

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE, HON. JUSTICE R.P.I. BOZIMO, OFR, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 2016 INDUCTION COURSE FOR NEWLY APPOINTED JUDGES AND KADIS, HELD AT THE ANDREWS OTUTU OBASEKI AUDITORIUM, NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE, ABUJA, ON 23RD MAY, 2016

It is my privilege and honour to welcome you all to the opening ceremony of the **2016 Induction Course for Newly Appointed Judges and Kadis** organised by the National Judicial Institute, in fulfilment of its mandate of providing Continuing Judicial Education for all categories of Judicial Officers and their Support Staff as stated in Section 3(2) of the NJI Act.

We must on this occasion express our most sincere gratitude to the Almighty God for giving us the opportunity to be here today, and particularly for your appointment and elevation as Judicial Officers. Please accept my warm congratulations. I

wish you the best of luck as you begin the onerous task of adjudication.

My Lords, this Induction Course is one of the most important in the annual programme of the Institute because it creates a forum where you are all formally welcomed to the Nigerian Judiciary and are introduced to the rudiments of the administration of Justice. The task ahead is onerous.

Your primary duty is to interpret the Law without bias, affection or ill will. You are Ministers in the Temple of Justice; therefore the need for you to imbibe judicial values cannot be overemphasized.

Distinguished participants, it is important to note that your job is tasking and demands long working hours, long sitting hours, and a lot more, but that notwithstanding, you should be able to strike a balance in handling your job and other affairs

that will compete for your time and attention. Note however that the duties of a Judicial Officer, which includes all the duties of his office as prescribed by law, should take precedence over all other duties and responsibilities.

My Lords, your status as Judicial Officers demands that you must be courageous, fearless, candid, uncompromising and firm in upholding the Rule of Law even as you strive to attain Judicial Excellence at all times.

As an institution, the judiciary is not and should never be indebted to anyone but the Constitution. Judgements and decisions of the Courts must be apolitical and free from bias at all times and must be accepted, understood and perceived as such. Your role as is aptly encapsulated in our Judicial Oath of Office is to uphold the law and dispense justice to all persons alike without fear, favour or prejudice.

In the words of Justice R. C. Lahoti of the Supreme Court of India:-

“Dispensation of justice is an attribute of God. Blessed are those on whom that Godly assignment has befallen. Still blessed are those who acquit themselves of such assignment with pride, dignity and honour.... Even God, who has created the human being does not sit in judgment over his deeds until the human’s death whence he determines whether he deserves hell or heaven. You have been given the authority to sit in judgment over the deeds of a man in his lifetime. Your pen has the power to grant freedom of living or the sentence of death to an accused. You can take away his liberty for a number of days, months or years (subject to the limitations of the law). Your mighty pen can turn riches into rags and a pauper into a millionaire. The more power you have, the more humility, rationality and balance must be among your possessions.”

To achieve the goal of this Induction Course, very salient topics have been selected for discussion. Resource persons and Chairmen of Sessions have also been carefully chosen and I believe they will set the tone for an in-depth discussion

of the topics which if properly understood and utilised, will enhance the daily performance of your duties.

My Lords, distinguished participants, may I at this point thank His Lordship, the Honourable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman, Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute, **Hon. Justice Mahmud Mohammed**, *GCON, FNJI*, and members of the Board of Governors for their unflinching support for all the programmes of the Institute. My Lord, we are indeed grateful for your consideration and approval of this year's Induction Course.

I would also like to thank the Education Committee of the Board of Governors under the able Chairmanship of my Lord, Hon. Justice W.S.N. Onnoghen, *JSC, CFR, FNJI*, for carefully selecting and approving the topics for the Induction Course.

Let me also appreciate the Justices of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and the Heads of various Courts for their presence. I thank our distinguished participants, guests, Chairmen of Session and Resource Persons for finding time to be here to share their wealth of experience and knowledge with us despite their busy schedule.

I must also thank the members of the Press for finding time to be here with us. Your presence is highly appreciated.

It is now my singular honour and privilege to invite His Lordship, the Honourable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman, Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute, **Hon. Justice Mahmud Mohammed**, *GCON, FNJI*, ably represented by my Lord, Hon. Justice John Inyang Okoro, JSC, to deliver his Keynote address and to declare the

2016 Induction Course for Newly Appointed Judges and
Kadis open.

I wish you very fruitful and exciting deliberations.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Hon. Justice R.P.I. Bozimo, OFR
Administrator, NJI