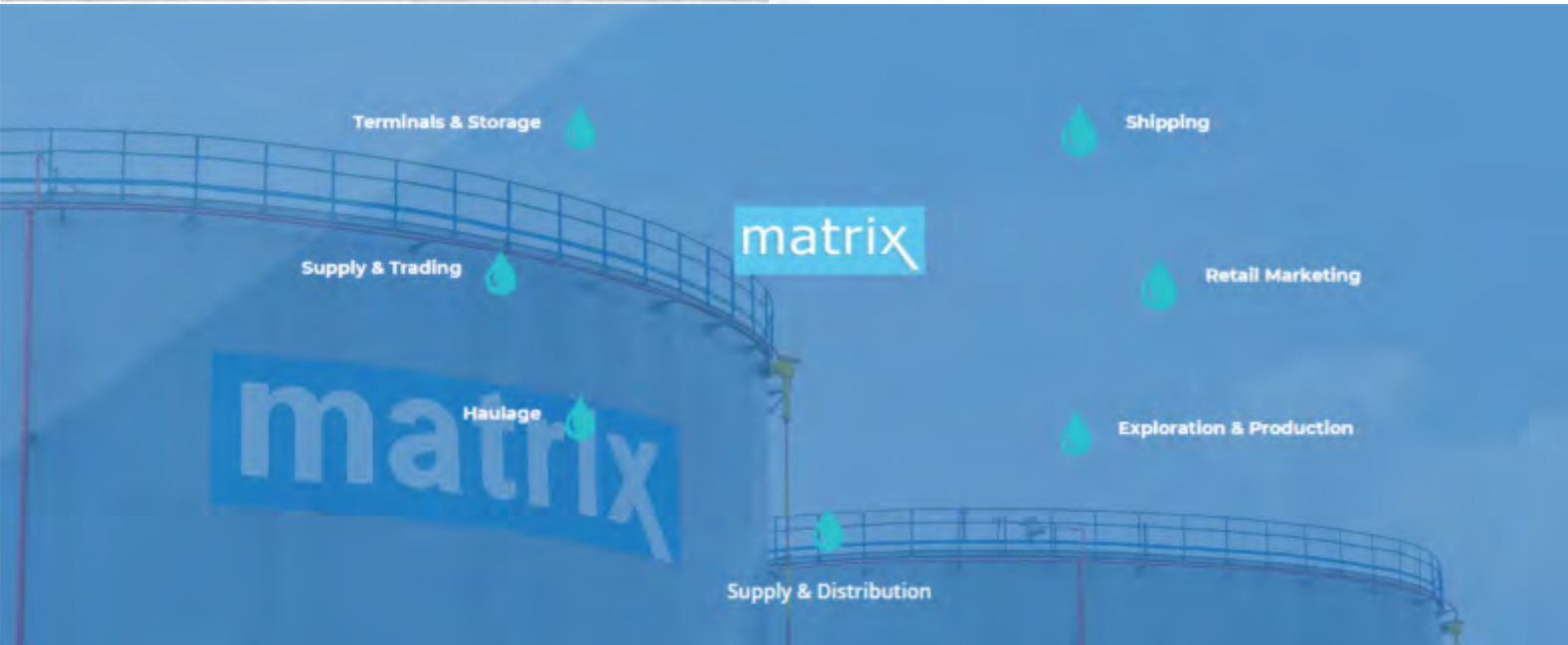




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**21<sup>st</sup>**

ANNUAL PUBLIC  
LECTURE & LUNCHEON

in Honour of 2  
Distinguished Alumni:



Justice Habeeb  
Adewale Abiru.



Prof Yusuf  
Olaolu Ali SAN



**UNIFEMGA  
LAGOS  
CHAPTER**

**HARNESSING  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR A**

# New Nigeria



Keynote Speaker  
**Prof Olanrewaju  
Fagbohun SAN**



Chairperson  
**Alhaja Kafilat Araoye  
MD Lotus Bank**

**CHIEF HOST**  
Alh Rafiu Ebiti  
Chairman, UNIFEMGA BOT

**HOST**  
Alh Saheed Bashiru  
Chairman, UNIFEMGA Lagos.

March 3, 2024

10:00am

Banquet Hall, Sheraton Hotel, 30 Mobolaji Bank  
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## **PROGRAMME OF EVENT**



1. Opening Prayer
2. Reading from the Holy Qur'an
3. National Anthem
4. OAU Anthem
5. Introduction of Guests
6. UNIFEMGA Lagos Chairman's Welcome Address
7. Chairman's Opening Speech
8. Keynote Speaker's Presentation
9. Questions and Answers
10. Citation of Honorees
11. Prayer Sessions for Honorees
12. Award Presentation and Photo Sessions
13. Goodwill Messages and Speeches
14. Chairman's Closing Remarks
15. Vote of thanks
16. Solat
17. Social Interactions and Networking

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# UNIFEMGA LAGOS CHAPTER CHAIRMAN WELCOME ADDRESS

## UNIFEMGA 2024 ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

## UNIFEMGA LAGOS CHAPTER CHAIRMAN WELCOME ADDRESS

**BEING THE WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY SAHEED O BASHIRU, CHAIRMAN LAGOS CHAPTER, OBAFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY MUSLIM GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION (UNIFEMGA) AT THE 21ST EDITION OF THE PUBLIC LECTURE AND LUNCHEON/RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF PROF YUSUF OLAOLU ALI AND JUSTICE WALE HABEEB ABIRU JSC HELD ON SUNDAY 3RD MARCH 2024 AT THE BANQUET HALL OF SHERATON HOTELS AND TOWERS, IKEJA.**

All praise is due to Allah (SWT), the Lord of the worlds. May the peace and blessings be upon the noblest of mankind, Muhammad (SAW), his households, his companions and those who follow his footsteps till the day of judgement (amin).

It is with great honour that I welcome you all to this great gathering of elites and professionals across all works of life, especially our two distinguished members that we are celebrating today – Prof Yusuf Olaolu Ali SAN and Justice Wale Habeeb Abiru JSC.

We welcome the Vice Chancellors and their principal officers in our midst from Obafemi Awolowo University, Prof Adebayo Simeon Bamire, University of Ilorin, Prof Abdulwahab Egbewole, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Abayomi Sunday Fasina, Summit University, Prof Musa Aibinu.

We acknowledge the efforts of our BOT Chairman, Alh Abdul Rafiu Ebiti, OAU Muslim Community under the leadership of Prof Owolarafe, UNIFEMGA National Executive Council, past and present National Executives, with special regards to Alh Tunde Popoola for building a strong foundation, the National President, Engr Abdulfattah Olanlege for his continued support, and past and present Lagos State Chapter Executives and our esteemed members.

Obafemi Awolowo University Muslim Graduates Association (UNIFEMGA) is a body of Muslim professionals in various fields in cities in Nigeria that graduated from UNIFE, now OAU. We have, over the years, helped our members to develop their capacities, network with captains of industries, and

tap into opportunities that we may feel needful by providing resource people to dissect such in fora as this.

Public lecture is a flagship programme for UNIFEMGA Lagos with this year's edition being the 21st in the series. This year's edition is special as it is combined with the reception of our distinguished members, Prof Yusuf Olaolu Ali SAN and Justice Wale Habeeb Abiru JSC.

Over the years, we have featured eminent personalities in our annual lecture programme who have delivered lectures such as Abdul Ahmed Mustapha, Permanent Secretary, Officer of Oversea Affairs and Investment (Lagos Global), Mr Mezu Nwuneli (Managing Partner, Sahel Capital), Dr Obafemi Hamzat (Deputy Governor of Lagos State). These personalities have delivered lectures on topical issues impacting the economy, social wellbeing, development, wealth creation, investment, agriculture, etc.

This year, our guest speaker is Prof Lanre Fagbohun SAN, former Vice Chancellor of the Lagos State University. He is a lawyer, academic, author, investor, professor of environmental law and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria. He will be talking to us about "Harnessing Opportunities for a New Nigeria". We hope this will avail us with the knowledge to identify and harness opportunities to better our lives as individuals, corporate entities, and government in our dearly beloved country Nigeria.

21<sup>st</sup>

ANNUAL PUBLIC  
LECTURE & LUNCHEON

Nigeria stands at a critical juncture in its history. As we embark on this journey of exploration and dialogue, it's imperative that we take stock of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Allow me to list some issues we are currently facing as a nation: high cost of living, infrastructure deficit and decay, unemployment, security, etc.

Our able guest lecturer will share his perspectives to the issues and challenges we face as a nation and will also proffer recommendations.

As we delve into these complex issues and explore pathways to a new Nigeria, let us remember that every challenge is also an opportunity in disguise. Our diversity, resilience, and spirit of innovation are the cornerstones upon which we can build a brighter future for generations to come.

Today, as we listen attentively to this lecture, let us harness the power of knowledge, collaboration, and collective vision to chart a course towards a new dawn for Nigeria. Let us challenge conventional wisdom, embrace bold ideas, and dare to imagine possibilities beyond the confines of the status quo.

I would like to take a moment to celebrate the remarkable achievements of two esteemed UNIFEMGAs, who have achieved significant milestones in their careers. Today, amidst our deliberations, we have the privilege of honoring individuals whose dedication, resilience, and unwavering commitment serve as beacons of inspiration to us all.

It is with great pride and admiration that we recognize Prof Yusuf Olaolu Ali and Justice Wale Habeeb Abiru JSC for their outstanding contributions and exemplary leadership in their respective fields. Their tireless pursuit of excellence, coupled with their unwavering passion for service, epitomizes the essence of true leadership and sets a standard of excellence for others to emulate.

In celebrating their success, we also reaffirm our commitment to fostering an environment where talent flourishes, dreams thrive, and aspirations soar. Today, as we honor them, let us not only celebrate their individual triumphs but also recognize the collective potential that lies within us to shape a brighter, more prosperous future for Nigeria.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the UNIFEMGA Scholarship Programme, I want to request from our distinguished guests to join us in harnessing the opportunity provided by our scholarship scheme. From the record over the years, the scholarship has been of great benefit and succor to OAU Muslim students in their academics, who usually maintained excellent performance on graduation from the university.

It will be a great investment to sow some of your fortune in this scheme and reap the rewards in this world and Sadaqatul Jariyat in the hereafter. You can dedicate your scholarship support in honor of our honorees (Prof Yusuf Olaolu Ali SAN and Justice Wale Habeeb Abiru JSC) or you can dedicate this to yourself, your parents, or loved ones. This will go a long way to build new generation of Muslims, who will help to preserve the heritage of Islam.

In closing, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to our esteemed speakers, whose insights and expertise will enrich our discussions. I also extend heartfelt thanks to all participants and stakeholders for your commitment to the journey of nation-building.

Together, let us embark on this voyage of discovery, with hope in our hearts and determination in our minds, as we strive to unlock the full potential of our beloved nation.

Once again, congratulations to our honorees, and thank you for being shining examples of excellence and leadership.

Thank you, and let the dialogue begin.



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## PROFILE OF JUSTICE HABEEB ADEWALE ABIRU



## PROFILE OF JUSTICE HABEEB ADEWALE ABIRU

Honorable Justice Habeeb Adewale Olumuyiwa Abiru is a distinguished jurist and scholar who has served as a Justice of the Court of Appeal of Nigeria since November 2012. He was born on October 17, 1964 in Lagos State, Nigeria. He obtained his Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degree from the University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Osun State in 1984, and his Barrister at Law (B.L) degree from the Nigerian Law School, Lagos in 1985. He also holds a Master of Laws (LL.M) degree from the University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Osun State in 1987. He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Chartered Arbitrators (FCI Arb) and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK) (MCI Arb).

Justice Abiru began his legal career as a Legal Officer at Savannah Sugar Company Ltd, Numan, Taraba State during his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme in 1985-1986. He then joined the law firm of Messrs. G O Oduwole & Co, Lagos as a Junior Counsel in 1988, and later moved to the law firm of Messrs. Bentley, Edu & Co, Lagos as a Counsel, Senior Associate and Head of Chambers in 1990. In 1997, he became the Managing Partner of the law firm of Messrs. M A O Abiru & Co, Lagos. He also served as a Lecturer at the Faculty of Law of the Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State from 1999 to 2001.

