

COPING WITH CHANGE

BY

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**PRESS BRIEFING ADDRESS ON THE 39TH
CONVOCATION CEREMONIES OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILORIN ON THURSDAY, 17TH OCTOBER, 2024 AT
THE UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM**

Introduction:

It gives me great honour and pleasure to welcome you all to the commencement of the 39th Convocation Ceremonies of the University of Ilorin. Today is a momentous occasion as we gather to start the celebration of the accomplishments of our graduating class and reflect on the progress of our cherished institution. I give gratitude to Almighty Allah for making today a reality.

As we delve into the festivities of this convocation, I am honored to share the journey and achievements of our students, whose hard work and dedication have culminated in this significant milestone. This ceremony represents not only the ultimate celebration of their academic success but also a reaffirmation of our commitment to educational excellence and innovation.

This year, our convocation ceremonies will spotlight the remarkable contributions of our graduates, who are poised to make impactful changes in their respective fields. We will also take this opportunity to showcase the strides the University of Ilorin has made in enhancing academic standards and fostering research and development.

I am therefore happy to welcome all important personalities and friends of the University who have joined us today as we reflect on the remarkable journey and scores of achievements we have recorded in the last one year at the University of Ilorin, consolidating **A BEGINNING THAT CANNOT WAIT**. I want to start by appreciating all my predecessors for laying a very solid foundation for the development of this great citadel of learning. Their labour culminated in the great University we now have. We have in the past one year consolidated on the foundation laid and commenced creating new building blocks.

As we reflect on the past year, it is evident that the University of Ilorin has made significant strides towards achieving our vision 1:10:500 of being the first among universities in Nigeria, among the first ten in Africa and among the first global 500 Universities thus setting records. Our commitment to fostering an environment of innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration has never been stronger, and it is this spirit that will propel us into the future with the new set of Core Values recently approved by the Senate of the University: *Integrity, Networking, Justice, Excellence, Commitment and Teamwork* (INJECT). Our dedicated faculty, staff, and students have worked collaboratively to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world. The resilience and adaptability demonstrated by our university not only strengthened our mission but also reinforced our position as a leader in higher education.

I invite you to join us in the celebration of these achievements and to continue supporting our mission to advance education and knowledge. Your presence today underscores the importance of this occasion, and we look forward to sharing the highlights of the programmes of the 39th Convocation Ceremonies with you. I also warmly welcome the graduating students, parents and guardians who are here with us today.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the entire University of Ilorin community, starting from the Principal Officers who are men of sterling qualities and impeccable character. I thank all of you for your unalloyed loyalty and devotion - the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Prof Olubunmi Abayomi Omotosho, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Management Services), Prof. Suleiman Funsho Ambali, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Technology and Innovation) Professor Adegboyega Adisa Fawole, the Registrar, Mr. Mansur Adeleke Alfanla, the University Librarian, Dr. Kamaldeen Tunde Omopupa and the Acting Bursar, Mr. Oba AbdulBarki. The Committee of Provost and Deans (CoPD) under the leadership of Prof. Biodun Sulyman Alabi has been quite positive in their unwavering commitment to our University and the goals of the current Administration.

I would like to appreciate members of the Senate for their guidance, wisdom, and insightful deliberations which have been instrumental in steering the University through a period of remarkable growth and transformation despite daunting challenges. Your commitment to upholding the highest standards of academic and administrative excellence has greatly contributed to our institution's success. It is through your collective efforts and sound judgment that we continue to advance our mission of providing top-tier education and fostering an environment conducive to scholarly and personal development.

To our Deans, Directors, and Heads of Department, your leadership has been pivotal in shaping the academic and operational framework of our university. Your dedication to your roles, your vision for your faculties and departments, and your relentless pursuit of excellence are deeply appreciated. Your contributions ensure that our students receive the highest quality of education and that our research and development initiatives thrive.

And to our valued academic and non-teaching staff, your hard work, commitment, and resilience remain the backbone of our institution. From the classrooms to the administrative offices, your dedication drives the daily functioning of our university and enhances the learning experience of our students. Your support and contributions, often behind the scenes, are crucial to our continued success.

