

The Emergence of Dr Saraki's Chairmanship



“He brought positive, radical changes into the Forum. It became a formidable decision-maker... The NGF has done well in carrying the governors along.” *Mahmud Shinkafi, Governor of Zamfara State, 2007–2011*

“A governor of governors.”

Dr (Mrs) N.N. Akanbi, Ambassador, Embassy of Nigeria, The Hague, The Netherlands

All those who worked with Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki in a professional capacity observed his qualities as a strategic thinker, astute planner, pragmatic achiever and firm but fair leader. These strengths were also clear to his fellow members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum.

It was no surprise when he sought to become Chairman of the Forum in 2007. And, more important, there was no opposition among the other governors. The transition was smooth in many ways. Dr Saraki had worked closely with Chief Lucky Igbinedion throughout his chairmanship; and being from the same party, they already enjoyed a good relationship. Also, the Forum then had very few formal rules, no effective secretariat and a minimum of processes. Dr Saraki was fully prepared and ready to initiate the plans he had for the Forum, to transform it from a passive talking shop to an active platform for driving change.

An important part of his leadership lay in inspiring his colleagues with a strong sense of belonging to the NGF and of their important role in Nigeria and its future. Their commitment to the Forum rose steeply and its meetings became well attended.