

**WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY CHIEF M. I. ABOABA AT THE
COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED HEADS OF
SERVICE AND PERMANENT SECRETARIES' HOUSE, ON WEDNESDAY, 23RD JUNE,
2021.**

Protocols.

All of us, members of the Association of Retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries, OSUN STATE, are happy to welcome Your Excellency, the Governor, and all the distinguished personalities here present, to the ceremony marking the commissioning of the Association's House. The ceremony is a very important landmark in the history of the Association, and we have every reason to regard this day, 23rd June, 2021, as both great and unforgettable. On behalf of the Association, I would like to thank the Almighty God for sparing our lives to witness this occasion. I would also like to thank Your Excellency, the Governor, not only for graciously accepting to perform this ceremony in person, but also for making it possible, in the first place.

This edifice, which is shortly to be commissioned as the Association's House, was once known simply as Quarter's 11. The Association had had a long-standing application to the Government of the State for the allocation of a piece of real estate which could be used as its operational base. It was in response to this long-standing application that Your Excellency approved the allocation of the erstwhile Quarters 11 to the state Association.

At the time the allocation was approved, the building had not been occupied for quite some time. It had therefore become decrepit, quite dilapidated, with the entire premises overgrown with a veritable forest. The poor, derelict condition of the property did not, in any way, diminish the value of the ownership which we had been granted, or the magnanimity of the Government, led by Your Excellency, the Governor, in granting the ownership.

The transformation of the erstwhile Quarters 11 to the edifice which is about to be commissioned by Your Excellency, the Governor, has been truly dramatic. It was

remodelled and refurbished to by the Association, with our own funds, and under our own supervision. From conceptualization and packaging, to the execution of the various works - - architectural, structural, civil, mechanical and electrical engineering works - - the Association has spent a total of N12.6million. I am happy to say that the Association did not take any loans, and is not indebted to anyone engaged to work on the project. I must confess that with that level of financial outlay, the Association has practically exhausted its savings. For us, in the Association, however, it has been money well spent. The edifice has been the product of our collective total commitment and dedication.

I would like to point out that in the process of remodelling, we have added to the original building a 4-seater conference room, a committee room, a library, and toilets. We also did the perimeter fencing, the landscaping of the entire premises, and general painting. As indicated earlier, we have done all these with our own funds. I only need to add that these funds are derived from contributions made by members from their monthly pensions which Your Excellency's Administration has been paying regularly.

At the risk of being regarded as immodest, we have given ourselves a pat on the back for a job well done so far. We are conscious, nevertheless, that the project is not yet completed. The following are still outstanding:

- *provision of a conference table and matching chairs for the conference room;
- *provision of cooling systems for the conference room and other rooms;
- *furnishing of the offices of the Chairman, the Secretary, the clerk and the committee room;
- *window curtains for the conference room and other offices.

While we are aware of the various demands on the financial resources of the State, it is our humble request that Government should, out of compassion, assist us to furnish the House. It is our hope that this would not be difficult for Government to do for us.

Your Excellency, the commissioning ceremony taking place today, and the process and events which led up to it, all demonstrate the strength of the bond between our Association and the Government of the State. We have had occasions to

approach the Government on issues of weighty importance touching on the strengthening of the Public Service, the core of which is the Civil Service. It is our firm belief, based on years of practical service, that the cause of good governance can best be served by a disciplined, knowledgeable, efficient and effective Civil service loyally supporting the Government of the day. We have always held ourselves ready to the Government of the State in the task of building and sustaining this kind of Public Service. Our communication with Government has always been, and will continue to be, through appropriate,

credible, legitimate channels. A great deal of our deliberations within the walls of the House being commissioned for us today will continue to be on how to move our State to greater heights.

Once again, Your Excellency, we in the Association, thank you, most sincerely, for honouring us with your presence here today.

It is now my privilege and pleasure to invite Your Excellency to perform the official commissioning of the Association of Retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries' House, situated in Òşogbo.

CHIEF M. I ABOABA

(Chairman)