



ADDRESS BY THE PRO-CHANCELLOR AND CHAIRMAN, GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, ILARO (FORMERLY FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC ILARO), ALHAJI GARBA BILAL GASHUA, AT THE 23RD CONVOCATION CEREMONY AND 46TH FOUNDER'S DAY ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC ILARO ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH APRIL 2026

Protocols

The Visitor to the University,
The President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR,
The Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa, CON, ably represented by the Director of Polytechnic and Allied Institutions, Mrs. Igwe Amy K., and her team,
The Honourable Minister of State for Education, Professor Suwaiba Said Ahmad
The Executive Governor of Ogun State, His Excellency, Prince Dapo Abiodun, CON,
The Executive Governor of Katsina State, His Excellency Mallam Dikko Umaru Radda, PhD, CON, the Convocation Lecturer of the day,
The Executive Secretary of NBTE, Professor Idris Bugaje,
The Registrar, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Professor Ishaq Olarewaju Oloyede, CON,
Members of the Governing Council,
The Principal Officers of the Federal University of Technology, Ilaro,
The Visiting Rectors, Registrars, Librarians, Bursars, Former Rectors and Principal Officers
Academic Board Members,
The Olu of Ilaro, Paramount Ruler of Yewaland and Chairman, Ogun State Council of Obas, His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr) Kehinde Gbadewole, Agunloye IV, MFR,
The Alake of Egba and the Paramount Ruler of Egbaland, His Royal Majesty, Oba Adedotun Aremu Gbadebo III
The Olubadan of Ibadanland, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja
Other Traditional Rulers,
Distinguished Recipients of the Fellowship Award,
Distinguished Guests,
The Alumni,
Esteemed Parents and Guardians,
Members of the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, now Federal University of Technology, Ilaro Community,
And above all, graduands of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, now Federal University of Technology, Ilaro,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured to celebrate this milestone with you. As Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, I proudly commemorate the achievements of our graduating students, marking the culmination of dedication, perseverance, and excellence.

It is my honour to appreciate the Honourable Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Tunji Alausa, representing the Visitor, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, Executive Secretary of NBTE, Prof Idris Bugaje, Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono; all our fellowship awardees, starting from His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Katsina State, Mallam Dikko Umaru Radda, PhD, CON, who will be delivering the convocation lecture, His Royal Majesty, Oba Adedotun



Aremu Gbadebo III, the Alake of Egba and the Paramount ruler of Egbaland, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja, the Olubadan of Ibadan, Mr. Sotayo Olugbenga Sonuga, the CEO of Haven Homes, an alumnus of our great citadel of knowledge; the Olu of Ilaro and the host Paramount ruler of Yewaland, His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr.) ESV Kehinde Gbadewole Olugbenle MFR, (Asade Agunloye IV), and other traditional leaders here present; members of the Council, members of the Management, members of staff, great Nigerian students, and other dignitaries for eking time out of their tight schedules to grace this epoch-making event.

I express deep gratitude to the Almighty Allah for making this day a reality. My profound gratitude is expressed to the Visitor, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, and the Honourable Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Tunji Alausa, for giving the entire Council and me another opportunity to serve our country and essentially anchor the development of the Federal University of Technology, Ilaro, on the policy template of the Renewed Hope Agenda.

The Council, Management, Congregation, and the entire Convocation are particularly appreciative of the Visitor, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, the Senate President, Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, PhD, GCON, Senator Aremo Dr. Olamilekan Adeola (YAYI) CON, FCA, FCTI, FFPI, the Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa, and the Honourable Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Said Ahmad, for allowing God to use them to pull off this landmark upgrade of our Institution. From the home front, we are grateful to Senator Aremo Dr. Olamilekan Adeola (YAYI) CON FCA FCTI, who was steadfast and uncompromising about initiating and reinitiating the bill in favour of the upgrade, even after the initial setback. Our profound appreciation also goes to His Royal Majesty, Oba Dr. Kehinde Gbadewole Olugbenle, MFR, Olu of Ilaro, who mobilised and organised all Obas and Chiefs within the Yewa region around the upgrade agenda. The past and current Managements, Staff, Unions, Alumni Association, and Students who supported the initiative are also appreciated.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the epochal development marks a significant milestone in our journey towards growth, academic excellence, and innovation. It also represents a befitting reward for the dedication of Students, Staff, and Management of the Institution over the years. I am confident that this development will ultimately boost the Institution's impact, attract top talent, and drive tech advancements in Nigeria. It is important to stress that, as a Council, we will ensure that the Institution's core values, which drove this upgrade, are sustained and improved to produce skilled and self-sufficient graduates who will contribute to Nigeria's transformation.

Ladies and gentlemen, this event presents a wonderful avenue for us to acknowledge that the yeoman efforts and interventions of the Federal Government of Nigeria in the tertiary education sector, under the aegis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, are yielding fruit, marking a significant shift in national educational development and good governance. For instance, the removal of Universities and Polytechnics from IPPIS has brought much-needed autonomy, enabling institutions like ours to take charge of our destiny and seamlessly drive administrative initiatives tailored to our peculiar needs. Moreover, key government interventions have been instrumental to our progress and continuous functionality. For instance, NELFUND loans are easing financial burdens on students, opening doors to education for many who would have otherwise been excluded. So far, I have been briefed that about 1450 of our students have benefited from NELFUND interventions. Furthermore, TETFund is supporting infrastructure and research, laying the groundwork for academic excellence and positioning our institutions as hubs for innovation.



