

*MANIFESTO*  
*of*  
*Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, SAN*

Table of Contents

1.0. INTRODUCTION ..... 2

2.0. WELFARE..... 5

    2.1. Medical/Health Insurance ..... 5

    2.2. Free medical Outreaches ..... 6

    2.3. NBA Life Assurance Policy ..... 6

    2.4. Access to Credit..... 7

    2.5. E-Consultation..... 7

3.0. ENHANCEMENT OF EARNING CAPACITY ..... 7

    3.1. Remuneration ..... 7

    3.2. Protection of Lawyers’ Business..... 8

    3.3. NBA Employment Bureau..... 9

    3.4. Continuing Professional Development..... 10

        3.4.1. NBA – Annual General Conferences ..... 10

4.0. INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ..... 11

    4.1. Regulatory Reforms..... 11

    4.2. Professional Conduct and Discipline ..... 11

    4.3. The Institutional and Governance Structure ..... 13

    4.4. Strengthening the NBA Sections, Fora and Institutes ..... 14

    4.5. Other Organs of the Association ..... 15

    4.6. Financial Stability ..... 15

    4.7. Stamp and Seal..... 16

5.0. POLICY FRAMEWORKS..... 16

    5.1. Legal Education Reform ..... 16

    5.2. Justice Sector Reform..... 17

        5.2.1. Reformed Bar and Bench Relationship ..... 17

        5.2.2. Speedy Dispensation of Justice..... 18

6.0. RULE OF LAW, ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY ..... 19

7.0. YOUNG LAWYERS ..... 19

    7.1. NBA-Law Firm/Institutional Mentorship Partnership for Young Lawyers..... 20

8.0. ATTAINMENT OF GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS..... 20

9.0. ONE DYNAMIC BAR..... 21

10.0. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS & RELATIONSHIPS..... 21

11.0. STATE OF THE NATION ..... 21

    11.1. NBA and National Security..... 21

    11.2. NBA and 2023 General Election..... 22

12.0. CONCLUSION ..... 23

PLEDGE ..... 24

*“The respect in which the Bar in any country is held is the best indicator of the freedom in that country.”*

*Sir Adetokunbo Ademola*

---

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

Our generation of lawyers is bedevilled by what I believe to be the loss of identity of ‘the ideal Lawyer’ and this, by necessary implication, has in no small measure militated against our ability to function in our primary calling as lawyers; a call to serve Justice. This will naturally bring about social, economic and political change to our country, Nigeria and will engender productivity, prosperity and empowerment of the people and thus guarantee the wellbeing of the entire citizenry – lawyers inclusive.

The performance of this primary role by each of us (lawyers) will aggregate to the birth of a Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) that will champion the course for the recovery, reformation and repositioning our nation yearns for. What seems like an abdication on our part as Lawyers, wittingly or unwillingly, can be addressed by galvanising the support and resourcefulness of lawyers towards this end. The NBA under my leadership will not only be one, big, strong and inclusive Bar; it will look for/go after its members to bring them into the fold. This shall be done from the understanding that it is the responsibility of the NBA to look after the general welfare and wellbeing of its members – after the similitude of the “Good Shepherd”. We shall seek out each member, bring them into the fold and deliver the benefit of membership to the entire body. We understand that it is only in identifying with its members that the NBA can appreciate their individual/collective needs and forge the required corporate resolve that will put the NBA in position to discharge its constitutional objectives.

The legal profession has the potential to get Nigeria out of the woods if we are deliberate about discovering or rediscovering ourselves. Then what we do can be translated into the experience of our Nation at large and the NBA in particular.

This understanding must motivate and drive us into looking after ourselves as a body of professionals for efficient discharge of the bigger responsibility identified above. It is only a Bar which has placed a premium on standards and integrity; concern for the wellbeing, prosperity and empowerment of its members, that can properly, effectively, purposefully and deliberately function in its primary role as standard-bearer for the larger society.

In doing this, the leadership of the Bar at all levels must understand that this ideal is the core responsibility of every legal practitioner. Therefore, we must be prepared to inculcate this ideal in all members of the profession in order to develop and sustain an unbroken succession of the ideology and philosophy through successive generations of lawyers.

My journey into the law profession and where I stand today is a function of providence and the privileges/ opportunities I was given as a young lawyer. I firmly believe that the great potentials which lie within our younger colleagues are not fully discovered and harnessed, because there are either few or no opportunities given for their potentials to find expression. I have in the course of my growth in the profession, strived to afford younger colleagues within the limits of my reach, the opportunity to express the gifts in them.

