

## **DAY 2**

**THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 2024**

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR KAYODE OYEBODE ADEBOWALE, *mni*, FAS AT THE CONGREGATION FOR THE AWARD OF CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMAS AND ADMISSION INTO FIRST DEGREE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ON THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 2024**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (RISP)

Registrar

Bursar

University Librarian

Provost of the College of Medicine

Provost of the Postgraduate College

Deans of Faculties and of Students

Directors of Institutes and Centres

Heads of Departments

Members of Senate

Members of Congregation

President and members of the University of Ibadan Alumni Association

Members of the Students' Representative Council

Honoured Graduands

Parents and Guardians of our Graduands

Gentlemen of the Press

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, I stand before you with deep gratitude and immense honour as we gather for this momentous convocation ceremony, celebrating the remarkable academic achievements of our esteemed students. This milestone represents the culmination of tireless efforts, unwavering dedication, and countless sacrifices made by the graduands, their loving families, generous sponsors, and our devoted university staff.

We will confer degrees on graduands from the Faculties of Agriculture, The Social Sciences, Education, Veterinary Medicine, Technology, Pharmacy, Renewable Natural Resources and Environmental Design and Management. A total of 6,553 degrees will be awarded in total, along with 111 diplomas. We proudly release these accomplished

individuals into the world as a new generation of innovative entrepreneurs, skilled professionals, visionary leaders, and talented change-makers. This joyous occasion transcends academics; it is a vibrant celebration that unites people from diverse backgrounds to honour institutional and individual achievements. Graduation day symbolizes triumph over challenges, the realisation of dreams, the celebration of resilience, and the beginning of new horizons.

To our graduands, congratulations on this remarkable achievement! Your hard work, perseverance, and commitment have earned you this moment. This is truly an event worth celebrating because God kept you all from matriculation till today. As we celebrate, we acknowledge the significance of this milestone and the endless possibilities that lie ahead.

I want to commend every parent, guardian and sponsor here today. Despite the current economic challenges in our country, you made huge sacrifices to support your children's education. I pray that these sacrifices will not go

unrewarded, both by God and through the success of your children. Thank you for your unwavering support.

To our exceptional faculty and staff, thank you for your relentless commitment and tireless efforts. Your collective inputs have established our institution as a beacon of academic excellence. Together, let us continue to push boundaries, fostering a culture of innovation and excellence that will shape the future of education and leadership. We have preserved the legacy of excellence that has characterized our institution for decades. As a revered beacon of knowledge, a vibrant hub of critical thinking, and a nurturing cradle for future leaders, our university has built a rich tradition of academic distinction.

I would also like to acknowledge our Commencement Speaker for this Day Two Convocation Ceremony, **Mr. Oluseye Alabi**, a distinguished alumnus of the University of Ibadan and Chief Executive Officer of YSA Energy Services Limited. We thank you for accepting this role and for your dedication to your alma mater.

## **NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF TERTIARY EDUCATION**

The University of Ibadan, like other tertiary institutions in Nigeria, has faced daunting challenges, including funding constraints, infrastructure deficit and decay, as well as other issues like brain drain, strikes, and inadequate industry-academia collaboration. The list is extensive.

However, in navigating these challenges, the University has implemented several short-term strategies which include public-private partnerships (PPPs), cost-cutting measures, digitalisation (such as online resources, and e-learning) and various industry collaborations for research.

As Vice Chancellor, I recognise that my role extends beyond leadership to service. My commitment to fostering a culture of academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity remains unwavering. Moving forward, we have prioritized initiatives that will enhance our academic programmes, support the well-being of our students and staff, and advance our research endeavours. We have continued to strive to create an environment where every member feels valued, empowered, and inspired.

## **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

I am proud to announce that the University of Ibadan has achieved remarkable milestones since the last convocation. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students. Permit me to enumerate just a few of the accomplishments.

- Alo Ikeoluwa represented Nigeria at the World Food Forum in Rome, Italy, from October 16 to 20, 2023. The event was hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Ikeoluwa was part of the first cohort of the Youth Food Lab incubator programme. Sponsored by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the programme aimed to empower youth to shape agrifood systems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The Department of Special Education held a Symposium to commemorate the **World Disability Day** at the Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan on 05 December 2023. The symposium was well attended, and it recorded a resounding success.

