

GOODWILL MESSAGE

BY

**THE HONOURABLE, THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF
NIGERIA**

**HON. DR JUSTICE IBRAHIM TANKO
MUHAMMAD, CFR**

AT

**THE 3RD ICPC SUMMIT ON DIMINISHING
CORRUPTION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

HELD AT

THE STATE HOUSE BANQUET HALL, ABUJA

ON

TUESDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 2021

AT

10:00A.M.

PROTOCOL

I sincerely appreciate and commend the effort of the management and staff of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) for the bold initiative of bringing us together on a yearly basis to rub minds on the milestones so far achieved by the various stakeholders of the Nigerian project in the fight against corruption and other vices in the country. The leadership of the Commission, particularly the Chairman, Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN has been upbeat in giving the country a clean slate in all matters relating to corruption. The three arms of government, from all indications, are working assiduously to reduce the menace of corruption to the barest minimum. The rating of the country on the corruption perception index by the global anti-corruption agency, Transparency International (TI), though gradually improving, is still not something to cheer about. More work is required and concerted effort needs to be injected to lift us up to the desired pedestal.

Your topic, “Cost of Governance: New Imperative for the Judiciary,” is very apt and strategic, too, in view of the perception of the country vis-a-vis its various institutions and agencies by the international community and even the citizens of Nigeria. I make bold to say that within the country, there is a state of mutual distrust between the government (as represented by its various agencies) and the generality of the citizenry. The no-love-lost relationship between the government and the citizens pervades the entire horizon of the country. An average Nigerian citizen does not believe nor has any convincing reason to believe that the instrumentality of governance is designed to benefit him or her by any fraction. That is the state we are in, and it will continue that way unless something serious and even drastic is done quickly to bridge the gap of communication and distrust between the ordinary man on the street and the government.

The Nigerian judiciary has been in the forefront in the fight against graft. We have put in place a robust mechanism of introspecting periodically to do a self-assessment to see those areas where corruption could surreptitiously creep into the system and quickly nip it in the bud from the outset. The National Judicial Council has been carrying out

regular disciplinary actions against erring judicial officers to effectively tame the monster within the system. It is not a hidden fact that for any nation to prosper and make meaningful progress, the judiciary must be firm, independent and insulated from any extraneous interference and orchestrated influence, either monetarily or otherwise.

Worried by the delays associated with the trial of criminal cases by our courts, particularly those relating to corruption and financial crimes, we decided to set up the Corruption and Financial Crime Cases Trial Monitoring Committee (COTRIMCO) in 2018, with Hon. Justice Suleiman Galadima, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court, as Chairman. The sole aim of this Committee is to fast-track the trial of corruption and financial related crimes in the country; and it has since been working assiduously with various heads of courts, to bring about a significant rise in the dispensation of corruption and financial crime cases in the country. Even with the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in virtually the whole of 2020 and a better part of 2021, a total number of 746 corruption cases were dispensed with. Similarly, the number of forfeited non-cash recoveries made, include 51 Automobiles, 16 Real Estates, 11

Barge/Tug Boats and 2 Schools. Between 2nd January and 14th November, 2021, a total number of 1,144 suspects were convicted of various corruption and financial related crimes, while the number of non-cash forfeited assets has also risen to include: eight Aircrafts, seven Filling Stations, 48 Real Estates and 149 Vehicles, amongst others. Similarly, various cash forfeiture were made in hundreds of millions of Naira. We shall not rest on our oars until every trace of corruption and undue exercise of influence to negatively secure unmerited advantage over others is stamped out of our clime.

It is my fervent belief that if all of us work in harmony with one voice and renewed determination, corruption and allied vices will certainly be on their way out of our beloved country and our voice shall, once again, be loudly heard and respected among the comity of nations. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you very much.