A PRE-CONVOCATION PRESS BRIEFING BY PROFESSOR FRANCIS CHUKWUEMEKA EZE, VICE-CHANCELLOR, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI, HOLDING ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019 IN THE COUNCIL/SENATE CHAMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY

PROTOCOLS
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Professor N. J. Okeudo;
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration, Professor J. S. Orebiyi;
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Development & Innovation, Professor Bede C. Anusionwu;
The Registrar, Mr J. U. Nnabuihe;
The Bursar, Mrs Helen O. Onuoha;
The University Librarian, Dr (Mrs) Chinwe V. Anunobi;
Deans of Schools;
Directors of Institutes/Centers;
Heads of Departments/Co-ordinators of Units;
Members of the University Senate;
Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists;
Representative of the various media houses here present;
Chairmen of Staff Unions;
The President, FUTO Student Union Government;
Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my singular honour to welcome gentlemen of the press and members of our staff to this press briefing. Let me begin this address by commending members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Imo State Chapter for the cordial relationship between you and the University. We note with satisfaction your efforts in projecting the positive image of the University to the outside world. We appreciate this collaboration and will ensure its sustenance for our mutual benefits.
This media interaction is among several events scheduled to commemorate the 32nd Convocation ceremony of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. The programme of events for the week-long activities include:

1) **Tuesday, December 3, 2019**  
   Vice-Chancellor’s Pre-Convocation Press Briefing and Tour of Waste Recycling Centre  
   **Venue:** Council/Senate Chamber, FUTO & FUTO Waste Recycling Centre  
   **Time:** 11.00 a.m.

2) **Wednesday, December 04, 2019**  
   Ecumenical Service  
   **Venue:** 1000 Capacity Hall of Excellence, FUTO  
   **Time:** 10.00 a.m.

3) **Thursday, December 05, 2019**  
   Tree-Planting at selected Sites in FUTO and Inspection of Projects  
   **Time:** 10.00 a.m.

4) **Friday, December 06, 2019**  
   32nd Convocation Lecture  
   **Venue:** 1000 Capacity Hall of Excellence, FUTO  
   **Time:** 12.00 p.m.

5) **Saturday, December 07, 2019**  
   (a) Students’ Research and Innovation Exposition Show  
   **Time:** 10.00 a.m. prompt  
   (b) Admission to First Degrees, Conferment of Higher Degrees and Award of Prizes.  
   **Venue:** Convocation Arena, FUTO  
   **Time:** 11.00 a.m.

This year’s 32nd Convocation lecture will be delivered by Professor Ndubuisi Ekekwe, an alumnus of the University. He will speak on the theme “The Innovators – Unlocking Abundance in Nations for the Rise of All”. Professor Ekekwe is a Young Global leader at the World Economic Forum and also
Selection Board member, the $100 million Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme. He will be the first alumnus to deliver a convocation lecture in FUTO.

Let me emphasize that Saturday, December 7, 2019, would be the grand finale of the convocation ceremony. On that day, the Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri will award first degrees and higher degrees to a total of 2,848 graduates. 294 of this number is for Postgraduate degrees and Diploma while 2554 is for first degrees. The breakdown of class of degrees according to schools are as follows:

A. **First Degrees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS/CLASS OF DEGREE</th>
<th>FIRST CLASS</th>
<th>SECOND CLASS UPPER</th>
<th>SECOND CLASS LOWER</th>
<th>THIRD CLASS</th>
<th>PASS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAAT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEET</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICT</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMAT</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOBS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOHT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>1361</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (SAAT)**
School of Engineering and Engineering Technology (SEET)
School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT)
School of Management Technology (SMAT)
School of Biological Sciences (SOBS)
School of Environmental Sciences (SOES)
School of Health Technology (SOHT)
School of Physical Sciences (SOPS)

B. **Higher Degrees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE AWARDED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Sc, M.Tech, MPH, M.Eng, MBA</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGD</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am happy to announce that Mr. Oguchienti Somtochukwu Marcel of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering with CGPA of **4.90** is the best graduating student for the class of 2018/2019 graduating students.

On behalf of the Governing Council, Management, Senate, Congregation, Staff and students of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, I congratulate the graduating students for the successful completion of their studies. As they become an integral part of the FUTO Alumni Association, I urge them to see themselves as worthy ambassadors of the foremost Nigerian University of Technology by upholding the high standards their alma mater is reputed for. I also commend our staff for their role in the training and tutelage of these graduands.

