



# Covenant University

13<sup>TH</sup>  
CONVOCATION  
KEYNOTE ADDRESS



## **INFLUENCING CHANGE IN AFRICA: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMERGING LEADERS**

**Ibukun Awosika**

Friday, July 20, 2018



Covenant  
**RELEASE** *of*  
**EAGLES 2018**

# Covenant University

13th Convocation Ceremony and Award of First and Higher  
Degrees and the Presentation of Prizes holding at  
Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria,

## 13<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCATION KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### **INFLUENCING CHANGE IN AFRICA: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMERGING LEADERS**

**By**

**Ibukun Awosika**

Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria Limited

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# COVENANT UNIVERSITY

## ANTHEM

We're a Covenant Generation	Covenant generation arise
Pursuing excellence	Light and knowledge to shine
Redeemed to reign	Glorious foundation stone
Learning to lead	Leadership skills to show
We are bound by an oath	Departing from knowledge
Obeying rules to rule	To empowerment Legalism
Making Kings of youth	To realism
Flying high on covenant wings	Wisdom's call for change
Wisdom's call for change	Inspired, on fire
Inspired on fire	With Courage Marching on in
With courage Marching on in	grace
in grace	God's own arrow
God's own arrow	Shot for glory.
Shot for glory.	



### Our Vision

To be a leading World-Class University, committed to raising a new generation of leaders in all fields of Human endeavour

### Our Mission

To create knowledge and restore the dignity of the black man via a Human Development Total Man Concept driven curriculum employing innovative, leading-edge teaching and learning methods, research and professional services that promote integrated, life-applicable, life-transforming education, relevant to the context of Science, Technology and Human Capacity Building





**MRS. IBUKUN AWOSIKA**  
Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria Limited  
(KEYNOTE SPEAKER)

## **PROFILE OF MRS. IBUKUN AWOSIKA** **Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria Limited**

Ibukun Awosika is the Chairman, Board of Directors, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and most valuable banking brand. She is also the founder and CEO of The Chair Centre Group. The companies in the group include: The Chair Centre Limited, Sokoa Chair Centre Limited, Furniture Manufacturers Mart, TCC Security Systems and Cubes and Boxes Limited. These companies are involved in manufacturing, retail and bank-way security systems services.

Ibukun chairs a number of corporate and not-for-profit boards amongst which are: GEMS Africa, Convention on Business Integrity (CBI), House of Tara International and Afterschool Graduate Development Centre (AGDC), a facility which she promoted to help address youth employability and enterprise issues in Nigeria. She sits on the boards of Cadbury Nigeria Plc., Digital Jewel Limited, [International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge](#) (IWEC), Imperial Gate School and Peniel Apartments Limited. She was Chairman, FBN Life Assurance Limited, FBN Capital Limited and Kakawa Discount House Limited. She also served on the board of Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA).

Ibukun is a graduate of Chemistry from University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Nigeria; an alumna of the Chief Executive Programme of Lagos Business School; the Global Executive MBA of IESE Business School, Barcelona-Spain; and Global CEO

Programme of Wharton, IESE and China European International Business School (CEIBS).

With high interest in social issues, including women, Ibukun is a co-founder and past chairperson of Women in Business, Management and Public Service (WIMBIZ). An ordained Pastor and founder of the Christian Missionary Fund, Ibukun, through this faith-based organization works with hundreds of missionaries spread across Nigeria to change lives with the provision of medical, educational, and other supplies.

As a fellow of the African Leadership Initiative, Aspen Global Leadership Network, Institute of Directors and Society for Corporate Governance Nigeria, Ibukun, through her projects aspires to use her opportunities in life to further the greatness of her dear country by raising entrepreneurs to create jobs for the large unemployed youthful population. She is a member of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), served on National Job Creation Committee (NJCC), and sits on the International Advisory Board of IESE Business School, Barcelona-Spain.

Ibukun is a multiple award-winning entrepreneur and the first Nigerian recipient of the prestigious International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWEC) Award as a nominee of the US Department of State in 2008. She loves to watch investigative and legal series in her leisure time. She is happily married to Abiodun Awosika and they are blessed with three wonderful sons.

# **INFLUENCING CHANGE IN AFRICA: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMERGING LEADERS**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you all to the 13<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony of Covenant University tagged - **“The Release of Eagles 2018”**.