In May 2001, Justice Abiru was appointed as a Judge of the High Court of Lagos State, where he served for over 11 years until his elevation to the Court of Appeal in November 2012. During his tenure as a High Court Judge, he presided over various divisions and jurisdictions, such as Lands and Chieftaincy Matters, General Civil, Family, Probate, and Criminal. He also served as a Member of the Governorship and Legislative Houses Election Tribunal in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State in 2007, and as a Member of the Local Government Elections Appeal Tribunal in Lagos State in 2011-2012. He was also involved in several committees and projects of the Lagos State judiciary, such as the High Court of Lagos State Civil Procedure Rules Review Committee, the Public Complaints and Training Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Lagos State Family Court, the

Committee on the Lagos Settlement Week, the Committee on the General Welfare of Judges, the Committee on the Retreats for Judges, the Committee on the High Court Law and High Court Rules, and the Committee on ICT.

As a Justice of the Court of Appeal, Justice Abiru has served in various divisions across the country, such as Akure, Kaduna, Jos, Kano, and Yola. He is also a member of the Sharia Panel of the Court of Appeal. He has delivered numerous judgments and rulings on various areas of law, such as constitutional law, electoral law, administrative law, contract law, land law, family law, criminal law, and human rights law. He has also participated in the Committee on ICT and the Welfare Committee of the Court of Appeal.

Justice Abiru is a prolific writer and speaker who has presented and published several papers on diverse legal topics, such as stay of proceedings, stay of execution, bail applications, interlocutory applications, judgment writing, trial advocacy skills, fundamental rights enforcement, contempt of court, locus standi, public interest litigation, asset recovery and forfeiture proceedings, land litigation, chieftaincy matters, and the role of the Court of Appeal. He has also contributed chapters to several books in honour of eminent jurists and lawyers, such as Alhaji Femi Okunnu SAN, Honorable Justice Dolapo Akinsanya, K S Okeaya-Inneh SAN, and Hon. Justice Ayotunde Phillips.

Justice Abiru is a devout Muslim and a committed community leader who has been actively involved in various non-governmental organizations, such as the Movement for Islamic Culture and Awareness (MICA), where he served as the President (Amir) and the National President (National Amir), the Muslim Welfare Fund (MUWELF), where he is a member of the Executive Management Committee and the Board of Trustees, the Muslims in South West Nigeria (MUSWEN), and the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), where he is a member of the Consultative Group.

## PROFILE OF PROFESSOR YUSUF OLAOLU ALI SAN

## PROFILE OF PROFESSOR YUSUF OLAOLU ALI SAN



Young Yusuf started his early educational life, in 1960 when he was enrolled in a local Quranic school and in a formal school. After his primary education, he went to a secondary modern school for three years, he worked briefly before he gained admission to Ibadan Boys High School, Ibadan, where he passed his school certificate with grade one and was the labour prefect

He again worked briefly as a clerical officer in the old Oyo state Ministry of Finance as a tax officer posted to Igboora in 1977 and at Lagelu Grammar School as a laboratory Attendant in 1978. He later gained admission to the then University of Ife, now (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) in 1978 and graduated with a 2nd Class Upper Division for his Bachelor of Laws degree. He was a winner of the prestigious Federal Merit Award for undergraduates and a University Scholar while an undergraduate at Ife. He attended the Nigerian Law School, where he also passed with a 2nd Class Upper Division.

About a decade after graduation, Yusuf Ali went back to his alma mater for his Masters programme which he completed with flying colours in 1991 when he bagged his LL.M. He was appointed by the Chief Justice of Nigeria in 1989, as a Notary Public. He attained the highest professional honour at the Nigerian Bar in 1997, when he was conferred with the prestigious and honourable title of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN).

Yusuf Ali has been in active legal practice since the time he was called to the bar. He joined the law Firm of Adegboyega Awomolo & Co in 1983 and rose to become a partner before he left to found his own law Firm Ghalib chambers, in June 1994. He is the Principal and Founder of the Law Firm, Yusuf O. Ali & Co, Ghalib Chambers, with offices at Ilorin, Lagos and Abuja with Ilorin as the head office.

Yusuf Ali SAN is a member of many professional bodies including the Nigerian Bar Association, the International Bar Association, the American Bar

Association, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, among others.

He has won and been conferred with many fellowships including Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCI Arb) (UK), Fellow Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCI Arb) (Nigeria), Member Chartered Institute of Taxation Nigeria (CITN), Fellow Society for Peace Studies and Practice (FSPSP), Fellow Dispute Resolution Institute (FDRI), and Honourary Fellow, Nigerian Mining And Geosciences Society.

Yusuf Ali SAN has served and is still serving on the boards of many companies and Institutions. He was the Chairman Kwara State Law Reform Committee and was the pioneer Chairman, Council of Public Defenders Kwara state. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees of Summit University Offa, Kwara State. He is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of Al-Hikmah University Ilorin

Yusuf Ali SAN has held and still holds many professional offices including:

- Sole Judge of the Kwara State Local Government Election Petition Tribunal 1996.
- Member Kwara State Local Government Election Appeal Tribunal 1997.
- Life Member, Body of Benchers.
- Member of Council, Commonwealth Lawyers Association.
- Member Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee of the Body of Benchers.
- Former Vice-Chairman of the International Bar Association Committee on Damages and Negligence.
- Member, NBA Ilorin Council of Elders.
- Member, Board of Trustees of the Ilorin Central Mosque.
- Chairman Alanu Trust Fund of the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.
- Former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Osun State University.
- Former Chairman of the Committee of Pro-Chancellors of State-Owned Universities in Nigeria (COPSUN).

## PROFILE OF ALHAJA KAFILAT ARAOYE MD LOTUS BANK



Kafilat holds a first degree in History from the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University (1985), and an M.Sc. in Industrial Relations & Personnel Management from the University of Lagos (1987), graduating as the best student in her class. She also holds Islamic Finance certifications issued by Ethica Institute of Islamic Finance, the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment/Bahrain Institute of Banking & Finance, as well as the Islamic Research & Training Institute. She has attended various executive management courses at the Cranfield School of Management (UK), Lagos Business School, Institute of Management Development (Switzerland) and INSEAD (France). Ross business School, University of Michigan (USA). She is certified in specialized Banking courses, conferences and Seminars, among them are the Structured Trade Finance Course by Euromoney U.K., Payments, Clearing and Settlement Conference by National Association of Clearing Houses, USA 2006, 2007, 2008, International Banker's Seminar, USA, South Africa, Swift regional conference.

She started her career in 1988 at National Oil and Chemicals Marketing Company Plc (now Conoil Nigeria Plc), and moved in 1990 to Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, as the pioneer head of Human Resources. She was part of the GTBank team that went to Jordan for the implementation of its core banking application amongst other critical assignments executed for the Bank. She left with accolades in 2015 as General Manager but continued to consult for banks and other sectors through her consulting outfit until 2018 when she was appointed as the MD Designate for LOTUS Bank then in formation.

Having put over 25 years into banking, Kafilat has expertise in virtually all areas of core banking, with emphasis on International and Domestic Operations, Payments, General Management, Business Development, Risk Management, Human Resources

and Strategy.

She was part of several Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Implementation Committees on some Settlement and Payment solutions between 2002 and 2007 and represented Nigeria at the Banking Techniques and Practice committee of International Chamber of Commerce, between 2006 and 2011. She was member Chartered Institute of Banker's Committee on Capacity building and Certification from 2014 to 2020 and is currently member, Advocacy & Strategy Committee of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria.

Kafilat has served, and currently serves as Member of the Governing Board of many institutions (secondary and university), amongst them Fountain University Oshogbo, Currently member, Board of Crescent Schools, Victoria Island and City of Knowledge academy, as well as Elder's Council, Al Muhtudeen Islamic Foundation (formerly Muslim Youth Forum).



## PROFILE OF PROFESSOR OLANREWAJU FAGBOHUN



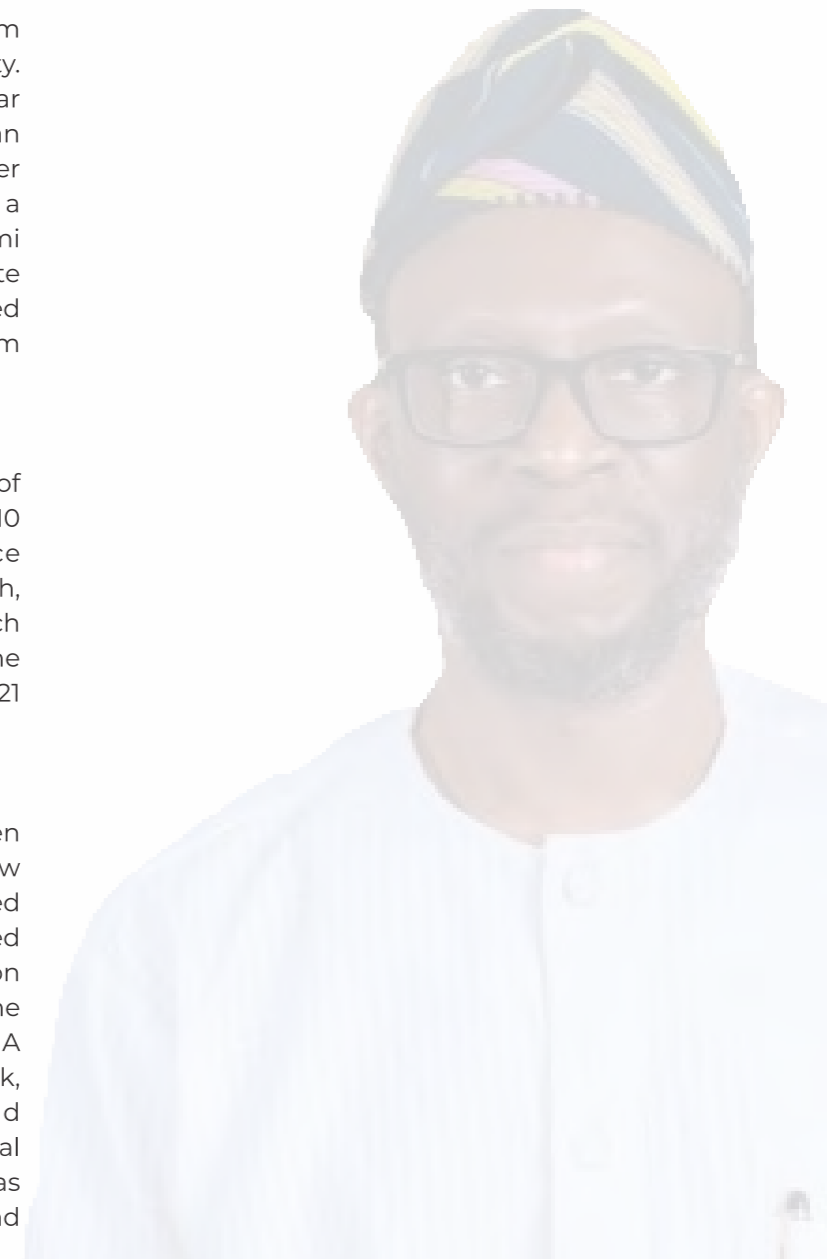
Olanrewaju Adigun Fagbohun (born 19 October 1966) is a Nigerian lawyer, academic, author, investor, professor of environmental law, Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria.

He obtained a Bachelor of Law, LLB degree in 1987 from the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University. Following the completion of the compulsory one year youth service program in 1989, he attended the Nigerian Law School before he was Call to the bar. He later proceeded to the University of Lagos where he earned a master's degree in law and later returned to Obafemi Awolowo University where he received a doctorate degree in law. During the doctoral program, he received a Postgraduate diploma in International Tax Law from Robert Kennedy College, Switzerland.

He served as the 8th substantive vice-chancellor of Lagos State University between 11 January 2016 to 10 January 2021. His administration as LASU's vice chancellor witnessed tremendous gains in research, innovations and infrastructural development – which helped to propel the university from obscurity to the second best university in Nigeria according to the 2021 Times Higher Education ranking.

He is an environmental law specialist and has been working in related areas of cutting edge public law (teaching, research and advocacy). He has published over 199 articles in local and international peer reviewed journals in different areas of environmental protection and sustainable development. He is the author of The Law of Oil pollution and Environmental Restoration: A Comparative Review; and the influential inaugural work, Mournful Remedies, Endless Conflicts and Inconsistencies in Nigeria's Quest for Environmental Governance: Rethink the Legal Possibilities. He has served as consultant and task leader for National and State Governments, and Development Agencies. He

was one of the 19 experts globally selected in 2012 to work in the Task Force that produced the International Bar Association publication titled Achieving Justice and Human Rights in an Era of Climate Disruption.





