

Welcome Speech by ACEN President, ENGR. GEORGE C. OKOROMA, FNSE, JP at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of ACEN on Thursday July 1st 2021 at Hotel Presidential, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Your Excellencies,

Past Presidents of ACEN,

Presidents and Past Presidents of sister associations,

Distinguished Guests,

EXCO and Council Members,

Distinguished Firm Members,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Today is a great day for all of us in the ACEN engineering family, and in particular, for my administration as we are gathered to review how far we have come as an association in the first half of the year 2021, and strategize on novel steps that we need to take to make the remaining half of the year a worthwhile, and an impactful time for our association.
2. This event brings a lot of joy and hope.
3. Joy for the fact that, despite the economic challenges brought on us by the upsurge of the novel Coronavirus pandemic, we weathered the storm, charted new courses, and innovated strategies that helped our businesses stand tall and vibrant amidst all odds.
4. This event brings a lot of hope for the future of our dear association as the year 2021 would make ACEN 50 years in existence as an association.
5. It is not an easy task to start an association and sustain it for five decades. To do this calls for dedication, selfless services and commitment to the ideals that holds us together as a pull of consulting engineers.
6. Today, ACEN is not only waxing old and strong, many of her Past Presidents and firm members are advancing in age and becoming elder statemen. Within this first half of the year 2021, we joined some of our Past Presidents to celebrate their birthdays: **Engr. Yusuf Olanrewaju Sagaya FNSE, FAEng, MFR, OFR @ 75, Engr. Bayo Adeola, FNSE FAEng @ 70, His Excellency Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu, FNSE, FAEng @ 58, Engr. Mrs. Mayen Adetiba, FNSE, FAEng @ 70, Engr. Nurudeen Rafindadi, FNSE, FAEng @ 61.**

7. And today, being the 1st of July, our dear Past President, **Engr. Dr. Joseph Ibikunle Folayan, FNSE, FAEng** turns 82. And in two weeks' time, particularly on the 15th of August, our Immediate Past President **Engr. Charles 'Yele Akindayomi, FNSE** would be 70 years younger.
8. Also, I cannot forget in a hurry that on the 24th of June 2021, our dear Past President, the Zana of Ilorin, **Engr. Yusuf. Olanrewaju Sagaya, FNSE, FAEng, MFR, OFR** was conferred the well-deserved Life Achievement Award by The Nigerian Academy of Engineering.
9. All of these put together shows how gracious God has been to everyone of us in the ACEN engineering family.
10. As we move ahead, I cannot but say very kindly that this event marks the beginning of the countdown to the end of my tenure as your President. I must confess that no responsibility is as noble and great as leading this association.
11. It has been a great responsibility, and in the coming months, I will hand over the baton of leadership of this great association to another consulting engineer, with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to lead us to the next phase of our progress.
12. I attribute all the successes and milestone achievements recorded in my tenure to the genuine corporation, support and teamplay of the entire members of ACEN Secretariat, our member firms, Past Presidents, EXCO and Council, corporate sponsors and the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
13. If I have been able to see farther into the future, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants like you.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. As the only professional body of engineering consultants in Nigeria, a key part of our responsibility is to ensure that the design and construction of our national infrastructural assets are carried out in line with international best practice and with standards that are compatible to our environment.
17. The theme for this year's EGM is **THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY AND THE CHALLENGES OF CONSULTING ENGINEERING PRACTICE UNDER THE THREATS OF INSECURITY.**
18. There is no denying that we are in an uncertain time. The very fabrics of our nation, our bond of peaceful coexistence and the ease of doing business is today threatened by insecurity.

19. As consulting engineers involved in major infrastructural development of our nation, we must be vigilant and intentional about developing a playbook that would harness technology and virile tools and strategy to ensure the safety and security of our critical national infrastructure and engineers as they go about discharging their duties.
20. As we put heads together to brainstorm on the way forward, I wish to thank very kindly the ingenuity and the hard work of the EGM Planning Committee ably chaired by **Engr. Dr. Edward N. Moore, FNSE, FNICE, MASCE** for birthing the theme and the topics that we would brainstorm on today.
21. I am confident and rest assured that we are going to benefit from the wealth of knowledge of our Special Guest of Honour and Keynote Speakers who are in good position to lend us their professional counsel on the disruptions taking place in consulting engineering practice as a result of COVID-19 and other developments.
22. It is therefore, my pleasure and honour to formally welcome our Special Guest of Honour, **Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu, FNSE, FAEng** - a Past President of ACEN, the Galadinma Kazaure, and the Honourable Minister of Water Resources, Federal Republic of Nigeria. He is ably represented by our own dear Past President, the Zana of Ilorin, **Engr. Yusuf. O. Sagaya, FNSE, FAEng, MFR, OFR**
23. Permit me to express my profound gratitude to **Engr. Chief, Sir. Dr. Edet James Amana FNSE, FAEng, OON**, the Chairman of Amana Consortium Ltd, **Engr. Robinson Tombari Sibe, MNSE**—Founder, E-Sense Technologies Ltd and MD/CEO, Digital Footprints Ltd, and all the other engineers for accepting our invitation to present a paper or to serve as Session Chairman/woman or Rapporteurs in this event.
24. We appreciate our sponsors for this event and I wish them good fortune during the year 2021 and beyond.
25. At the end of this conference, we would come up with a communique which we hope will be an aggregate of our collective views on an integrated approach to ensuring that the survival and strengthening of our profession, and the Nigerian economy is secured through advocacy and representations to relevant arms of government.
26. 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 2021 **Extra-Ordinary General Meeting** of this Association open.
27. Thank you, and may we have fruitful deliberations.

Engr. George C. Okoroma, FNSE, JP

ACEN President

1st July 2021.