



ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACE: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR NIGERIA

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PROTOCOL

The Visitor, Your Excellency, the Executive Governor of Lagos State;
The Chancellor, Lagos State University;
The Pro-Chancellor & Members of the Governing Council;
The Chairman of the Occasion: Your Excellency, former President, Chief
Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR;
The Vice-Chancellor and other Principal Officers of the University;
Vice-Chancellors of Other Universities here present;
Members of the Senate of Lagos State University;
Your Royal Highnesses;
My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal;
Academic and Non-Teaching Staff of Lagos State University;
Graduating Students;
Other Students of Lagos State University;
The Lagos State University Community;
Members of the Press;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is a great honour, and privilege, for me to be invited to deliver the 22nd Convocation Lecture of the Lagos State University on the “Role of Tertiary Education in Promoting Social Cohesion and Peace: Opportunities and Challenges for Nigeria”. I thank the Almighty God for making it possible for me to honour the invitation. It is necessary that I also convey the felicitations and good wishes of the Management and Staff of the National Universities Commission (NUC), and, indeed, the Nigerian University System (NUS), to the Management, Staff and Students of the Lagos State University (LASU), on this august occasion. We also acknowledge the unparalleled support and corporation received by the National Universities Commission from one of Nigeria's most respected intellectuals, a former Executive Secretary of the NUC, a multitalented academic and a distinguished staff of this great University, his academic eminence, Professor Peter Okebukola. Among his many current noble engagements, Professor Okebukola chairs the NUC Strategy Advisory Committee which has just developed a blueprint on the rapid revitalisation of university education in Nigeria.

Let me also specifically commend the efforts of the Visitor, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode for his peerless commitment to enhancing human capital development in the State, as demonstrated in his support to the Lagos State University which is today enjoying one of its best moments since its establishment in 1983. The fact that the Institution is celebrating its 22nd Convocation Ceremony is an eloquent testimony to the success of its efforts in the production of the required high level manpower not only for Lagos State, but for Nigeria and the World at large.

I congratulate you, the graduands, for the tenacity of purpose, determination and hard work that saw you through your various programmes. I wish to encourage you to maintain a healthy link with the University, through the Alumni Association, and to always be worthy ambassadors of this great University, wherever you may find yourself.

I also wish to urge all of you, vibrant LASU students, to continue to be peaceful and to remain focused on the task of preparing yourselves both in learning and character, for a fruitful future.

I am grateful to the authorities of this University for considering me worthy to be the 22nd Convocation Lecturer. I imagine that the invitation was premised on my practical experience in tertiary education management and the current role which I am playing in repositioning the Nigeria University System for greater performance and relevance. Indeed, I accepted to engage in this discussion on higher education, with the firm belief that although it is a topic best reserved for professional educationists, there are aspects of it on which an administrator – which I have become – can make meaningful contribution. That is why my focus here is mainly on the role of higher institutions in promoting “cohesion and peace”, both of which are concomitants of “National Unity”.

We are all aware that Nigeria is a Federal Republic comprising 36 States and a Federal Capital Territory. While the Federal Government is led by an elected President, and a bicameral Legislature; the State Governments are led by elected Governors and unicameral Legislatures. The Country’s population of about 198 million, is ethnically diverse, and consists of more than 250 ethnic groups, many of which speak distinct primary languages and are concentrated geographically.

In Nigeria, the issues that confront the State and Society, which continue to generate the greatest worries and concerns, are those of violence, communal conflicts, rights of ethnic groups, rise of ethnic militias, agitation for self-determination, alleged political persecution, fundamentalism, terrorism, kidnapping, and other violent crimes. In the midst of all the hues and cries of political dominance, and marginalization, many ethnic nationalities have continued to agitate for restructuring, resource control or for outright secession. One could be forgiven if one dares to say “we appear, as a people, who are most often so divided along ethnic and religious lines to the extent that one really wonders if, indeed, we want to remain together as a single indivisible entity”.

It is even more worrisome, considering the fact that Nigeria has co-existed for over a century since the amalgamation of the then Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. Going by the level of agitations and acrimony that have become the hallmark of our co-existence, one would really wonder if Nigerians do appreciate, even in small measure, the benefit that have accrued to all and the blessings that we have enjoyed and continue to enjoy. Why have we chosen not to count the gains and see the bigger picture of leveraging on our diversity, great population and natural resources in building a great nation?

