**ADDRESS BY DR. BAMANGA TUKUR, CON COM**

**GRAND PATRON, AFRICAN BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE**

**AT THE**

**ABR PRESIDENTIAL HAND OVER CEREMONY AND DINNER, TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL**

**31ST JANUARY, 2018**

**THE TUKUR LEGACY**

PROTOCOLS

I am indeed very delighted to see this day and occasion become a reality. We are greatly honoured to have the distinguished presence of you, very important personalities in our midst. You are most welcome.

Today marks an important milestone in the history of the African Business Roundtable (ABR) and indeed private sector development in Africa. ABR is undoubtedly the foremost continent wide association of businesses and business leaders focused on the promotion of free enterprise economy, enhance productivity and competitiveness of the African Private Sector.

Before I proceed, I will like to pay tribute to the late Dr. Babacar Ndiaye, a former President of the African Development Bank and founder of the African Business Roundtable, who passed on last year. May we please observe a moment of silence in his memory and honour…… May his soul rest in peace.

Dr. Babacar Ndiaye was a visionary and pragmatic leader, a colossus that bestrode Africa’s economic landscape. He was a strong advocate for strengthening and development of the African private sector through building capacity that enhances competiveness and growth, forging linkages and partnerships in a very structured and sustainable manner. This led him to the establishment of the African Business Roundtable, the Africa Export Import Bank and a host of other related organization for promotion of business and investments in Africa. He was a master institution builder.

Most people do not know that the ABR was founded by the African Development Bank between 1988 and 1990, and even operated before the Private Sector Department of the Bank Group became fully functional. ABR was the main umbrella private sector institution, by which the Bank Group mobilized, engaged and involved the Business Sector in those days. Dr. Babacar Ndiaye, as Honorary President of ABR, led a delegation of top business personalities in Africa to the White House to meet with the then President of the United States, President George Bush Senior, in 199?. This visit preceded, and eventually motivated the establishment of the US Corporate Council on Africa.

I took over a financially prostrate organization when I was elected President (in 1991 (1993). Everyone here knows that without necessary resources deployed to actualize a vision, you will remain at best a good dreamer. I committed enormous resources in terms of personal funds, time and goodwill towards rebuilding, restructuring and re-organizing the institution to raise its profile and relevance in the global economic, political and even socio-cultural arena. More importantly however was my commitment to strengthening governance, institutional efficiency and effectiveness through establishment of a functional secretariat, staffed by well trained professionals and supported by a pool of expert consultants which led to the development of a very robust Business Plan to chart the organizational path in delivering its mandate. I also invited notable business leaders, firms and development institutions across the globe to join, support or collaborate with the ABR. We expanded the Board for more gender and regional inclusiveness.

During my tenure, ABR achieved the following milestones among many others:

* Became the leader and voice of the African Business Sector, which culminated in the invitation of my humble self, as President of ABR, to address the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 to speak on the Role of Business and Meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals.
* Leader and Chair of the NEPAD Business Group, a coalition of global business associations founded under Mr. Koffi Anan as Secretary General of the United Nations, comprised of the US Corporate Council on Africa, the Canadian Corporate Council, the Commonwealth Business Council, the International Chamber of Commerce, the French CIAN and of course the ABR.
* Partner to the Blair Commission for Africa for mobilizing and sensitizing the African Private Sector
* Member of the UN Financing for Development
* Member of the Steering Committee ITC funded ‘Programme for Africa Capacity for Trade – PACT 11’
* Member of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
* Obtained Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC)
* Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation and collaboration with several UN Agencies such as UNIDO, UNECA, UNCTAD and UNDP
* Observer Status with African Union Commission in view
* Observer Status with UNESCO in view
* Signed MoU with the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) and other Regional Economic Communities
* Signed MoU with the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency of the World Bank (MIGA)
* Re-established good working relationship with our founding institution, the African Development Bank.
* Established and mentored Entrepreneurship Club in Secondary schools in Nigeria, sponsored young entrepreneurs to win the ‘Student for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship – SAGE’ consecutively over 3 years
* Obtained financing from the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and African Development Bank – Funds for Africa Private Sector Assistance (ADB/FAPA) for institutional strengthening, association building and training of SMEs for competitiveness and growth
* Signed MoU with the NEPAD Secretariat and contributed financially to the initial take off of the Secretariat in South Africa
* Partnership Agreements for cooperation and collaboration with several Business Associations such as CCA and Chambers of Commerce.

The list goes on and on. I couldn’t have achieved these all by myself, but for the contribution, support and cooperation of several people and institutions notably the African Development Bank, the African Capacity Building Foundation, the United Nations and several of its Agencies, the African Union Commission, the World Bank and IMF, committed ABR Members like the Bank of Industry, loyal and dedicated staff and of course the Board of Directors, most especially Mr. Samuel Dossou-Aworet, who was the Vice President, International before his unanimous election as President and Chairman of the Board in September 2017. I thank you all.

I am particularly delighted that I am handing over the reign of this institution to my brother and compatriot, Mr. Samuel Dossou-Aworet, President of Petrolin Group, the Pan Africa Oil and Gas Exploration Company. He is a passionate crusader for good corporate governance, an advocate for regional integration through cross border business and investment partnerships, a very successful business personality of high repute and integrity. He has been a part of the ABR for a long time and has helped in no small measure to sustain the vision of the late founder, Dr. Babacar Ndiaye and has been on this mission with me to empower the African Business Sector to create wealth, generate employment and improve the standard and quality of life of Africans.

Mr. Dossou-Aworet is most competent to take over, and I am glad our colleagues in the Board of the ABR also recognized this by unanimously electing him as President and Chairman of the Board. I call for all to support him to take the ABR to its next level.

Thank you all for your attention.

Long Live the ABR.

Dr. Bamanga Tukur, CON

Grand Patron, ABR & Tafidan Adamawa