I am persuaded from my experience that what we must do to recover lost grounds as an Association and regain our voice in speaking for the downtrodden and the oppressed, is to invest sacrificially and strategically in the great potentials and resourcefulness of our younger colleagues.

**My name is Yakubu Chonoko MAIKYAU, SAN, FCIMC.** I am known to many as Y.C. Maikyau. I obtained my Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Degree in 1989 from the prestigious Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and was called to the Nigerian Bar on 12 December 1990. After the mandatory NYSC programme, I joined the law firm of Messrs. Danladi Bamaiyi and Co. in Sokoto, where I worked for 13 years and rose to become the Head of Chambers until I founded the law firm of Y. C. Maikyau & Co., in 2003, with offices in Abuja, Sokoto and Kebbi States. On the 26 August 2011, I

was conferred with the prestigious rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria. I obtained a Diploma in International Commercial Arbitration from the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, London, United Kingdom and was admitted as Fellow of the Institute (FCI Arb) in September 2014. I am also a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (FICMC).

I am a member of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) and the International Bar Association (IBA). As a member of the Nigerian Bar Association, I have served and continue to serve the Bar in many capacities. I was a Member of the NBA Legal Profession Regulation Review Committee (LPRRC), which made far-reaching recommendations for the reform of the Profession culminating in the Legal Profession Regulation Bill; Chairman, North Disciplinary Committee from 2012 to 2014; I am the immediate past Chairman, Law and Individual Rights Committee of the Section on Legal Practice and had also served as a member of the ad hoc Welfare Committee set up by the NBA to alleviate the hardship occasioned on members of the Bar by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am the pioneer and current Chairman of the NBA Welfare Committee and have been a member of the NBA National Executive Council (NEC) since 2018.

As an advocate, I have had the privilege of handling several notable cases that have impacted on the Nigerian legal landscape. One of such cases was *Re: Abdullahi, (2018) 14 NWLR (Part 1639) 272*, where the Supreme Court of Nigeria, on the strength of our arguments, reached a novel decision, allowing the substitution of a deceased appellant in a criminal case with the administrators of his estate for the purpose of preserving the civil rights of the estate. Very early in my career, I also had the privilege of capturing national attention as counsel in the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission of Nigeria – The Oputa Panel – set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo, following the return of Nigeria to Democracy in 1999. Beyond litigation, I have advised on alternative financing transactions, facility disbursement and served on arbitral tribunals as sole arbitrator, co-arbitrator, presiding arbitrator and counsel.

Outside the field of law, I am a graduate of Rhema Bible Training Centre, Nigeria, where I was awarded a Diploma in Ministerial Training, with emphasis on Societal Leadership. I am a community development and welfare enthusiast and Patron of Purpose Global Academy in D'lanko, Danko- Wasagu Local Government Area, Kebbi State – a pet project which has been responsible for several free medical outreaches in my home state, Kebbi State. I am happily married to Zainab Maikyau and the marriage is blessed with Four (4) children.

I am from Kebbi State, one of the States in the Northern geographical zone as delineated by the NBA Constitution, 2015 (as amended) (the “NBA Constitution”). It is to this geographical zone that the office of the President of the NBA is zoned from August 2022 to August 2024. I have met the eligibility requirements under the NBA Constitution and therefore hereby humbly offer to serve, our great Association in this capacity.

## **2.0. WELFARE**

As the Chairman of the NBA Welfare Committee, I have the honour and privilege of being placed in charge of developing policy and implementing the welfare agenda of the NBA. If I am elected President, members can expect enhancement of existing welfare schemes and development of new ones for the improvement of their health and wellbeing.

### **2.1. Medical/Health Insurance**

The NBA Medical & Health Insurance Scheme is part of the mandate of the NBA Welfare Committee which I currently have the privilege to chair. On **2 May 2021**, the NBA signed an MOU with the NHIS, having negotiated a **₦15,000** premium for members to subscribe and be enrolled into the NBA NHIS GIFSHIP (Group Individual and Family Social Health Insurance for Policy). **₦15,000,000** was paid for 1,000 members of the

Association under the pilot scheme. Access cards were issued to beneficiaries under the pilot scheme. Other members of the Association have also subscribed to the scheme at ~~N~~**15, 000**. We shall build and consolidate on the gains of the scheme.

