

A Communiqué issued at the end of a 4-day National Conference on “Repositioning Office Administration and Information Management for Innovation, Sustainable Development and Global Competitiveness” organized by National Institute of Office Administrators and Information Managers (NIOAIM), at the International Conference Centre, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, from 7th – 10th February, 2022.

Opening address by the Vice Chancellor, Lead City University Ibadan- Prof. Kabiru Adeyemo.

The maiden conference was declared open by the Vice Chancellor, Lead City University, Ibadan, Prof. Kabiru Adeyemo, who adduced the reasons for the conference and emphasized the benefits inherent in the conference theme, and by extension the conference which is an off-shoot of the National Institute of Office Administrators and Information Managers (NIOAIM).

According to him, the conference is a novel initiative that aims at developing the human capacity of upwardly mobile, mid-career adults who are hungry and thirsty for knowledge to upgrade and sharpen their professional skills in the area of office and information management. They aim to achieve these with the latest tools, techniques and methodologies for both the Public and Private Sectors of the society. The Vice Chancellor opined that the need for the conference at this point in time cannot be over-emphasized. He also stated there is no better time than now due to the information explosion era and the changing role of information professionals, especially the secretaries whose role has evolved over time in an ever changing world.

According to him, “the conference has therefore become very imperative and germane in equipping and assisting information professionals, in order to prevent and curtail the influx of non-professionals into the noble profession of information managers, thereby preventing the state of anarchy and cataclysm, and encouraging quacks”.

He declared the conference open and wished everyone a great conference.

NIOAIM Welcome Address, delivered by Dr. Tolulope E. Adenekan (the Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustees and the Executive President of NIOAIM)

In her address, she noted that the Institute was borne out of the passion to take a peep into the multi-dimensional problems that Secretaries face in their various jobs, as well as the need to proffer a long-lasting and reassuring solution.

She also noted the significance of the profession. According to her, the Office & Information Management profession is a noble one with a high level of job opportunities, and lots of latent benefits for competent and skilled professionals. However, she revealed that the profession has been laced with a lot of disheartening challenges, some of which include the unjustifiable subordination, assignment of demeaning roles/responsibilities and stressful work schedule, since the evolution of the secretarial profession. She further explained that this trend has, since, been very worrisome and it is high time the challenges were addressed more decisively and intellectually in consonance with emerging trends and innovation in Office and Information Management. This should culminate in bringing together all Information Managers in offices, registries, libraries, the health sector, business organizations, among others, in our relatively new but fast growing Institute as members of the professional family.

The ultimate aim of the Institute, according to her, is to bring the attention of the world to the beautiful roles that Office Administration and Information Management, as well as the practitioners play in modern administrative system. She believes the Institute will show that the practitioners are the engine room of every organization through academic exposure, networking, knowledge sharing and skill enhancement for career development.

In her address, she mentioned that the Institute's constitution has been guiding and will continue to guide the conduct and activities of the body, which has over 200 financial members as of January, 2022. She further explained that NIOAIM is aiming at attaining Chartered status within the next three years.

Keynote Presenter's Address

The Keynote address, delivered by Professor Oyesoji Aremu, on the topic “**Information dissemination and management in the 21st century: some realities and untold**

challenges”, was anchored on the premise that organizations need to embrace technology in order to remain in business.

Technology, according to him, has become a sine qua non of modern professional emancipation owing to its enormous contribution to alleviating human sufferings occasioned by analogue practices. Across varied contexts, technology has been referred to as a “saviour”, owing to the roles it plays in facilitating simplicity, easiness and speed in human activities. The dichotomy often witnessed between developed and developing nations, advanced and struggling economies is motivated by technology. Office administrators and information managers must be part of the e-Tech in the 21st century. They have to seamlessly integrate into it and avail themselves of continuing education and training which a conference like this provides.

