



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

A CALL TO DUTY FOR ENGINEERS AND POLITICIANS

Being Full Text of the Speech Delivered by the President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Engr. Adekunle Mokuolu, FNSE, at the Society's 10th Fellowship Conferment Lecture and Ceremony, held on Friday, March 22, 2019, at the International Conference Centre, Abuja

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 10th Fellowship Conferment Lecture and Ceremony for which we are gathered here today was originally scheduled to hold on January 18, 2019. It had to be rescheduled a couple of times because the attention of government and politicians were shifted to the then imminent general elections. We are grateful to God for the successful conduct of the elections and for the prevalent peace in most part of the country, which has provided the opportune ambience to congregate here this evening.

On behalf of the Council of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), I sincerely welcome you all to this colourful ceremony.

I feel very elated standing before you right now because the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, FNSE, GCFR, has given all Engineers something to cheer about by signing the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) Amendment Act into law just this afternoon. That new amendment has broadened the authority of COREN with far-reaching powers of prosecution of infractions in the industry. I therefore, start my address by giving very warm felicitations to all Nigerian Engineers for this accomplishment. It is a vehicle that will propel this country to the next level.

In anticipation of the amendment of the COREN Act, the NSE has since embarked on seeking ways of building linkages and opening frontiers even beyond our shores, for the purpose of creating opportunities for knowledge and business exchanges with countries with similar experiences of infrastructure deficit with Nigeria. In that regard, we reached out to foreign embassies of such countries especially in Asia, one of which is the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. The Ambassador of the Republic

of Korea, Mr. Lee In-Tae is here with us this evening with his Trade and Economic Counselor. It is our fervent hope that the new law will further strengthen our discussions.

Tonight, we will be conferring the prestigious title of FELLOW on thirty-nine deserving members of the Society who have been found worthy after going through a rigorous screening exercise. I congratulate the new Fellows and their families for achieving this milestone in their lives through dint of hard work and diligent service to the Society and the profession.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it will seem to many that Nigerian Engineers are over flogging the subject of infrastructure development in our discourses, but I say that it is only the man who is truly ignorant about the significance of infrastructure to human and national development that would insinuate that. Discourses in infrastructure development in Nigeria will remain on the front burner until we significantly reduce the huge infrastructure deficit in our country. A major component of tonight's event is a Lecture which will dwell on infrastructure development from the perspective of Financing. And we will hear from no less an authority than a development banker and the Chief Financier of Infrastructure in Nigeria, the Acting Managing Director & CEO of the Infrastructure Bank Plc, Mr. Ross Oluyede. There is no doubt that he will do justice to the topic, "*Financing Infrastructure Projects in Nigeria: The Role of the Infrastructure Bank*".

My dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I must address our political elite in Nigeria. First, I congratulate the President and Commander-in-Chief, President Muhammadu Buhari, FNSE, GCFR on his electoral victory. I also congratulate all other politicians who won their various elections as Governors, Senators, House of Representative Members and into other positions.

Particularly and with great elation and expectation, I congratulate our Members who are Governors-elect and Deputy Governors-elect in their various States, namely, His Excellency, Engr. David Umahi, FNSE, Re-elected Governor of Ebonyi State; Engr. Oluseyi Makinde, FNSE, the Governor-elect of Oyo State; Engr. Abdullahi Alhaji Sule, FNSE, Governor-elect of Nassarawa State; Engr. Babagana Umara Zulum, FNSE, Governor-elect of Borno State; Engr. Raufu Olaniyan, FNSE, Deputy Governor-elect of Oyo State; Engr. Hamzat Obafemi, FNSE, Deputy Governor-elect of Lagos State and Engr. Niomot Salako-Oyedele, FNSE, Deputy Governor-elect of Ogun State. And there are many Senators, House of Representatives Members and House of Assembly Members on the list.

I hereby send a reminder to our politicians that Nigerians have, once again, done their parts by going out to queue under the sun to vote for them, even at the risk of losing

their lives in some places. Beyond the elections, what these poor Nigerians expect is for the politicians to fulfil their own part of the bargain by making life better with provision of basic critical infrastructure. Such a simple expectation!

I want to assure all elected Engineers that the NSE, your primary constituency, is well positioned to make very light, the burden of delivering on your campaign promises so that your people will willingly give you another mandate. And then we would have proven to Nigerians that only Engineers can deliver true democratic dividends. I believe that it will still be consistent with democratic principles if Nigerians in all the 36 States demand that only Engineers should be their Governors and Deputy Governors, and that can only happen when Nigerians have enjoyed your skillful management of resources and State affairs for their wellbeing.

Ladies and gentlemen, leaders who are truly leaders put their own interests in abeyance while pursuing the general interest and seeking ways to move the populace into a prosperous future. Leaders sacrifice what they have to protect and save what belongs to the people. The Nigerian political elite must realise that it is only when we feel protected and cared for that we can march behind them and proudly call ourselves their followers. I personally hold the conviction that the worst disability is the disability of the mind. A disabled mind is one that is filled with the thoughts that the wellbeing and happiness of others must be subjugated to their own wellbeing and happiness.

May we not have mind-disabled politicians in Nigeria (Amen).

Thank you for your attention. God bless you all.

Engr. Adekunle Mokuolu, FNSE
President