

## **Nigeria: President Obasanjo Reiterates Commitment to Democracy**

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President Olusegun Obasanjo has called for collective resolve by all Nigerians and friends of Nigeria to cherish, support and strengthen the Nations democratic institutions, and reiterate his commitment to handing over on May 29 2007.

The President who stated this while declaring open the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) National forum on August 29, in Abuja, reassured that his administration will continue to strength the democratic institutions and practices.

He urged the development partners and friends who's support the nation cherishes not to raise dust on the nation's democracy, which is on course rather, they should support the democratic structures and practices which is functioning and on course.

He declared that the nation would not accept any agenda apart from the Nigerian agenda adding that his administration would not be a party to nor allow any form of undemocratic practices.

He called on all on politicians to operate within the framework of political parties noting that the current number of political parties put at 45 should be enough to accommodate diverse interest and called on all to develop the spirit of good sportsmanship as election is not a do or die matter.

He condemned the emphasis placed on money in politics and the activities of political godfathers, saying no nation can move forward if politics is seen as a money making venture.

The president, advocated increase in the level of participation of women in politics declaring that from personal experience, women are more reliable, dependable and loyal noting that there is a need for steadfastness in politics.

He expressed concern over the emphasis in some quarter as regards where the President should come from as against integrity, credibility and what his competences are.

He reassured on his administration's undiluted commitment to democratic path, disclosing that INEC has been provided with all its needs to function effectively and urged INEC to deliver and ensure a free and fair election in 2007.

The President assured all that "when the time come on May 29, 2007 when I will hand over, and return to my farm" he would want to assure that the tempo would not be reduced.