In addition to renewing the subscription for the 1, 000 members in the pilot scheme in the first year, we will pay for an additional 1, 000 members for each year of our administration. This will bring the total number of our members on the scheme to 3, 000 at no cost to them. The additional numbers of beneficiaries will target 50% lawyers of between 1 to 7 years post-call while the remaining 50% will be spread among other groups with no less than 100 physically challenged lawyers.

Furthermore, our administration will enter into partnership(s) with health institutions to secure subsidised fees for medical/laboratory services. The NBA-Medicaid Cancer Foundation partnership will be consolidated. This is to help members stem the rising tide of cancer related ailments through early detection and medication.

## **2.2. Free medical Outreaches**

Our administration will work closely with all Branches of the NBA, to encourage and support periodic free medical outreaches at the Branch level.

## **2.3. NBA Life Assurance Policy**

This administration has negotiated an increase in payable death benefits by 100%. It is now N2, 000, 000 in the event of death and N1, 000, 000 in the case of terminal sickness or accidents resulting in partial incapacitation. We will continue to negotiate with our insurers for increased insurance pay-outs with the aim of achieving an increase of 50% in the pay-out, if the incentive is increased.

## **2.4. Access to Credit**

The current Finance Committee, to its credit, negotiated with various financial institutions including Access Bank Plc and First Bank Plc, and announced a finance scheme for lawyers in 2021. The scheme will provide credit to lawyers at single digit interest rate far less than the market rate of 23%, to enable lawyers set up their practice. The NBA backstops the facilities with funds of the Association domiciled in selected financial institutions. My administration will continue and improve on this scheme.

My administration will actively engage with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) regarding the classification of law firms as Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) to enable them benefit from fundings available to SMEs through the CBN. We will canvass for increased borrowing thresholds, reduced interest rates and access to other facilities. We will also engage with Islamic Banks in order to accommodate the needs and preferences of all our members. We will take advantage of our numeric strength in seeking other lending and financing arrangements that would be of benefit to the members of the NBA.

## **2.5. E-Consultation**

As a means of consolidating the NHIS scheme and a way of enhancing access to medical health, we will leverage technology as a means of consultation between doctors and our members, working together with healthcare providers. This way, we can expand the scope of the health care cover, ease access to doctors and promote the wellbeing of our members.

## **3.0. ENHANCEMENT OF EARNING CAPACITY**

### **3.1. Remuneration**

The issue of the poor remuneration of lawyers (especially young lawyers) and the corresponding challenge of the poor earning capacity of lawyers is an area to which our administration shall devote a lot of time. The NBA



Remuneration Committee has done tremendous work in data collection and analysis relating to earning and wages across the country. The resultant report was presented to and approved by NEC at its meeting of 17 March 2022.

My administration will make this a major plank of its administrative agenda and seek to achieve standardisation and enhanced standards of service delivery by members of the NBA to the legal profession in Nigeria. During the debate at NBA- NEC on the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee, it was clear that there was unanimity of opinion regarding the need to take positive steps to improve the current situation of undercutting of fees by lawyers, as well as deal with the issue of earning capacity & pay. The issue of conditions of service of lawyers in law firms and at other organisations that employ lawyers is one that goes to the root of integrity and existence of our profession. My administration will address these issues by publicising the report of the Remuneration Committee so that members of the Association are aware of the reasons for the recommendations. My administration shall implement the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee by immediately taking forward aspects of the recommendation that require urgent action.

### **3.2. Protection of Lawyers' Business**

Whilst the above paragraph on Remuneration and the Report of the NBA Remuneration Committee deals with the structural issues that affect the earning capacity of our members, it is clear that competition from other professions like Estate Surveyors/Agents and Accountants and indeed foreign law firms and local financial institutions constitute a clear and incessant existential danger to our profession.

Our administration will apply the highest level of vigilance in monitoring all forms of invasions into our territory. Fundamentally, we will operate under a principle of protectionism that would aim to preserve exclusivity to the legal profession in Nigeria. My view is that we need to invest much more in professional development and standards of service delivery before we can consider any form of liberalisation. This approach will be

adopted in our conversations regarding the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement and advances by other Bar Associations regarding mutual recognition of qualifications.

We will focus on professional capacity development of our members through our Continuing Legal Education programmes to guarantee quality service by our members, in order to justify the space taken back by us and prepare members to compete favourably in the global legal market.