- The Department also organised an international conference on special needs education with the theme 'Fostering Holistic Inclusive Educational Services.' The conference was held at the Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan from 23 to 26 April, 2024.
- Together with the Servants of Charity in Africa (Opera Guanella) – an arm of the Catholic Church, the Department of Special Education organized the Guanella Africa Summit and a Public Lecture on Rehabilitation and Inclusive Basic Education at the Trenchard Hall of the University of Ibadan, on 8 May 2024. The summit was well attended. The event recorded a resounding success.
- Adesinayo Adeyeye, Damilola Alimi, and IreOluwa Ajewole won first, second and third prizes, respectively, in a project competition organised for the Department of mechanical Engineering students.
- Damilola Yusirat ALIMÌ emerged as the winner of the Committee of Deans of Engineering & Technology of Nigerian Universities CODET South West Zone II competition with her innovative final-year project on the design and development of a Syringe Infusion Pump. As

a result of her outstanding achievement, she was nominated to represent the zone at the National competition in August.

- The Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Management organised a guest lecture and symposium to commemorate the World Fisheries Day. The event, themed “Healthy Ocean Ecosystem and Sustainable Stocks of the Ocean,” featured a series of engaging activities. These included a Clean-up Day and Road Show in Ibadan Metropolis on 18 November 2023, followed by the guest lecture and symposium on 21 November 2023.
- The Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management celebrated the 2024 World Wildlife Day with a programme tagged: “**Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation**”. The programme took place from 4th to 5th March, 2024.
- Dr O. O. Oyebola of the Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Management hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of the INCiTIS-FOOD (Integrated and Circular Technologies for Sustainable City Region FOOD Systems)



in Africa in February 2024, with over twenty EU-AU consortium members in attendance.

- On Tuesday 25 June 2024, the Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management held its 2024 Annual Guest Lecture. It was delivered by Mrs. Susan Akporiaye, former President of the National Association of Nigeria Travel Agencies (NANTA). The lecture was titled: “Tourism Destinations and Products Promotion”.
- The Tree Club (Student Association of Departments of Forest Production and Products & Social and Environmental Forestry) hosted the Northern Africa Regional meeting, an annual gathering of members of the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) in the Northern African region. There were over 50 participants from Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, Sierra Leone and other countries. The theme of the conference was “**Harnessing Technology for Sustainable Forestry and Environmental Innovation in Africa**”.
- Nathaniel Oluwatobi Owolabi, a 500-Level Student of the Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management received a travel grant award of \$500 from Africa Nature Investors (ANI) to attend the 60<sup>th</sup>

Annual meeting of the Association of Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) held in July 2024 in Rwanda.

- Funmilayo Priscilla Etumudon, a 300-Level student of the Department of Forest Production and Products, was awarded the Working to Advance STEM Education in Africa Women (WAAW) Foundation Scholarship for the 2023/2024 session.
- Four 500-Level students (Kehinde Uthman, Ameenat Aderibigbe, Abdullai Molawa Kolade, and Taoffeqoh Bolanle Olasupo) and Two Ph.D. Students (Olufemi Odunayo Komolafe and Rebecca Adepeju Falana) of the Department of Social and Environmental Forestry will participate in the European Union sponsored Erasmus + Student Exchange Internship Programme KA171 at the University of Jean, Spain, from September 2024 to January 2025.
- Omotara Salma (a 500-Level student) and Olamilekan Atanseiyee (a 200-Level student) from the Department of Forest Production and Products were among the nine delegates that represented Nigerian chapters of the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) at the

2023 International Forestry Students' Symposium (IFSS) in Germany.

- Omotara Salma, a 500-Level student, was sponsored as a participant at the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6). The event took place from February 26th to March 1st, 2024, at the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Omotara Salma was also one of the participants at the Major Group Led Initiative (MGI) in support of the United Nations Forest Forum-19 (UNFF-19). The event took place from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Mr. Nathaniel Owolawi, a 500-Level student from the Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management developed an Initiative to interpret the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red-List Categories using short words and illustrations. He also collected data on the birdlife within the Zoological Garden, University of Ibadan, and displayed pictures of the Birds. The project, titled "**The Zoo Avian Neighbours,**" served as an engaging platform to teach the important lesson that wildlife extends beyond enclosures and must be protected wherever they are found. Mr. Owolawi

also launched another creative project, "Zoo Laughs," further demonstrating his commitment to environmental education and awareness.

