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***BABCOCK UNIVERSITY  
EMINENT PERSONS DAY  
ADDRESS***



***Delivered By***

***CHIEF RICHARD AKINJIDE, CON, SAN, FCIARB. (U.K.) FCE***

***FELLOWSHIP AWARD:***

***ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF CHIEF RICHARD  
AKINJIDE, CON, SAN, FCIARB. (U.K.) FCE***

***DELIVERED ON THURSDAY MARCH 15, 2007***

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Chief Richard Akinjide, CON, SAN, FCI Arb (U.K) FCE** is a practising Member of the Bar of England and Wales with Chambers at **9 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3BP**. He practises also at **The Gambian Bar**. He specialises in **Oil and Gas, Companies and Banking Matters, Mergers and Acquisitions, Shipping, International Commercial Arbitration and International Law**. He handles Appeals from **West Indies** at the **Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, London**. He is a **Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, United Kingdom (UK)**. He took Silk in Nigeria as **Senior Advocate on January 12, 1978** and was **Called to the Nigerian Bar in March 1956**. **Member of Nigerian Federal Parliament 1959-1966, Member of the International Law Commission of the United Nations in Geneva from 1981 – 1986, Federal Minister of Education 1965 -1966, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of Nigeria 1979-1983**. He is the author of the **2nd Edition of "Africa and The Development of International Law"** published by **Martinus Nijhoff at The Hague, The Netherlands (1988)** and selling worldwide. **Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of the University of Jos 1976-79**.

He is an **active member of the Association of International Petroleum Negotiators in TEXAS, United States of America (USA)**. Cases he handled are reported in various **Law Reports in Nigeria, England, The Gambia** and in **International Law Reports**. He is a **specialist in Oil & Gas**.

He represented **Nigeria** as the **Co-Agent** and a **Counsel** in the case **Cameroon v Nigeria at The World Court, The Hague** for **about 8 (eight) years** involving **International Boundary Dispute from Lake Chad to The Atlantic Ocean**. He was a member for **four (4) years** of the team of **International Jurists** that drafted **The Law of The Sea-Convention** otherwise known as **"The Constitution of The Sea"** which is the **biggest Convention** ever sponsored by the **United Nations (UN)**. **Chief Richard Akinjide** signed that **Convention** and **The Final Act** on behalf of **Nigeria at Montego-Bay, Jamaica**. **Publications of AKINJIDE & CO** series which started with **"Advocacy, Ethics and The Bar"** have now reached **28 (twenty-eight)** issues and circulates world-wide. **Chief Richard Akinjide** established trusts in the **Universities of Ibadan, Jos and Cambridge (England)** for **Annual Prizes in Law**. **Five (5) of his children read law**. **Chief Richard Akinjide** was the **President** of the **Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) 1970-1973** and past **Chairman** of the **Nigerian Body of Benchers** and a past **Member of the Council of Legal Education**. **Visiting Lecturer** for the **LL.M Programme** in the **Alternative Dispute Resolution, International Commercial Arbitration etc, University of Ibadan**. **Awarded Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON) in 2002**. **Distinguished Fellow of the Nigerian Law School**. **Honoured as Fellow of the Babcock University Circle of Eminence (FCE) in 2007**.

**Hobbies: Golf, Snooker and Gardening.**

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## BABCOCK UNIVERSITY EMINENT PERSONS DAY ADDRESS

In the course of the next 50 years, a time period well within the life span of those whom it is your noble mission to educate today, as a result of both global warming and the depletion of fossil fuel reserves worldwide, humanity will have no choice but to undertake changes of a nature, on a scale and at a speed never witnessed in the whole history of known civilizations. The alternative is an inescapable degradation of life conditions on planet earth.

Let us not be mistaken. For the first time in the history of human race, the challenge is the very survival of most vegetal and animal species and, ultimately, the preservation of our own. For the first time in the history of known civilizations, humanity must undergo an in-depth revolution, a dramatic change of methods, visions, ideas, conditions and behaviours.

Where else but in the walls of such a great citadel of learning could I more appropriately state the fact that, more than ever, the critical ingredients to overcoming the most formidable obstacle of all known times are education, character, knowledge, research and innovation. In one word, intelligence where the sky is even not the limit.

As you all well know, about two months ago some 500 eminent members of the international scientific community originating from a large sample of the world's nations met under the patronage of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in Paris, France, to assess the causes and impacts of climatic changes. The report they submitted at the end of their meeting is alarming. Yes, scientists agreed, it is human activity that is the major cause of *global warming*. The observed rise in temperatures worldwide, the first in the past thirteen thousand years, does indeed mainly result from the persistent and growing emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Such emissions have occurred over the past 200 years or so and continue unabated today. *The result is the greenhouse effect*, the warming of our planet as the heat originating from the sun is trapped in the atmosphere and prevented from escape back into space.

Carbon dioxide is massively emitted into the atmosphere because the enormous quantities of energy the world economy consumes to fuel its many industries, the services, transportation systems and the domestic activities of 6.5 billion people are mainly produced by burning fossil fuels: wood, *coal, petroleum products and natural gas*. Only a small proportion of world energy supplies originates from renewable energy sources *such as solar energy, wind power or hydro-electricity*.

