

Valedictory Address

By

Mr. Chidi Onyeukwu Ajaegbu, FCS, MBF, Dip. (Polygraph), FCA
50th & Golden Jubilee President
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria

At The

Special Council Meeting

Held On

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Your Excellency, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, CON, FCA

Executive Governor of Ogun State

Your Excellency, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, FCA

Executive Governor of Lagos State

The Vice President, Otunba Samuel Olufemi Deru, FCA

The Doyen, Mr. Akintola Williams, B.Comm, CBE, CFR, FCA

The Chairman, Body of Past Presidents

My Revered Past Presidents

The 1st Deputy Vice President, Deacon Titus Alao Soetan, FCA

2ND Deputy Vice President, Mallam Isma'ila M. Zakari, BSc, mni, FCA

Immediate Past President, Alh. Kabir Alkali Mohammed, mni, FCIS, CGMA, FCA, MFR

Distinguished Council Members

Registrar/Chief Executive, Mr. Rotimi A. Omotoso, FCA

Professional Colleagues

Invited Guests,

Gentlemen of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

PREAMBLE

1. Let me begin by welcoming you all most warmly to this special meeting of the Council during which the 51st President of the Institute will be formally sworn-in and decorated with the insignia of office.
2. Permit me this auspicious opportunity to express my profound appreciation to the entire membership of our Institute for entrusting me

with the task of providing leadership to this noble professional body during the 2014/2015 presidential year. I note with joy and satisfaction that the challenges of leadership presented by my election into the high office of the President of the Institute on June 3, 2014 were made easier by the excellent degree of cooperation, unflinching support, loyalty and encouragement I received from some members of the Presidency, Council, Management and Staff of the Institute. I am greatly indebted to you all.

3. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

In my inaugural address as the 50th and Golden Jubilee President of this great Institute on June 3, 2014, I promised to positively impact the Institute's processes, offerings and diverse stakeholders in order to raise not only the quality of our output and services but also, to reinforce our public interest mandate. The following modest achievements are clear testimonies of the fulfillment of these promises.

4. IFAC and World Congress of Accountants

I led a delegation of 950 chartered accountants to the Accountancy Profession's Olympics, the 19TH IFAC World Congress of Accountants, which took place in Rome, Italy between November 9-13, 2014 with the theme, ***"2020 Vision: Learning From the Past, Building the Future"***. Aside from providing two resource persons who made presentations during the technical sessions of the Congress, our Institute was selected for inclusion in IFAC's Professional Accountancy Organisation (PAO) capacity building database of potential partner organizations. This selection affords our Institute opportunity to be the recipient of future

Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide services for specific PAO capacity building projects. At this juncture, I wish to commend the Registrar/Chief Executive for the vital role he played in ensuring the achievement of this objective.

Sponsorship of WCOA Research Programme

5. As part of its strategies to globally market the ICAN brand, the Council deliberately decided to sponsor the Academic Research Programme of the Congress. The Institute was designated as the **Academic Partner/Sponsor of the Congress**. Part of the benefits included the conspicuous display of the ICAN logo at the venues including the main congress hall throughout the Congress. Secondly, I was given the opportunity to present the Prizes to the Winners in their various categories and also delivered a keynote speech. The quality of the speech was highly commended and every African and Accountants from frontier and emerging markets became Nigerians on that day. Again let me recognize the inputs to this speech of Mr. A. A. Asein, Deputy Registrar (TS).

44th Annual Accountants' Conference

6. The 44th Annual Accountants' Conference of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria was held at the International Conference Centre and the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja between September 8 and 11, 2014. The theme of the conference was, **"Protecting the Public Interest-Enhancing Professionalism"**. The Conference was declared open by the Special Guest of Honour, the then President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR who was ably represented by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister For the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. In spite of the massive negative publicity by the International and local media due to the health (Ebola virus disease) and security (Boko Haram Insurgency) challenges in the country, a total of 3,925 delegates including invited guests and resource persons from Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, USA and host, Nigeria attended the Conference. The Conference recorded a surplus of 14% over the previous year.