The 2022/2023 session has been one of exceptional accomplishments for our faculties, students, and the entire university community. The session commenced on 4th December 2023 while the matriculation ceremony for the 12,967 (twelve thousand, nine hundred and sixty-seven) students admitted into various programmes of the University held on 14th February, 2024. Our faculties have continued to demonstrate academic excellence through groundbreaking research, innovative teaching methods, and numerous awards and recognitions. We are proud of the strides made in enhancing the quality of education, with many of our programs receiving commendations both nationally and globally. For example, our Department of Chemistry secured the official recognition of the American Chemical Society (ACS) having satisfied the world-renowned Scientific Society with the quality of its Curriculum, Impressive Infrastructure and robust safety culture. In response to the University administration's initiative on adoption of alternative energy, the Faculty of Education adopted the use of solar energy. Specifically, the Administrative Section of the Faculty and Departments of Science Education and Arts Education are powered by solar energy to ensure prompt and effective delivery of services. The faculty also installed solar streetlights and provided solar lamps in lecture theatres and strategic places in the faculty. The Faculty of Agriculture as well as the Faculty of Engineering and Technology have also followed this direction in the provision of alternative energy sources in their strides for efficient teaching and quality research. As a policy, the University has adopted sustainable energy provision to drive our processes.

Our students, as always, have been at the forefront of these successes, excelling not only in academics but also in extra-curricular activities, research, and community service. Their dedication, resilience, and achievements have brought pride to the University of Ilorin. We are all indeed Trendsetters.

However, this session has not been without its challenges. Like many institutions across the nation, we were confronted with obstacles that tested our resolve, ranging from the multiplier effects of removal of petroleum subsidy with its implications on prices of goods and services, astronomical increase in electricity tariff, galloping inflation and infrastructural needs to the evolving demands of higher education in a rapidly changing world. We braced these challenges but not without a price. We adopted strategies to cope with the challenges which is inevitable and the only constant metrix.

In the year under review, the University continued to enjoy the support of TETFund. An intervention fund of One billion, six hundred and fifty-six million, nine hundred and forty-four thousand, nine hundred and thirty Naira only (₦1,656,944,930.00)

was allocated to the University by TETFUND for year 2024 and this covers eleven (11) areas including physical infrastructure/programme upgrade, Academic Staff Training, ICT support among others. The University equally received the sum of Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira (₦250,000,000.00) only for Zonal Interventions to execute different projects.

Distinguished guests, gentlemen of the press, ladies and gentlemen, the reputation of our university for academic excellence and integrity remains strong due to the unwavering dedication of both academic and non-teaching staff in maintaining the highest standards in the discharge of the mandates of the University. Over the past year, we enhanced our processes through digital transformation, which has contributed to more efficient outcomes. In acknowledgement of outstanding leadership in advancing GovTech Initiatives and digital governance which contributes significantly to the Federal Government digital transformation agenda in the public sector, our university was honored in the Nigeria GovTech Public Service Awards 2024 as **“The Best Federal University in ICT integration”** at an event organized by the Bureau of Public Service Reforms in Abuja on 11th October 2024. It therefore gives me great honor to share the digital transformation of our university.

The University of Ilorin Digital Transformation Journey for Effective Service Delivery

The University of Ilorin has made remarkable progress in its digital transformation journey, greatly enhancing the efficiency, security, and accessibility of its service delivery systems. One of the most significant milestones was the migration of the University’s data and resources from the ICTP platform, which experienced hiccups and downtimes, to the globally recognized and secured Amazon Web Services (AWS) platform. This move has improved the University's data security and system uptime, providing a more reliable foundation for the institution's digital services.

Building on this robust foundation, the University developed and deployed a scalable integrated enterprise portal that consolidates various services and processes under one umbrella. This portal enables seamless communication and interaction among students, staff, and administrators. The Enterprise Resource Portal (ERP) equips the university with an efficient system that can be accessed across departments, and it is integrated with everyday transactional and learning activities especially the Learning Management System (LMS). The Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) commenced operations this session with the admission and matriculation of about 200 students in the various programmes offered in the Centre.

In the same vein, the university has successfully launched a website which will meet the 21st Century requirements. The successful migration of data from the old portal to the new enterprise portal ensured the continuity of operations without significant data loss, and the automation of several key processes further streamlined administrative functions. Notable automations include the University Admissions ranking system, which has made the admissions process more transparent and efficient and the Intra-University Transfer applications system for students who are not in good academic standing.

Moreover, the automation of the school fee rebate process for biological children of staff members has provided financial relief and convenience to the University community. Another significant innovation is the automation of the Students Union electoral system, which enhances the integrity and transparency of student governance. Similarly, the automation of the academic staff promotion system has expedited the review and approval process, ensuring timely recognition of staff achievements.

In terms of academic outcomes, the University has also automated the spreadsheet generation system for final year results, significantly reducing manual errors and delays. The ongoing automation of the Transcript Ordering and Issuance System will further enhance the efficiency of the University's academic records management. Introduction of Security Barcode in the Statement of Results of Graduands and ensuring on the spot responses to challenges faced by the University of Ilorin students at NYSC Orientation Camp. The clearance of final year students has also been automated, and this will provide opportunity for a seamless clearance process to enable students to conduct their clearance from any part of the world. There is a new model of promotional exercise for Senior Non-Teaching Staff using the Computer-Based Test (CBT) method. A semi-automated application process for the Learned Conference Fund for academic staff has been introduced, allowing staff to apply for conference funding more easily. This process will be fully automated before the end of the year to consolidate the gains.