Mr. Yusuf Ali SAN is a Patron and Legal Adviser to many professional and socio-cultural groups all over Nigeria. He is an Associate Lecturer, at the Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin. He has delivered more than 300 papers on different and diverse topics at various fora, including the International Bar Association Conferences, Commonwealth Law Association conferences, annual conferences of the Nigerian Bar Association, among others. He has contributed more than 20 chapters to various legal books and has to his credit more than 45 published learned articles in learned journals in the field of litigation, commercial law, jurisprudence, practice and procedure, constitutional law, in local and international law journals. He is the Author of the following books:

1. **Anatomy of Corruption in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Solutions.**
2. **The Supreme Court and Jurisprudence of the Right to a Fair Hearing in Nigeria.**
3. **Public-Private Partnerships In Nigeria: An Essential Guide for Stakeholders.**

Yusuf Ali SAN is a litigator and arbitrator per excellence and has transversed all the superior courts of record from the high courts to the Supreme Court in the course of his over three decades of legal practice. He has also acted as counsel and arbitrator in many arbitral proceedings and is highly knowledgeable in Islamic finance and jurisprudence. He has attended many arbitral conferences within and outside the shores of Nigeria especially those organised by IBA and ABA.

Yusuf Ali has been awarded more than 250 honours from within and outside Nigeria. He is a visiting Research Fellow at Kings College, University of London UK and a Professor of Practice at Federal University, Oye-Ekiti. He is listed in the American Biographical Institute's Who is Who, as well as in Nigeria's Who is Who. A few of the over 250 honours and awards conferred on him include:

- Police Friendly Award 2009 by the Kwara State Police Command.
- Commander of Great Ife (COI) by the Obafemi Awolowo university National Alumni.
- Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa) of Al-Hikma University.

- Award of recognition as an accomplished professional by the Government of Kwara State at the 50th year celebration of the State in 2017.
- Doctor of Science Degree (Honoris Causa), in Public Administration by Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu, Osun State.
- Recipient of Osun State Merit Award at the 30th anniversary of the creation of the State.
- Yusuf Ali SAN is very passionate about philanthropy and using the vehicle of Yusuf O. Ali (YOA) Foundation of which he is the founder and sole financier. So far, he has intervened in many public institutions by constructing and donating several landmark projects including:
  - A twin dormitory of 40 bed space to the University of Ilorin.
  - An eighty bed hostel to the Osun State University.
  - A ten bed fully equipped advanced trauma centre to the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.
  - A thirty-unit ICT centre to the Faculty of Law of the Obafemi Awolowo university Ile Ife.
  - A thirty-unit ICT centre to the College of Law, Crescent University Abeokuta, Ogun state.
  - Endowment of the Crescent University College of Law Building.
  - A forty unit e-Resource centre to the Kwara State polytechnic, Ilorin.
  - A twenty room luxurious hostel to Fountain University, Osogbo.
  - Yusuf Ali SAN has also contributed to religious and other worthy causes. Some of these include:
    - A fully equipped court complex for the Osun State Judiciary.
    - A kidney dialysis Centre where patients treatments are subsidised by his Foundation.
    - A thirty unit e-Resource centre for Summit University, Offa Kwara State.
    - Rehabilitation and upgrade of two High Court rooms and the ancillary facilities at the kwara state High Court complex, Ilorin.
    - A patrol vehicle and some units of patrol motorcycles to the Nigerian Police, Kwara State Command.

The YOA Foundation does a lot of other charity works and engagements like award of scholarships to indigent students in secondary and tertiary institutions both in Nigeria and outside the country, provision of wells and boreholes for communities, medical financial assistance to patients and the development of literary awareness in secondary schools all over the country by entering into an annual sponsorship with the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA).

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# PROFESSOR YUSUF OLAOLU ALI - 21 WAYS AS A HERO OF POSITIVE CHANGE IN OUR SOCIETY

By Professor Lukumon O. Oyedele  
University of the West of England Bristol, UK.

Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali is an icon and a living embodiment of positive change in Nigerian society and the global community. As a philanthropist of excellence, he encapsulates the values and aspirations for a better, more inclusive, sustainable society. He stands tall among his peers through his dedication to improving the lives of the less privileged and promoting the socio-economic growth of institutions and communities.

Here are the 21 ways Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali has initiated positive change within our society:

## 1. EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Professor Olaolu Ali is worthy of veneration as a key to societal improvement, symbolising the power of education, learning, and knowledge dissemination. King's College London (a top UK research-intensive University) recently appointed him as a Visiting Research Fellow based on his research prowess. He has authored and published 43 Journal Papers, 22 Book Chapters and 117 Conference paper presentations within and outside Nigeria.

## 2. UNITY AND DIVERSITY:

1. Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali represents diverse individuals in harmony, showcasing the strength of unity despite differences. He has demonstrated this through his legal practice at Ghalib Chambers and other service to humanity.

## 3. EMPOWERMENT:

Through his Yusuf Ali Foundation, he lifts others, supporting them to reach their full potential through various scholarship programmes, helping orphans and people experiencing poverty.

## 4. PROGRESS AND INNOVATION

1. As a Pro-Chancellor at the University of Osun (UniOsun), Professor Ali has elevated the University to an enviable height within the Nigerian higher education sector. He demonstrated forward movement, growth, and technological advancement on how the University can benefit society.

## 5. EDUCATIONAL PHILANTHROPY & CHARITY

Through his foundation, Professor Yusuf donates time, resources, and funds to organisations or causes that work towards positive societal change, including supporting vulnerable populations, advancing medical needs, and addressing social inequalities. These include a 100-bed hostel at Fountain University in Oshogbo, an 80-bed hostel at UniOsun, an ICT centre and e-library at OAU Ile-Ife, Kwara State Polytechnic, and Summit University, among others.

## 6. ROLE MODELLING, MENTORSHIP AND TALENT DEVELOPER

Leading by example and embodying the values and behaviours that contribute positively to society, Professor Ali mentors and inspires others to follow suit and create a ripple effect. For instance, his mentorship role to the young and old at UNIFEMGA is second to none.

## 7. AUTHENTIC & TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Professor Olaolu Ali continues to demonstrate two decisive leadership approaches that include genuineness, honesty, empathy, and emotional intelligence. As the Pro-Chancellor of UniOsun, he drove transformational change that emphasises personal integrity, vision, and transparency, inspiring and motivating others to create lasting and positive Impact. Under his leadership, UniOsun is one of the best-governed Nigerian universities that never shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic and national industrial strike actions by university unions.

## 8. HEALTHCARE ADVANCEMENT IN COMMUNITIES

Professor Ali is working in fields that directly contribute to improving the health and education of communities. These include the Advanced Trauma Centre at UITH, the Renal Dialysis facility at Ilorin and financial donations for cancer control and payment of patients' hospital bills within and outside Nigeria every year.

## 20. VOLUNTEERING

1. As a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, he has distinguished himself in the legal profession with extensive knowledge and experience in various aspects of law. As the principal partner of Ghalib Chambers, he demonstrates a high reputation for insightful guidance, analysing issues, finding innovative solutions, and practical interpretations of complex legal matters. A legal icon of excellence, he mentors younger legal professionals and adheres strictly to ethical standards, showcasing integrity and upholding the rule of law.

# 21<sup>st</sup>

ANNUAL PUBLIC  
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## 10. A FRIEND OF THE POOR & HUMANITARIAN WORK

Professor Ali provides aid and support to people affected by natural disasters, conflicts, or crises. This includes organisations and individuals working in disaster relief, refugee assistance, and global development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he gave 5 million naira each to the Kwara and Osun States as part of COVID-19 relief funds. He also provided a well-equipped patrol van and motorcycle units to the Kwara State police command to improve security.

## 11. SOCIAL ADVOCACY, HOPE & RESILIENCE

Advocating for causes and issues that matter, whether it's human rights, environmental conservation, equality, or healthcare. Professor Olaolu Ali raised awareness, lobbied for policy changes, and conveyed optimism, resilience, and hope, particularly during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 12. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

He gets involved locally by volunteering, participating in community events, supporting universities and local businesses, and initiating grassroots projects that address specific community needs as a beacon of hope for his people, fast track socio, political and economic growths to Ifetedo and his people. The kernel of these is the alleged facilitation to Ifetedo of the Faculty of Law of Osun State University.

## 13. SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting eco-friendly habits, supporting sustainable initiatives, reducing waste, and advocating for policies that prioritise environmental conservation. In collaboration with others, Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali through the University of Ife Muslim Graduates Association (UNIFEMGA) demonstrated environmental conservation by symbolising the importance of preserving the environment for future generations

## 14. EQUALITY & JUSTICE

Through his legal profession and practice, he signifies fairness, equality, and social justice, emphasising the importance of human rights and equal opportunities for all.

## 15. COMPASSION AND SUPPORT:

Through the Yusuf Ali Foundation, he symbolises care, empathy, and support, highlighting the importance of compassion in creating a better society.

## 16. PEACE & HARMONY:

He promotes peace, tranquillity, and understanding among people, promoting a peaceful coexistence. These include communities within Osun State, Kwara State and the Nigerian communities at large.

## 17. ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing innovative solutions to societal problems through entrepreneurship, technology, and creative endeavours, Professor Ali continues to address societal issues that lead to an equitable society for all.

## 18. POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Professor Ali has taken legal practice to an enviable height in Nigeria. These include engaging in political jurisprudence, advocating for ethical governance, and participating in policy making and supporting policies that promote fairness, justice, and social equity.

## 19. CULTURAL & SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Supporting cultural diversity, promoting inclusivity, and celebrating differences to create a more tolerant and accepting society. Examples include sponsorship of Islamic programs on radio and television, including sponsoring groups and individuals on Islamic enlightenment.

## 20. VOLUNTEERING

Offering time, skills, or resources to help others without expecting anything in return. These include assisting older people, alleviating poverty by empowering various traders with financial aid, and helping disparate persons set up businesses within Nigeria.

## 21. FAMILY MAN PER EXCELLENCE

Professor Ali is deeply devoted to his family, prioritising, valuing and nurturing family relationships, including their well-being, happiness, welfare, and growth. He built a female hostel at the University of Ilorin in honour of his late wife. With three daughters who studied accounting, law and medicine at the University of Ilorin, his last son is a PhD graduate in Engineering from the University of Cambridge.

Overall, Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali continues to demonstrate service to humanity through empathy, compassion, and a commitment to making the world a better place for everyone. He has shown persistence and a long-term commitment to addressing underlying issues locally, nationally, or globally. He desires to alleviate suffering, promote equality, and foster a more inclusive and better world for current and future generations.



Professor Lukumon O. Oyedele  
University of the West of England Bristol, UK.



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
**FUNDAMENTALS OF A NEW NIGERIA:**  
**HARNESSING THE OPPORTUNITIES**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
**FUNDAMENTALS OF A NEW NIGERIA:**  
**HARNESSING THE OPPORTUNITIES**

**By: Professor Olanrewaju .A. Fagbohun, PhD, SAN**  
**Former Vice Chancellor, Lagos State University**  
**National Productivity Order of Merit Award Winner**

Being Keynote Address delivered at the 21st UNIFEMGA, Lagos Chapter Annual Public Lecture themed Harnessing Opportunities for a New Nigeria.  
Lagos, Nigeria  
03 March, 2024

**I. Introduction & Context**

**1. I am deeply honoured and privileged to have been invited to present the Keynote Address at the 21st Obafemi Awolowo University Muslim Graduates' Association (UNIFEMGA) public lecture.**

The theme, *Harnessing Opportunities for a New Nigeria* holds significant importance for our country especially at such a time as this. I therefore wish to extend my gratitude to the leadership of UNIFEMGA, Lagos Chapter, and offer my congratulations to the organization for its commendable efforts as a Muslim alumni association dedicated to all-round human development rooted in Islamic values. By actively and persistently collaborating with influential societal figures advocating for societal progress and development, UNIFEMGA, especially its Lagos Chapter, has established itself as a proactive organization determined to give a fighting chance to Nigeria and indeed to Nigerians.

