It gives me great pleasure to welcome you today to this 27th Convocation Ceremony of Yaba College of Technology, the cradle of Higher Education in Nigeria.

I am humbled by the array of distinguished personalities who have honoured our invitation to this occasion. I am grateful to you all for this rare privilege.

Honourable Minister, for the purpose of record, at this occasion, please permit me to recall that Yaba College of Technology was established in 1947 as the Yaba Technical Institute. The Technical Institute transformed to Yaba College of Technology in 1963 in re-positioning for the dynamic role it was to play in the technological and socio-economic development of Nigeria. The college then began with about 8 artisan courses and 423 trainees on these same grounds. The college now runs over seventy academic programmes in forty-one academic departments and eight schools including the new School of Technical Education which is run in affiliation with the University of Nigeria Nsukka. The student population now is about 16,000. The history of the institution is indeed synonymous with the history of higher education in Nigeria. Over the past 60 years the college has been producing high and middle level manpower for the development of the nation’s economy. Today’s occasion marks yet another milestone in the historical development of the college.

Honourable Minister Madam, at today’s ceremony, the college will be presenting a total of 5747 graduands being the combined figure for the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 sessions broken down as 2004 and 3753 respectively. For the 2008/2009 session we have a total of 1249 at HND category comprised of 31 at distinction level, 216 at upper credit level and 751 and 251 at lower credit and pass levels respectively. At the ND level we have a total 755 graduands comprised of 30 at distinction category 155 at upper credit category with a total of 380 and 190 at the lower and pass categories respectively.

Also for the 2009/2010 session we have a total of 1440 graduands at HND category comprised of 20 at distinction level, 492 at upper credit level and 749
and 179 respectively, at lower credit and pass levels. At the ND level we have a total of 2307 graduands comprised of 45 at distinction category, 608 at upper credit category, and 1139 and 515 at the lower and pass categories respectively.

We shall also be conferring the Honourary Fellowship of the College, which is the highest honour awarded by the college, on three eminent Nigerians in the persons of His Excellency, Dr. Godswill Akbabi the Executive Governor of Akwa Ibom State Honourable Faruk Lawan, Chairman House Committee on Education, and His Excellency Sir Michael Otedola, former Governor of Lagos State; for services rendered to humanity and in particular, for their contributions to reshaping the education landscape of the nation.

I recall that one of the first three recipients of this award in 1992 was the late Admiral Augustus Aikhomu who was called home to his rest by the Almighty on August 17, 2011. He was an illustrious alumnus of Yaba College of Technology who contributed very much to the development of the college. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

I recall also that the other two recipients were Prof. Jubril Aminu and Dr. Michael Omolayole. I am indeed pleased that we have Senator Jubril Aminu here with us today at this occasion. It is indeed gratifying that you have kept faith with us through the years, you are welcome Sir.

Honourable Minister Madam, this convocation ceremony is unique for me. It is so because it is my first convocation as Rector of this great institution. In about two weeks from now, I would have spent two years in office. It is therefore pertinent that I present a very brief account of my stewardship over the past two years.

At inception of the present administration we realized the need to articulate, harness and consolidate the gains of the past, in order to prepare the college to brave the challenges of the 21st century, as an emerging contemporary institution of higher learning in the global arena. This consolidation initiative was intended to re-position the college for transformational growth and it was founded on the indices of Academic and Infrastructural development amongst others.
ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

For the academic development of the college, the college management embarked on a vigorous staff exposure and development drive. It was realized that for the student to derive maximum benefit from lecture delivery, it was necessary that the instructional capability of the trainer himself be strengthened and the trainer be exposed to contemporary trends in teaching and learning. Towards this end a total number of 214 staff were sent on seminars, workshops and conferences in year 2010 as against 88 for the preceding year. This number was further stepped up to 446 in year 2011.

In addition, through the Science and Technology Education Post Basic Project (STEP-B) and Tertiary Education Trust Fund intervention a total of 887 staff and 405 students benefitted from workshops and training programmes.