Ladies and gentlemen, I am of the candid opinion that Nigeria is better and stronger together, and that our unity should be sacrosanct. This was the dream of our founding fathers, as enshrined in the motto of the Nigerian Coat-of-Arms Ordinance No. 48 of 1960, "Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress". The former Nigerian national anthem also implored us to "stand in brotherhood" even though in "tribe and tongue we differ". Peaceful co-existence was the overarching philosophy upon which the foundation of our dear country was laid. It is obvious that our founding fathers were conscious of our diversity in tribe, language and religion, and thus, the need to foster social cohesion. This is anchored on the understanding that where there is no unity, the attainment of peace and progress is like a "fleeting shadow".

TERTIARY EDUCATION: ORIGINS AND PURPOSE

The idea of tertiary education is most commonly traced to the legendary Greek Philosopher, Plato, who, indeed, founded the first University in the World – **The Academy**, in Athens (365 BC). In his classic, *The Republic*, Plato espoused the thesis that to attain the goal of an ideal and just society, in which men live in perpetual harmony and freely actualise their full potentials, the social structure must be in consonance with what he identified as the three elements of the soul.

Man, according to Plato, is made up of three elements: the **rational**, the **appetitive** and the **spirited**. The appetitive part is the one that is accountable for the desires in people; the rational is the thinking element in every human and it is responsible for sensible decisions and choices. The spirited element is responsible for the emotions, courage and valour. These elements occur in

different abundance or ratio in man; while some have a predominance of the appetitive element, others are endowed in large measures with the spirited or the rational elements.

It is these differential endowments that determine the structure of social organization and functional relationships. Those with an abundance of the appetitive element should form the class of **artisans, producers and labourers**; those with an overt quantum of the spirited element should constitute the **auxiliary** class while those who are evidently imbued with the rational element should constitute the **guardian** class (rulers). In Plato's worldview, society is best organized, if there is functional specialisation; if everyone is doing what he/she is best able to do.

The social stratification, which Plato recommends, is to be attained, not by arbitrary selection, but through a comprehensive system of education. All citizens are to be subjected to the same system and curriculum of education in their early life. Education is the sieve by which citizens are separated into the different levels of society. It is education that also ensures a perfect social order as well as efficiency. Every class is expected to be subjected to continuous and appropriate education in order to attain perfection in the functions naturally assigned to it. The farmers, artisans, soldiers and, even rulers, can perform to their optimum, only if they undergo continuing education. Indeed, education should be for life since knowledge is always changing and adaptation always essential.

Whereas, Plato recommends continuing vocational education for the class of producers and relentless physical and mental exercises for the **auxiliaries**, he reserved the most rigorous education for the **guardians**. The **guardians** must be trained in general laws of nature, moral philosophy, culture and the arts. They must be supremely knowledgeable and be totally devoted to the pursuit of knowledge for the good of the society. Knowledge is, for Plato, the key to good governance, hence his often quoted admonition that society will not attain its ideal state "until philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers."

Education, at any level, refines skills, the intellect, vision, talents and the mind. It is akin to fire which transforms gold, iron ore, bronze and other metals into products of infinite shapes and beauty. At the tertiary level, education is expected to produce a supremely knowledgeable, creative, innovative and visionary class of citizens. This is the central point of Plato's philosophy of education. The highest form of education is expected to produce leaders who would guide society towards the attainment of its manifest destiny. This is the philosophy of education that has remained at the heart of curriculum development, throughout the ages and all over the world.

TERTIARY EDUCATION TODAY

The purpose of tertiary education remains the building of human capacity at the highest level. The aim is to continuously produce a ruling, professional, clerical and technical elite class to serve the multifarious needs of society, particularly the need for stability, development and progress. The saying that youths are the leaders of tomorrow is based on assumption that they will go through the grill of educational refinement and capacity-building to actualize their potentials. The expectation as well as historical reality is that leadership in aviation, medicine, law, engineering, military service and academia is attained, or most commonly attained, after varying periods of exposure to tertiary education.

The pivotal role of Tertiary (Higher) Education in society was affirmed at the Second UNESCO Non-Governmental Organizations' collective consultation on Higher Education (Paris, 8-11, April, 1991), which declared that, apart from the intellectual functions of teaching and research and its educational function (training of the mind and transfer of ideas and concepts from one generation to another), Tertiary Education has the responsibility for:

- (a) training of specialists, of professionals and of highly qualified manpower to meet the needs of governments, of industry and business, and, indeed, of all branches of society;
- (b) the provision of services to a specific region or community which can take on a great variety of forms: extensions of adult programmes, refresher courses,

consultative technical and artistic services in all fields of competence for the economic, political, social, ecological and cultural development of society and the pursuit of a more equitable social orders”.