The 21st century has ushered in an era of technological proliferation occasioned by a paradigm shift in the field of Information Management. This narrative has brought about information explosion. Rather than battling with insufficient information, the 21st century information managers battle with information explosion in which there are too many alternatives to be considered before decision can be made. The lecture dived into the negative role attitudes, lack of upskilling for retooling, and the negative roles the inventions of robots played in hindering the effectiveness of the record managers.

Lead Paper 1

Professional ethics as a tool for enhancing the job effectiveness of Office Administrators and Information Managers in Nigeria- Prof. Joseph S. Odemuyiwa

The issue of Professional Ethics was discussed as a global phenomenon necessary for success and professional pride. The Office Administrators and Information Managers are image-makers of the organization or unit of the organization for which they work since they handle information. How they collect/communicate information, keep information etc. portrays the image of the organization in a positive or negative light. While every organization is expected to have an ethical program, every professional body also needs to have a code of conduct or ethical rules for practitioners of the profession to be seen as responsible, reliable and effective. Every office or organization depends on its staff to be seen as acting ethically.

He explained that when a group of people claim to be professionals, they take on special rights and obligations because of their special claims to knowledge, wisdom and respect. Professional codes of conduct are promulgated by various professional associations, and these associations take responsibility for the partial regulation of their professions by determining entrance qualifications and competence. He also mentioned that Codes of ethics are promises by professionals to regulate themselves in the general interest of the society.

In conclusion, he advised that it is no gain-saying that an ethical culture drives integrity, respect, and accountability. It empowers an organization to attract and retain quality personalities. Good ethics increase credibility and commitment. He recommended that the Institute should seek an enabling law that will regulate the practice of Office Administration and Information Management in Nigeria, as well as endeavor to have a list of codes of conduct for the members. He further enjoined the Institute to have a disciplinary committee for erring members in order to maintain credibility among others.

Lead Paper 2

Managing Nigeria Records and Archival Resources in Support of Her Sustainable Development (By Prof. Gabriel Bunmi Alegbeleye)

Prof. Gabriel Alegbeleye defines record as: "information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business". He further explained what records are not. Humanity, he stated, as at today, is facing various economic, social and environmental problems. These problems have taken an acute dimension in Nigeria. Different approaches concerning tackling these problems have been undertaken. One successful approach is the sustainable development strategy framework. He stated that records are not books and journals, all materials created for reference and convenience purposes, neither are they museum materials e.g. artifacts – sculptures, pottery. He explained that "Records" include documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers and any other thing on which information is recorded or stored by any means, whether graphic, electronic, mechanical or otherwise. He defined Archival records as those that have enduring value

and are transferred to the custody of archives for preservation and safe keeping. According to him, only 5-7% of all organization records are designated as archives. He buttressed that Records life cycle includes the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

In addition, he discussed the collapse of recordkeeping systems in Nigeria and the reason for office administrators and information managers. According to him, prior to independence, well-structured recordkeeping systems were in place with well trained staff. The colonial administration left Nigeria with National Archives for the safekeeping of important national records and considered that regions will establish parallel archives for state. This, unfortunately, did not happen. The lecture explained that informal practices supplanted formal rules; provision of employment became a priority while efficient public administration became secondary; proliferation of poorly-managed paper records in offices; lack of incentives to maintain efficient recordkeeping and allocate adequate resources for the storage and deployment of trained staff; and lack of training of the right type. All these, among others, were part of the challenges faced by information professionals.

In conclusion, he mentioned that it is obvious that office administrators and information managers have a crucial role to play in the sustainable development of Nigeria among other organizations, such as the Society of the Nigerian Archivists and the Nigerian Library Association. These organizations are in different ways poised to support the country's sustainable development agenda. What we may demand from all of them is cooperation and synergy so that the task of the country's sustainable development may be achieved even quicker than anticipated.

