



INTERNATIONAL LAW
— ASSOCIATION —

International Law Association

Nigerian Branch

TEXT OF THE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW ASSOCIATION, NIGERIA, PROFESSOR DAMILOLA S. OLAWUYI, SAN, DELIVERED ON FRIDAY APRIL 05, 2024 AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRANCH

Protocols:

Our distinguished keynote speaker, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, MFR
Our eminent panelists and invited guests
Members of the Executive Council of ILA-NG
Members of the Conference Organizing Committee
Distinguished members of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

Introduction

I am highly delighted and honored to welcome you all to what promises to be a wonderful and refreshing Conference, themed *“Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) & International Law: Building Blocks for Sustainable Infrastructure Financing.”*

This year’s conference is important for two key reasons. First, it doubles as the 10 years Anniversary of the Nigerian Branch of the International Law Association (ILA). As you may already know, the ILA was founded in Brussels in 1873 as a learned society dedicated to the study, clarification and development of international law and the advancement of peace, equity, and justice worldwide. Unlike the International Bar Association which is mainly for lawyers, membership of the ILA is open to lawyers and non-lawyers that are interested in international law including diplomats, foreign policy experts, and practitioners in justice and international law departments. The ILA has consultative status, as an international non-governmental organisation, with a number of the United Nations specialised agencies. The ILA has members across the world, who participate through their local branches.

In recognition of Nigeria's preeminent role in public and private international law, the ILA approved the establishment of a Branch in Nigeria in 2014. The Branch was formally inaugurated by the then Chief Justice of Nigeria at our first conference held in Lagos. Since then, ILA Nigeria has provided the leading platform and intellectual space for Nigerian scholars and practitioners to unearth, analyze and resolve important questions in public and private international law, international diplomacy, and global governance. This year's conference is therefore a milestone anniversary conference that provides us a wonderful opportunity to reflect on how far we have come as a branch and to also map out decisive plans for the next decade.

Secondly, this year's conference provides a timely platform to bring together governments, business leaders, leading practitioners, academics, and students to exchange knowledge experience and learn from each other on how to strengthen the design, financing and implementation of public private partnership projects to accelerate infrastructure development. At a time of real and urgent need in Nigeria, PPPs can provide innovative solutions to bridge infrastructure gaps.

Like our previous conferences, this year, we have assembled leading practitioners and thought leaders to shed light on how to maximize the full value of PPPs in Nigeria. The conference will feature a distinguished keynote lecture, 3 high-level panels, 1 students' debate and a High-Level Dinner conversation with His Excellency Governor Kayode Fayemi, CON, former Executive Governor of Ekiti State and former Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum, amongst other remarkable panelists and expert speakers.

I encourage all speakers and attendees to share candid thoughts that will help us to prepare detailed Conference Communique and recommendations that reflect the current state of the implementation of PPPs globally and its application in Nigeria.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to those that are yet to join the ILA to please join us in advancing the study and practice of international law in Nigeria. The last page of your program contains more information about the Branch, as well as the membership application form.

Conclusion

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me conclude my remarks by thanking all members of the Conference Organizing Committee, most especially the Chairperson, Oludayo Olorunfemi, the Secretary Joshua Daranijo, and other members of the team for their tireless commitment and hard work without which this conference would not have been possible.

I also thank all our Sponsors for their tremendous support, as well as our invited speakers for honoring our invitation and for partnering with us on this history and epoch-making Conference.

On behalf of the Executive Council of ILA Nigeria, I warmly welcome everyone to today's conference and wish us all a rewarding and successful deliberation.

Thank you.

Professor Damilola S. Olawuyi, SAN, FCI Arb
President, International Law Association, Nigerian Branch