On the infrastructure front, the University has installed alternative power backups at major network distribution points to ensure continuity of digital services during power outages. Dedicated internet services have been deployed at key locations, including the Researchers' Lodge and Mini-Campus, to support academic research and collaboration. Additionally, the University has improved the capacity of its ICT support team, ensuring that technical issues are promptly addressed and that users receive adequate assistance.

The University's efforts in raising awareness about emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), among staff and students have been commendable. In July 2024, the University hosted a 2-day AI workshop, underscoring its commitment to preparing its community for the future of technology. The automation of the Human Resource Management System and the University-wide Biometric Attendance System have also modernized administrative processes, ensuring more accurate tracking of staff attendance and performance. Our commitment to AI has been further demonstrated by devoting the University lecture for 2024 to this great issue with the lecture delivered by the erudite Professor of Islamics and former Vice-Chancellor of our University, Professor Is-haq Olanrewaju Oloyede CON, FNAL who is currently the Registrar of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

Further digital improvements include the automation of the Hostel Balloting System for students, migration of various portals to the new integrated platform, and the automation of the users' complaint system using an E-ticketing solution. These developments have significantly enhanced the user experience across the University's digital ecosystem. Additionally, the University has been working on upgrading its website to world-class status, with the aim of increasing its visibility and accessibility.

The University has also prioritized training for staff and students on the new systems and deployments, ensuring that the digital transformation is inclusive and user-friendly. To support its ICT infrastructure, the University has improved its ICT facilities and developed standard operational procedures for its Network Operation Centre and other units. Furthermore, the University has enhanced the visibility of its scholars by registering the institution on relevant global ranking databases.

The University procured Operating Theatre lamp with Combo light, Camera and WiFi enabled for internationalization of training of Medical and allied Health students easy and more effective with which surgical procedures would be projected to both near and far seminar rooms to medical students in a more comfortable setting and to share surgical procedures with collaborators thousands of kilometres away.

In line with our sustainability efforts, the University has put in place a proper recycling system for outdated equipment, adhering to established procedures. The automation of report systems and good standing reports has streamlined decision-making processes, allowing for data-driven insights and improved governance at all levels of the institution.

Research and Collaborations

In the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and community service, the Senate Research Grant (SRG) was revived with a sum of Two Hundred Million Naira Only (₦200,000,000.00) budgeted in 2023 and in 2024 respectively. A new initiative of SRG (Special Intervention) was introduced with the sum of Fifty Million Naira annually. It is our hope that this will increase the support for our researcher, to embark on groundbreaking researches. Also, several academic staffers of the university had attracted various grants from TETFund, national, and foreign bodies for research and training, with the University having about 20 patents and innovations to its name. The university was recently announced as the institution with most patents by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology. Laboratory-to-Product (LABTOP) Centre University of Ilorin, emerged as the second runners up at the Inaugural Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Offices (IPPTO) awards in Nigeria. The event held on 31st January, 2024 in Abuja. Some staffers and students of the university are currently undergoing a Distance Learning Programme at the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), Geneva.

The university also recognised and rewarded staff for publishing highly rated journals to serve as further motivation for research. Presently, researchers in our Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in collaboration with researchers in the Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology (IRTA), Spain and the Royal Holloway University of London, UK is currently undertaking research in Innovative Veterinary Solutions for Antimicrobial Resistance through a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada Dollars worth 1.6 Million (₦2,200,000,000.00).

Our Faculty of Agriculture team won 2nd place in the Climate Risk Research Challenge organised by Sustainable Africa Initiative in collaboration with the Climate Risk Research Foundation. An award of \$3,500 was received at the University of Ibadan on 25th June 2024. Also, the plant breeding program of the Faculty of Agriculture entered partnership with IITA on Soyabean Research Development continued to be sustained.

Two academic staffers attended the International Hands-on Training on CRISPR/Cas-mediated Genome Editing which was organized by the Centre for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and food security (CAS-AFS), D-8 Research Centre for Agriculture and food security (D-8 RCAFS), National Centre for Genome Editing (NCGE) and Centre of Agricultural Biochemistry and Biotechnology (CABB), University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Two other staffers of the University are currently on training on Stem Cell research in Wisconsin University, USA. The training which was scheduled to last for 18 months took effect from 15th of October 2022 and is expected to end on 30th of June, 2024. To ensure that after their training they will have facilities to work with, the University is engaging with TETFund and other national and international partners to construct a Stem Cell Centre.

