

BUILDING A NEW GENERATION UNIVERSITY: PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS*

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PROTOCOL

INTRODUCTION

SLIDE 1: I wish to express sincere gratitude to the authorities of the University of Abuja for the invitation to deliver the 2016 pre-convocation lecture. My thanks first to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Michael Adikwu Fellow. Nigerian Academy of Science. and Professors Isu and Azuke, my contact persons over these past few months. I am particularly indebted to Professor Azuke, who within the first one hour of our meeting, was subjected to my approach to the topic of this pre-convocation lecture. It was easy to be open to him and I freely let lose my opinion on the Nigerian university system and what direction it should go. It appeared to me that he was either being the gentleman he is or he agrees with my opinion on the Nigerian university system. Whatever my reading of him, the opinions expressed in this lecture, for which I take full responsibility, are absolutely, entirely and completely mine. At a time, I was not sure that this lecture would hold, as we had to wait for the pleasure of those who control education in Nigeria for permission and go-ahead for the lecture. I was a bit confused on why the University had to wait for approval of the Ministry to hold a convocation ceremony. I am aware that the convocation days and dates of some universities are fixed and are never re-scheduled. For example, we all know that the main Convocation date for the University of Ibadan is November 17 every year, come rain, come shine, come week end, come week day. In the short time I spent at the Redeemer's University, we set our Convocation day for the first Saturday in October of every year. The Visitor to the University accepted the date and if he was unable to attend, he would send a representative, and we went ahead with our Convocation exercise. It was unthinkable, even for a young university as ours to deviate from our tradition, and alter the date of our Convocation to suit the convenience of the Visitor. After all, he or she is only a visitor and should not dictate when I celebrate in my house. Our graduates, and their parents are the reasons for our existence and we pay our respects to them by assuring them that every year on a set date, the convocation takes place. The convocation day is for them and not for any other officer of the University. A university without tradition is a rudderless university, without an anchor that will soon be tossed to and fro by forces it has surrendered to. I think time has come for our universities not to surrender their autonomy by allowing the Nigerian system to chip away at their tradition of excellence, orderliness and rule of operation.

SLIDE 2: My life long education reminds me of the word, democracy. I am one of the few and lucky Nigerians born in a generation when we had political leaders who at least cared for their people. Otherwise how could the 39th surviving child of a polygamous cocoa farmer have enjoyed free primary education in his town, gone to secondary in another region from his, on partial scholarship, and then gone to another region to complete his university education also on scholarship? **SLIDE 3:** Apart from occasional trips out of Nigeria, which I regard as very thing icing on the cake of my education, I was educated OF, FOR, BY and IN Nigeria. Indeed, as there is no end to education, my education is still of, for, by and in Nigeria.

SLIDE 4:

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This uniqueness gives me the courage to speak as you will hear during the course of this lecture, that is, speaking with no holds barred, speaking because I know the level and high quality of education which my country has offered in times past, can offer now and in the future. A quality of education that my country is refusing to offer to my children. I will speak because I love my country and because I know that my country, if she decides to provide high quality education for her citizens, can do so easily, comfortably and without sweat! I know this country has the financial, human and other required resources to provide an excellent, an exceptional, a superb and a first rate quality of education for every of her citizens. Never mind that in times past, we have squandered, wasted and misused our resources. **SLIDE 5:** But we are in a new period, we are in a new generation of a new Nigeria where our resources will be used wisely, sensibly, judiciously, prudently, intelligently, and sagaciously. Ladies and gentlemen, we are in for a new time to build for our nation a new generation university for our nation, where we will be accountable to each other, responsible to each other and answerable to each other. Therefore, if I speak with passion today, it is because of the pain in my heart, caused by the neglect and abandonment that successive Nigerian governments have employed to wrack and wreck education. If you detect rage and fury in my speech, it is because of the agony that wrings and mangles my frame, because of the carelessness with which the custodians of quality education have handled education. If anger, anguish and sorrow, are the needles and threads that sew together the fibers of my words producing this tongue of ferocious fire, you will understand that I am mourning and singing the dirge of quality education caused by us, the parents who have destroyed and shattered the foundation of education at the home level. So make yourself as comfortable as you can, because we are here to tell and hear about where our education stands. **SLIDE 4:** We are here to discuss how we can turn Nigeria's education around for the better as we attempt to examine the prospects and problems of building new generation universities in Nigeria. While I will focus on university education in particular, I will also dwell a bit on the other tiers and levels of education which are the roots and the stems of tertiary or university education

SLIDE 5: But first let us define what we mean by the words that make up the title of this lecture-problem, prospect, build and "new generation universities". There is nobody in Nigeria who does not know what problem means or is. We meet it every day, everywhere and every time. Problem comes as difficulties, setback, drawback, glitch, hindrance, obstacle, or obstruction. Problem comes as animate or inanimate, at home, in the school, in the office, on the road, at work on the way to work and the way back from work. Our houses of solution to problems- churches, mosques, prayer homes, etc. are not free from problems. Sometimes they add more to the problem we bring in for solution in the first place. We see so much problems in this country – from water supply, electricity, and even the air we breathe, that we are resigned to accepting problems as normal! Problems should not be normal and they are not to hinder, impede or obstruct our development. Neither are they to thwart our desires and aspiration, but as stepping stones on which we climb to greater achievement.

The word "prospect" can be used to mean different things- it could be about forecast, predictions, scenarios, or diagnosis. Another way to look at the word "prospect" is when we use it to denote hope, possibilities, visions, probabilities, or options. The miner uses the word prospect in the matter of extraction such as digging searching hunting for minerals. In this talk, I will confine "prospects" to hope, possibilities, visions, probabilities, or options.

Let us now talk about building. The word "building" immediately conjures a vision of construction, creation, fabrication, manufacturing, and putting together some physical structures, when used in relation to human beings, we think of developing and encouraging someone.

The operative word is new generation universities is generation, we know what is new and what a university is. Generation may refer to a cohort, an age group, peers, while another way to describe generation is creation, invention and origination. In the context of this lecture, generation refers to a cohort, an age group, or peers.

