

**5TH ANNUAL LECTURE OF THE STEPHEN OLUWOLE AWOKOYA FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AT THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AUDITORIUM, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS ON MONDAY 20/3/2000**

**WELCOME ADDRESS-SENATOR OLABIYI DUROJAIYE mni**

The Chairman of today's event, Chief (Dr.) Bayo Kuku, the Ogbeni-Oja of Ijebu-Ode, Most distinguished Senator Haruna Abubakar, the Deputy Senate President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and newly-turbanned Dan Iyan Lafia of Lafia Emirate, The Guest of Honour, Mr. Olabode Emanuel, The Guest Speaker of today, Prof. Oladipo O. Akinkugbe, Our respected Chief Launchers, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Chief Harry Akande here represented by..... Your Excellencies, My Lords, My colleagues on the Board of Trustees of the Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation for Science Education, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation for Science Education, I rise to welcome you all to this occasion. This welcome address must be brief because of the long list of events in our agenda today.

2. Yet it is a bounding duty for me, in welcoming you to make a brief remark about the rationale for establishing this Foundation.

The Foundation is in honour of a very illustrious citizen of Nigeria, Chief Professor Stephen Oluwole Oluremi Awokoya D.Sc., C.B.E., the Aseto of Awa-Ijebu and Muwaolu of Ikija, Ijebu.

Professor Awokoya was the first Nigerian who graduated in Chemistry. This was in the University of London in 1946.

He was the foundation principal of the Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo (which I had the honour to be a foundation student of) and the first Minister of Education in the Old Western Region of Nigeria.

It was in his capable hands that the Action Group Government of Western Nigeria led by the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo entrusted its most populist, benevolent and enduring policy programme- FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION SCHEME that began in Western Nigeria in 1955.

Professor Awokoya later rose to be the Chief Federal Adviser on Education and Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Education during, the 1st Republic.

Shortly afterwards he was appointed a Director and later Deputy Director-General of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

His last call to duty was as Professor of Education at the University, of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University.

3. It is not just his hard work and exceptional brilliance that we at the Board set out to immortalise. It is the man's vision, moral impact, hard work and exemplary leadership qualities which he implanted in the young students who had the fortune to undergo his inspiring tutelage.

4. Prof. Awokoya died 15 years ago at the age of 72. His beloved wife, Chief(Mrs.) Josephine Olufunke Awokoya also died in May 1998.

The Foundation was established in 1995 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Prof Awokoya's transition.

It is the tradition of the Foundation to invite reputable scholars to speak on a topical issue related to Science Education.

It is in promotion of one of the cardinal objectives of the Foundation to continue the good work of Professor Awokoya by awarding, scholarships to brilliant university undergraduates or research fellows in the field of Science and Science Education.

This is one of the modest ways we plan, to contribute to societal needs for skilled manpower and well-informed personnel in the field of Science and Technology.

We have so far awarded 8 scholarships, 2 for female and 6 for male students. Today we are izoinix ahead to award three more scholarship in your very presence.

5. We have also in our program, the presentation of a book containing the four annual guest lectures delivered after the inauguration of the Foundation. The book is titled:-

"ESSAYS IN SCIENCE EDUCATION" S.O.Awokoya Foundation, Lecture-Series Volume 1 (1996-1999)

6. We have not called today's event a book launch. We are presenting a book on Science Education and will be grateful to receive your strong patronage in buying many copies of the book and in donating, generously to the Foundation to enable it to continue and expand its scope of service to our country. So every donation is a contribution to helping some Nigerian youths from many parts of the country to acquire sounder education and skill all in the efforts to improve productivity and higher standard of living of our people.

7. Before I resume my seat, permit me to mention the fact that the presence today of a few of our prominent national figures of different religious persuasion and political identifies is proof positive that all will still be well for Nigeria.

Let no one be discouraged by the noise and threats of a few sadists who would rather see Nigeria back in the turmoil and stench of her recent past under military rule.

We have embraced Democracy and I am confident that with God's backing no amount of religious intolerance, negative political scheming, or violent eruptions of criminals will snatch Democracy from our firm grasp.

We of the National Assembly are at one resolve with the executive arm of this Government to serve this nation to the best of our abilities.

As a member of the Finance and Appropriation Committee of the Senate, I can assure you, that we are all aware of the eager expectation of all Nigerians and business partners of Nigeria to approve the Budget for year 2000 without further delay.

It is only a matter of a few days now before we complete the detailed and painstaking work we are doing on the Budget.

Time will not permit me to go into details, but we know how important our responsibility is and we cannot afford to disappoint you the good people we represent.

8. Once again we welcome all of you friends of the Foundation, particularly our Guest Speaker, Prof. Akinkugbe who will soon focus our minds on "Thoughts on restoring the tilting balance in African science". Very many thanks to all of you, ladies and gentlemen.

SENATOR OLABIYI DUROJAIYE CHAIRMAN S.O. AWOKOYA FOUNDATION  
FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION