

CONVOCATION ADDRESS, DELIVERED BY THE CHANCELLOR, HIS EMINENCE, EDIDEM EKPO OKON, ABASI OTU V, OBONG OF CALABAR, NATURAL RULER, TREATY KING & GRAND PATRIARCH OF EFIK EBURUTU KINGDOM AT THE 27TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE (FUNAAB), ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE, ON TUESDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2020.

PROTOCOLS

I sincerely welcome you all to the 27th Convocation Ceremony of our great citadel of academic excellence; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). In a special way, I appreciate the presence of the Visitor to the University, His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR. I wish to congratulate the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Dr. (Barr.) Aboki Zhawa, OON; Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Felix Kolawole Salako, FSSSN; members of the Governing Council, Principal Officers, members of Senate, Staff, Students, Graduating Students of the University, Parents, Guardians, Honorary Awardee and a distinguished son of Africa; Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, OFR, for witnessing today's historic event.

Your Excellencies and invited guests, our University has lived up to expectations in different spheres. We have won laurels and confirmation from the right quarters clearly indicates that we are on track. The Vice-Chancellor and Management team have done very well in placing the University on the right path to academic excellence. I am proud to say that since my appointment as the Chancellor of this great University, FUNAAB has grown from strength to strength. Certainly, the sky is the limit for this citadel of learning to continue to wax stronger.

At this juncture, let me reiterate our passionate and clarion call on the Visitor to the University, to magnanimously restore our courses in the College of Management Sciences (COLMAS) that were delisted about four (4) years ago. This is a great demand that many stakeholders would want Mr. President to give his listening ears to and we sincerely believe that this time around, we will all hear the good news.

Your Excellency, Sir, Permit me to restate that the establishment of the College was borne out of the call for diversification of academic programmes in specialised Universities with the assurance to retain Agriculture as the flagship in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The existence of the College of Management Sciences (COLMAS) is to add value to what we are doing because of the strong inter-relationship between Agriculture and Management.

Not only that, the purpose of this pronouncement on diversification was to allow greater access to higher education by an ever-increasing pool of eligible candidates, who are unable to access higher education due to insufficiency in numbers of federal universities to cater for their admission needs. You will all agree with me that the number of admission-seeking candidates into our universities is increasing by the day. We really need to do something fast about this admission crisis before it gets out of hand. It is, therefore, important that the College, which has enjoyed full accreditation status by the relevant academic and professional bodies, should be allowed to continue its contributions in the academia towards national development. The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) should be given all opportunities to realise its aims, objectives, and mandate. I am convinced that under the President Muhammadu Buhari administration, our University will continue to wax stronger in becoming a centre of academic excellence in Nigeria. Therefore, giving life back to the College of Management Sciences (COLMAS) will give the necessary tonic to fully complement the existing academic programmes in agriculture, sciences, veterinary medicine, and engineering run by FUNAAB.

I particularly salute the choice of Dr. Akinwumi Adesina by the University for the conferment of Honorary Doctorate Degree. I had no hesitation in approving the request when presented by the University Council. Dr. Akinwumi is a household name in Agriculture both nationally and internationally. His exploits as a Minister of Agriculture in promoting value chain addition of agriculture crops is unparalleled. We are proud with the significant contributions he has been making since he became the President of African Development Bank. He is no doubt one of the leading light of

Nigeria at the international level that we are pleased to showcase as an exemplary citizen of this country.

The contributions to Research and National Development by the erudite Professors to be conferred with the Academic titles of Emeritus Professors of the University cannot be discountenanced by anybody. Both of them served meritoriously as Vice-Chancellor of this University. We are proud of them all.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, once more, I express my heartfelt congratulations to all stakeholders in the University, parents, well-wishers and most especially, the graduands that we are celebrating today. I wish you all success as you continue your life endeavours and activities.

Thank you for listening and God bless you all.

**His Eminence, Edidem Ekpo Okon, Abasi Otu V,
Obong of Calabar,
Chancellor, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta
January 2020**