

TEXT OF AN ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FUND, SIR JOSEPH N. ARI, KSM DURING THE 8TH MANAGEMENT RETREAT ON FRIDAY, 18TH AUGUST, 2017 AT AES LUXURY APARTMENTS, JABI, ABUJA

PROTOCOLS

"The impossible cannot be where there are perseverance and faith. There is no impossibility in life."

It is with great delight and gratitude to God Almighty for journey mercies from our various locations that I welcome the elite of the Fund's workforce to the AES Luxury Apartments here in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja for the 8th ITF Management Retreat.

This forum is an integral aspect of Annual activities of our dear organization as resolutions emanating from such gathering have provided the basis for management policies that have had a fundamental and critical impact on our service offerings and, indeed, all our operations as a corporate entity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the run up to this Retreat, I had taken time off to immerse myself in the writings of Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Rashid Al Maktoum; the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Emir of Dubai, who is credited with the growth of Dubai into a global city. I found some of his assertions quite compelling, inspiring and deeply profound. At the same time, they left me with some foreboding; fear of what lies in wait if we don't change or imbibe new attitudes and practices as individuals or as a corporate body.

The above quote is one of his, which I found quite relevant in view of the theme of this Retreat: **The Power of Mandate Actualisation.**

The questions that I kept brooding over after reading his books were: how was it possible to create oceans of opportunities from a barely habitable and desolate desert environment? How was it possible for him to successfully implement visions that many initially considered unfeasible, crazy and indeed unworkable?

The answer to both questions would be found in a careful consideration and critical analysis of the above quote.

I will now turn my conversation to the ITF: How is it that the ITF despite a robust Mandate and a litany of well-conceived plans is yet to effectively actualize its mandate? For me, the answer is clear. It can still be found in the quote.

It is said, "A great idea is a redundant idea that holds very little intrinsic value when it is not executed". In little over 10 years, we have burnt through two major plans- the 4-year road map and the 10-year Strategic Plan, all of which were designed to ensure hundred percent achievement of our mandate. Several retreats and countless reviews have been held to the same end, all to no avail. Several years on, we have remained, in the main, where we started; and retrogressed in most areas. My take on this conundrum is that we were never committed to implementing our plans; we never believed that the mandate of the Fund can fully be actualized. We were and still think it is not possible, which is why we are today, more than 45 years of existence, discussing mandate actualisation. This mentality has to change, beginning from today.

Last year, we came up with a home grown plan: The ITF Reviewed Vision: Strategies for Mandate Actualisation, which was developed 100 percent by some of us here. The Plan, therefore, is ours in its entirety. Yet the familiar impediments and negative attitudes, some of which strike at the very heart of our core values; attitudes that had hampered the smooth implementation of previous plans are witnessing a disturbing resurgence.

Some of the programmes that have been implemented under the Quick Wins have been sabotaged by some members of our workforce that have clearly not imbibed our core values.

It is regrettable and appalling to note that most of these acts were perpetrated by, or with the active collusion and connivance of some of us that are gathered here today. The ITF cannot achieve its mandate when the workforce actively subverts the organisation. For the Reviewed Vision to be achieved, we must immediately rid ourselves of negative tendencies that have the propensity of hurting the organisation. Let us be warned: it is either we purge ourselves of such acts, or Management will help you do so. As Management, we are committed to

the achievement of all that is contained in the Reviewed Vision. Nobody should, therefore, be a stumbling block. Again, the words of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum are instructive: "Honesty is the road to success."

To actualize our mandate, we, as leaders must be at the forefront of purging ourselves of the ills that have plagued the system. Beyond issues of integrity, to my mind, the utmost impediment to our corporate achievement is the rampant indiscipline, which manifests itself in late coming, absenteeism, truancy, resistance to Management directives and other negative work attitudes. These have occasioned a situation whereby some few work tirelessly day and night for the good of the ITF, while others loiter around spreading harmful and poisonous rumours that have destroyed and stifled office harmony, thereby setting back the ITF quite severely. We must commit ourselves to stamp out these vices henceforth.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you agree with my prognosis of our situation, I will invite this Retreat to come up with strategies that will not only lead to the full actualisation of the Fund's Mandate but also kickstart the emergence of an institution devoid of negative tendencies. I will also invite the Retreat to work towards the execution of those goals that will be fallouts of this August gathering. This is because our country and albeit the ITF have never been in short supply of plans; rather implementation has consistently become the bane. Let us turn around the story here and now. The time has come for us to really come together as leaders in the ITF and do something meaningful and different. I urge you, therefore, to join me and Management so that together we will collectively grow the ITF our forebears had envisioned.

In conclusion, I will again leave you with the words of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum "The word **IMPOSSIBLE** is not in the leader's dictionary. No matter how big the challenges, strong faith, determination and resolve will overcome them."

I thank you for listening and may God bless our efforts to positively change the fortunes of the ITF.