The internationalization strategy of the University has enabled staff and students' exchange. One doctoral student from the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, Adeyemi Roheemat Olabimpe, was in Lithuania on an Erasmus+ KA171 Scholarship for Research Training under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies at Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, from May 6th to July 25th, 2024. Babalola David visited Morrison Hospital in Wales from January 11th to January 19th, 2024, on a student exchange program. Two students from the Faculty of Physical Sciences, Raji Mustapha Adekunle and Balogun Ayo Felix, embarked on Ph.D. bench work in India.

One of the international academics who strengthened our teaching and research capabilities was Professor Ramar Krishnamurthy from Uka Tarsadia University, India. Presently he is collaborating with our university to grow a brand of rice that does not need to be in a water to survive. The rice is expected to be produced in commercial quantity very soon. He has facilitated some of our members of staff to visit India for teaching, research, mobility and completing their Ph.D. programmes.

Prof. Margherita Salvadori of Torino University also visited the Faculty of Law on a staff exchange programme. Dr. Jony Hon Shin from the Ohio State University was at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management for a two-week research visit in connection with a grant from the Feed the Future Advancing Local Leadership & Innovation Networks (ALL-IN) initiative.

Dr. Oluwabunmi Lucy Niyi-Gafar, from the Faculty of Law had the opportunity to undertake a working visit in Lithuania on an Erasmus+ KA171 Mobility/Teaching Scholarship, at Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania between 6th and 10th May, 2024 while a non-teaching staffer of Centre for International Education, Mrs. Arinola Saadat Gambari was also given the opportunity to visit Lithuania on an Erasmus+ KA171 Staff Mobility for training during the 12th International Staff Exchange Week at Mykolas Romeris University between 17th and 21st June, 2024.

Prof. Aribidesi A. Usman of Arizona State University, USA, a Fulbright Scholar arrived on 30th November 2023 for an academic year in the University. Prof. Aribidesi recently concluded his visiting here and assisted in co-development of Curriculum for the take-off of B.A. and M.A. degrees in Anthropology. He is also engaging in research collaborations with lecturers in History and International Studies Department and mentoring graduate students through teaching workshops and seminars.

From the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Science, Dr Attah Francis Alfred Unuagbe traveled to Austria for three months under a research corporation agreement between Medical University of Vienna and University of Ilorin funded by government of Austria. Dr. M.O. Bojuwoye of the Department of Medicine was on an exchange programme at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre, Manhattan, USA for 3 months (November 2023 to March 2024) under the Mammadi Soudavar Fellowship programme.

From the Faculty of Physical Sciences, Baker, M. T. won a 3-month Bench work for Ph.D. research in India. Dr. A. W. Banjoko of the Department of Statistics won a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Africa Health Research Institute, South Africa. A TETFund Postdoctoral Fellowship Award tenable at the Hydro & Electrometallurgy Department, Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology, Bhubaneswar, India was won by Dr. I. Ayinla of the Department of Industrial Chemistry. Another Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Institute of Environmental Radioactivity, Fukushima University, Japan was won by M. M. Orosun of the Department of Physics. In addition, a Postdoctoral Fellowship of the Central University of Technology, Free State, South Africa was won by K. O. Ibrahim of the Department of Geology.

Prof. R. O. Babatunde of the Department of Agricultural Economics & Farm Management won a Visiting Research Fellowship of the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), Kyoto, Japan for 3 months between 7th July 2024 and 1st October 2024. We are pleased to inform you all that our University was prominent in the 2% globally Scientists ranking with 7 of our academic staff making the list.

This University established the Centre for Management and Leadership and equally collaborated with the Chartered Institute of Management and Leadership Commonwealth of Kentucky, USA. The Centre organized a Mandatory Continuous Development Programme on 16th April 2024.

The Department of Geophysics established an Industry-Unilorin collaboration through the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC),

leading to a link to Total Energies E&P Nigeria Limited, Nigeria Agip Oil Company and Seplat Petroleum Development Company Plc.

Furthermore, in our pursuit of knowledge, and in realization of the critical nature of industry engagement, we have expanded our academic programmes and strengthened our partnerships with industry and other academic institutions. These strategic collaborations enhanced the learning experience for our students, preparing them to meet the demands of an ever-evolving global landscape. The University of Ilorin Innovative Skills and Pioneering Entrepreneurship Award (**U-INSPIRE AWARD**) was flagged off on 4th October 2024. The Award will prepare our students for internships, job volunteering, hands-on-skills that would position them ahead in today's competitive world. The newly created Centre for Blue and Regenerative Economy as well as Centre for Gender Studies will also empower our students to prepare for the world beyond campus within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are set for the innovative world of works.

