

**4TH ANNUAL INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE NEW SENIOR
ADVOCATES OF NIGERIA (BOSAN)
FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS STATE
WEDNESDAY 01 DECEMBER, 2021**

COMMUNIQUE

INTRODUCTION

The 4th induction programme was organised by the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (BOSAN) for the newly appointed Senior Advocates. It was one of the pre-swearing in activities for the new members before their conferment on December 8, 2021. It was the 4th in a row since the recommendation and directive were made in 2018. The programme served as an orientation for the new members and as a platform to provide insights into the expectations from the new members of the Inner Bar. The Induction Programme was attended by the new Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs), a few old SANs, the Induction Committee members, and the following facilitators: Hon. Justice Musa Dattijo Mohammad, JSC, Hon. Justice Ejembi Eko, JSC, Hon. Justice Helen Ogunwumiju, JSC, Hon. Justice Mojeed Owoade, JCA, Hon. Justice Obietonbara Owupele Daniel-Kalio, JCA, Chief 'Folake Solanke, CON, SAN, Mrs. Miannaya Essien, SAN, Mr. Olumide Sofowore, SAN, Professor Oluyemisi Bamgbose, SAN and Professor Fabian Ajogwu, SAN. The theme of the Induction Programme, **'Legal Ethics and Professionalism in the Practice of Law'** was enriched by discussions of the erudite facilitators on the following perspectives:

1. Excellence and Professionalism in the Practice of Law
2. Legal Practice as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria
3. Accountability and Discipline of Senior Advocates of Nigeria
4. General Introduction and the Role of Legal Ethics and Professionalism in the Practice of Law

The following are observations and recommendations from the induction programme:

OBSERVATIONS

1. The allegation against the Judiciary as the most corrupt body in the country would be mitigated if members, as senior advocates, act right.
2. Without the Judiciary, there would be no peace in the country.
3. Actions of the senior advocates are judged by the public.
4. The elevation to Senior Advocates of Nigeria comes with enormous responsibilities and expectations.

5. To be appointed a senior advocate, a person should have a profound knowledge of the law such that the society knows him for that.
6. Moral bankruptcy and embezzlement can disqualify a person from being elevated.
7. There is the need for knowledge of information technology.
8. Senior advocates can get what they want without joining the band of petitions writers.
9. Requesting for the submission of photographs of the newly appointed members in their ceremonial regalia before the induction date can lead to a new senior advocate having to rob before conferment.
10. Senior advocates must see themselves as role models who go out of their way to develop others.
11. Many Senior Advocates are in the habit of blaming the juniors for faults emanating from their chambers.
12. The conferment is a privilege, not a right and so can be suspended or withdrawn on certain grounds.
13. The privilege attached to conferment are exercisable only in courts.
14. The rule against advertisement is a strict one and it is not a defence that members were not consulted before the advertisement.
15. Junior lawyers have a life outside the office and practice and overtime should not be a daily thing.
16. Bandits, rapists, and kidnappers all inflict terror and are all terrorists.
17. Senior Advocates are bound by the rules guiding legal practitioners.
18. Some legal practitioners conceal important authorities while presenting matters in courts
19. There is a controversy as to the appropriate body that disciplines senior advocates and which body imposes sanctions on erring members of the Inner Bar – whether Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (LPDC) or the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee (LPPC).
20. Punishing an erring senior advocate twice under both disciplinary committees would amount to double jeopardy.
21. Some legal practitioners make contradicting submissions in different jurisdictions on the same issue and instigate the court to ignore existing decisions just to win in a matter. These practices have led to conflicting decisions from different judges on the same issue.
22. There may be cases where congratulatory messages are posted on social media without the knowledge of the new Senior Advocates (being congratulated) despite the strict liability rule against advertisement.
23. Some junior lawyers rebuff attempts at correction.
24. The culture of petition writing against judges weakens the resolve for justice.
25. Some lawyers discuss the conduct of judges in cases that are *sub judis*

