



Prof. Iyorwuese Hagher, Ph.D, OON
HIGH COMMISSIONER

AN ADDRESS

By

HIS EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR IYORWUESE HAGHER, Ph.D, OON,

NIGERIA'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO CANADA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2011 CANPAD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

28th July – 1st August, 2011, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The President of CANPAD,

The Executives of CANPAD,

Invited Guests,

Fellow Nigerians,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me congratulate you once again on the landmark achievements of your association within the past 10 years of existence. The sustenance of this association up to this time is an indication of your collective efforts at remaining united as one family. I have come to consider CANPAD Annual Conference as one of the most important meetings of Diaspora Nigerian professionals. I regret my inability to attend the 10th Anniversary, personally, but happy to share this goodwill message with you.

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Your consistency in having this yearly gathering, as a CME/Family is worthy of emulation by other Nigerian Professional associations in Canada.

This year's focus on youths underlines the importance you attach to raising a future generation. I commend your efforts in sustaining the bursary program for students of African descent in Canadian Universities.

As you are aware, Canada, on account of its stable economy, commitment to human rights, rule of law and democracy, is perceived as a land of great opportunities flowing with milk and honey. At this stage of our national development, Canada offers one of the best benchmarks and beacons for emulation.

One of my goals as the Nigerian High Commissioner has been to unite all Nigerians in Canada, as one effective way of changing the way we are perceived by our hosts. I am pleased that your association has proved to be my partner in this regard. I thank you.

Canada-Nigeria bilateral relations are developing on an even keel. The increasing exchange of visits at official levels and the expanding contacts between the private sectors of our two economies attest to it. Trade between Nigeria and Canada continues to rise; many Canadian Companies are constantly looking for partnerships in Nigeria. Nigeria is today Canada's biggest trading partner in Africa. These are cheering news.

Our healthcare delivery system is faced with a lot of challenges including management of available resources. But Government at different levels is making efforts to improve the situation. The National Health Bill which had languished for over 7years has just been passed by the two chambers of the National Assembly. The Bill stipulates the guidelines for the formulation of a national health policy. It also provides a framework for the regulation and provision of national health services while recognizing

the rights of health workers and users. The Bill shows the determination of government to improve health care delivery in our country.

Notwithstanding government's effort at improving the health of our people, there is need for partners to fill in the gaps. This is where your association and others like it come in. Yes, Nigeria needs your association's support to put in place a sustainable healthcare delivery system. I am aware of your regular contributions in this regard. The yearly despatch of your colleagues to provide needed healthcare to our people back home in Nigeria is commendable. I assure you of the full cooperation of my office to ensure the success of such missions to Nigeria in future.

I expect more commitments from your association. For instance, I expect you to partner with the Federal Government to organise training workshops in Nigeria in order to impart critical knowledge that your members have acquired over the years while studying and working in our host country. Our knowledge gaps back home in fighting such diseases as diabetes, cancer, tuberculosis, HIV; etc will be greatly reduced with such workshops. I also look forward to seeing many hospitals built in Nigeria by your members to eliminate these diseases, which have reduced life expectancy in our country to 54 years against the average global index of 75years. I am aware that these visions will be achieved, seeing the efforts already put in place by some of your members. I encourage you all to work towards this, so that infant and maternal mortality rates in our country will be reduced to the barest minimum, and the physical and mental health of our people is given a boost.

I always maintained that Nigerians are the most resilient people in the world. We have survived terrible diseases in the past, we will certainly survive the scourges of mismanagement in the health sector.

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, in his address during the last PDP Convention, stressed his commitment to conducting a credible elections as well as maintaining a virile and a united country. Today, Nigeria is viewed by the international community as a strong country in the African continent, which can organise a credible election and where good governance upholds. A nation that used her indigenous home grown wisdom to bring peace in the embattled Niger-Delta, without the involvement of the western world. We can do anything that we set our mind to do.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we desire Canadian technology and education, and we are willing to pay for this. In the last few years, Nigeria has bought very sophisticated medical diagnostic equipment and other medical apparati. We need manpower to operate these equipment which are under-utilized. I enjoin CANPAD to persuade Canada to assist in manpower training. I equally urge CANPAD to lobby the Canadian government and politicians to join the global positive acceptance of Nigeria.

The Nigerians in Diaspora are the resource-base, which the Federal government is partnering with in an effort to build a solid economy. Few days ago, an annual forum of Nigerians in Diaspora was held in Abuja, an event that drew many Diaspora Nigerians to brainstorm on the way forward to achieve a more buoyant economy for Nigeria. You are part of this forum, your mental and physical resources are much needed by your motherland to move this wheel of development.

Ladies and gentlemen, the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR is set to move our country to greater heights. I call on CANPAD to lead the way for Nigeria's renewal. Let us join hands with the federal government to make a new Nigeria. Nigeria needs Canada to

partner with, in education, health, energy, to mention just a few. I have a full confidence that your association can be that crucial ingredient Nigeria needs to achieve a sustainable health system.

On behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is my honour and privilege to wish you a successful 10th Anniversary celebrations.

Long Live CANPAD

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Long Live Canada

Thank you and God bless you all.