

**Welcome Address by The Chairman, Board of Trustees of SOAFSE,  
Prof. A. F. Ogunye  
During The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture, Award of Honours & Post- Graduate  
Scholarships**

**PROTOCOL**

- **The Chairman Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, great education philanthropist and Great Akokite.**
- **The Special Guest, Dr Olutoyin Okeowo, another great philanthropist towards education.**
- **What both of you have in common is that you are both Pro Chancellors of two Universities.**
- **The Guest Lecturer, Prof Ogunbodede, .....**

**THE HONOUREES.**

- **Prof Oritsegbemi Omatate**
- **Ms Funke Opeke**
- **Mr Austin Uvuru**

**The BOT of this great Foundation**

**Mrs Adenike Ogunye, a wife of 61 years**

**Some selected guests.....**

**Distinguished Guests, Members of the Press, Ladies and gentlemen.**

**WHOM ARE WE CELEBRATING?**

**We are celebrating The Unsong, Most Eminent Educationist Of Nigeria**

**WHOM ARE WE CELEBRATING?**

We are celebrating the person whose the first position was literarily reserved for him in all the examinations he took in all the schools he attended.

**WHOM ARE WE CELEBRATING?**

We are celebrating the first Nigerian to obtain a degree in Chemistry, from University College, University of London in 1946

**WHOM ARE WE CELEBRATING?**

We are celebrating the founding Principal of Molusi College, Ijebu Igbo on January 28, 1949.

Without a man of his calibre as the first Principal, Molusi College would have been a stillborn baby or would have been murdered in its infancy, and the whole world at large would not have known what had been lost.

The rest is now history that Molusi College and the Celebrant triumphed gallantly. The first set of the students wrote their Cambridge School Certificate Examination after spending 5 years in the school instead of four years originally designed because he left to join the government of Western Region in January 1952. This feat was concluded by Dr. Tai Solarin who took the baton from Celebrant in January 1952.

He played the able role of great successor. He had unusual energy, profound knowledge, zest, and indomitable courage.

#### WHOM ARE WE CELEBRATING?

We are celebrating a principal that gave us, Molusians, an inspiring motto  
“ONLY THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR MOLUSI COLLEGE”

And also left us an inspiring School Anthem which he composed the words and the music.

The celebrant period in politics was active but brief during which he was a member of the Drafting Committee of **the Macpherson Constitution** for Nigeria and was **the first Minister of Education in the old Western Region**. As a Minister of Education, he implemented the Universal Free Primary Education Scheme in the old Western Region between 1952-1956. **In 1956, the celebrant was on the Queen’s Honours List and was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for his pioneering work in Education.** On leaving politics in 1956, the celebrant went back into his first calling, which was education.

Of the three who were the architects of Universal Free Primary Education in the old Western Region, it is **ONLY** the celebrant that had not been honoured by **ANY GOVERNMENT**, State or Federal.

All his other achievements were in Education between 1956 and March 15 1985 before his death are well documented in today brochure.

Ladies and gentlemen, the man we celebrate on Tuesdays around March 15 every year is Professor Stephen Oluwole Awokoya, born in the small town of Awa Ijebu. Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State.

**This Ijebu Man Had Not Been Honoured Despite All The contributions He Made To The Upliftment Of Education As A Foremost, Eminent Educationist Of Nigeria Either By The Federal Government Or His State Of Origin, Ogun State**

**Why? Why? Why?**

#### **GOVERNMENT POLICY & ENGINEERING /TECHNOLOGY**

**The woeful performance of our economy since 1980 can be placed squarely on the corridors of public policy failures. Unquestionably, the policy issues are of very wide dimension, spanning beyond the realms of Engineering and Technology. Nevertheless, very many are of technological nature and are clearly related to Engineering.**

## **LESSONS FROM OTHER LANDS**

**It may be instructive to briefly examine experiences of some other countries in managing the integration of Engineering and Technology in policy formulation and implementation, to deliver desired national goals. For this address I am examining China ONLY.**

### **CHINA**

**We are witnesses to the spectacular transformation of the Chinese economy and society in the last 30-40 years. China achieved an amazing average GDP growth rate of about 8-10% consistently for over 20 years, driven by Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology. The pace and scale of the economic transformation of China in fact have no historical precedent.**

**In 1980, China and Nigeria were amongst the poorest nations of the world, with a GDP per capita of \$195, about 1.5% of USA GDP per capita same year, rising to \$959 in 2000, about 2.6% of USA level. Amazingly by 2020 China's GDP per capita had surged to \$11,062, rising to about 17% of USA level, while Nigeria GDP per capital was just \$2149. China today, with an aggregate GDP of \$18.8 trillion is the second largest economy of the world ranking only behind USA with a \$29.2 trillion economy.**

**In this period, it is no surprise that over 50% of the top leadership of the government of China, and even the ruling Communist Party, were Engineers. At my valedictory address to the Nigerian Academy of Engineering as President in 2014 I did point out that it is on record that all the 9 members elected to the Standing Committee (Executive Committee) of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China for the period 2000 to 2013 were Engineers and Scientists, including the President at the time, Hu Lintao. The current President of China is a Chemical Engineer.**

**This is indeed most instructive. Evidently, China accorded Engineering and Technology the deserved pride of place. The doors to importation were shut and the Chinese Engineers, Technologists and Scientists were seriously challenged to produce the goods and services required to grow their economy and for export, with great success.**

**You can remember in the eighties and nineties we ridiculed Chinese goods saying "China ke".**

**Credible scientific bodies were regularly consulted and served as Think Tanks for state development. In particular four out of the five prestigious academies of learning in China are scientific and play a central role in the development process. These are:**

- China Academy of Sciences**
- China Academy of Agricultural Science**
- China Academy of Medical Sciences**
- China Academy of Engineering**

**Today, the history of China and its economic success cannot be written without due reference to the role of Engineering, Technology and Science.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Evidently, the developmental trajectory of Nigeria has been severely hampered by the absence of sound Engineering input in public policy formulation and implementation. There must therefore be conscious effort to reset and recalibrate, in order to make progress. Nigerian engineers are ready to be challenged like Chinese counterparts to produce the goods and services required to grow our economy and for export. MR PRESIDENT PLEASE CHALLENGE THE NIGERIAN ENGINEERS, TECHNOLOGISTS AND SCIENTISTS LIKEWISE WHAT CHINA DID.**

**Our distinguished guests, please I want to remind you that SOAFSE is an NGO. We need your financial support to carry out our objectives. Kindly support us generously as a guest or invited guest of our honourees. GOD SHALL CONTINUE TO ENRICH YOUR PURSES IJCMN AMEN.**

**Ladies and gentlemen, I have been a member of the Board OF Trustees of SOAFSE since the inception, 30 years ago, I am stepping down for a younger Awokoya DNA to take my position. When I watch how one of them, Yetsa, has changed the narrative of the board, I believe it is time for me to step down.**

**YOU ARE WELCOME TO OUR 30<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANIVERSSARY.**