



CO-CREATION FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY, OKO- IRESE, PROFESSOR FRANCISCA ONAOLAPO OLADIPO, FNCS ON THE OCCASION OF THE MAIDEN CONVOCATION CEREMONY. TUESDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER, 2024

Protocol

With immense gratitude to the Almighty God, I wish to formally welcome you all our Distinguished Guests, to the Thomas Adewumi University campus community and to our Maiden Convocation Ceremony. I warmly welcome our commencement Lecturer, His Excellency, Ambassador Humphrey Geiseb, the High Commissioner of Namibia to Nigeria and the ECOWAS and I most especially welcome His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Kwara State Mallam AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq (**represented today by the Deputy Governor, His Excellency, Elder Kayode Alabi**), the Convocation Lecturer and Executive Governor of Oyo State, His Excellency Engr. Oluseyi Abiodun Makinde as I appreciate the presence of all the visiting Vice-Chancellors of sister universities **-especially my own Vice-Chancellor, from Federal University Lokoja, Professor Olayemi Akinwumi**, and other heads of institutions, our Royal Fathers, all our guests, parents and guardians, staff, students, and friends, I most sincerely welcome you all as we celebrate this epoch-making occasion. We are grateful to all our dignitaries who came from far and near to honour our invitation and for your demonstration of goodwill towards our university. Our most respected Founder, Engr. Dr. Johnson B. Adewumi, I heartily welcome you and our co-Founder, Dr. Gloria Adewumi to the Maiden Convocation Ceremony. I congratulate you on your investiture as the Chancellor of this university, **and wish you a super happy birthday.**

A Journey of Resilience towards Excellence

A little over three years ago, precisely on Saturday, 16th May, 2021, we embarked on a remarkable journey as we opened our doors to our first set of students -66 of them. Today, after 3 years, 6 months, and 10 days, filled with both challenges and triumphs, the first 26 of them stand before us as proud graduands, representing the very essence of excellence that Thomas Adewumi University seeks to instil in all its students. Today therefore marks a historic milestone in the annals of our university, as we gather to celebrate the maiden convocation ceremony. This occasion is not just a celebration of academic achievement but a testament to the hard work, resilience, and dedication of our pioneering students.

I am delighted to inform you that all our graduands have met the rigorous academic



standards set by the University, which is: in addition to excelling in their chosen fields of study, the acquisition of a minimum of two International ICT Certifications offered by Google, IBM, Coursera, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence initiative. They are therefore ready, for an exciting career life in a technological-driven world.

We have 26 graduands from 2 Faculties and 9 academic programmes convoking on this occasion. While the full details are presented in the table on page 35 of the proceeding, it is important to let our distinguished audience know that we have 6 First Class, 14 Second Class (Upper Division), 4 Second Class (Lower Division) and 1 Third Class. Given the quality of the training that these graduands have received from our university, we are proud to be contributing this token of innovators to the Nigerian and global workforce and we have no doubts that they will deliver.

This remarkable achievement is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and perseverance of our students; the unwavering support of our teaching and supporting staff as well as the sacrifices of their parents/guardians. I therefore heartily congratulate our graduands and their families and admonish them to be good Ambassadors of our university.

Co-creating for Global Impact

Located in one of the most beautiful lands on earth, TAU is built on a proud legacy of about three decades of experience in nurturing great minds through the Thomas Adewumi International College (established in 1997). At the inception of this administration, the Senate of the university and the Governing Council approved the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan with the theme, **Co-creating for Global Impact**. Driven by a shared purpose -to be the university of choice for excellence and character, where developmental ideas and innovative knowledge are sourced for the benefit of mankind, the Strategic Plan, anchored on 7 focal areas, 12 Strategic Goals and 91 Strategic Objectives, seeks to position the university at the forefront of providing world-class education through teaching, research, and societal impact, playing a key role in economic recovery and ensuring a more resilient society for the future.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, parents of our graduands and friends of our university, kindly permit me to quickly present to you some of the things that define our university:

1. **Academic Excellence:** We have continued to ensure the delivery of affordable and accessible, student-centred, world-class education in Science, Technology,



Engineering, Medicine and Innovations (STEM-i). Between 2021 and now, we have doubled our academic programmes from the original 13 approved by the National Universities Commission for take-off to 27, established four (4) new faculties including Engineering, Law, and Nursing Sciences, to give a total of 7 Faculties from the original 3 as approved for take-of and achieved 100% FULL NUC accreditation in all our academic programmes. Additionally, our LLB Law Programme is approved by the Council of Legal Education, while our Bachelor of Nursing Science Programme is fully accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria. Earlier this month, we presented our first set of Nursing Students for the Council's qualifying examinations, and we achieved a 100% pass. ~~As required by the National Universities Commission, we have achieved a 100% completion of the development of the 30% Institutional Contributions to the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) and commenced the implementation during the last academic session thereby injecting more innovative and problem-solving content to our curriculum and preparing our students for a thriving career in a technological-driven world through innovation, entrepreneurship, and skills development.~~

- 2. Commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Recognising the importance of building a sustainable future, we are deeply committed to making a meaningful contribution to all the 17 SDGs. ***We are undoubtedly one of Nigeria's most sustainable university campuses:*** with a 214KW solar farm, we rely majorly on renewable energy to power our campuses, and with our over 10 kilometres of fibre optics infrastructure, we make fast broadband internet connectivity available to our faculty, staff and students, as well as some part of Oko Community. We grow up to 75% of what we consume on our campus, from food and water to energy. 99% of our infrastructure like furniture, buildings, etc., are locally engineered using materials from our grounds. Shortly after this ceremony, we shall commission one of our most recent initiatives, a 240-capacity locally engineered students Hall of Residence. Beginning last academic session (2023/2024), we commenced the adoption of innovative practices as we systematically transitioned into an ICT-driven university. Over 70% of our operations, including statutory and ad-hoc meetings, leave applications and exeat requests, results processing, etc., are paperless and done online via our robust portal thereby reducing our carbon footprints and promoting a sustainable campus. ***We promote good health and well-being:*** while we own the only Medical Center serving our immediate community and over 62 others, we have just constructed a new Physiotherapy Clinic, adjudged as one of the best in the country by the



accreditation panel from the Medical Rehabilitation Therapists (Reg.) Board of Nigeria as one of the best in the country in terms of engineering and equipment.

As a university, we recognize the importance of education in poverty alleviation. We offer scholarships, financial aid programmes, and skill-building initiatives to empower economically disadvantaged students. I invite you all to visit our SDG Hub <https://sdgs.tau.edu.ng/> to read about some of our initiatives.

- 3. Funding, Grants, and Capital Development:** Distinguished graduands, honoured guests, and cherished families, I am particularly proud to reflect on our university's significant strides in funding, grants, and capital development. Over the past two years, we have secured transformative grants that have fueled groundbreaking research and bolstered academic excellence across departments. Our research initiatives have secured a total grant of USD178,000 in actual cash and over USD50,000 in research credits and other support to faculty, staff and students from our strategic partnerships. Additionally, we have an MOU with an Energy Consortium in the USA for creative funding of up to USD105million. Also, through the generous support of our founders, we have achieved record funding levels that have supported state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure. ~~These milestones are not just investments in our campus but in the future of our students, empowering innovation, fostering inclusivity, and setting a robust foundation for generations to come.~~
- 4. Research and Innovations:** In January 2023, we initiated a phased transition from being primarily a teaching university to becoming a vibrant hub for research and innovation. As part of this initiative, we formulated the Thomas Adewumi University Research Agenda, aligning it with our Strategic Goals and the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This transition underscores our commitment to addressing global challenges through impactful research and innovative solutions. We also developed university policies and frameworks that ensured that all research/creative outputs aligned with this agenda. We established the Office of Research Ethics and Compliance to oversee the responsible conduct of research and academic integrity matters. To further deepen innovations in our academic delivery, we established 2 International Innovations Hubs in partnership with colleagues from the Diaspora (The FSI Innovation Hub for students and the AI Research Lab for Faculty) and established the TAU Journal of Innovation Science and Technology (the maiden edition has just been published). ~~We also instituted the TAU innovation award to be given to individuals or research groups from TAU~~



