

THE SUN RISES AGAIN



**Text of the Address of the 11th Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin,
Prof. Wahab Olasupo Egbewole, SAN, Delivered on the Occasion of his
Formal Assumption of Office at the University Auditorium, University of
Ilorin, on Monday, October 17, 2022**

THE SUN RISES AGAIN

Protocol

Gratitude

Since we are nothing without the Almighty Allah, the Determiner of All Affairs, it is auspicious to begin in Allah's name and on a note of gratitude to Him for making today a reality in the annals of our better by far University. We propose, He disposes and He has been positively disposed to me as a person and the university as a whole. I share the belief that ours is a specially blessed University and I am hopeful that the University of Ilorin shall become *primus inter pares* (first among equals) once again because of the abundant talents the University is endowed with. I thank the Almighty God for the grace of life and for the privilege to stand before you this morning as the 11th substantive Vice Chancellor of this citadel of intellectualism and Centre of Excellence. Kindly join me in saying *Alhamdu lillahi rabbil 'aalamin*.

I express my profound appreciation to the Governing Council of the University of Ilorin for the amazing job they did in steering the University to this shore. This is one of the most harmonious transitions we have ever experienced in recent times and I credit the Governing Council. A special mention must be made of the late Chairman of Council, Mallam Abidu Rafindadi Yazid, OON, under whose leadership I was also privileged to serve, for the excellent service rendered to the University. While I still use this medium to commiserate with his family, the Governing Council and the entire university community, I fervently pray that Allah forgive his shortcomings and grant him Aljanna Firdaos.

I am equally grateful to you all, eminent stakeholders in the University of Ilorin project, for all the goodwill and support you have lavishly showered on me since my unveiling as the 11th Vice-Chancellor of this great University. I do not take them for granted. My hope is not to disappoint you regarding the laws governing the mandate entrusted to me. Being privileged to have five former Vice-Chancellors of this University who are still alive and available (i.e. Prof. S. O. Abdulraheem, Prof. S.O. Amali, Prof. I. O. Oloyede, Prof. A. G. Ambali and Prof. S. A. Abdulkareem), I am optimistic that with their combined wisdom and mine, the University of Ilorin under my leadership shall rise again to global reckoning. The sun rises everyday and the sun rises again for the University of Ilorin with the resumption that coincides with today's occasion.

The SMART Agenda

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I have been part and parcel of this University for some two and a half decades and I am infinitely aware of its nature and texture. I have taken time to study the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that

characterise or confront the University and I am prepared to address them for institutional excellence and our collective interest. My vision for the University of Ilorin is all about attaining global reckoning as a 21st Century university and the best in Africa. This is not a tall dream as I believe strongly in the human capital of this University. Together, we can take the university to the topmost league in Africa if we are SMART.

The SMART University mantra entails that my Administration, with your support, will be purposively geared towards achieving:

Sustainable development,

Monumental achievements,

Adaptive capacity,

Rapid response to change and

Team building.

While there shall be opportunity to expound these five cardinal foci, it is apposite to emphasise that the smart mantra for a smart university that I envision will be geared towards achieving the vision of the University “to be an international center of excellence in learning, research, probity and service to humanity”.

Shuttling to the Space

Being Africa’s *numero uno* (number one) University definitely requires efforts and sacrifices on our part as stakeholders. This is why, “Beyond the Frontiers” (2019-2023), as the current Strategic Plan of the University is tagged, we shall be “Shuttling to the Space” as from next year to propel the University to where it should be, right among the galaxy of stars. The specific strategies of how this shall be achieved shall be highlighted before the relevant organs of the University in due course. As fine feathers make fine birds and great people make great universities, the University can be the best. All that I solicit is your cooperation and prayers.

However, one thing is certain. There will be challenges, which are natural by the way. But we shall soar above them like an eagle and with determination cum unity of purpose, we shall get there. The operational blueprint of overcoming challenges shall be anchored on the principles of inclusive governance, no-door policy, thinking without the box (not just outside the box), strengthening of the committee system and reviving the academic culture, both its diverse attitudinal and professional components. For example, some of the attitudinal components include critical thinking, objectivity, evidence-based conclusions, depth, frugality (avoiding wastages), effective deployment of human and material resources, self-respect, collaboration, integrity, fairness and

uprightness while aspects of the professional dimension concern mentorship (guided freedom), academic freedom, effective teaching, innovative research and institutional autonomy all in conformity with the extant laws.

As a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, I shall be loyal to the law, rules and regulations because I know the implications of subverting laid-down procedure and due process. Yet, as a professor of jurisprudence, I shall be just, fair and humane in the decision-making process. As a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Administrators, I am committed to doing right things in the interest of this great institution and its entire membership, the students and staff. For all of us, the sun shall rise again and it shall be a new beginning.

Think Green, Be Green

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we shall be concerned about the environmental policy regarding clean and conducive environment. When we save the environment and think green, we save ourselves and become green. We shall prioritise research and development as drivers of progress. We shall activate a code of conduct based on ethics, professionalism, punctuality, promptness, feedback and attitudinal change. Definitely, we cannot achieve all these without putting staff welfare at the front burner. There is no limit to human ability if there is motivation and in this regard, mechanisms of promoting welfare will be put in place while training and retraining opportunities shall be created to boost productivity and effectiveness. This is our university and it is ours to build together.

The tripartite mandate of the University begins with teaching which entails that the interest of students should be a top priority without compromising staff welfare. Therefore, we shall make our students our pride by constantly engaging them and making them potential ambassadors of the ideals and values of the University enshrined in the motto, *probitas doctrina* or character and learning. There is no doubt that if we lead by example, our students will be inspired. When our students are inspired, the society is better.

Good, Better, Best

I want to appreciate my predecessor, Prof. S. A. Abdulkareem, for his efforts in institutional building. The University is like a building and everyone of us can only add a few bricks here and there. I want to extend my hands of fellowship to all stakeholders in the University. I especially acknowledge the goodwill and the spirit of sportsmanship of my esteemed colleagues who are as passionate as I am about taking the university to a new height. They are all eminently qualified as I am and I can assure them that we are all in it together as a single finger cannot life a load. In other words, no one can do it alone and with you all, I believe that we shall advance the interest of the university and

humanity and we shall set a new bar of institutional excellence. With you all, the sun rises again and it shall bring a new light and a new height to all of us.

As we all know, the University is better by far. It is my plan to make better best. As the old nursery rhyme says, and I crave your indulgence to say it along with me:

Good, better, best.

Never let it rest.

Until your good is better

And your better is best.

Finally, as today is not a day for long speeches, I want to admonish you to let us remain together as a university in the interest of our shared humanity and posterity. I appeal to you to be open-minded, positive and active. I want to urge you all to shun rumours and gossip so that we can all shine in glory. The human mind is a garden and our thoughts are the seeds. We can grow flowers or weeds. Let's grow flowers in the University of Ilorin, let's cut the weeds and be the best we can be because my belief is that we can truly be the best, can't we?

Yes, we can!

Thank you very much for your attention.