

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF STEPHEN OLUWOLE AWOKOYA
FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION, SENATOR OLABIYI DUROJAIYE,
ON THE 21ST ANNUAL LECTURE AND AWARDS OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND
HONOURS AT THE MUSON CENTRE, ONIKAN, LAGOS, ON TUESDAY 15TH
MARCH, 2016:**

SALUTATION:

- ✓ I heartily welcome our Chairman of today, **Mr. Pascal G. Dozie**, CON, a reputed banking guru and Chairman of MTN Nigeria Ltd. He was the promoter and first Managing Director of the Diamond Bank (Plc), a bank that has weathered many turbulent economic storms and is still standing till today.
- ✓ Welcome too is our Guest of Honour, Mr. SEGUN OGUNSANYA, the Chief Executive Officer of Airtel Telecommunication Ltd. Following the trend we started last year, Mr. Segun Ogunsanya is the second youngest Guest of Honour we have had in our 21years of existence. Our Board is abreast of the “young must grow” spirit of this generation.
- ✓ Next in this roll call of honour is our Guest Lecturer, Prof. U.M.O. Ivowi, Fellow of the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria; Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Education and President, Nigeria Academy of Education!

As we do, once every five years, we have today a Book Reviewer in person of Dr. Olufemi Olugbile, Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatry; Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Management; former Chief, Medical Director of LASUTH to review – rather, introduce the 3rd and 4th sets of our 5-yearly publications of our Foundation annual lectures.

- ✓ Now, it is my duty to welcome specially, our three honours recipients of today as well as all past honorees present.
 - (i) Let me start with the only female among them. She is a High Chief honoured by two of the oldest dynasties in Yoruba land – the Oṣoni of Ife and the Olowo of Owo. This lady, an Amazon in her own right, a strong woman, who, despite the relatively early departure of her husband, single-handedly raised her many (real many) children to impressive levels of distinction in the country. Not only that, she, an Educationist by profession, successfully handled and nurtured her late husband’s establishment and investments in the medical field and in landed property and estates. Above all, our ‘numero uno’ Honouree of today has blazed a unique trail right through the crette, primary, secondary up to the tertiary level of Education. Let me leave the rest to my colleague who will present her citation. Yes, you want to know! I talk of the one and only HIGH CHIEF, Dr. (Mrs) WINIFRED ADEFOLAHAN AWOSIKA, OON,

the Ọsọ-biken of Ọwọ, Chairman, Chrisland Schools Ltd and Chancellor, Chrisland University. “Nlẹ o, ọmọ igi nla s’ọwọ gbalaja; akata nla bori Ọwọ mọlẹ Eni a bi l’owo ni lati ni owo lara”.

- (ii) Next is Dr. O A. Lalude, Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers; Fellow of the Academy of Engineers; Chairman of Crestech Engineering Ltd. and Managing Director, Elkgrove Ventures – provider of technical and Management Consulting in the Energy Industry.
- (iii) Our third but not the least honoree of today is Dr. Osborne Olumide Phillips, PhD., Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers; Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers; Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Engineers; former and only Executive Vice Chairman of Texaco; Chairman, Promaco Associates and Founder and Chairman, Board of Governors of Downen College, Lagos. Without taking as much time as I spent on Dr. Awosika, I want to add one accolade from my personal knowledge of this man of substance. He is the husband of my former colleague, the first female Departmental Director in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the elegant and brilliant Dr. (Mrs) Oluwatoyin Phillips.

You are all respectfully welcome and congratulated on your well-earned awards of today.

- ✓ My dear colleagues on the Board of Trustees of Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation for Science Education;
- ✓ My Lords Spiritual and Temporal;
- ✓ The young scholarship awardees of today, their parents and teachers;
- ✓ Gentlemen of the Press;
- ✓ Respected members of the audience; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

WELCOME:

I will adopt the main tenet and format of my previous welcome addresses by saying; today, Tuesday, the 15th day of March, 2016 is the 21st occasion of the Board of Trustees of **STEPHEN OLUWOLE AWOKOYA FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION** coming out to award scholarships to very brilliant Nigerian Science students irrespective of age, gender, institution of learning or state of origin. The common denominator or criteria have always been **BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE** in Science or Science - related subjects. As you will soon see, it is also our ninth occasion of awarding Honours to a few Nigerian adults considered to have exhibited impeccable records of credibility and achievements in their services to others and to the country. We are happy to **welcome** you all. We are grateful to you too.

The Great Professor:

It is always necessary to indicate the sterling qualities of the great man whose achievements we seek to immortalize through the activities of the **Foundation** named after him. He is the one and only **Chief, Professor Stephen Hezekiah Oluwole Oluwemi Atanda Jenriogbe AWOKOYA, the Aseto of Awa, Ijebu**. A week ago, a respected Nigerian and old teacher of mine at Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo, Dr. Michael Omolayole of Unilever and 'Omo' powdered soap fame, telephoned me that his community in Ijebu-Imushin has built a LIBRARY in Imushin in order to boost "READING FOR PLEASURE HABIT" among all and sundry. He was given the slot to nominate two out of the five eminent personalities to be identified in the Library. His own two nominees and heroes are Dr. Nelson Mandela and Prof. Oluwole Awokoya. Last week too, an old TV recording viewed at a symposium in honour of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, at Ikenne, Ogun State, showed Prof. Oluwole Awokoya standing closely at the right hand of Pa Awolowo at the launching of the Free Primary Education Scheme at Ibadan in 1955! That says it all – the class our father Awokoya belonged!

