

INAUGURAL SPEECH OF THE 17TH PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF NIM DR MRS SALLY NKEM ADUKWU-BOLUJOKO, FNIM AT HER INVESTITURE ON THE 8TH OF DECEMBER 2009, AT THE LAGOON RESTAURANT, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS.

Fellow managers, relations and friends, I stand here today humbled by the trust bestowed on me by the council and entire membership of the Nigerian Institute of Management Chartered. I am also overwhelmed by the outpouring of love from members within and outside the country. I have received countless emails, text messages and calls since my election. Many of which express confidence in my ability to take the institute to a new level.

I am thrilled to see many distinguished Nigerians from various states of the federation and from overseas assembled here to witness the investiture of the 17th President and chairman of council of our great institute. I crave your indulgence to recognize some of the guests because I feel personal about their presence. Besides this is my only opportunity to speak in this programme.

I give God the ultimate glory for what is happening here today. The presidency of NIM does not come easy. Unlike the larger society, NIM insists on inviting credible individuals to leadership based on overt and consistent recognition of relevant qualities and selfless service to NIM. Campaigns are not only prohibited, they are abhorred. In fact mere indication of interest to run for the office of President or the Deputy President disqualifies the person. The process is strictly the prerogative of the council. Eminent ladies and gentlemen, you now know why I rejoice.

I thank all the Past Presidents for their continued dedication to the service of the institute. I call them NIM's major stakeholders. These are men and woman who conceived and built Nigerian Institute of Management Chartered (NIM) through great personal sacrifice. They are the embodiment of all our institute stands for. They are all retired but re-fired by God to keep serving humanity for the general good.

Sir Peter Edeogbon, FNIM the outgoing President deserves my appreciation in a special way. He made a decision to work by the rules, a rare disposition of leaders in Nigeria. He allowed me to do my job as Deputy President, creating an enabling environment for me to succeed. I remain grateful to you, Sir.

I remain grateful to my five children for their huge support, advice, companionship and level-headedness. In them I see God's champions. My brothers and sisters-in-law have been of great strength to me. I am grateful to them.

THE TASK AHEAD

The task ahead is evidently enormous when you consider NIM the largest professional body in Africa that has existed for 49 years. But I am encouraged by the caliber of men and women who were duly elected into council at the last AGM. These are outstanding professionals of repute, committed to the service of our great institute. As a team we shall work doggedly to build an institute that will add value to membership, an institute that will truly be a symbol of excellence; giving service and dignity to management and leadership at all levels. An institute that will be the pride of Nigeria. Indeed, I see a new Nigerian Institute of Management Chartered; I see the institute strategically positioned to serve the needs of man and nation in the 21st century. I see a new era of service and fulfillment.

As I step into this threshold of service and onto this exalted office as the 17th president and chairman of council of our great institute, I cannot but remember my late husband Dr. Titus Olawepo Bolujoko on whose advice I joined NIM twenty years ago. I came in search of management education and received a good measure. In gratitude I served NIM in many capacities as I was found fit, never saying “no” to assignments, culminating to my unanimous election as president and chairman of council.

The vision of NIM which is: “to be the source and symbol of management excellence” had been crafted at the reception of NIM Charter. Looking at where we are today as a nation, nothing could be more appropriate and apt like this vision. We intend to intensify the vision by making it plain and sharing it with all our workers and members. For no vision has any power, force or impact until it has been shared.

NIM like many organizations have passed through different stages. In the beginning we were the toast of the nation and even of Africa. Nigerian Presidents consulted NIM especially with regard to their budgetary decisions. NIM’s stand on national issues were sought and held relevant.

The military era saw the decline of this scenario. The 3rd Republic led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, CNIM understood the “ancient” wisdom; the imperative of professionalism and the place of management in governance. He therefore aligned with NIM and his administration became one that appointed the greatest number of professionals to man key sectors of the economy irrespective of party patronage.

We want to take NIM back to its premier position of being the driver of Management knowledge in Nigeria. Where we not only define management practice, we become the pathfinder and set the pace in leadership. You know that the best leaders are those who can also manage. We plan to educate our membership, sharpen their tools so they not only know how to mix and apply resources, they will also know how to inspire and motivate the minds and hearts of men towards higher performance and self fulfillment.

The membership services directorate led by Engr. M. K. Suleman, FNIM is doing a great job. The department is currently undergoing a process of retooling in order to bring it to a point of providing faster response time to enquiries and registration of new members. Indeed our forms will be filled online where prompt acknowledgment can be obtained. NIM quarterly journals will reach individual members and corporate members as when due. All quoted companies in Nigeria would receive our journals regularly because it is our mandate to disseminate management knowledge in Nigeria.

We intend to benchmark many processes, bringing best practice into the management of our zones, branches and chapters throughout federation to ensure that our numerous graduate members are reached and are adequately mentored. As a mark of recognition and encouragement the best branch award shall be reinstated, while the best zone and the best chapter awards will be put in place.

Managers and leaders are legacy thinkers – thus our strategic partnership with NYSC since the last six years where Nigerian Institute of Management gives six months free tuition to youth corpsers is producing a crop of better equipped university graduates for employment into Nigeria’s labor market. We have report from employers of labor that indicate that the graduates who pass through our training show higher initiative than others who did not. NIM would undertake a survey in the near future to assess the impact of this venture. In the interim, we shall ensure effective cooperation with the NYSC; involving them in the inductions of the graduate members, and partnering with them in organizing leadership summits for Nigerian youths in various geographical zones. On behalf of the Nigerian Institute Management Chartered I like to express our gratitude to the Director General of NYSC and his staff nation-wide for the good job they are doing.

