

**SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, PROFESSOR FRIDAY E. OKONOFUA AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE FRIENDS OF UNIMED FUND – JULY 7, 2016**

Your Excellency, the Executive Governor of Ondo State, Dr Olusegun Mimiko, and the First Lady of the State, Mrs Olukemi Mimiko

The Deputy Governor of Ondo State, Alhaji Lasisi Oluboyo and his lovely wife  
Senators and Members of members of the House of Representatives here present

The Secretary to Government of Ondo State

The Speaker, Ondo State House of Assembly

Members of the State House of Assembly here present

The Chief Judge of the State

The Head of Service

Chief of Staff

Chairman of this occasion – my colleague in the specialty of obstetrics and gynaecology – Dr AO Akinniyi

Chairman, Governing Council of the University of Medical Sciences, Emeritus Professor OO Akinkugbe, CON, NNOM

Our most revered members of the Governing Council of the University here present

Our Royal Father of the Day - The Osemawe of Ondo Kingdom, Oba Victor Kiladejo, Jilo III, MB ChB (OAU, Ile-Ife), CON

Other Royal Majesties and Kabeyisis here present (Name them). In particular:

The Oni of Ife HRM Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II

The Deji of Akure – HRM Oba Aladetoyinbo Ogunlade Aladelusi (Odundun II)

The Olowo of Owo HRM Oba Folagbade Olateru Olagbegi III

The Olugbo of Ugbo Kingdom – HRM Frederick Obateru Akinruntan

The Olukare of Ikare – HRM Oba Akadiri Mommoh

Other highly respected Obas, Princes and Princesses here present

Very Distinguished High Chiefs of Ondo Kingdom and beyond here present

Principal Officers of the University

Commissioners and Special Advisers here present

Vice-Chancellors and principal officers of other Universities here present

My Lord Spiritual and Temporal

Staff and students of the University

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is the Day the Lord has made – we shall rejoice and be glad in it. It is with great pleasure and special delight that I welcome you all as Special Guests to this unique and auspicious occasion – the launching of the Friends of UNIMED Network (FUN, FUF). After several months of preparation, I thank the Almighty Lord for making today possible. Seeing the array of dignitaries and special Guests present here today gladdens my heart and will remain one of the most memorable days in my life.

The University of Medical Sciences is now slightly over one year old. During this period, it has witnessed substantial growth and development that we can now proudly beat out chest and say that this noble has come to stay. Let me begin therefore by paying tributes to the originator and the brain behind the idea of this University – which is no person other than the highly revered and progressive Governor of Ondo State, His Excellency, Dr Olusegun Mimiko, MB, ChB (OAU, Ile-Ife), CON – the only human Iroko in Nigeria. Surely, when the history of this University is written, and the development of pioneering health infrastructures in this country is choreographed, the name Olusegun Rahman Mimiko will ring out loud and clear.

I also wish to thank those who have worked tirelessly behind the scene to make this project a reality. And I will mention just a few. HRM Kabiyesi Oba Victor Kiladejo has worked on this project as if his very existence depends on it. Sir, we are indeed, very grateful and we pray that the Almighty Lord will continue to bless and protect you as you take the Ondo Kingdom to greater height of development. Our Chairman of Council, Distinguished Emeritus Professor OO Akinkugbe is not only our Chairman, he is also the Chief Advisor of the University, and the chief architect of many of the milestones we have identified for the University. We are very grateful to you sir for what you have been to this University.

I also wish to thank the Commissioner of Health, Dr Dayo Adeyanju – for his pioneering role in ensuring the take-off of the University can never be forgotten. We are also grateful to the Commissioner of Education, Arc Jide Adejuyigbe and the Commissioner for Finance, Chief Yele Ogundipe – who have continued to function as unpaid chief disciples of the University. We are also supremely grateful to Professor Peter Okebukola and Professor OA Bamiro, who are themselves Pro-Chancellors and Chairmen of Governing Councils of several Universities for standing firmly like the proverbial rocks of Gibraltar in support of many steps so far taken by the University.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, let it be on record that we are here today because of the uncanny foresightedness, nobility of purpose and patriotism of one man. He is our very respected High Chief Olusola Adeduro, the Sasere of Ondo Kingdom. Chief Adeduro is not only a member of the Governing Council of the University, he is also one of the leading benefactors and an ambassador plenipotentiary of the University. As a member

of the Fund Raising Committee of the University, High Chief Adeduro was the person who suggested the idea of small funds from several persons that would collectively go into bigger funds for growing the University. Since then, not only has Chief Adeduro personally advertised the fund to several persons, he has attracted some notable persons – specifically Chief Sunny Ade and Mr Olasehinde, who have promised to donate big projects to the University. In the case of Chief Sunny Ade, High Chief Adeduro, has promised to support him in implementing his mega-project for the University. Furthermore, High Chief Adeduro has not only donated his entire seating allowance as a member of the Governing Council to the University's development, he has actually paid the school fees of some indigent students who could not pay fees in the University.