2. Reflecting on the array of distinguished thinkers who have graced this podium as Keynote Speakers

Speakers in the past editions of the association's public lecture, I am profoundly humbled to now stand before you. As a Muslim and a product of 'Great Ife' myself, I sense a profound bond with this great and esteemed audience. Hence, I consider this moment a unique opportunity to honour our great *alma mater* and those virtuous and passionate men and women who, at various times, molded us into purpose-driven individuals, committed to advancing the progress of our nation and our global community. I am confident that I echo the sentiments of majority of us gathered here today when I say that our shared experiences at *Great Ife* continue to evoke unceasing excitement within us, even as we navigate new chapters of life across various parts of the world. This enduring attachment to *Great Ife* speaks volumes about the profound impact it has had on our lives.

3. Let me also congratulate the worthy honorees of today, my Lord, Honourable Justice Habeeb Adewale Abiru, Justice of the Supreme Court, and Professor Yusuf Olaolu Alli, Senior Advocate of Nigeria. You have continued to serve as true embodiment of those virtues as are commended and encouraged in the Qur'an and hadith. May Allah (SWT) continue to

guide and uphold you.

4. The topic of my address is *Fundamentals of a New Nigeria: Harnessing the Opportunities*. It is imperative that we prioritize getting the fundamentals right, as only then can our nation effectively harness its opportunities. In the context of the scenario described earlier, I find myself contemplating the extent of our attachment and dedication to our great country, Nigeria? Permit me to give some additional perspective to this rhetorical inquiry. It is quite interesting to note that the profound connection we, as alumni of *Great Life* feel towards our alma mater, where we spent between 2 to 10 years depending on our chosen fields of study, mirrors the attachment every Nigerian feels towards a particular institution or community, whether by association or birthright. Yet, I suspect that if my rhetorical question is posed on the depth of attachment that Nigerians have to Nigeria today, the thrust of responses and reactions will show that we are touching a raw nerve. The organizers of this event, in a subtle yet poignant way, reflected this much in the theme of this event. The reference to a “new Nigeria” is a clarion call for meaningful change and presupposes that there is “an old or current Nigeria” from which we all want to move away.
5. In today's Nigeria, Nigerians are expressing deep-seated frustration and discontent, stemming from underlying issues that can neither simply be wished away nor overlooked. Describing the current circumstances as hard and very challenging is an understatement: escalating food costs, unsustainable transportation expenses, weakened labour market, unfulfilled political promises, worsening poverty levels, lopsided growth, increasing income inequality heightened insecurity marked by violence and kidnappings, a stark absence of basic amenities, and a bitter harvest of dashed expectations from the much-touted democratic model of governance. For a country famed as “the happiest capital of the world”, life in contemporary Nigeria presents a sharp dichotomy: a minority who possess and blatantly flaunt wealth, juxtaposed against a majority who lack such privileges and who are seemingly destined to endure cramped and severely diminished lives in incapacitating conditions. This, is a minuscule view of the shapes of suffering confronting Nigerians.
6. Nigeria's reputation has not always been like this. It was at a time, a respected trading nation renowned for her groundnuts, cocoa, hide and skin, palm oil and kernels, and other cash crops. Today's Nigeria that we now wish will die and resurrect in a new Nigeria was once the green pasture for a number of other African countries. Foreigners were an integral part of our university faculties, and unity prevailed, with every part of Nigeria embracing all Nigerians regardless of ethnic background. In terms of development, Nigeria was once upon a time ahead of countries such as Botswana, Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong, who have since benefitted from good governance and have now become global destinations and cynosure of all eyes, while massive brain drain has become the lot of Nigeria.
7. If we were to carry out an autopsy of what went wrong that left Nigeria dwarfed from its initial path of greatness, accusing fingers will point to many factors. These include the detrimental effects of colonialism on national unity, cohesion, integration and patriotism; the vestiges of an inadequate educational policy; the failure of early politicians to eschew unhealthy rivalry and put the abundant resources of the nation to good use; and the incursion of the military into governance. While it cannot be denied that these factors had various devastating effects on the country, the fact remains that Nigeria is not the only country that experienced these challenges. However, a number of countries that experienced similar challenges have made their way out of the cul-de-sac. Similar observations can be made regarding the current global economic crisis. For instance, for many countries, their trajectory of progress creates room for optimism albeit guarded. For many Nigerians, on the other hand, their dampened enthusiasm which stems from a total mistrust for the government, is further fueled by the increasing brazenness of some political and other office holders in their violation of law and basic moral ethos.
8. Hitherto, the buzz phrases were, “restructuring”, “need for equity and justice”, “reset of the template of power”, “constitutional amendment”, “true federalism”, “good governance”, and “the need to rejig the security architecture among others. Today, everyday conversations and debates are now inundated with extreme negative commentaries and doomsday assertions such as; “Nigeria is a failed state”, “Nigeria is collapsing”, “amalgamation of

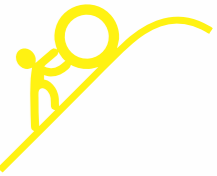
*Nigeria was a mistake”, “Nigeria's fragile democracy is facing an uncertain future”, “no theory or ideology can work for Nigeria”, good governance is beyond this generation”,* It is quite evident that the nation is progressively but steadily degenerating. Just as we have the mischief makers who are deliberately etching out these disturbing assertions for selfish reasons, so also are the poor masses, particularly the youth, who have been pushed to the wall and no longer see a future for themselves.

9. We cannot shy away from the fact that the debilitating challenges of today are the consequences of the maladministration and mismanagement of successive administrations. Regrettably, the logic of this position which ordinarily should imbue rational thinking is, for a number of reasons, no longer an effective antidote for rekindling the passion and patriotism of citizens who have found themselves in the throes of poverty. First, every election brings promises of opportunities for the country, but elected public officers consistently fail to deliver on these promises. Second, Nigeria is one of the most endowed countries on earth both in terms of human and material resources; yet, poverty is endemic. Third, on a daily basis, as one explosive scandal is sizzling off, another damning one is taking over with no seeming consequences for perpetrators. The unending saga is one of every new day, a new scandal. Finally, and as I noted in another paper on *Good Governance in Nigeria's Quest for Transformation*:

**...in the case of Nigeria, we can tick the boxes on almost all critical reforms that should deliver on good governance and public integrity, yet the desired outcomes of good governance reforms have remained elusive.**

10. I have recounted the above to remind us of where we are, and to provide guidance as we progress. Time is running out for Nigeria to identify and implement effective solutions to the problems the country faces. What new direction must Nigeria follow to turn back the tide of instability and become a vibrant nation that will have a pride of place in global reckoning? This, I believe, is the task that the organizers have set for me.

## II. Turning the Tide of Daunting Challenges



11. It will serve no useful purpose to jump into seeking solutions without first pondering the myth or reality of the claim that Nigeria's problem has defied solution, and that resolution lies beyond this present generation of leaders. I personally do not share this view. I will venture to add that for majority of the masses, whose very loud and clear prevailing message as they struggle through life and their invocation of the God factor, is for a “miracle” that will deliver on their high expectations for Nigeria's future.
12. I hope you will pardon the self-indulgence of my sharing the personal story of an institution that mirrors Nigeria, and which I was privileged to lead as Vice Chancellor between 2016 and 2021. Lagos State University (LASU) is a public university owned by the Lagos State Government (LASG) and with a student population of over 25,000 and staff population of about 3,000. As at December, 2015, everything you can expect to go wrong with an institution had gone wrong. One commentator described it as a system under siege. Another notable activist who was once the President of the Student Union at LASU asked me why I decided to leave my comfort zone for “this mess”. The proprietor, the Lagos State Government was already tired of the institution's incessant crises; both staff and students had become disillusioned; other stakeholders, including the Alumni were no longer proud to be associated with the institution; basic infrastructure had collapsed; and the campus was plagued by the reign of terror of cultists.

13. Fast forward to 2021, the university experienced five consecutive years of unbroken academic sessions; it became certified as an African Centre of Excellence for Innovative and Transformative STEM Education by the World Bank; it was ranked second in Nigeria following the University of Ibadan, and placed between 501 – 600 band out of 1527 institutions globally by the Times Higher Education, UK. In addition, employers were coming to train and recruit students from the campus; students were consistently excelling in both national and international competitions; and the institution became the bride of benefactors for its infrastructure. What brought about these changes? We embraced inclusivity; upheld the rule of law and due process; appointed officers based on merit rather than on tradition; maintained transparency and accountability; prioritized quality assurance; and were uncompromising in enforcing discipline. These approaches enabled us to be firm but fair, and within a short while every critical stakeholder became aligned. Despite the efforts of divisive individuals to sow discord, they were unable to garner sufficient support because the system was functioning effectively, and the majority supported the new era.

14. Again, we are all witnesses to what happened at the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) under the leadership of Professor Is-haq Olanrewaju Oloyede. He was appointed in 2016, and from the first year, he turned the fortunes of the institution around from a struggling, loss-making and inefficient entity to one that was regularly making remittances to the Federal Government. According to a commentator, what JAMB remitted under Professor Oloyede in 5 years was more than what the institution generated in more than 40 years of its existence. Through innovative technology, the activities of JAMB became seamless and transparent.

15. Let us not be unduly sanctimonious to think that Nigeria is the only country grappling with challenges. Nations across the world are also seriously contending with difficult issues, such as the scourge of corruption, yet they are carrying out governance effectively with needed leadership to improve people's lives. In the case of Nigeria, one is provoked to ask why the country is grinding down despite reform mechanisms that are regularly being put in place? To my mind, we are running a society where the interest of self is greater than the interest

of the state. In the bid to amass wealth or get immediate gratification, leaders, elites and citizens in authority do not care about what is at stake, even to the extent of compromising national interest. We have come to believe that any line can be crossed without facing any consequence.

16. On the contrary, for a number of states within the global community, only one set of rules reign both for the rich and the poor. Consequently, everyone, including the corrupt minded individuals, have recognized that some patriotic principles should never be violated, regardless of the potential benefits that may come with such actions. Beyond the consequences associated with messing up the system, there is a patriotic consciousness that has been instilled since childhood – the respect for the rule of law and the value for the safety and prosperity of the nation rather than for self.

17. Fifty years ago, Singapore grappled with challenges including high unemployment and poor infrastructure, among others. Today, the city is ranked as one of the most livable cities, with one of the highest levels of human capital development in the world. We are also all conversant with the story of Sheikh Rashid Ibn Saeed Maktoum and his visionary leadership of Dubai. Within a short space of ten to twenty years following the United Arab Emirates independence and the withdrawal of the United Kingdom in 1971, Dubai became a luxury travel destination for leisure and business. In the case of China, the car industry is a pillar of its economy. As at 2004, her total highway length was 34,000 kilometers. By 2009, it has expanded to 65,055 kilometers. By 2021, it approached 169,100 kilometers, and reached 177,000 kilometers by 2022. As always, China was intentional in her development plan, and was thus able to compress her remarkable step in motorization transition into less than twenty years. Reference can also be made to South Korea. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis, business leaders voluntarily gave support to government while other South Korean families offered family jewels and gold filings to help the nation stave off a currency crisis. All of these reflect the depth of devotion to one's country, and goes clearly beyond political party affiliation, religious inclination or ethnicity. They also show the significant difference that bold, innovative and effective leadership can make in the life of systems and institutions.

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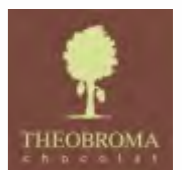
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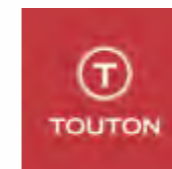
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- Meningitis Vaccine
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- Snake Venom Antiserum
- Anti D Immunoglobulin (Rhoclone/Rhogam)
- Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin

Care Yourself, Family, Staff, School, Worship Centres and Community Vaccination

**TYPHOID FEVER VACCINE**

Typhoid Fever is a life threatening illness caused by the bacterium Salmonella Typhi. Typhoid is still common in the developing world where it affects about 21.5 million persons each year.

**How does Typhoid Fever spread ?**

Ingestion of contaminated food or water. Contact with acute case of Typhoid Fever. Due to inadequate sewage system and poor sanitation. Eating food and drinking beverages handled by person carrying the bacteria. **Prevention:** Vaccination, avoid unhygienic food and drinks; frequent hand washing before food intake, take properly cooked and washed food, consume portable water.

