

WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE (NJI), HON. JUSTICE R.P.I. BOZIMO, OFR AT THE REFRESHER COURSE FOR MAGISTRATES. HELD AT THE ANDREWS OTUTU OBASEKIN AUDITORIUM, NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE, ABUJA, 1ST APRIL, 2019

PROTOCOL

I am indeed happy to welcome you all to the 2019 Refresher Course for Magistrates.

The National Judicial Institute conducts a yearly Refresher Course for Magistrates so as to facilitate effective administration of criminal justice in their courts. This explains why the theme for this year's Refresher Course: Repositioning the Magistracy for Better Justice Delivery could not have been more appropriate than now.

Aside from creating an opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas, the Refresher Course offers some respite to participants from their otherwise tedious and arduous criminal trials. It is our desire at the Institute that the Course will also serve to refresh your memories and understanding of some of the ideas you already have on crimes, victim protection, sentencing practices and of course, human rights.

My Lords, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Nigerian society has for long had to deal with crimes and punishment for deviant behaviour through the instrumentality of the Courts. Critical to

this process in terms of both easy reach and availability, are the Magistrates Courts.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as amended) guarantees the rights to life, personal liberty and freedom of movement as fundamental rights of every citizen. This being the case, you must remember that where any of these rights is to be deprived, such must be done in strict compliance with due process and procedure outlined under the law. The justice of all criminal trials requires all the actors especially the Magistrates who are empowered by law as unbiased adjudicators, to act fairly and impartially. This is to avert serious injustice

such as unjust imprisonment or loss of property or even both.

My Lords, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me also emphasize that we at the Institute have always endeavoured to include sessions on Judicial Ethics in almost all our training programmes including the training for Magistrates. The reason for this is to enable you imbibe a culture and sense of excellence. This way, you will not only be able to conduct yourselves in a manner that dignifies your judicial office, but also reinforce the confidence of those who come to court for justice.

My Lords, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to express the profound gratitude of the Management and staff of the National Judicial Institute to the Honourable, the Acting Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Dr. Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad, CFR, FNJI, for his support for the programmes of the Institute at all times.

At this juncture, I should like to express profound gratitude to all the Chief Judges and various Heads of Courts who are here to lend support to us for this course. We are also grateful to all the Chairmen of Sessions and Resource Persons who have agreed to share their wealth of experience and knowledge with us.

My Lords, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is now my singular honour and privilege to invite the Honourable, the Acting Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Dr. Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad, CFR, FNJI, to deliver his keynote address and declare the 2019 Refresher Course for Magistrates open.

I wish you all an enriching experience during the course.

Thank you God bless us all.

Hon. Justice R.P.I. Bozimo, *OFR*
Administrator, National Judicial Institute