Ladies and gentlemen, a pre-Convocation press briefing such as this, affords us the opportunity to report on our recent efforts and achievements as a University. Specifically, I will highlight some milestones of the University since our last convocation in April 2019.

Unarguably, FUTO has evolved and remained an institution of repute in the advancement of Science, Engineering, Agriculture and Technology through production of high-level technical manpower. Based on our unique mandate and curriculum content, we have championed distinct academic programmes geared towards meeting the University strategic objectives.

In furtherance of this success story, my administration through the mantra of driving the Culture of Excellence has put in place innovative policies and initiatives aimed at improving teaching, learning and research. As a progressive institution, we have established Information Technology programmes, expanded Research enterprise, attracted two World Bank-sponsored Centres of Excellence and enriched our curricula with practicals and hands-on trainings to adequately equip our students for the future.
It is also gratifying to note that stable academic calendar has been maintained in the last one year with a more conducive and comfortable environment for our students and faculty members. Within the available resources at our disposal, we have upgraded and expanded facilities to improve teaching, practicals and research. Also, all the programmes of the University have full accreditation from the National Universities Commission (NUC) and relevant professional bodies for some specialized programmes. In our effort to boost information deployment and use in the University, we are pleased to report that the ICT Centre Building that was gutted by fire in 2017 has been renovated with state-of-art facilities. This Centre was successfully used to conduct the second semester examinations for all 100 level students using the Computer Based Testing System (CBT). Similarly, the ICT Centre is collaborating with CISCO Academy to enable staff and students not only to acquire trainings on different I.T. skills but also to obtain CISO certification that is well sought after internationally.

As you may be aware, FUTO has a pedigree of excellence and one way to sustain the reputation is to ensure observance of Rules and Regulations. This explains why the current University Management has continued to maintain zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct. The relevant Staff and Students Disciplinary Committees are highly effective in dealing with staff and students that indulge in any misconduct. It is important that I inform you that the University has developed the Sexual Harassment Policy and is being considered by the Governing Council. This became necessary following the recent national outcry on cases of sexual harassments in our Universities. This document spells out what constitutes Sexual Harassment as well as appropriate sanctions for same. In the same vein, Anti-Plagiarism Policy and University Research Policy have been developed and are awaiting approvals of the Senate and Council so as to promote and maintain academic standards and protect intellectual work
and property. On the other hand, our administration has been resolutely committed to enhancing staff welfare and wellbeing through prompt payment of salaries, release of promotions to deserving staff as well as other welfare packages aimed at improving productivity.

Permit me gentlemen of the press to, on a cheerful note, announce that FUTO was among six (6) Federal Universities selected to host the World Bank sponsored Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Procurement, Environment and Social Standards Enhancement. The University proposal was outstanding among other proposals that were assessed by NUC Panels and the World Bank. The project value is worth over $11 million. This Centre of Excellence when fully operational, will champion research and development of manpower in Procurement, Environment and Social Standards. It will interest you to note that this new Centre of Excellence is coming barely few months after FUTO was selected as Africa Centre of Excellence in Future Energies and Electrochemical Systems (ACE-FUELS).

Similarly, the University through its Environment and Waste Management Committee in collaboration with the Departments of Polymer and Textile Engineering and Materials and Metallurgical Engineering has established a mini recycling Centre that converts wastes into saleable and useful products. Specifically,

- polythene waste materials are being recycled into nylon bags, hangers, plastic cups, keyholders etc.
- Used table water/soft drinks plastics bottle are shredded into flakes that are either exported as raw materials or used for production of rugs, pullovers, pen, pet bottles for chemicals etc.
- Used papers are shredded and recycled into toilet rolls and packaging papers.
• Biodegradable wastes are converted to manure for farming purposes.
• Used metal materials are remolded into different metal sizes and shapes using our foundry facility.
• Broken bottles and glasses are crushed and used as additives in the manufacture of paints. Let me note that all the paints used for the repainting of the Senate Building were produced in the University with additives from the recycled broken bottles and glasses.

