

**CITATION
FOR
PROFESSOR OYEWALE TOMORI**

The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Chief Olusegun Obasanjo

Mr. President, Sir,

I present Professor Oyewale Tomori, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Doctor of Philosophy in Virology of the University of Ibadan, Fellow of the Royal College of Chemical Pathology of the United Kingdom, Fellow of the Academy of Science (Nigeria), Regional Virologist with the World Health Organization (WHO), and Professor of Virology of since 1981.

Professor Tomori is a virologist of international repute, and he is currently the Regional virologist with the World Health Organization Africa Region. Within the past 30 years, he has carried out meaningful research studies on a wide range of human viruses, and zoonotic and veterinary viruses, which are of immense public health importance in Nigeria, and Africa as a whole. The studies involve epidemiological and serological surveys for viral infections, the control of viral epidemics, the development of diagnostic tests for viral infections, the immunology of viruses, the pathology and pathogenesis of viruses, the development of viral vaccines, and characterization and ecology of viruses. Prominent among the viruses he has studied are the Yellow fever virus, the Lassa fever virus, the poliomyelitis virus, the measles virus, the Ebola virus and a hitherto unknown virus, the Orungo virus, which was discovered by him. This discovery is definitely an outstanding contribution to the discipline of virology.

Prof Tomori is recognized as one of Africa's frontline Lassa fever researchers. He has developed a unique diagnostic virus neutralization test for the Lassa fever. His major contribution on Yellow fever is the development of a technique for forecasting impending outbreaks of the disease. This has helped to put the country in a state of preparedness to combat the epidemic. Undoubtedly, through his innovative and in-depth

poliomyelitis, measles and rabies virus), Prof Tomori has definitely contributed significantly to preventing and reducing mortality and morbidity in communities such as Nigeria, where outbreaks of these viral diseases occur frequently. His research activities on Lassa fever and Yellow fever extend beyond the shores of Nigeria into other African countries such as Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya and Liberia.

Professor Tomori's expertise and contributions have been recognized nationally and internationally. He was appointed a member of WHO team investigating the Ebola virus; the United States Public Health Department awarded him a certificate of merit in recognition of his Lassa fever research, and the Royal College of Pathology of the United Kingdom elected him a Fellow of this prestigious College, the first Nigerian veterinary doctor to be so elected. Nationally, he won the Honourable Minister of Science and Technology's Merit Award and the Orishejolomi Thomas Award for contribution to Medical Sciences through Research.

Professor Tomori is one of Nigeria's foremost virologists. He has made innovative contributions to Medical Science and Practice in Nigeria, and Africa. The viruses he interacts with, chases around and seeks to destroy (before they could destroy him) through his daring research activities are deadly, and are invariably incurable.

Whilst emphasizing his academic and professional qualities, we must not forget his other human attributes. When he was not chasing around those deadly viruses, he was busy putting smiles on the faces of the less privileged inmates of the Oluyole Cheshire Home for the Physically Handicapped in Ibadan, where he served diligently for over 20 years, seven of which he was the Chairman of the Management Board.

Mr. President, Sir,

It is this towering virologist, this renowned medical researcher, who has brought glory to his fatherland, this 'patriot with strong ethical, philosophical and humanitarian views' that I invite you to confer with the Nigerian National Merit Award for the year 2002.