Linkages/Collaborations

The University recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with North-China University of Water Resources and Electric Power to strengthen China-Africa Cooperation in areas of Curriculum Development, Collaborative Research, Split Site Degree, Joint research endeavours, Joint Conferences and Impactful Community Development.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between the University and Broad Grains Limited. The company started mechanized farming activities on university farmland around Amoyo and this will expose our students to practical experience in mechanized farming. It will not only assist the training of our students but also improve on productivity to ensure food security within our immediate environment and in Nigeria. The University is currently concluding the Public Private Partnership option with Oriental Energy Farms to cultivate about 4,000 hectares of land to produce maize and soybean with value addition. The full Business Case has now been submitted to ICRC to implement this project.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the University and British America Tobacco Nigeria Foundation for Graduate Agriprenuer Project. Four alumni of Faculty of Agriculture won 1.5million naira each as participants of the 1st Cohort of BATNF-Unilorin GAP. They are already working on their projects on the university farm.

Ranking

The University participates in the global ranking metrics and was 1st in Nigeria in Webometric ranking in 2010. Our current ranking by some ranking agencies is as follows:

| Year | Most preferred university in Nigeria JAMB | Telegraphs University of Choice award | Nigerian Universities in Scholarly Outputs-SCO PU/Sci-Val | Top Universities in Nigeria : 2024 Nigerian University Rankings UniRank | Nigeria All Universities Rankings - AD Scientific Index | World Universities Ranking - Times Higher Education (THE) | Nigerian University System Ranking - NUC | Nigerian University System Ranking - NUC List of 100 best universities in Nigeria - EduRank | Nigerian University System Ranking - NUC List of 100 best universities in Nigeria - EduRank Best Value University for International Students in Nigeria - Study Abroad Aide | Scimago Institutional Ranking - Scimago Journal Rank |
|------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| 2020 | 1 st | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 10 th |
| 2021 | 1 st | - | - | - | 3 rd | - | 7 th | - | - | 16 th |
| 2022 | 1 st | - | - | - | - | 4 th | - | - | - | 10 th |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 2023 | 1 st | 1 st | - | - | - | 7 th | - | - | - | 10 th |
| 2024 | 1 st | - | 3 rd | 3 rd | 5 th | 6 th | - | 8 th | 8 th | 6 th |

The Times Higher Education released its ranking for 2025 on 9th October 2024 in which our university retained 6th position in Nigeria. This does not reflect our true position as another ranking body SciVal Scopus released its result within the same week where our university was ranked 3rd. Seven of our academic staff were among the Stanford/Elsevier top two percent leading scientists in the world; and all efforts at repositioning the ranking of our university are at top level. The new website of the University has been deployed for testing and we believe this will improve our visibility and consequently our ranking.

Our desire to be number one in Nigeria is very much on course while our current position is understandable given the fact that the University is taking some measures to reposition itself for global ranking. Some of the steps being taken by management will enhance the capacity of the University to favourably compete and reclaim her first position through the re-design of the portal and website which are critical factors in ranking. The University is also improving on its research as well as putting measures in place to make the findings in our research more impactful in the society. As earlier indicated, we already clinched the best University in patency, we are ranked as the best Federal University in ICT, and our journey to the top continues.

Students Awards

As we celebrate the achievements of our graduating students and reflect on our collective accomplishments, let us also recognize the vital role each of you play in the ongoing journey of the University of Ilorin. Your collective efforts not only uphold our tradition of excellence but also pave the way for future generations of scholars and professionals.

Our students participated in various events emerging as champions. For example, our students emerged as champions at the recently concluded All Nigeria Universities Debating Championship held at the Veritas University on 11th September 2024. Two of our students won a trophy in the English-as-Second-Language category of the Western IV International Online Competition where students from 27 countries and 69 universities across the globe participated. One of our students in person of Nahimah Idris, won \$2,500 scholarship from the grant to the students from countries in the region of Latin America, Africa, North Africa, middle East and Asia; by WVA/MSD Veterinary students’ scholarship 2023.

Indorama fertilizer company gave out scholarship to two best female students in the farm practical training (FPT) year on 12th December, 2023.

Alumni

I am pleased to inform you all that the challenges bedeviling our Alumni Association has now been finally resolved with the election of Professor Abdulrasaq Kilani of the University of Port-Harcourt as the National President. Let me urge the new executive to partner with the University by ensuring that they assist the University in its efforts to be globally relevant. We are very proud of the giant strides of our products. They continue to demonstrate that they know their onions and hold their own globally. This is a testament to the foundation given to them by the Better By Far University. We will continue to support and celebrate them.