I wish to add that the Committee on Environment and Waste Management has also developed a proposal on generation of electricity from heterogeneous waste materials. This novel proposal is begging for funding and we appeal to donor agencies and corporations to support this project to achieve the first indigenous generation of electricity from waste materials. Interaction with the Private sector is going. We are optimistic that funding will soon flow in. Our plan is to satisfy our local community and then move to the larger markets.

It is expedient that I also inform you on some recent achievements of our Students in various competitions and endeavours. They include:

(i) FUTO Enactus (formerly Students in Free Enterprise, SIFE) emerged National winners at the 2019 Sahara/Enactus Nigeria Challenge.

(ii) FUTO Nigerian Universities Engineering Students Association (NUESA) emerged third position at the Otis Anayefi Engineering Students Quiz competition held during the Nigerian Universities Engineering Students Association (NUESA) Annual National Technical Conference and Exhibition held at the Nile University, Abuja, from September 16 – 21, 2019.

(iii) Miss Elizabeth Oluchi Anyanacho of the Department of Statistics won bronze medal in Taekwondo at the 12th All African Games held in Rabat, Morocco from 17th to 27th August, 2019.
(iv) Miss Eze Ifunanya Nnaemeka, a 500-level student of the Department of Chemical Engineering emerged 3rd place winner in the National category of the Continental Essay Competition on Standardisation organized by the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO).

(v) Three students of the Department of Dental Technology (Odocha Ijeoma Linda, Egeonu Chiamaka Patience and Obinna Oluchi Colette) emerged first, second and third positions in the May 2019 Professional qualifying examinations of the Dental Technologists Registration Board of Nigeria.

(vi) Of course, the social media is awash with the story of our final year students of Mechanical Engineering Department who designed a functional prototype airplane as their final year Research project.

Let me also use this medium to report that the University has continued to receive accolades and commendations as a result of the excellent performance of our graduates. Just recently, the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) on Ease of Doing Business during its South East engagement in Owerri, Imo State showcased three outstanding young start-up entrepreneurs. Two of these young men were products of FUTO. Similarly, the Chairman of UBA, Mr Tony Elumelu, the billionaire businessman and philanthropist, during the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Forum 2019 remarked how a female graduate of FUTO who was hired by United Bank for Africa distinguished herself within few days of engagement. The Management of Unilever Nigeria Plc also commended the University for the work we are doing in the development of top talents for our great nation. This accolade was sequel to the outstanding performance of three FUTO students at the World UNILEVER Idea Trophy contest in London early this year. These are some of the commendations from the larger society on the quality of University education in FUTO.
On Infrastructural Development, I am glad to report that the University has ensured the completion of the following projects within the period under review:

i. Construction and furnishing of Academic Office Building for the School of Communication.

ii. Rehabilitation and furnishing of the Burnt ICTC Building

iii. Rehabilitation of Toilet facilities for the School of Environmental Sciences, Old School of Engineering and Engineering Technology (SEET), Hall of Excellence, 500-Capacity Lecture Theatre for School of Science

iv. Completion of School of Health Technology Building and

v. Completion and furnishing of two Hostel buildings.

vi. Completion and furnishing of a one story Building donated by the National Information Technology Agency (NITDA).

Just yesterday, Monday, December 2, 2019, the Commissioner of Police, Imo State Command, CP. Rabiu Ladodo commissioned the Nigerian Police Post in FUTO. The Police post is located at the University’s back gate and it would help improve security on campus.

Let me add that the Ecological Fund Office is currently working on Erosion and Flood Control Works/Reinforcement of Threatened Bridge Base at FUTO. We wish to thank the Federal Government for this intervention and other assistance in boosting infrastructure in the University.

While we appreciate the Federal Government for their assistance, we wish to appeal to corporate organisations and wealthy individuals to also support our University in many challenges that confront it. Some of them include; a foundry facility, laboratory equipment, staff quarters, perimeter fencing of the University, standard stadium and cafeteria and of course, the encroachment on the University land among other issues.
Before I conclude this address, I want to specially thank my Principal Officers, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, Coordinators of Units and all members of staff for working so hard and supporting Management to achieve these successes. This convocation and many other enumerated achievements would not have been possible without your commitment and dedication. I thank you all for all the support and encouragement.

I also thank the members of the Press for honouring our invitation and urge them to use their platforms to broadcast the coming convocation and other milestone of the University.

Thank you all for listening and may God bless us all, Amen.