

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA



REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LAW AND RELIGION HOLDING ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2015

PROTOCOLS

It gives me great pleasure to welcome our distinguished audience to the Opening Ceremony of this very important International Conference on *Towards Law and Religious Freedom in Africa*.

A Conference on this topic is very apt for Nigeria at this moment. This is because religious extremism has over the last few years, being on the increase in Nigeria and many other countries on the continent of Africa viz: Mali, Central African Republic, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Algeria, Egypt, Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republic etc.

Religion, currently, has a very high impact on our daily life. It appears to have taken over our sub-consciousness individually and collectively. All aspects of our national life including electioneering seem to have religious undertone, which appears to be taking a very dangerous dimension, inimical to our well-being as a nation. Religious intolerance is rearing its head. This International Conference, therefore, should enable the interrogation of issues of religion, law, and state affairs more deeply, as well as the way forward for a redress.

Islam and Christianity as well as other mainstream religions all preach tolerance, brotherhood and peace. It is inconceivable, therefore to find adherents purveying terrorism in the guise of championing or defending any faith.

I am aware of the presence here of many personalities from home and abroad, who are well versed in the relevant issues and who will make presentations for our elucidation. I urge all of us to participate fully in this promising exchange and intellectual interaction. Let me seize this opportunity to salute and thank our distinguished speakers and participants particularly the erudite and Honourable Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria - Justice Bode Rhodes- Vivour; the Honourable Justice of the Court of Appeal, Justice Helen Moronkeji Ogunwunmiju, the distinguished representatives of the Islamic, Christian and

traditional faiths, including a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, and the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Nigeria, Professor Is-haq Oloyede and all of us who have taken the time to attend the programme. Allow me to single out the delegates from the International Centre for Law and Religion Studies of Brigham Young University, Utah, in the United States and delegates from the African Consortium on Law and Religion Studies, and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Lagos and Ikeja Branches.

We are also honoured to have the dynamic President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Mr. Augustine Alegeh, SAN join us at this memorable event.

We welcome you all and wish you a fruitful deliberation.

Professor Rahamon A. Bello, FAEng
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Lagos, Nigeria.