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AN ADDRESS



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DELIVERED BY:

PROFESSOR CHIGOZIE C.
ASIABAKA <sup>KSM,
JP</sup>
THE VICE CHANCELLOR



ON THE OCCASION OF THE

CONVOCATION LECTURE

OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI

On Thursday, December 1, 2011

WELCOME ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR C. C. ASIABAKA, KSM, JP, VICE-CHANCELLOR, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI AT THE 24TH CONVOCATION LECTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY, ON THURSDAY DECEMBER 1, 2011.

PROTOCOL

On behalf of the Chancellor, Management, Senate, Congregation, Staff and Students of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, I most heartily and warmly welcome you all to the 24th Convocation Lecture of our University; the first since my assumption of office as the 6th substantive Vice-Chancellor of this University about five months ago. I am therefore happy and delighted to play host to this wonderful and distinguished audience as we have in this hall today.

I welcome most respectfully our able, resourceful and achievement-oriented host Governor, His Excellency. **OWELLE ROCHAS OKOROCHA** OON, our Honourable and indefatigable Minister of Education, **PROFESSOR (MRS) RUQUAYYATU AHMED RUFAI** OON, the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, **PROFESSOR JULIUS A. OKOJIE** OON, my colleagues, the visiting Vice-Chancellors and Heads of other tertiary institutions and other very special guests here present. I am especially delighted that in spite of your busy schedules you have graciously honoured our invitation, and found time to be here today to share this academic fellowship with the FUTO community. You are most welcome and we thank God for granting you journey mercy to our campus.

Let me also most respectfully acknowledge in a special way the esteemed presence of the man of the day, our most distinguished Guest Lecturer and by all means a courageous, eloquent and distinguished Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As you all know he is valuable stakeholder of our dear University, an illustrious Igbo son and a hard-fighting champion of the cause of the Igbo nation. He is no other than Senator Uche Chukwumerije CON, the 24th Convocation Lecturer of the Federal University of Technology Owerri. Our respected Senator is a household name in Nigeria and does not really need much introduction in our University. We are proud that his dear son, an alumnus of FUTO, had won national and international honours in sports not only for this University, but also for our nation Nigeria. ¹

May I, on behalf of the entire University Community Congratulate you, our beloved brother, and Guest speaker on the recent conferment on you of the prestigious National

Honour of **Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON)** by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, **DR. GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN, GCFR**, on Monday November 14, 2011. We have no doubt that his honour, which is richly and well-deserved, will serve as added tonic for more commitment and enhanced contributions to the development and transformation of our dear nation. This is especially important for the realization of the current transformation agenda of the Federal Government. May I also take the liberty of this occasion to most humbly and respectfully thank and commend our University Visitor Mr. President, for giving Honour to whom Honour is due.

Also I should note that our distinguished Guest Lecturer is the current Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education. Those of us charged with the arduous task of serving as Administrators and leaders in the University System, are acutely aware that it is a tedious, difficult and time-consuming task to manage men, materials and the social environment in a global austere economic climate. We can then imagine how busy and committed our Guest Lecturer must be in his present capacity as the Chairman of the highest parliamentary organ of the nation, responsible for maintaining oversight functions on the whole three tiers of education in this country. This is, by no means, a mean task. For him to be her with us as Convocation Lecturer therefore inspite of his understandably crowded daily schedules, is a clear evidence of his selflessness, patriotism, and his unflinching commitment to the development of education in our country. Our distinguished Senator Sir, FUTO community is indeed honoured and most grateful for your cherished presence on our campus today. It goes to reassure us of your love for us and for our Institution.

On our side, it is no doubt a reassuring feat for this administration to have successfully attracted such a distinguished personality to address us on this important Convocation occasion. It is for me a great achievement for which I feel personally proud, in consonance with our determination and quest for excellence in this University.

Honourable Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, permit me to add that going by his pedigree, antecedents, rich background, knowledge, experience and wide exposure, our distinguished and respected Senator is eminently qualified any day and any time to serve as a Convocation Lecturer in any University here and elsewhere. Furthermore we are delighted that he has resolved to focus on a very crucial topic of current interest and great importance to Nigerian Education. **“THE COLLAPSE OF NIGERIA'S TERTIARY EDUCATION- CALL FOR A MARTIAL PLAN”**.

As we are aware, it is an incontrovertible fact that the foundation upon which tertiary education rests has for long been under severe threat by a variety of factors. This has been worrisome to managers of the system. It is however consoling and nerve soothing

that this sorry-state of affair is not only a source of concern to the highest legislative body of the nation – the Senate, but has also been receiving their deserved attention. This fact finds expression in today's submission and call by the distinguished Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman Senate Committee on Education for a martial plan to halt the decay and imminent collapse of this indispensable sector of the nation. All hands must therefore be on deck to ensure that something is done in this regard, and urgently too, to revive the system and restore the enviable glory and standards that had hitherto characterized the tertiary as well as other levels in the Nigeria Education System.

As we settle down therefore for today's special and sumptuous academic meal from our Convocation Lecturer, I am pretty certain that we shall all leave here adequately fed and abundantly satisfied that our Guest Lecturer has done a good job. On this very optimistic note therefore it is now my pleasure to invite the University Orator, **Professor Moses O. E. Iwuala**, to please proceed to unveil and present to this distinguished assembly the man of the moment, our distinguished 24th Convocation Lecturer- **SENATOR UCHE CHUKWUMERIJE, CON.**

Thank you and God bless.

PROFESSOR CHIGOZIE C. ASIABAKA, KSM, JP
Vice-Chancellor