### **3.3. NBA Employment Bureau**

I understand that not all lawyers are desirous to venture into the practice of law in the traditional private legal practice, join private corporate organisations or the Public Bar.

We will establish an NBA Employment Bureau that will be saddled with the responsibility of interacting/interfacing with Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) both at the Federal, State and Local Government levels, including the Armed Forces, Police and other paramilitary organisations, to seek placements for our members. Apart from securing employments for our members, this is one sure way of positioning our members in strategic sectors and offices whilst enabling some of the best resource persons to man the affairs of the State that will cause the much-desired socio-economic change for Nigerians in the long term.

This strategy is directly connected with the appreciation of our primary responsibilities as agents of socio-economic change and the need to unleash our potentials in the efforts to recover, reform and reposition the Nigerian State.

The proposed NBA Employment Bureau will liaise with our members for proper guidance/placement in their quest for employment. This will be so for those seeking to be employed either in public service or private enterprises. The relevant information that will be elicited from such

members seeking employment will play an important role in developing training programmes by the ICLE to help prepare members for employment in their chosen career path.

### **3.4. Continuing Professional Development**

The enhancement of continuing professional development of members is integral to the maintenance of standards and the promotion of an organised system for the profession. Prior to the empanelling of the Board of the NBA-ICLE in 2021, not enough attention had been paid to this all-important duty of the NBA to its members. The NBA under my administration will invest in manpower and technology for the NBA-ICLE to ensure that it operates at full capacity and achieves its true potential. My administration will continue with the affordability, availability and accessibility principles of the current administration. We will also advocate and promote mandatory Continuing Legal Education provisions in our Rules of Professional Conduct and seek to further strengthen the NBA in this regard. The Career Development Centre of the Institute will be reinforced to provide career related guidance and assistance to members.

#### **3.4.1. NBA – Annual General Conferences**

The Annual General Conference is the flagship event of the NBA. More than any other forum, the AGC boasts of the largest gathering of members, thus it is important that we continue to take advantage of this gathering as a platform for positive exposure of our members as well as a place for CLE. Consequently, we will build on the successive administrations' elevation of the quality of panels (local and international speakers) and robustness of discourse.

We will further diversify the array of speakers and participants at the sessions to ensure the vastness and multifaceted practice that we seek to encourage. We will give more young lawyers the opportunity not only to learn from more experienced speakers but also to get fair opportunity to speak and express themselves.

We will sustain the current free conferencing afforded to members who are senior citizens whilst expanding the gesture to cover physically challenged members.

## **4.0. INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

### **4.1. Regulatory Reforms**

There have been several efforts at the review of the Legal Practitioners' Act 1975 (as amended) the "LPA". I was privileged to be a member of the Legal Profession Regulation Review Committee set up by the NBA under the leadership of President A.B. Mahmud, SAN in 2017. The Committee made far-reaching recommendations in its report on how to regulate the conduct of Legal Practitioners and the affairs of the NBA. The KPMG Diagnostic Report on the NBA further underscored the need for effective regulation of legal practice in Nigeria, in order to gain or regain public confidence and preserve the integrity of the profession.

My administration will do all within its powers to advocate for the enactment of the NBA's version of the Legal Practitioners Bill currently before the National Assembly. Baseline principles in the proposed bill which are necessary for the transformation of the Legal Profession into a compliant and competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century profession include:

- a. the separation of the regulatory functions of the NBA from the representative functions;
- b. the creation of an independent regulator for the Legal Profession in Nigeria; and
- c. the inclusion of mandatory continuing legal education.

### **4.2. Professional Conduct and Discipline**

As stated earlier, the NBA has lost its effective voice needed to bring about the freedom that Nigeria needs. Under the current administration of the

NBA, this voice is being restored and this effort must be sustained through deliberate and conscious efforts.

As an Association, we must deal with growing cases of professional misconduct. It is the preponderance of professionalism exhibited by members of the Association in our dealings with our clients, local or foreign, that will restore the Association to its pride of place in the scheme of things in Nigeria and beyond. We must therefore get involved in regulating the conduct of our members and bringing erring members to book.

The present Disciplinary Procedure has completely alienated the NBA from participating in the disciplinary process of its members. While the rationale for the present exclusion of the NBA from the process was rooted in the lackadaisical attitude with which complaints of misconduct of our colleagues were attended to by the NBA, the complete removal of the NBA from the process has worsened the situation and public perception of the NBA in relation to the discipline of its members.

