**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF JUST FRIENDS CLUB OF NIGERIA (JFCN), CHIEF J.N. GREEN-AMAKWE, AT THE 2ND JFCN ANNUAL LECTURE HOLDING ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017 IN ABUJA**

Mr. Chairman,

Our Distinguished Guest Lecturer,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the second annual lecture of Just Friends Club of Nigeria (JFCN). The maiden lecture was held in June 2014, also here in Abuja.

Our intention in instituting an annual lecture was informed by the need to extend the frontiers of economic, social, political and cultural discourse and thereby positively influencing the way our country is run.

Our maiden lecture was on “The Federal Government’s Privatisation and Economic Reform Programme” and was delivered by Mr. Benjamin Dikki, then Director General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises. This time around, we thought it fit to bring to the fore the issue of the role of the private sector in the development of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

This has become imperative given the crucial role of the private sector in ensuring economic growth and stability in any economy; Nigeria not being an exception. While there is a school of thought that believes that government has no role in business but this does not imply that it should not intervene to create an enabling environment for the private sector to thrive, by creating the regulatory and legal framework for investors.

It was the late American president, Ronald Reagan, who said thus: “Don’t be afraid to see what you see.” What we see about the Federal Capital Territory project is troubling. We understand that the recession which the country has just emerged from has put a hold on initiatives of the government and the private sector. But more efforts need to be in place to put life back to the FCT.

It is in that regard that I am highly delighted with the rare opportunity afforded us today by this forum to exchange ideas on the role of the private sector in FCT development.

We are proud to have Mr. Tony Chidi Ejinkeonye, the President, Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry as the Guest Speaker at the 2nd JFCN Annual Lecture.

We have covered most grounds with the choice of the Chairman of this occasion and the four discussants.

Our Chairman is not only a former Permanent Secretary of FCT but he is also an environmental expert. So as we grow, it should not be at the expense of our environment.

The discussants are a reputation management expert, a transport sector expert, a legal practitioner and a management consultant / investment guru. The menu is rich and we would be the better at the end of this enlightening event.

That said, it is apt to talk a little about our club. Just Friends Club of Nigeria is a socio-cultural organisation that fosters and encourages the spirit of oneness, companionship and comradeship amongst members and between the club and other friendly associations. The club is also involved in recreation and sports and engages in acts of philanthropy in favour of the needy members of the society at large. The club is built on a foundation to be socially responsible and to serve communities with her programmes.

Its members are professionals in engineering, communication, accounting, business and legal sectors of the economy. Membership is open to all Nigerians.

Ladies and gentlemen we thank you for coming and you are enjoined to enjoy occasion.

**J. N. Green-Amakwe**

President