

SPEECH AT THE ITEMS RETREAT BY THE BOARD CHAIRMAN, PROFESSOR WOLE MICHAEL OLATOKUN

Protocols

Good morning and welcome to this significant two-day retreat hosted by the Information Technology and Media Services (ITEMS) Unit of our university. It is indeed an honor to stand before you today to inaugurate an event that promises not only professional growth but also the forging of stronger bonds within our unit.

ITEMS, as we know, is a diverse entity encompassing Information Technology Networks and Hardware, Management Information Systems, Software Development, University Media Centre, Training Research and Development and ITU College of Medicine. Each of these units represents a crucial piece in this intricate puzzle, contributing to the seamless functioning of our university's technological backbone.

In the next two days, we would embark on a journey of introspection, collaboration, and innovation. Our proposed program of activities is designed to tap into the vast reservoirs of talent, expertise, and diverse perspectives from our university. Through activities such as the Picasso Activity and the Knowledge Exchange with profile posters, we aim to uncover the unique skills that make each staff an invaluable asset to our unit.

A major activity of Day 1 revolves around "Harnessing ICT Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges towards a Top-rated University which will be anchored by our own Emeritus Professor Olufemi Bamiro." His insights will, no doubt, set the tone for our discussions on overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities in the ever-evolving field of information technology.

As we delve into this theme, I encourage each participant to take a moment to reflect on the top three challenges you face as ITeMS staff. Our breakout sessions will provide a platform to address these challenges collectively, fostering a collaborative spirit as we brainstorm solutions and share insights.

We also recognize the importance of staying abreast of regulations that shape our work. Therefore, an essential part of Day 1 will be dedicated to understanding Data Protection Regulation, a critical aspect of our responsibility in handling sensitive information.

Moving on to Day 2, we shift our focus to the "Reminder of the Social Contract." Through activities like the Talking Stick and Energizer, we aim to create an open and dynamic environment where each voice is heard and valued. Sustaining passion in the face of challenges, to be handled by Prof Egbokhare is a call to cultivate a resilient, motivated, and innovative workforce. It recognizes that passion is not just a fleeting emotion but a strategic asset that, when nurtured, can lead to sustained excellence and a positive impact on our university through ITEMS.

Professor Adenike Osofisan will spearhead a session on the "Team-based Vision Focused Transformation of ITeMS." This session aims to harness the collective strength of the ITEMS team, fostering a shared vision that will drive the unit toward innovation and excellence. She will draw on her expertise to facilitate discussions on the importance of aligning individual and team goals with the overarching vision of ITeMS. The focus will be on creating a dynamic and inclusive environment where every team member feels valued and motivated to contribute to the shared vision. By the end of the session, participants will not only have a clearer understanding of the transformative journey ahead but also be equipped with actionable insights to implement within their respective teams.

The evaluation of project experiences will provide us with valuable insights into our collective journey, and the 3-way generous listening exercise in mixed groups will reinforce the idea that there is no failure, only learning.

To demystify the world of grants, Prof Owoaje would share knowledge and insights, fostering a culture of continuous learning. The 'Networking' activity, breaking the taboo, encourages us to define networking in our own words, fostering deeper connections within our teams. On a creative note, the Tree Painting Exercise, a symbol of growth and interconnectedness, will also feature while a projection of the future of ITEMS in 2024 will conclude our retreat.

This retreat is therefore a fully loaded pivotal event designed to serve as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and transformation within the unit. Its essence lies in its commitment to nurturing a dynamic and cohesive environment that propels ITEMS towards greater heights of excellence. In essence, this retreat hope to be a transformative experience, fostering a sense of community, innovation, and purpose among participants. It is a crucial step towards shaping a forward-looking, adaptive, and high-performing ITEMS. We therefore look forward to an enriching and stimulating experience in the next two days.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Kayode Oyeboade Adebawale and his team, for the unwavering support in making this retreat a reality. His commitment to fostering innovation and excellence at our university is evident, and we in ITEMS are privileged to have his support in all our activities.

I also extend my gratitude to our invited guests in the likes of our own Emeritus Professor Olufemi Bamiro, Professor Adenike Osofisan, Prof Francis Egbokhare, Professor Akinola, Prof Olorunyomi, Prof Owoaje and other ICT experts who have agreed to share with us their wealth of experience. A special acknowledgment is also due to the organizers of this event, particularly our indefatigable and dedicated Director of ITEMS, Mrs Abiodun A. Alao, whose tireless efforts have brought us together today. The meticulous planning and coordination reflect a commitment to ensuring that this retreat serves its purpose of nurturing growth, collaboration, and innovation within our unit.

I also acknowledge all the Deputy Directors and the hardworking staff of ITEMS whose presence here is a testament to your dedication to advancing the technological landscape of our university, and I am confident that the exchange of ideas over the next two days will be instrumental in shaping a better future for ITEMS.

As we engage in the proposed program of activities, let us keep in mind our overarching goal which is: to transform ITEMS into an innovative powerhouse that provides even better services to the University of Ibadan. Let us approach these two days with enthusiasm, open minds, and a commitment to collaborative success. May the outcomes of this retreat propel ITEMS to new heights, ensuring that our services not only meet but exceed the expectations of our university.

Thank you and God bless you all.

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Chairman, ITeMS Board
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