Image of the Institute

7. Throughout my tenure, the Institute strengthened its cordial relationship with gentlemen of the press such that most, if not all, its events were adequately covered and reported in the print and electronic media. Indeed, almost on daily basis, ICAN was reported in the newspapers. We also reinforced this through scheduled press interviews, press releases and press conferences.

8. Golden Jubilee Anniversary Celebrations

8.1 *World Press Conference*

In line with the well thought-out Golden Jubilee Anniversary programme, I held a world press conference on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at the Council Chamber of the Institute during which I highlighted the invaluable contributions that the Institute has made to human capacity building initiatives, growth of the Accountancy Profession and development of the nation's economy.

8.2 Golden Jubilee Anniversary Lecture

The Golden Jubilee Anniversary Lecture was held on May 18, 2015 with Mr. Daniel Monehin, FCA as the resource person and graced by the Doyen of accountancy profession in Africa, Mr. Akintola Williams, under the Chairmanship of Chief Olusegun Osunkeye. The anniversary lecture was not only well received, but also, very enriching as it catalogued, among others, the invaluable roles of the Institute and its members in the creation of value over the years. Once again, I congratulate the erudite resource person and the Planning Committee for the success.

8.3 Launching of “Indelible Footprints: the ICAN Story”

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations, a book titled, the **“Indelible Footprints: The ICAN Story”** , was published by the Council to commemorate and celebrate the Institute’s five decades of excellent services to the local and international economy. I warmly appreciate the BPP led by the Doyen for their physical presence and handsome donations during the formal launching of this historic book which took place on May 18, 2015. In addition to its historical importance, this publication could turn out to be a gold mine for the Institute if properly harnessed.

MoU Between ICAN and CITN

9. After extensive negotiation, the content of an MoU was mutually agreed by the Councils of ICAN and CITN and this was subsequently filed as terms of settlement and judgment of the Supreme Court on this long drawn matter. The MoU provides that ICAN members with ICAN

practising Licence will continue to enjoy direct membership of CITN by just filling the CITN membership form without having to sit for any examinations. ICAN Members without ICAN practising Licence would be required, on application, to attend only CITN orientation programme/induction ceremonies for the purpose of admission into its membership. The MoU was publicly signed by both bodies on March 10, 2015 at the Golden Gate Restaurant, Ikoyi Lagos.

Whistleblowers' Fund

10. The Institute has established a N50million Whistleblowers' Protection Fund as part of its strategies to ensure high moral and ethical standards by members in the discharge of their duties. The aim of the Fund is to protect ICAN members and the Public from any form of reprisals or victimisation when an alarm is raised on financial impropriety by public or private establishments, individuals or groups within the country.

Tuition Houses' Support Fund

11. In its strategic efforts to improve the quality of accounting education in the country, the Institute, on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, launched, the **Tuition Houses' Support Fund** in the sum of fifty million(50m) Naira. This will assist tuition providers to enhance their learning environment and materials.

Development of New Study Packs

12. I am delighted to report that the new ICAN World Class Learning Materials have been delivered and the e-version is now available free to

all our students. The formal launching of the study packs was held on Friday, May 22, 2015 at the Ebute Metta Annex office.

Endowment of N10m Subject Prize by Retired Partners of PwC

13. The Retired Partners of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Nigeria, have endowed a subject Prize in perpetuity in the sum of ten million Naira (N10m). The subject is ***Management, Governance and Ethics*** at the Skills Level of the Institute's qualifying examinations. The best student in this subject, in each diet, will be awarded a Prize in line with the terms of the endowment. On behalf of the Council, I express our profound appreciation to the Retired Partners of PwC for this invaluable support and commitment to the ideals of the Institute and Profession, even in retirement.