This has served to expand the horizons of staff, broaden their exposure, and improve the quality of service delivery. Also about 127 staff are currently pursuing higher degree programmes in foreign and local institutions.

In-House Conferences, Seminars and Publications

Still in the spirit of promoting the academic culture, three Conferences were organized in the college this year, two of which were international conferences organized by School of Liberal Studies and School of Science. The other was organized by School of Technical Education while an Annual Lecture was also organized by the School of Environmental Studies. This is in addition to numerous departmental and school based seminars.

In the year 2011, academic staff of the college published not less than 73 books 626 conference papers and 672 journal articles. It is worthy of note that this is a significant improvement.

I should also mention that an Institution based Peer Review Journal is to be established in the first quarter of year 2012. This will provide an avenue for staff to disseminate their work.
**Strengthening the Research Culture**

In the area of strengthening the research culture, staff of the college are encouraged to conduct research.

To overcome the constraints of funding, a committee on Grantsmanship was constituted in April 2011 and some of the members sent for an international workshop on European Project Funding and Management from 18th to 21st April 2011. The committee is to, amongst other functions, assist researchers in packaging their proposals for grants, to facilitate their winning the grants.

In line with best practices the world over, the college is presently making preparations to hold a research fair in February 2012. It is planned that this will be an annual event.

**Department of Agricultural Technology**

During the 2009/2010 session, the Department of Agricultural Technology was established. The first set of students were admitted in June, 2010. The programme is running smoothly at the Epe campus.

**Upgrading of Technical Teachers Training Programme (TTTP) to School of Technical Education**

In August, 2010 the Technical Teachers Training Programme (TTTP) was upgraded to School of Technical Education, headed by a Dean.

The programme is a degree awarding programme run over the past 15 years in affiliation with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Hitherto, the programme had operated as a unit headed by a Director. The school now has 6 departments and ten programmes.
Learning and Teaching Enhancements

Management, as a deliberate effort, dedicated a substantial amount of fund towards the provision of classroom, laboratory and workshop equipment and furniture as well as books and journals.

New External Linkages

On new external linkages, in October 2010, the college entered into a renewed agreement with Centre Songhai in the areas of Joint research and development projects in renewable energy especially in biofuel and bio-enterprise.

Also in 2011, the College commenced the process of entering into an MOU with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa in the areas of postgraduate training, staff sabbaticals, staff and student exchange, short-term academic programmes and one year top-up programme for our HND graduates.

The college has an on-going collaboration with University of Central Lancashire in the areas of staff exchange, top-up programmes and admission into higher qualifications. It is instructive that UCLAN, after observing the high performance of our products, granted a rebate of 50% on fees for beneficiaries of the collaboration.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in June 2011 with Firmenich, a subsidiary of the Geneva based Firmenich group. The partnership is to operate with the Department of Food Technology at which a fragrance and flavours laboratory is being set up by the organisation.

The college is in the process of entering into collaboration with De-Montfort University in the areas of Management Studies programme. Discussions are at advanced stage in this regard.

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

At Yaba College of Technology Entrepreneurship education is a compulsory course for every student starting from the National Diploma to the Higher National Diploma level.
In order to further entrench the programme in the college, a modern and functional structure was built for the Centre and completed in August 2011. This was commissioned by the Honourable Minister of Education two days ago on 22\textsuperscript{nd} November 2011.

In 2010, the first entrepreneurial lecture was held alongside the first exhibition of students’ products. Since then, three other exhibitions have been held and a 2\textsuperscript{nd} entrepreneurial lecture was also held in 2011.

The Centre has successfully facilitated several training programmes for staff and students at home and abroad while the staff of the centre are being continually trained for effective facilitation in Entrepreneurship.

In order to give the centre a definitive direction, an advisory committee was constituted for overall operational matters. The committee is comprised of stakeholders from public and private organisations and agencies. The Advisory Committee was inaugurated on 23\textsuperscript{rd} December 2010.