Dr. Umar A. Oseni, a worthy alumnus was appointed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as a member of its Financial Regulation Advisory Council of Experts.

Our medical alumni body ably led by Prof A. A. Fawole, our Deputy Vice-Chancellor (RTI) has been wonderful. We appreciate the giant strides and assistance over the years and only two months ago, the North American branch donated a 10KVA state of the art solar power to some classrooms at the old College site. Earlier in the year, Dr. Femi Balogun, a UK-based alumnus built a befitting ILUMSA Secretariat for our students' use and this has added to the beauty of our medical school. I am privy to the efforts of the Prof Fawole led set in concluding arrangements for the donation of equipment worth about ₦40million to one of our laboratories in the College of Health Sciences.

Dr. Remi Bamisile, a Linguistics and Nigerian Languages alumnus of the Faculty of Arts, resident in the USA, endowed and paid a sum of One Million Naira (₦1,000,000.00) into the University's Scholarship Account for Annual Prize of ₦100,000.00 to the Best graduating student in Yorùbá Language Broadcasting and Advertising. He also donated a Desktop Computer system and a 3-in-1 printer to the Faculty. I am aware that this year the University of Ilorin Alumni Association and University of Ilorin Muslim Graduates are endowing an annual prize in the University. In the same vein, HRM Oba Dr Micheal Odunayo Ajayi is endowing annual prizes for the Best Graduating Student in Sociology and Best Graduating Student in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Nigeria Connects, Georgia, USA donated 55" Smart Television, Ten Lenovo Laptop Computers and other instructional materials to the Faculty of Arts. Mr. Arisekola

Tunde Muritala donated a Bore-hole drilled for water supply to the Department of Geology and Mineral Sciences. The Peter Oyedipe Foundation donated twenty (20) laptops to 20 students of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology. Mr Olasunkanmi Iranloye, the CEO of Century Securities Limited, Lagos, an alumnus of the Department of Mathematics donated a 70-inch Phillips smart television to his Department in September 2024

Sports:

As a sports loving institution, we participated in the underlisted games

- i South West University Athletics Championship held at the University of Ibadan between 29th August and 1st September 2024.
- ii Team Unilorin was at the 11th Federation of All Africa University Sports (FASU) held between 20th September and 29th September, 2024. We won three Gold and Two Silver taking 14th position out of the 58 universities that participated throughout the continent.
- iii University of Ilorin Staff Football and Table Tennis Teams participated in the 2nd KU8+ Conference Sporting Activities between 3rd and 5th August, 2024 at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. The staff athlete from University of Ilorin was the table tennis Champion.
- iv Unilorin Taekwondo Team participated in 1st Edition of the Governor Umar Mohammed Bago Open Taekwondo Championship from 25th - 28th April, 2024 in Minna, Niger State
- v Unilorin Athletics Team participated in Dynamic Athletics Outdoor meeting at Nigerian Navy Sports complex, Ojo Lagos State on 27th January, 2024.
- vi University Badminton Coach and a student Badminton player, Suleiman Tajudeen Ayodele and Sofiat Obamisola respectively, participated in All Africa Men's and Women's Championship, Egypt 2024, from 16th -18th February 2024

We have continued to encourage our sportsmen and women and will continue to encourage sports on our campus as a way of ensuring a healthy workforce and to demonstrate further commitments of our University, we handed over the Nigeria University Staff Sports Association secretariat to contingents of NUGA and Bayero University on 22nd May, 2024.

Appointments:

- i. Dr. Ibrahim Ghali of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was appointed as a Non-Executive Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL).
- ii. A Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, Olugbenga Mokuolu was elected Co-Chair of Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership Case Management Working Group, a global platform for coordinated action against malaria.
- iii. Former Dean, Faculty of Education Professor Medinat Folorunsho Salman was appointed as the maiden Vice-Chancellor, Kwara State University of Education, Ilorin.
- iv. Professor Nazmat Surajudeen-Bakinde of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor, University of Applied Sciences and Technology (USET) the Gambia.
- v. The National Judicial Council (NJC) approved the appointment of an Associate Professor at the Department of Private and Property Law, Dr. Fatimah Funsho AbdulRazaq and two alumni of the University Mr. Yusuf Adebayo Dikko and Mrs. Temitope Osuolale-Ajayi as Judges of the Kwara State High Court, following their recommendation to the National Judicial Council (NJC) by Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq CON.
- vi. Professor Olusegun Omoniyi Ige of the Department of Geology. Faculty of Physical Sciences was appointed as the Director-General, Nigerian Geological Survey Agency (NGSA) by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR in June 2024.
- vii. A graduate of the Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin, Justice Asmau Ojuolape Tamwa Yusuf, was sworn-in as one of the new Justices of the Court of Appeal held on 10th July 2024 at the Supreme Court of Nigeria Complex, Abuja.
- viii. Four of our Alumni were recently elevated to the enviable rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) by the Legal Practitioners and Privileges Committee on 30th September, 2024. They are: Prof Yemi Oke, SAN, Olaolu Owolabi, SAN, Sharafadeen Abdulqadir, SAN who were 1999 graduates while Dr. Taiye Oniyide, SAN graduated in 2003.