SLIDE 6: Let me begin the discussion on Building a new generation university by providing a brief historical narrative on the evolution and establishment of the Nigerian university system. The Yaba Higher College (YHC), Lagos, was established in 1930. Until its closure in 1947, the College produced trained Nigerians to be teachers, medical assistants, assistant agricultural officers, forest supervisors, surveyors and other administrators. The University College, Ibadan (UCI) was started in 1948 as Nigeria's first university affiliated to the University of London. The UCI awarded degrees of the University of London until 1962, when it became October 1962, when it became a full-fledged autonomous university. Earlier in 1959, the British Colonial Administration of Nigeria (BCAN), appointed a Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria under the Chairmanship of Sir Eric Ashby. The Commission submitted a report titled: *Investment in Education*, in September 1960, a month before Nigeria became independent of the BCAN. The recommendations of the Commission, called the Ashby Report, were accepted with few amendments. On the basis of this Government White Paper on the Ashby Report, the Federal Government established the University of Lagos in 1962. In the same year, the governments of the Northern and Western Regions established the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Ife, respectively. The University of Ife was later renamed Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Earlier in 1960, the government of The Eastern Region of Nigeria had established the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The University College Ibadan which predates the Ashby Commission, was established in 1948. It became autonomous of the University of London in 1962, and was renamed the University of Ibadan, Ibadan. These five Universities established between 1948 and 1962, were the first generation universities. They were established primarily to meet the manpower needs of Nigeria and set basic standards for university education in the country.

SLIDE The Ashby Report also recommended the establishment of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to oversee the activities of the Universities. The NUC was subsequently established in 1962, as a department in the Cabinet Office. As Nigeria's population grew from 45.2 million in 1960 to 56.1 million in 1970, and with an increasing number of qualified students for university education, there was the need to establish more universities to meet this demand for appropriate and well trained man power needed for administrative, scientific and technological development of the country and to assert our independence. **SLIDE 7:** Between 1970 and 1989, 24 additional universities (17 Federal, 7 State) were established and located in various parts of the country. These were the second generation universities.

Nigeria's population continued to explode, now 95.6 million in 1990, almost double the 1970 figures, and with youths within the 15-24-year age bracket, accounting for approximately 20% of the population. The desperate need to find spaces in our university system for this population of our nation, led to the establishment of even more universities. Consequently, between 1990 and 2015, the number of universities rose to 141 made up of additional 18 Federal, 33 State and 61 private universities. These are the third generation universities. This is a broad categorization of our universities into generations. Another form of categorization is to follow the thinking of the successive federal and state governments of Nigeria. The immediate post-independence years, was the era for the establishment of universities in Ibadan and Lagos by the Federal government, while the Regional

governments, established universities in Nsukka, Ife and Zaria. These five universities could be rightly called first generation universities. Subsequently, universities were established in order to correct the perceived distortion in geographical distribution of universities in Nigeria. These universities were established to take care of and satisfy the needs of federalism in an independent nation. Starting with the establishment of the University of Benin in 1970, seven others were established in 1975 in Kano, Calabar, Ilorin Jos, Maiduguri, Sokoto and Port Harcourt, as the “second generation” Universities. The next epidemic of university establishment came between 1980 and 1992, when government established Universities in specialized areas of agriculture and technology. This set of universities of agriculture (Makurdi, Abeokuta and later Umudike) and of technology (Yola, Akure, Minna) may rightly be classed as the third generation universities.

Thereafter, the establishment of universities in Nigeria followed the haphazard pattern of our governance, under military rule and civilian rule watched over by the military. In my opinion, these some of these new and “fourth” generation universities, were established with no well or clearly defined objectives or deep thought. It would appear that they were established to satisfy criteria, other than merit. Thus, not only did we establish universities for the armed forces, police and petrol resources, we also created and distributed universities in such a way that no state was left out of the federal frenzy for establishing universities. In 2011 alone, we established 14 universities (9 federal 1 state and 4 private). **SLIDE 8:** These were followed by three other universities which made the former President to say “I set up 12 universities in the remaining 12 states where there are no universities.” It was as if universities had become “dividends of election results”, or more like a commodity for or an instrument of federal characterization, distributed for political correctness irrespective of whether we had the resources to make them function.

SLIDE 9: One of the reasons we often give for the establishment of so many universities over such a short period of time was to accommodate the increasing number of qualified youths unable to gain admission to the university. I think someone woke up one day and discovered that over 1 million students would sit the SS3 examinations and therefore there is the need to build enough universities to accommodate all the 1 million candidates. It is true that over 1 million candidates seek university admission, but we forget that of the 1 million youths who sit the JAMB examinations, a high failure rate even in spite of large scale and widespread examination malpractices, considerably reduce the number actually eligible for admission into the universities. Between 2005 and 2009, the percentage of students who met the requirements for university admission varied between 10% -25% of the number sitting the examinations. In absolute figures, of the 1,369,147 candidates who sat the West African Examination Council (WAEC) examinations in 2008, only 188,394 or (12.76%) obtained credits in Mathematics and English, basic requirements for University admission. In 2009, the situation improved slightly, with 356,845 or 25.99% of 1,373,009 candidates meeting the basic admission condition. In 2010, of 1,593,442 candidates who sat the WAEC examinations, only 616,370 (38.7%) made the qualifying score eligible for university admission. In the last two years, the number of those who sat for the WAEC examination, and who attained the qualifying score was 529,425 or 31.3% in 2014, and 1,593,442 and 616,370 (38.7%) respectively in 2015. The National Examination Council (NECO) examinations has always produced worse result than WAEC results. Of 1,200,765 candidates enrolled for the NECO examinations, only 126,080 or 10.5% met the basic admission criteria of credits in English and Mathematics, required for university admission., In 2015, only 16% of the 969,491 who sat for the NECO examination had credits in credits in English and Mathematics. Furthermore, of the 99,195 candidates who made the University of Lagos, their first choice university, the university of Lagos was only able to admit 9,507 candidates, that is 9.6%. The last percentage is not only wrong but

