

**WELCOME REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR ON THE OCCASION OF THE
BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAMME ORGANIZED BY THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS
SECTION, UNITED STATES CONSULATE-GENERAL, LAGOS AT CALEB
UNIVERSITY, IMOTA, LAGOS STATE, FEBRUARY 28, 2013**

Management and Staff of Caleb University, Officials of the Public Affairs Section, US Embassy, Proprietors, Principals, Fellow Teachers, Students of Caleb University and Visiting Institutions, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I welcome everyone to Caleb University. Licensed by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2007, this University commenced academic activities in January 2008 at its take-off campus at Magodo, Lagos. It relocated to the permanent site at Imota in November 2009 and has produced two sets of graduates. You are all invited to our next Convocation here on Saturday, March 9, 2013. This is **the only bachelor's degree awarding private University in Lagos State**. I am delighted to announce that our College of Postgraduate Studies, duly approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC), has taken off with the MSc. Architecture programme. In all, we have three undergraduate Colleges and fifteen bachelor's degree programmes in Architecture, Building, Quantity Surveying, Accounting, Banking and Finance, Business Administration, Economics, Mass Communication, International Relations, Political Science, Biochemistry, Computer Science, Industrial Chemistry, Microbiology and Industrial Biotechnology, and Physics with Electronics. All are duly accredited or approved as appropriate by the NUC.

Exactly a year ago today, we hosted the first Black History Month (BHM) event at Caleb University. Today, I am delighted to welcome our partners from the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the United States Embassy and representatives (proprietors, principals, staff and students) of selected senior secondary schools across Lagos State to the second BHM event on our campus. This is the fourth Embassy-related event that we have participated in since 2011. On February 24, 2011, Caleb University students visited the US Consulate-General in Lagos for a BHM event, at which I made a presentation on "Nigerian Youth as Agents for Change." On February 13, 2012, the University hosted the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Nigeria, His Excellency Ryuichi Shoji, on his first visit to a Nigerian University.

The foregoing activities confirm that this University is open to collaboration with local and foreign partners to achieve common goals. That such positive partnerships can foster cultural exchanges and capacity development is buttressed by my own personal experience as a founding member of the American Studies Association of Nigeria (ASAN), established in 1989, and Vice-President of the University of Lagos Chapter. During my tenure as Dean, the Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos established the Centre for American and Atlantic Studies, which was supported by PAS.

The theme of his year's BHM event ("**At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th Anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington**") draws attention to the importance of vision, inspirational leadership, personal sacrifice, self-development, dedication and positive values (epitomised by the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the American Civil Rights Movement) in the development of a nation. Fortunately, most of the participants in this event are young people who represent the future of our society. By learning more about important aspects of the evolution of the United States of America, they can be challenged to channel their individual potential towards transforming Nigeria. A major lesson that the film show, career talk and discussions can teach us is that nation-building is a slow and painful process in which everyone must be involved, that there are no quick fixes, and that every society has its own unsavoury past, which it must confront and address before it can achieve true greatness. Consequently, this event is expected to fire the imagination of the young, engender reflection and open up many possibilities.

On behalf of the Management, Staff and Students of Caleb University, I wish you fruitful deliberations and journey mercies as you return to your destinations.

Thank you for listening. God bless.

Professor Ayodeji OLUKOJU

Fellow, Nigerian Academy of Letters

Vice-Chancellor

Thursday, 28 February 2013