**HEPATITIS B VACCINE**

**HEPATITIS B** is a contagious liver disease which is caused by the infection of **Hepatitis B** virus. At first, infected person develops acute infection with mild illness which can progress to chronic infection. This may lead to liver cirrhosis, liver cancer and sometimes death. **Spreads:** HBV spreads through contact with blood or body fluids, including semen and vaginal fluids of infected person. Household contact (e.g sharing of infected Toothbrush or Razor); IV drug use; sexual contact with infected person. **Tattooing and body piercing** if done using unsterilized equipment. **Mother to infant during child birth;** blood transfusion using unscrubbed blood.

**Why Should My Child Or I**

**Take Hepatitis B Vaccine**

- Because 23 million Nigerians are infected with Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis B spreads 100 times faster than HIV
- Hepatitis B is the leading cause of liver cancer
- Hepatitis B vaccine is safe.

**CERVICAL CANCER VACCINE:**

Cervical Cancer is cancer of the cervix (the neck of the womb). And unlike some other cancers, it is not a condition dependent on family history because it is caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection-a viral infection.

Cervical cancer is by far the most common HPV-related disease and HPV itself is the most common viral infection of the reproductive tract. Most sexually active women and men will be infected at some point in their life and some may be repeatedly infected. Persistent infection with HPV is a necessary cause of cervical cancer.

**Prevention:** is through vaccination and screening **Who Should be vaccinated:** it is recommended that all young females from 9 years of age are vaccinated. Older women can also benefit from vaccination against the causes of cervical cancer. It is recommended that you start screening when you reach 26 years of age, and ideally continue to do this at least every 3 years until you reach 50 years and then 5 years until you reach 65 years.

**CHICKEN POX VACCINE**

**CHICKEN POX** is an illness caused by the varicella zoster virus. It is characterized by itchy spots, tiredness, fever and loss of appetite. It is very common, highly infectious and contagious. Once a case has occurred in a community it is difficult to prevent an outbreak.

**PREVENTION**

Vaccination is the best way to prevent chickenpox, thereby protecting children and adults from the severe complications and death associated with the disease. Children, adolescents and adults should get vaccinated.

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18. Let me make it clear that it will not be fair to say that Nigerians in general are not patriotic. Far from it. Vestiges of the love that Nigerians have for their country are evident in the way they celebrate the successes of the Super Eagles, other national events and their willingness to lend a hand in everyday social interactions. The dilemma is when citizens consistently see their leaders, public officers and members of the political class engage in profligate and errant fiscal behavior. That is when the norm of universalism, where everyone believes they can engage in aberrant and sleaze take hold.

19. We should not be under any illusion that the situation in Nigeria cannot degenerate beyond what we are all currently experiencing. In the absence of strong political will, a strong sense of national pride, a strong belief that Nigerians can attain the high standards that nationals of other countries attain, and a strong drive by all to make the nation better as a country, we will never achieve a new Nigeria. Several examples abound of countries that have ceased to exist. Reference can also be made to a country like Venezuela which at a time had the largest crude oil reserve in the world (amounting to more than 300 billion barrels) and was in the 1960s and 1970s one of the wealthiest countries in Latin America. Venezuela has a population of less than 30 million. Today, over 90% of Venezuelans live in poverty. Hyperinflation characterized by extreme food and medicine shortage, constant electricity blackout and rampant crime has now become the order of the day.

20. I am a strong advocate of the corporate existence of Nigeria and by this, I do not mean that our current arrangement is not deeply flawed. I will also readily admit that the subject of our Union as one country is negotiable. It happened in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Sudan, Ireland and Germany among others. So, it can very well happen in Nigeria. But, if we do a deep soul-searching, is that what we really want? If we agree that the diversity of nature is the core of the harmonious symphony of our ecosystem, then, it should not be difficult to relate to the opportunities inherent in the diversity of people, culture and lifestyles. Further, when we consider the implication of the principles of sovereignty and what impact it will have on everyday activities that we ordinarily take for granted, the reality of Nigeria breaking into smaller countries will force on us, much deeper reflection. Finally, if we bring our

current unsavory mindset into that alternative of a cannibalized Nigeria, we would only have succeeded in creating multiple mini-Nigeria.

21. We can however re-think a number of fundamental principles and utilize them to bring about the emergence of a new Nigeria.

**III. Fundamentals  
 for a New  
 Nigeria**



**(i)The Challenge of Federalism**

22. The first of the foundational issues is what I will refer to as the consistent conversation on our "accidental constitution". The strident calls have been that what Nigeria needs is a new constitution. The 1999 constitution which ushered in the fourth republic was derived from the 1993 constitution (second republic), which also has its origin in the 1979 constitution (first republic). At the core of the problem of the 1999 constitution is its legitimacy: it is believed that it is not a document that arose from the solemn resolution of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and indeed, that it was just hurriedly put together by the Provisional Ruling Council of the Federal Military Government of the time.

23. It is not difficult to appreciate why the 1999 constitution has so few friends. For one, it has failed to achieve the expected balance in the distribution of power and functions among the three levels of government so as to provide a barrier against centralist authoritarian control. There is a substantial mismatch in functions assigned, tax raising powers and revenue among the federating units. In addition, its operationalization totally negates the spirit of competitive federalism. The principles of consultation and coordination which should guide its operationalization are observed in breach.

24. I have above distinguished the substance of the 1999 constitution as a document from its operationalization so that we do not confuse the two. While I fully agree with distinguished scholars, jurists and other critics of the 1999 constitution that it could have been better designed in order to achieve a more appropriate balance of the federal structure, and more transparently provide for the values of democracy, I respectfully believe that the attack on the constitution which holds that it is not a document of the people has long been overtaken by events. To continue to tug at it will be a distraction from the real issues which I am convinced has more to do with operationalization of the constitution. I say this for the simple fact that the 1999 constitution has been in use for close to 25 years. The Provisional Ruling Council that introduced it at the time represented the sovereign. Thus, even if it contravened established norms, that which otherwise is not lawful has been made lawful by necessity. Asserting the illegitimacy of the constitution on this basis at this stage therefore can be no more than for an historical purpose of revisiting our past and re-imagining our shared future.

25. On the substance of the 1999 Constitution vis-à-vis its operationalization, I believe as noted earlier that the challenge of Nigeria in relation to the constitution is more about its operationalization. Whatever document that is in place will not succeed for as long as operators continue to prioritize self over the nation. The stated goal of the 1999 constitution is for Nigerians to live in unity, harmony, and to promote good governance and the welfare of all individuals in Nigeria based on the principles of freedom, equality and justice. The primary impetus behind this entrenched goal was the belief that persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria, regardless of their territorial position, had essentially identical demands and expectations with regards to their social conditions.

26. The framers of the constitution recognized that the document's inherent nature is such that it does not account for every contingency and future problem. Consequently, adjustments in the balance between meeting the demands and expectations of the people on the one hand, and maintenance of the federal system on the other hand are accomplished by means of a system of checks and balances: *constitutional amendments, intergovernmental*

*relations (consultation and co-ordination), and judicial review.* What this reinforces is that the framers of the 1999 Constitution did not intend for it to be a once-and-for-all universal document. Rather, the document permits and encourages reforms and the continuing articulation of differences. The daunting question remains: how effectively have we utilized these checks and balances in adjusting the constitutional foundation of our federation and strengthening our unity?

27. Section 9 (2) and (3) of the Constitution outline the procedure for amending provisions of the constitution. Section 9 (2) requires the votes of two-thirds majority vote from both houses of the National Assembly and approval by a resolution of two-thirds majority of the States Houses of Assembly for Constitutional amendments. Section 9 (3) imposes an additional requirement of four-fifth majority from both chambers of the National Assembly and approval by a two-thirds majority of the States Houses of Assembly for amendments related to creating new states, boundary adjustments, establishing new local government areas, fundamental rights, or altering the mode of amending the constitution.

28. Some might contend that the outlined procedure for amendment lacks adequate flexibility. This is deliberate and is designed to prevent scenarios where amendments are subject to the whims of politicians seeking brownie points. Notwithstanding, the 1999 constitution has so far been altered five times – twice in 2010 under former President Umaru Yar'Adua, and thrice under former President Muhammadu Buhari (2018 and 2023). While these amendments are commendable, there are still critical issues that have not been successfully addressed through constitutional amendment. These include; “devolution of power”, removal of Land Use Act from the Constitution”, “affirmative action for women”, “State Creation and Boundary Adjustment”, “constitutional provisions to protect election of chairmen and councilors of local government to insulate them from Governors”, “State Police”, “Restructuring of the federation”, “abrogation of immunity clause”, “tenure of office”, financial autonomy for the judiciary and local governments”, “revenue allocation”, “strengthening independence of institutions”, “citizenship and indigeneity”, and “constitutional roles for traditional

rulers”.

29. Imagine for a moment that all the aforementioned issues scaled the rigorous process of amendment; wouldn't Nigeria have reaped the benefits of incremental constitutional amendments as a method of addressing the perceived shortcomings within the federation? Why did these critical proposed amendments fail? The answers are not far-fetched. Partisan politics tainted by distrust and division along regional lines played a significant role. Legislators, at both national and state levels, in the different scenarios, opted to vote to protect their constituents and political interests, rather than Nigeria's interest. We have had opportunities to amend the constitution to make it more people-driven, but we have failed to do so. Rather, we chose to clamour for a brand-new Constitution. Instead of allowing for extensive intergovernmental relations and intensive consultation and co-ordination to guide political decision-making processes as intended under the Constitution, our politicians are consistently driven by parochial interest. Who then are the “angel Nigerians” or quintessential body to draft the new constitution? What came out of the 2005 Constitutional Reform Conference and the 2014 National Conference? The simple truth is that within both the executive and the legislature, structures that exist or are intended to be put in place to enhance consultation and co-ordination are not allowed to serve their intended purposes. All these bring us back to the problem of operationalization and the challenge of operators.

30. Just recently, the breaking news was about a Bill proposing constitutional alterations for a transition to Parliamentary System of government. I find this to be a bold and inspiring move. Equally, I agree that the Parliamentary System has the potential to reduce the cost of governance. My concern is that the vision of a new system alone will not change avaricious attitude without effective checks and balances in place. If the current attitude of many of our political actors persists, the Parliamentary System will turn out to be more expensive than the Presidential System. It is interesting to note that Kenya put in place one of the world's most ambitious and progressive constitutions in 2010 to seek social transformation through constitutionalism. Incidentally, more than 12 years after the constitution was put in place, it has yet to achieve its goals. This is primarily due to the Kenyan government's

increasing disregard of its importance, demonstrated by repeatedly ignoring the rulings of Kenya's Supreme Court. Consequently, it must be stressed that the best of constitution will not by itself provide basic amenities. The operators of the constitution are those who will make this happen. Where operators of the constitution are not faithful to the constitution, nothing good will happen. They are the ones who can make the system expensive or inexpensive. If it is to reduce cost of governance, so many countries have abolished upper houses of bicameral legislatures at the national level and adopted unicameral systems. This, perhaps, is the right way for Nigeria to go.

31. I will, in a moment, revisit the process of judicial review which under the 1999 Constitution is meant to be a check on the greed of the political class and other abusers of the system, but which has remained comatose. Allow me to point out at this stage that the critical issues that are undermining and impoverishing peoples' lives are not directly caused by what is or is not in the Constitution. Rather they stem from a deficit of integrity, good values and patriotism among many public office holders. Perhaps, it is possible to gauge the potency of the constitution and the patriotism of our public office holders by taking stock of how the country responds to the following betrayals:

- a) Violation of procurement rules and regulations for self-gain;
- b) Utilization of sub-standard materials for construction;
- c) Usage and production of sub-standard goods and products;
- d) Outright stealing and mismanagement of funds allocated for the provision of social services and amenities;
- e) Orchestrated killing of innocent citizens to gain relevance, power or to make the system ungovernable in order to maintain a corrupt status quo;
- f) Appointment of unqualified and inept individuals to positions of authority;
- g) Outdated rules that are creating opportunities for graft;
- h) Wasteful prestige projects orchestrated by some Governors to siphon State funds;
- l) Refusal to grant citizens a say in government despite provisions of Freedom of Information law and other



- relevant provisions of the Constitution;
- j) Subversion of justice either through negligence, ignorance or corruption by agencies responsible for law enforcement;
- Quick fix solutions and unsustainable social intervention programmes that are more of conduit for corruption; and
- l) Subversion of the rule of law and due process.