is an example of how we plan with faulty analysis of data. To know the correct percentage admitted by the University of Lagos, we must have information on the number of the 99,195, who made the required credits in five subjects, including mathematics and English, and of those who passed the University of Lagos qualifying examinations. Remember, they chose the university before they did the examination. Let me further illustrate the way we misuse data. For example, in 2011, 1,493,000 candidates sat for the UTME and 650,059 (43.5%) scored below the 200 pass mark. Certainly there will be further attrition on this number when we remember that in the same year, only 39% or 587,630 candidates had 5 credits in five subjects, including mathematics and English. So when the newspapers carry bold headlines that only 15,000 students were admitted representing 10% of those seeking admission, we mislead ourselves as we fail to consider those who attained the qualifying grade as our denominator. I am by no means against the establishment of universities, but why should we establish more universities, based on wrong data, and especially at a time when ASUU enumerated 62 items on the poor state of our universities, which gave reasons for ASUU going on strike. **SLIDE 10:** Some of the issues raised by ASUU included i). Nigerian University Students sitting on bare floor or peeping through windows to attend lectures, ii). over 400 Nigerian University students in a laboratory meant for 75 students, iii). university administrators spend millions to erect super-gates emblazoned with CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, when their libraries are stocked with moldy and outdated books acquired in the colonial days, iv). millions of naira are expended to purchase exotic vehicles for university officials, even though power supply is available only for one hour in a day in the lecture halls which lack basic furnishings; v). fencing and landscaping of official quarters gulp hundreds of millions of naira, when student's hostels are refuse dumps, that are unfit habitation, even for cows and pigs.

Our government goes into a frenzy of establishing new universities, while starving existing ones, and rendering them comatose! We have been blessed with governments that are always eager and keen to award new contracts rather than complete the hundreds of projects abandoned by party stalwarts. Majority of our universities are grossly understaffed. It is only in our country that reliance is placed by our universities on part-time and visiting lecturers. Virtually everybody walking on our streets has one complaint or the other about our university system. **SLIDE 11:** *"There are lots of bad universities because our national emphasis is on quantity, not quality,"* said a professor in Lagos. An NGO activist said *"A lot of universities are glorified secondary schools, and some of the products of university education cannot even put a couple of sentences together."* A comment from a young NGO activist about sums up the situation of Nigeria school system *"the public school system is in a terrible state, full of poor, de-motivated teachers who strike every other week because the government doesn't listen to them, because politicians' own children are in private schools."* How true. It is on record that between 1999 and 2013, ASUU spent annually, about two and a half months of the expected 9 months on strike action. During one of the prolonged strike actions, the *federal government claimed that the 2009 agreement which took three years to negotiate, was signed on its behalf by officials it regarded as incompetent.*

During the pre-colonial period and the first 25-30 years' post-independence, the standard and quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, without doubt, were certainly not inferior to global standards. In those days our first and second generation universities attracted staff and students from all over the world. It was a measure of pride to be admitted and to graduate from the universities of the first and second generations. Today, there has been so much deterioration in the standards we held high, so much desecration of the values we cherished that it is difficult to separate our universities into first, second and third generations. Some of those classed into the third generation may feel slighted and

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believe they belong to the second generation. **SLIDE 12:** By the time we clarify the characteristics of next or new generation university, we will see that very few of our universities meet the popular classification of CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE engraved on the gates of some of our universities. The only thing of excellence in some of our universities may well be the beautiful entrance gate built by artisans imported from Benin Republic. Archaic and old buildings, past glories, and plastering the word EXCELLENCE on gates do not determine the excellence of a university. The current rankings of universities in the world, have shown us where we belong. What happened to our education system that we are now eagerly clamouring for new generation universities? Our university system cannot and should not be viewed in isolation from the decadence that our country has descended into. Our universities are only reflecting and adapting to the changes in our society and doing it with academic excellence. We will talk more about that later. But first let us consider what is a new generation university?

SLIDE 13: NEW GENERATION UNIVERSITY

We use age as a measure for categorizing our universities into first, second and third generations. But let us see what criteria others use to define and categorize first, second and third generation universities. Wissema in his book *Towards the Third Generation University: Managing the University in Transition*, enumerated the characteristics of the three generations of universities. **SLIDE 14:** The first generation universities were the medieval universities, which existed between 1100 and 1700. They grew out of the Latin schools from “the personalities and the inheritance of Plato’s Academia and Aristotle’s Lyceum. They were often located near important churches or monasteries. Latin was the language of study, and the schools focused on the preservation of sacred body of letters and sciences from antiquity. They were set up to educate, defend the truth and graduate professionals. The Humboldt or second generation universities span the period 1400-1860. In addition to the objectives of the first generation universities, that is, providing education, the second generation universities added research to discover nature in the study of modern science through monodisciplinary approach. Her graduates were not just professionals, but also scientists. The second generation university did not spring up in a flash, but had a transition period of 400-500 years between 1400 and 1860. This was the first transition period between the first and the second generation universities. The third and current generation universities began in the late 1990s. The transition from second to third generation universities (TGUs), started in the 1950s, about the time our first university in Nigeria was established, as an appendage to and a college of the University of London. The TGUs are global in orientation, distinct from the national orientation of the second generation universities. The TGUs, in addition to being centers of education and research are exploiting the results of their research and working with industries to create value and make entrepreneurs of their graduates. The TGUs, while maintaining the traditional university functions of teaching and research, are innovation generation universities, actively engaged in transfer and implementation center. A typical classroom of a TGU consists of a diversity of students- part time, school leavers, career changers, distance learners, who are 200 miles or more apart, and connected and receive their lessons via video conferencing. In preparing for success in the global economy, these TGUs engage all potential learners, and are open to exchanging ideas, new teaching methods and technology. They provide alternative educational solutions and products. They respond to markets which demand diversity at all levels including those in vocational training and academics. But more important, the TGUs must be intricately woven into the fabric of the local communities, serving as a positive force for growth and prosperity. Indeed, the TGUs through their success globally enhance their relevance to the immediate community

