

My Manifesto

Manifesto of
Shola Abiloye for
The Position of Secretary,
NBA, Lagos Branch

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INTEGRITY

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DEDICATION

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SERVICE

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ACCOUNTABILITY



OUTLINE



**A FIT
FOR PURPOSE
SECRETARIAT**



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A FIT FOR **PURPOSE** **SECRETARIAT**



**'SHOLA ABILOYE FOR
THE POSITION OF SECRETARY, NBA,
LAGOS BRANCH**



WHO IS **SHOLA ABILOYE?**

I was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2008. Presently, I am the Partner in charge of the Shipping and Dispute Resolution Group of Southgate Solicitors, a full-service commercial law firm based in Lagos, and Abuja, Nigeria. I have extensive experience in Admiralty law, Shipping & Marine Insurance Law & Litigation, Ship Registration, Cabotage Registration & Compliance, Ship Finance & Securitization and International Trade Law & Commercial Arbitration. I was part of the Lagos Team that compiled and drafted the Final Report for the Presidential Committee on Maritime Sector Reform in 2012. I have acted and continue to act as counsel

to several Nigerian and foreign companies in different areas of law including oil and gas law, project finance, FinTech, corporate and commercial law and compliance, debt recovery and insolvency practice. I have had the privilege to have served as Company Secretary of various organisations including Mitsui OSK Lines Nigeria Limited, Ocean Network Express (Nigeria) Limited, Atrolinks International and the RCCG Lagos Province 4 Legal Team. I am presently serving as Board Company Secretary and Member of the Advisory Board of Sickle Cell Advocacy and Management Initiative (SAMI), a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to empower and improve the lives of people, especially with sickle cell disorder through strategic partnership via education, creating awareness, and providing medical support.





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My intention to vie for the position of the branch secretary is fuelled by my desire and deep passion to have a fit for purpose secretariat for the Premier Bar. There is no gainsaying the fact that the Secretariat of any organization is the lifeblood of that organization. For the Nigerian Bar Association, the importance of an efficient and fit for purpose secretariat cannot be over emphasized.

The Secretariat is the contact point of the members with the Branch. It is through the secretariat that the members feel the pulse of the Association. Conversely, it is also through the secretariat that the Branch through the Executive Committee connects with and serves its members. For the Premier Bar with its large membership of over fifteen thousand lawyers, including some of the finest in the legal profession, a record number of Senior Advocates, Life Benchers, Benchers, past and current Attorneys General, globally recognised/celebrated solicitors, in-house counsel and innovators, our Secretariat must be top notch to meet with the yearnings and aspirations of these fine men and women, and also position itself



to be invaluable to the innovative crop of young lawyers.

It is to this end that I present myself for service. I have keenly followed the development of our Branch over the years with particular focus on the Secretariat. There have been a positive and upward trajectory in the way the Secretariat has been run in recent years, yet there is need for improvement. This is so, especially as the current reality of the world we live in, requires more innovation in the way the secretariat is run viz-a-viz the expectations of members of the Branch.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a challenge that makes it imperative that we have an online secretariat that can be accessed at the touch of a button. So many of our members are reluctant to physically visit the secretariat, rather they prefer a situation where they can transact all their businesses online. It is noteworthy and highly commendable that the current administration has done a lot in this regard, however there is still room for improvement, in order to fully automate the system.



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As Secretary, I plan to play a key role in conjunction with the Chairman and the Executive Committee, to ensure that the almost elusive Bar Centre for the Branch becomes a reality. To actualize this dream, I will make sure the building of the Bar Centre is a top priority item on the agenda of every Executive Committee and branch monthly meeting.

To aid clarity, I will now highlight my action plan so that members of our Branch will have no doubt about my plans.. This list is by no means an exhaustive one, as I am open to ideas and suggestions that will ensure that Lagos Branch continues to set the pace.

- **NBA Lagos Journal:** With the co-operation of the Chairman and other members of the excos, I intend to initiate the publication of NBA Lagos Journal. As the Premier Bar, it saddens me that we do not have a professional journal where members can publish their research works. While the Branch could be



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commended for the ongoing Knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS), in my respectful view, there is a lacuna created by the KSS as presently constituted. For instance, where are the lectures and papers delivered at our monthly KSS? My take is that these lectures should form a part of the journal, amongst other publications from our members. I have already identified some lawyers – both young and very experienced to be nominated, with the approval of the Chairman, to set up an editorial committee for the NBA Lagos Journal. I have also identified potential sponsors for the publication of the journal in the event that the Branch is unwilling to assume 100% financial responsibility for the publication.

