

**ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, CNIM, GCFR AT THE  
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD AT INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE CENTRE ABUJA ON MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2006**

- The Senate President
- The Speaker of the National Assembly
- The Minister of the federal capital Territory
- The Head of Service of the Federation
- NIM Council Members
- Fellows and other members of the Institute
- Members of the Press
- Registrar/Chief Executive, Directors and other members of staff
- All invited guests.

It is my greatest pleasure and honour to be with you this morning; first and foremost as a member of this great Institute. I have been following the trends of events of the Institute right from the date the highest honor of Companion was conferred on me which I gracefully accepted and cherished. I also recall two years ago when I was personally here at your conference to unveil the NIM Crest following my signing into law the Establishment Act by the National Assembly. The significance of this is that the people of Nigeria have empowered you to perform your duties as stipulated in the Act.

I would have wished to be present at all your conferences barring all emergency State matters especially as a number one manager of the Nation, a Companion of the Institute and more importantly the very critical topics of the conference touching on current issues affecting the Nigerian Nation.

The Nigerian problems that have eaten deep into the fabrics of our society are dated as far back as the first republic. Nigeria has been lagging behind systematically on all developmental, economic, social and all areas of human endeavor. To solve all these

problems requires only one solution, that is good Management. Good management must not only be applied but it must be seen to be applied with the deserved speed. In a situation where Nigeria has been left behind by other Nations who are continually growing geometrically, I wonder what speed we are going to use on our developmental programmes to be able to catch up and where possible be on the lead.

These are what informed our current reform packages, their adaptation and implementation which must be implemented with any imaginable speed required to put the country back on track. It would take people of good management understanding to appreciate our current drive for which time is not on our side. I therefore see all those present here today and other members of the Institute as agents of this transformation and reform in line with what I have always perceived of the Nigerian Institute of Management of not given up Nigerian or give up on Nigeria. The struggle is collective, open, decisive and with management tactics. I therefore implore you all to join hands and deliver on the policies of the Government so that the gains, which must be sustained, will rub off on all citizens of this country.

The Nigerian Institute of Management, with the conference topics I have seen today, has demonstrated its commitment and support to our reforms agenda. After a thorough discussion on all these topics by these eminent management scholars that I have seen today, I should have no doubt on the excellent outcome from this conference.

To fully put the country in the path of prosperity, complete eradication of corruption must be in the fore front of our agenda. I find it absurd, unpleasant and unthinkable seeing Nigeria listed among one of the most corrupt nations. The widening corruption scandal is a huge challenge for this administration. If official corruption is not eradicated, the rule of law can be jeopardized. A radical shift in policy to curb official corruption is necessary and must be pursued as a major challenge for this administration.

I have always enjoyed reading the Institute's code of conduct. I therefore challenge the Institute not to only see this been read, but must commit this to practice as a way of life. If the over seventy thousand members of the Institute are vanguards of the code of conduct, as wide spread as they are, this country will be a nicer place to conduct affairs.

I will like to receive the communiqué of this conference which will be passed to the relevant organs of my Government for possible implementation.

I thank you all for been part of the nation building and wish you happy deliberations.

Ekabo; Daluno; Barkanku da zuwa.