32. Public officers often wax lyrical about growth, sustainable development and their determination to deal decisively with corruption. Yet, they engage in one or all of the above misadventures, and only for them thereafter to summon God to sanctify their corrupt practices in the name of thanksgiving, not minding the dire consequences of their acts on the nation. They are confident that even when they are charged to court, they will exploit the technicalities, uncertainties and delays of our court system. Thus, the now common refrain "Go to Court". Justice is neither speedy nor cheap and is hugely technical. On their part, the citizens, in their anger, frustration and helplessness have adopted the spiritual inclination of "May God help Nigeria" as their coping strategy. I believe we should refrain from invoking God in this matter. Instead, we should utilize the intellect that God has given us to effect positive change.

33. This brings me back to the process of judicial review and the fundamental role of the judiciary in dividing governmental functions and financial relations among levels of government (fiscal federalism and intergovernmental relations), and safeguarding citizens' liberties.

**(ii) The Judiciary with its Cornerstone Objective of Justice**

34. The third critical mechanism of an effective federal system is an impartial and transparent judicial system that is able to, without delay, protect rights and freedoms under the law, check abuse of power and maintain the balance between the Centre and the States. Section 6 of the Constitution vests judicial powers of the Federation in the courts, while Section 4 made clear that neither the National Assembly nor a House of Assembly of a State shall enact any law that ousts or purports to oust the jurisdiction of a court of law or of a judicial tribunal established by law. A well-functioning judicial system is not only

vital for law and order in the society. It also must serve as a catalyst to business activities, and remains indispensable in the maintenance of balance in a federal system.

35. The framers of the 1999 Constitution recognized that there will, from time to time, be disputes between the Federation and a State or between States, not only on interpretation of provisions of the constitution, but also on the application of those provisions. This is why there is a clear framework laid out for the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court intended to deal with such cases and controversies. In that role as the guardian of the Constitution and the final arbiter of law or fact, the Supreme Court in several cases such as *A. G. Bendel v. A. G. Federation* (1983) 6 SC 8; *A. G. Lagos State v. A. G. Federation* (2004) 12 SCNJ 1; *A. G. Federation v. A. G. Lagos* (2013) LPELR – 2097 (SC); and *A. G. Abia v. A. G. Federation* (2007) 2 SC 146, has, at various times, been saddled with the responsibility of resolution of issues affecting both the overall federal system and the fiscal arrangements within the system.

36. The Supreme Court together with other courts within the Nigerian judicature has the authority to invalidate legislation or executive actions which a court considers to be in conflict with the Constitution. Through the power of judicial review, the constitution can be maintained as a living document that can continually meet expectations in complex and complicated situations. Furthermore, the Court, through the maintenance of strong adherence to rule of law and constitutional government, has the potential to sanction actions motivated by narrow political and economic self-interest and ensure the fulfilment of the promise of equal justice under law for Nigerians. In this regard, in resolving disputes, the court's interpretative philosophy is the ask what the original intent of the framers of the constitution was?

37. Within the context mentioned above, when the judicial system is efficient (i.e. capable of producing desired results without wasting resources) and effective (i.e. producing a result that is wanted), it will be authoritative in adjudication and earn the respect of the society. When it is otherwise, the consequences manifest in incidences of pervasive betrayals such as earlier mentioned and worsening

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constitutional tensions as are being experienced in the country today, In recent times, a series of judgments and rulings have increased the withering attacks on Nigeria's judiciary. Prior to the recent attacks, the sector has been struggling with delays in the determination of cases, inadequate funding, allegation of corruption, inordinate reliance on technicality and legalism, and a deeply flawed system for the appointment of judges. One of the most eloquent statements about the current state of Nigeria's judiciary was made by a retiring Justice of the Supreme Court, Honourable Justice Musa Datijo Muhammad, at his valedictory session. He noted:

*A couple of years ago, appointment to the bench was strictly on merit. Sound knowledge of the law, integrity, honour, and hard work distinguish those who were elevated. As much as possible, the most qualified men and women were appointed. That can no longer be said about appointment to the bench... it is asserted that the process of appointment to judicial positions are deliberately conducted to give undue advantage to the children, spouses and mistress of serving and retired judges and managers of judicial offices... It is obvious that the judiciary I am exiting from is far from the one I voluntarily joined and desired to serve and be identified with. The institution has become something else.*

38. In the face of the above narration of systematic judicial failure, need we ask any further why Nigeria's federalism is fledgling? As a matter of urgency, Nigeria needs to reform its judiciary. We must overhaul the system for appointing Judges, enhance accountability through monitoring; ensure independence; appropriately resource the system including providing sufficient incentives for judicial

officers, and prioritize improving access to justice.

### (iii) Accountability and Transparency in Institutions

39. Institutions are a collection of social norms that regulate individual and organizations' behaviour. With particular reference to the public sector, institutions are the policies, legal frameworks, informal norms and Codes of Conduct which create the incentives that drive governance and government decision-making. The importance of strong institutions in holding those in power accountable underscores the need for advocating for strong institutions and strong leaders. Where institutions lack sufficient autonomy from interest groups and are not accountable to the majority, the result is poor governance, i.e. negative impact on access to economic, legal, political and social rights, and opportunities.

40. Many of Nigeria's public sector institutions have been described as cesspool of corruption, such that no one with integrity wants to engage with them. Stories abound of multinational companies who for reasons of strict regulations and integrity standards in their home country sub-contract or out-source "public relations" to indigenous companies. Their attitude is "hear no evil, see no evil". Many wonder why corruption in Nigeria's public sector has persisted without restraint. First, the attitude among many appointed leaders of 'let me do my own before we lock the gate of corruption' is a reason why the problem has continued. Second, regulatory watchdogs are weak, often either lacking in resources and capacity, or their independence having been outrightly hijacked by vested interests. Thus, they often resort to sensationalizing investigation. Third, the courts, as previously noted, have not been able to deliver on predictability of decisions and speed of trials.

41. Monumental fraud and other serious atrocities committed by heads of institutions are often overlooked or given a slap on the wrist, under the guise of granting medical attention for frequently feigned illnesses by perpetrators or through laughable plea bargains. It is essential that abusers of power must not be allowed to feel that they are beyond the law. The crack-down which must be non-partisan and non-discriminatory must start with mandatory digitalization of all institutional processes and procedures relating to procurement

(acquisition of goods, construction or services), including their approval routes. It should also extend to government services such as citizens requests for license and permit among others. It is feasible, and what is required is a proper mix of digital channels such that weaker users are not disadvantaged. Freedom of information legislation must also be allowed to operate effectively (including giving access to raw data) at minimal cost, and the courts must be ready to play their role in this regard. The transparency that will result from the above will significantly reduce corruption since information can be monitored and evidence tracked and documented. This will afford civil society organizations, the media and others the opportunity to play their role as effective watchdogs.

42. The stark reality is that numerous interest groups have hijacked Nigerian institutions. Mere good wishes, great enthusiasm and slogan shouting will not curb the pervasive corruption among government officials. Until Nigeria embraces digital tools and technologies that meet proper standards in the running of her institutions, the system will remain ineffective and corrupt.

### (iv) Nigeria's Security Challenge

43. Security is a core government responsibility and is fundamental to people's livelihoods. Insecurity poses a threat to political stability, economic growth, social development, human rights protection, poverty eradication and overall governance. The factors driving insecurity include poverty, inequality, injustice, unemployment, corruption, unpopular policies and terrorism among others. Nigeria has, for some time now, been grappling with unprecedented security challenges. These include Fulani-Herder farmer clashes, kidnapping for ransom, oil-theft and illegal refining, political score settling, arbitrary arrests by police for extortion, Boko Haram terrorists, cult-clashes, ethnic militancy, militant Islamist groups, armed robbery and other violent criminal activities. Citizens and entire communities are frequently subjected to serious violent incidents such as bombing of residences, offices and religious institutions, kidnappings, arson attacks, and brutal assassinations.

44. The government at all levels has made extensive efforts to address the security challenges, yet they have remained daunting. As part of the government's efforts to address the problem, agencies and outfits of the government including the police, the army, as well as joint commands of the police have all been in charge. Furthermore, funds have been made available to acquire weapons all in the bid to stem the challenge. The motivation behind criminal activities varies: poverty is the reason why some go into crime; perceived injustice (political, ethnic and religious) sometimes prompts rebellion against the system; and there are those who sponsor violent crimes to render the system ungovernable for political or economic gains. On the side of governance, there are those who sabotage government's efforts and initiatives for their selfish gains. What is the path forward?

45. I'll proceed with the assumption that the relevant agencies of government already have a clear view of the root causes mentioned above. What we might need to enhance further is the security infrastructure. This involves strengthening the police and other security agencies, investing in community initiatives, deepening access to conflict resolution mechanisms, and improving intelligence services. The argument for State Police has been reiterated numerous times. In nearly all federal systems, subnational governments maintain their own police forces. It was recently reported that President Tinubu, alongside State Governors have reached an agreement for the Federal Government and the States to collaborate with the National Assembly to establish a framework for the implementation of State Police. In the meantime, the State Police Bill is already being considered at the National Assembly. The modalities for the implementation are to be further discussed at the National Economic Council. Huge commendations must go to Mr. President for spearheading this initiative. This is the kind of consultation and coordination that the framers of the Constitution envisioned. It demonstrates that, under the 1999 Constitution, Nigerian leaders can achieve whatever goals they set for the growth of the nation. To guard against the abuse of the police and ensure the proper functioning of the courts, it is proposed that Section 215 (5) of the 1999 Constitution be amended, as it is antithetical to the principle of checks and balances enshrined in the Constitution.

**(v) Energy and Livelihoods**

46. Access to energy is for Nigeria to achieve meaningful development, improve peoples' livelihoods and alleviate poverty. Lack of access to affordable and reliable electricity deepens systemic inequalities. Despite a population of over 200 million people, Nigeria only generates between 4,500 and 5,000 megawatts of electricity daily, which is far below the estimated energy demand of 24,380 megawatts in 2015. Since privatization in 2013, this situation has persisted with more than 46 percent of the population yet to be connected to the national grid. How does Nigeria compare with countries of similar population sizes? As of 2022, Pakistan with a population of 202,675,000 was generating 43,775 megawatts; Brazil, with population of 209,850,000 was generating 181,532 megawatts as of 2021; and Indonesia with a population of 265,015,300 was generating 85,100 megawatts as of 2023.

47. It is on record that each administration starts off with an ambitious target, only to later attribute its failure to challenges in power generation, transmission or distribution. Frankly speaking, there was no sincerity in the privatization process. National assets were sold to entities that were ill equipped to manage them. If the system had allowed for thorough appraisal of the bidders' capabilities in terms of design, implementation plan and financial capacity, efficiency and welfare would have seen improvements. Sadly, Nigerians have endured persistently poor performance, in the face of increasing tariffs. Nigerians are tired of the blame game. It is cheering to know that the recently signed Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023 now allows states to be fully involved in the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. This, hopefully, will bring an end to the season of excuses for non-performance. The sector should therefore be able to attract private sector investment. It is apparent that without addressing the electricity issue, whatever incentive that is given to the various sectors of Nigeria's economy will fail to realize their intended goals.



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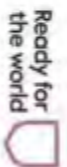
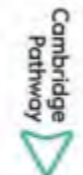
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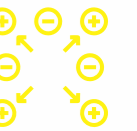
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**(vi) Education**

48. South Korea, once counted among the poorest countries, now ranks among the largest economies of the world. Not many will believe that as at 1953, South Korea was one of the poorest economies on the planet. Further, as recently as 1997, the country was plagued by financial crisis, crony capitalism and political immaturity. A primary factor behind its rapid economic advancement is its educational system. Its single-track approach guarantees universal access to primary, secondary and tertiary education, guided by rigorous academic standards known as “education fever”. Bringing this closer to Nigeria, the introduction of the free primary education programme by the government of Western Nigeria in 1955, which remained prominent till 1966, left an indelible imprint on the annals of education in both Western Nigeria and the entire country. That highlights the importance of education in fostering national development.

49. To ensure Nigerian students are equipped with the skills that will make them competitive in the global economy and have the confidence to practice those skills, it is imperative to adequately, and urgently too, fund our educational institutions. In the absence of skilled human resources, the potentials of natural resources will never be realized. Our institutions must be capable of attracting and retaining top graduates and talents, both from within and outside the country, to serve as teachers. Reform efforts should address the entire system rather than the usual sporadic disconnected initiatives. Creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication are the imperatives of today's learning. These should serve as the guiding principles for our strategic planning and the mapping of our curriculum. Despite the encouraging developments recently observed at the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), there remains an urgent need for a more proactive approach towards integrating our institutions with our communities and businesses. In addition, there is a crucial need for accountability within the system. Nigeria needs an education revolution.