~~who develops software, techniques, procedures and or machines that improves the quality of life in homes, offices, and society in general.~~

5. **Brand Identity, Visibility and Ranking:** Through deliberate efforts, we have ensured strong digital research footprints for visibility. We practise complete open access as dictated by international standards. Our Library has no less than 10 million open-access e-resources of our own, hosted on our server -on-premise and all our staff publications are made available via our Open Educational Resources (OER) repository free of charge. According to the most recent Webometrics ranking of World Universities, **TAU is ranked 1st among the 20 universities that were licenced in 2021, 4th among the 9 universities in Kwara State, 5th among the 149 Private Universities in Nigeria, and 50th among the 274 universities in Nigeria.** We have also been listed in the last two editions of the Times Higher Education (THE) World Universities Ranking and in the 2024 Impact Rankings, we were recognized for our contributions to the UN SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), and 5 (Gender Equality).

6. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** As a legacy institution, we create equal opportunities for everyone who works, studies or just visiting on our grounds to thrive. Though we are an elite institution, providing premium educational services, we are not elitist and discriminatory, rather, we welcome talented people from all over, irrespective of their socioeconomic or religious backgrounds and lived experiences. We are the leading light in our host community and neighbouring communities. We have kept our school charges affordable and within certain thresholds to ensure that even the poorest of the poor can benefit from our excellent academic environment. We have both need-based and unrestricted scholarships/fee subsidies for students from Oko-Irese in particular, and generally from Kwara State and environ. We conduct periodic medical outreach through our Faculties of Medical and Health Sciences, Nursing Sciences as well as our cottage hospital, the Oko Medical Centre. As part of our Convocation activities, a free eye care medical outreach was conducted on Friday, 22nd November 2024 where over 300 patients received medical attention, and almost 20 surgical procedures were successfully performed by a team of seven medics, specially invited by the University for this impactful initiative. Recognising the agrarian nature of Kwara State and the consequent physiotherapy illnesses that accompany traditional farming, we have built a Physiotherapy clinic in Oko to provide medical attention within reach of the over 60 communities being served by our cottage hospital. **In recognition of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Google University**



Relations, Republic of Ireland awarded us a DEI grant with an unrestricted gift of USD75,000 in their 2024 Funding Cycle.

- 7. Internalization, Collaboration and Linkages:** In keeping with one of our Strategic Goals to promote strategic and sustainable partnerships for local relevance, regional impact, and global recognition, we have established and operationalized partnerships and linkages with universities in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, ~~namely Johannesburg Business School, University of Johannesburg, Bowie State University and , University of Central Oklahoma, USA, Chandigarh Group of Colleges Jhanjeri Mohali, Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Lovely Professional University in India.~~ Just a few steps from this auditorium, right in this building, we currently host a Mirror of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open Courseware (MIT-OCW) hosting over 13 million contents from more than 2,500 MIT's on-campus courses through the Open Courseware initiative and we have hundreds of thousands of students from English-Speaking Sub-Saharan African countries accessing their study materials from our campus. We have established partnerships with international skills-building academies to provide international certifications for our students: Oracle Academy, Huawei Academy, GitHub for Campus, IBM Skillsbuild, Coursera for Campus, Saylor Academy, and Alison. Oluwatodunni Obafemi, a 300 Level Student of Computer Science is currently named the Innovator of the Year and is concluding his semester abroad programme at the AI Innovations Lab, University of Johannesburg, SA. Still on internationalization, we are a founding member of the Consortium of Universities in Kwara State (KU8+), and during this period under focus, we were admitted as a full member of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH), Collaborative Online Learning of the USA Department of Education, International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) and The Association of African Universities.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, all the above are a **few** of the things that set our university apart from others. Together, we have built a vibrant and inclusive academic community that celebrates diversity, fosters creativity, and embraces innovation. We have cultivated an environment where intellectual curiosity thrives, where knowledge is created, shared, and applied to address the challenges of our time, and where lifelong bonds of friendship and collaboration are forged. Today, as we reflect on our achievements, we are filled with gratitude for the contributions of every member of our university's campus community – our visionary leaders (our Chancellor/Founder, co-Founder, BOT, Pro-Chancellor and Members of Council), Principal Officers and members of the Senate, our dedicated faculty and staff, talented students, supportive parents, and valued partners,



