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To: All Nigerian Lawyers

LET US SECURE THE FUTURE THROUGH A UNITED BAR THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Distinguished Learned Colleagues and Friends,

On Wednesday 27 May 2020, I submitted my nomination form to signify the formal expression of my intent to contest for the office of the **President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA)**, the foremost and oldest professional membership association in Nigeria and the most influential network of legal practitioners in Africa. Alongside the nomination form, I submitted a document embodying my Leadership Programme of Action for the NBA, if elected President. In that document, I pledged to use what I consider as my greatest personal attribute: discipline of execution, in carrying out the undertakings that I had given to the members; and I also promised to lay the foundation for the future profession that we all desire.

On the strength of the foregoing pledge, I asked you to give me your mandate and join me in bringing about an Association that works for the majority of its members. Last night, you answered that call in an overwhelming and unequivocal manner when, at the end of a long and intriguing process, you made me the President-elect of the NBA (2020 to 2022).

I write to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. Let me assure you that I do not take for granted the hardwork, passion and commitment that you all invested into the process that has now culminated in my emergence as President-elect.

When I decided to throw my hat in the ring, I was certain that the election was really not about me. I was driven by the passion to use my time, talent and resources to improve our Association by making it fit-for-purpose, beneficial to all members and responsive to the needs of the society. Throughout the electioneering process, I saw many Nigerian lawyers who had either lost faith, or never been interested, in the NBA participate with utmost enthusiasm in the hope that things would become better. This further goes to show that the extraordinary movement that heralded this electoral victory was not, and could never have been about me.

The victory of last night is for our young lawyers who have become disillusioned with the way the NBA has been run over the years and how the profession appears to be disconnected from the challenges that face them and their future. It is for the progressive senior lawyer who refused to accept the status quo and took firm steps to ensure that things are done better. It is for the corporate counsel, law officers, law teachers, the police and military lawyers, and lawyers in all components of the profession who for long have been treated as unequal members of an Association that ought to be the umbrella body for all legal practitioners.

The victory of last night is for the lawyer with disability who has long suffered neglect and indignity by the profession. Above all, our victory is for non-lawyers and the general populace who took an unusual, but a special, interest in the conduct of our elections, thus lending credence to my long-held belief that the Nigerian society has always yearned for a legal profession and indeed a Bar that stands tall as an unwavering bastion of the rule of law, an advocate for the sanctity and independence of the judiciary, and a bulwark against tyranny and oppression.

It is therefore with immense respect for you, a deep understanding of the value of your mandate, a demonstrable appreciation of the factors that have bedevilled our

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noble Association and with humility to the will of God, that I wholeheartedly accept this mandate from you. The outpouring of support is only indicative of the amount of work that needs to be done. The greatest appreciation that I can show to all of you is to keep to the various promises that I made, and this, I assure you that I would do.

Regarding the electoral process, I am not unaware of the complaints by at least one of the Presidential candidates about the administrative issues surrounding the elections. As members of the legal profession, our electoral process ought to be and remain a standard for others to follow. I said this much in my second letter dated 29th July 2020 to the Chairman of the Electoral Committee of the NBA. I strongly believe that there is plenty room for improvement in our electoral process, and I commit to making this possible.

In closing, I congratulate all the contestants for the various offices in the Association for the hardwork that they put in, and for the successful outing that they had. The expectations are high and together we have a duty to devise measures to tackle the problems of our noble Association. We need to hit the ground running.

I also particularly appreciate my friends and learned seniors, **Deacon Dele Adesina SAN**, and **Dr. Babatunde Ajibade SAN**, against whom I had the privilege of contesting for the office of President of the NBA. One thing that remained unshaken throughout the election process was my utmost respect for these distinguished and respectable gentlemen. May I humbly assure them that my respect remains intact. The election is over but the work ahead of us is immense. We must now unite in order to achieve our common goal of revitalising the Bar and ensuring that our voice is firm and unshaken when we speak. I obviously cannot do this alone and will be counting on their support and counsel as we work towards Securing The Future through a United Bar that Works for All.

I thank you, once again, for the confidence that you have reposed in me, and re-assure you that I shall do my best to deliver on your mandate. May God bless you all and the Nigerian Bar Association.

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