



# CONVOCATION LECTURE FOR UNIVERSITY OF JOS

35TH & 36TH CONVOCATION  
CEREMONIES & GOLDEN JUBILEE

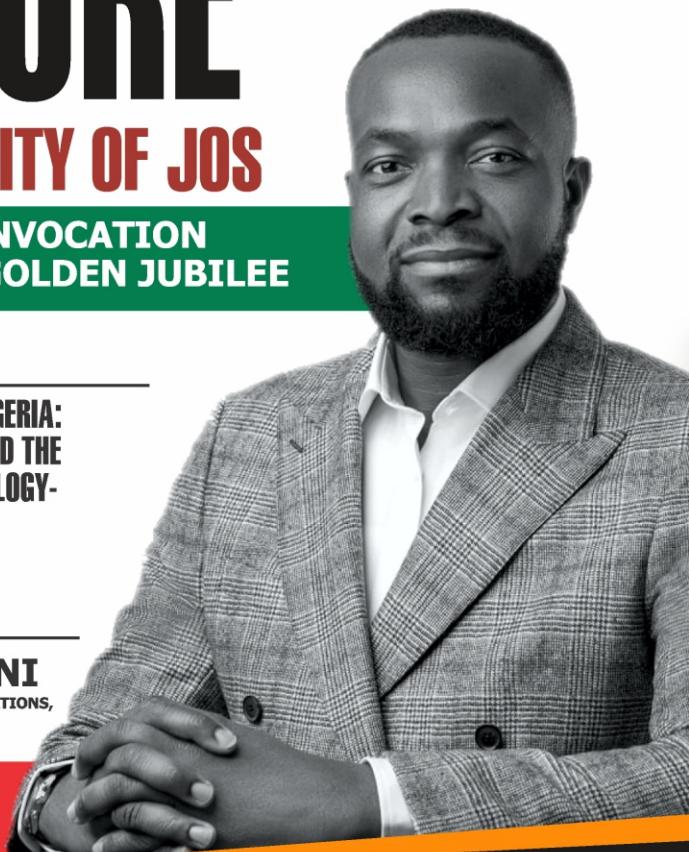
## TOPIC:

BUILDING A PROSPEROUS NIGERIA:  
ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE  
ARCHITECTURE OF A TECHNOLOGY-  
POWERED SOCIETY

## DELIVERED BY:

**DR. BOSUN TIJANI**  
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS,  
INNOVATION & DIGITAL ECONOMY  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER, 2025



## **NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Nigeria, we hail thee  
Our own dear native land  
Though tribe and tongue may differ  
In brotherhood we stand  
Nigerians all are proud to serve  
Our sovereign Motherland

Our flag shall be a symbol  
That truth and justice reign  
In peace or battle honoured,  
And this we count as gain  
To hand on to our children  
A banner without stain

O God of all creation,  
Grant this our one request  
Help us to build a nation  
Where no man is oppressed  
And so with peace and plenty  
Nigeria may be blessed.

## **UNIVERSITY ANTHEM**

UniJos our UniJos  
Founded in the Lord's glory  
Fountain of Knowledge  
Discipline and dedication.

Building leaders in earnest  
Lighting up the nation's path  
With knowledge genuine and pure  
In character and in learning

UniJos our UniJos  
Setting the pace in leadership and  
Learning.  
In service of God and Man  
To humanity's delight and  
development

God is our strength  
Growth and excellence is our goal  
In all that is fair and upright  
God bless our UniJos.

