



WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT/CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL, THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF BANKERS OF NIGERIA (CIBN), PROFESSOR SEGUN AJIBOLA, Ph.D., FCIB ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2017 ANNUAL LECTURE WITH THE THEME: NATIONAL INTEGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND THE CHALLENGE OF ECONOMIC POLICY MAKING HELD AT THE BANKERS HOUSE ON THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2017.

Protocol

On behalf of the Governing Council, Members, Management and Staff of the Institute, it gives me great pleasure to extend our warm welcome to you all distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen who have honoured our invitation to be at this Annual Lecture. I am delighted that you are able to join us to make this event a memorable one.

For 27 years, we have established the tradition of holding the Annual Lecture with the aim of bringing together policy makers, business leaders and academics to discuss matters of public policy and interest. This year's Lecture with the topic **National Integration, Citizenship and the Challenge of Economic Policy Making** is therefore not an exception. I must say that the topic is aptly timed given the current agitations for sovereign ethnic identities going on in all parts of the country.

It is also unique because after several years of experimenting with Panel Discussion, we are reverting to using just only the Guest Lecturer. This is to allow the Lecturer develop a well-researched paper that would do justice to the topic and have enough time for presentation.

It is particularly fulfilling that we have no less a personality than Professor Osita Ogbu, Professor of Economics and Director, Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to deliver the Lecture. An erudite scholar, a development economist and policy study expert, Professor Ogbu's experience, spanning over 25 years in both public and private spheres, occupying strategic leadership positions made him the first choice of the Institute to address the issue.

I would like to also specially recognize the Chairman of today's Lecture, Mr. Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, CON, FCIB, President, Nigerian Stock Exchange. Mr Aig-Imoukhuede's contribution to banking and finance sector in the country has been outstanding and the industry continues to rely on his vast experience on topical issues aimed at moving the industry and country forward.



It is also worthy of note that the planning of this Annual Lecture has benefitted immensely from the experience and commitment of members of the Research, Strategy and Advocacy Committee (RSA) Committee of the Institute. This Committee is ably chaired by Mr. Ifie Sekibo, HCIB, The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Heritage Bank Limited who is ably represented today by the Vice-Chairman, Dr Tunji Sobodu.

Distinguished audience, allow me to underscore that the imperative of national integration for sustainable growth and development in a highly diverse and dispersed country like Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. There is no gainsaying the fact that national integration and successful policy planning and implementation are inseparable. Indeed, it would be a misnomer to assume that any economic policy would succeed without the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens while respecting their respective ethnic, cultural, religious and social affiliations.

Nigeria as a country has been estimated to have over 250 ethnic groups each with its own expectations and desires from the national government. It would therefore be playing the ostrich denying that these social dynamics would have overarching implications on economic policy making and implementation. These dynamics have, over the years, manifested in various ways such as centrifugal tension, self-determination ethnicity and religious consciousness. I wish to therefore state that national integration is predicated on the mobilization of the citizenry just as it is enhanced through appropriate economic policy.

Let me inform this distinguished audience that the CIBN, in addition to its capacity building mandate in the industry, continues to play strategic roles in policy formulation and implementation in the country. The Institute makes regular inputs into the various bills affecting banking and allied matters in the National Assembly the most recent being the participation at the Stakeholders Roundtable to address increasing interest rates in Nigeria organized by the Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance and Financial Institutions.

We are fortunate to have the support of Access Bank Plc and appreciate the Bank for its consistent support. Similarly, this Lecture has enjoyed the immense support from the management of Eko Hotels & Suites



I anticipate a candid, enthusiastic and engaging Questions and Answers Session while hoping at the end of the Lecture, our best passion towards further committing to national integration would have been aroused.

Once again, let me express my deepest gratitude to you for sparing valuable time to be here with us.

God bless and thank you for listening.

Professor Segun Ajibola, Ph.D., FCIB

President/Chairman of Council, CIBN

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