1.0 Introduction

I am pleased to welcome you to this all-important event, marking the inauguration of the Board of the Centre for Ilorin Studies (CILS). But before I present the welcome address proper, kindly permit me to appreciate the Almighty God, for granting us the grace of conceiving the establishment of the Centre, along with the grace of survival to the point of witnessing this memorable occasion. From experience, we know that it is one thing to conceive an idea, it is another thing to plan for it, and it is yet a completely different story to actually witness the execution of the plan. We, therefore, thank the Almighty Allah, for seeing us successfully through the various stages of our individual and collective survival: AL-HAMDU LILLAHI RABBIL ‘ALAMIN.
2.0 Inception and Mandate

The Centre for Ilorin Studies was established during the 2010/2011 academic session. It is part of the core vision of making the University of Ilorin an International Centre of Excellence. It is also part of the grand mission of creating a world class environment for the actualization of the University’s vision.

In specific terms, the Centre is mandated to acquire Ilorin Emirate-related manuscripts and publications in Arabic and other languages, particularly, those of them that border on historical, religious, cultural, and other features of growth and development. These works are collected from indigenes of the Emirate, lecturers of the University of Ilorin and other writers from any part of the world. The ultimate goal is to preserve the materials acquired and to immortalize their authors.

3.0 Justification

It is important to note that the establishment of the Centre is in line with national and international best practices as exemplified by similar centres within and outside the country. In Nigeria, for example, similar centres with concerns for the needs of the immediate environment and preservation of their heritage include: the Ilorin History and Culture Bureau, here, in Ilorin; the Centre for Arabic Documentation, at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Centre for Trans-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri; Centre for Islamic Studies, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto; to mention just a few. Examples of such Centres, at the international level, include the International Research Institute of Stavenger, Iris; Mama Haedarah Centre for
Manuscripts, Timbuktu, Mali; Civitan International Research Centre, University of Alabama, USA, French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) and several other centres. Meanwhile, the Centre for Ilorin Studies is justified by the several Arabic manuscripts crying for dedicated researchers to investigate their themes, authors, specific contents and relevance to contemporary issues. The Centre is thus an actualization of UNILORIN’s vision of serving the immediate community and meeting its yearnings and aspirations.

4.0 Achievements

For lack of space and time, the executive summary of the Centre’s success story is presented as follows:

1. Acquisition of 95 manuscripts made up of 1,328 folios. These include:
   - AN-NAJMU FI AT-TAWHID KALQAMAR by Shaykh Muhammad Belgore, Mahmoud;
   - KITAB ā’AN ’AMR AS- SADAQ by Shaykh Ahmad Rufai Bello, Oke-Are;
   - RISĀLAT AL-WASĀYĀ LIL FARĪQAYN by Shaykh Mai Masa, Muhammad.

2. A collection of 131 books including:
   - 25 of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory’s works;
   - 12 of Shaykh Dā’ūd Alfanla’s booklets;
   - 4 of Prof. Ahmad Shehu Abdussalām’s book publications;
• 11 of the Research Bulletins of the Centre for Arabic Documentation;
• 3 of Prof. Abdulbaqi Shuaib Agaka’s book publications;
• one of Prof. A.G.A.S. Oladosu’s book publications; to mention just a few.

3. A collection of 120 papers presented at the 1st International Conference on the Life and Works of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iloriy (August 2012), including:
   • 53 published articles in Arabic;
   • 30 published articles in English; and
   • 37 papers in manuscripts.

4. Regular contact and collaboration with the Centre for Arabic Documentation, University of Ibadan.

5. Effective collaboration with the Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, to host the 1st International Conference on the Life and Works of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory, held in August, 2012.

6. Successful hosting of the Centre’s 1st Public Lecture on Wednesday, 12th December, 2012.

7. Video recordings of major socio-spiritual events such as the:
   • the FIDAU Prayer Session for Late Alhaji Abubakar Olushola Saraki;
   • the FIDAU Prayer Session for the late MUFTI of Ilorin – Alhaji K.S. Apaokagi; and
   • the Special Prayer Session organized by His Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin, for the TALIBAN of Ilorin – Professor Shuaib Oba AbdulRaheem on the occasion of his reappointment as the Chairman of the Federal Character Commission; among several other events.
8. The latest, in our success-story series, was the 1st National Conference organized by the Centre, from the 26th to 29th of May, 2013. The conference was apt, timely and relevant, in view of the prevailing state of insecurity that has characterized most part of the country. In fact, the Conference could not have been hosted at a better time than now that the whole citizenry are yearning for an effective paradigm, capable of engendering peace, harmony, tranquility and mutual understanding, across the length and breadth of our beloved country: a country that is so much blessed and endowed, but yet, so much neck-deep in abject poverty and unparalleled deprivation.

This is where the relevance of Ilorin is obviously situated: over the years, the city has remained a magnetic centre of gravity, attracting different interest groups and professionals, from different parts of the country: historians have cause to catch a glimpse of its historical monuments; geographers are attracted to its geographical landmarks in addition to its veritable strategic location; religious experts are persuaded by its significant contributions to the rapid growth and development of the city’s Islamic culture; settlers from both the northern and southern “hemispheres” migrate there, due to its reputation for peace and harmony; business men and women move in for its economic viability; while politicians seek refuge on account of its relative political stability and provision of a safe haven.

All these are worthwhile justifications for the timing, the theme and the venue of the conference. We seize this opportunity to acknowledge the University Administration, under the able leadership of the Vice-Chancellor-Prof. A.G. Ambali- for its
moral and financial contributions to the stunning success of the conference. We recall, with sincere appreciation that the representative of the Vice-Chancellor, accompanied by other Principal Officers witnessed both the opening and the closing ceremonies of the conference. We are very grateful sir.

5.0 Conclusion
Finally, permit me to warmly welcome you to this inauguration programme as I pray the Almighty ALLAH to grant all of us, the strength and faith to carry out our functions and justify the trust reposed in us.
Thank you.