

**TEXT OF AN ADDRESS BY SIR JOSEPH N. ARI, KSM, KSS,  
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE  
INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FUND AT THE COMMISSIONING  
CEREMONY OF LAGOS ISLAND AREA OFFICE COMPLEX-  
ON THURSDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2020, AT LAGOS ISLAND  
AREA OFFICE COMPLEX, IPONRI, LAGOS STATE.**

It is with great delight and gratitude to God that I welcome you to the occasion of the official commissioning of the Lagos Island Area Office Complex of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in Nigeria's commercial city of Lagos.

There is no doubt that Lagos is central to Nigeria's industrialization. It is also true that for the country to achieve the level of industrialisation, Nigerians must be equipped with necessary skills to drive the process. That is why Lagos State alone is home to six ITF Area offices and an Industrial Skills Training Centre (ISTC).

At this juncture, let me especially welcome the Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-olu, who is here with us despite other urgent matters of state requiring his attention, which is not entirely surprising given the value he places on human capital development in Lagos State.

I want to also appreciate and welcome our supervising Minister, His Excellency, Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, CON, Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, under whose leadership and guidance, the ITF has recorded several landmark achievements since he assumed office barely a year ago.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Lagos Island Area Office that will be commissioned shortly is very strategic to the actualisation of the mandate of the Industrial Training Fund, as it will not only house our seven operational offices, but because it is at the heart of the industrialization of Nigeria as a whole, as it is the centre of most of the country's manufacturing and innovative start-ups. Thus, if we get it right in Lagos, then we can easily adapt it to other states.

The ITF believes in Nigeria because our population alone gives us an economic advantage that many countries lack. But as I have noted severally, our population that ordinarily should be a resource, may become an albatross if we cannot provide a greater proportion of our population with a source of livelihood through the acquisition of requisite skills.

In 2016, the incumbent Management on assumption of office realised that one of the challenges facing the acquisition of skills by Nigerians was infrastructural deficits and in tackling that, the ITF unveiled an ambitious plan tagged: The 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 commissioning is further confirmation of our commitment to full implementation of the plan as well as propel the Federal Government's agenda with respect to productivity and economic growth of the National economy through the provision of

infrastructural development that will enhance job creation and entrepreneurial development of Nigerians.

The Lagos Island Area Office we are commissioning today, which was wholly funded from our internally generated revenue will provide:

- Modern office accommodation,
- Standard training rooms,
- Pent house accommodation,
- Water treatment plant,
- Modern parking lot.

The benefits of this project to the people of Lagos State, the ITF and Nigerians are enormous. In completing this project, we are addressing the challenges of service delivery, as it will take our services to the doorsteps of Lagosians. Equally, the office will expand the Fund's revenue base through training and provide easy access to employers of labour in Lagos State.

I, therefore, wish to congratulate the Area Manager, Management and staff of the Lagos Island Area Office who are the primary beneficiaries of the Fund's commitment to address infrastructural deficits which has hindered many Nigerians from benefiting from the ITF's vast programmes.

I also call on the ultimate beneficiaries of this project, who are the citizens of Lagos State and other stakeholders, to continue to partner with the ITF to achieve its mandate of developing the Nation's human resource.

Finally, I want to once again thank Governor Babajide Sanwo-olu for not only gracing this occasion, but also express my profound appreciation to you and the good people of Lagos State for creating the enabling environment for the Industrial Training Fund to carry out its operations successfully.

I also want to thank Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, CON, the Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, stakeholders and other distinguished guests for making today's event a huge success.

Thank you and God bless.