



AANI LAGOS

· SHARED EXPERIENCES SERIES

· INAUGURAL SESSION

Reflections at 85

Leadership, Legacy, Passing the Torch, and Faith

85

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SEC 2, 1980 · Chairman, AANI Lagos Elders Advisory Council

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OPENING

At eighty-five, birthdays are no longer about counting candles.

They are about counting *mercies*.

I stand deeply grateful — to God for life, for family, for friendships, for opportunities to serve, for lessons learned through success and failure, and for faith that has sustained me through every season.

Age itself teaches very little. It is experience, *properly reflected upon*, that becomes wisdom.

At eighty-five, reflections are no longer theories. They are experiences — lessons learned through challenges, disappointments, victories, and unexpected blessings. Today I would like to share four.

01

Leadership

Conviction over comfort

02

Legacy

Give more than you keep

03

The Torch

Preparing those who follow

04

Faith

An anchor through every storm



REFLECTION

01

**Leadership Is Not About Comfort.
It Is About Conviction.**

The Test

As Director of Engineering of the defunct Nigerian External Telecommunications Ltd. (N.E.T. Ltd.), I faced considerable pressure from influential members of the Political Board to bend established regulations in favour of certain interests. Sometimes it was subtle. Sometimes it was direct.

I understood clearly what compliance would bring. It would bring peace. It would bring approval. It would make life easier. But I also understood what it would cost. It would cost my conscience.

And so,

I refused.

What Looked Like Punishment

Refusal had consequences. Relationships became strained. Support diminished. Some who once welcomed me warmly became difficult to find. Even telephone calls seemed to develop a life of their own and stopped returning themselves.

Eventually I was sent on a nine-month course at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, in 1980. One internal communication described it as *“an initiative designed to reduce institutional resistance to management proposed actions.”* I translated it more simply: we are sending you away so everyone can calm down.

“What appeared to be a setback became an opportunity.”

NIPSS broadened my perspective and exposed me to some of the finest minds in our nation.

THE LESSON

Never sacrifice permanent values for temporary comfort.

Leadership begins where convenience ends.

Anyone can lead when applause is loud. True leadership emerges when principles become expensive and standing alone becomes necessary. It is not about being feared, nor even admired. It is about being trusted.



REFLECTION

02

Legacy: Give More Than You Keep

Life is not measured by what we keep.
It is measured by what we give away.

Wisdom

Encouragement

Time

Compassion

Mentorship

People rarely remember our salaries, or the size of our offices. They remember how we treated them, the opportunities we created, and the encouragement we gave when they were struggling. That, ultimately, is legacy. Not applause. Not titles. Not buildings. Impact.

There Is a Difference Between Success and Significance

Success

is about achievement.

Significance

is about contribution.

The question is not *“How much did I acquire?”*

The question is

“Whose life became better because I lived?”



REFLECTION

03

Passing the Torch

The Highest Form of Leadership Is Stewardship

Some leaders spend their later years protecting territory rather than preparing successors. Stewardship begins when we start asking different questions.

“How can others become better than me?”

“How can I help the next generation succeed?”

“How can I pass on what life has taught me?”

Values That Never Become Obsolete

Integrity

Character

Discipline

Humility

Service

The world they are entering is different from the world we knew. Yet some values never become obsolete.

Permit an Old Man to Speak Plainly

Build competence — *but build character even more.*

Seek success — *but never sacrifice integrity for advancement.*

Pursue influence — *but remain humble.*

A torch fulfils its purpose only when it lights another torch.



REFLECTION

04

Faith: The Anchor Through Every Storm

When Brotherhood Was Tested

Entrusted with leadership as President of the Executive Committee in my place of worship, I watched a season of growth become one of tension and division. Different interests emerged. Misunderstandings developed. Brotherhood was tested.

It would have been easier to compromise my convictions to keep temporary peace. Instead, after much prayer and consultation, I chose the path I believed right, even knowing it would be unpopular. The decision came at a cost. Yet throughout that season, faith remained my anchor. It did not remove the pain, but it gave me courage to stand and to trust God with the outcome.

*“God often rewards
obedience slowly*

— but thoroughly.”

TWO ANCHORS

There are storms education cannot solve, battles experience cannot prevent, and nights wisdom alone cannot comfort. Sometimes all we have left is faith — and faith is enough.

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.”

Psalm 30:5

“For indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease.”

Qur'an 94:5–6 · Surah Ash-Sharh

At eighty-five, I stand as living evidence that storms do not last forever.



THE FINAL MEASURE

Finishing Well

What begins as ambition gradually becomes responsibility. What starts as achievement eventually becomes stewardship.

Gratitude, and Leaving Bitterness Behind

Gratitude

Gratitude keeps us humble. It reminds us that whatever we achieved was made possible by God, family, mentors, colleagues, and countless others whose contributions often go unnoticed.

Letting Go

Life brings disappointments, betrayals, and unfulfilled expectations. Carrying bitterness into the evening of life only robs us of peace. Wisdom teaches us to forgive, to let go, and to move forward with grace.

WHAT ENDURES

Hold Firmly

1

Integrity

2

Purpose

3

Service

4

Kindness

5

Faith

And above all, hold firmly to faith. Because in the end, these are the things that endure.

THE GOAL

The Goal Is Not Merely to Grow Old

It is to grow

wise

useful

gracious

kinder

deeper

closer to God

The greatest legacy is not what we accumulate, *but what we leave behind in people.*

IN CONCLUSION

Institutions change. Titles disappear. Policies are rewritten.
Generations come and go.

**But integrity, wisdom, kindness, courage, and service
never grow old.**

*A meaningful life is not measured by how long we held power, but by how
faithfully we used it.*



Thank you.

May it be said that we stood firm in difficult times, served beyond ourselves, passed the torch faithfully, and left the world a little better than we found it.

May God bless the National Institute.

May God bless our nation.

And may God bless every one of us.