

**REMARKS BY ALHAJI MAHMUD YAYALE AHMED,  
CFR, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
FEDERATION AT THE 2009 ANNUAL FORUM OF  
LAUREATES HELD AT THE MERIT HOUSE COMPLEX,  
ABUJA ON 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2009**

**PROTOCOL**

I am pleased to share with you the joy of this occasion and to welcome you to the 2009 Annual Forum of the Nigerian National Order of Merit Award. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum of Laureates since its inception in December, 2007.

2. As we are all aware, the Nigerian National Merit Award (NNMA) was established through Act No: 53 of 1979 as amended by Act 96 of 1992, to accord proper and due recognition to intellectual and academic contributions made by citizens of Nigeria at home and in Diaspora. The recipients are people who have made valuable contributions to national and global attainments in all fields of human endeavour.

3. May I, also inform you that the Laureates of the Nigerian National Order of Merit come together annually to deliberate on salient issues of national interest. The objective of the Forum amongst others are:

- ❖ To provide a forum for bringing together all the Laureates of the NNOM;
- ❖ To promote opportunities for networking with Government, the industry and private sector;
- ❖ To network with other Nigerian intellectuals, the local Academies and Research Organizations as well as the Nigerian Academies in Diaspora;and
- ❖ To generate ideas that can foster national development.

4. The Federal Government of Nigeria had declared Seven-Point Agenda and Vision 20-20-20 with the objective of making Nigeria one of the best twenty developed economies by year 2020. I am glad to note that these

August bodies of Laureates and academies have gathered today to lend intellectual and academic support to the desired agenda and vision of the Federal Government. The issues raised at the Forum I believe will be packaged, as a communiqué of the Laureates.

5. This year's Forum titled "**Developing a Road map for Attaining the Goals of Vision 20-2020: Visions, Slogans and Realities**" I understand was deliberately chosen to bring into focus the key issues necessary for attaining the Federal Government's Vision 20:2020. It is my hope that at the end of the two day deliberation, the Forum will be able to proffer objective and unbiased road map towards attaining the Vision 20:2020. I assure you, the Federal Government of Nigeria will take seriously the input received from this assembly of intellectuals.

6. Finally, I seize this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman and members of the NNMA Governing Board for organizing this Forum and to continue in its efforts at adhering strictly to the objectives for which the NNMA is established. It will be recalled that my office tasked this assembly last year to undertake in-dept study on the three important national issues, namely; Power and Energy, Oil and Gas, and National Security. The assignment could not take-off due to lack of fund. I assure you that this assignment will be given serious attention next year.

7. As the Chief Host of this gathering, we are happy with your performances this far, as well as your continual record of success, especially in the selection process of the Laureates and other laudable programs of the Board. I, therefore wish to pledge our continuous support and cooperation for the activities of the Board and our readiness

at all times to come to the aid to the NNMA whenever and where necessary.

8. Once more, I am highly honoured and privileged to welcome you to the 2009 Annual Forum of NNOM Laureates and wish you a very successful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention, please.