## **NATIONAL PLEDGE**

I pledge to Nigeria my country  
To be faithful, loyal and honest,  
To serve Nigeria with all my  
strength,  
To defend her unity  
And uphold her honour and glory  
So help me God

**Convocation Lecture, University of Jos  
35th & 36th Convocation Ceremonies & Golden Jubilee**

**Topic: Building a Prosperous Nigeria: Academic Institutions  
and the Architecture of a Technology-Powered Society**

**Delivered By: Dr. 'Bosun Tijani  
Honourable Minister of Communications,  
Innovation & Digital Economy  
Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**Friday 12th December, 2025**

**CONVOCATION LECTURE PROGRAMME**

1. Procession
2. Opening prayer
3. National Anthem
4. University of Jos Anthem
5. Introduction of Dignitaries present
6. Welcome address by the Vice-chancellor
7. Citation of the guest lecturer by Prof. Sarah Lwahas
8. Convocation lecture to be delivered by Dr. Bosun Tijani, the Hon. Minister of Communication, Innovation and Digital Economy
9. Presentation of gift to the Guest Lecturer by the Vice-chancellor
10. Vote of thanks by the Deputy Vice-chancellor, Academic, Prof. Rahila P. Gowon
  - UniJos Anthem
  - National anthem
  - Procession in reversed order



## **DR. 'BOSUN TIJANI**

HONOURABLE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, INNOVATION & DIGITAL ECONOMY  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

# CONVOCATION LECTURE

UNIVERSITY OF JOS 35TH & 36TH CONVOCATION  
CEREMONIES & GOLDEN JUBILEE



FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER, 2025

## TOPIC: BUILDING A PROSPEROUS NIGERIA ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF A TECHNOLOGY-POWERED SOCIETY

Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council,  
Sen. Grace Folashade Bent, CON,  
The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tanko Ishaya,  
Members of Council and Senate,  
Distinguished Professors and Scholars,  
Proud Parents and Guardians,  
And above all, the Graduating Class,

It is a profound honour to stand before you today, not only as a Minister of the Federal Republic, but as an alumnus of this great institution.

This university shaped me twice — first as a Diploma student in Computer Science, and later as an undergraduate in Economics. The convergence of those two disciplines — computation and economic thinking — is, perhaps, what brings us together today to reflect on how societies build prosperity in an age shaped so deeply by technology.

That this lecture coincides with the Golden Jubilee of the University of Jos makes the moment evenmore meaningful. Fifty years is not merely a celebration of longevity; it is an invitation to askadeeper question: What kind of future should the next fifty years produce for Nigeria — and whatrole must our universities play in shaping it?

Let me begin where universities are most comfortable: with theory.

Economists have long sought to explain why some societies grow richer while others struggle. One of the most enduring frameworks is the Cobb-Douglas production function, expressed simply as:

$$Y = A \cdot K^{\alpha} \cdot L^{\beta}$$

Where:

- $Y$  represents total economic output,
- $K$  is capital,  $L$  is labour,
- and  $A$  represents technology, innovation, and technical efficiency.

What this formulation teaches us is something profoundly important: asociety can add more workers and invest more capital, but without improvements in  $A$  — technology and knowledge — growth remains limited and fragile.

Technology, therefore, is not an accessory to prosperity; it is its multiplier. It determines how effectively labour and capital are combined. It is the difference between linear growth and exponential progress.

This is why nations that invest in science, research, innovation, and skills consistently outperform those that rely solely on natural resources or demographic advantages. And it is why universities sit at the very heart of any serious conversation about national prosperity.

However, technology does not advance societies automatically. Nations must organise deliberately to appropriate it. Broadly, there are three ways societies do this:

#### **First: Adoption**

This involves importing technologies developed elsewhere — machinery, software, industrial systems — and using them locally. It is often the starting point.

#### **Second: Adaptation**

Here, societies take imported technologies and modify them to suit local conditions — climate, culture, scale, cost, and context.

#### **Third: Creation**

This is the highest stage — when a country develops its own technologies, exports them globally, and shapes international standards.

Let us consider two instructive examples.

China began its modern journey largely as an adopter — importing manufacturing techniques and industrial know-how. It then moved deliberately into adaptation, localising and improving upon those technologies. Today, China is firmly in the creation phase — leading in areas such

as advanced manufacturing, renewable energy technologies, electric vehicles, telecommunications, and artificial intelligence.