The NBA is viewed as unconcerned with the conduct of its members, leaving the public at the mercy of erring members. On the other hand, the present arrangement where the LPDC deals with complaints of professional misconduct independent of the NBA, has only undermined the NBA and its ability to regulate the conduct of its members. The level of public confidence we enjoy will largely depend on the perception of the public on our willingness, readiness and resolve to deal with cases of professional misconduct amongst our colleagues.

The current administration has made a case for the review of the existing LPDC Rules to provide for the participation of the NBA in the disciplinary process of its members. Our administration will pursue this course to ensure that the NBA fully participates in the process with a renewed vigour and purposefulness.

### **4.3. The Institutional and Governance Structure**

The NBA cannot achieve its objectives without a functional Secretariat. An institutional framework that functions with minimal political interference, to a large extent, guarantees accountability and transparency in the operations of any organisation. It also ensures that institutional memory is preserved, and that laudable policies and projects are sustained after the life of a given administration.

I commend past administrations for providing the foundational basis for accountability in the running of the affairs of the NBA and reforming the administrative structure of the NBA through the amendment of the NBA Constitution. The innovations contained in the amendments will help protect the NBA Secretariat from interference from the vagaries associated with constant change in policy. It will guarantee the sustenance of the programmes of the Association, proper record-keeping and preservation of institutional memory. Our administration will build on the gains of past and present administrations, equip the NBA Secretariat with modern technological tools/equipment that will help in achieving a well organised and functional Association.

While it is desirable for the President's attention to be undivided throughout his term, an efficient secretariat will generate greater output and higher quality of service, leaving the President and the Executive members to deal with more strategic matters necessary for the growth of the Association.

The Secretariat of any organisation is the operational and intellectual engine room of the organisation. The organisational structure of the Secretariat and its performance is critical to how the organisation is perceived and indeed instrumental to whether that organisation is successful. That said, we must reform the Secretariat, to focus on sustainability of ideas and programmes.

In 2021, the NBA Secretariat Restructuring Committee presented a report on the professionalisation of the NBA Secretariat to NBA-National

Executive committee (now Council) (NEC). That report forms part of the Constitution presented to the members at the 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM). The fundamental change in the Constitution is that the office of Executive Director is invested with the powers to manage the Secretariat on a day-to-day basis.

Our position on the operations, functions and role of the Secretariat is that it must be set up to compete with the Secretariat of the most notable and effective Bar Associations in the world.

My administration will continue with the ongoing restructuring with a view to having a Secretariat that is fit for purpose and delivers value to members. I believe in an efficient workforce that would act as catalyst for delivering on the objectives of the NBA. I am committed to following the NBA Constitution to the letter and ensuring that the Executive Director is given all the support required to run the Secretariat. We will prioritise and complete the restructuring process within 100 days of assumption of office.

#### **4.4. Strengthening the NBA Sections, Fora and Institutes**

Beyond providing a platform for professional and social advancement of the Bar, the NBA Sections and Fora are veritable resource bases for policy conceptualisation and formulation for public and private sector initiatives. As a member of the Section on Legal Practice (SLP), I have witnessed the tremendous intellectual discourse and conversations at conferences or seminars organised by the Section. Similarly, the NBA section on Public Interest and Development Law (NBA-SPIDEL) has been vibrant in public interest advocacy and litigation. This is one Section through which the NBA can unleash its potentials to drive socio-economic changes in Nigeria.

The impact recorded by the Section on Business Law (SBL) in the area of economy, international businesses, and trade, cannot be over emphasised. The support provided by the current administration of the NBA is encouraging. My administration will sustain the momentum through

high-level engagements, deliberate judicial and legislative interventions to engender support for policy and legislative reforms.

#### **4.5. Other Organs of the Association**

I am mindful of the fact that 2 years is a short time to achieve transformation especially where the NBA must interface with external agencies and corporations, so, Committee nominations will be presented at the first post-inauguration NEC meeting of the administration, with clear mandate of deliverables and the right appointments to achieve the desired results. My administration will ensure adequate representation of all demographics of the Association, in order to achieve diversity and inclusiveness.