Such energy sources produce energy directly without combustion and without carbon dioxide.

*In the past two centuries, unprecedented levels of economic growth have been recorded worldwide. But the unbreakable bond between energy usage, economic activity and carbon dioxide emissions has now rendered high rates of world economic growth ecologically unsustainable in the long term. Why? Because when as a result of carbon dioxide emissions the climate gets persistently warmer, not only are delicate ecological balances disturbed and many species destroyed but also ice is melting, sea levels rise and large land surfaces are swallowed by the seas. Scientists tell us that the melting process has already started. They add that, if no corrective action is rapidly taken and sustained, if a substantial reduction of carbon dioxide emission does not take place worldwide, the potential impact on food supply, industrial activity, health and habitat will be such that the prosperity and life of hundreds of millions of men, women and children would be at risk. If we were not to take any corrective action, the cost of repairing the many damages inflicted on our planet would indeed be staggering. It has been conservatively estimated to equal that of repairing the destructions caused by both the first and second world wars.*

There is also some urgency for corrective action. A British tycoon has very recently gone as far as offering a reward of US\$25 million to anyone who would find a way to substantially reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere. *Some of you here in Babcock University may be interested!*

Paleontologists, those scientists who study fossils as a guide to the history of life on earth, have invented elegant names to qualify the successive steps in our species' evolution. When our far-away ancestors, then hardly discernible from the apes, became able after tens of thousands of years of evolution to stand permanently on their two feet and walk, they were baptized *Homo erectus* – they who can stand. When intelligence emerged, when after another huge span of time *Homo erectus* discovered the usages of primitive tools, another huge step in evolution was accomplished. Then, *Homo erectus* became *Homo sapiens* – they who can think. *Homo sapiens* are our direct ancestors, the founders of our distinguished lineage: the modern *human being*.

I am afraid, however, that in the past two centuries *Homo sapiens* have not made the best possible use of their thinking capability. Rather they have turned into *Homo economicus* – *they who are only interested in counting money. Driven by greed, the real engine of capitalism, humans have ill treated*

*their planet, over-exploited its resources and spoiled their environment unmindful of the fact that planet earth is their most precious possession, the only planet where they can live. Indeed, there is only one earth and if there are others in the universe, they are out of reach.*

Blinded by the perspective of large short-term gains, humans have ignored or pushed aside the long term consequences of their actions thus putting at great risk the life and prosperity of future generations: you students to whom I am talking today as well as the youth of this world and perhaps even more so your and their children. When you are in a hole, you must stop digging.

Today, as the global race for profit continues unabated gathering both the old players (The US, Europe, Japan) and powerful new actors (China, India, Brazil), we are told by eminently knowledgeable people that man's sole option is to rethink the whole economic process in its totality so as to give birth to a sustainable world economy fueled by renewable sources of energy. The task is formidable indeed and must be accomplished in one and only one century: the 21st. It is also important that implementation be no longer delayed. It must begin early into this century. There is no time for more time. The 21st century is indeed the century which will witness both the complete exhaustion of world fossil fuel reserves and a massive degradation of life conditions on earth if our present economic paradigm is not entirely restructured.

I am afraid that, here in Nigeria, these international issues, as pressing as they may be, stand so far away from the day-to-day preoccupations of the many Nigerians who struggle daily for their mere survival that they remain unknown, are ignored or pushed aside as irrelevant. *If questioned about climatic changes, many Nigerians, I am sure, will feel totally unconcerned as they felt about HIV and AIDS some years ago. But they could not be more mistaken.*

Nigeria is a full fledged actor in the world economic process. Her wealth and prosperity, as dented as they can be, critically depend upon her international trade in oil and gas. Oil and gas, these very fuels the world becomes increasingly convinced should be progressively replaced by renewable sources of energy.

We may all regret that no serious political and economic strategy was ever implemented to prepare the ground for Nigeria's post – oil era but a stubborn fact remains: it is a totally re-engineered Nigeria that this and the next two or three generations will have to design and deliver before the end of this century. To achieve this extraordinarily difficult objective, Nigeria does and will require all the thinking power she can possibly nurture now and in the future.

This is why you at Babcock University together with all other institutions dedicated to the transmission and development of knowledge in this country are entrusted with a mission of education, research and innovation, the importance of which has now become more vital than ever to the survival and future prosperity of this land.

The trickle-down theory of **university education** that so long as a University employs brilliant academics, undergraduates will learn by **OSMOSIS, that is, the gradual process of learning or being influenced as a result of being in close contact with them.** When it comes to quality in everything, **Babcock must clothe itself and must be uncompromising in all issues of quality.** That is exactly what **Babcock** needs. That is precisely what Babcock must be. **Babcock University has enormous reservoir of goodwill.** You must not squander it. Goodwill is a great and fragile asset.

This is also why I am particularly proud and honoured to be one of your guests on the occasion of your *Eminent Persons Day*.

Thank you.

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