Building of Lecture Theatres

14. During the presidential year, the Institute built lecture theatres in five selected tertiary institutions across the country as follows: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; University of Benin; University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus; Northwest University, Kano; and Federal University of Technology, Birnin Kebbi. I am delighted to report that the 350-capacity lecture theatre projects in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, University of Benin (Uniben), Benin City, University of Nigeria (UNN), Enugu Campus and Northwest University Kano have been all completed and commissioned. I warmly congratulate the Chairman, BOPP, Balogun Johnson Olabisi Omidiora, BSc, FCA, OON (MB000377), Amb. (Chief) Arthur C.I. Mbanefo, MFR, FCA Odu III (MB000120) and Chief Garrick Sunday Aghahowa, FCA (MB00003) after whom these projects

in OAU, UNN and Uniben were respectively named. The Birnin Kebbi Project is still under construction at this moment. It is expected that these donations will assist the Departments of Accountancy in these institutions to admit more deserving students into their training programmes and improve the visibility of the ICAN brand on the campuses of these Universities.

Chidi Onyeukwu Ajaegbu ICAN Centre Aba

15. In May last year, I promised to provide a counterpart fund of twenty-five million Naira (N25m) while ICAN will provide same amount of money to facilitate the development of an ICAN Centre in Aba. On May 1, 2015 and to the glory of God, the centre in Aba has been completed, and commissioned.

16. Mutual Cooperation Agreement with Tertiary Institution (MCATI)

Further to the objections raised by members over the memorandum of understanding signed with Babcock and other universities, the Council reviewed the agreement and came up with the Mutual Cooperation Agreement with Tertiary Institutions (MCATI). The MCATI offers peculiar exemption conditions to any tertiary institution willing to sign onto the programme. Besides, all tertiary institutions that sign on must make ATS examination compulsory for all its 100 level students. Thus this initiative will help to provide a stream of students into the professional stream of the Institute's examinations. I am delighted to report that some tertiary institutions have signed on while the Council has created a Standing Committee to manage the Scheme.

Signing of MoU with NNDC

17. Following the expiration of the 3-year memorandum of understanding between the Institute and the New Nigeria Development Company under which the Student Special Projects for the Northern states are being managed, we had to review and sign a revised MoU. The NNDC was very pleased with the successful implementation and achievements under the erstwhile MoU signed in 2010. I signed the MoU on behalf of the Institute and the Group Managing Director of NNDC signed for the organisation with some management staff of the both organisations in attendance.

Inaugural ICAN Academic Conference on Accounting and Finance

18. In pursuance of our statutory mandate, the inaugural edition of the ICAN Academic Conference on Accounting and Finance organized by the Institute was held May 19 - 20, 2015 to create robust platform for our members in academics in tertiary institutions to expose their research findings to their colleagues for intellectual review and commentaries. It was attended by over 100 accounting lecturers from various tertiary institutions.

ICAN Library, Abuja

19. Over the years, students and other stakeholders in Abuja have been clamouring for venue where they can carry out their studies and research work. In response to this dire need, the Council approved the establishment of a library at the Akintola Williams House, Abuja. Accordingly, we had to request one of the tenants on the ground floor to quit to give room for the initiative. The contract for this has been

awarded to Havilah Nig. Ltd. from the series of bids considered by the Major Tenders Board.

Inauguration of Two more District Societies

20. In order to expand our members' network, we successfully inaugurated, in February, 2015, the Jalingo and District Society, Taraba State as well as the ICAN-Canada District Society of the Institute in Calgary, Canada bringing the number of the Institute's District Societies to 53.

First ICAN-USA Conference, Toronto, Canada

21. The inaugural ICAN-USA District Society's conference was held in Toronto, Canada between August 25 -30, 2014. I led a delegation comprising, the Vice President, Immediate Past President and 140 fee-paying members to the Conference. The Conference was a huge success.