The Conference with the theme "Repositioning Office Administration and Information Management for Innovation, Sustainable Development and Global Competitiveness", the very 1st of its kind by the Institute, recorded a good outing with well over ninety (90) participants from all over Nigeria. The conference also recorded over seventy (70) articles presented on nine different conference sub-themes during plenary sessions. The conference had a successful Professional Development Workshop with the theme "Upskilling for Professionalism in the Information Age", which aimed at improving the

skills of secretaries, office managers, administrators and information managers for success in their daily conducts within their various organizations. This session adequately impacted knowledge on academic paper writing and improved research skills of participants. A gala night was held where the participants were entertained with good music, choreography, and meals.

Membership of the institute is said to be open to every Administrator and Information Manager i.e. once you are involved in administration, management and information management, you can be a member.

The opening ceremony was graced by The Pro-Chancellor of Lead City University, Chairman Board of Trustees of NIOAIM, and a Honorary Fellowship awardee, Prof. Jide Owoeye, the Vice-Chancellor, LCU and Chief Host of the Conference, Prof. K.A. Adeyemo, Members of NIOAIM Board of Trustees, Hon. Commissioner for Information, Culture and Tourism, Hon. Wasiu Olatunbosun, The Hon. Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Osun State, Hon. Olayemi Lawal ably represented by Adeola Olayiwola, Senior Special Assistant to Osun State Governor on Youth Empowerment, Keynote Presenter, Prof. Oyesoji Aremu, Lead Paper Presenters; Prof. Gabriel Alegbeleye and Prof. Joseph Odemuyiwa, Royal fathers of the day; HRM Oba (Dr.) Solomon Olagoke Akinola Oyeyode II, the Oranmiyan I of Oko Land, HRM Oba Sunday Oladapo Oyediran, Onpetu of Ijene Land, the Honourary Fellowship Awardees, Hon. Olayemi A. Lawal, Arc. Dr. Olusegun O. Aluko, Dr. Kola Adeyemi, Rev'd Dr. Edward Alabi, Dr. Olayinka Joel Ayefele, Alh. Fatai Ibikunle, Chief Yomi Otubela, Prof. Afolakemi Oredein, the management and staff of Lead City University among others.

In closing, the conference agreed that there is a need for proper professionalism in the Information and office administration profession. To suffix this, there is a need to ensure that the Institute continues to implement trainings in order to ascertain that the profession is weeded off of quacks, while attaining a high level of professionalism and contributing towards national development.

Resolutions

At the end of the 4-day conference, it was resolved that:

1. Business organizations are to embrace the use of technology so as to remain relevant in business;
2. The Institute should seek an enabling law that will regulate the practices of Office Administration and Information Management in Nigeria, as well as endeavor to have a list of codes of conduct for the members;
3. Office Administrators and Information Managers have a crucial role to play in the sustainable development of Nigeria among other organisations;
4. Office Administrators and Information Managers are expected to provide accurate information for better communication that would create values for individuals, organizations, communities and the society at large;
5. Office administrators and Information managers are to follow professional ethics which is a global phenomenon necessary for success and professional pride towards enhancing a better service delivery in any organization;
6. Office Administrators and Information Managers should continually sharpen their communication skills, work on their people' management skills, become innovative thinkers, develop their business acumen and continue their professional development in order to become better in their chosen profession;
7. Poorly written articles, plagiarism/self-plagiarism, and publishing in predatory journals are to be avoided at all cost in the academia;
8. Office Administrators and Information Managers are to strike a balance between their work and personal life so as to avoid unforeseen contingencies; and
9. Roles and responsibilities of Office Administrators and Information Managers has evolved overtime, hence 'secretaries' are to equip themselves with essential skills so as to remain relevant in the world of work.
10. The 'Secretary' nomenclature should be changed to Office Managers.

Communique Drafting Committee of the Conference

1. Dr. T. E. Adenekan
2. Dr. S. O. Tunmibi
3. Dr. O. D. Bakare
4. Dr. S. V. Adeyeye

5. Dr. T. D. Samuel
6. Mr. D. O. Okhakhu
7. Mrs. R. A. Oloye