His Achievements:

Professor Awokoya was born at Awa, Ijebu on July 9, 1913. He attended Sagun Primary School, Oru, St. Andrew's College, Oyo, Yaba Higher College, Lagos and University of London. He was ever first in almost all his classes and was the first Nigerian to obtain a Bsc. Degree in Chemistry in the University of London. This was in 1946. He was the first Principal of Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo (where three members of the Board of this Foundation were students), the first Minister of Education in the Western Region of Nigeria where, under the able Premiership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Awokoya moved the motion for a Bill for the Act of Parliament that introduced the revolutionary and epoch-making "**Universal Free Primary Education Scheme**". This was the first in Nigeria and indeed first in Africa. Professor Awokoya proceeded to be the foundation Principal of Federal Emergency Science School in Lagos in 1957/58 as well as Chief Federal Adviser on Education. It was in the latter capacity that he established the ASPAU Scheme i.e. the **African Scholarship Programme of American Universities** which turned out to be a booster to a high-level manpower development project. Thereafter, Professor Awokoya was appointed the Deputy Director of **UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

After his return to Nigeria in 1973, he took up appointment as Professor of Education and Curriculum Development at the University of Ife; now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Prof/Chief Oluwole Awokoya was happily married to Chief (Mrs) Josephine Olufunke Awokoya (nee Otubusin, a member of the royal family of Ijebu-Ode). By the time the erudite Professor

returned to his Maker on March 15, 1985, at age 71, virtually all his children and some grand children had obtained University degrees in various fields of Science and most of them were married with children.

Talking of March 15 on a day that is March 15, (the Roman Ides of March) reminds us of the need to rise and observe a minute's silence in honour of Prof. Oluwole Awokoya. May his soul rest in peace.

The Rationale for the Foundation:

This ebullient and brilliant teacher of teachers had inspired and positively touched the lives of many successful Nigerians including all ASPAU, AFGRAD scholars and Molusians. Some of us are in this gathering today. So, we all can see the rationale for immortalizing his memory by continuing the good work which he devoted his life to i.e. inspiring youths, moulding good character and widening the intellectual horizon of builders of a great, modern, African country –**NIGERIA!**

Need for Funds:

As I have always admitted openly, inadequate funds limit the extent we can go by way of annual awards of scholarships. One of my colleagues on the Board of Trustees of this Foundation, **Dr. Folarin Awokoya** will soon come to this podium to announce this year's scholarship winners. You will be astonished by the level of brilliance always shown by Nigerian students. Limited by funds, we are only able to award **eight scholarships** this year, seven in 2015, eight in 2014 and six (6) in each of the two preceding years.

We have, however, refurbished the science laboratory of Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo, a school mid-wifed and nurtured for its first three years by Mr. S. O. Awokoya (as he was then). We want to do more. Ladies and Gentlemen, please help us and tell others who can help us to award more scholarships and to equip more laboratories and libraries in Nigerian higher institutions of learning! We should not leave funding of Education to governments alone.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES:

Before concluding this annual welcome address, it has been the tradition of our Foundation for our Board Chairman to make brief comments on one or two contemporary events or challenges confronting our dear country. In the past three to four years I had fingered "BOKO HARAM" and "CORRUPTION". I also pointed to increasing tempo of KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOME.

It cannot be denied that we are passing through some rather hard times now in the country. What with the end of dry season heat, combined adverse effect of electric power failure, fuel shortage and heavy traffic, etc! But these

are only transitory head-aches which will soon be over D.V. The situation in the country this time last year was worse, as some people started to move out in fear of what the 2015 general elections might lead to.

Today, let me repeat a near – prophetic statement I made at the end of my welcome address on March 17, last year. Please permit me to quote:-

“I know my colleagues on the Board will never like me to make any political pronouncement and I have always restrained myself from doing so on this platform. But I, as a fact, know that God loves Nigeria. My prayer is that the Almighty Creator will grant all of us the strength of character and courage to move out with our permanent voters cards (PVC) without fear of any threat of violence, vote according to our conscience and watch that our votes are recorded before peacefully going home. I believe that if we do the needful, we all will soon rejoice and praise God in the words of Psalm 126 and 150 for granting us what we faithfully desire and work for.”

Although we have not yet attained the stage to say “uhuru” and “Halleluyah”, we, as a nation, really have reason to thank God in the words of Psalms 126 that says “when the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream the Lord has done great things for us and we are glad!” Compared with the anxiety we all had about our country this time last year, we should Thank God that the General Elections have come and gone. ‘Boko Haram’ is definitely on retreat, but not due to the ₦2.2 billion a public servant recently claimed to have spent on prayers to defeat Boko Haram. The Police are waking up to their responsibilities in the fight against kidnapping for ransome which is still raging; and with the awful exposures of so many high-ranking barons of CORRUPTION put to shame and hopefully soon to be put to long term imprisonment, CORRUPTION will be reduced to a level of near extinction if every citizen and other residents of Nigeria cooperate with the Buhari administration to restrain from, expose and fight corruption. It is a duty for all of us to perform. We will TRIUMPH. Thank you and welcome to our event.

Senator Olabiye Durojaiye, mni.

Chairman, Awokoya Foundation.

15th March, 2016.