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The rules of the profession are solemn and should be taken seriously by all members.
2. There should be continuity in mentorship from those the Senior Advocates look up to (their mentors).
3. The Judiciary must be transparently clean.
4. Integrity is a moral issue, and an advocate should demonstrate same at all times.
5. Senior advocates must pass down qualities such as punctuality, dignity and decorum to their mentees who are ambassadors of their various chambers.
6. Senior advocates should not be too busy to supervise the junior ones.
7. If a senior advocate must grant interviews, he should not do so with his wigs on.
8. Senior advocates should not denigrate their colleagues.
9. Senior advocates must not aid or abet corruption by frustrating fights against the menace.
10. Legal practitioners owe the duty to disclose all authorities while presenting matters in courts, even if the authorities are against them. They must not mislead the court or fabricate evidence.
11. Conferment as a senior advocate is a rare point of the legal profession and members need to work harder to remain at that point. The standard of decorum for them is much higher.
12. Members of the Inner Bar should respect the court, the law, as well as respect the juniors. They should collaborate with other lawyers to support and promote the NBA.
13. Legal Practitioners should refrain from using interlocutory applications to slow down matters in courts.
14. Members should be tolerant for a better and smoother relationship with the court. Respect begets respect.
15. Legal practitioners should maintain absolute frankness, as improper behaviours in court hardly go unnoticed.
16. Attempts to correct junior lawyers should be done carefully and in a graceful manner, making sure the junior ones do not feel disgraced.
17. Senior advocates are expected to show example to the juniors by conducting themselves properly and with decency and not engaging in degrading conducts.
18. Until they are sworn in, newly appointed senior advocates should not be seen robed.
19. The due date for submission of photographs by new members is not cast in stone and cannot be a basis for the waiver of the rule against robing before induction. Members can request for extension of time to submit photographs.
20. The relationship in the Profession should be guided by the golden rule that you 'do unto others what you want others to do unto you'.
21. Senior Advocates should admit faults from actions emanating from their chambers and not shift blames on the juniors.

22. A senior advocate should not carry himself as to show he has a relationship with the court.
23. Senior Advocates should apologise and offer explanations when they are late to courts.
24. Senior Advocates should allow the juniors to sit with them when the court is congested rather than leave them to stand.
25. They should teach the juniors time management and demonstrate a superb and friendly relationship with the courts.
26. Senior advocates should ensure an adequate remuneration of junior lawyers in line with the number of hours under Labour Law.
27. The rule on advertisement was made by the NBA and should be respected by all. Senior advocates should show examples to others by making efforts not to violate these rules. It is best to inform friends and family that advertisement is strongly discouraged
28. Senior advocates are to teach the juniors to seek advice before rendering legal advice.
29. They are to teach the juniors to yield their seats to seniors if there are no chairs as courtesy is one of the pillars of the legal profession.
30. Every practitioner should maintain clients' account and should ensure integrity and good character.
31. Senior advocates are expected to have poise, panache, and grace without arrogance.
32. There should be a single independent disciplinary body seized with the responsibility of disciplining the members of the Inner Bar. This body should comprise of eminent practitioners and judges who are retired from active practice and service respectively.
33. Senior advocates should desist from the practice of discussing the conduct of judges in cases that are *sub judis*. They have a duty to ensure excellence in the legal profession.
34. Senior advocates should ensure personal development through attendance of conferences, workshops and engaging in research. This will keep them abreast of the development of law and practice.
35. There must be a need for a senior advocate to invite a member of the Outer Bar to sit with member of the Inner Bar, although most colleagues will not expect to be invited where the need has not arisen. It is usually the most senior member of the Inner Bar present whose consent is sought and who by himself invites the member of the Outer Bar subject to the consent of the court.
36. Senior advocates should not be seen shabbily dressed. This extends to combination in dressing and in native attires.
37. Senior Advocates of Nigeria should not feel superior to the local NBA branches. They should rather relate with the local branches and show examples to others.