



GOODWILL MESSAGE BY MR. ABUBAKAR MALAMI, SAN,
HONOURABLE ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION
AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE AFRICAN
BAR ASSOCIATION 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PORT
HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE HELD ON MONDAY, 7TH AUGUST,
2017.

Courtesies

I am delighted to deliver a Goodwil Message on this occasion of the 2017 Annual Conference of the African Bar Association holding in the Garden City of Port Harcourt. Port Harcourt has, deservedly, acquired a reputation as a home for the regular gathering of Lawyers and their associates, for diverse Conferences and other events over the years.

I am therefore convinced that all distinguished participants and invitees will find the city a worthy host for what promises to be a fruitful and fulfilling Conference.

2. I commend the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, the Government and good people of this State for the hospitality and protocol arrangements which have made this Conference, and several others, possible in the State. Let me also express my appreciation to the President and entire membership of the African Bar Association for the invitation extended to me to be part of this ceremony.

3. I should also welcome in a special way, His Excellency, Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the immediate-past President of the Republic of Tanzania, who has honoured us with his presence at this Conference to participate and deliver the Keynote Address. I welcome Your Excellency and all foreign delegates and participants here. I wish you all a wonderful time in Nigeria and trust that you will use the opportunity to build bridges that will further strengthen our unity as Africans.

4. The African Bar Association, by virtue of its stated objectives, has the potentials to become a very key instrument for the achievement of the ideals of the African Union, which emphasize greater integration and collaboration among Africans across various fields of endeavour and activity. As lawyers, your contribution to the enthronement of the Rule of Law and principles of good governance, which the African continent direly requires in several sectors, can not be over-emphasized. I therefore hope that this Conference will help the Association to reinforce that sense of purpose and provoke new initiatives that will make this association an even more visible voice on the African continent.

5. The choice of the theme of this Conference which is on "Dissecting the Legal and Regulatory Framework For Doing Business in Africa" is apt and most relevant. It is a demonstration of your acknowledgment that what Africa needs now is economic independence and empowerment of its peoples in order to free the enormous potentials that exist within it to propel its long-overdue development To achieve sustainable growth, we must therefore constantly review the legal and regulatory structures which guide, but oftentimes, also impede business activities on our continent. As Lawyers, our duty must go beyond defending clients when they appear to fall foul of such laws made by our various States, but

should also include questioning whether those laws cannot be improved or repealed, and then taking active steps to join hands with Governments to address such concerns.

6. I am impressed by the choice of topics for this Conference and the rich assemblage of experienced and competent Resource Persons who shall address them over the next few days. I am convinced that this Conference will achieve its objective and come up with solid proposals on how we can improve business in Africa. I also hope that this Conference will deliberate on the modalities and mechanisms for deepening interaction between the African Bar Association and the various national Bar Executives in our various countries in order to promote inclusiveness and synergy in the contributions of all lawyers to the development of our continent.

7. Permit me to conclude my address by reiterating that Africa's future lies in greater integration and shared visions among our States and peoples. Our deliberations must therefore focus on strategies and initiatives which will strengthen that future and lead us faster towards the single African economy to which the African Union remains committed. As Lawyers who are naturally leaders in our communities and other social and official settings, let us use the advantage of that privilege to work as individuals and as a collective

towards a more prosperous and humane future for ourselves and the next generation. I trust that the African Bar Association will continue to be guided by this ideal.

8. Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for your attention and wish you a most fulfilling Conference.

9. Thank you very much.

Abubakar Malami, SAN
Honourable Attorney-General of the
Federation and Minister of Justice.

7th August, 2017.