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COSMIC BALANCE AND THE QUEST FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE: KASU HOSTS 17TH PROFESSORIAL INAUGURAL LECTURE

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Kaduna State University (KASU) once again reaffirmed its commitment to intellectual depth and societal relevance as it hosted its 17th Professorial Inaugural Lecture, delivered by Professor Solomon Ochepe Oduma Aboh which drew a wide audience of academics, students, and members of the public, all gathered to engage with a theme that speaks directly to the challenges of contemporary society.



Professor Aboh explored the enduring significance of African Traditional Religion as a framework for understanding peace, human relationships, and societal stability. Central to his discourse was the concept of cosmic balance, which he described as the foundation upon which harmonious living is built. According to him, life is sustained through a delicate relationship between human beings and the Supreme Being, among individuals within society, and between humanity and the environment. When these relationships are properly aligned, society experiences peace, order, and prosperity. However, when this balance is disrupted, the consequences manifest in conflict, environmental crises, and social instability.



Drawing attention to the moral foundations of traditional African society, the professor emphasized the importance of values instilled from childhood. He noted that respect for others is not merely a social expectation but a deeply rooted cultural principle that shapes how individuals relate to one another. In the same vein, he observed that both love and hatred are learned behaviors, often cultivated within the family. This, he argued, places a significant responsibility on families as the primary institutions of moral formation.

Reflecting on the past, Professor Aboh painted a picture of a society where trust, hospitality, and communal responsibility were the norm. Strangers were welcomed without suspicion, children could move freely across communities under shared protection, and the well-being of one person was considered the responsibility of all. In such a setting, the idea of being “one another’s keeper” was not an abstract concept but a lived reality. He contrasted this with present-day realities, where fear, individualism, and social fragmentation have gradually replaced communal bonds, raising important questions about what has gone wrong.

The lecture also revisited traditional approaches to justice and conflict resolution, which prioritized restoration over punishment. Rather than focusing on retribution, these systems sought to repair relationships and restore balance within the community. Through a simple but powerful illustration, Professor Aboh highlighted how victims in traditional settings often preferred the return of what was lost to the imprisonment of offenders, underscoring a justice system rooted in reconciliation rather than exclusion.

Equally significant was his discussion on dignity in acts of charity. In traditional African society, helping others was done quietly and without the need for recognition. Assistance was structured in a way that preserved the dignity of the recipient, reflecting a deeper understanding of compassion and community responsibility. He noted that this contrasts sharply with some contemporary practices where acts of giving are often publicized, sometimes at the expense of the very dignity they are meant to uphold.

Professor Aboh further addressed the place of African Traditional Religion within the broader religious landscape, arguing for its recognition as a vital contributor to peacebuilding and social cohesion. He maintained that its non-proselytizing nature positions it uniquely as a bridge capable of fostering understanding among different religious groups. In his view, embracing indigenous knowledge systems alongside modern frameworks offers a more inclusive and culturally relevant path to national development.

The lecture also highlighted the growing global interest in African Traditional Religion and culture, pointing to opportunities for academic collaboration, research funding, and institutional development. Professor Aboh advocated for the establishment of a dedicated centre within the University to harness these opportunities, noting that such an initiative would not only advance scholarship but also contribute to economic and cultural development.



In concluding, he reiterated that cosmic balance remains an essential principle for achieving peaceful coexistence. He called on individuals, communities, and policymakers to reconnect with the values that once sustained African societies, emphasizing that true progress must be rooted in harmony, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

The 17th Professorial Inaugural Lecture stood as a compelling reminder of the relevance of indigenous knowledge in addressing modern challenges. Through this engagement, Kaduna State University continues to position itself as a centre for critical thought, cultural reflection, and solutions that resonate with both local realities and global aspirations.

In his opening remarks, the Vice-Chancellor of Kaduna

State University, Professor Abdullahi Ibrahim Musa welcomed all participants and expressed his appreciation for their presence. He congratulated the inaugural lecturer on this important academic milestone and encouraged the audience to listen attentively, noting the relevance of the lecture to both scholarly discourse and societal development.

The ceremony also featured the presentation of an award to Professor Solomon Ochepe Oduma Aboh in recognition of his scholarly contributions and dedication to the advancement of African Traditional Religion and cultural studies.

In his closing remarks, Professor Bala Dogo, Chairman of the Kaduna State University Professorial Inaugural Lectures, Seminars, Conferences, and Workshops Committee, commended the inaugural lecturer for his insightful presentation and unwavering commitment to academic excellence. He also expressed appreciation to all participants for their attendance and contributions to the success of the event.



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