The College is also involved in small enterprise ventures. One of these is a commercially viable block industry which was established in 2010 and serves as practical demonstration during training programmes, and also for job creation for people in the neighbourhood. Another is a paint manufacturing enterprise in the department of Polymer and Textile Technology established in 2011. It is pertinent to state that all construction and other civil works projects in the college procure their blocks and paints from the small scale industries operated under Yabatech Consult, the business arm of the college.

Indeed, the Governing Council approved that the modest income generated from the block industry over the past year be used as seed money to commence a water bottling industry. This will also provide entrepreneurship experience and further employment for inhabitants of the neighbouring community.
Future Academic Programmes

Honourable Minister, while consolidating and strengthening the academic base of the college, management has also been forward looking and re-positioning for the establishment of new programmes, namely:-

Biotechnology programme

Collaborative proposal of School of Environmental Studies on Post-Graduate Diploma programmes

Environmental Control and Management programme

National Diploma (Part-Time) programme in Banking and Finance

National Diploma in Road Traffic Operations

National Diploma in Road Passenger Transport

National Diploma in Project Management

Malting and Brewing science in the School of Science.

Other programmes which have been in the pipeline are the

1. Marine Engineering programme and Instrumentation Engineering programme amongst others.

To commence the programmes, management has to put in place the necessary structures such as personnel, equipment and infrastructure.

Honourable Minister, this naturally leads to the issue of infrastructural development and expansion of the college. This also brings us to the issue of access to education which is an issue on the front burner of the Honourable Minister’s developmental agenda for the education sector.

For the 2011/2012 session a total of 107,000 candidates selected Yaba College of Technology as the more preferred institution of choice. However, the college carrying capacity can take only about 5% of the number of applicants to the
college. In order to improve carrying capacity and also achieve the planned expansion of the programme offering of the college, management embarked on the development of infrastructural facilities to provide staff offices, lecture halls, seminar rooms, workshops and laboratories.

The projects include:

1. A seven-storey Multi-use building
2. A centre for Entrepreneurship Development
3. Architecture Studio for Post-graduate Diploma in Architecture
4. Construction of Foundry for Department of Metallurgical Engineering
5. Construction of a 3-storey Science Building for the School of Science
6. Conversion of a 500-seater lecture hall to a 3-storey Building
7. Completion of renovation project at School of Environmental Studies and completion of Department of Agricultural Technology at Epe campus

Honourable Minister, through transparent and judicious application of funds, the college has been able to optimally utilize resources at its disposal to lay down the necessary structures to propel the college on the path of transformational growth.

**Transformation Agenda**

The Honourable Minister will please recall that on 16\textsuperscript{th} July 2011, Heads of Tertiary institutions were invited to a forum where the transformation agenda of Mr. President was presented and the transformation document circulated. All institutions were mandated to acquaint themselves with, and key into the agenda and further, to sensitise their staff on the transformation agenda.

A committee was constituted in the college to assimilate the content of the document and synthesize a blueprint for the college to internalize. The report of
the committee has been accepted by management. The report focuses on Good Governance, Infrastructure and Human Capital Development.

A first sensitization exercise has been carried out in the college through dissemination of information to the different schools and units.

Honourable Minister, one question we in the Polytechnics must address is the question of percentage contribution of Polytechnic education to the performance of the real sector of the Nigerian economy. We must ask ourselves this question because, for effective transformation of the economy, there must first be a transformation of the real sector. Our goals must be defined in terms of measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and attitude our students should possess at the end of their studies to drive the vision of the real sector. Resolving the issue of manpower relevance will to a large extent reduce the necessity for the importation of goods and services and promote job creation.

We must improve our contribution to knowledge, and working with industries, we must apply research and innovation to technological advancement, for greater productivity.

Honourable Minister, we must produce manpower for the operation, maintenance and sustenance of existing infrastructure and production facilities, particularly in industries such as power, oil and gas, automobile, textile and other related industries where products and manpower are largely imported. To create the enabling environment for this, we must redirect emphasis to competency based education and the development and infusement of technically competent manpower in the Polytechnics to co-exist with other lecturing staff in order to build technical competence in the system through innovation and translation of existing knowledge.