As an important national institution with a pan-African focus, First Bank is obliged to lend its voice to the sustainable development and growth of Nigeria and indeed Africa. As such, it is a privilege to be in the midst of this amazing body of knowledge to deliver a keynote on the topic **“Influencing Change in Africa: Roles and Responsibilities of Emerging Leaders”**. This topic resonates and is considered an imperative for any meaningful economic growth on our continent. Fortunately, the timing of this event



coincides with a period in which Nigeria is at a cross-road, having recently emerged from economic recession marked by soaring inflation, unprecedented spike in unemployment rate and quarter-on-quarter economic contraction. We have reached that point where our decisions will not only decide our future, but will either create a promising one for the next generation or leave them with huge debris that may decimate their capacity for relevance in the global community in the future. Dear Graduands, there is no better time to have this discussion on how you, emerging leaders can foster positive change on the Continent.

A University education provides you a way of thinking. Education is an enabler. It is not meant to cage you...it is meant to open your mind to possibilities...it should empower you. An educated mind is a liberated mind. The real value of your education is how you apply your learning to provide solutions in

the marketplace, that you can offer to others, for which they are willing to pay you.

As you move on to the next phase of your lives, there are 3 pertinent questions that you all must ask yourselves:

Who am I? Where am I going? How will I get there?

Plan your life around the answers to these questions.

You have so much responsibility for you. Be true to yourself and learn to stand for and fight for the things that you believe in. Fighting for the things that you believe in will ultimately give you the victory that you desire. Every place you find yourself is a transit point for where you are going, so be the best of you at each stage of your life's journey.

Stand your ground respectfully. Have the courage to speak the truth. Add your voice in the conversation. You can't be outstanding

unless you are standing. But you must learn to be a team player without being offensive. Find the means to endear yourself to others. Find your voice and create your space to find your way. Stand up, push and have the confidence to say what you know.

Always remember that people matter. As far as it is up to, be at peace with all men. Treat people right. Show respect and honour to people. Relate with compassion and humility of spirit. You must balance firmness with fairness. Never shut a door permanently, because you do not know when you'll need those doors.

With regard to business or career, doing the right things pays off in the long run. It might appear that you are slower than your peers, but a business or career that endures must be built on integrity and the right value systems. You never know who is watching. Guess what? You are on stage and you've got an audience. When you are committed to the

things you believe in, you will find that even in the most challenging times, there would be within you a capacity to find solution for any situation.

You can aspire to be whatever you want to be, but it won't be given to you. You have to earn it. Be strategic in your dealings. In a fast-changing world, you should thirst for knowledge. Empower your mind to think strategically. Invest in your learning. Be open-minded and teachable. Develop the ability to take valuable information from people with the knowledge and skills that you require through mentorship.

Your life is a journey. Would you encounter difficult times? Yes, you would. Hold on to your vision and your ambition and keep working hard and doing the right things. A wise man once said: “No one ever drowned in his own sweat”.

Remember also that everyone's time is not

the same, so be gentle with yourself.

Have a sense of you before you commit to another. Your choice of a spouse is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. It must not and cannot be an emotional decision. Choose a partner that complements your vision and helps you to be the best of you.

Remember that the totality of your life is the summation of the decisions you make.

This speech would be incomplete without the God factor. Make God the centre of your life. God is the driver of my life and I am who I am today by His grace. One of my favourite quotes from the bible is, “They that know their God shall be strong and do great exploits”. Therefore, it is the knowing of God, trusting Him, and holding on to Him when nothing else seems real that is the distinguishing factor between success and failure. He has never failed and He will never fail me.

In my closing remark, I wish to congratulate you all on your graduation and I thank Covenant University for the invitation and opportunity to lend my voice to this generation of leaders who will contribute to the growth of this great nation and indeed, Africa.

As Acemoglu and Robinson pointed out in their book, “Why nations fail”, for nations to succeed, they need to defend and constantly improve their inclusive institutions. It is particularly encouraging that Covenant University is leading the way in harnessing the enormous human capital of this nation and providing a robust platform for creativity and expression of talents. I ask that you continue and not be weary.

Thank you for your time and God bless you.

**Ibukun Awosika**  
Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria Limited





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