#### **4.6. Financial Stability**

For many years, the NBA has been run as an organisation that lives on a day-to-day basis, often spending all that it generates within a given administrative cycle. The culture of the rainy-day fund had not been promoted before the the current administration of the NBA. Our thinking is that a solid financial base guarantees independence and would enable the NBA play its role to its members and to society without being influenced by external forces that could seek to exert undue pressure and influence on the Association. Also, there hasn't been emphasis on sweating the assets of the Association to generate funds from its activities and assets. The National Secretariat complex should be made more functional and developed to generate income from the parts of it that are currently not utilised or underutilised. Also, the old Secretariat in Abuja that is currently being renovated for the use of the NBA-ICLE and the Human Rights Institute (HRI) should be run in such a way that those Institutes pay rent for the use of the premises before making any annual returns to the Association.

We will build on current efforts at debt settlement and expanding the revenue-generating base of the Association. Financial stability is built on the strong values of transparency, accountability and sustainable investment. My administration supports the idea of having an NBA Fund.



We commit to placing a minimum of 30% of the Annual Revenue of the NBA yearly to the Fund, with a view to significantly growing it from the current value of N1, 500, 000, 000.

#### **4.7. Stamp and Seal**

We will seek to improve all aspects of administration relating to the issue and delivery of stamp and seal. The ultimate objective of my administration would be to move to a safe and secure electronic stamp system. In the meantime, we will continue with the current policy of issuing 48 free stamps to members.

### **5.0. POLICY FRAMEWORKS**

#### **5.1. Legal Education Reform**

On a personal note, I have at several fora submitted that the liberation of any society will necessarily entail the discharge of the primary responsibilities of lawyers in the pursuit of Justice.

An essential element of setting the standards is the training of would-be members of the Association. In order to ensure that standards are maintained, the profession, as the most important stakeholder in the industry must take the lead in the determination of the form and nature that the training of would-be practitioners should take. It is also critical to the business of practitioners that entrants into the employment space are employable.

The existing curriculum of our legal education does not and cannot unleash the potentials of lawyers as catalysts of change into our society, because of what may have been the deliberate walls erected around the ideal legal education that would have prepared the lawyers for this assignment; the socio economic and political transformation of the nation.

My administration will draw from the 2007 Funke Adekoya Report on the Reform of Legal Education in Nigeria (commissioned by the NBA) and the 2008 Funke Adekoya report on the reform of Legal Education in

Nigeria (Commissioned by the Council of Legal Education) to develop an NBA legal education framework that would act as the thought regulatory document for all discussions by the NBA on legal education. The legal education framework policy will act as the guide document for all NBA representatives on the Council of Legal Education.

Our administration will work with the Council of Legal Education (CLE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), Faculties of Law in Universities, to leverage on the provisions of the NBA Constitution with respect to the Association's role in the advancement of Legal Education. We will work to develop and ensure the implementation of Legal Education Curriculum that will cause the required transformation in the minds of new breed of lawyers, leading to the inevitable prosperity of the members of the profession.

## **5.2. Justice Sector Reform**

The importance of the Judiciary as the third arm of government in the country and the last hope of the common man cannot be overemphasised. The challenges faced by the system of administration of justice in Nigeria are well documented. There is consensus amongst practitioners and most Nigerians, that the justice delivery system has progressively deteriorated over the past decades.

My administration shall ensure that the ongoing work to improve the justice delivery sector is consolidated and institutionalized. Importantly, my administration will ensure that the NBA has a clear justice sector policy and would use the membership of the Federal Judicial Service Commission and the National Judicial Council to advance its objectives of justice delivery and the promotion of the rule of law in Nigeria.

### **5.2.1. Reformed Bar and Bench Relationship**

The lawyers in every nation, particularly a developing nation as ours, have the bounden duty to take the lead and drive the processes that will lead to the growth of the economy. The responsibility is not any different, when an otherwise growing economy becomes bedevilled by challenges

which have stagnated the economy. This drive will entail deliberate cooperation between the Bench and the Bar from the point of view of a robust understanding of our role as agents of justice, which when attained, naturally translates to providing the necessary platform for socio-economic activities that will bring prosperity to the entire nation, thus enhancing the wellbeing of lawyers.

