

**Welcome Speech By ACEN President, ENGR. GEORGE C. OKOROMA, FNSE, JP At  
The 2020 Annual Conference and General Meeting of ACEN Delivered on the 5<sup>th</sup> of  
November 2020 at NAF Conference Centre and Suites, Kado, Abuja, FCT.**

Your Excellences,

Past Presidents of ACEN,

Presidents of Sister Association,

Captains of Industries

Exco and Council Members,

Distinguished Firm Members,

Distinguished Guests,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Words are not enough to express how delighted and greatly over joyed I am to have all of us here today in the highest gathering of the Association for Consulting Engineering in Nigeria-ACEN.

The Annual Conference and General Meeting of our association is a time to take stock of our activities for the past one year and discuss matters that strengthen the understanding of our role as consulting engineers in the economic development of Nigeria.

Looking back, I can tell that our continued existence and shared prosperity as an association till date is by the unflinching grace and mercies of God Almighty.

The upsurge of the novel Coronavirus left no nation and economy untouched. Over the past five months, economic activities were grounded, corporate gatherings were prohibited and movements both national and international were restricted.

These move, though for the good and safety of every one of us, wreaked havoc on our professional consultancy services. New contracts may not have been awarded within this period and even the ones in progress were halted. Today, I am elated that the lockdown is easing out and normalcy is returning to our cities and businesses are resuming operation.

While we are grateful to God for this great opportunity to gather and share with one another, we cannot afford to neglect the mood of our nation at the moment. Our heart goes out to the families who lost their loved ones and those whose property were destroyed and vandalized during the END-SARS protest that took place in major cities of our country. I am confident that the voice of our youths have been heard and that their request is being addressed accordingly.

I want to take some time to express our profound gratefulness to His Excellency Prof. Yemi Osibanjo, SAN, GCON, Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, ably represented by the Honourable Minister of Water Resources Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu, FNSE, FAEng – a Past President of ACEN, and the Honourable Minister of FCT, Mallam Muhammed Musa Bello, ably represented by Mallam Muhammad Bashir Mai-Bornu, Chief of Staff to the Honourable Minister of FCT.

Permit me also to thank very kindly the President, Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria, Engr. Ali A. Rabi, FNSE, the President, Nigerian Society of Engineers, Engr. Babagana Mohammed, FNSE, the President, The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Hajiya Saratu Aliyu and Engr. Tony Attah, Managing Director/CEO of NLNG. Having all of you here with us today is wonderful and for this, we are very grateful.

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

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

The theme for this year's AGM is **'ENGINEERING CONSULTING AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN A RECOVERING ECONOMY.'**

Looking at the handwriting on the wall, it is altogether fitting and proper at this juncture of our existence as an association and as a nation to think of innovative ways to better engineering consultancy services and birth strategies that would strengthen our firms, accelerate infrastructural development and help us survive in the post-covid-19 economy.

The novel Coronavirus pandemic proved to us that in times of upsurge and turbulence, every nation looks up to her indigenous team of expertise and skilled professionals to proffer swift and lasting solution to the challenges at hand.

We are pleased and happy that the Federal Government of Nigeria on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2018 issued an Executive Order called Presidential Order 5 outlining procedures for Planning and Execution of Projects, Promotion of Nigerian Content in Contracts and Science, Engineering and Technology.

This is a bold step by the Nigerian government to encourage indigenous engineering consultants as key players in the infrastructural development of the nation.

What we hope and pray for is that the process of implementation of this great idea will be internalized in all Ministries, Department, and Agencies (MDAs) of Government, International and Private Organizations across the length and breadth of our Nation.

There is no better time than now for Nigeria to start investing in her own, patronizing her own and preparing her own to be future ready for any uncertain challenges. We are our own rescue. And unless we have the tools and skills needed to take our nation to the acme of greatness, nobody will.

I must thank the entire team of the AGM planning committee ably led by **Engr. Sam Otenike, FNSE** and the entire ACEN Secretariat for the depth of critical thinking, devotion to duty and expertise that went down the line to put this event up. We are grateful to all the resource persons and facilitators of sessions who accepted our invitation to share their wealth of knowledge with us.

Your excellences, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, looking at all that we have itemized for this event, I am confident that we are going to learn, unlearn and relearn new things that would help us make the post-covid-19 economy a blissful one for all of us.

Please feel at home, enjoy the time being, and remember to obey all Covid-19 guidelines.

Thank you very much for coming, and may we have a fruitful deliberation.

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

ACEN President

5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.