Can we class any of the universities in Nigeria as a new generation university? If not, what does it take for a Nigerian university to become a genuine new generation university? What steps are we taking to frustrate our universities developing into TGUs? **SLIDE 15:** Let us take a step back and try to define education. So, what is education? I hope by the time I define the word “education”, we will be able to decide whether the type of education we have in Nigeria, is POOR QUALITY EDUCATION, DYSFUNCTIONAL EDUCATION, UNPLANNED EDUCATION, or MIS-EDUCATION. It is important for us to know what type of education we currently have, and so that we will be able to clearly define the steps we need to take to turn our universities into genuine and new generation universities. Education has no less than ten components; and just as a car, has many components which combine to make it a car. So also, the ten or more components of education blend together to make education complete. The components of education are culture, development, edification, enlightenment, information, instruction, learning, schooling, teaching and tutoring. I am reminded of the Holy Book, which says in Gal 5:22 – 23 that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Note the Book says the fruit and not the fruits. So also the fruit of a USEFUL, PRACTICAL, EFFICIENT, WELL-DESIGNED and new GENERATION education is a person or a citizen of knowledge, erudition, scholarship and wisdom, who is also a person of polish, civilization, tradition and culture.

SLIDE 16: Article 26, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights focuses on education and it states¹, Everyone has the right to education.

Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

Elementary education shall be compulsory.

SLIDE 17: Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Let us see how close Nigeria is to fulfilling the education aspect of the Universal Human Rights. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Today in Nigeria, it costs more to send a child to the nursery and kindergarten than to send a child to some secondary schools or university. Equally, the cost of secondary school education in some parts of Nigeria surpasses what we charge in most, if not all of our private Universities. Elementary education shall be compulsory. According to information from UNICEF, Nigeria has 10.5 million children out of school in 2015 giving Nigeria the title of the country with the largest population of children out of school’ At secondary school level, only 36% of males and 29% of females eligible for enrolment in our secondary schools were enrolled for the same period. We have it on record that of the over 1 million secondary school students who take the JAMB examinations for admission into our tertiary institutions, less than 10% meet the criteria for admission into the University. What happens to the rest...? they sell recharge cards, are forced into slave labour and become area boys and the girls go into international human trafficking. Becoming the weapons of mass destruction unleashed on innocent citizens during voter registration exercise and elections. At the last count, we have 117 Universities in Nigeria, many of which remain glorified thatched roofs calling themselves ivory towers; suffering from insufficiency of adequately trained and qualified staff, poor infrastructure, and gross parental underfunding.

Again, let me draw your attention to Article 26, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Higher education. It says Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the BASIS OF MERIT! It did not say that Higher Education, like elementary education, shall be free or compulsory, AND AVAILABLE TO ALL; nor did it say that, like Technical and professional education, it shall be made generally available. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says Higher education shall be equally

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accessible to all on the basis of merit. It is important for us to keep this in mind, as we remember one of our reasons for issuing licence for the establishment of universities.

The second part of Article 26, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says “.....*education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms*”. Unfortunately, with our education has not succeeded in achieving the full development of the potential of the Nigerian child. Unfortunately, with our education has not succeeded in achieving the full development of the potential of the Nigerian child. The positive influence of an educated person must produce an improvement in the life of the citizens of his or her country.

SLIDE 18: Let us briefly take a look at the just concluded MDGs. Nigeria was among the 189 countries from across the world that endorsed the United Nations Millennium Declaration in New York in September 2000, which led to the adoption of the eight time-bound Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the monitoring indicators.

The eight goals were to be achieved by respective countries by 2015 and were stated as follows:

- MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education
- MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- MDG 4: Reduce child mortality
- MDG 5: Improve maternal health
- MDG 6: Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for Development.

The goals were intended to increase an individual’s human capabilities and "advance the means to a productive life". The MDGs emphasize that each nation's policies should be tailored to that country's needs; therefore, most policy suggestions are general. It is obvious that education has a significant role to play in the achievement of the MDGs. Indeed, the catalyst for achieving each of these goals is education. Nigeria’s MDG end report is coined in such positive way that it masks the fact that of the 8 goals, we met only one (MDG8- Develop a global partnership for Development.), partially met another (MDG5 - Improve maternal health) and failed to meet the other six goals, including MDG1-eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, MGD 2- achievement of universal primary education, MDG3-promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, MDG4- reduction of child mortality, MDG6-combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases. MDG7- Ensure environmental sustainability. Let us consider in details our performance on MDG 2 and MDG4. For MDG2, primary school enrolment actually declined from 60% in 1995 to 54% in 2013. In 2011, I made a presentation titled: In the presentation I said “*The MDG2 sets a target that by 2015, we should have ALL CHILDREN completing a full course of high quality primary schooling. We are told that currently in Nigeria, 84 out of 100 school age children attend school³; an increasing number is staying to Grade 5. The net enrolment ratio in primary school education was 84.26% in 2005 from 81.1% in 2004. The literacy rate among 15-24 year olds improved from 76.2% in 2004 to 80.20% in 2005. These are figures the government wants us to swallow. Please swallow them with a bucket of salt*”. Last year UNICEF told us that about 10.5 million children who should be in school are out of it. As for primary six completion rate, Nigeria remained largely on track towards achieving this indicator. The completion rate which stood at 73% in 1993 trended upwards in most of the subsequent years culminating in 82% at the end-point year. The literacy rate increased marginally from 64% in 2000 to 66.7% in 2014. The significant rate of 80.0% achieved in 2008 could not be sustained. You now know why an NGO activist said “A lot of universities

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are glorified secondary schools, and some of the products of university education cannot even put a couple of sentences together.” We laid the foundation for failure to put a couple of sentences together, at the primary school level, no need blaming the universities, who have only assisted in putting a poor icing on the cake of a destitute and deprived education.