Community Development/Service:

We are more than just an academic institution; we are an integral part of this vibrant community. Our dedication to community development and outreach initiatives

deepened our connection with society. We are committed to giving back, and our students and faculty actively participate in programmes that positively impact our local and global communities. A Farm Produce exhibition was held on 28th February, 2024 by the Faculty of Agriculture. They hosted a vibrant farm market day to sell various agricultural produce and products of farm practical training from the various Departments to the University Community. The agricultural produce/products sold included vegetables, eggs, broilers, goat, beef, fish (fresh and smoked), honey, locust beans and a variety of packaged processed food as well as garments and fabrics from home economics students. The Faculty also organised a focused jetty fish harvest day at the Unilorin Dam site collaboration with the Dam Management Board on 18th April, 2024. Local fishermen were engaged to harvest fish from the Dam. Different types and sizes of fish were encountered in the Dam and sold to the University community.

As part of our Community Development Experience (COBES), various Departments and Faculties engaged various communities including Edidi, Shao, Igbonla, Iwo-sin and Omupo. The COBES explored various entrepreneurial skills like Accounting, Health Management to mention a few.

A total of 95 Nursing students undergoing the BNSc Programme were mobilized for the COBES Community Posting at Edidi and Shao respectively. Another batch of 300level MB;BS students undertook the COBES Community posting between 2nd and 29th February, 2024. A total of 257 students were mobilised to Edidi and Igbonla, Iwo Isin, Omupo and Shao Communities respectively. For the 600 level MB;BS July 2024) COBES Posting was targeted at Entrepreneurship and ICT Skills. It is aimed at Entrepreneurship Skills for Final year MB;BS students before graduation and consists of lectures on Accounting, Budgetting, Health Management, Health Marketing, Health Economics and Business Skills.

The Faculty of Engineering and Technology, University of Ilorin, remains at the forefront of driving technological advancements and fostering innovation through impactful initiatives. One of its key projects, the FETUILS TechHub, has become a vibrant center for research, capacity building, and community development. As a co-working space and innovation hub, it has provided students, faculty, and local entrepreneurs with access to cutting-edge resources and training. The Hub has played a significant role in empowering youths with digital and engineering skills, fostering start-ups, and promoting local technological solutions that address the challenges of our immediate community. Other laudable initiatives of the Faculty which include FETUILS Car Services, FETUILS renewable energy, a FETUILS product designs and manufacturing continue to impact greatly on the university

community and environs through training, research, consultancy and outstanding service delivery. One of our students in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology developed an attendance capturing machine which will be processed for commercialization as soon as the pilot stage is completed. These initiatives are testaments to the university's commitment to social responsibility and sustainable growth with the goal of contributing to the nation's economic and technological development. To further streamline this process, a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy is being put in place to determine the structure and processes of our intervention.

Projects For Commissioning:

Below is the summary of projects ready for commissioning at this year's convocation ceremonies:

1. Faculty of Law Library
2. Faculty of Law Professorial Suite
3. Faculty of Law Moot Court
4. Home Economics and Food Science Building
5. Asphalt Overlay on the Existing Road Surface from entrance gate to Senate building Roundabout (Phase III)
6. Solar Street Light from University Gate to Senate Building
7. Solar Street light from Senate Building to Student Hostels.
8. Abuja Liaison Office Guest House

Private Hostels:

1. 200 Bed Space Hostel (An-Nur Hostel) at College of Health Sciences.

Students Graduating from the University of Ilorin in the 2022/2023 Academic Session:

For the 39th Convocation Ceremonies, the University shall be graduating a total of 12,042. In the First Degree/Diploma category we have 256 First Class, 3842 Second Class (Upper Division) 6178 Second Class (Lower Division), 1299 Third Class and 62 Pass. The 39th Convocation Ceremonies also include 124 MB;BS graduands, 64

Nursing graduands, 35 Optometry graduands, 30 Veterinary Medicine graduands, and 18 graduands with Distinction and 85 graduands with Pass in Pharmacy, 1 distinction and 32 Pass in Physiotherapy. We have a total of 16 Diploma degree holders. Furthermore, the total numbers of Higher Degrees to be awarded at the 39th Convocation Ceremonies is 1,875; out of this figure, there are 92 Postgraduate Diplomas, 1,280 Masters from various Faculties, 179 Professional Masters, 1 MPhil and 323 Ph.Ds.

