



**REMARKS OF PROFESSOR RAHAMON A. BELLO *FAEng*  
AT HIS INVESTITURE CEREMONY AS VICE-CHANCELLOR  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2013  
IN THE MAIN AUDITORIUM, MAIN CAMPUS, AKOKA**

Governor of Ogun State, Senator Ibikunle Amosu,  
The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of UNILAG Governing Council, Deacon (Dr.)  
Gamaliel O. Onosode *OFR*,  
Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of University of Ibadan Governing Council, **Chief  
Wole Olanipekun, SAN**  
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Research), **Professor Babajide Alo, FAS**,  
The Registrar, **Oluwarotimi O. A. Shodimu, Esq**,  
The Bursar, **Mr. L. A. Odekunle**,  
The Acting Librarian, **Dr. Okanlawon Adediji**,  
Provost of the College of Medicine, **Professor Sade Ogunsola**,  
Deans here present,  
Directors and Heads of Departments and Units,  
Vice-Chancellors and representatives of other universities,  
Presidents and Representatives of Professional bodies,  
Members of the Alumni Association, here present,  
Our Dear Students,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Gentlemen of the Press,

It is my singular honour and great pleasure to address this gathering on the occasion of this epoch-making Investiture Ceremony. Today is a historic day in the life of University of Lagos, as this is the first Investiture Ceremony of a Vice-Chancellor.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, any person conversant with contemporary developments in our University will agree with me that there is no better note for me to start this address than to give glory to Almighty God for his total control of my life to this moment and for his divine grace on me which has led to the event of today. I express intense appreciation to the

President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, **GCFR**, the Governing Council and the Senate of our University following my appointment as the 11<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos with effect from November 12, 2012.

It will be recalled that following the sudden, sad and shocking death of our 10<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adetokunbo Babatunde Sofoluwe, **FAS**, the Governing Council appointed me to serve as the Acting Vice-Chancellor for six months from May 12 to November 12, 2012. I want to seize the opportunity of this address to thank all the stakeholders of this University for extending their unreserved cooperation to me and other members of the management team of this great University during this period. I also want to pray to God to comfort the family of our late Vice-Chancellor while praying for the repose of his soul.

To say that I am grateful to staff and students, especially Senate and the Governing Council led by Deacon (Dr.) Gamaliel Onosode, **OFR**, will amount to expressing the very obvious. The University of Lagos is poised to achieve even higher levels of recognition and impact because of your special talents and the energy that you all devote to making this University a great institution.

I want to assure you that I cherish your goodwill and support, which I do not take for granted. I want to pledge that in the conduct of the University's affairs, I will apply justice, fairness and equity.

I thank my wife and family. We have been a team for years. We will not be on this stage today were it not for your commitments to keeping our family balanced, and for your steady support as I took on increasingly larger



challenges. I thank you all for your love, and for seeing possibilities in me that I could not see.

I also want to appreciate my professional colleagues here, Fellows of Nigerian Academy of Engineering and Nigerian Society of Engineers, my classmate (UNIFE '74), my community friends from Yewaland and all who are able to be part of this event. Today's event is a powerful personal experience which my family and friends are also honoured to be part of.

This event, with all of its pomp and pageantry, offers an opportunity for us to celebrate our University and its heritage as we mark a passage in leadership; as well as renew our commitment to the values and goals that have helped this extraordinary University to thrive for half a century.

As we continue to march along the path of excellence, let me highlight some of our plans to take the University of Lagos to the number one spot in Africa and a comfortable position in the league of top-class universities in the world:

### **1. INFRASTRUCTURE:**

We have commenced the process of upgrading teaching infrastructure in the University. As part of the upgrading exercise, each classroom will be rehabilitated and have interactive ICT board, internet connectivity, air-conditioning and comfortable seats and all conveniences as necessary. A new 15-floor library, befitting the current and future needs of University of Lagos is in the offing. Both the upgrading and the new library are to be funded with the TETFUND N3billion high impact intervention.

On infrastructural development, a new thrust is being put in place, due to the constraint on available land for the University. Vertical developments have to

be effected from now on. Hence, all new buildings are to be designed for a minimum of 12 floors irrespective of how many floors are to be immediately constructed. This will make expansion easier in the future.

## **2. RESEARCH**

Research activities are being re-engineered to put Unilag back on the league of leading research institutions. Senate just endorsed the establishment of a Research Development and Innovation Office. Full time Research Fellows are to:

- coordinate multidisciplinary research proposal development
- attract research grant locally and internationally
- carry out intellectual property right registration as necessary
- find end-users for research results and commence the process of fund generation through research and development of industrial parks.

## **3. e-ADMINISTRATION**

We are poised to effect immediate changes in the way things are done in the University. ICT application will not only be limited to teaching and research, e-administration has commenced in earnest and paper conservation in the University is bound to be down by 50 percent by the time the first phase is concluded. Meetings will be conducted on e-platform and documents will be stored on virtual database as well.

#### **4. ENDOWMENT AND DONATIONS**

The University has been lucky in the last while and a few remarkable projects have been endowed. These include:

##### **a. NIMASA MARITIME INSTITUTE**

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has concluded plans to build a Maritime Institute which is to cost N1billion and to provide facilities for training human resources for the maritime industry.

##### **b. CBN ULTRA MODERN “CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE “ PROJECT**

The Central Bank of Nigeria has commenced the construction of an ultra-modern “Centre of Excellence” in the University of Lagos. When completed, the centre will include an 8-storey Faculty Building and 7-storey Five-Star Hostel.

These and others still being pursued will add to other additional teaching and research resources being promised by agencies and philanthropists.

#### **5. STAFF AND STUDENT WELFARE**

This administration will respect and honour all statutory rights of all members of staff and will be fair and just in its dealings with all members of the community.

Continuous dialogue with all the staff unions will be employed to resolve all possible issues that may arise. Payment of salaries and allowances will be assured as at when due.



Accommodation challenges for both staff and students are to be ameliorated through the BOT arrangements for hostels and staff accommodation. These will be pursued to find fund shortly.

As to student unionism, processes are already in place to ensure the restoration of full student unionism at the University of Lagos, soonest. The successes recorded so far will be used as the springboard. All students are enjoined to eschew violence and other negative activities to enable this transition to be smooth.

## **CONCLUSION:**

At this juncture, I seek your indulgence for us to consider the popular tale of the elephant and the blind men. In that story, each man touched a different part of the animal and they all came away with widely divergent impressions of what it was that they were touching.

As highlighted in that story, the elephant represents the future, which we all have different visions of. In other words, we do not know yet the true nature of the future. However, we all can act to shape that future. Now, as we did in the past, is the time to recommit ourselves to being a University that makes a major difference. I believe the way you make a difference in the future is by focusing on both the fundamentals and the big drivers in the present.

Teaching and research are the heart of what we do at University of Lagos. Nothing else matters if we do not get this right. Our goal at all times must be to provide the highest quality education and lead in conducting and disseminating important research.

Through team-work, open administration and democratic governance; we are poised to do our best to take the University to an enviable height. Our sole aim is to make the University of Lagos to be number one in Africa in the next few years and one of the best 100 universities globally as soon as possible. We cannot do this alone; all hands must be on deck. This means that there must be a synergy among the University Management, the students, staff and other stakeholders. By stakeholders here I am referring to you all. You are our stakeholders. I seize this opportunity to urge you to join forces with us at the University through patronage of our endowment, sponsorship of intellectual programmes such as conferences, seminars, workshops and provision of scholarship to our students.

On this note, I thank you for your kind attention.

**PROFESSOR RAHAMON A. BELLO *FAEng***  
**VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2013**