

ADDRESS OF HON. JUSTICE B.A. ADEJUMO OFR AT THE EV

ADDRESS OF HON. JUSTICE B.A. ADEJUMO OFR AT THE EVENT TO MARK THE CONFERMENT OF NATIONAL HONOUR OF OFR ON HIS LORDSHIP AT LADI KWALI HALL SHERATON ABUJA ON MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER, 2008

PROTOCOLS

It is my pleasure to welcome everyone here present to this luncheon/reception to mark the conferment of the National Honour of the Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) on me by His Excellency, the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua GCFR.

I am highly honoured by the revered presence of everyone here, having in mind the fact that few days to two important festive periods such as the Christmas and New Year celebration are always crucial to all and sundry for preparation. This is one special reason why I am delighted that you could find time out of your busy schedule to be present. I therefore sincerely say a hearty thank you.

Your letter of congratulations and expressions of love and encouragement are appreciated. Words cannot adequately convey the joy in my heart over your nice words about me.

I thank Almighty Allah, who has spared our lives to witness this day.

I wholeheartedly thank our President, His Excellency, Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua GCFR for the honour bestowed on me. My profound gratitude goes to the Honourable The Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon Justice I.L. Kutigi, GCON for His Lordship's continuous support and assistance to the National Industrial Court.

My appreciation goes to the appointing Authority, those who nominated me for the Award and those who made this day a reality.

How I wish my mother were to be alive today to witness this important day in the life of her son. This is not so because death the ultimate and the only thing that is certain in life has taken her away a year ago. She died at the age of 92 years. My mother was a loving and caring mother. She was a sweet mother. She taught us her children, good virtues. She suffered to bring her children up. I thank you Mama. This honour would have been dedicated to you if you were alive today.

As for my father, I never knew him as he died three months before my birth. Nevertheless, I am proud that he was my father.

I thank both my late father and mother for bringing me to this life. May their souls rest in peace.

I thank all my relations who have contributed in one way or the other to my successes in life, particularly members of my mother's family. They have been fantastic in their support towards my upbringing and seeing me a success.

It will be unappreciative of me if I fail to mention the contributions of people like Justice Mustafa Akanbi CFR, former President of the Court of Appeal.

My Lord always encourages me to work harder and maintain high standard of discipline because people are watching and that good work will never go unrewarded either here on earth or hereafter. My Lord, words of mouth cannot be sufficient to thank you. May Allah continue to guide, guard and reward your Lordship.

My Lord, Late Hon. Justice Olajide Olatawura JSC, (CON) was a fine, gentle, amiable and considerate father. I came to know My Lord, in 1995 when I was appointed the Deputy Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Then My Lord was the Administrator of the National Judicial Institute (NJI). Since My Lord was like a father to me, he was always guiding and advising me. He made me to understand that the Bench is where I belong. Until his death a few weeks ago, he was always concerned about my success. My Lord in your death I still remember you. I will continue to thank you for all you have done for me as long as I live. May your gentle soul find a place in the bosom of your Lord. (Amen).

I sincerely appreciate the cooperation and support of my brother Judges of the National Industrial Court, the Chief Registrar and the entire Staff. They have all contributed to my being honoured today. I say thank you.

I thank my wife Mrs. Aminat Adejumo and her family and our loving children too who have all supported me in attaining this height. I also appreciate the individual and collective contributions of people who are behind my success and joy. I thank His Royal Highness Oba Jimoh Daodu, the Akala of Ikaram-Akoko and the entire people of my community in Ikaram-Akoko in Ondo State. I thank His Lordship, Hon. Justice Adeloje, retired Chief Judge of Ondo State who appointed me a Chief Magistrate in Ondo State in 1994. While thanking those who are alive, I most not fail to thank others who have contributed to my life. In this vein I thank Late Hon. Justice Mohammed Bello, the then Chief Justice of Nigeria who appointed me a

Deputy Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court in 1995. I also seize this opportunity to thank the Late Hon. Justice Ogunleye, who was my Chief Judge for about three years in Ondo State before his demise. These great men contributed immensely to my judicial career. May their souls rest in peace. I also thank all Nigerians on behalf of whom the honour is conferred on me.

I am mindful of the fact that there are thousands of Nigerians who are eminently qualified for National Honours, but are yet to be recognized. I have no doubt in my mind that surely, a day will come when such people too will mount the podium of honour.

