
The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR
The Honourable Minister of State for Education, Chief Nyesom Wike,
The Hon. Minister of Sports/Chairman, National Sports Commission & Supervising Minister of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Alhaji Bolaji Abdullahi,
Vice-Chancellors,
The President of NUGA, Mr. Ken Anugwueje
The NUGA Executives,
The Chairmen & Directors of Sports form Various Universities,
All Protocol Officers,
All NUGA Participants,
Ladies & Gentlemen.

It is, indeed, a great pleasure and delight to welcome you to this auspicious occasion of the opening ceremony of the 24th Edition of the Nigerian Universities (NUGA) Games. On behalf of the Council, Senate, Staff and Students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, I welcome the athletes, officials and organizers of the Games to Ile-Ife, the cradle of civilization, and to our great University, popularly known as ‘Great Ife’, the foremost university in Nigeria with the most beautiful campus in Africa.

Permit me to use this occasion to thank the National Council of NUGA for granting our University the hosting right, which was sealed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Council of NUGA and our University at Ile-Ife on Tuesday, 24th April, 2012. The Games, which formed part of the activities for our University’s 50th Anniversary celebrations, however, could not hold in 2012 because of the National Sports Festival in Lagos and other unforeseen circumstances. At one of its meetings in Ile-Ife, the NUGA Management and OAU agreed that the Games should hold between 3rd and 10th October, 2013 but again this was not possible due to the prolonged ASUU strike.

In preparation for the Games, the University embarked vigorously on the construction of all the facilities and infrastructure that are needed for the successful hosting of the Games. Apart from the existing modern facilities at our Sports Complex, which consist of an all-purpose Pitch with Pavilion, a Football Pitch, 3 Tennis Courts, One Cricket Oval with a Pavilion, a Hockey Field, Handball Court, an all-purpose Gymnasium, 4 Badminton Courts, 1 Basketball Court were renovated and upgraded. Importantly, I am happy to inform you all that the University also completed the construction of an Olympic-size Swimming Pool and Terrace, 4 new Volleyball Courts and 2 Handball Courts with appropriate Terraces. The Athletics Main Bowl comprising an 8-Lane Tartan Track of IAAF Standard and Field, which was donor driven, was also completed in record time for the Games. The University seizes this opportunity to thank VAST International Company Limited, the contractor for the Swimming Pool and the Tartan Track for a job well done.

The University, as a foremost ICT University in Nigeria, is equipped with a bandwidth of 550Mbps and a Cloud Computing Environment (CCE) with a 7.7 TB cloud server, telepresence with Huawei TP 3118 products, a functional website and Media Centre where journalists covering the Games will have easy access to information on a daily basis.

You may kindly recall that the appellation “Great Ife”, which our University is well known by originated from sports excellence following the formidable foundations laid by the late Mr. Isaac Akioye, former Director of our Institute of Physical Education, through the successes he recorded everywhere our athletes went.
Permit me to state that part of the vision and mission of the present University management is to bring back the glory of “Great Ife” during this competition. Permit me to also remind you that the University creditably and successfully hosted the 3rd Edition of the Games in 1970, and the 10th Edition in 1984. The University is therefore determined to host the best games ever with the provision of up-to-date world-class facilities on ground, ensuring a hitch free organization and making optimal welfare provisions for the athletes and officials of the Games. We will be hosting about 7,000 athletes from about 80 universities, 600 seasoned technical officials from recognized sports institutions/associations in Nigeria and many honourable guests are also expected to grace this 24th Edition of NUGA Games.

Sports are perceived as well-structured physical activities guided by rules and regulations. I therefore appeal to all athletes and officials to put up their best performance and adhere strictly to the rules and regulations governing all NUGA events so that we can have successful competitions.

I also enjoin spectators who normally play the role of motivating athletes to perform optimally. Winners of competitions should display humility while other competitors should accept their fate with the spirit of sportsmanship. Sportsmen and women should interact freely since sports are meant for social interaction. You are enjoined to be friendly and ready to learn from one another.

Lastly, sports activities should build unity, physical fitness and confidence in participants. It is my firm belief that these identified values of sports should be displayed in all athletes during this NUGA Games.

I wish to remind you all that the NUGA Games are not designed for winning medals alone but for the all-round development of students, by reducing tension and encouraging peace and harmony in a wider perspective.

As the competitions progress, please endeavour to take time off to visit some historic centres in Ile-Ife. I also call on NUGA officials to utilize this golden opportunity to look for potential and talented athletes that can represent the nation at international competitions, for example, the Commonwealth Games holding in July, 2014 at Glasgow.

We cannot but thank the Almighty God for making it possible to hold the Games despite daunting challenges faced by the University. I therefore express the appreciation of the University to the Federal Government for the release of funds for the construction of the Olympic Size Swimming Pool. We thank individuals and corporate bodies including Zenith Bank Plc., Diamond Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA), First Bank Plc., Guaranty Trust Bank, Barrister (Dr.) Jimoh Ibrahim of the Energy Group, Pastor E. A. Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the National Sports Commission and other organizations for their financial support and assistance towards the hosting of the Games.

I admonish you all to view this 24th Edition of the Nigerian Universities (NUGA) Games as the beginning of a bright future for the promotion of Sports Education programmes in Nigerian higher institutions.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, we welcome you to Obafemi Awolowo University Modern Sports Complex. Please rest assured that the Game Village is safe and hazard free. I wish you all a memorable competition and pray for journey mercies as you return to your various destinations after the Games.

Thank you.

Professor Bamitale Omole
Vice-Chancellor