Malaysia, closer to home, offers a more sobering lesson. Decades ago, Nigeria expertise in palm-oil science was ranked very highly compared to countries like Malaysia. However, Malaysia decided to invest heavily in research, university-industry collaboration, and continuous innovation. Today, Malaysia is one of the world's leading palm-oil exporters. Nigeria, regrettably, lost its leadership position – not because the crop changed, but because the knowledge system weakened.

The lesson is clear: technology appropriation is not accidental – it is institutional.

This brings us naturally to the role of academic institutions.

Universities are not merely places of instruction; they are national infrastructure for intelligence.

They perform at least five critical functions in a technology-powered society:

- Knowledge Creation – expanding the frontier of what a society knows.
- Human Capital Formation – training the minds that power industries and institutions.
- Research & Development – turning ideas into usable solutions.
- Social Interpretation of Technology – understanding ethical, cultural, and economic implications.

No nation has transitioned successfully from adoption to creation without universities playing a central, intentional role. Where universities are weak, nations stagnate. Where universities are strong, societies innovate.

Digital technologies provide us with a vivid contemporary illustration.

Digital transformation is not merely a technical exercise; it is deeply social, economic, and political. It reshapes how governments function, how businesses compete, how citizens engage, and how identities are formed.

This is why digital public infrastructure, digital literacy, cybersecurity, innovation ecosystems, and digital governance cannot be addressed by engineers alone. They require economists, sociologists, legal scholars, ethicists, and policy thinkers.

Universities are uniquely positioned to help societies make sense of technology, not just deploy it. They help ensure that innovation serves people – not the other way around.

As Nigeria looks toward the ambition of becoming a \$1 trillion economy, artificial intelligence will be a defining factor. AI is the new A in the production function – a powerful multiplier of productivity across agriculture, healthcare, education, manufacturing, governance, and creative industries.

But effective AI adoption requires careful national preparation, especially in five areas where academic institutions must lead:

### **Inclusive Research & Data Representation**

AI systems must understand Nigerian realities — our languages, cultures, industries, and social structures. Universities must lead research into inclusive datasets and contextual intelligence.

### **Low-Compute Innovation**

Nigeria cannot rely solely on expensive computing infrastructure. Research into efficient, low-resource AI models will determine how broadly our society can participate in the AI economy.

Nigeria cannot rely solely on expensive computing infrastructure. Research into efficient, low-resource AI models will determine how broadly our society can participate in the AI economy.

### **Trust, Safety, and Guardrails**

AI governance, ethics, and safety are not optional. Universities must anchor evidence-based frameworks for trust, accountability, and responsible use.

### **Talent Development**

We need technical experts, yes — but also policy thinkers, ethicists, economists, and social scientists who understand AI's broader implications.

### **Global Leadership**

Nigeria must not be a passive rule-taker in global AI governance. Our universities must help position us as thoughtful contributors and leaders from the Global South.

As analumnus, I say this with both pride and challenge: The University of Jos must not merely observe Nigeria's future — it must help architect it.

Our universities must align their research, teaching, and partnerships with the national imperative of prosperity. They must ask not only what is publishable, but also what is transformative.

Our universities must align their research, teaching, and partnerships with the national imperative of prosperity. They must ask not only what is publishable, but also what is transformative.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I announce today that the Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation & Digital Economy will establish and support a National Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence at the University of Jos — the first of its kind in Nigeria.

This centre will serve as a hub for advanced research, talent development, policy engagement, and innovation — contributing directly to Nigeria's technological and economic future.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,  
Graduates of the University of Jos,

Nigeria's future will not be built by chance. It will be built by knowledge, courage, and deliberate organisation.

As you step into the world today, remember: prosperity is not inherited — it is designed.  
May the next fifty years of this great university help design a Nigeria that works for all.

Thank you, and congratulations to all.

