**OPENING REMARKS BY DR. MUSA ADAMU ALIYU, SAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCHING OF THE UNGOGO BAR VOICE, PUBLICATION OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION (NBA) UNGOGO BRANCH, ON SATURDAY, 21ST JUNE 2025, AT THE AMANI EVENT CENTRE, NASARAWA GRA, KANO.**

**Protocol:**

It is my great honour and privilege to stand before you today to make opening remarks at this important occasion.

It is a wonderful opportunity for me, after a long period, to meet with members of the NBA Ungogo Branch, colleagues from other branches, invited guests, the authors and contributors of this special edition of Ungogo Bar Voice. This publication is more than a scholarly journal—it is a platform for professional reflection, engagement, and reform.

As we launch this initiative, we must reflect deeply on the direction of our profession. Increasingly, public perception of legal practice is being shaped by what we do—or fail to do—as legal practitioners. Ethics, once the bedrock of our profession, is now under threat from rising allegations of professional misconduct and complicity in acts that undermine the very system we swore to defend. As I noted at the NBA Lagos Law Week, on 16th June 2025, lawyers are not just advocates; we are gatekeepers of justice. We must not allow ourselves to become instruments of impunity under the guise of legal representation.

This is why the kind of intellectual engagement offered by this publication is so critical. Eminent voices such as Justice Helen Ogunwumiju, JSC, have urged legal academics and practitioners alike to constructively critique judicial decisions, thereby strengthening jurisprudence and supporting legal reform. Similarly, Mike Ozekhome, SAN, reminds us that while court judgments are subject to scrutiny, personal attacks on judges cross ethical lines. In other words, let us critique judgments—not judges—always to advance justice, not undermine it. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage legal academics and practitioners within the branch to consistently scrutinise decisions emanating from our courts in Kano State and beyond, with the goal of advancing scholarship.

Additionally, I would like to draw our attention—as legal practitioners and judges—to strive to do our best in advancing the cause of justice for posterity. Now, with Artificial Intelligence making inroads, it is only a matter of time before all submissions and decisions by counsel and judges become globally accessible at our fingertips. Who knows? One day, the National Judicial Council and the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee might use AI to analyse the quality of lawyers' submissions and judges' decisions for elevation to the exalted rank of Senior Advocates and higher judicial offices. In the same vein, the same tool could be used to assess the integrity and candour of lawyers and judges through their submissions and judgments. Such innovation could help democratise merit recognition and promote accountability.

Legal innovation is also reshaping our professional landscape. From e-filing to virtual hearings, we must embrace technology—yes—but always within the bounds of ethical practice. As I’ve emphasised elsewhere, innovation without regulation can erode public confidence in justice. Legal tech must serve justice, not reduce it to a mere transaction.

We must also prioritise reform in legal education. Ethics, public interest law, and digital literacy must become core components in training the next generation of lawyers. As lawyers, we must confront corruption head-on.

In light of recent judgments—particularly the Supreme Court's decision on local government autonomy—we must defend the doctrine of judicial precedent. I appeal to all of us as lawyers: do not lend your skills to undermining apex court decisions through diversionary or frivolous suits. We have a responsibility to preserve the integrity of the judicial system. At this juncture, I wish to express ICPC’s appreciation to the National Judicial Council for the recent reforms we have witnessed.

I commend the Chairman of the NBA Ungogo Branch, Ahmad Abubakar Gwadabe Esq., and the executive committee for this timely and commendable initiative. I also appreciate the Magazine Publication Committee, ably led by Sadiku Sammani Lawan Esq., for their outstanding work. May this noble effort thrive and endure.

To our young lawyers, this platform is yours to explore and expand your professional horizons. Use it to discover your strengths, express your ideas, and uphold the ethics that define our noble profession.

Let Ungogo Bar Voice become a beacon of responsible legal commentary, professional development, and ethical consciousness in the Nigerian Bar.

Thank you all, and happy reading.

**Thank you.**