On MDG 4, reducing child mortality, our under-five mortality rate (U5MR) has improved remarkably from 191 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000 to 89 deaths per 1000 live births in 2014, but still short of the 2015 target of 64 deaths per 1000 live births by 28 %. Our infant mortality rate (IMR) was estimated at 91 deaths per 1000 live births, in 1990, the decreasing to 58 deaths per 1000 live births in 2014. Again, this is still short of the 2015 target of 30 deaths per 1000 live births. On immunization of our children against vaccine preventable diseases such as measles, polio, the proportion of one-year-old children immunized

against measles increased from 46% in 1990 to 63.0% in 2014. What all these figures mean is that of the 6.7 million children born in Nigeria in 2014, thirty-three thousand, eight hundred and twenty of them died before they reached the age of one year, two every hour.

SLIDE The second Millennium Development Goal² - MDG2 sets a target that by 2015, that is, at the end of last year, we should have had ALL CHILDREN completing a full course of high quality primary schooling. We are told that currently in Nigeria, 84 out of 100 school age children attend school³; an increasing number is staying to Grade 5. The net enrolment ratio in primary school education was 84.26% in 2005 from 81.1% in 2004. The literacy rate among 15-24 year olds improved from 76.2% in 2004 to 80.20% in 2005. These are figures the government wants us to swallow. Please swallow them with a bucket of salt.

I feel strongly that Nigerians want university education, and indeed, education in general, help in the achievement of the full development of the potential of the Nigerian child who will eventually become the adult citizen.

One huge lesson for Nigeria from the failure to meet 6 of the 8 MDG goals, is how the size with the enormity of our population diminishes the outcome of most of developmental efforts. This is one lesson we have refused to acknowledge or learn. Any time the issue of population growth management is mentioned we see no population, hear no population or talk no population. Demographers say we add one Nigerian every 6 seconds to our population. This means by the end of this year, we will have 5,270,400 children born. Given a combined infant and U5M of 180, we will still have 4,221 780 children reaching the school age.’ To enroll all these children in primary school, we will need 140,726 class rooms, and need to build on the average 28,145 classrooms over the next five years. This comes to building 77 classrooms per day. This shows the enormity of our problem arising from our unplanned population growth

SLIDE Let me ask two or three naughty questions. Do you notice that Nigeria has never appointed a petrol attendant as the Minister of Petroleum Resources, nor have we appointed a bricklayer as the Honourable Minister of Works? Has any road side mechanic become the Federal Minister of Science and Technology or the Street Medicine Seller appointed the Minister of Health? It has always been the educated – the Professors, the Accountants, the Political Scientists and economists, the writers, the engineers etc. who run government. Now to my naughty questions; but before then, let us refresh our mind of the ten components of education- culture, development, edification, enlightenment, information, instruction, learning, schooling, teaching and tutoring. I have a feeling that we missed some components of education from the origin, that is from the home and continue to discard more

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of the components of education as we progressed through the primary and secondary levels. By the time we reach the tertiary level, all that is left is the carcass of true and real education and we end up with poorly educated, graduates who were mis-educated and receive first class degrees in dysfunctional education. Now to my questions. 1. What component of our education is missing in the upbringing of our political leaders, who fight in the respected chambers of the national assembly, who loot the national treasury, so much so that 500 or so of them take 25% of the resources meant for 150 million of us? What component of our education is missing in the development of our Governors, who when caught in the net of EFCC, plea bargain or run away or use the court to cut the rest of us to pieces? I ask what component of our education is missing in the upbringing of our parents that make them jam JAMB, squeeze the neck of NECO and fabricate certificates so their children can gain admission into our centers of decomposed educational excellence. What component of our education is missing in the training of our civil servants and contractors that make them inflate contracts, execute budget in the real sense of EXECUTION, and fiddle with documents to filch our finances. Finally, what component of education is missing in the upbringing of our pastors and preachers that make them defecate on the altar of celestial adulation. Whatever is missing that has made our education system what it is today, must be corrected, changed if we must get the New Generation University we clamour for. Indeed, to get such a generation of universities, there is a role for us all, not just for academicians, researchers, lecturers but also for our political and traditional leaders, our parents and the ordinary citizen on the streets of our cities, towns and villages

There are two approaches to building a new generation university or to use a popular Nigerian catch phrase “a world class university”. I hear some of our academic leaders, in order to achieve world class status through the back door, describe their universities as the “Harvard of Nigeria” the “MIT of Imo State” or the “Oxbridge of South and South West Combined” Each of you casting your university in borrowed brands, should be thoroughly ashamed for equating your glorified secondary school to a real world class university. It is deceitful. You must thank your luck that the owner of the brand you stole has not sued you to court for a three count charge of defamation, libel and slander. You can build a new generation university by transitioning from an older generation university to a new generation university, as done by China, Germany, Russia, South Korea, or Taiwan. These countries provided additional funding to promote their top flight universities to enable them better able compete globally. Nigeria too, has made some attempts at “upgrading” some of the older universities to “world class” universities. Unfortunately, the outcome has been what you get when you put new wine into old bottles, or like banks putting new money into bad debts. The debts usually get written off. The second route is to establish a new university from scratch with the clear objective of creating world-class institution. Whichever method is used; certain common attributes are needed. Both methods require vision, passion and courage. According to Richard Miller, President of Olin College, *“The opportunity to start from a blank page and create an entire institution from concept to reality is a rare and precious gift. It enables many possibilities that would be unthinkable at established universities.* Building a new generation and world class university is an arduous and lengthy task which requires careful planning and scrupulous attention to details. The first and perhaps the most important step, in the same class as provision of adequate funding, is putting together a well thought out vision which should be succinct, creative, memorable, unique and realistic. In addition, the mission must be clear, ambitious, descriptive, and achievable.

The curriculum of the university, which must be based on the vision and mission of the university, has to be a product of a logically and carefully considered, as well as a well-reasoned process. A cursory look at the academic briefs of some of our existing universities give the impression that they were

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pieced together by excerpting and combining fragments from multiple academic briefs of previously licensed universities; They represent artful masterpieces of cutting and pasting adapted, altered, revised, reformed, adjusted or amended visions, missions and programmes of other approved universities. It is as if “once you read one, you have read them all”. Let us look at the missions of some of our universities. No less than 12 Nigerian universities plan to become *world class universities*. We have another set of six or seven universities that would apply *cutting edge techniques in teaching and research*, while another set of four universities dream of becoming *the foremost university in the entire world*. But by far the best mission is that of the university destined to become the *first choice and foremost cutting edge world class citadel of education and learning in the world*. In some of these universities, part time teachers pursuing their postgraduate degrees and at the level of Lecturer 1 status are running the departments. For how long shall we continue to deceive ourselves?