THE INSTITUTE’S STAFF

As an institute we take pride in our staff. We believe that an organization is as good as her team, and I believe we have a winning team. I salute all NIM staff for keeping the flag of our institute flying.

I like to remind you that the landscape has changed, the world is changing daily indeed by the second, globalization has shifted the world’s market to our door step, competition is keen as demands rapidly shift; we no longer can solve a problem with the same level of thinking we were in when the problem arose. The world belongs to the organizations that can adapt and re-adapt frequently. We ought to conduct our operations with the tools and skills consistent with the information/knowledge age. Anything short of this will be retrogressive and will impede performance. Therefore we shall not do businesses as usual, because no one wants to rise to a higher level and continues to do the same things he has been doing.

NIM is mindful of work environment and equipment, every year we spend tens of millions of naira on capital equipment. This year council has approved the upgrading of our ICT facilities to enable us have effective links with our members and the outside world. Our library has been upgraded to a virtual library. The members of staff are paid very well and we intend to keep making it better.

MANAGING THE WORKPLACE

All over the world managers are still employing industrial age control models in their relationship with workers because many of us in positions of authority do not have accurate understanding of human nature. We manage people as we manage objects. This lack of understanding prevents us from tapping into the highest motivations and talents of our work force. Consequently we alienate our people, depersonalize work and create low trust, contention and rebellion in the work place. Rather than dis-empowers ourselves and our workers by managing people, we should learn to build relationships and empowered teams. We must begin to acquire strategic leadership skills that will enable us manage things while inspiring our teams.

As managers we require workers to apply their bodies and mental faculty to their skills and to machines, but as leaders we will seek to reach their hearts and inner motivation that they might apply their hearts to their skills and perform willingly and effectively. In this century the manager-leader would be the sought-after because he has the ability to walk on the leading edge. I suggest and I indeed urge you to pay attention to new concepts and paradigms in order to maximize performance

ABUJA MANAGEMENT HOUSE

The inside cover of the program brochures in your hands contains the picture of the proposed NIM management house at Abuja. It is an impressive building, one that befits the institute. It is valued at about 3billion naira. The outgoing president has passionately driven the project. We expect to take it up and drive it; earnestly soliciting the support of members. I appeal to all NIM members to pay their levies within the next quarter to enable us be on course. The various categories are listed on page 43 to 44 of the programme.

STRATEGIC FOCUS OF THE NEW COUNCIL

From the foregoing, our strategic focuses in the next two years are these:

To bring back the culture of discipline and the ethics of entrepreneurship. No great endeavor is attained without the pain of discipline; which when taken keeps the pain of regret at bay. Any framer will tell you that cows don't give milk; you have to fight for every drop. We will learn to work harder and smarter, finding new and better ways to work so as to be in the competitive edge. The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work, and our duty determines our destiny.

Intensifying our vision – we intend to share NIM vision; making it plain to all concerned, while ensuring compliance. Our vision is the blazing camp fire around which we all gather, it provides light, direction, energy, warmth and unity. None is allowed to stand away in the shadows. Remember the charter came with the big uncle's stick – the vibrant disciplinary committee and the tribunal. This goes to say that our rules must be binding, violations must be punished, and our decisions must mean something to us. NIM vision is in pursuit of excellence – therefore in excellence as in other areas we cannot lead from behind. We must lead from the front.

Sharpening of our core competence – our aim is to retain our leadership edge as a management trainer and regulator in Nigeria. We will also begin to prepare grounds for a post graduate university of management and strategic studies in Nigeria.

Finally we are determined to provide an empowering leadership, inspiring people, creating and receiving commitment, bringing the best out of our people, and being role models. We will lead people to realize that while principles are timeless, methods need to be under constant review. They have to learn to be willing to unlearn and be ready to recognize the danger of safety. Our people will be encouraged to launch out to fallow grounds as we build lasting relationships.

THE NIGERIAN NATION

As I conclude this speech, I wish to make a plea concerning our beloved country. I urge you to speak good about this great nation always; because we attract what we say. Besides as some of us speak negative things about Nigeria, we fail to realize that Nigeria is the totality of all of us in this hall today. If each one of us can resolve to straighten up in little things as in the big, Nigeria will stand up.

Lewis Henry once described his town (Seattle) in the following words that sound much like the attitude of many of my country's leaders. And I quote

Nigeria is “A place where people spend money they haven’t earned to buy things they don’t need, to impress people they don’t like”

The one thing that has kept Nigeria moving backwards is the love of money. Leaders chase money, followers go after money, families, churches and enterprises make money their focus. Values and norms are set aside in this rat race. We are all caught up in it, oblivious of Luy Thomlin’s assertion that in every rat race, even if you win you are still a rat.

Lucius A. Seneca as early as the fourth century BC stated that and I quote

“Money has never made anyone rich”

Up to this 21st century, I have not seen a man who is rich in my estimation because he has money. Our wallets don’t determine who we are; who we are is a function of our hearts. All Nigeria’s systems down to homes are malfunctioning because men and women choose to fill their wallets at all costs instead of filling their hearts. Consequently leaders refuse to render service or build legacies. I therefore implore every Nigerian to change their mindsets from the pursuit of things to the pursuit of people, from acquisition to distribution, from hatred to love, from thinking win/lose to thinking win/win.

Until we change the way we think we cannot change the way we act or the way we live today.

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) once said “I am wealthy in my friends”. That should be our resolve as managers of this nation; we should be wealthy in building people, building teams and in leaving legacies. We all can do that, I know we can!!