



## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

**BY**

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HIGH COMMISSIONER OF NIGERIA  
TO THE UNITED KINGDOM**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF  
INVEST IN NIGERIA MAGAZINE,**

**AT THE HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON,  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009.**

## Protocol

I am honoured to welcome you to the launching today of the Invest in Nigeria publication, which has been put together by Newsdesk Media Group based here in the United Kingdom.

When I was first approached by the media group in August 2008, I was a bit sceptical about the possibilities and prospects of producing the magazine we are about to launch. This was based on my candid appraisal of the challenges such an effort was bound to face, not least of which was funding and logistics.

Today's event is therefore an eloquent testimony to the dedication and resourcefulness of the staff of the **Newsdesk Media Group**. It is the positive outcome of rigorous planning, hard work and above all, a firm belief in the future of our country.

The publication we are here to launch is significant in many ways. It is a high quality publication, which contains a lot of essential and useful information and data on Government policies and programmes, without being unnecessarily patronising. It tells, in a very graphic, analytical and incisive manner, the stories of tremendous changes taking place in Nigeria. More importantly, it chronicles the challenges and great opportunities of doing business and investing in the country, covering all sectors.

From the acerbic minds of well-trained and professional journalists, the story of Nigeria's on-going transformation could

not have been better told against the background of the re-branding project of the Federal Government.

One of the fundamental challenges we face in seeking greater investments into the Nigerian economy is the problem of perception, which is not often related to reality. Whereas Nigeria is wrongly perceived and held up as a country of criminals and fraudsters, the reality of the situation is that only a negligible few are involved in unwholesome behaviour and practices. Regrettably, it is the story of these despicable few that is often told and blown out of proportion by the media.

While it is true that good stories do not sell, which is why they do not get reported in the media as often as they should, it is unfortunate that negative perceptions of our country have the unwitting effects of discouraging potential investors. They can also lead to divestment and capital flight from the country. Yet, there are thousands of honest, diligent and hardworking Nigerians abroad who are making significant contributions to the growth and development of their countries of residence in all spheres of human endeavour. The good stories of these Nigerians are simply not being told.

Surely, such great Nigerians, such illustrious and honourable Nigerians do not deserve to be criminalised and unfairly branded. Nigerians in this country and all over the world must therefore reject unfair labelling. I urge you to remain steadfast and united

in your resolve to remain good ambassadors of our country in all you do and say anywhere you may find yourselves.

Government will continue to take effective measures to consolidate democratic governance and promote peace, security and rapid economic development in our country. In doing this, the need for a paradigm shift on the part of foreign correspondents and news media in their reports of Nigeria has become a necessity. They must seek a deeper understanding of Nigeria, its history and complexities, as the basis for balance, objectivity and fairness in their stories and reports on the country. They need to adopt a more objective view of the policies and actions of Government as it pursues its vision and mission of charting a clear path for sustainable growth and development of the country.

This publication, which has been put together at no cost to the High Commission, fits perfectly into this paradigm shift. It tells, in a fairly balanced manner, Nigeria's success stories and opportunities for greatness and economic prosperity, without necessarily glossing over the challenges. After all, every society has its own challenges and drawbacks. What matters is the efficacy of Government measures in tackling those challenges and the manner in which those difficulties are being confronted in the context of good economic and political governance for the benefit of the electorate.

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I will like to end this address by congratulating the publishers of the magazine, the **Newsdesk Media Group** and thanking them immensely for their unflinching commitment to Nigeria's interest. I also thank our foreign friends for keeping faith with Nigeria and answering the clarion calls for partnership with us in seeking a secure and prosperous future for our people.

I thank you for your attention.