The Bar and Bench must understand that they are members of the same body, performing different functions for the benefit of our common principal-Justice. Both members of the Bar and Bench must be properly sensitised and reawakened to this understanding. Only then can we drive the recovery, reformation and repositioning of Nigeria. Examples of Singapore, UAE, Kenya and Rwanda, as countries where the Bar and Bench relationship resulted in judicial policies that catalysed the Economic evolution in those jurisdictions provide useful guide in this regard. The United Kingdom's economy is also significantly driven by the combined efforts of an efficient judicial system supported by a regulated and disciplined Bar. My administration will pursue measures that will facilitate a robust understanding of this responsibility amongst members of the Bar and Bench towards creating a conducive atmosphere for productive economic activities in the Nation and thereby, fulfil our responsibilities as socio-economic change agents.

### **5.2.2. Speedy Dispensation of Justice**

We will pursue cooperation with the judiciary to ensure that matters are disposed of within reasonable time. We will monitor the progress of the cooperation and discipline erring members who deliberately frustrate judicial proceedings. We will continue to advocate for the appointment of the best of us to judicial office and an increase in the number of judges and justices of the various courts as well as improvement in the standard of living.

We will also continue to advocate for the increased use of technology and better case management systems in the justice delivery system.

## **6.0. RULE OF LAW, ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY**

Freedom in any society or community is bench marked by the level of respect for the Rule of Law in that Society.

This, however, is not possible until the Bar becomes known for its transparency, integrity and care for the Nigerian people. Only then, will the Bar possess a voice, strong and loud enough to enjoy the respect that will translate to the freedom of the people of Nigeria.

Under the current administration, the voice of the NBA has regained considerable attention and respect. This tempo must be sustained if we are to restore respect for the Bar. For the Bar to once again command the respect of the Nigerian public, we must introspect and resolve to deal with the matters of professional misconduct within our ranks, which to a large extent, have muffled the voice of the Bar.

Our administration will continue to promote the rule of law, advocate for the protection of human rights; champion law reform, protect the integrity and independence of the judiciary, amongst others.

## **7.0. YOUNG LAWYERS**

Young lawyers are the greatest asset of the NBA. These younger members of the profession who constitute about 65% of our population are versatile and dynamic. This generally means that with the right guidance, focus and environment, they add tremendous value to the profession and society. The NBA under my watch will encourage social mobility through investment in our younger colleagues.

My administration will encourage more group mentorship sessions structured to provide career development trainings for young lawyers. The YLF would also be directly involved in the development of a curriculum for the benefit of its members.

We will prioritise young lawyers from day one and provide funding for their activities to enable achieve their goals. We shall strengthen the YLF and strategically position the young lawyers for leadership succession through participation in the activities of the NBA and appointments into committees.

### **7.1. NBA-Law Firm/Institutional Mentorship Partnership for Young Lawyers**

The NBA under our leadership will seek and enter into partnerships with law firms, particularly top law firms with diverse practice areas, for the mentorship of young lawyers. We shall secure mentorship arrangements with these law firms for members of 1 – 5 years post call at an agreed minimum allowance of 100, 000 to be shared 60 – 40% between the law firms and the NBA, for a period of 6 months. The idea is to expose the young lawyers to the best standards of practice; provide opportunities for possible employment of those under the mentorship programmes who may impress the mentor Law firm during the mentorship. This is in addition to other layers of mentorship programmes which the NBA will structure for the benefit of young lawyers.

We will appeal to the CSR policies of institutions to absorb our members on mentorship programs in order to develop their capacity.

## **8.0. ATTAINMENT OF GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS**

The demands of globalisation have created the need for global competitiveness within our legal space.

Our administration will leverage on the extensive work carried out by SBL on the workability of AfCFTA, and opportunities provided by social media, new technology, blockchain and artificial intelligence and ensure that members of the NBA are equipped to keep in step with and stay ahead of the curve in the digital economy.

## **9.0. ONE DYNAMIC BAR**

The NBA under our administration will continue to recognise and promote the collective interest of the Bar through the different fora within the NBA; Women, Young Lawyers, Law Officers, Lawyers in Salaried Employment, Lawyers in Military, Legislative lawyers and Lawyers that are physically challenged. We will strengthen all interest groups and ensure that members are actively included in the affairs of the Bar.

## **10.0. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS & RELATIONSHIPS**

No man is an island, neither an Association. In an interdependent and interconnected world, we will continue to look inward to build competence and competitiveness. We must look around the world for inspiration, collaboration and mutually beneficial partnerships. To this end, we will engage with International Bar Associations and firms, with a view to encouraging mentorship and training for willing members.

