

TEXT OF AN ADDRESS BY SIR JOSEPH N. ARI, KSM, KSS, THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FUND (ITF) AT THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF THE MODERN LIBRARY COMPLEX, CENTRAL STORE AND ITF STAFF SCHOOL CLASSROOM BLOCK ON FRIDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2020, AT ITF HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX, JOS, PLATEAU STATE

It is with great sense of accomplishment that I welcome you to the official commissioning of the Modern Library Complex and the Central Store at the ITF headquarters complex and Classroom Block at the ITF Staff School.

At this juncture, let me welcome my brother, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, KSGG, the Governor of Plateau State, whose wholesome dedication to the capacity development and sustainable economic growth of Plateau is in alignment with our vision of an industrialised and developed country, whose citizenry is fully equipped with the skills and the empowerment to take it to higher heights. On behalf of the Governing Council, Management and the entire staff of the ITF, you are very much welcome, Sir.

Similarly, let me also especially welcome our supervising Minister, His Excellency, Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, CON, Minister of the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, under whose leadership the Fund has recorded unparalleled achievements in all spheres of its activities including the projects that are being commissioned since he assumed office barely a year ago.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, as the leading human resource development institution in Nigeria,

we are determined to take our place at the forefront of the fight against the twin evils of poverty and unemployment. To achieve this onerous objective, it became imperative that the ITF must put in place the necessary infrastructure to carry out this enormous task effectively.

It was against this backdrop and the urgent need to support the achievements of the Federal Government that the current leadership in the Industrial Training Fund in 2016 unveiled an ambitious plan tagged: **The ITF Reviewed Vision; Strategies For Mandate Actualisation**. The key objectives of the Plan were to accelerate the impartation of technical skills to Nigerians for job creation and poverty reduction, and the expansion and modernization of our infrastructure for more Nigerians to access our services and to enhance our capacity to train Nigerians in relevant contemporary skills. Today's ceremony is further confirmation of our commitment to full implementation of the plan as we strive to achieve the developmental policies of President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR.

Over the last two weeks, we have witnessed the partial achievement of these objectives. On Thursday and Friday last week, we commissioned the Mechatronics and Administrative block at the Industrial Skills Training Centre (ISTC), Kano, and the Katsina Area Office Complex. Yesterday, we commissioned the very impressive Lagos Island Area Office. Today, we are witnessing another landmark event: the commissioning in one swoop of 3 significant projects: The Modern Library Complex, and Central Store at the Headquarters, and a Block of Classrooms at the ITF Staff School.

The Modern Library Complex will accommodate e-learning facilities for Engineering, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Periodicals and Dailies among others. It will also house a 250 Computer Based Test (CBT) capacity, as well as office accommodation for staff.

It is our firm belief that the Library will enhance the capacity of staff to perform their duties. It must be noted that for any organisation to flourish, it requires the services of a vibrant and well-furnished library. Taking into cognisance our position as a learning and development agency, staff of the ITF are expected to be knowledgeable and that can only be achieved through constant research, which is possible with a rich modern library.

The Central Store is one project that has over the last ten years suffered several setbacks from abandonment to fire outbreak. However, in view of its strategic importance to the successful operations of the Fund, Management was determined to complete the project, which consists of the main building, Office Accommodation, Storage Facility, Marshal Bay and a Modern Parking Lot. We believe that the project will lead to efficient and effective supervision, better facilities for stores audit and easier stock taking among others.

Your Excellencies, the block of 32 Classrooms we will also be commissioning at the ITF Staff School is testament to the Fund's resolve to ensure our children are equipped with knowledge and skills for development at a tender age. Our curriculum emphasizes hands-on skills so as to build the interest of pupils in skills acquisition at an early stage. All the classrooms have conveniences and office accommodation for the staff. Apart from

the newly constructed classrooms, Management renovated all existing structures in the school. It also established a school farm for Agricultural Science practicals, and provided and equipped workshops for Technical Science, Home Economics, Chemistry, Physics and Biology Subjects. All these are part of our Corporate Social Responsibility to our immediate community as a responsible corporate citizen.

In order to ensure continuous efficient and effective mandate delivery, there are several other projects in the pipeline which, include the construction of a Model Skills Training Centre in Enugu and an Industrial Skills Training Centre in Gombe, construction and refurbishment of Area Office complex in Awka, Jos, Enugu, Kaduna amongst others.

These projects, will collectively among other things, build a seamless organisation, which is people centred and technology driven, motivating the workforce towards self-development, career growth and job satisfaction and also address service delivery challenges as the Fund will provide cutting-edge services to the doorsteps of Nigerians across the country.

In conclusion, I wish to once again thank His Excellency, the Governor of Plateau state, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong for gracing this occasion. Similarly, I want to thank our Minister, Otunba Richard Adebayo Adeniyi, CON, and other distinguished guests for making this occasion a memorable one.

Thank you and God bless.