

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, MALAM MUHAMMAD MUSA BELLO AT THE VALEDICTORY COURT SESSION IN HONOUR OF THE RETIRING CHIEF JUDGE, HIGH COURT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, HONOURABLE JUSTICE ISHAQ BELLO HELD AT THE CEREMONIAL COURT HALL OF THE HIGH COURT OF THE FCT

TUESDAY, 5TH JANUARY 2021

PROTOCOL

1. I consider it a great honour indeed for the opportunity to deliver an address at this Valedictory Court Session, in honour of a distinguished legal luminary, humanist and gentleman, the Honourable Justice Ishaq Usman Bello who retires today as the Chief Judge, High Court of the Federal Capital Territory.
2. May I begin by congratulating Justice Ishaq Bello for attaining the age of 65 and retiring from the FCT Judiciary with honour and dignity and bringing to a close a public service career at the bench, which has been long, outstanding and meritorious.
3. Following his appointment as the substantive Chief Judge of the FCT High Court in 2015, Justice Ishaq Bello brought about innovations that ensured the smooth and timely dispensation of justice, so much so that it became an established fact that litigants always sought to have their

cases heard in FCT courts even if such cases were outside the Jurisdiction of the FCT.

4. The Federal Capital Territory Administration had the privilege of collaborating with Justice Bello especially with the Alternative Dispute Resolution option of dispensation of justice which has helped in resolving many seemingly unresolvable disputes particularly over land and property.
5. Many of those cases, had they gone to full trial most likely would have proven to be expensive, time consuming and perhaps even left the litigants unsatisfied. This innovation has indeed saved the Administration, corporate organisations and individuals considerable amount of funds and time.
6. That is one of the many reasons why we will remain committed to our pledge to support the FCT High Court in its quest to make Abuja the Center of Arbitration for Local and international Contracts which stands to be of immense benefit to the Federal Capital Territory considering the volume and importance of transactions that take place here.
7. My lords, ladies and gentlemen like many great jurists, Justice Ishaq Bello has a very deep passion for using the instruments of the law to dispense justice especially for those seemingly ensnared in the courts and also the correctional systems.
8. His efforts as the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Decongestion of Prisons and Prison Reforms in Nigeria

which is one of the many of such ad-hoc but highly sensitive assignments he has diligently undertaken has seen to big leaps being taken forward in our quest of having a correctional system that really achieves its objectives of genuine reformation of Nigerians who owe debts to society.

9. We will also honour our commitment to Justice Bello in his quest for the establishment of a Children and Young Persons' Court which is a project for which he has great passion.
10. We are a little bit saddened that certain circumstances very much beyond our control in the course of the year had prevented us from making as much progress as we would have wished on this matter.
11. I however I wish to re-assure Justice Bello that we will do the best we can to see to its completion before the end of my tenure as Minister of the Federal Capital Territory because like Justice Bello, we also believe strongly in the reformation and proper correction of offending minors.
12. As the organisation responsible for the development of of the FCT, we naturally welcome all efforts by corporate organisations and individuals to develop all plots allocated to them and the tenure of Justice Ishaq Bello has seen to the development of an almost unprecedented number of office complexes and residential buildings for judicial staff across the 6 Area Councils of the FCT.

13. This has not only added to the infrastructural stock of the FCT but also guaranteed that staff of the FCT Judiciary not only have decent working environment but also equally decent residential abodes.
14. The Judiciary as an arm of government is essential for the development and sustenance of democracy and Justice Ishaq Bello has contributed immensely to the watering of those democratic roots
15. As a well-respected and designated anti-corruption Judge his actions at the various election petition Tribunal where he served has further ensured the growth of our democracy.
16. Justice Ishaq Usman Bello is not just a jurist per excellence but is also a man well loved and respected outside his beloved law profession.
17. He is held in such high esteem that he was found worthy to be turbaned as the *Kuliyan Zazzau* by His Royal Highness, Ahmed Nuhu Bamali Emir of Zazzau in December of 2020.
18. It may interest you my lords, distinguished ladies and gentlemen to note that the conferment of the title of *Kuliyan Zazzau* on Justice Bello was the first such bestowment on any individual by the Emir since his enthronement as the Emir of Zazzau.
19. Justice Ishaq Bello is, and will remain an inspiration to many. I therefore urge all those coming behind to learn

from the examples he has set as this will ensure not only their personal and professional growth but that of the legal profession as well.

20. We are indeed proud of him and will miss his wise counsel which he has freely dispensed over the years. We are however delighted in the assurance that he will still oblige us if we approach him in future.

21. As an Administration, we pledge our continuous support to the High Court of the FCT and wish Justice Ishaq Usman Bello the very best as he takes his last bow as the great legal luminary that he is.

22. Thank you for your valued attention.

MMB