## **11.0. STATE OF THE NATION**

### **11.1. NBA and National Security**

The expression of any aspiration either within or outside of the NBA depends on a secure and safe Nigeria. The name of our Association by itself presupposes the existence of the entity known as Nigeria. There is no gainsaying the fact that not only is the existence of Nigeria under attack, the security and safety of the citizenry within the threatened existing Nigeria is bleak if not totally absent. There is no part of Nigeria that is not experiencing security breaches in an alarming proportion. Many Nigerians, including our members have lost their lives, practice and means of livelihood as a result of the activities of insurgents, terrorists, Bandits, unknown gun men and other criminal elements howsoever described.

While we salute the resilience and determination of the Nigerian people, and commend the sacrifices and efforts of members of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and other security agencies in their fight against these security challenges, our administration will be in the vanguard of the call on Government to pay critical attention to the security of lives and properties of Nigerians. We will make consistent calls on the Government to show demonstrable commitment and increased investment in the National security, in order to contain the menace of security challenges.

A situation where non state actors openly boast of being better equipped than our National Security outfits is totally unacceptable. The NBA under our watch as one of the critical stakeholders in the affairs of the Nation, shall by the grace of God engage with Government in order to ensure that proper attention is paid to the need to make appropriate investments in security and other sectors of the economy, to guarantee the peace and tranquillity we need to engender productivity across the Nation.

We will use all legal instruments, processes and avenues available to scrutinize Government activities in its constitutional stewardship, most especially in the area of securing the Nation and its citizens and the prosecution of criminals. We will enlist volunteers across the branches of the NBA to take up prosecution of criminal matters Pro-bono as a way of supporting National Security.

## **11.2. NBA and 2023 General Election**

As a Nation, we are again set to go into General Election. The electoral processes have already commenced with the issuance of the Timetable and Schedule for the 2023 General Election on the 26 February 2022. No doubt these activities would require the involvement of members of the Bar in the provision of legal services to political parties, candidates and other stakeholders as they engage in the election activities. Ultimately therefore, the outcome of the 2023 General Election has so much to do with the Bar and Bench. We therefore owe Nigerians, honest, sincere and

professional participation in the process(es) in order to ensure a free, fair and credible election. We must do all that is legitimately within our abilities to ensure that the relevant Laws and Rules, properly interpreted and applied, become the guiding principles for our involvement. The Rule of Law must not only be respected but be seen to have been respected by all and sundry.

Our administration will ensure robust engagement with the relevant agencies and stakeholders; closely monitor and carefully report election activities, in order to guarantee that the will of Nigerians is respected and fully implemented. We will also ensure that members of the Bar conduct themselves with the highest level of professionalism as anything short of that, is an abdication of our duty to the people of Nigeria and such conduct if discovered, will be met with strict disciplinary action within the relevant Laws/Rules which regulate the professional conduct of members of the NBA.

Candidates of political parties who are members of the NBA, counsel, or party agents, who are found guilty of electoral misconduct will be made to face disciplinary action, as such conducts are clearly unbecoming of members of the profession. Ditto for members of the profession who aid and abet illegal actions of government without convincing proof of contrary advice to such illegality.

Our administration will also within the confines of the Law and the understanding of our identity as members of the Bar, cooperate, support and defend the Bench in the discharge of its judicial duties. It is this level of cooperation between the Bar and Bench in the handling of these matters, that will see the Bar and Bench bring about the necessary recovery, reformation and repositioning of the Nigerian State for the benefit of the entire citizenry.

## **12.0. CONCLUSION**

Our administration, so help us God, will to a large extent sustain the laudable achievements, and useful policies of previous administrations.



With your mandate and our collective efforts, we will recover, reform and reposition the NBA as an Association fit to compete with any reputable Bar Association around the world. We will run the association and make the members' welfare and satisfaction the priority of our administration. We will deliberately seek out our members in their numbers, lead them to the association and together, build one dynamic Bar.

## **PLEDGE**

My Pledge to the Association is that, if entrusted with the mandate of our members for the next two years, I will work tirelessly in the interest of the entire Bar and not of a limited few to ensure that the NBA lives up to its ideals. I pledge to do all that is within my power to protect and promote the interest of the Association and our members, by implementing these and other policies that may yet be conceptualised, in order to recover, reform and reposition the Bar to work for all its members. I shall respect, protect and promote the rule of law and be fair to our members to ensure that the Association continues to be a voice of reason and of courage for the common man, in the interest of our members and of the Nation.

**YAKUBU CHONOKO MAIKYAU, SAN**

2022