The Federal Government has approved the establishment of the Nigeria National Laureate Annual Prize Programme, a landmark initiative aimed at recognising and rewarding outstanding academic research, intellectual excellence, and commercially viable innovation from tertiary institutions across the country. Innovation grants, such as the Student Venture Grant, are driving entrepreneurship and tech development, nurturing the next generation of innovators and equipping them with the skills to compete globally. Free technical education is expanding access and skills, equipping Nigerians with the expertise needed to power the modern workforce. These policies are invariably propelling TVET growth, aligning with Nigeria's development goals and signalling a commitment to producing skilled, employable graduates.

It is also impressive that across Nigeria, APC State governments are actively aligning their educational development plans with the Renewed Hope Agenda. From Yobe State, where my Governor, His Excellency, Hon. (Dr.) Mai Mala Buni, CON, COMN, has revitalized education through careful implementation of infrastructure development, teachers' recruitment, and scholarships' offerings, among others; Katsina State, where the digitally minded Governor Mallam Dikko Umaru Radda is increasingly expanding access to digital skills and constructing modern schools with solar-powered water systems and energy-efficient classrooms; to Ogun State, where Governor Dapo Abiodun's educational reforms are anchored on infrastructure upgrade, STEM education prioritization, and digital skills enhancement, and many more instances across other Nigerian States, the development narratives rekindle hope that Nigeria is being propelled along the trajectory of sustainable development.

As Federal University of Technology, Ilaro (FUTI), we appreciate the Federal Government of Nigeria, and we remain committed to excellence in higher technical education, contributing to national growth and producing skilled graduates who will drive progress, innovate solutions, and shape Nigeria's future.

Ladies and gentlemen, reflecting on my tenure as Chairman of the Governing Council since August 2024, I have been very impressed and delighted by the quality of manpower propelling this Institution forward. I am most inspired by the teachable and morally conscious students who consistently excel academically. Most importantly, I commend the harmonious campus environment, engendered by various staff unions such as ASUP, SSANIP, and NASU, and the Students Union Body and Alumni Association, which is even well accentuated at this critical transitional epoch. I believe that these collaborative efforts of staff and student unions, which have fostered stability and peace and afforded a stable academic calendar, would be sustained as the Institution fully transitions into a University. My heartfelt appreciation is extended to those who God has used to shape the Institution's outstanding legacies: past and present Council members, Rectors and Management teams, academic and administrative staff, students, and community stakeholders, particularly His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr.) ESV Kehinde Gbadewole Olugbenle MFR, Olu of Ilaro and Paramount Ruler of Yewa Kingdom, along with Obas and traditional chiefs, for fostering peace, development, and high standards.

Today, we gather to honour five exceptional individuals who have been outstanding in their respective leadership endeavours. I am delighted to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of Governor Dapo Abiodun, CON, of Ogun State, who has driven transformational development, fostered peace and security, and conducted significant progress in Ogun State; Governor Mallam Dikko Umaru Radda, PhD, CON, of Katsina State, a foremost proponent and implementer of digital governance and economic transformation; Oba Adedotun Aremu Gbadebo III, Alake of Egbaland, who has preserved heritage and nurtured unity within our regional sphere, and Oba Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja, Olubadan of Ibadan, who has exemplified philanthropy, cultural leadership, and discipline. We honor their dedication



and commitment. Furthermore, Mr. Sotayo Olugbenga Sonuga, CEO of Haven Homes and distinguished alumnus of our great Institution, serves as a beacon of inspiration, demonstrating that with perseverance and dedication, our graduates can achieve greatness and contribute meaningfully to their alma mater. Please join me in congratulating these exceptional individuals on this well-deserved recognition.

To our 8713 graduands, today marks a milestone. You have navigated academic rigors, overcome obstacles, and grown into capable, insightful individuals poised to make an impact in the world of work, your communities, and the nation at large. You bear the hopes of your families, communities, and nation. We are celebrating your academic prowess and the resilience, discipline, and innovative spirit you have honed here. As you leave our Institution, remember you are not just graduates. You are rather ambassadors of excellence. The skills and knowledge you have gained are catalysts for building your future and contributing to societal progress. In today's fast-paced, tech-driven world, adaptability, innovation, and skill are crucial. I encourage you to stay curious, pursue continuous learning, and remain relevant in your field.

The theme of this year's convocation lecture, *"Digital Literacy: Fundamental Skills and Job Creation Tools for Graduands in the 21st Century,"* would no doubt examine how you can leverage digital skills to boost employability, drive innovation, and access global opportunities. Mastering digital tools would inevitably position you to land top jobs or create your own venture, solve real-world problems with tech solutions, connect with global networks and markets, and stay ahead in an ever-evolving job market. As you venture into the world, remember to use your education to solve problems, uplift others, and contribute meaningfully to the progress of our nation.

Our dear parents and guardians, I commend you. Your tireless support, sacrifices, and encouragement have brought us to this milestone. You have nurtured not just your children, but also the future leaders of our nation. Today, you are rightfully proud of your accomplishments and share in the joy of this moment.

To our academic and non-teaching staff, I applaud your tireless dedication to shaping young minds. Your efforts may often go unnoticed, but your impact is profound. Let us continue to drive excellence in education, research, and innovation together. As we celebrate, let us look ahead. Our Institution is evolving, and we are committed to enhancing infrastructure, expanding programmes, and forging partnerships to boost education quality and graduate employability. I invite stakeholders to collaborate with us in achieving these goals.

In parting, success is a journey, not a destination. It is essentially about the impact you create, the lives you touch, and the legacy you leave. Carry forward the values of integrity, diligence, and service. You are Nigeria's future; the world awaits your brilliance. Congratulations, class of 2024/2025. I wish you success, fulfillment, and limitless opportunities.

Thank you, and God bless.