



# KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Special Features

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## The Historic Speech That Said Everything

BY: HAMZA MUSA MAKARFI

In a simple conversation between this writer and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Yusha'u Ibrahim Ango, he asked whether I had fully digested the speech delivered by Her Excellency, Dr Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe, Deputy Governor of Kaduna State, who represented Governor Senator Uba Sani at the twin event of NIPR Week and the Kaduna Youth Summit.

I replied, cautiously, that I had only partially done so, mindful that in an academic environment, such a question often comes with another behind it. So I searched for the speech, sat with it, and immersed myself in its words. What I found was not merely an address. It was diagnosis, warning, confession, motivation, and manifesto wrapped into one.

Some speeches are quickly forgotten the moment applause fades. Others echo long after the microphones are switched off. This one belongs to the second category. Standing before hundreds of students at Kaduna State University, the Deputy Governor did not waste time on ceremonial pleasantries. She looked at the crowd and saw not undergraduates, but “future professionals, future administrators, future tech moguls, and future titans of industry.” It was the kind of opening that instantly lifted the room. Students were no longer an audience; they were possibilities. They instantly appreciated the fact that the event was unmissable.



Deputy Governor Kaduna State, H.E. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe delivering a speech at the NIPR Week/Kaduna Youth Summit

Then came the line that must have thrilled many in the hall: seeing more female participants than male, she declared, “the future is indeed female.” In one stroke, she encouraged the women, challenged the men, and ignited conversation.

But the speech was not built on compliments alone. It pivoted sharply into concern. “There is a monster in our midst,” she said. No sugarcoating. No diplomatic cushioning. The monster was substance abuse. And she armed her argument with facts, millions of Nigerians affected, the North-West deeply vulnerable, Kaduna itself wrestling with prevalence figures that translate into nearly half a million people caught in addiction's grip.

That was when the hall likely grew quieter. Because numbers, when spoken well, stop being statistics and start becoming faces.

She described addiction as a thief, stealing memory, focus, passion, finances, dignity, and peace from homes. It was not only the user who suffered, but the mother who sold



comfort for school fees, the father whose hopes dimmed, the siblings who watched potential disappear. Her language was vivid enough to sting, but measured enough to instruct.

Yet the speech reached its emotional peak when she moved from public office to personal memory. She reminded the students that she, the Vice Chancellor, the NIPR President, and many dignitaries once stood exactly where they now stood: young, uncertain, tempted, pressured, curious.



A cross-section of attendees at the event

That was the bridge.

Not leaders speaking down to youth, but former youth speaking back to youth.

She admitted some brilliant people of their generation were swallowed by bad choices and now exist only as memories or shadows of what they could have become. Others resisted, endured, and rose into productive citizenship. It was perhaps the most human moment of the speech: authority stepping aside for honesty.

Then came a series of unforgettable phrases that sounded almost poetic: ***Fumbling fingers. Fading memory. Fragile veins. Fractured future.***

Those four phrases alone could power a campaign poster for years.



DVC Academic Prof Yusha'u Ibrahim Ango

But no great speech ends in despair. It must offer a road forward. She praised national anti-drug efforts while highlighting Kaduna State's own response through KADSAMHSA, an agency focused on treatment, prevention, and mental health support. Here the speech shifted from warning to governance, from problem to policy, from fear to action.

Her message to students was simple and sharp: reject the pressure, reject the mockery of sobriety, reject the lie that "one try won't hurt."

Then she coined perhaps the most memorable slogan of the day: Productivity is the new high.

In an era where young people are constantly sold artificial thrills, that sentence may be worth framing on hostel walls.

And just when listeners thought the speech had ended, she widened the lens beyond drugs to character, truth, and nation-building. She challenged the youth to be remembered not for the noise they created, but for the clarity they brought; not for broken trust, but rebuilt trust; not for silence, but voices of integrity answering Nigeria's call.



The Deputy Governor H.E. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe (middle) with NIPR officials

That was the moment the speech became historic.

Because it was no longer only about substance abuse. It was about destiny. It was about leadership. It was about the burden and beauty of being young in a country that urgently needs its youth alive, sober, skilled, ethical, and ready.

Many speeches say something.

**This one said everything.**