The curriculum of courses in a new generation university should be developed to reflect the needs of the society in which the student will eventually serve. It must be current, relevant and dynamic; subject to such modification and adaptation which will ensure that the graduates of the university can effectively respond to changes in and demands of the society. The academic briefs of many of our universities are pointers to the lack of depth in thought and non-appreciation of the true needs of our nation. Many of the new universities still run the same programmes approved for the early post-independence and first generation universities. It will not be a surprise that many of these universities still run courses in single subject courses such as botany, zoology philosophy. Going by the number of universities offering degree courses in banking, business administration and financial studies, Nigeria should not be wallowing in economic woes, even in the face of wanton and licentious looting. The number of religious (Christianity and Islamic) studies graduates we turn out of our universities should guarantee us a nation in a state of religious tolerance and freedom from murder and kidnapping. A few years ago, I checked the number of publications on malaria, over a period of five years, published by researchers in five of our foremost universities and they numbered 5,000. It is as if we squeeze one publication out of every case of malaria in Nigeria, and yet we are unable to do anything positive about controlling malaria in Nigeria.

A new generation university must create the conducive environment for learning by giving care to the design and construction of buildings (lecture halls, laboratories, hostel accommodation etc.) to ensure that students learn in a conducive environment and are provided with infrastructure, needed to carry out cutting edge scientific research. The vision, mission, academic plan and objective of the university must be brought into consideration in the design and construction of the physical infrastructure so that the infrastructure meets the requirements of the vision, academic plan and objectives of the new university. We already see that many of our universities are littered with poorly maintained or abandoned and incomplete buildings. Therefore, the university becomes a hostile environment learning. The absence of basic infrastructure, facilities and amenities (power supply, water, etc.) is the fastest way to destroy a new generation or any university at all.

However, effective utilization of good infrastructure and facilities require good governance, a visionary and strong leadership as well as a team of qualified academics and administrators. The effective leadership should work under the authority of an independent Council, able to provide guidance and empowerment. The governance framework and clear definition of roles must be put in place and implemented.

We are all witnesses to the activities surrounding the appointments of Vice Chancellors of our universities. The process is characterized by wrangling, bickering, squabbling, internal strife and back

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biting. At times, we escalate the battle for the selection of Vice Chancellors and move it outside the ivory tower, involving traditional rulers, governors and parliamentarians. We bring in issues like federal character, geopolitical zoning and our differing tribe and tongues to the simple issue of selecting a Vice Chancellor that should hinge on merit. I hear also of people who in order to become Vice Chancellors have gone beyond the secular to seek the assistance of modern and ancestral spiritual powers. Some we are told have fasted and gone into prayer sessions in the day time only to initiate plan B, by going naked at night before the ancestral shrines, carrying sacrifice of decapitated chicken, raw egg, a dash of palm oil and cowries. We do know also, that many of those who get nominated into the Councils of our universities, are people who have no idea of the vision and mission of the university on whose Council they serve. Many of them see the appointments as another opportunity to use the position for self-service, and to recoup whatever investment they may have ploughed into the political party they represent in the University Council, no matter, how beautiful a university campus is, it will be an empty shell without appropriate academic and administrative leadership. New generation universities are not built on such decadent, degenerate and immoral administrative frameworks. Any structure built on such a depraved and corrupt framework will collapse, sooner or later.

The survival of a new generation university, as indeed any other type of university, is predicated on the provision of adequate funds for capital projects. At the same time ample funds must be provided for the first few years of operation of the university. A business plan to ensure the sustainability of the university must be developed and implemented. Above all, the operations of the university must be based on accountability and judicious use of funds. A university has no business by either taking out a full page colour advertisement to celebrate the electoral victory of the president or the birthday of the Chairman of the University Council. The Vice Chancellor and Registrar of such a university should be charged to court for misuse and misappropriation of university funds

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS AGAINST ESTABLISHMENT AND SURVIVAL OF A NEW GENERATION UNIVERSITY IN NIGERIA?

According to Reed and Hawkins in their publication titled *"The Emergence of the New Generation University"*. universities nowadays have become *"a particular kind of public corporation, autonomous but accountable, state-funded yet fee-charging, open to all yet selective, enjoying special privileges but expected to fulfill a range of functions for the public good"* However, the new generation university in Nigeria, has to go a step above the general run of universities. It must be responsive to the international and domestic markets. It must be more efficient in the management of available funds in view of the decline in public funding. It must also be more competitive in its teaching and teaching methods in order to attract students on campus and off campus. It must be adaptive and adept in research activities and application so as to take advantage of local and international commercial opportunities. Above all it must have a good public perception as demonstrated by its adherence to high standards of accountability and responsibility

What then are the constraints against establishing and nurturing a new generation university in Nigeria, with the characteristics enumerated above. Put another way, what are the constraints against establishing and nurturing a world class university in Nigeria. History has shown that when a nation was willing to change, her people reinvent themselves in a new process of creative thinking. The people of Nigeria must be reinvented in a new process of creative thinking. Like the Bible says we must be new creatures: **old things** must pass away; so that all **things** are become new. We must think

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anew, reflect anew, deliberate anew, meditate and cogitate anew, work anew, relate anew, see our country in a new light, believing and confident that our country has the human and financial resources to be a top rate country, to have the faith and act the faith, that we can establish, nurture and sustain new generation and world class universities. But first we must ERADICATE the current Nigerian attitude to work, ERADICATE our acceptance of corruption as customary and stealing as standard practice. We must be bold to condemn the culprit and put the burglar behind bars. In our creative thinking as a people and as a nation, we must become a country with