**IV. Harnessing the Opportunities**



50. The global economy is undoubtedly experiencing a period of profound upheaval marked by food and energy supply crisis, persistent inflation, debt distress, security threats, climate crisis, and global macroeconomic challenges exacerbated by Russia's war in Ukraine. Across the world, the prevailing reality is that countries are exploring strategies to enhance their resilience in order to withstand shocks and persistent structural challenges, as well as be in position to amortize the windows of opportunity that these challenges present. If Nigeria successfully addresses or demonstrates clear evidence of addressing the fundamental challenges identified above, it will be poised to leverage opportunities that enhance its competitiveness and facilitate rapid transformation of its communities and the well-being of its citizens. What therefore are the opportunities waiting to be harnessed for Nigeria's development? Indeed, I say without equivocation that Nigeria boasts abundant opportunities for development across multiple sectors including natural resources, human capital development, entrepreneurship and innovation, digital technologies, green and blue economies, regional integration, tourism, biodiversity and many others

51. Nigeria must aggressively map out and leverage her areas of comparative advantage. The entertainment industry, for example, is one area where Nigerian artists have distinguished themselves and winning worldwide audiences. Nigeria's tourism sector is another area where Nigeria can boast of a wide variety of tourist attractions in every state. With proper structuring, Nigeria has the potential to emerge as an international entertainment and tourist destination that will attract millions of foreign tourists each year. Top game developers will see the over 32 thriving biodiversity in Nigeria wildlife reserves as places to invest. The strong sense of community in Nigeria, coupled with the widespread use of pidgin language in various forms, will undoubtedly allure tourists and enhance their experience with the communities. In Agriculture, there is opportunity to move beyond the export of raw materials by focusing on creating more value-added products. We must fully understand the value

chain of agriculture and the comparative advantage of states across all sectors. Similarly, in the solid mineral sector and blue economy, there's potential for value addition. However, realizing these potentials will require implementing consistent and favourable policies, regulations and reforms that prioritize long-term productivity and export-led growth. With Nigeria's teeming population of youth that are ICT savvy, the country is in position to leverage technology to increase efficiency, accountability, and productivity.

52. Another crucial area of focus is Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Often hailed as the backbone and engine of any economy, SMEs play a pivotal role in driving growth, fostering innovation, and creating jobs.

Regrettably, Nigeria is yet to tap into the great potentials of SMEs to drive growth, open new markets, and provide employment opportunities. Their growth and valuable contributions have been largely undermined by inconsistent government policies, harsh economic environment, high cost of operations, lack of access to funding and poor business practices. The government must prioritize its support for the sector to foster intentional development of this critical sector. Initiatives must be put in place to encourage responsible micro lending, ensuring long-term access to capital, implementing credit guarantee schemes and establishing reasonable lending requirements. Government must also evolve strategies to provide non-financial services to support SMEs, particularly in the area of capacity building.

53. We are in the era where data reigns. To thrive in this new age, a country needs a comprehensive real-time view of its data to gain valuable insights into the needs and priorities of its communities, identify areas of growth opportunity, and effectively track progress towards development goals. In a global list of 30 countries that are leading the data economy, South Africa was the only African country that featured, ranking at 25. If Nigeria aspires to secure its position in the emerging data-driven economy, it must swiftly embark on developing plans for effective data governance.

54. With regards to ease of doing business, Nigeria ranked a dismal 131st out of about 191 countries worldwide as of 2020. This performance speaks

volumes about the dilemma facing Nigerian entities and their competitiveness in the global economy. Much has been said regarding Nigeria's imperative to diversify and embrace non-oil exports to address the deepening forex exchange problem. Significant efforts can be directed towards both the manufacturing sector, which has unfortunately underperformed in the last two decades, and the services sector, which accounted for 52% of the GDP in the third quarter of 2022. Government must remain vigilant of regulations that impede the performance of these sectors and be ready to provide support with incentives that enable them to invest in their workforce for the development of new skills.

55. Government must continue to aggressively address infrastructure constraints, particularly focusing on improving the road networks and digitizing our ports. It is disheartening that our ports which ordinarily should be the catalyst of economic development, have turned into the albatross undermining the system as a result of corruption and myopic management. As part of the efforts to enhance the sustainability of Nigeria's economy across various sectors, the courts must evolve into hubs where a series of good practices promoting quality and efficiency in the court system drive prompt resolution of commercial disputes. Only then can Nigeria attract and retain foreign capital and investment. **If we succeed in reforming Nigeria's judicial sector today, Nigeria will undergo transformative change.** We can also enhance productivity through intellectual property and other tangible assets. By employing the triple helix model of innovation, Nigeria can intentionally align her educational institutions to collaborate with the industries in research and development and also fully tap into the potentials of Artificial Intelligence. This collaboration will foster the development of requisite skills, technology, expertise and improvements in the quality of goods for exports.

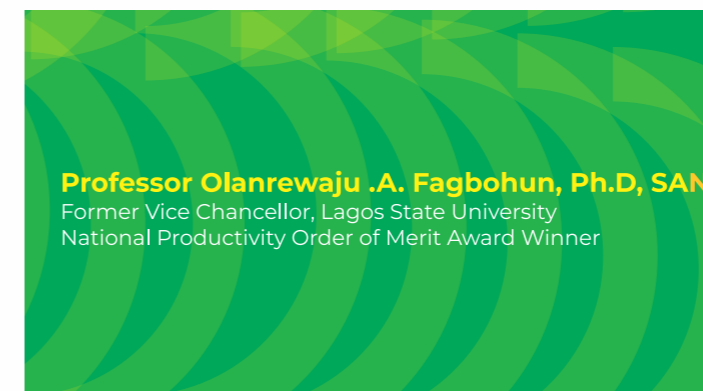
56. In closing this segment, allow me to sound a note of caution. It is fashionable for developing countries in situations similar to Nigeria's to be offered various types of grants, soft loans, concessional trade arrangements, aid for trade, climate change support, capacity development and training assistance by multilateral development banks and financial institutions. Their prescription and strategies are not devoid of politics. In such

circumstances, we must be cautious of inflated expectations. Securing a deal is one thing; ensuring it translates into tangible progress is another. Any assistance that would lead to unsustainable debt burdens for the country or exacerbates the pressure on communities, families and individuals would be meaningless and inappropriate.

## V. Conclusion

57. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the success or failure of endeavours hinges on the individuals involved. Regrettably, for too long, elected leaders and public officials have exploited social divisions among Nigerians along religious and ethnic lines to flout democratic rules and engage in horrifying and shameful corrupt practices to consolidate their hold on power. On the path of the judiciary, which should serve as a check on such abuses, reforms intended to simplify proceedings have paradoxically become more technical and burdensome than the processes they aim to reform. Procedure, rather than justice, has taken precedence, and rights are routinely defeated by wrongs. The once-respected esteem for the law has disappeared, leaving the society hugely demoralized. The current challenges can serve as inspiration for a new Nigeria. The opportunities abound for us to harness in building a prosperous nation, as well as the untapped potential of our vibrant youth population. It is long overdue for Nigeria to shine on the world stage. With determination, innovation, and collective effort, we can realize this vision and pave the way for a brighter future for all Nigerians.

58. I thank you for listening.



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## GOODWILL MESSAGES

**Congratulatory Message to Justice Habeeb Olawale Abiru (JSC)**  
Your newest accomplishment/appointment fills my heart with joy! Stepping into the exalted position of Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria is an exciting feat, and I'm delighted you have this opportunity and recognition. No doubt, your discipline, knowledge, wisdom, hard work, skills, integrity and the will of Allah, have made this possible.

To me and many people, you are a true inspiration. Many will testify to your profound wisdom and courage. Above all, your humility, care, compassion, and love for others are worthy of emulation. Your relationship with people across all strata with the fear of Allah stands you out among noble men. Actions speak louder than words, and yours tell an incredible story.

I strongly believe you will succeed.

I wish you the strength and resilience to overcome any challenge that may come your way and achieve remarkable success. May Allah continue to bless you to be of more service to humanity. Congratulations on your well-deserved elevation.

*Olushola Modeenat Arasi*

Hearty congratulations to  
**Honourable Justice H. A. Abiru (JSC)**,  
eminent Jurist and worthy Ambassador of Deen Islam.  
May Allah guide you in the task ahead.

*Mohammed & Risquat Buari.*

### Ile-Ife Chapter

"And surely, there is not for Man unless what he strives for"  
(Surah al-Najm, Q53:39)

The UNIFEMGA Ile-Ife Chapter joyfully congratulates  
**Professor Olaolu Ali (SAN)** for his recognition as one of the recipients of  
an award and reception arranged by the **UNIFEMGA Lagos Chapter.**

Attaining the position of Professor of Practice in Law is a noteworthy  
accomplishment that signifies years of diligent effort, unwavering dedication,  
and financial contributions toward the advancement of education in Nigeria.

This appointment will no doubt promote the integration of academic  
scholarship with practical experience and may Almighty Allah grant you the  
very best in this world and the hereafter, Aamin.



Our Dear,  
**Habeeb Adewale Olumuyiwa Abiru,**  
Congratulations on your elevation to the position  
of Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.  
May Almighty Allah continue to guide and guard  
you, increasing you in Hikmah and discernment.

May He continually bless you with good health  
and a sound mind, and may you prosper in all  
aspects of your life - Aameen.

*From - The Abiru Family.*

The family of AbdurRasaq Obitayo  
felicitates with  
**Prof Yusuf Olaolu Ali SAN and Justice  
Habeeb Adewale Abiru JSC** for their  
achievements and we pray that Almighty  
Allah will grant them success in the new roles.

Barakallahu Fih, Aameen.

*From Engr & Arc (Alhaja) Abdur Rasaq Obitayo*

Congratulations to  
**Prof. Y. O. Ali (SAN)** as he adds  
another feather to his cap.  
Warafanahu makana aliya .

*Mohammed & Risquat Buari.*

## GOODWILL MESSAGES

### Lagos Chapter

And my success is only through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return." (Quran 11:88)

The UNIFEMGA Lagos Chapter joyfully congratulates Professor Olaolu Ali (SAN) for his recognition as one of the recipients of an award and reception arranged by the UNIFEMGA Lagos Chapter.

Attaining the position of Professor of Practice in Law is a noteworthy accomplishment that signifies years of diligent effort, unwavering dedication, and financial contributions toward the advancement of education in Nigeria.

This appointment will no doubt promote the integration of academic scholarship with practical experience and may Almighty Allah grant you the very best in this world and the hereafter, Aamin.

### Ilorin Chapter

"And those who believe and do good will be the residents of Paradise. They will be there forever." (Quran 2:82)

The UNIFEMGA Ilorin Chapter joyfully congratulates Professor Olaolu Ali (SAN) for his recognition as one of the recipients of an award and reception arranged by the UNIFEMGA Lagos Chapter.

Attaining the position of Professor of Practice in Law is a noteworthy accomplishment that signifies years of diligent effort, unwavering dedication, and financial contributions toward the advancement of education in Nigeria.

This appointment will no doubt promote the integration of academic scholarship with practical experience and may Almighty Allah grant you the very best in this world and the hereafter, Aamin.

### Abuja Chapter

As for those who believe and do good, We certainly never deny the reward of those who are best in deeds." (Quran 18:30).

The UNIFEMGA Abuja Chapter joyfully congratulates Professor Olaolu Ali (SAN) for his recognition as one of the recipients of an award and reception arranged by the UNIFEMGA Lagos Chapter.

Attaining the position of Professor of Practice in Law is a noteworthy accomplishment that signifies years of diligent effort, unwavering dedication, and financial contributions toward the advancement of education in Nigeria.

This appointment will no doubt promote the integration of academic scholarship with practical experience and may Almighty Allah grant you the very best in this world and the hereafter, Aamin.

## TWO IMPORTANT LESSONS PROFESSOR YUSUF OLAOLU ALI, SAN TAUGHT ME.

Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali, SAN has deeply impacted me with his wisdom and compassion, leaving an enduring impression on my life. His teachings resonate with profound simplicity, reminding me of the essence of our shared humanity.

Allow me to share two invaluable lessons I have gleaned from him over the years:

### Lesson One: Universality of Humanity.

With gentle yet firm conviction, Yusuf Olaolu Ali taught me to transcend borders and backgrounds, and to recognise that every individual is a beloved creation of Allah (swt), regardless of thier origin.

