

**AGM Opening Remark By ACEN President Engr. GEORGE C. OKOROMA, FNSE, JP  
At The 2020 Annual Conference & General Meeting of ACEN, Delivered on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>  
of November 2020 at NAF Conference Centre and Suites, Kado, Abuja, FCT.**

Past Presidents,

Exco and Council Members,

Distinguished Firm Members,

I welcome you all to the 2020 Annual General Meeting of our Association, which, to the glory of God is holding onsite. I am very delighted and grateful to God for this awesome opportunity of physical presence and interaction as we have all been yearning for it since the lockdown.

The impact of the novel Coronavirus on nations and economy cannot be overemphasized. For more than five months, economic activities were grounded, corporate gatherings were prohibited and movements both national and international were restricted.

Within this period, a lot of havoc was wreaked on our professional consultancy services. No contract was awarded and even the ones in progress were halted. Today, I am glad that the lockdown is easing out and normalcy is returning to our cities.

I want to once again congratulate all our newly admitted members and assure you of our esteemed commitment to encourage the growth of your businesses.

I will like to thank those who have put in their best for the success of our Association since the beginning of this administration through Committee work and active participation in our activities.

Particularly, I thank all Council and EXCO members and the entire ACEN Secretariat team for their support so far during my tenure. Together we hope to accomplish set objectives for the upliftment of our Association.

I want to briefly talk about what we have done in the past twelve (12) months, and then ACEN's Managing Director would give more details where necessary. I will also highlight some policy thrusts and plans for the New Year 2021.

My team and I envision ACEN to become the number one adviser to the Government and private sector in areas of sustainable infrastructural development, resilient designs, project planning, financing, supervision, and liaison. This is what we have been working on assiduously and we are seeing remarkable results already.

## **ACEN ON COREN COUNCIL**

Successive sitting President of our Association continues to represent ACEN on COREN Council in line with the decision of Council at her meeting of May 30, 2019.

## **PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITIES**

Apart from representing ACEN on COREN Council seat, I currently sit as: –

- Chairman, COREN permanent site review committee
- Chairman, Committee on COREN Regulations on Submission of Annual Practice Report by Engineering Practitioners and Firms and Publication of Annual Register.
- Member, Committee on Investigation into Abnormalities in the COREN Professional Interview Process.
- Member, Committee on Investigating Panel.

In the year 2020, I have led ACEN delegations and represented ACEN in the following activities:-

- The Investiture of The President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Engr. Babagana Mohammed, FNSE at the International Conference Centre, Abuja on Saturday 11 January 2020
- The 27<sup>th</sup> GAMA (now FIDIC-AFRICA) General Assembly Meeting (GAM) which took place via Zoom on Tuesday 21 April 2020
- The meeting between LACIAC and ACEN in preparation for the 2020 edition of Dispute Management in Africa Infrastructure Projects (DiMAP) training workshop which LACIAC and ACEN co-hosted the maiden edition in January 2019. I am pleased to inform you that ACEN was able to win fifty-six participants at the workshop during the first three weeks of October 2020.
- Review of Highway Design Manual on Reinforced Concrete Roads (Rigid Pavements) for Federal Ministry of Works & Housing
- Preliminary Report on the Collapse of the 8-Storey Building under Construction in Owerri and others across the federation submitted to COREN
- FIDIC online General Assembly Meeting of Tuesday, September 15, 2020, via video conferencing.
- Review of the Engineering Consultancy and Project Management Services Agreement, Charges and Conditions of Engagement, ECOPACCE (ongoing).
- The successful hosting of our Extra-Ordinary General Meeting virtually with the Honourable Minister of Water Resources Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu, FNSE, FAEng, and FIDIC CEO Engr. Dr. Nelson Ogunshakin FICE, OBE in attendance on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- The successful hosting of Port Harcourt and Abuja Business Evening virtually on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 and Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

It is of note that I wrote a letter on behalf of the Council and the entire membership of our Association to the Secretary to the Federal Government proposing to support the fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic by volunteering some of our members as consultants for the setting up of the Isolation and Testing Centres. The same gesture was extended to the Government of Lagos State and the service was to be rendered on a pro bono basis.

## **ACEN ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION**

I am pleased to inform you that ACEN ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION has been duly registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and with a dedicated operations account with Guaranty Trust Bank PLC.

