

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FOR SPECIAL DUTIES AT THE 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FORUM OF LAUREATES OF THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2009 AT THE MERIT HOUSE COMPLEX, ABUJA.**

It is my honour to give special appreciation to the Governing Board of the Nigerian National Merit Award, who worked seriously to make this occasion a reality.

2. As we are all aware, the Nigerian National Merit Award has the statutory responsibility of according due and proper recognition to intellectual, unique and academic contributions made by Nigerians to National Development in the fields of Engineering/Technology, Medicine, Science, Humanities, Arts and Culture, as well as other fields of human endeavour, through conferring on deserving citizens, the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM) Award. This, therefore, makes this forum the meeting point of Nigeria's intellectuals with great concern for the development of Nigeria.

3. This Forum no doubt, is to avail the larger Nigerians the opportunity of sharing in the vast and seemingly untapped knowledge of these Laureates, thus achieving one

of the aims and objectives behind establishing the Nigerian National Merit Award, which among others, is to evolve a system that provide opportunities for networking with government, with a view to generating ideas that can foster national development. The Forum therefore, becomes an avenue for cross fertilization of ideas by our distinguished Awardees to express their views on critical national development issues.

5. The theme of the Forum is *“Developing a Road map for Attaining the Goals of Vision 20-2020: Visions, Slogans and Realities”* I will say is the reality of our time as there is no better time than now for us as a nation to critically examine our vision and goals for national development, especially with regards to harnessing our intellectual property for our nation’s development, as it is happening in other nations.

6. At this juncture, I want to use this opportunity to congratulate the Governing Board of the Nigerian National Merit Award for the success so far recorded by the Agency, with the desired integrity and commitment towards intellectual and academic development of Nigeria.

7. You have made us proud as a nation. There is no doubt that those who have the rare opportunity to receive the Award have really worked for it. I boldly say that this administration will do whatever it takes to support and encourage you.

8. I therefore, use this opportunity to appeal to the Board not to relent in her efforts at promoting and rewarding intellectual and academic excellence in Nigeria.

I thank you immensely for your kind attention.

**AMBASSADOR SENATOR IBRAHIM KAZAURE**  
**Honourable Minister, Special Duties**