our sister universities in the KU8 – who have all played a vital role in shaping our collective success.

A Peep into the Future

Before I conclude this address, I would like to let our Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Talented Graduates, Wonderful Parents in on what to expect from our university in the few months. We shall continue to promote innovation and support research excellence in our faculty, staff and students. Through our recently established Vocational and Technical Training Centre and our partnership with the National Open College Network, United Kingdom (NOCN), we shall continue to produce highly-skilled, future-fit graduates for a global workforce. We have planned academic programmes expansion and have commenced the process of establishing a Medical School. By September 2025, we hope to admit our first set of students into the MBBS programme. I would like to use this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to the Executive Governor of Kwara State, Mallam AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq for his commitment to the development of Kwara State and Kwara South as His Excellency has approved the upgrade of the General Hospital Omu-Aran to a Teaching Hospital. Preparations are at advanced stages for the establishment of the School of Postgraduate Studies, the Centre for Distance and eLearning, the Centre for Professional Studies, Oko Business School, the TAU FM Radio Station, among others. While we are proud of the significant growth in our enrolment, from an initial intake of 66 students in May 2021 to a remarkable 1,215 students as of today, we planned to keep doubling our enrolment each year and provide the necessary sustainable infrastructure to accommodate the proposed growth and improve campus life for all the members of our community.

Conclusion

As I bring this address to a close, I would like to acknowledge and commend the invaluable contributions of those who have played pivotal roles in the growth and development of this esteemed citadel of learning.

First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to our visionary Founder and Chancellor, alongside the Co-Founder, and their children. Their dedication, foresight, and unwavering support have laid the robust foundation upon which this institution proudly stands. Your passion for education and commitment to excellence continue to inspire us all to aim higher.

I also convey my heartfelt appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees, as well as the Chairman and members of the Governing Council. I must also acknowledge the significant contributions of our pioneer Vice-Chancellor, Professor



Kolade Luke Ayorinde, whose efforts set the tone for the solid academic culture we enjoy today.

A special appreciation goes to the past and present Brigade Commanders, 222 Battalion, Nigerian Army, Sobi Cantonment, Ilorin, for their steadfast support in ensuring that our campuses are secured.

Heartfelt thanks to the Principal Officers, and members of the Senate, all members of staff, both academic and non-academic.

To the Oko Community, led by the Oloko of Oko-Irese, thank you for your unwavering love and support. Your partnership has been a cornerstone of our progress.

To the parents and guardians of our graduating Amber Set, thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of nurturing your wards. You placed your faith in us when our journey was just beginning, and we are confident that the knowledge, values, and skills we have imparted will empower them to excel in life.

To our first fruits, the Amber Set, the distinguished Class of 2024, take pride in your remarkable achievements and embrace the future with confidence. You have proven yourselves as trailblazers, becoming the pioneer alumni of Thomas Adewumi University. Your journey here has equipped you with the tools to leave an indelible mark on the world, and I am certain that you will do so with excellence and purpose.

Congratulations once again! You have made us immensely proud, and I am confident that your future will be filled with success, fulfilment, and impactful contributions to society.

Finally, I wish to appreciate once again, all our distinguished guest for honouring us with your presence on our big day! Thank you, and may your paths ahead be bright and rewarding.

Professor Francisca O. Oladipo, FNCS
Vice-Chancellor