- The CEI holds a monthly webinar, with the theme: *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Employability*.
- The CEI also participated in other activities.:
  - i. The June 5-6, 2024 HEI Innovation Community of Practice held in Nairobi Kenya, the Director of CEI was one of the panellists at the meeting.
  - ii. The Oladele Fajemirokun Foundation Business Innovation and Talent Expression (BITE 2.0), was held on 16 May 2024 at University of Lagos. BITE is an exciting opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs to showcase their innovative business ideas to a panel of esteemed judges. The sponsor of the competition Oladele Fajemirokun Foundation (OFF) has upgraded this to a regional BITE competition in South-West. The competition will include all Federal universities before the end of 2024, and the University of Ibadan was successfully included in the recent round. The Director CEI was invited as a special Guest of Honour at the event.

iii. The CEI Co-hosted the AT-Swiss Africa Science and Business Innovators Conference, organized by University of Basel between 28 and 29 February 2024. The CEI has been in partnership with University of Basel Switzerland for over 3 years and have been part of their conferences where University of Ibadan students pitched their start-ups.

Victor Durosaro, a 300-level Electrical/Electronic Engineering student, was selected by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to participate in Phase 3 of the Japan-funded Training Programme on "Developing Essential Digital Skills for Women and Youth in Africa: Enhancing Employment Opportunities and Livelihood Development in the Digital Economy." This opportunity was granted on February 8, 2024.

Victor's selection for this prestigious programme was driven by his innovative project focused on transforming agriculture in Nigeria through a Smart Irrigation System. This system is designed to tackle the challenges posed by unpredictable rainfall patterns due to climate change. Victor's proposal introduces a new business

model that not only addresses the irrigation needs of farmers but also seeks to enhance productivity, increase income, and improve nutritional output. His work aims to foster a more resilient and prosperous agricultural future, not only for Nigeria but potentially for the entire African continent.

- iv. Medherence, a student startup co-founded by University of Ibadan medical students Nwata Chidinma and Olayiwola Olaitan, was accepted into the prestigious Microsoft for Startups programme. This exciting milestone was achieved on January 29, 2024. Medherence was accepted based on its vision and impact on people with chronic diseases in Nigeria. This opportunity provides the startup with free access to Microsoft product development licenses valued at over \$10,000, along with mentorship from seasoned experts at Microsoft.

## **CHARGE TO THE GRADUANDS**

Once again, I say congratulations to you all!

This milestone marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in your life, where you will leverage the excellence

and independence cultivated during your time at the University of Ibadan to forge your unique path.

Choosing University of Ibadan from over 278 institutions in Nigeria was undoubtedly a remarkable decision. As you embark on this new journey, you will encounter diverse challenges, but with astuteness, resilience, and determination, you will overcome them and thrive.

As you celebrate, I would like you to note these key takeaways:

- i. **Courage and Resilience:** Be courageous, forthright, and passionate about contributing to Nigeria's development.
- ii. **Drawing on Your Education:** Utilise the skills and knowledge acquired to propel yourself forward, even in uncertain times.
- iii. **Nigeria's Potential:** Believe in Nigeria's rich history and potential to become one of the world's leading nations.
- iv. **Transformative Impact:** Your education, determination, and resilience are not just personal assets. They are the catalysts for transformative change, both within Nigeria and beyond.

I therefore charge you all to go forth with confidence, seize every opportunity that comes your way, lead the change, and claim your rightful place at the top.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, may God Almighty grant you all journey mercies as you return to your various destinations.

Thank you for your attention.

**Professor K.O. Adebowale**, *mni, FAS*

*Vice-Chancellor*