Employers ratings have shown that National Diploma graduates of Polytechnics have displayed the maturity and technical orientation for performance in the labour market. They have also been seen to be well prepared for further academic studies. This is an attestation to the relevance of the direction of technical education. We only need to apply more effort in the right direction.
Yaba College of Technology is in dialogue with the French government on some technical assistance projects in the college. Under this technical assistance the French government will provide equipment for the Schools of Engineering and Environmental Studies.

The French government will also arrange for companies in France with foreign direct investments in Nigeria to sponsor training in the College for technicians towards capacity building in the local companies.

LG Electronics Nigeria Ltd, in fostering their contribution in the field of technical education, formed a partnership with the college through the School of Engineering in October 2010. This involves the provision of job training for college students at the company’s workshop. Students are retained at the conclusion of the internship, based on their performance.

**e-Learning Project**

An e-Learning Centre was established in the college in 2011. It is run by Yabatech Consult in partnership with a consulting firm. The centre will enrich the teaching and learning process and also provide opportunity for acquisition of internationally certified qualifications.

**CHALLENGES**

**Development of Epe Campus**

The constraint of space has made it expedient for management to look towards the Epe campus for future physical growth. The Epe campus is a 55 hectare parcel of land donated to the college by the Lagos State Government for educational development in the year 1986. The Department of Agricultural Technology which commenced in the last academic session is located at the Epe campus. Honourable Minister Ma, the challenge of transforming a virgin land into a vibrant and full-fledged academic campus is enormous. It will require the commitment of huge resources by government. This is why the campus is still at an early stage of development in spite of the acquisition of the land since 1986.
The college will appreciate support in the development of the Epe campus as this is indeed the future of Yaba College of Technology.

**Mosinmi Land**

The Mosinmi land was donated to the college by the Ogun State Government. The land is about 55 hectares in size. The college wishes to use the land for agricultural purposes. However constraints of funds have stalled progress in the development of the land. Management will appreciate assistance towards the actualization of this purpose which entails training of seafarers, ratings and other shipping manpower.

**Establishment of Maritime Training Programme**

The maritime training programme has been a long conceived project. A good number of milestones have been recorded on the project including collaboration with NIMASA, GMAT and other relevant organisations. The Lagos State Government has granted the donation of a jetty for Maritime transportation management which will complement the programme. The programme is earmarked for commencement at the Technical Training Centre of Nigerian Ports Authority located at Apapa. The project will require funds for payment of lease to NPA, rehabilitation of equipment and infrastructure at the training centre. Management will appreciate assistance on this project.

**Marine Engineering Programme**

The ND Marine Engineering programme is also a long conceived programme for location at the Epe campus. Due to constraints of funds, management has not been able to put on ground the requisite equipment for NBTE resource inspection and approval for takeoff of the programme. The college will also appreciate assistance on this project.

**Accommodation**

The college presently provides accommodation for about 7% of its staff. Management obtained Council approval to provide 2 blocks of 8 no.3-bedroom
flats, 2 blocks of 8 No. two bedroom flats, terrace bungalows and self contained flats for junior staff. This is being implemented in phases. Presently under construction by a developer are 1 block of 8 No.3-bedroom flats while 3 no. terrace bungalows and six self contained flats have been completed on build operate and transfer basis and are presently occupied by staff. An arrangement has been worked out through which monthly repayments to the developers will be drawn from internally generated revenue, including rental income received from occupants of the college staff quarters.

Also six self-contained flats have been built as transit accommodation for drivers and maintenance staff.

Honourable Minister this effort has only succeeded in scratching the surface of the problem. The college is in great need of support from the public to assist with the accommodation problem.

**GOVERNING COUNCIL**

The last Governing Council of the College was constituted in March 2009 under the Chairmanship of Chief Joju Fadairo, a distinguished politician and astute administrator. During its tenure the council approved 37 projects, 111 new appointments, confirmed 43 appointments, up-graded 63 staff and approved 348 promotions amongst many other achievements.