Launching Of Members' Credit Card Scheme

22. As indicated during my investiture, members' welfare was given deserved attention during the year. Accordingly, I launched the members' credit card scheme which is an initiative designed and supported by StanbicIBTC Bank to provide credit facilities at zero interest free rate to members for 55 days. Interest will only be paid, if the period agreed is exceeded. To qualify, a member is required to be in good financial standing with the Institute. That is, he or she must not be owing the Institute. The launching of the scheme was held at the Institute's Council Chamber on Tuesday, December 16, 2014.

Creation Of Financial Reporting Faculty

23. In appreciation of the dynamism of financial reporting globally, the Council recently decided to establish the Financial Reporting Faculty which will serve as the mechanism for tracking and apprising members of these changes. This brings to seven, the number of Faculties so far created by the Institute. As to whether they are achieving their potentials, a lot of work is still to be done.

Advocacy Initiatives

24. During the year, the Institute issued some Advocacy Papers designed to educate the public as well as draw policy makers' attention to issues that can either advance the course of the Institute and Profession or vitiate economic growth and development. These include:

- A case for Joint Audit (The Guardian, Monday, August 25, 2014)
- Case for Mergers of Small and Medium-sized Accounting firms in Nigeria(The Guardian, Wednesday, September 24, 2014)
- Cushioning Oil Price Shock: Rethinking Policy Alternatives for Nigeria(The Guardian, December 10, 2014)
- Executives serving on Audit Committees

Public Service Seminars

25. During the year, the Council organised non-fee training sessions for stakeholders in the economy. The following free training sessions were held during the period under review:

- A case for mandatory joint Audit
- IFRS for Audit committee members of quoted companies

- Not-for-profit entities

I am delighted to report that the feedbacks received from participants have been very encouraging.

Annual Budget Symposium

26. In line with this established tradition, the Institute organised a Symposium on the 2014 Annual Budget of the Federal Government of Nigeria during which presentations were made by Dr. Bright Okogu, Director-General, Budget Office of the Federation, The Presidency and other eminent resource persons. The resultant communiqué was sent to the government, published in the newspapers and was also widely circulated.

Memorandum to Government

27. Further to the request by the government, the Institute submitted a memorandum in respect of the increasing call for the creation of the Office of the Accountant-General of Federal Government as distinct from the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation. The government acknowledged the quality of the memorandum but declined to accept our recommendations.

Creation of a Liaison Office within the National Assembly

28. The Council proactively decided that an ICAN liaison office, to be manned by a Senior Manager, be established within the National Assembly complex. The main responsibility of the officer will be to monitor and report to the Institute bills that can affect, whether positively or negatively, the mandate and activities of the Institute.

World Bank Grant

29. As you are all aware, the World Bank approved a grant of US\$499,300 to enable the Institute strengthen its technical capacity such that it can adequately support its members. The 3-component Grant was successfully implemented under a Twinning Programme signed with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). I am delighted to report that the Project has been concluded and audited to the satisfaction of the donor agency, the World Bank. I wish to specially commend the Project Implementation Team and the Secretariat for doing the Institute proud.

Tribunal Sitings

30. In order to further raise the bar of accountability and transparency even within the Profession, the Council resolved to resuscitate the practice of inviting the press to its Tribunal sittings. This will also help to convey to the public that the Institute does not condone any professional misdemeanour and that it does not have sacred cows. Throughout the year, the Tribunal had 9 sittings, ruled on 13 cases, of which there were 10 judgments and 3 interlocutory rulings. This Presidential Year arguably had the highest number of sittings and rulings since the Tribunal started sitting in 1972. We now invite the media to our sittings and also publicise our verdicts in the print media (see businessday of today).

Institute's Revenue and Cost Control

31. The Council has taken some decisions to boost the revenue of the Institute. This includes:

(a) Delisting of Members

The Council has resolved that in line with the Institute's enabling Act, all members who have not fulfilled their financial obligations to the Institute as and when due will be delisted. The Council however gave a concession that the cut-off date for delisting should be January 1, 2013. This exercise has increased the number of financial members and the exercise is ongoing.