*Dr. 'Bosun Tijani*

HONOURABLE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS,  
INNOVATION & DIGITAL ECONOMY FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
OF NIGERIA

# CITATION OF CONVOCATION LECTURER

**Dr. 'Bosun Tijani is the Minister of Communications, Innovation & Digital Economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

Recognized as one of the TIME100 AI 2025 awardees for his leadership role in advancing AI globally, Dr. 'Bosun Tijani serves as the Minister of Communications, Innovation & Digital Economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. An accomplished entrepreneur and business leader, Dr. Tijani is a pioneer in the African startup ecosystem and has been instrumental in driving innovation and fostering the growth of tech startups across the continent. He is the co-founder and former CEO of Co-Creation Hub (CcHUB), a leading pan-African technology and innovation center with presence in Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda and Namibia. Founded in 2010, CcHUB has played a pivotal role in nurturing startups through mentorship programs, funding initiatives, and access to essential resources.

Under his leadership, CcHUB became a vital catalyst for the African tech ecosystem, promoting collaboration, knowledge sharing and the development of groundbreaking solutions to local and global challenges. Dr. Tijani's visionary leadership, passion for technology, and commitment to fostering a thriving startup ecosystem have made him a respected figure in the African tech communities. His dedication to creating opportunities and driving innovation continues to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs in Nigeria and beyond.

Prior to CcHUB, he led the networking and coordination of leading innovation agencies across Europe as European Innovation Manager at PERA, with the aim of standardizing the varying methodologies for commercializing research results. He had also previously worked at the International Trade Centre, in Geneva Switzerland overseeing the design and implementation of technical support programmes geared towards enlightening and assisting exporters in Sub-Saharan Africa in maximising the use of information and communication technologies for export marketing.

Dr. Tijani is an exemplary scholar who holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Jos, a Masters degree in Information Systems and Management from Warwick University and a Doctorate degree in Innovation and Economic Development from the University of Leicester. He is also an adjunct professor at the Wits School of Governance, South Africa.

His PhD research focused on contributing to a better understanding of how the network perspective to innovation capacity serves as a contextually relevant framework for explaining the adoption and adaptation of innovation in developing countries and offers an alternative path to how African countries can effectively organise to strengthen their innovation ecosystems.

He was a member of the UK Advisory Committee on Digital Access Africa; a committee member for the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) on Science and Technology; and a member of the Expert Advisory Group to the European Commission on mainstreaming technology and innovation in the relationship between Europe and Africa.

Dr. Tijani is the Vice Chair of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council, and Co-Chair of the ITU Submarine Cable Advisory Body, reflecting his commitment to strengthening global digital infrastructure. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Digital Innovation Board for the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development.

Dr. Tijani is a Desmond Tutu Fellow and a Fellow of the Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law at the prestigious Stanford University. He is happily married with three children.



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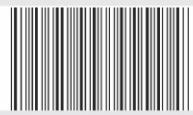
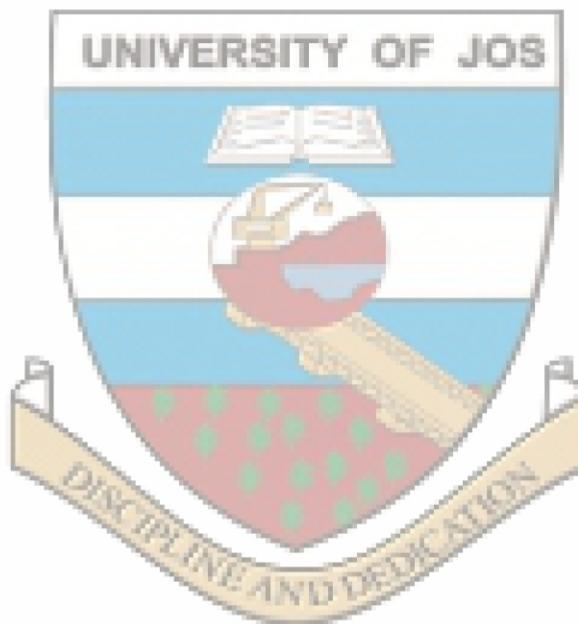


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