

A KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE SPECIAL GUEST, THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF AVIATION, NIGERIA,

**PRINCESS STELLA ADAEZE ODUAH OON,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICAN AVIATION TRAINING ORGANIZATION (AATO) CONFERENCE HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2013 AT THE NICON LUXURY HOTEL, ABUJA NIGERIA**

- ❖ The Deputy Senate President of Nigeria, Senator Ike Ekweremadu
- ❖ Very Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members
- ❖ President of African Aviation Training Organization (AATO)
- ❖ The ICAO Regional Director
- ❖ Delegates of AATO Constitutive Assembly
- ❖ Gentlemen of the media
- ❖ Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

It is with greatest delight and appreciation that I most warmly welcome you all to this very auspicious occasion of African Aviation Training Organization (AATO) constitutive Assembly thematically framed “Committed to the provision and sustainability of Aviation training excellence in Africa”. Fortuitously, this marks the first hosting of the assembly in Nigeria.

The formation of this organization is essentially meant to promote the harmonization and standardization of Aviation training in Africa through cooperation, sharing of expertise and resources amongst member states. To this effect, AATO have no doubt

been a potent agent of change and development of Aviation Industry in the African sub Region and internationally too.

While applauding your giant strides, one cannot but urge you to double your efforts at snatching the African Aviation sector from the woods and underdog status, among the Committees of global Aviation players. We must harness our meager resources towards optimal development of our Aviation training institutions to obtain maximal gain and growth for the industry. To this effect, it behoves on AATO and all stakeholders to ensure an unimpeded access to our network of approved Aviation training organizations in Africa. This would among other numerous advantages, provide a fertile ground for instructional facilities and trained human resources among member states' easy reach.

Given that scarcity of funds have been the bane of the continent's training centres, the pooling of resources, instructors and facilities available among members may be viable economies of scale around our perceived weaknesses. Again, member countries may be encouraged to focus and make the most of their areas of core competencies while patronizing others in their areas of competitive advantages. Our various levels of leadership may need to deliberately favour the Aviation training sector in the allocation of values of states. The fulcrum for this is the exorbitant and cost effective profile of sophisticated and ever dynamic training equipment in the industry. The modest achievements and sophistication being witnessed now in the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT) Zaria is attributable to the high premium and importance placed on train the Trainer policy of government. Where the presidency has been most passionate and generous in allocating resources to this sector, the National Assembly have equally been most zealous in approving the budgetary allocation. It is our fervent desire to indeed entrench NCAT as a veritable centre of excellence for Aviation training in Africa. While aspiring to make our College a "one stop shop" in Aviation trainings, we are in the meantime patronizing other training centres in training our instructors/personnel in their areas of comparative advantages.

The African Aviation Training Organization (AATO) should pool its intellectual resources in crafting a standard curriculum and training content for all its members. This is inclusive of Research and Consultancy services towards improving the training models

of its members. It goes without gain saying the fact that African Aviation depends greatly on AATO in accessing current global market information as regards demands and supplies of manpower capacity in Africa.

Distinguished delegates, permit me to commend the different levels of leadership in AATO for being pivotal in the upward beat in the continent's Aviation industry. This couldn't have been without all hands been on deck. Bravo ladies and gentlemen, keep the momentum!

I wish you a very smooth and successful election into your council seats. I also pray the founding members sign and give life to your constitution for all to run with it.

Thank you very much for coming. Hope you enjoy the alluring scenery of Abuja and the warmth and hospitality of the Nigerian people.

You are welcome and do have a safe trip back to your various destinations at the close of your 3 days constitutive Assembly sessions.