

## **APPRECIATION – CLASS OF 1982 GLOBAL REUNION**

Dear members, I want to, on behalf of the exco, thank all of you for your support and participation in our first global reunion. Indeed, the event surely has a place in our history book. From various reviews within the Association and outside, the event has been adjudged to be a huge success. The credit and appreciation must go to members individually and collectively. The show of support was unprecedented, and the successful execution beat all our most optimistic expectations.

The Reunion Committee and the Central Working Committee both led by the VP did excellently well to organise the event to meet the overarching objectives viz:

1. Reconnecting with friends and rekindling old bonds
2. Sharing knowledge for collective benefits
3. Reconnection with our alma mater and thanksgiving to God for how far He has brought us

Truly it was one weekend to remember! And indeed, a thing of beauty and nostalgic significance to see long lost friends reconnect for first time after 37 years and able to strike routine boyish conversations as if continuing from the day before. Then taking the opportunity to wine and dine together with the passion and innocence of youth that we thought were all gone and forgotten – eating from the same pot over the weekend was most refreshing. We even took the opportunity for the group to have a call with our dear classmate Rufus Ashiedu in faraway Queensland, Australia! Personally, I could not think or imagine what else would have been more fulfilling that weekend than to be with you guys! For those who could not make it, YOU MISSED - but that is enough reason why we must do it all over again - 2022 REUNION Loading, Watch Out! Our 40<sup>th</sup> year post graduation will be a milestone worth celebrating by God's grace.

A critical success factor for the event was the overall alignment and cooperation of all members with the common focus to get a great result. It is therefore a clear demonstration and affirmation of how much we can achieve TOGETHER as a group if we all pull in the same direction. Indeed, WE ARE MADE FOR MORE! We therefore need to take the lessons and momentum from the Reunion to commit to do and achieve more as a group. Everyone must pull his weight. The Association really requires your love and commitment more than anything else – yes, even money. It is in this light that I must state, rather regrettably that the Host Region, Benin Regional Council, should have done better in hosting us. The CWC had to go on overdrive to achieve the success that we have all roundly applauded. In the review conducted during discussion sessions at the Reunion with members of the host region present, it was agreed that the host region failed to meet up to expectations as hosts. We discussed some issues around this, and they have agreed to appraise themselves and hopefully come up with solutions on how to avoid this type of occurrence in future. While this may come across as a direct indictment, I see it more as a wakeup call for each and every one of us to present much more commitment in our contributions to the affairs of the Association as TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE. I am confident that we have all taken the positives from the event and have indeed emerged STRONGER TOGETHER.

Lastly, I must highlight that at the end of the Reunion Dinner, we conducted a fund-raising session to raise funds for:

1. Class of 82 Credit and Loan Fund
2. Eghosa Grammar School Renovation Project - immediate intervention
3. Endowment Fund to support the families of our departed colleagues

The Welfare Secretary, Dr Kenneth Ikhide, will give an update on this in the coming days and I will request and urge all those who did not have the earlier opportunity to participate to donate generously (voluntarily) to the respective funds. Additionally, the Secretary General, Dr Amadin Idehen will subsequently present the formal record of the proceedings.

May God bless you as you give to support our COMMONWEALTH.

PEACE AND BLESSED BE OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

**Ikponmwosa James Odiase**

**President**