

**ACEN President, ENGR. GEORGE C. OKOROMA, FNSE, JP Opening Remark At The
2020 Extra-Ordinary General Meeting**

Thursday 30th July 2020.

Past Presidents,

Distinguished Guests,

Exco and Council Members,

Distinguished Firm Members,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a thing of great joy for me that despite the challenges brought on us by the novel Corona Virus pandemic, every one of us in the ACEN engineering family is alive, hale, and hearty up till this date. This can only be ascribed to the unfailing mercies of God Almighty which He has showered on us abundantly.

With great joy in my heart, I wish to welcome you all to the 2020 Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of our great Association.

Normally, this event should have held physically in Lagos State, but for the restrictions on social gatherings brought about by COVID-19, we are harnessing technology to host this important meeting of our Association on the Zoom platform.

Since its inception in 1971, the Association for Consulting Engineering in Nigeria-ACEN has continued to chart the way forward for effective and ethical engineering consultancy services for Government, Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and Corporate Organizations.

The past 49 years of our existence have witnessed first-class leadership from 17 carefully selected distinguished engineers of impeccable character and goodwill.

Within this period, a lot of novel ideas were birthed, policies were promulgated and initiatives were championed for the growth and advancement of engineering and consultancy services in Nigeria.

It is a thing of joy for me to state without mincing words that this is the first Extra-Ordinary General Meeting that is holding in my tenure as the 18th President of this Association.

Permit me to use this medium to express my profound gratitude to Exco and Council and to our Distinguished Firm Members for conferring on me, the honour to stir the affairs of this Association as your President.

I wish to thank you all very kindly for the support and goodwill that my team and I have enjoyed so far. The current position of ACEN on the summit of greatness is a function of your unreserved corporate and administrative support which you have given us.

With you on our side, we are confident that the path of ACEN will continue to shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

The Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of this great Association is a time when we come together to review our stance, how far we have come, and how close we are to our destination.

It is a time to take stock of our activities for the first half of the year and to evaluate and strengthen the understanding of our role as consulting engineers in the economic development of Nigeria.

As the only professional body of engineering consultants in Nigeria, a key part of our responsibility is to be fully involved and ensure that designs and construction of infrastructural projects are done with total adherence to international standards and with resilience and sustainability thinking.

The theme for this year's EGM is **'THE SURVIVAL AND STRENGTHENING OF CONSULTING ENGINEERING PRACTICE IN DISRUPTIVE AND UNCERTAIN TIMES.'**

There is no denying that we are in an uncertain time. Many things have changed, businesses have crumbled, companies are downsizing and awards of contracts are in its minimal ratio.

To enable Consulting Engineers and Consulting Firms to survive the hardship brought on the global community by the novel Corona Virus, it is imperative we re-focus our searchlight and learn innovative strategies to strengthen our firms and to help us survive in this disruptive time.

A lot of critical thinking went down the line to enable the EGM Planning Committee to pull up this theme; and I am glad and proud of the depth of knowledge and exposure of the resource persons who have been invited to share ideas with us in this august gathering.

It is, therefore, my pleasure to formally welcome our Guest of Honour, Engineer Suleiman H. Adamu, FNSE, FAEng – a Past President and the Honourable Minister for Water Resources of the Federal Republic; Thank you for honoring our invitation.

Permit me also to welcome our Guest Speaker - a Distinguished Engineer of international repute, Engr. (Dr.) Nelson Ogunshakin, a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers (FICE) United Kingdom, member of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), and the CEO of the International Federation for Consulting Engineering – FIDIC, Geneva, Switzerland. It is our great pleasure to have you in our midst - Dr. Nelson

I believe deep down my heart that we are going to have a great time together. We are going to learn, unlearn and relearn.

At the end of this conference, we would come up with a communique that we hope will be an aggregate of our collective views on an integrated approach to ensuring the survival and strengthening of our consulting practice through advocacy and representation to relevant arms of government.

We have our corporate sponsor, CUTIX, and other sponsors of this event in attendance at this conference and wish them good fortune during this COVID-19 pandemic year.

I wish to thank very kindly the brains behind the planning of this event and the leadership of Engr. Kunle Adebajo, FNSE who is the Chairman of the Planning Committee. You all are super awesome and I thank you for your hard work.

To this end, distinguished engineers and firm members, by the powers vested on me as the 18th President of the Association for Consulting Engineering in Nigeria-ACEN, I declare the 2020 Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of this Association open.

Thank you, and may we have a fruitful deliberation.

Engr. George C. Okoroma, FNSE, JP

ACEN President

30th July 2020.