- a love for and acceptance of excellence,
- a desire to settle for only the best
- a culture of open regard for honesty
- a high standard for both private and public living
- a boldness to oppose evil and stand up for what is right
- a resistance to forces of evil and decadence
- a resilience for staying on the course of probity
- a penchant to seeking today the solutions to the problems of tomorrow

PROBLEMS/CONSTRAINTS OF BUILDING NEW GENERATION UNIVERSITIES

It must be clear from onset that a new generation university cannot exist or function in a vacuum and must operate within the political, social and cultural situation in Nigeria. Therein lies the first and major problem for such a university in Nigeria. We will not go into the details of Nigeria's position in the records of Transparency International, or the poor perception of Nigeria in the world. These issues directly or indirectly affect the ranking of Nigeria universities. Therefore, the first constraint to establishing a new generation university begins with the country itself. Let us see some of the criteria used in ranking universities and how the state and attitude of the government and people of Nigeria can influence our play with such criteria. The criteria include i). Number of academic staff with PhD or equivalent, ii). Percentage of equipment fully operational and calibrated or physical facilities that meet safety and quality standards, iii). Number of book titles in the Library, iv). Ratio of academic staff to students, v). Number of programmes accredited by professional bodies, vi). Amount of research grants received, vii). Number of research products/recognitions conferred by national and international bodies, viii). Number of papers refereed and cited in refereed journals, ix) Number of articles, books and publications per staff, x), Number of patents attained and xi). Number of products commercialized. Another ranking organization has just five criteria. These are the numbers of i). Stiff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, ii). Highly cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories, iii). Papers published in Nature and Science journals, iii). Papers indexed in Science Citation Index-expanded and Social Science Citation Index and v). Per capita academic performance of an institution. We do not need a soothsayer to tell us that if 10,000 universities are ranked based on these criteria, most Nigerian universities will come in at the bottom of the list. There is no way a university can attain any ranking of merit, certainly not a poorly funded university, or one established with criteria alien to merit, or headed by people selected on their lobbying capacity and capability, and run by Council members, some of whom are in Council to milk and suck dry the University.

There is a need for a change of attitude by genuine academicians in Nigeria. Let me start with the National Universities Commission (NUC). The Commission must continue to carry out university accreditation using people of integrity who will ensure that every university abides by the rules and regulations of accreditation. I think in the recent past, the NUC has become a tool of the government, not a true commission for university education in Nigeria. The word commission has different meanings and purposes. A commission as noun can be i). a charge – payment, fee, cut, costs,

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expenses, ii). an official group – committee, authority, agency, administration, board or working group. iii). a task – an assignment, duty, mission, or job, iv). an order – command, directive, and the word commission as a verb, can mean to hire, order, appoint, contract or assign. From the state of our universities, it is easy to see that at different times our NUC has fit some, if not all the definition of a commission. When a government says it is establishing universities as gifts to stated, one may translate that to mean that the universities are being established for political reasons or as a political gift horse. Our NUC has gone along with the government without a whimper! When there are allegations that some of the people who conduct accreditation exercise in the name of NUC, receive BROWN ENVELOPES, and NUC asks “Are those who give and take the envelopes not your academic colleagues?”, then NUC forgets one thing that the accreditation bears the tag: NUC ACCREDITATION. When it is clear and glaring that many lecturers are hirelings, peddling their certificates to the numerous newly created staff-starved universities, and when universities hire lecturers for accreditation purposes, like building contractors hire artisans on a daily basis, then you wonder what type of accreditation we are getting in our universities and what NUC is doing about it. There was a year, when NUC did not have funds to carry out the accreditation exercise, and requested universities to pay the cost of the exercise. My university was levied a certain sum, and I requested for details on how the amount levied was arrived at. The initial response of the NUC was to label me as rude and troublesome. Eventually, after insisting on getting the details, I was told that the levy was to cover transport and daily subsistence of the ten or so “accreditors” coming to accredit five programmes over a period of 2-3 days in our university. Instead of having 5 people on the accreditation team, only 3 showed up and stayed for 6 hours (11 am- 5 pm) to accredit five programmes in our university. NUC is yet to respond to my request for a refund for transport and subsistence allowance paid for the two others who did not show up at all, and the subsistence allowance for those who stayed for 12 hours instead of 3 days. I need not tell you that some of those programmes ended up with interim accreditation! We deceive ourselves, don’t we, when we accredit universities using outdated, obsolete, archaic and outmoded benchmarks, and at the same time, expecting to be ranked among the best universities in the world! Those antiquated benchmarks that have remained on the bench for years have a way of stifling innovation and encouraging adapting to the changes in our society. Any wonder we produce unemployable graduates. Hear what has been said about unemployability of Nigerian graduates.

They include comments such as “lack of employability skills”, “failure of school curriculum to place emphasis on practical concepts of entrepreneurship” and “too much emphasis on theoretical education than entrepreneurship exposure”, “quality and focus of training offered by the universities not in tune with the needs of society”, “most of the programmes run in the universities are irrelevant”, “university lecturers fail to update themselves and so cannot impact new knowledge”, “lack of basic mental, social practical and developmental skills to function effectively at assigned jobs”, “ lack of digital skills and digital creativity”, “most curricula used in the university system today are outdated and no longer in tune with current realities” and “the quality of education in Nigeria is low”. These comments were made by top officials of the NUC, Vice Chancellors, Deans of Colleges and employers. The question is what are we doing about finding solutions to these problems?

