
Protocols

It is with great pleasure that I formally welcome you all to the Nigerian Institute of Chartered Arbitrator’s 2017 investiture and Award Ceremony.

I congratulate our new Fellows, Mediators and Members who are successful in the recent examinations and assessments, and are scheduled to be inducted today. This is an important milestone in your professional lives. Our fellows, mediators and members are made up of eminent professionals who have distinguished themselves in their chosen fields. They include Appellate Court Justices, High Court Judges, Senior Advocates of Nigeria, Professors of Law, highly experienced lawyers, accountants, quantity surveyors, and corporate executives.

The divisiveness of litigation and the attendant costs continue to present opportunities in Alternative Dispute Resolution methods, for practitioners including Judges in retirement. It is therefore better to be prepared to embrace it, contribute to, and benefit from it. That the Rules of a number of Courts, include mandatory provisions for ADR show that there has been a migration from a good to explore to a must explore. The Court of Appeal Rules 2016 encourage ADR in all its ramifications.

We continue to explore ways of maintaining the high standards of training aimed at achieving the highest standards in our membership. We have tried to ensure that arbitrators are not only competent and experienced in field, but are also people of the highest moral caliber and professional competence. This year’s Fellows, Mediators and Associate members are a testimony to the high premium that we continue to place on this aspect of our institutional objectives and activities. Our members rank at par with ADR practitioners elsewhere across other jurisdictions. It is therefore not surprising that many of them handle matters outside the shores of Nigeria.

Last year, the Institute introduced the Qualified Mediators Programme, which am proud to confirm has been a huge success. The selection to the programme was carefully done and the programme as well as the assessments were intensive. The feedback from the participants is that the programme was indeed a worthwhile experience that left them with the right skills and resources to act as mediators in complex disputes. We are proud to be inducting today,
our pioneer class set of Mediators, who would henceforth be entitled to use the letters liaMed’ after their names.

Although the importance of Arbitration is without doubt clearly established, it is indeed worrisome that a significant number of arbitration of home generated disputes is exported outside Nigeria. The quest to domesticate arbitration in Nigeria continues to drive the activities of this Institute. It is our belief that the time has come for a reversal of this trend. With qualified persons in the Institute, there should be no excuse to seek expertise outside, except of course in international commercial arbitration; or where the specific circumstances of a case so demand. What remains is for us to work together to reverse the trend of setting aside arbitral awards at the slightest opportunity, and to appointing qualified arbitrators in Nigeria to conduct arbitration. Arbitration is envisaged to be a final way of determining disputes. It is to be done with the highest sense of professionalism and ethics. This is the charge to you today.

This Institute continues to encourage specialisation within the field by driving sectoral committees within the Institute. They include the Banking and Financial Services Committee, Aviation and Transport Committee, Energy and Power Committee, Maritime, Construction and Real estate, Telecommunications, PPP and Concessions, and other committees.

It is the plan of your Institute to build its office and arbitration centre. This however cannot be done without the contribution of our esteemed members, who directly and indirectly, through your friends, associates, and clients will leave a lasting legacy in the Arbitration Centre and office that will house your Institute. It is my commitment to lead this initiative with you support and contributions.

I would not end this speech without paying tribute to the founders of this great Institute Judge Bola Ajibola, SAN, FCIArb, members of the Governing Council, former Presidents and the Management and Staff of the Institute. They are indeed wonderful people.

On behalf of the Governing Council, Fellows and members of the Nigerian Institute of Chartered Arbitrators, I congratulate all our inductees. Your charge is to go forth and practice and promote arbitration, mediation and other ADR; and be good ambassadors of the Institute in your different fields.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Professor Fabian Ajogwu, SAN FCArb Vice-President & Member of Council
Nigeria Institute of Chartered Arbitrators,