Invitation:

Distinguished guests, gentlemen of the press, ladies and gentlemen, let me use this opportunity to invite you to all the other activities and events lined up for the 39th Convocation Ceremonies which commenced with a special Jumat Service on Friday 11th October 2024 at the University Central Mosque and an interdenominational church service on Sunday 13th October 2024 at Chapel of the Light on our campus. The Convocation Lecture titled **Nurturing Democratic Values and Education for the Future of Nigeria** will be delivered here in this Auditorium tomorrow Friday 18th October, 2024 at 9.45am by **Prince Lateef Olasunkanmi Fagbemi, SAN**, the Honorable Minister of Justice and the Attorney-General of the Federation. There will be the Chancellor's cocktail in honor of the Lecturer at 12noon at the Multipurpose Hall on the same day. Later in the day at 4pm, the Command Performance of the Convocation Production which is an Opera titled ***Nilee Wa (In our Land)*** will be performed at the Performing Arts Theatre while there will be repeat at 6pm. The award of degrees to 4 year Programmes graduands in the various Faculties will hold on Monday 21st October 2024 at this Auditorium at 9am while the award of degrees to 5-year and 6-year programmes graduands will hold on Tuesday 22nd October, 2024 by 9am. Thereafter, the Visitor of the University, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, *GCFR* will commission some completed projects at various sites on our campus by 1.30pm on the same day while the day's event will be rounded off with the Convocation Luncheon and Merit award to deserving staff members by 4pm at the Multipurpose Hall of the university.

The 39th Convocation ceremonies will be ended with a Jumat Service on Friday 25th October 2024 at the University Central Mosque by 1.30pm and a thanksgiving Church Service will hold on Sunday 27th October 2024 at St. Thomas Aquinas Chaplaincy at 9am prompt. Let me add that entry to the venues of the programmes lined up will be strictly by invitation cards and I enjoin all our visitors to allow the processes put in place to flow seamlessly so that all the programmes will be held without hitches. I sincerely thank all members of the ceremonial committee for their selfless service and dedication to the success of these events.

50th Anniversary:

Our University will be 50 years in 2025 and I am pleased to inform the members of the public and especially distinguished press men that the University will roll out the drums and also showcase our achievements and how we are impacting on our community as well as what we are doing to reposition the education sector. The whole of 2025 has been declared 50th anniversary year for the University of Ilorin.

Conclusion:

In bringing this Press Briefing to a close, I would like to emphasize that the 39th Convocation ceremony of the University of Ilorin is more than just a celebration of the academic achievements of our graduands; it is a testament to the resilience, hard work, and dedication of both students and faculty. It is a symbol of how far we have come as an institution and how committed we remain to charting new paths of excellence. It is a demonstration of our courage, resilience and commitment as an institution as well as the showcase of enduring strategies in coping with change.

As we reflect on this significant milestone, we must remember the broader mission of the University of Ilorin, which is not just to impart knowledge but to mold leaders who will shape the future of our society. I am reminded of the timeless words of the great Nelson Mandela, who said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Indeed, through education, we are not just preparing our graduates for personal success; we are equipping them to address the challenges of our time and make meaningful contributions to the world.

Our graduates, today, have been equipped with the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and ethical foundations needed to navigate a complex global landscape. They have not only met the academic requirements for their degrees but have also developed the resilience and adaptability that are so crucial in today’s fast-paced world. As they move into the next phase of their lives whether it be in industry, entrepreneurship, public service, or further studies, they carry with them the responsibility to lead with integrity, innovation, and empathy. They represent the best of what the University of Ilorin has to offer, and we have no doubt that they will go on to make us proud.

As we look to the future, we must continue to adapt and innovate. The world is changing at an unprecedented pace, and higher education must evolve to keep up with these changes. We at the University of Ilorin are ready for the challenges ahead and prepared to navigate and overcome them. We will continue to leverage

technology, foster global partnerships, and prioritize research that addresses the pressing issues of our time, whether they are related to sustainability, health, or economic development. No doubt this concluded session has been very challenging, distressing and excruciating, we have survived thus far because of our resilience, commitment, courage and undaunting optimism. We designed our strategies for coping with changes. We remain committed to our goals, aspirations and core values and are poised for greater achievements. The future of the University of Ilorin is bright, and together, we will continue to achieve greatness.

Thank you and enjoy the convocation ceremonies.