

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF JUDGE OF BENUE STATE; HON. JUSTICE I. HWNDE ON THE OCCASION OF OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE JUDICIAL RESEARCH CENTER ON 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2009**

**PROTOCOL:**

I am highly delighted to address this august gathering on the occasion of the official commissioning of the Judicial Research Centre.

I welcome in a very special way His Excellency, Rt. Hon. G. T. Suswam, the Executive Governor of our State when inspite of short notice has offered to avail himself to commission the centre. I equally warmly welcome his able Deputy Chief Steven Lawani, the Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly and his entourage, and other top government functionaries.

I welcome the High Court Judges and all the Legal Luminaries in our midst.

To our visitors from Abuja, I say welcome to Makurdi, a town of serene beauty, the capital of our beloved Benue State.

Today marks a milestone in the annals of our Judicial history as we are on the road map to greatness in the contemporary legal world.

A Judicial Research Centre, put in place by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in collaboration with the State Judiciary,

\* and well equipped with the latest information technology gadget, is ready for commissioning this morning. Thanks to the UNODC for its tremendous support in actualizing this dream. It was the officials of UNODC that sold this idea to the State Judiciary and we quickly embraced the idea and commenced work on the project.

The UNODC's support to ten pilot state, (Benue inclusive) has made great strides in the area of training and retraining of our staff through organization of varieties of workshops and helped to evolve an action plan from which we can locate our bearing.

(\*) Your Excellency the centre you are about to commission is the first of its kind in the North Central Zone and is well equipped to meet the research needs of our staff, and can compete with any research centre elsewhere. As John Donne once said:

"No man is an island entirely unto himself".

A Judge does not have the monopoly of knowledge. As such he needs to constantly keep tract with the happenings in the other jurisdictions as he attends to individual problems on a case by case and day by day basis. This is tantamount to self development in the art of judging and interpretation of the law.

④ The advancement of this legal and judicial knowledge is what is packaged today as a Research centre, a well programmed system of continuing legal and judicial education through what we are witnessing today. The world is fast becoming a global village. Crime has become a sophisticated phenomenon and only a mastery of these latest tricks can check this ugly trend.

Finally, I assure the UNODC Management team of our continuous readiness to partner with them in capacity building to enhance the efficiency and productivity of our judiciary. I am sure that His Excellency is impressed with what you have done to the State Judiciary and will be ready to assist in any way to advance the quest of Benue Judiciary for excellence.

Once again, I express our profound gratitude to the leadership of UNODC in Nigeria and the entire staff and wish them an exciting stay in the country. We look forward to continuing partnership as we strive to improve the quality and speed of our output.

May I at this stage invite His Excellency who has graciously graced this occasion to address this gathering and commission the Judicial Research Centre.