe, and it's working. We are packaging and planning, but we haven't gotten there yet. We should have one currency. Much as you are free to move around within the ECOWAS countries—that is one thing that we have been able to achieve, you can move around—but we have to promote trade and maritime activity within the ECOWAS countries. This is very important: seamless trade, seamless maritime activity. I shouldn't have any problem taking my goods from Mali to Nigeria or my goods from Nigeria to Monrovia. There shouldn't be any—it should be today as if it is one country. Because if I can move from here to Ghana without any issue, then my goods are supposed to move in without any issue. So that, we shouldn't be talking about export to Europe or export to the outside world, not necessarily within the sub-region. The goods and services within the sub-region should move seamlessly within the sub-region.