In Nigeria, the critical role of tertiary education in economic development and socio-political order was at the heart of the 1960 Report of the Ashby Commission on Higher Education. Although the Commission was motivated by political pressure for tertiary education opportunities, it showed a clear understanding of a broader role for tertiary education in a developing society. For Lord Ashby, tertiary education, apart from creating the manpower needs of an emerging independent country, has the more enduring purposes of: (i) creating a national elite (ii) engendering development and (iii) promoting unity and nation-building. The Report gave birth to the de-merging of the University College, Ibadan, from the University of London, to become an autonomous University of Ibadan, and the emergence of new Universities in Nsukka (1960), Lagos, Ife, and Zaria (all in 1962).

TERTIARY EDUCATION AND THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION & PEACE IN NIGERIA

Tertiary education comprises all levels of post-secondary education, and includes Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics and Universities. The first tertiary institution established in Nigeria, by the Colonial Government, was the Yaba Higher College, Lagos, which commenced operations in 1934. The College offered multi-disciplinary post-secondary courses, and produced the much needed indigenous personnel, such as Medical Assistants, Surveyors, Teachers, Administrators and Agricultural Assistants, who serviced the operations of the British Colonial Government in Nigeria. Between then and now, the Nigerian University System has grown from five, when the NUC was established in 1962, to its present level of" 164 universities. In addition to these universities, there are 183 Mono-technics and Polytechnics, as well as over 90 Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Enrollment in Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) in Nigeria is well over 2.0 million students. As the apex of tertiary education, and given their traditional roles of teaching, research, dissemination of existing and new knowledge, pursuit of service to the

community as well as being storehouses of knowledge, Universities, along with other TEIs, are uniquely placed to be at the vanguard of finding lasting solutions to the problems that plague peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

The most ambitious and comprehensive attempt at making tertiary education an instrument of National unity, peace and social cohesion, was by the regime of General Yakubu Gowon. After the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), General Gowon made a “No Victor, No Vanquished” proclamation which was highly acclaimed all over the world. This was immediately followed by the adoption of a programme of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reintegration (the 3Rs). The essence of this programme was to quicken the process of healing the wounds of the War, facilitate reconciliation and create the necessary conditions for building a common national consciousness, social cohesion and unity.

Education was perceived and identified by the Gowon Administration as one of the key instruments of its nation-building agenda; it was, indeed, considered to be pivotal to its implementation. At the end of the Civil War, there was a marked imbalance in access to tertiary education in the country. Of the five existing Universities, only one was in the Northern Region of the country (the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) while 76% of the student population was from the South. This gross imbalance in student population between the North and South was seen as prejudicial to social cohesion and national unity. In addition, the Universities were plagued by severe inadequacies in their facilities and admission capacities, so much so that less than 20% of qualified candidates had no chance of gaining admission. This was at a time of increased demand for higher education swelled by large numbers of returnees from the Civil War who had abandoned their studies in the violence that preceded the Civil War and the uncertainties of the crisis itself.

Mass expansion of higher education became one of the priorities of Gowon’s educational policy, particularly, against the background of agitation in the Northern States and other States which did not have federal universities - Mid-West, South-Eastern and Rivers States. These States wanted universities of their own. The Northern States were, particularly, uncomfortable about the very low percentage of Northerners in other federal universities (less than 2%).

Under the platform of the Interim Common Services Agency (ICSA), the Northern States agitated for the establishment of state universities in the Region, expansion of preliminary courses and preference to students from the North in university admissions. The Gowon regime was concerned that the establishment of state universities would (i) exacerbate existing inter-state and inter-ethnic rivalry and tension (ii) lead to the isolation of the youth of each State of the federation into their state universities with negative consequences for unity and social cohesion (iii) weaken the quality of education offered and the graduates produced because of the lack of financial capacity of States to adequately fund the complex operation/needs of universities. The Government was convinced that “unless a planned and conscientious national plan for university development was introduced, standards would suffer to the extent that the Degrees and Diplomas awarded would be worth very little”.

