

AN ADDRESS BY IBRAHIM EDDY MARK, VICE PRESIDENT, (BUDET AND FINANCE) AND ALTERNATE CHAIRMAN, LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE ON THE 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN BAR ASSOCIATION HOLDING IN PORT HARCOURT, SOUTH SOUTH NIGERIA FROM 6TH – 10TH AUGUST 2017.

Protocols.

It is with deep sense of honour and privilege to address this august gathering of eminent persons of African descent and the world.

I must therefore tread with caution so as to say it right and fitness for purpose.

The Local Organising Committee after getting the mandate of the General Council of African Bar Association, did swing into action to actualise our mandate.

We have a Chairman, His Excellency, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON who is a perfectionist and do not take half measures. With this in mind, the committee was aware that our best must be good enough.

We therefore created subcommittees on Transport/Security, Accommodation/Hospitality/Protocol, Media/Publicity, Venue/Facilities, believing that with this vehicle, we can cover the ground and assist the main conference planning committee to give delegates the best African Bar Association can offer.

We got hotels to give reasonable discount to delegates, we did our best in Airport pick up to accommodation areas, we made provision for hospitality which delegates have been taking advantage to patronise.

We also scored high on security arrangement and pledge to do more during the entire period of the conference. This is important due to the negative and untrue allegations of insecurity in the state by those whose stock in trade is to see everything bad in Rivers State.

To appreciate the good people of Rivers State, it is on record that no untoward happening has occurred since the delegates started arriving from 3rd August, 2017 and we pray none will occur. The security agencies have done the needful and we must commend their dexterity and tactical disposition

We have on our part, set up appropriate halls for the breakout sessions that are twenty in number.

All relevant electronic gadgets are aids needed by the various speakers, translation equipment have been procured and duly installed.

The live telecast of this program, live streaming and other platforms necessary for broadcast and reaching the intended audience are clear testimony of what the delegates want and demand

The theme of the conference **“DISSECTING THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR DOING BUSINESS IN AFRICA”** is a precursor to what to expect after the twenty sessions have done justice to the various topics stated for discussion. Speakers are coming from Africa, Europe, America and the Caribbean.

Let me say that we have also taken the health of delegates into our planning and have made arrangement to meet with the medical demands of delegates and will refer any major concern to appropriate medical institutions that abound in the city of Port Harcourt.

Suffice it therefore to assert that we are not only good to go but we are ongoing.

As Chairman of the Local Organising Committee which attests to the fact that he wants to be part of the planning and as chief host, he did not relent in making sure that we get what we are seeking to do

In this time of economic down turn and recession, our chief host still found time in the midst of contending demands of state craft and democracy dividends, to in all modesty, financially and materially see not only to the foreseen success of the conference, but its successful take off

We may not have much or appropriate words to really appreciate this our life Council Member, who has in all situations come to the aid of African Bar Association.

He did, lest we forget, host our Council meeting in April 2017 in this city of Port Harcourt.

In conclusion, we must place our gratitude to His Excellency, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike CON, a true son of Africa, who has really risen to his present position through hard work, sincerity of purpose and deep appreciation of what it takes to be a servant leader.

We must report and assert that the presence of the Keynote Speaker, His Excellency, Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, immediate past president of Tanzania gives and alludes to the fact that this conference success story has started on a good note.

We must commend the simplicity of the keynote speaker from the time we did the Airport pickup and arrival at his abode, duly provided by the Government of Rivers State with the attendant protocol.

The story of the conference and Port Harcourt as host started in June 2016 when we had our Council meeting in Cameroun. Port Harcourt, Nigeria defeated three other contestants to win for Nigeria the host of 2017 African Bar Association Annual Conference.

We did bring the good news to His Excellency, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike CON, Governor, Rivers State. He received the news in his boisterous and affable disposition.

He did assure us when we came to break the news that, he will do the best host and host well the conference.

We therefore assure delegates and our esteemed speakers and invited guests that the best is yet to come. We shall not disappoint as Port Harcourt is not called the GARDEN CITY for fun of it. Be further rest assured that, all the goodness and your expectations will be met and in full measure.

I savour the privilege of having your listening ears to this epistle.

Thanks

Ibrahim Eddy Mark, Esq.
Vice President B & F
And Alternate Chairman
Local Organising Committee
07/08/2017