His words echo in my mind: "Muri, as a matter of policy, I don't ask anybody where they come from because that is not important to me."

### Lesson Two: Embracing Strengths.

In 2017, he summoned me to Ilorin with his characteristic urgency, emphasizing the importance of our meeting. I promptly arrived and, over breakfast, shared with him a challenging encounter I had experienced with a mutual acquaintance.

Professor Ali listened intently, his silence profound. After Dhur prayer, he grasped my hand and said, "We have already shed some of our sins, let us not add more by discussing another person's faults. We all have shortcomings, but I choose to relate to people based on their strengths and not their failings."

Since then, I have adopted this approach, finding peace of mind and improving my ability to manage people.

May Allah (SWT) bless Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali with a life of goodness, and grant our Ummah more individuals like him.

And beyond wealth and fame, may we all find our place in Al-Jannah tul Firdaws.

Ameen,yah robil alameen.

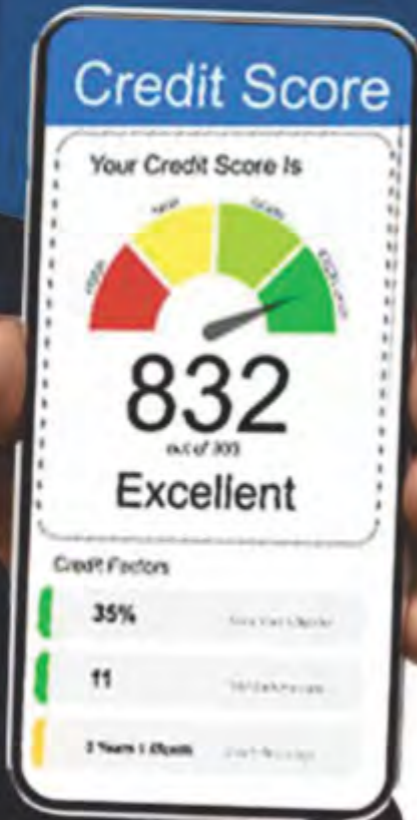
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# THE HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS





## INTRODUCTION

HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS (HP) set to offer relevant and suitable assistance to needy individuals or organizations in a timely, effective and efficient manners.

The Holy Quran noted - "Give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds, that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow..."

**Quran 2: verse 25.**

Also, "the example of those who spent their wealth (e.g., money, time and other resources) in the cause of Allah is that of a grain that sprouts into seven ears each bearing one hundred grains, Allah will multiply the rewards even more to whoever He wills. For Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing" Quran 2: verse 261.

Furthermore, "...Whatever you spent of good, it will be repaid to you in full..." **Quran 2: verse 272.**

## HP AIMS

The Humanitarian Projects aims include but not limited to the following:

- Offering support to the less privileged parents whose children are in state of medical emergency.
- Assisting needy individuals in critical stage to settle medical bills.
- Visitation to organizations including Motherless babies homes, Prisons, hospitals, old people homes to offer support, donations (ranging from food items, used clothes and toiletries etc) and Da'awah activities.
- Visitation and Support needy individuals to meet basic needs – ranging from cash, food, provision of shelter and payment of children school fees.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Application can be through reference or a direct submission of application addressed to the Chairman, Humanitarian Projects or to the association's secretariat stating the area in which assistance is required and provide necessary bio data information which include:

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Address, email and telephone number
- ▶ Gender, purpose.
- ▶ Photos and family background (where necessary).

The information provided will be in strict adherence to the data Protection Act with a view to ensure confidentiality.

### DONATION OR SUPPORTING THE HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS

**Banker:** Keystone Bank Limited  
**Account Number:** 1005490892  
**Account Name:** UNIFEMGA-Lagos Humanitarian

## HP VISION

To be an organization with an epitome of kindness in the Nigeria society.

## HP MISSION

To passionately provides an accessible, equitable, benevolent and empathetic support to needy or vulnerable individuals in the society within affordable scope of the Humanitarian Projects

## PICTURES OF SOME SUCCESSFUL HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS



THP Team during one of their visitation/donation at Kirikiri Correctional facility



Donated bedsheets and pillow cases to Akodo General Hospital Lagos



Donation of mattresses with mackintosh to inmates at Rehabilitation Centre, Ikorodu, Lagos.



THP donated bedsheets and pillow cases at LASUTH General Hospital



Da'awah session with inmates at Rehabilitation Centre, Ikorodu.



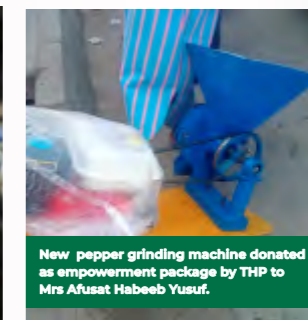
Donation of mattresses to inmates at Kirikiri Correctional facility.



Donation of lunch to serve 1,600 inmates at Rehabilitation Centre, Ikorodu



Dr Fatmat Akhluwal with CMD Lagos Island General Hospital after donation of drugs to the hospital.



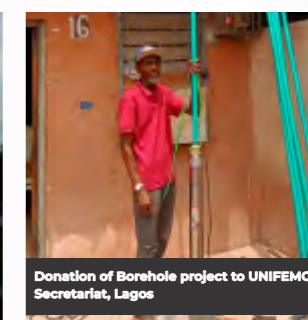
New pepper grinding machine donated as empowerment package by THP to Mrs Afusat Habeeb Yusuf.



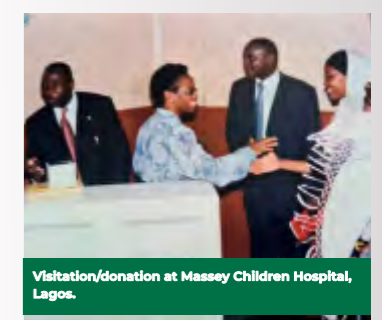
Donated foods stuff and cooking utensils to inmates at Rehabilitation Centre, Ikorodu, Lagos.



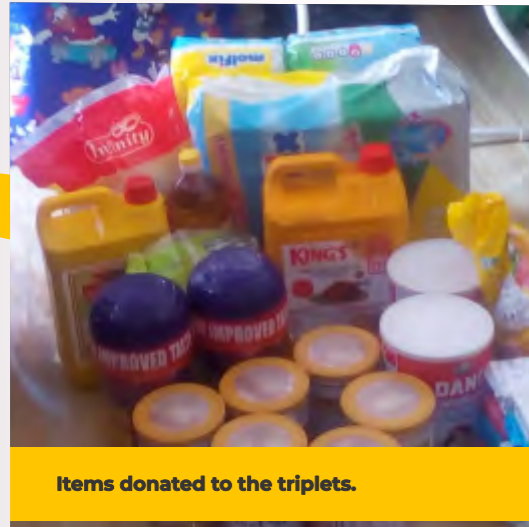
Roofing of mosque at Rehabilitation Centre, Ikorodu, Lagos.



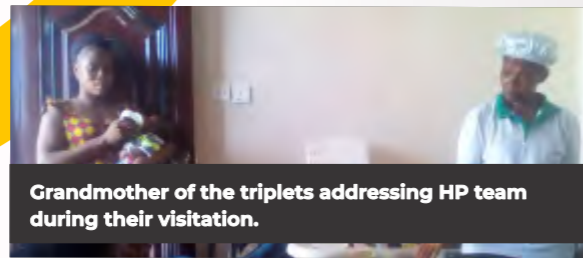
Donation of Borehole project to UNIFEMGA Secretariat, Lagos



Visitation/donation at Massey Children Hospital, Lagos.



Items donated to the triplets.



Grandmother of the triplets addressing HP team during their visitation.



Alhaji Abdulrasaq Obitayo team to visit the new triplets babies at Iyana-Iba Lagos. The babies lost their Mom immediately after delivery.

## ENQUIRIES

All questions or concerns to be directed to the Administrative Secretary at the **UNIFEMGA secretariat** located at **NO 16 Sanya Street, Surulere Lagos State** who will channel accordingly.

☎ 0803 578 2850

✉ [dhumanitarianprojects@gmail.com](mailto:dhumanitarianprojects@gmail.com)

📘 [the-humanitarian-projects](https://www.facebook.com/the-humanitarian-projects)

## GOODWILL MESSAGES

### Kudos to a Beacon of Inspiration

Paying tribute to Prof. Yusuf Ali, SAN, as a Professor of Practice of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, is a significant way to acknowledge his exceptional contributions and expertise in the field of law. Prof. Ali, distinguished as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), a philanthropist, embodies a rare blend of practical experience and academic prowess, making him an invaluable asset in the legal and the academic communities.

The choice of Prof. Ali for this great achievement is not an accident as he has demonstrated his very high propensity for academic engagements as he has produced scholarly articles and published books to justify this elevation.

His journey as a legal luminary is marked by a commitment to excellence, ethical practice, and a deep understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of law. This unique combination enables him to impart real-world knowledge and insights to students, bridging the often-discernible gap between academic study and legal practice.

As a Professor of Practice, Prof. Ali will influence a new generation of lawyers, instilling in them not just the knowledge of law, but also the nuances of its application in real-life scenarios. His role in mentoring and shaping future legal minds cannot be overstated. His contributions extend beyond the classroom, influencing policy, legal reform, and the upholding of justice.

Moreover, his commitment to public service and pro bono work sets a high standard for professional responsibility, showcasing how legal expertise can be harnessed for the greater good of society.

Prof. Ali's legacy as a Professor of Practice is thus a beacon of inspiration, representing the pinnacle of professional achievement combined with academic contribution and societal impact.

*(Professor Wahab O. Egbewole, SAN, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Nigeria)*

### Celebrating a Win-Win Appointment

In today's university system, university administrations are thinking outside the box and instituting innovative policies to enhance their global competitiveness. One of such is the appointment of personalities who have recorded remarkable achievements in their chosen professions, outside academia, as Professors of Practice. In 2023, the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, appointed Mallam Yusuf Olaolu Ali, SAN, as a Professor of Practice in Law. With a first degree in Law from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife, a second degree in Law from the same university and an unmistakable propensity for canonising his thoughts in the publication of academically well-received books and respectable articles, Mallam Ali's is a befitting potentially immensely rewarding appointment.

The rewards guaranteed by this appointment include the unique exposure of both students and lecturers of the Faculty of Law at FUOYE to the benefits of a long-term practical experience of a personage who has not only reached the top of the profession by becoming a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, but has also earned a reputation for being a fearless, cerebral, erudite and diligent lawyer who has vast experience in various areas of the profession. One other guaranteed reward is the benefit of his academic experience since Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali has had prior appointment as an Associate Lecturer of Law at the University of Ilorin. Moreover, the appointment would be of immense benefit to the leadership of the university, since Professor Ali has been the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Osun State University, Osogbo. In fact, he is the immediate past-Chairman of the Committee of Pro-Chancellors of State-Owned Universities in Nigeria (COPSUN), and his tenure was marked by enduring legacies. But the benefits of this distinguished appointment are not one-way. As a win-win appointment, it would be immensely beneficial to Professor Yusuf Olaolu Ali too. First, it would give him the opportunity to familiarise himself more with current intellectual thoughts on legal issues in, especially, Nigeria. It would also be invaluable to him with the respect to the excitement that comes with doing something significantly new and more refreshing, and thereby facilitating innovation in his practice of law. Professor Ali is a personable gentleman – ever so willing to identify with his friends; ever so willing, in the Kájolà ('Let's thrive together') spirit, to promote the growth of all around him; and ever so willing to celebrate their successes.

So, as this new potentially mutually rewarding intellectual relationship begins, I wish FUOYE and our new Professor of Practice in Law all the best all the way.

*(Professor Yisa Kehinde Yusuf, former Dean, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and former External Member of the Governing Council, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri)*

### Yusuf Olaolu Ali: Leading Light in Law and Catalyst to Human Development

"Lives of great men all remind us that we can make our lives sublime and departing or leave behind us, footprints on the sands of time" – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

"The legal practitioner lives for the direction of his people and the advancement of the cause of his Country" – Sir Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams

No society can make progress without a strong legal foundation. Critical socio-economic and political issues of rule of law, human rights, poverty, corruption, food security, unemployment, gender discrimination, among others, are rooted in law and policies. Bro Olaolu, Notary Public, SAN, Arbitrator, Academic, Author, Professor, is no doubt a leading light and