As a result of these perceived weaknesses and the weightier agenda of promoting national unity and social cohesion, through tertiary education, General Gowon suspended the constitutional provision on higher education in August 1972 and transferred to the Federal Government “full responsibility for higher education throughout the country”. With this constitutional amendment, the Federal Government “arrogated to itself the sole right to establish universities and to legislate on all matters concerning further expansion of university education”.

The larger import of this constitutional change was that it gave the Federal Government the regulatory authority needed to actualize its agenda of promoting national unity through higher education. Chief A.Y Eke, the Commissioner of Education at the time, made this point, eloquently, when he affirmed that “instead of remaining the parochial or regional subject, it had previously been, (Higher) education is now a matter of immense national consequence for the citizens of Nigeria”. The pursuit of unity, social cohesion and by implication, peaceful co-existence, was at the heart of the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), the aim of which was to detribalise the products of Nigeria’s tertiary institutions and create nascent national elite. This same detribalizing mission was at the heart of the creation of federal unity schools at the secondary education level.

It would not be far-fetched to say that Gowon's faith in the nationalizing potentials of tertiary institutions has not been fully justified, if at all. Subsequent constitutions removed the Federal Government's monopoly in the ownership and control of higher education. By putting higher education on the concurrent list, the floodgate was opened for the establishment of State Universities, with the inherent parochialism that the Gowon regime sought to prevent. Today, even federal universities are succumbing to the lure of parochialism with one in each State of the Federation and perfidious agitations for indigenes to occupy the highest positions in their management. It is sad to say that Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) in Nigeria are, tragically, yet to be the incubators of national unity and social cohesion.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For Nigeria to unlock its potentials and take its rightful place in the comity of nations, the country must rise above all the parochial, sectional and retrogressive forces that have worked against its unity and nationhood. Considering the number of TEIs in Nigeria, their statutory roles, and the ever-increasing student enrollments in these institutions, the country does not need to look elsewhere for solutions to its search for a socially cohesive nation.

I believe that the sheer number of staff and students in our TEIs provides us a unique block towards entrenching social cohesion and peace in our society. Given the diverse backgrounds of the population in TEIs, and the fact that they come from and will go back to the larger society upon graduation, our staff and students represent a veritable tool for creating the much-needed environment for our society to live in peace and to make progress. The extent to which we view our TEIs as a tool and are able to exploit it, would determine to a larger extent our ability to influence the larger society. Each TEI must develop its strategy for achieving this; and the extent of success by each institution shall determine the extent to which it is able to influence the larger society. All the intellectuals have individual and group roles to play in this desire to make TEIs tools of social cohesion and unity. Our institutions must be models of national complexity and unity. We will be able to tell the whole nation that we are serious, as an intellectual hub, when a Hausa man or Yoruba man is elected as Vice-Chancellor in a Federal University in the West or North

respectively based purely on merit. Achieving that will not only be a barometer for us, but how we achieve it will definitely usher in the dawn of our true national development!

Permit me to say a word about **affirmative action**, popularly called Federal Character Principle in our nation. The Federal Character principle arose out of the desire and need to ensure the inclusion of all groups in federal resource allocation and sharing so as to ensure equity, or at least, reduce acute marginalization. I subscribe to the principle of Federal Character for its ability to reduce the tyranny of the majority; but I should quickly add that we must learn to infuse excellence into our affirmative action. What this means is that on all occasions when we select the affirmative representatives of a group, we must select the best representatives from that groups that meet pre-determined qualities of excellence for the spaces to be filled. However, should a deserving group, at a material point in time, lack the required qualified representatives, then every effort should be made to quickly train those representatives while temporarily filling the gap with qualified representatives from other groups on negotiated terms. In this manner, we can adequately achieve our dual goals of ensuring equity and achieving excellence!

Recent developments in our country have challenged and continue to challenge, our peaceful co-existence. Erstwhile peaceful communities have become mini-theaters of war! The largely peaceful Fulani herdsmen and their various host farmers, for example, have suddenly become engaged in seemingly perpetual conflict, with attendant loss of lives and property to the extent that severe measures have been implemented in some areas to curtail the movement of the herdsmen. What puzzles me, rather, is the suddenness, and the extent of these conflicts and their seeming intransigence! What bothers me, even more, is the seeming quiet from the academia in terms of identifying the root causes, as well as proffering the ways or means of addressing them through workable solutions. Should I be mistaken that the case is that there is no robust research on the issues, given that it is not my area of expertise, I still submit that there is little intellectual contribution to the way the issues are being addressed. It appears clearly, to me, that there is a disconnect between Government and the academia in this important issue, as is the case with our

technological and agricultural development. Given that Sociology is no rocket Science, no pun intended, I should be excused for thinking that we (and I mean the TEIs) ought to have made more significant intellectual contributions to governmental and non-governmental approaches to addressing these conflicts. The same argument, Distinguished Colleagues, applies to all forms of conflicts affecting our society. Let me quickly add that, my thoughts on this are not about beautiful Ph.D theses and other chitchats that end as theoretical exercises and stimulants; but rather practical and implementable solutions!

