



EULOGY DELIVERED BY

***RACHEL ODEDE,
UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR A.I.***

**IN HONOR OF
*PROFESSOR ADEBAYO ADEDEJI, CFR***

WINDHOEK

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PROFESSOR ADEBAYO ADEDEJI, CFR
(21st December 1930 – 25th April 2018)

Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR), Grand Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the Eagle (GCOL), former Federal Commissioner (Minister) for Economic Development & Reconstruction, Nigeria and former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa died, aged 87 years, on Wednesday 25th April 2018, after a brief illness.

The late Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Asiwaju of Ijebu and Olotu'fore of Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria had a singularly distinguished academic, managerial, national and international, diplomatic and political career in service to Nigeria, Africa and the international community.

At the age of 36 years, he became a full-fledged Professor of Public Administration at the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Nigeria where he rose to be Director of the University's Institute of Administration. In 1971, he was drafted into General Yakubu Gowon's government as the cabinet minister responsible for the economic development and reconstruction of post-civil war Nigeria. He was founder and pioneer chairman of the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the father of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which he established in May 1975 – after more than three years arduous negotiations with governments and countries divided into Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone spheres of influence.

He was appointed United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa in June 1975 and was promoted to the rank of United Nations Under-Secretary-General in January 1978 – a position he held with tremendous success until July 1991 when he resigned to return to Nigeria after 16 years of international service.

Prior to this, at the height of the African Great Drought Disaster and Economic Crisis of 1984 to 1986, Professor Adedeji also served as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Africa's Economic Crisis in addition to his onerous duties as ECA's Chief Executive.

Immediately after his resignation from the United Nations in 1991, Professor Adedeji established the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS), a non-government, independent, continental, non-profit-making think-tank dedicated to multi-disciplinary and strategic studies on and for Africa. Born out of the need to fill the void in strategic thinking in Africa, the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS)' *raison d'être* was to provide and promote options for overcoming the multi-layered marginalisation of the vast majority of African peoples – be it within local communities, nation-states or the global economic and political system.

Through his engagement for creating a viable and sustainable centre for future studies, Professor Adedeji continued to dedicate himself to the struggle for an Africa that was an integral part and a fully respected partner of the world community. He was also an unrepentant believer in African integration and development, and during the first years of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS), mobilised the intellectual and research community in Africa and beyond in support of its research programme, the primary purpose of which was to identify policies, strategies and struggles for evolving mutually beneficial relations between post-apartheid South Africa and Africa as a whole.

In his writings, Professor Adedeji stressed the need for Africa's socio-economic transformation and for genuine democratisation based on an indigenously-crafted human-centered holistic development paradigm. "The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP)" (1989) as well as the "African Charter for Popular Participation" (1990) bear his unmistakable imprint. Both were endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly and have become hallmarks in Africa's emancipation debate.

Professor Adedeji initiated a major continent-wide proactive basic and fundamental research and strategic study of Africa's conflict-ridden and war-torn societies and polities under the theme "Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts". A strong advocate of democracy in Africa and of the democratisation of the development process since 1975, he consistently argued, even when it was imprudent to do so, that Africa's persistent economic crisis was but a consequence of the political crisis which manifested itself in a

lack of democracy, accountability, good governance and the pursuit of a human-centered holistic development paradigm.

After his departure from the United Nations in 1991, Professor Adedeji also served extensively as consultant to United Nations organisations, African governments, non-governmental organisations and universities. Such positions included economic adviser to the government of the Republic of Namibia (from 1991); the United Nations Secretary-General's Panel of Independent High-Level Advisers on the future course of United Nations development activities (1992); chairman of the High-Level Group of Experts on the future of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994); consultant to the United Nations on Asia-Africa Co-operation (1997); member of the Advisory Board of the United Nations African Futures Project – co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank, (AfDB) (from 1998).

In addition, he was a founding member of the 2005 Africa Forum of Former Heads of State and Heads of International Organisations. He was also Chairperson of the African Peer Review Mechanism's Panel of Eminent Persons (APRM), established under the auspices of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development and designed to embrace all stakeholders, including government, civil society organisations and the private sector, thereby engaging the polity in a permanent dialogue on good governance.

During his lifetime, in recognition of his contributions, Professor Adedeji was awarded several national honours by various African countries, including Grand Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the Eagle (GCOL) in 1995 by the Republic of Namibia and Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR) in 2001 by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He was also a proud honorary citizen of the Republic of Namibia since 1995 until his death.

In 2010, after turning 80, Professor Adedeji retired from public life and spent the last years of his life quietly in his home town of Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria.

He is survived by children and grandchildren.