(b) Reduction in Foreign Trips

In order to reduce the cost of the Institute's governance, I reduced by 80% the number and size of Institute's delegation to international events. In the same vein, visits to District Societies were scaled down considerably.

(c) Gratuity, Staff Mortgage and Car Loan

During the year the Council signed an exit agreement with the staff Union which led to the termination of the gratuity scheme. All staff were duly paid their entitlement. In addition the Council approved Staff Mortgage and enhanced the Car Loan Scheme.

Five-Year Strategic Alliances with CIS and NBA for Nigeria's Economic Development

32. On behalf of the Council, I signed a 5-year collaboration agreement for Nigeria's socio-economic development with the Presidents of Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers (CIS), and President of Nigerian Bar

Association (NBA) on February 17, 2015. The tripartite agreement covers all areas of mutual interests for enhanced development of the Nigerian capital market, the financial and legal systems and the entire socio-economic life of Nigerians.

Visit to Relevant Stakeholders

33. During the year, I visited the following relevant stakeholders:

The Central Bank of Nigeria; Securities and Exchange Commission; Nigerian Stock Exchange; Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria; National Insurance Commission; National Universities Commission; Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau; The Auditor-General for the Federation, Mr. Samuel Ukura and his Management; The Accountant-General of the Federation, Mr. Jonah Otunla, FCA and his Management; The Big 4 firms and numerous Small and Medium-sized practicing firms; The President/Chief Executive Officer, Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, GCON etc. The visits were very useful and productive.

Visit To District Societies

34. As part of the efforts to monitor the welfare of members, acquaint myself with their problems and proffer solutions to them, I visited 15 District Societies. As outposts of the Institute, such visits are crucial if the information gap subsisting between the Institute and its members and students who are widely dispersed is to be bridged. I also seized the opportunity of the visits to pay courtesy calls on Executive Governors of States where they are located to appreciate the office bearers for employing our members and to encourage them to engage more

because of the associated benefits of using professionals.

Partnership with CIPFA

35. We signed an MoU with CIPFA in London on Thursday, March 19, 2015, ICAN members with at least five years practical experience in the Public Sector, will enjoy direct membership of CIPFA. In other words, the collaboration will pave the way for dual membership for members of ICAN. As an outcome of this relationship, I have been invited to speak at their annual Conference coming up on 5th July, 2015 in London.

ONECCA Cameroon MOU

The Institute signed an MOU on mentoring with ONECCA Cameroon during the Presidential Year.

African Congress of Accountants, Mauritius

36. The 3rd African Congress of Accountants organized by the Pan African Federation of Accountants (PAFA) and hosted by the Mauritius Institute of Public Accountants was held in Port Louis, Mauritius between May 12-14, 2015. The theme of the Congress which was attended by 850 participants drawn from 42 countries was, “**Rising Africa: Partnering for Results**”. I led a delegation of the Institute to attend the Congress. The Institute contributed seven resource persons to the Congress.

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremonies

37. In line with established tradition, the Institute's Annual Dinner and Awards was organized. We used the opportunity of the Annual Dinner to confer the Institute's prestigious merit awards on outstanding Nigerians and corporate entities in the following categories: member, non-member and corporate body. The esteemed winners were:

Members' Category

- Mr. Henry Egbiki, FCA, Senior Partner, EY West African Region
- Elder Moses Malomo, FCA – Accounting Lecturer of over 50 years
- Mr. Frederick Iluyomade Ogunjuboun, FCA – Served as Treasurer and in several ICAN Committees.
- Alh. Muktari Aliu Dangana, FCA – Over 40 years in professional practice.

Non-Members' Category

- Chief Richard Akinjide, SAN – The Minister of Education in 1965 when the charter was granted to the Institute.
- Barr(Chief) Theo Nkire – A philanthropist and an Educationist.