It almost goes without saying that a paradigm shift is required in the way and manner we perceive and utilize TEIs! It is high time that our TEIs made direct contributions to the economic and technological development of our nation beyond human capital training. The technologies that drive our economy must come from our TEIs. Why should Nigeria continue to expend huge sums, in foreign exchange to build our roads, for example? Why can't our TEIs develop the capacity to build our roads? Why should our TEIs continue to spend money on electricity bills rather than build their own dams to cater for their needs? Why must Government continue to pay foreign companies to tackle gully erosion rather than our TEIs addressing the issue? Until we interweave our TEIs and our economic activities, and produce the necessary spinoffs, we are likely to continue with this unrealistic economic development module that relies only on the sale of a mono-economic product! It behoves our TEIs to see their roles as business entities with huge potential for economic and commercial success, and aggressively actualize the huge economic, commercial and technological potentials that they possess.

FUNDING OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

I must not fail to discuss the funding of our TEIs, especially, the public institutions at the Federal level. We have operated for 84 years, since the establishment of Yaba College of Technology in 1934, a module of funding that relies solely on the Federal Government. All recurrent and capital costs are borne by Government! The result of this module is that, with decreasing Government earning, our TEIs are finding themselves in more and more difficult financial situation; the truth being that little investment is being made

in the crucial area of research and development, given the sheer size of the wage bill of TEIs. It is, thus, apparent that there is a need for a new strategy for funding TEIs in Nigeria! I personally see this happening in two ways.

First, I would like to see a Government that continues to give block grants as usual, but with a little extra for investments. The University of Ibadan, for example, can receive an extra grant of N1 billion annually from Government for investment for the next 20 years to enable it build a reasonable endowment. The University should only be allowed to benefit from the returns on the investment, while the type of investment and where the proceeds can be applied, essentially research, should be determined by Statute. This should be replicated in all universities in Nigeria! Secondly, I would like to see a more regulated Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) regime in our TEIs. This should entail allowing more flexibility in the areas of IGR that can be exploited, including some cost sharing mechanisms. More importantly, there should be greater accountability in the management of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). The current IGR practice in our TEIs should not be allowed to continue as it denies the system of much needed funding, while the little collected is mostly spent in an unaccountable manner.

TEIs in Nigeria must re-invent themselves to be able to cope with the challenges of social cohesion and peace. The institutions must undertake internal self-assessment and re-strategize their operations. They must be able to work more closely with Governments at all levels and they must engage in more practical and realistic research. There are vast and ample opportunities for TEIs in the social and economic spheres in Nigeria, given that little practical research and development contributions have reflected in conflict resolution.

To fully exploit these potentials, I wish to make the following suggestions:

- i. There is need for increased strategic Government funding of TEIs to support long term investment in research and development. TEIs must also explore and exploit IGR sources for strategic long-term investment. This should enable TEIs to make meaningful contributions to social cohesion and peace;

- ii. There is need for TEIs to develop individual strategy for ensuring lasting social cohesion and peace on their campus and the extension of same to the larger society. The contributions of TEIs to social cohesion and peace must be measured. The need for the emergence of intellectual think-tanks in our national social and economic sphere must be encouraged and exploited. These think-tanks must be made to work closely with Government, and all its agencies, to ensure deep intellectual contributions to Government programmes with the goal of enhancing social cohesion and peace. TEIs must lead in efforts to reach out to, and work with, dissatisfied segments of our society, and they must increase their research on social issues to engender social cohesion and peace, as well as make sure that these research endeavours are made to count;
- iii. There is need for TEIs to increase their participation in the economic activities of the nation. Government must take pro-active steps to integrate TEIs into the economic fabric of society. The result is that the TEIs will become richer, able to develop technologies, improve society, reduce Government costs, thereby making significant contributions to social cohesion and peace; and
- iv. There is need for TEIs to carefully undertake self-assessment to reposition themselves as corporate entities capable of meeting the needs of the nation now and in the future in all spheres, especially in social cohesion and peace. They must review their governance and funding strategies, as well as overall operations, especially as public institutions, to make them more competitive and attractive for investment. They must seek partners from the private sector and not only donations, so as to build lasting businesses and enterprises.

