

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY SIR JOSEPH N. ARI, *KSM, KSS*, DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FUND, DURING THE 2021 HALF-YEAR AND 3RD QUARTER PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING ON 8TH NOVEMBER, 2021, AT THE ITF HEADQUARTERS MULTI-PURPOSE AUDITORIUM, JOS.

PROTOCOL

It is with great pleasure and gratitude to God Almighty that I welcome you to the 2021 Half Year and 3rd Quarter Review Meeting, which is taking place both physically and virtually. This meeting, which is coming exactly thirty days after we marked our 50th Anniversary, will provide us with a dual opportunity to review our activities in the first nine months of the current year, while also attempting to chart a roadmap for the ITF we envision as it enters its next phase of life as an organization.

You will recall that in my address during the 50th Anniversary I had said, "As we enter the next phase of our life as an organisation, I am desirous of seeing an ITF that has answered its name as the leading learning and development Agency that Nigerians depend upon in terms of actualising the building of our economy. I would like to see an ITF that adds value in taking Nigeria to be among the top country in the comity of Nations. I will also want to see an ITF that competes favourably with other learning and development Agencies worldwide. I would like to see an ITF that grows not just into a household name where every young Nigerian would see as a pride of place to belong to in terms of actualising his or her career prospects. Finally, I would like to see an ITF that will lubricate the industrial hub of the country by way of ensuring that industries in the country operate optimally".

Therefore, the theme of today's event: **Target Setting and Achievement in a Post Covid-19 Era: The Way Forward for ITF**, which has been carefully selected, will provide us with the platform to vigorously deliberate and address the challenges currently faced, not only by the ITF, but by all organizations operating in our dear fatherland, as they have battled, and continue to battle with the myriad of challenges thrown up by COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond target setting, deliberations here will allow us to think futuristically and innovatively on the ITF we desire, bearing in mind Management's vision I had underscored earlier.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the challenges we are currently confronting today as fallouts of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be with us for some time to come. It is in appreciation of this that Management has continued to explore ways of exploiting the opportunities in the prevailing situation for our corporate survival in the years ahead including aligning our HR and finance operations with emerging global Information Technology best practices.

However, some of the problems that have continued to defy reasonable solutions are two critical aspects of our operations- Target Setting and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). To resolve these, Management has mandated two Management staff to critically examine these in their presentations at this forum. It is my hope that the two papers will lay the intellectual,

even practical foundations for Management's new thinking about Target Setting and Performance Management. It is equally my hope that this forum will look at ways where we can surpass our targets in all our KPIs. While I do not intend to pre-empt the Score Card that will be presented shortly by the Corporate Planning Department, I can reasonably conclude from reports that even the area where we had lagged behind which is training implementation has progressively improved.

From the foregoing, it must be obvious to all of us that we have a challenging task before us. I, therefore, urge all participants at this meeting to listen attentively and contribute meaningfully to the discussion in order to find lasting solutions to these problems.

In conclusion, I wish to use the opportunity of this meeting to address the recent efforts by some elements to blackmail us and cast aspersions on the integrity of our dear institution. Although Management had taken the decision not to respond to their allegations, I want to emphasise that our institution is renowned as sticklers to all processes and procedures, and rules and regulations guiding our activities. It was in appreciation of this that the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) named the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) as the most ethics complaint and integrity Agency amongst 352 Federal Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) surveyed by the Commission in 2020. We are hopeful of carting home the award again this year, as we have continued and will always administer the Fund on the path of financial integrity and in compliance with all governmental regulations and processes, and shall not be distracted by mischief makers and detractors.

On the allegation of non-utilization of our capital votes, I will invite the organisers of the failed protest to visit our nine-story Lagos Island Area office in Lagos; Katsina Area office complex and vocational wing; Mechatronics workshop and Administrative at the Industrial Skills Training Centre (ISTC), Kano; the E-Library complex and Stores complex at ITF Headquarters, the block of 13 classrooms and the Introductory Technology Laboratory at ITF Staff School, Jos, all of which were commissioned by our supervising Ministers, the Hon Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, OON, and his counterpart, the Hon Minister of State, Industry, Trade and Investment, Ambassador Mariam Yalwaji Katagum.

I will also request them to visit our new ultra-modern office complexes and vocational wings in Awka, Aba, Gusau, Minna, Maiduguri and Abuja Multipurpose Buildings that are awaiting commissioning. I want to assure you that rather than being distracted by our detractors, we will continue to follow the path of integrity and fiscal discipline as we strive to develop the ITF through the parsimonious application of the resources available to us.

On this note, I wish us fruitful deliberations and formally declare open this event.

Thank you for listening and may God bless our collective efforts to develop the ITF and by extension, our dear country, Nigeria.