

**WELCOME REMARKS BY THE PRO-CHANCELLOR AND CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL,
OSUN STATE UNIVERSITY, PROFESSOR PETER OKEBUKOLA, OFR, AT THE OPENING
CEREMONY OF THE OSUN EDUCATION SUMMIT, HELD AT THE AUDITORIUM,
OSUN STATE UNIVERSITY, 7 FEBRUARY 2011**

- Mr. Governor of Osun State, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola
- Your Excellency, the Deputy Governor, Otunba (Mrs.) Titilayo Laoye-Tomori
- The Rt. Hon. Speaker, Osun State House of Assembly, Barrister Adejare Bello
- The Chief Judge, Mr. Justice Olaniyi Ojo
- Chairman of the day, Nobel Laureate & Emeritus Professor, Wole Soyinka
- The Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Moshood Lanre Adeoti
- Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Gboyega Oyetola
- Keynote Address Speaker, Professor Oye Ibidapo-Obe
- Top Government functionaries
- Important Stakeholders in the Education Sector from across the country
- Distinguished participants and other invited guests
- Ladies and gentlemen of the media
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of Council of Osun State University, it is my great pleasure to welcome the Governor and Visitor to the University, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, to our main campus in Osogbo. We appreciate this first visit to Osun State University since your assumption of office as the Chief Executive of the State.

Our warm welcome is extended to all the several distinguished participants at this Summit. The array of dignitaries is such that it would be a great risk for me to mention you all by name without leaving out one important name or the other. But I must specially welcome the Deputy Governor, Her Excellency Otunba (Mrs.) Grace Titilayo Laoye-Tomori, a great moving force behind this Summit. While the Governor has so far not been able to visit the main campus of our University in person, he has indirectly visited the place several times as the Deputy Governor has been our guest on more than one occasion.

We are also honoured to have with us a distinguished citizen of the world, Nobel laureate Emeritus Professor Wole Soyinka who will steer this Summit as Chairman.

Ladies and Gentlemen, most, if not all stakeholders will agree that the Education Sector in this country is in need of urgent corrective intervention to arrest the deteriorating trend at virtually all levels of the system and at all levels of government. Education is on the concurrent list as we all know and, in a way, this

has made this crucial sector an orphan in the sense that everybody's child has become nobody's responsibility.

While efforts have been invested in the past by various governments over the last 20 years or more, progress made has been painfully slow at federal and state levels. But we must trudge along and build on the gains of the past. We must not be narrow in our gaze as the model for improving quality in education systems implicates input, process and product variables.

Input variables include the quantity, quality and welfare of teachers; relevance and up-to-dateness (currency) of the curriculum; adequacy of facilities including classrooms, laboratories and libraries; adequacy of funding; students' cognitive potentials and attitude to work and parental support for the delivery of education. Process variables include the quality of teaching that goes in the classroom or in practical sessions in laboratories; efficiency of staff; and quality of school management including the management style of the headteacher, principal, vice-chancellor, or rector. Output variables are levels of achievement in terms of knowledge skills and attitudes. We must not focus on a set of variables and neglect the others. We should be aware that the strength of the education chain is as strong as its weakest link and hence factor all the elements in the education equation into our deliberations at this Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen, there would appear to be a consensus that what we lack is not ideas but rather the political will to implement what has been proffered over the years and at several similar summits. This is why it is heartening to note that intervention in this sector is one of the first major initiatives of this new Administration. We at Osun State University are ready to partner with the new Administration to achieve the goals of making the lives of the people of the State better in all ramifications. We are ready to partner with Government to achieve the six-point integral action plan. Particularly in the education sector, we are appreciative of the goal of Government to accelerate the provision of functional education for the youth that would make them productive members of the society.

As an institution, the primary aim of Osun State University is to provide its students with high quality education that would make them both entrepreneurially minded and globally competitive. Not only are they to acquire knowledge and skills that would serve them for life, but they would also be equipped with the entrepreneurial mind that would affect their disposition towards life after graduation. Our goal is to ensure that not one student graduates from UNIOSUN without taking with him or her, a particular skill that could be deployed to economic and commercial purposes after leaving the University. We are equally

poised to support Government to achieve the same level of quality, purpose and relevance at the lower levels of education in the State.

We are persuaded that the deliberations over the next few days would assist in fashioning an agenda that will move the education sector forward on all sides in the State.

It is therefore my great pleasure to once again welcome you all and to wish us fruitful deliberations.

Thank you all and God bless.

Professor Peter Okebukola, OFR
Pro-Chancellor & Chairman of Council
Osun State University
7 February 2011