

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA
OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ON RE-APPOINTMENT AS
VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA.

In view of the formal public announcement now made by the Federal Government of my re-appointment as Vice-Chancellor of this University for a second term of office, I crave your indulgence to depart a bit from my already prepared address and say a few words. I accept my re-appointment with pleasure and ^{pledge} to continue to do my best in the overall interest of this University. I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari for graciously re-appointing me for a second term of office. I wish to thank all of you here present and those far away, who by several actions, supported my administration and encouraged me to achieve the level of success in my first term of office that enabled my council and the Federal Government to unanimously and unequivocally reappoint me for a second term of office. I thank in particular the large body of 13,000 students of this University and the enthusiastic 6,000 strong members of NASU who have been quite vocal in their support and enthusiasm for the good work done by the administration.

I see my re-appointment as a great victory for the forces of progress, integrity and uprightness, over reactionary forces of evil, fraud, and intrigue.

It is on record that in the past four years, my Administration as part of its advertised programme of action, embarked on a number of cleaning-up campaigns to stamp out fraud and sharp practices from this University. Some top functionaries and other highly placed members of the University caught in the debasing acts, were thrown out. The level of integrity and public accountability in certain quarters in the University had fallen very low and some urgent remedial action was called for. My Administration took those actions and we have no apologies.

However, while the generality of the University Community including the vast majority of staff and students hailed these bold steps, some of the affected individuals, and a certain clique from within, probably fearful of being similarly caught up and exposed in the cleaning-up exercise, embarked on all manner of clandestine intrigues and campaigns of calumny against the person and office of the Vice-Chancellor. Secret and anonymous letters were written by a clique that called itself the "Committee of Concerned Academics", as well as some named spineless professors and circulated widely, in the country,-

particularly to top government officials in Lagos and elsewhere to create the impression that all was not well at the University of Nigeria. The clique followed these moves by several secret emissaries to Lagos, to prevail on the Executive Office of the President not to re-appoint me Vice-Chancellor for a second term of office.

While not wishing to go into this issue now, let me say that for any group of people who call themselves academics, to heap malicious lies and calumny under the cover of anonymity and widely circulated same to all and sundry, is, to say the least, dastardly and mean. I consider the trend very unhealthy in a University, and it should be condemned vehemently by all right thinking people in this country. So blinded were the ghost academics and an associated clique of spineless professors, in their hatefulness and malice, that they could see nothing good in the work done by this Administration these past four years. Yet this Administration has been widely acclaimed, as having achieved unprecedented rate of development for this University during the past four years.

However, now that this issue of re-appointment for a second term of office is over, let me in all sincerity extend, once more, a warm arm of fellowship to all and sundry, and ask all concerned, including the so-called "Committee of Concerned Academics", to co-operate with my Administration so that our second term of office will be as fruitful for this University as the first term. My determination remains the same to do my best and sacrifice of all my time and energy in order that this University may be put on an irreversible path of glory and honour. I will, during my second term of office, as in the first term of office, use all available talents in the prosecution of the programmes of the Administration. Should any person or persons continue however to constitute a cog in our wheel of progress, or deliberately try to undermine the Administrations, such persons will be called to order. To do otherwise is to shirk my duties.

Secondly, while my Administration recognises and will indeed encourage an opposition among the governed, as part of any meaningful democracy, it hoped that our critics if not constructive will at least resist the urge to deliberate falsehood and calumny. My Administration may be forced to release the unpleasant details of fraud, intrigue and manipulations by some of these ghost academics who do not seem to appreciate the immense restraint shown by Council and this Administration over these matters these past months.

Let me also hope that the events of the past four years have taught any opposing clique that while it may have its say, it must also concede that the wishes of the majority should prevail. It is immoral and unethical for a clique of self-seeking individuals, with one axe or the other to grind, to seek to thwart or subvert the wishes of the majority. My Administration will fight to prevent any such misarrangement of justice, at whatever level it is being perpetrated in this University.

Finally, let me advise the opposition to learn to observe the rules and regulations made for the good governance of this community particularly the ethical norms and moral crusade programme of my Administration. Any member of the opposition who soils his hands and offends the ethical norms of my Administration through being fraudulent, as in the past, must expect to be punished, no matter how much blackmail and calumny he decides to trump up or generate in his wake, against the Administration. I hope a word is enough for

I now return to the next of my prepared address.

Signed:

PROFESSOR F. N. NDILI,
VICE-CHANCELLOR

17 DECEMBER, 1983