This award will definitely serve as a motivation for me to work harder for the advancement of the National Industrial Court, the Nigerian Judiciary and the progress of the Nation at large.

Today marks another historical milestone in my life because I am happy that my little contributions to the advancement of the Nation's Judiciary as a whole,

the National Industrial Court in particular, my fellow Nigerians and our great Country is appreciated.

In my brief sojourn in politics where I was a Honourable member of Ondo State House of Assembly and Chairman House Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Public Petition from 1991 to 1993, I contributed my best. The challenges of that office gave me progressive insight into the workings of the judiciary hence, I made up my mind to take up a career on the bench and in my short sojourn in the Nation's Judiciary, first as a Chief Magistrate in Ondo State Judiciary, a Deputy Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and Secretary, Advisory Judicial Committee, Secretary Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee, Judge of the High Court of Ondo State and presently the President, National Industrial Court, I have always set for myself a goal of improving whatever the state of any Institution I find myself.

The meteoric rise of the National Industrial Court is an example of my passion to make a good institution better and a better institution, the best.

The enactment of National Industrial Court Act 2006 (NICA 2006) by the National Assembly culminating in its signing on the 14th June 2006 by the then President of Nigeria is a giant stride towards the repositioning of the Court. The creation of Eight Divisions, appointment of Six new Judges bringing the number of Judges to Ten, creating awareness to Nigerians, the making of new Rules of Court, New Practice Direction for the Court, and Robbing by the Honourable Judges of the Court and members of the bar during their appearances in Court are evidence of our collective efforts towards repositioning the Court.

It is pertinent to state that the National Industrial Court was 25years old when I stepped into the mantle of the headship of the Court on 5th of May, 2003. During our 25th Anniversary, which took place between 5th – 7th November, 2003, I did say that this is my Vision and Mission for the Court. “.....to work hard and uplift the Court to an enviable state through all lawful means”

Glory be to God the Almighty and those who made it possible for the old Court of Appeal and it's appurtenances to be allocated to the National Industrial Court as its permanent Headquarters.

One may continue to count on and on efforts we have painstakingly invested in taking the Court out of the woods to the height it has now attained today; from taking the Court from a slum in Victoria Island at No. 22, Oju Olobun Street to a State of the art Court at 31, Lugard Avenue, Ikoyi Lagos.

We must not forget to thank His Excellency, the Governor of Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola SAN who assisted us when he was the Chief of Staff to the then Governor Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu when we ran into problem in the building of our permanent site at Lugard Ikoyi, Lagos.

We thank the Hon. President of the Court of Appeal who as a father has engendered a smooth handing over of the said property to National Industrial Court. National Industrial Court has since taken physical possession of the old Court of Appeal at Area 3, Garki, Abuja.

I thank the Hon. Chief Justice of Nigeria for His Lordship's fatherly role and support for the Court since His Lordship assumed the leadership of the Nigeria Judiciary. I must not forget the noble roles played by the Chairman of today My Lord, Hon. Justice M.L. Uwais GCON, former Chief Justice of Nigeria who recommended me for appointment as a Judge in 1998 and also recommended me for appointment as the President National Industrial Court in 2003. I also thank My Lord Hon. Justice S.M.A. Belgore GCON former Chief Justice of Nigeria for the part played by their Lordships in the process of repositioning the National Industrial Court.

My appreciation goes to my Lords of various jurisdictions who inspite of their tight schedules are able to grace this occasion particularly my Lords Justices of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

My profound gratitude goes to both out-going and in-coming Hon. Minister for Labour, Employment and Productivity for the

tremendous cooperation the Court enjoyed from them in their various portfolios.

I also thank the past two Attorneys General of the Federation and Minister of Justice as well as the present Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Federation for their support towards the repositioning of the National Industrial Court.

We are eternally grateful to the distinguished Hon. Members of the National Assembly who in their wisdom found it fit and proper to enact National Industrial Court Act 2006. Besides, they have been contributing immensely to the repositioning of our Court.

Our efforts towards the repositioning of the National Industrial Court are still ongoing. It is our collective responsibility to work towards the up-liftment and development of Nigeria. In this vein, I humbly call on all stake holders, Members of the Bar, the Organized Labour, Nigeria Employer Consultative Association, the Academicians and our respected members of the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly to see to the inclusion of the National Industrial Court in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to be reviewed. When this is done, it will finally lay to rest the Constitutional controversy trailing the Court.

May God continue to bless our great Country, Nigeria.

Thank you all for gracing this occasion.