

## **Aare Afe Babalola, SAN Speech at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Convocation Ceremony.**

I welcome you heartily to the second convocation ceremonies of our university, ABUAD.

Exactly one year ago, on October 21, 2013 and right in this ultra-modern 7,000 seater Alfa Belgore Hall, we graduated our first set of 130 students from the College of Sciences and College of Social and Management Sciences. Those of us who were privileged to witness that occasion would agree with me that it was indeed a historic and colourful event which was witnessed by our revered President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the UNESCO Assistant Director General for Africa Affairs, Dr. Lalla Aicha Ben Barka, former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Hon. Justice Alfa Moddibo Belgore among other nobles.

Today, thanks to God, we are graduating students from Colleges of Law, Sciences and Social & Management Sciences. I am glad to confirm that the first set of students have completed their one-year mandatory Youth Corp Service. The first graduates branded themselves as **“The Pacesetters”**. Everywhere they go, they make us proud in terms of

dress, decency, punctuality, respect, excellence and quality in everything they do.

## GRATITUDE

### The Parents

I pay special tribute to the parents, guardians and friends of our 2014 graduating students. I thank you for believing in me and in particular for choosing ABUAD which was only a year old out of 150 older universities in this country four years ago. You believed that ABUAD would provide quality education without any disruption in academic calendar. You were right. It is a fact that those students who registered at the same time with your children in those universities are still in the second or third year. Your children are graduating on schedule. There is no extra week, no extra day, no extra hour, no extra minute. This is why so many students who took JAMB examination this year chose ABUAD as **the University of First Choice** out of 50 private universities **ABUAD which is only 4 years old came 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 50 private universities**

### Staff

I pay special tribute to the members of the Board of Trustee (BOT), the Governing Council, under the

able and erudite leadership of Ambassador (Prof.) Iyorwuese Hagher, the Senate, the able, experienced, committed and honest Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Michael Ajisafe, all members of the university community, staff and students for supporting the vision of the Founder to reform, entrench and institutionalise quality education in Nigeria and change the status quo. I have found, as a fact, that the most difficult task in the world is to bring about change. This is why we are faced with so many challenges from students, teachers and the community. But we are succeeding.

### **Some of our achievements in the last one year**

It is my pleasure to inform you that in the last twelve (12) months, ABUAD has again achieved much more than we hoped for. The staff population has increased from 750 to 1,200 while the student population increased from 2000 to 3,750. In the provision of physical structure, we have put up the most expensive and most beautiful Talent Discovery Centre and ultra modern five-star Guest House costing over 2½ billion naira. I urge parents and friends to visit these structures including our Agricultural Enterprise Centre before you go back. We have completed the Moringa Factory which produces eight different products. Today, we can

boast of 110,000 Mango trees, Mango factory, Harvest Protection House, Mango Cooling Centre, 500,000 Teak trees, 500,000 Gmelina trees, Mushroom, Piggery, Snailry, Turkey, Quail, we have increased our fish ponds to 680. We now sell fresh and smoked fish. The statement of Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, the Hon. Minister of Agric, bears confirmatory testimony to what the university has achieved in the area of agriculture.

The statement reads in part:-

***“The most impressive part of my visit was the university farm. There is no university in Nigeria with this kind of commercial farm! I was also equally impressed to see your Law Centre, a beautify edifice that matches your sterling scholarly and erudite contributions as one of Africa’s foremost legal luminary”.***

In view of our incredible achievement in agriculture, the IITA has designated the university as a Research Centre in agriculture. The reputable Moore Plantation has entered into MOU with us.

## **Mentoring**

ABUAD is the **first university** in Nigeria to be invited to mentor a foreign university. In particular, the University of Industrial Development, Accra, Ghana has invited our university to mentor their university. Part of the letter sent to us reads: **“We in UID fervently believe that you are one of the foremost believer in the need for us to save Africa from becoming a perpetual dumping ground for goods and products made in India, Korea, China and Brazil”**.

### **29<sup>th</sup> Association of Vice Chancellors of Nigeria Universities**

I am proud to inform you that out of 150 universities in Nigeria and even though we are only four years old, we hosted the 29<sup>th</sup> edition with the theme “Pathways to Sustainable Education in Nigeria”. The comment of some of the Vice Chancellors are contained in this year’s convocation programme.