The college is very grateful to the governing council for the inspirational leadership it provided during its tenure which lasted up to October 2011.

**Relationship with Unions**

Relationship between the management and the staff and student unions is one of cordiality, mutual understanding and respect. Management has, at different times been formally appreciated by the staff and student unions for its goodwill towards them.

**Security**
The issue of security is taken very seriously. Management has a good working relationship with the Police and State Security Service.

In order to improve the quality of security service, management in July 2011 integrated the services three private security firms into the security system of the college. A modern security building was constructed in year 2011 to provide office accommodation for the Unit. This was commissioned in October 2011 by the immediate past Chairman of Council, Chief Joju Fadairo

**The Environment (Esprit De Corp)**

I am happy to state that since the commencement of my administration, the college environment has been very peaceful. We have not experienced student or staff crises. This has contributed to the progress recorded in the college in the past two years and the successful implementation of the academic calendar.

**APPRECIATION**

At this point I wish to acknowledge and appreciate our development partners who over the past two years have contributed immensely to the development of the institution.

Deserving of special mention is the Federal Government of Nigeria which gave through the vehicle of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund a special intervention of N1.2b to the college. This was applied to the construction of an ultra modern 7-storey building which has indeed changed the landscape of the neighbourhood; construction of a Foundry for department of Metallurgical Engineering; procurement of workshop and laboratory equipment for departments across the college, supply of library books, furniture and other teaching appliances. The merged 2009/2010 regular intervention has also been applied for the on-going construction of the 3-storey School of Science building and procurement of equipment for Departments of Polymer and Textile Technology, Department of Agric Technology, Department of Chemical Science and Microbiology laboratory.

Also deserving a special mention at this occasion is the Petroleum Technology Development Fund for the construction and donation of an ICT centre to the
college, equipped with one hundred computers. The project was completed in September 2011.

I thank the Nigerian Communications Commission for the donation of 100 laptops with e-Learning facility in June 2011. These have been allocated to the eight schools of the college for equipping the newly established computer laboratories in the schools.

I thank Zenith Bank and Stanbic IBTC for the donation of 650KVA and 250KVA generators respectively to the college in year 2010.

I thank Chief Razak Okoya of Eleganza Industry for the annual scholarship grant to students with outstanding performance in the college.

I thank the Flour Mill Association of Nigeria for the donation of equipment to the Department of Food Technology.

The past two years have been very eventful. My administration has remained focused on the single goal of taking Yaba College of Technology to the next level.

I am indeed grateful to the immediate past Council and the college management for the support I have received and the entire college community for their goodwill. I can only hope that I will continue to enjoy this support and goodwill.

I want to pay a special homage to the past administrators of this great institution, in particular my fellow Nigerian predecessors in office.

- Dr. (Engr.) E.A. Akinleye - Principal - 1971-1975
- Mr. G.M. Okufi - Rector - 1975-1985
- Dr. P.O. Adegbile (late) – Rector - 1985-1993
- Chief (Mrs.) F.A. Odugbesan - Rector – 1993-2001
- Mr. F.O. Owoso – Rector- 2001-2009

They all made their mark and stamped indelibly their footprints in the sands of time.
I appreciate the presence of my fellow Rectors, Provosts and Vice Chancellors who have come from their various institutions to lend their fraternal support at this occasion.

I must also thank the illustrious Alumni of this College for the love and support shown their alma mater. I commend in particular the efforts of Chief Emmanuel Unackukwu the President of the Alumni Association.

CONCLUSION

I congratulate the Fellowship awardees. We are honoured that you have found our institution worthy of associating with. I congratulate our graduands on the successful completion of their programmes. I am sure that by now you would have imbibed the culture of excellence which is synonymous with your alma mater, and that you can now count yourselves as worthy, not only in knowledge but also in character. I charge you to be good ambassadors of this great institution. I also congratulate the proud parents of the graduands.

Honourable Minister Madam your Excellencies, Distinguished Statesmen, your Royal Highnesses, Graduands, Students and well wishers of this College, I say a very big THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.