RETOOLING FOR RELEVANCE

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, a problem can only be solved if it is attacked from its root cause. Social instability in Nigeria has resulted from a history of bad governance and the insensitivity of Governments to the living conditions of the citizenry. To promote social cohesion, therefore, the nation's Tertiary Institution must promote literacy and good governance, aimed at

alleviating poverty through job creation and research/innovations that would positively impact on the well-being of the people. I wish to suggest that Tertiary institutions must:

- (i) **Engage in Education for Social Cohesion:** This calls for a more creative and proactive approach to education, which should include the establishment of unique and customized courses/programmes that would facilitate social cohesion and national unity. The long-term objective must be to socialize members of the society and provide them with knowledge and skills that would facilitate their social participation.
- (ii) **Promote Good Citizenry:** TEIs must strive to train graduates who are truly worthy in learning and character. A good citizen of Nigeria must first be a good person. TEIs ought to teach the rules of the game: those that govern interpersonal and political action. They consist of the social and legal principles underpinning good citizenship, obligations of political leaders, attitudes and behaviour expected of citizens, and consequences for not adhering to principles, law and order. TEIs can also facilitate students' appreciation of the complexity of issues related to historical and global current events, and, in so doing, increase the likelihood that a student would see a point of view other than his own.

By teaching the rules of the game in this manner, TEIs foster tolerance and lay the groundwork for voluntary behaviour consistent with social norms. A good citizen of Nigeria needs to recognize individual differences, acknowledge common bonds, and demonstrate skills related to diversity, inclusiveness, and fairness. Diversity exists in various forms including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity, culture, talent, ability, status, and learning styles. Our TEIs must see the population of staff and students, as well as their diversity, as a laboratory for generating and disseminating the ideals of social cohesion and peace on campuses, and the larger society. Each institution must, consciously, develop a strategy for peaceful co-existence on its campus.

- (iii) **Promote Literacy:** TEIs must be more engaging in ensuring mass literacy in their immediate communities through the establishment of educational outreaches. TEIs must assist Governments in reducing the percentage of out of school children. Illiteracy hinders social and economic mobility of people. Besides, an illiterate populace is a veritable tool in the hands of mischief makers.
- (iv) **Promote Entrepreneurship Education:** Government's inability to provide jobs for the teeming population, most especially our young graduates, is increasingly becoming a big challenge. TEIs must begin to enhance the skills of students, with adequate training in entrepreneurship. Graduates must be adequately trained, and fully equipped, to be entrepreneurs (job creators) upon graduation, rather than being job seekers.
- (v) **Promote Good Governance:** For as long as governance continues to be weak, Nigeria will not attain the desired quantum leap, while positive development will continue to elude the country. Academics must step out of their comfort zones to participate, through intellectual inputs, to ensure that Governments, at various levels, are responsible and accountable to the people. Institutions must partner with Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations to promote good governance.

CONCLUSION

Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the sum total of my lecture today is that Tertiary Education in Nigeria needs strategic rebooting. We must reconnect to the fundamental goals and functions of tertiary education and develop a new vision based on curricula that are geared at solving practical socio-economic, political and technical problems. To do so, our institutions must evolve robust programmes that are capable of appropriating the enormous opportunities in our economy to increase their viability, capacity to survive in a difficult environment and relevance to Nigeria's development process.

Finally, if the truth must be told, our tertiary education system has failed woefully in two out of the three great missions identified in the Ashby Report. No doubt, remarkable success has been achieved in the area of creating the manpower needed for development but the system has failed to give birth to a national elite or serve as an instrument of unity and peace. The elite class in Nigeria is, even, more fractious and more bigoted than ever before. Ethnicity and religious intolerance reigns supreme, almost 58years after independence and after the Ashby Report. Today, our disunity has become more pronounced and rather than the language of peace and progress, our so-called educated elite is spewing out noises of hate, secession and war. The challenge for the immediate future, and it is an urgent one, is to get our Tertiary Institutions back to do what they can do best, create a national elite that would facilitate the emergence of a truly united nation.

May God bless Nigeria!

Thank you for your attention.

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