Corporate Body Category

- Masters Energy Oil and Gas Limited
- Niger Delta Development Commission

38. Fellowship Award Conferment Ceremony

The Council organised the 13th Fellowship Award conferment ceremony on April 22, 2015. A total of 477 members were decorated with the insignia of their new status. The event was acclaimed by all participants to be a huge success.

39. Closing Charge

However, as we take time to reflect and celebrate the achievements of this Presidential Year, the sobriety required at this time in the history of our nation cannot and should not be lost on us.

We must admit with uncanny frankness that the standard of living of the average Nigerian is low, unacceptable and indeed, calls for concern. For the business community, the story is not better. The cost of doing business remains prohibitive in the face of insecurity of lives and properties, thus making our environment uncompetitive.

As a body, we warmly congratulate and urge the new government to confront these untoward developments with the will and might of the state for our dreams to become realities. We need and deserve better lives as Nigerians. The citizen's declining standard of living or rising misery index, in my view, is reversible. I dare say, we can do it as a nation ***if pretensions to service by those in leadership positions give way to purposeful leadership at all levels of governance.***

Appreciation

40. Let me end this address by noting once again that the significant progress recorded this presidential year bear eloquent testimony to the spirit of teamwork and the unalloyed cooperation I received from some

members of the Presidency, Council and the entire membership of our great Institute. Above all, I benefited immensely from the wealth of experience of some of our revered past presidents who were always willing to share their experiences and thoughts on many issues with me. I am eternally grateful for their guidance and collective words of wisdom. I must seize this opportunity to specially commend the entire staff of the Secretariat under the leadership of the Registrar/Chief Executive, Mr. Rotimi A. Omotoso, FCA, especially my Golden Jubilee PA, Olalekan Oseni, Ifeoma Okwuosa, Kike Isok, Bunmi Owolabi, Kayode Abe, Abel Asein, M. A. Lawal, Effiong Bassey, Felix Obaika, Morgan Emmanuel and Azeez Ismaila for their immense support, sacrifice and dedication to duty.

While I step away from my Presidential role today, my dedication to the Institute is unwavering. I will continue to make my time, intellect and other resources available for the advancement of the Institute's noble objectives, God being my Helper. This valedictory address will not be complete if I do not publicly appreciate the patience, love and understanding of my best friend, lover, confidant, girlfriend and darling wife, Josephine throughout the past 365 days. I also of course do appreciate unconditionally my wonderful children, Amaka, Tochi and Ekene, who opened their hearts and tolerate my constant travels and absences. Josephine, the love, peace and calm you provided made it possible for me to give full attention to the affairs of the Institute, knowing that all is well at the home front. I deeply cherish you and pray God's blessings and reward on you. Amen.

41. Finally, let me admit that in the process of trying to improve the Institute, the Council under my leadership may have taken some decisions which some members disagreed with and actually considered unacceptable. While I have no regrets over this, I must say that such disagreements actually enriched the quality of our decisions. Enduring institutions, in my view, are not built on or driven by populist policies but by the supreme desire to protect public interest, the common good and interest of the Institute. Thus, the positive reports I have presented have been driven by this philosophy. I therefore thank those who disagreed with me. One thing that was generally accepted about this presidential year was that my positions on issues were as unambiguous and clear as a sunny noonday and my word will always be my bond.
42. If I ever have the opportunity again, I will pass through this route as a Chartered Accountant, President of ICAN and in fact, aspire to be the IFAC President.
43. In the end, we walked the talk and in my opinion I am leaving the Institute better than I met it as I promised in my inaugural address of 365 days ago. Once again, thank you all and God bless you all.

Long live the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**Mr. Chidi Onyeukwu Ajaegbu, FCS, MBF, Dip. Polygraph, FCA
Golden Jubilee President.**

June 2, 2015