Sir, the entire staff and students of the University are exceedingly grateful for what you have done for the University in the short period of our existence.

The mission of the University is to provide exceptionally high quality education and service delivery that will stem the current propensity for Nigerians to travel abroad for medical treatment. We promise that within the first 5 years of its existence, this University and associated teaching hospital will be the medical tourism destination of Nigerians. This will save the State and the country monumental funds that are currently being expended by Nigerians in overseas hospitals.

To achieve this noble objective, we realise that we cannot do it without substantial funding. For a new University, we need to build new infrastructures – offices, laboratories, auditoria, lecture halls, etc. These are some of the things older Universities have accumulated over time, but for us just starting, we need sufficient funds to build the infrastructure to the same level that older Universities have attained, and even more. And with stringent accreditation requirements of the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) hanging as albatross over our neck, we cannot take the issue of infrastructure and equipment lightly.

So, we require substantially larger amount of funds as compared to older Universities. However, we realise that government alone cannot bear the burden of funding. Government has come up with this great and noble idea of the first Medical University in Nigeria, but it is now left for civil society to ensure that the idea does not die.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that is why we are here today to appeal to well-meaning Nigerians to make small contributions that will collectively lead to a big resource for growing the University.

The Friends of UNIMED Fund is only one of ten Fund raising ideas that the University is pursuing. Indeed, the entire University has been transformed into a fund-raising citadel, with every staff being involved. For example, nearly all staff members have made voluntary contributions to the FUF, and many are involved in the implementation of one fund raising strategy or the other. We believe very strongly that together these ideas will generate a quantum of resources that will help the University to achieve his mission and vision.

The immediate needs of the University to meet the accreditation requirements of the NUC and the MDCN are presented in the brochure with you.

**(To run through the pictures in the power point very briefly – 5 mins)**

Today, we are launching the Friends of UNIMED Fund. The idea is to generate a cohort of friends for the university who will make regular, small and determined financial contributions towards the implementation of specific projects in the University. *It is not the size of individual contributions that will matter, but rather the number and consistency of the contributors.* The goal of the University is to attract one million faithful friends who make annual donations of at least one thousand naira (₦1000) each. This will amount to about One Billion Naira each year, enough to embark on major developmental projects each year for the University.

Despite that the minimum amount is ₦1000, we welcome even smaller amounts, but we will have different categories of donors as follows:

**Platinum Friends of UNIMED (PFU)** – donations above ₦50 million

**Diamond Friends of UNIMED (DFU)** – Donations between ₦25 million and ₦50 Million

**Golden Friends of UNIMED (GFU)** – Donations between ₦10 Million and 25 Million

**Silver Friends of UNIMED (SFU)** – Donations between ₦1 Million and ₦10 Million

**Bronze Friends of UNIMED (BFU)** – Donations between ₦100, 000 and ₦1 Million

**Special Valued Friend of UNIMED (SVFU)** – Donations between ₦20, 000 and ₦100, 000.

**Valued Friend of UNIMED (VFU)** – Donations between ₦1000 to ₦20, 000

**Friend of UNIMED (FU)** – Donations less than ₦1000.

**Super Friend of UNIMED (SFU)** – Any person who mobilises a substantial number of friends for the University will be designated **Super Friend of UNIMED (SFU)**. At this point, I must mention Mr Cosmos Ugwem, who is present with us today who has been mobilising friends to support the University both at home and abroad. He is the first friend to be so designated as the Super Friend of the University.

Special certificates, broaches and plaques will be presented to the donors in accordance with the type and category of donations they make.

In particular, the University will name projects donated by big donors after those that make the donations.

For smaller donations, the funds will be accumulated until such a time they are large enough to fund a major project for the University. A room will be left within the building where the names and amount donated by Friends will be permanently imprinted for future generations of Nigerians to see. We will of course, use other ways to honour our esteemed donors and benefactors.

Finally, let me assure everyone present here today that all funds donated to the University will be used judiciously and only for the sole purpose of developing the University. Not a single Naira of this fund will go into any personal pocket, and certainly not my personal pocket. Within the next few weeks, the Ondo State Auditors will complete the task of auditing all incomes and expenditures made by the University since its establishment only one year ago. The results will be published in all channels of the University for all to see. That is the level of transparency and accountability being envisaged for the management of the FUF. All receipts and expenditures under the Fund will be published regularly for all to see.

Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your presence here today, and look forward to a good outcome for this launching.

May God bless you all.