This is perhaps one of the most important legacies adopted to ensure the growth and sustainability of the Association. This vision which was birthed around 2005 and re-echoed and actioned ten years later around 2015, should transform into a sustenance pillar of ACEN activities in the long run. The Foundation is being managed by a Board of Trustees chaired by Engr. K. A. Adeola, FNSE, FAEng, and four other Past Presidents with the Managing Director as the secretary.

Its funding has been separated from that of the Secretariat and invested in Treasury bills. It is hoped that this Foundation will attract more donations from our friends and clients. I urge you to please join us in propagating the objectives of the Foundation.

## **ACEN WEBSITE**

The first point of call for an international audience and the general public for inquiry about any association is to search for us on Google and to be redirected to official official website of the association. To this end, my first task was to give ACEN website a general facelift with a responsive on-the-click look and feel with the integration of essential functionalities.

Today, ACEN website is up and running in sync with all of our social media handles, it has up-to-date reportage on proposed events and happenings in our Association, alongside the upload of documents for firm members and the general public consumption.

Despite the standing proposal of ₦ 1,350,000 to do a general overhaul of the site, I took the project up with the technical support of Burnsley Technologies in collaboration with Gambeta News and we delivered this project free of charge for the good of our dear Association.

## **FIDIC CONFERENCE**

The 2020 FIDIC International Infrastructure Conference scheduled to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in September has been postponed to next year. However, the FIDIC General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held on Tuesday 15 September 2020 during which elections into the FIDIC Board were conducted. I am happy to announce that one of us from FIDIC-AFRICA, Engr. James Nwangi from Kenya was elected into FIDIC Board.

FIDIC provides opportunities for Future Leaders to participate in international engineering activities. To this end, we urge member firms to encourage young engineers to come out in large numbers and identify themselves with FIDIC.

## **ACEN E-LIBRARY**

As I said in my inaugural address, *“for Nigerian engineers and consultants to be at par with their counterparts in the 83 member states of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers, we must provide facilities for engineering capacity development and fund platforms that would grant engineers direct access to latest documents and research journals on any issues that resolve round engineering and consultancy.”*

To achieve this target, the ACEN e-Library and Engineering Capacity Development Centre was birthed to be the first place of call for engineers and aspiring engineers in Nigeria and all over the world for research papers, the latest information, and professional online training and learning.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this as official documents show that great efforts have been made 15 years ago to register ACEN with a Virtual Library Organization to build the capacity of ACEN members through access to published materials in their various areas of interest. In this new administration, I can't afford to let this dream slide but to make it come alive and bloom at this time.

Today, the ACEN e-Library is up and running and it was officially presented to EXCO on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 with 36 curated backlinks to ivy-league institutions and engineering resource database for the capacity development of our members and would-be engineers of the general public.

A lot of funds went down the line on pro bono basis to bring us to where we are today on this project and a lot more is needed to finish up and install all of the plugins and functionalities that are needed.

Moving forward, we covet the active involvement of ACEN Secretariat and Member Firms to upload engineering contents for readership and to fully harness the functionalities integrated on the site.

## **GAMA CONFERENCE**

The 2020 GAMA International Infrastructure Conference scheduled to take place in Gaborone, Botswana from 19th-21st April 2020 was earlier this year postponed to next year 2021 with ACEB-Botswana being retained as host for the conference and which they have also declined. FIDIC-AFRICA is however planning to host a virtual conference next year.

ACEN accepted to host the 2022 conference in Lagos, Nigeria after GAMA pleaded with our Association to allow ACEB-Botswana to transfer her hosting right from 2020 to 2021.

GAMA had at its 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Meeting held on Tuesday 21 April 2020 changed her name to FIDIC-AFRICA to align with FIDIC Regionalization Strategy.

## **REVENUE IMPROVEMENT**

The Corporate Partnership scheme remains the most formidable and viable source of extra income to the Association.

Presently, the Association has only one Corporate Sponsor, Messrs Cutix PLC whose interest in the relationship has dwindled. We have opened talks with Tranos, Purechem cables, and wires ltd, and Simba Group as additional corporate sponsors.

We have been very prudent and professional in handling funds of the Association and our hope is to improve on revenue generation in the future.

I wish all members a fruitful discussion in this Annual General Meeting and success in all your endeavors.

Thank you and do enjoy the moment.

**Engr George C. Okoroma, FNSE, JP**

President

5<sup>th</sup> November 2020