- **Full Automation of Branch Website:** I salute the current excos for launching the branch website. We are in an age of technology and our



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Branch must not be lagging behind. I have noticed several complaints by our members regarding the functionality of the website. Can we have a fully automated website? Yes! Can we have a website that is a one-stop shop for all a member needs to do with the Branch? Yes! If elected as Secretary, I will work towards ensuring that this promise is fulfilled by rolling out sustainable ICT infrastructure to support the website.

- **Online Branch Directory of Lawyers:** We currently have a membership of more than 15,000 lawyers, with full details (name of law firm/company, address of law firm/company, email address, picture, phone numbers and also their areas of specialization). I intend to use this information to create an easily accessible database that will contain areas of specialization of lawyers and their contact addresses. I believe such a



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database would positively assist individuals, government agencies and private-sector companies in identifying skilled lawyers that could assist them in handling certain specialized matters.

- **Online Service:** Member complaints and enquiries will be made online (with a 24hour resolution timeline) and at the Branch Secretariat. An electronic filing system in addition to the old manual system will be utilized in storing our records. During handover, proper records will be passed on to the incoming administration. I believe this will facilitate the culture of continuity and transparency at the NBA National Secretariat. All correspondences received and sent out on behalf of the NBA will be digitally filed. I shall also ensure that records of any of our publications (e.g., leaflets or newsletters) are properly kept electronically. The Reports



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presented at the various statutory meetings will be properly filed both manually and digitally.

- **Dedicated Helpline:** A dedicated functional telephone helpline will be available at the Secretariat to attend to all enquiries from members to be manned by a staff from 9am - 4pm during weekdays.
- **Electronic Filing and Submission System:** I shall set up a Branch Secretariat cloud where we shall store documents such as branch dues, bar practicing fees and other documentations for efficiency and safe keeping.. This will help to prevent loss of member information and related data.
- **Transparency and Financial Prudence:** Transparency, accountability and financial prudence are fundamental features of good governance. When elected as the Branch Secretary, I will ensure that transparency will be the watchword in the management of



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the Association's resources including its finances and assets. I shall run the Branch Secretariat in a transparent manner. I shall regularly present the secretariat report to members of the Branch. Auspiciously, the current administration has performed excellently in entrenching the principles of corporate governance in the NBA. In this regard, it will be my duty to sustain and strengthen this laudable legacy.

- **Expedite Turn-around time:** I plan to personally deal promptly with all correspondence, enquiries, complaints, requests, and queries sent to the official email address of the Branch. This will be done in addition to the dedicated staff manning the helplines and website.
- **24 Hour Meeting Publication:** If elected, I plan to publish, via emails and on the Branch WhatsApp groups, a synopsis of our monthly meetings including decisions reached and resolutions passed



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within twenty-four (24) hours after the meeting.

- **Monthly Updates:** I undertake to provide via email, a monthly update to members on the activities of the Branch.
- **Bar Centre:** I plan to play a key role in conjunction with the Chairman and the Executive Committee to ensure that the almost elusive Bar Centre becomes a reality. To actualize this dream, I will make sure the building of the Bar Centre is an item on the agenda of every Executive Committee and branch monthly meeting, until the Branch becomes the proud owner of a befitting Bar Centre.
- **I undertake to ensure that all members are kept informed of dates, times and venues for meetings, giving proper notice as detailed in the Uniform Bye Laws. This also applies to meetings conducted online via Zoom or any other online platform.**



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I am a quintessential lawyer who combines deep knowledge of the law with considerable experience in commercial law and arbitration. I have a proven track record of service and also have a firm grasp of contemporary issues of law, public interests and understand servant leadership. Having had the privilege of serving as Secretary of various organisations and having also served as a co-opted member of the Executive Committee of our Branch from 2017-2019, I understand the progress made so far and the peculiar challenges of the NBA Lagos Secretariat. Since 2008, I have followed with keen interest, the various developments within our Branch and I believe that I have the requisite expertise and experience to bring sterling reforms that will rejig our Secretariat. My thoughts as stated above have informed my hashtag #AFitForPurposeSecretariat. I have no doubt that it is a call to service, and I humbly present myself to serve as your Branch Secretary. I promise not to let you down. Like the Latin maxim goes,



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dictum meum pactum (my word is my bond), I shall always bear in mind the pact I have made to serve you all, diligently and efficiently I earnestly covet your support and vote. I will always welcome the opportunity to provide further information/clarification as may be required.

Yours faithfully



Shola Abiloye,
FCArb. (Notary Public)



+234 808 310 1040



info@sholaabiloye.com



www.sholaabiloye.com