The leadership of our universities must combine their academic excellence with some measure of courage and insist in being treated decently and with respect. I am not sure if it is still common practice, But, often, Vice Chancellors get text messages requesting their presence in Abuja within 24 hours on the MANDATORY invitation from the Honourable Minister. For one, I have never seen where an invitation is mandatory. For two, given the poor transportation and communication systems, it may mean you waking up at 5 am to catch the first flight to Abuja, so you can arrive for the 10 am

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meeting. Then the Honourable Minister arrives four hours late, at 2 pm, to tell you what was announced on the NTA a week before, or the Minister stays with the Vice Chancellors for about thirty minutes and announces gleefully that he must leave to answer an urgent call from the State House. The autonomy that ASUU fought for with so much sweat and blood is being eroded and chipped away with the connivance of the academic and administrative leadership of our universities. The recent “sack” of thirteen Vice Chancellors by the ‘Honourable’ Minister of Education is a case in point. The so called sack is a demonstration of the high handedness of the Minister and a lack of respect for the guiding procedures rules and regulations for appointment of Vice Chancellors. This is a blatant violation of the autonomy of universities as entrenched in our cherished Constitution. We read of the Minister saying the government will not go back on this decision. While we see his remarks as a demonstration of arrogance, we are comforted that our President once presented a budget to the National Assembly which led to the sack of some officials in the Department of Budget. Our hope is that the right Minister will be sacked, and not the Vice Chancellors, many of whom had retired, before the unfortunate sacking. They had served this country to the best of their ability and they deserve our national appreciation and national honours. True, we called for CHANGE, but this is not the change we sought when we changed the government. However, what stunned me on this matter me is the ‘loudness’ of the silence of Almighty ASUU.

The NUC exercise of accrediting universities is a system for ensuring quality assurance and that programmes meet minimum academic standards. The 2013 exercise evaluated 420 programmes in 29 universities. Only 11 or 2.6% of programmes evaluated were denied accreditation, while 109 (45%) received interim accreditation. The reasons for not attaining full accreditation by the programme hinged on poor staffing, inadequate physical facilities and library resources. In 2010, NUC issued the decree that all lecturers in all universities, must possess PhD degrees within five years. It is over ten years since the decree was promulgated, and universities are unable to fulfil this condition. The NUC ruling that all lecturers must be PhD holders requires reevaluation in a country that pays scant attention to staff development, especially at university level. Between 1970 and 2010, a period of 40 years, one of the first generation universities produced less than 1,000 M. Phil and PhD graduates. In some of the disciplines, the University awarded only one postgraduate degree. Production of good and high quality PhD graduates cannot be mass produced like pure water, and they should not, and must not be so produced. Given the rate we mass establish universities, and our inability to attract PhD holders – be they foreign or “diasporic”- to our university system, we will continue to have universities with staffing problems. No one is opposed to the need to have quality teachers in our universities, but the achievement of that objective, will remain a mirage in the desert, unless we address seriously and aggressively address the issue of postgraduate training in our university system. Well, we all know that we have a penchant for burying our heads in the sand of deceit and fantasy, pretending that it can be done with the resources we allocate to staff training. We are only exposing our behind for the world to laugh at us.

Distinguished audience, the education light that we see at the end of a dark tunnel must not be flickering candle light blowing in the wind. It must be the full head lights of an oncoming train about to stop at the station. From the station, we must all join the train as we continue our journey on a road clearly illuminated by the powerful headlight of all the components of EDUCATION: decency, integrity, loyalty, faithfulness, culture, development, edification, enlightenment, information, instruction learning, schooling, teaching and tutoring, using these components, we can hear the song of our Nigeria of old....

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Can we be silent for a moment...Can we listen to the music and the melody of the old song of Nigeria. I can hear the talking drums from deep down the bowels of the nation. I can hear a sonorous voice coming from the great and small rivers of Nigeria. I can hear the singing from the banks of the streams and streamlets watering the land of Nigeria. Can you hear it? I hear it, oh yes, I hear it. I hear the voice of Nigeria:

The silent voice of sanity and the quiet voice of probity

The hushed voice of honesty and the calm voice of decency

The still voice of honour and the soft voice of reason

The tranquil voice of integrity and The serene voice of virtue

The soothing voice of godliness and The peaceful voice of contentment

The voice of my old Nigeria

Do you hear it.....Do you?

It is now time for a prophecy. I see a tertiary education in Nigeria turning the corner for the improvement and transformation of the Nigerian society, but only if we do two things. One, the entire tertiary education system (private and public) must reach for more than it can grasp, that is, our reach must exceed our grasp. Unfortunately, the same society seeking change, and the government and its agencies, have disabled tertiary education by cutting the big toe and index finger of tertiary education, disabling it, but not totally halting it. It must be at the doors of our academicians that the buck must stop, if we must establish, nurture and the sustain new generation universities. The politicians handle politics, the traditional rulers handle customs., the policemen handle law and order, so also must academicians take the leadership and work together with the society to handle education. We must do it better than the politicians have handled our politics and the policemen our lawlessness and disorder. Again I repeat, if we must turn the fortunes of tertiary education around for good, the academic community, the custodian of the new generation of universities must have a reach exceeding its grasp and reach for more than it can grasp. There was a time when young lecturers had the shoulders of older and experience professors to stand on, so they could see far ahead. That time is gone. Now there are no more giants with shoulders to stand on. What we have now are midget's product of years of poor staffing and poor funding of our universities and the poorest of attitudes.

The second point is that we must tackle education from the beginning, the very foundation of education, that is, our homes. As we run after money (legitimately or otherwise), we are out of the house before the cock crows, and return long after the chicken has retired to bed. Weekends are not for relating to the children, but for exhibiting conspicuous consumption and celebrating fraudulence and ill-gotten gains. Our children only hear of integrity; they rarely see it practiced. If then the Nigerian education system must be the instrument for the full development of the human personality and for the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, it must not begin in the nursery or primary school. Education must start from the home. If we do not address the home training of our children, it will matter little what we do in our nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary arms of the education system. We must nurture our children at home, on the need for integrity and hard work. We must train our children at home, through a daily dose of personal and moral example. As parents, we must show no distinction between our private and public life. We must begin at home, the education of those who will enter our tertiary institutions and who will lead Nigeria aright, in the future.

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All that is left is for me to say thank you to the Vice Chancellor and other officers of the of the University of Abuja, and members of Planning Committee for the 2016 Convocation, for the honour you have done me, by your invitation to deliver this lecture. To all of you beautiful and honorable ladies and gentlemen I thank you for blessing me with your distinguished presence and your enduring and dignified patience. Most important of all I thank God Almighty who has been so good to me in more ways than I can count or remember. My time is up, and I rest my case

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