### **Accreditation**

All over the world, accreditation of programmes taught in a university is critical to quality education. It is my pleasure to **inform you that we have scored 100% accreditation by NUC and relevant professional bodies for all the programmes submitted to them**. More importantly, we were the

first university to secure full accreditation in Medicine at a go even though we are only 4 ½ years.

### **Benchmark**

We are the first university to improve on the benchmark set by NUC as far back as 1974. Ladies and gentlemen, we are in a technological age. The world and indeed university programmes are changing with technology. ABUAD is a 21<sup>st</sup> century university founded to reform education in Nigeria. Therefore we believe that we should also improve on NUC curriculum. We have initiated and developed degree programmes in Social Justice, Human Biology, Security and Intelligence Studies and Mechatronics. The Computer Professional Regulatory Council of Nigeria (CPN) has granted full accreditation for its Computer Programme and has designated the university as the only Centre of Excellence in Cyber Science and Research in Nigeria. ABUAD is the only centre in Nigeria for US based Pearson VUC Testing Site and one of the 50 internationally recognised exam centre in the world.

### **UNESCO Retreat and Oxford Symposium**

Our university is the first to host UNESCO Regional Staff Retreat in Nigeria. We pay special tribute to

Prof. Hassana Alidou, the Regional Director of UNESCO in Nigeria who in her remarks on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September said: ***“ABUAD is a model HED which we are proud of and happy to be connected with for a long time. This campus is in the league of some big universities I have seen in developed world in terms of facilities”.***

### **The Awardees**

I congratulate the highly distinguished citizens of the world who have been nominated by this pace-setter university for award of honourary degrees. These are great citizens of the world who have in their chosen fields changed the world. This intimidating and impressive profiles of these great people are in the convocation brochure, they speak for themselves. Our university only honours men and women of honour and integrity like you. You richly deserve the honour. Congratulations.

### **Our Future Plans**

I am usually delighted each time I hear eminent personalities within and outside this country pour encomiums on us for our achievements so far. The secret of our success is that we are insatiable with our dreams. We continue to dream and continue to explore ways to make our achievements better. We

welcome new ideas and continue tirelessly to pursue our vision. We are still far from where we are going.

We have formed and continue to form alliances with leading world educational institutions and multinational corporations in all disciplines in the university, including Julius Berger, Pan Ocean Oil Corporation Ltd, IITA, CES Industries, USA and Festo Automation of Germany, just to mention a few. We are now one of the few institutions in the world accredited as full COMPTIA VUE Testing centres with over 50 international certifications for our students. These certificates are globally recognised and internationally competitive. We have invested nearly 3 billion naira in the past few months in purchasing equipment for our College of Engineering which has now become incomparable to any other in the country. We are indeed pioneers of change and, while the global future may remain uncertain we are prepared to embrace these uncertainties as springboards of change for a better Nigeria, Africa and the global world. This is why we are not only excited about the future of ABUAD but continue to train our staff and students to think differently; to see opportunities where others see difficulties and to continue to steer the course of future

uncertainties, as a skilful rider of an unruly horse, to the winning side of global fortunes.

### **Graduating Students**

Now, my dear graduating students, I say hearty congratulations. I appreciate your hard-work, your endurance and your submission to ABUAD code on discipline. Today marks an important milestone in your lives and the beginning of your journey into the world as graduates. If you hold onto the core values of this university, namely, **industry, determination and integrity**, people will soon know you as 'Transformers' the brand name you voluntarily chose for the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of graduating students, I am sure you will succeed much more than the Founder.

### **My Charge to you**

You must continue to preach the gospel of this university which is qualitative, **functional and reformatory education**. Your predecessors, the **Pace-setters** have made us proud and are still making us proud. You are enjoined to perform your duty as members of the alumni association, make your monthly or annual contribution, turn to university website every week, check your weekly newsletter and make your comments regularly. See

yourselves as ambassadors of this university. The name ABUAD is known and respected all over the world. It opens doors. I assure you **that the future is very very bright for you.** Remember the philosophy of the founder. **Hard work doesn't kill. He prays most who works hardest. Never stop dreaming of becoming the best in your chosen career. Always remember that it is not a sin to dream high; but low aim is a crime. You will make it better than the Founder.**

Good luck, God bless. Long live ABUAD.

Congratulations.

God bless you all.