

“A DAME OF DEEDS”

WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, CALEB UNIVERSITY, IMOTA, LAGOS STATE, PROFESSOR AYODEJI OLUKOJU, FNAL, ON BEHALF OF THE PROPRIETOR, CALEB GROUP OF SCHOOLS, DR. OLADEGA ADEBOGUN, ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE FIRST LADY OF LAGOS STATE, DAME ABIMBOLA EMMANUELLA FASHOLA, TO THE CALEB GROUP OF SCHOOLS, WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2014

Your Excellency, My Lords Spiritual and Temporal, Parents, Staff and Students of the Caleb Group of Schools, Gentlemen of the Press, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Visitor, Caleb University and the Proprietor of the Caleb Group of Schools, Prince Oladega Adebogun, PhD, DSc *honoris causa*, I welcome Her Excellency, the First Lady of Lagos State, Dame Abimbola Emmanuella Fashola, to the Caleb Group of Schools. We thank God for this day, which is the day that the Lord has made, as we mark this unprecedented event in the annals of the Caleb Group of Schools. Only a few weeks ago, the Secretary to the Lagos State Government, Dr. Oluranti Adebule, delivered the fourth Foundation Day Lecture of Caleb University at Imota. Before then, two other women had graced our third Convocation Ceremony – the Convocation Lecturer, Ms Evelyn Oputu, MD/CEO of the Bank of Industry, and the only honorary Doctorate recipient, Engr. (Mrs) Florence Seriki, MFR, MD/CEO of Omatek Computers. A week ago, the United States Consulate-General Team to Caleb University was led by yet another

woman, Ms Rhonda Watson. And today, we are receiving Her Excellency, the First Lady of Lagos State here at Magodo. This strongly suggests that, before long, our amiable Governor, Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN, too, will be visiting to further identify with our modest contributions to the socio-economic development of our dear State. His Excellency will surely deploy his legendary footballing skills to score a hat-trick to equalize the gender game with the women!

That said, we are highly honoured and most delighted to host Her Excellency and to be identified with her sterling contributions to the development of Lagos State. Being married to an outstanding Governor, who has brought purpose, polish and panache to the governance of Nigeria's most populous, most diverse and wealthiest State (more populous and richer than many sovereign countries), our distinguished guest and First Lady automatically shares in whatever credit the current government of Lagos has earned for outstanding performance. Such great deeds include revamping and expanding road transport infrastructure, rehabilitating otherwise hopeless youth, fixing Oshodi and other knotty issues, cleaning up and reclaiming the environment, optimally harnessing the human and material resources of the Centre of Excellence, elevating the megacity of Lagos to global reckoning and benchmarking good governance for other States in Nigeria.

But beyond this, Dame Fashola has been a quiet and result-oriented community-based grassroots organizer in her own right. As Chair of the Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO), our "Dame of Deeds" has to her credit notable initiatives and accomplishments in the broad areas of children and women's reproductive health, senior citizens' welfare, poverty eradication and skill acquisition, and the upgrade of the environment. But, it is her multiple roles as a model mother and an unobtrusive and non-controversial wife of the Chief

Executive of Lagos State, and her critical interventions in the promotion of basic education in Lagos State that resonate the most on the occasion of this landmark visit.

For the record, her Lagos Empowerment and Resource Network (L.E.A.R.N) initiative has intervened in the lives of more than 300,000 youths in the State. Rightly so, her deeds have not gone unnoticed as she has received awards from Nigerian and foreign organizations, not least a Medal of Honour awarded by the immediate past Supreme Pontiff, Pope Benedict XVI, in recognition of her deeds. In a poignant manner, her visit to the Caleb Group of Schools exemplifies her engagement with, and encouragement of, like-minded institutions and platforms committed to youth education, character building and social development.

For the record, the Caleb Group of Schools sprouted out of the consuming passion of its Proprietor and Managing Director, Dr. Oladega Adebogun, for reversing falling educational standards and providing sound education characterized by spiritual, moral and academic excellence. For good measure, he combines the practical, first-hand experience of a classroom teacher with extensive academic and professional training in various universities, including the world acclaimed Harvard University. From a modest beginning, the Group grew steadily into a conglomerate comprising the Caleb International School (Nursery and Primary), established in Ilupeju in 1986; Caleb International College, Magodo, established in 1995; the Caleb International College, Lekki, founded in 2003; the Caleb Educational Institute at Magodo; and the Caleb British Academy, established in 2008. In 2011, the Group expanded to the United Kingdom, where it established the Caleb Educational Services (CES) located in Camberwell, London.

In all, the Caleb Group of Schools, a member of the International Schools Association (ISA), has established a reputation for excellent performance in external examinations without compromising its integrity. Its sterling record is a product of the following interlocking elements:

- Highly committed and competent teachers, who adopt interactive, innovative and result oriented teaching methods;
- A culture of constant assessment, evaluation and monitoring of students' academic progress;
- A student - friendly environment with an atmosphere conducive to learning, self development and well being;
- Remedial classes for the academically challenged and enrichment classes for gifted and talented students;
- A sound pastoral care programme and mentorship system
- A variety of co-curricular activities and programmes aimed at developing the total personality; and
- Leadership and Community Service programmes

One of our students, Adeola Akeju, obtained the overall second best SSCE result in Lagos State in 2011. We were adjudged one of the best three schools for quality education in the State in 2013. Top performances by our students in inter-school debates on national television channels are complemented by unbeatable band displays at the annual opening ceremonies of Christian programmes on Lagos Television (LTV). Our students have also acquitted themselves in global youth leadership conferences in the United States of America and in annual summer exchange programmes in the United Kingdom. Products of our secondary schools

proceed to leading Nigerian, British and American universities, including Caleb University.

In 2007, the Caleb Group of Schools achieved the distinction of being the first and still the only one in its category in Lagos State to have a university licensed by the National Universities Commission (NUC). Today, Caleb University has produced three sets of graduates in thirteen bachelor's degree programmes across the three Colleges of Environmental Sciences and Management (COLENSMA); Pure and Applied Sciences (COPAS); and Social and Management Sciences (COSOMAS). Caleb University's pioneer best graduating student, Tope Bakare, a 2011 First Class Honours graduate of Industrial Chemistry, topped the class in the entrance examination into the MSc Chemistry programme at the University of Ibadan. A 2013 alumna, Ifeoma Aya, a First Class Honours graduate of Economics, is currently on a Master's degree programme at the University of Manchester on full scholarship. In March 2013, the NUC graciously approved the University's College of Postgraduate Studies (COPOS), which has taken off with two programmes - the MSc in Architecture and the Master of Business Administration.

It is worth stressing that the constituent schools in the Group are spread across two of the three Senatorial Districts in Lagos State. They represent our modest contribution to capacity development and the production of potential leaders and change agents for Lagos State, Nigeria and the world. Our main contribution has been the successful operation of a holistic curriculum designed to raise godly leaders imbued with faith-saturated ethical values. Our core values are: Fear of God; Responsibility; Diligence; Integrity and Honesty.

We are delighted to be singled out for the honour of this visit by Her Excellency and remain committed to maintaining the standards that have become our brand. We also hope that this visit is a harbinger of greater things to come.

On this note, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, kindly rise with me to formally welcome the “Dame of Deeds,” Her Excellency, the First Lady of Lagos State, Dame Abimbola Emmanuella Fashola, to the Caleb Group of Schools.

Long live Caleb Group of Schools! Long Live Lagos State!! Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

Thank you for listening. God bless.