



**NIGERIAN BAR  
ASSOCIATION  
LAGOS BRANCH**

# **A BAR WITHOUT BARRIERS:**

**UCHENNA OGUNEDO AKINGBADE'S MANIFESTO FOR  
THE OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN, NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION,  
LAGOS BRANCH (2025 -2027)**



# INTRODUCTION

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**Article 7(1) of the NBA Uniform Byelaws for Branches provides for the duties of the Branch Chairman as:**

To preside at all Annual General Meetings and other meetings of the Branch and at the Executive Committee meetings;

To direct and motivate the Executive Committee and members generally towards the achievement of the aims and objects of the Branch as set out herein or as may be determined from time to time;

To provide direction and leadership to all Committees, Officers and members of the Branch, ensure the efficient utilization of the resources of the Branch subject to the approval of the Executive Committee or the General Meeting and direct all other officers of the Branch in the performance of their duties;

- To serve as the official spokesperson for the Branch;
- To be ex-officio member of all Committees of the Branch;
- To cause the summoning of the monthly and Annual General Meetings or other meetings in accordance with the provisions of this Bye- Law;
- To present the Chairman's Address at the Annual General Meeting;
- To perform such other functions as may be in the interest of the Branch;
- To represent the Branch at the National Executive Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association ("the Association")

# BRIEF PROFILE

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My name is Uchenna Ogunedo Akingbade. I am a Founding Partner at Sunesis DLP and I have been in active and continuous legal practice since my call to the Bar. My core practice areas are, dispute resolution, commercial law, and real estate law. I am a Notary Public of Nigeria, a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK), an LMDC-certified mediator, and an Associate Member of the Business Recovery and Insolvency Practitioners Association of Nigeria (BRIPAN).

I obtained my LL. B from the University of Jos, my B.L from the Nigerian Law School, Bwari campus, an LL.M from the University of Birmingham UK, and completed an executive management training at the Lagos Business School. My foundational legal career began at Chief Solo Akuma, SAN & Associates in Abuja, followed by a stint at Adetunji Shoyoye & Associates, Lagos, before founding Distinguished Legal Practitioners. In 2024, I merged my solo practice with that of my business partner and together we co-founded Sunesis DLP.

I was born and raised in Jos, I had my primary education at Command Children's School and my secondary education at St. Louis College - an all-girls Catholic school.

Beyond legal practice, I have extensive project management experience in Nigeria's telecommunications sector and sit on the boards of several private companies and NGOs.

I am deeply committed to community impact, particularly in education, pro bono criminal defence, rehabilitation of incarcerated persons, and human rights advocacy.

# TRACK RECORD OF SERVICE

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With a proven track record of service, I have played pivotal roles within the NBA Lagos Branch - consistently showing up, taking responsibility, and delivering meaningful impact. These roles include:

- *Co-opted Member, NBA Lagos Executive Committee - Liaison Officer to the In-House & Government Counsel Forum (2023-date)*
- *Mentorship Session Coordinator, In-house & Government Counsel Forum 3-in-1 event Planning Committee (2025)*
- *Law Week Planning Committee (2025 - Programmes & Logistics; 2024 - Secretary, Content & Programmes; 2023 - Secretary Budget & Finance)*
- *Lead Coordinator, NBA Lagos and Business Recovery and Insolvency Practitioners Association of Nigeria (BRIPAN) Training & Induction (2024 & 2025)*
- *Member, NBA Lagos Human Rights Committee (2023-date)*
- *Member, International Human Rights Day Planning Committee (2023 & 2024)*
- *Member, NBA Lagos Building Committee (2024-date)*
- *Member, NBA Lagos AGC Planning Committee (2023 & 2025)*

My commitment to service transcends the NBA Lagos Branch. I (have) also play(ed) active roles in affiliate professional bodies, broadening my reach, and amplifying my impact.

- *Chairperson, NBA-SBL Tourism Retreat & Roundtable Abeokuta, Planning Committee (2024)*
- *Team Lead, Quality Assurance Team, Media & Publicity Subcommittee, NBA-SBL Conference Planning Committee (2025)*
- *Programmes Team Lead, British-Nigeria Law Forum, Nigerian Summit Planning Committee (2025)*
- *Co-Chair Marketing & Publicity Sub- Committee, BRIPAN Conference Planning Committee (2025)*
- *Advisory member, NBA-SBL Tourism Retreat & Roundtable Ibadan, Planning Committee (2025)*
- *Secretary, Steering Committee, NACL CCDM Lekki*
- *Member, NBAWF Lagos State Chapter Programme Planning Committee*

- *Secretary, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Epe, Law Week Planning Committee (2024).*
- *Host, Law Practice Series – a web series providing insight into diverse legal career paths*

My commitment to service has always been guided by empathy, strategic thinking, and a results-driven mindset. I am deeply passionate about institutional progress, community building, and legal empowerment. Through my professional journey, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative potential of good leadership and inclusive governance.

It is on this foundation that I present my candidacy for the position of Chairman of the NBA Lagos Branch.

## MY IDEOLOGY

The Nigerian legal profession stands at a defining moment—pressed between the weight of tradition and a wave of profound change. Declining standards, generational disconnect, public distrust, and technological disruption demand more than passive observation. I believe in a profession that evolves with purpose—embracing innovation, fostering intergenerational synergy, and upholding ethics, service, and excellence.

Rather than sit on the sidelines, I believe we must respond to these challenges with action. My approach is rooted in inclusion, results, and a belief that every generation has a role to play in shaping the future of the Bar. We are not the leaders of tomorrow; we are the leaders of today. The future is now.

We must rise above the disillusionment that the state of our Nation has foisted on us. We must reclaim our courage, and recommit to building a Bar that is visionary, responsive, and relevant collaboratively to reignite a spirit of purposeful engagement, shared responsibility, and transformative impact within our profession.



# MY VISION

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To build a dynamic, inclusive, and impactful Bar where every member is empowered, every voice matters, and the legal profession serves justice with courage, innovation, and integrity.

# MY MISSION

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To advance professional excellence, protect lawyers' welfare, foster innovation, uphold human rights, and create a Bar that is responsive, collaborative, and impactful within the legal ecosystem and society.

My candidacy is positively disruptive - a movement for a purposeful, inclusive and impactful Bar. A Bar without Barriers

If given your mandate, to serve the Branch as Chairman, Below are the initiatives that I intend to focus on and run with throughout my administration:

# CAPACITY BUILDING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The legal profession is evolving rapidly, and our members must be positioned not only to adapt, but to lead, build, and thrive. The changing landscape of legal practice—driven by digital transformation, increased client expectations, cross-border commercial activity, and regulatory shifts—demands a proactive and strategic approach to professional development.

If elected to serve, I will revitalize and build on the strengths of the Branch's Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Committee. We will expand the frequency and coverage of our training programmes, ensuring they are more robust, responsive, and relevant to contemporary practice realities.

We will introduce innovative approaches such as firm-led workshops and masterclasses focused on specific practice areas. These will complement our existing CLE sessions and allow for deeper, practice-specific learning and interaction.

In collaboration with affiliate professional bodies such as BRIPAN, ICSAN, LASIAC, CIN, and others, we will roll out targeted training sessions designed to meet the real-world demands of modern legal practice. Furthermore, we will identify and establish partnerships with renowned educational institutions such as the Lagos Business School, with a view to co-creating executive-level and specialized training offerings for our members.

Where possible, we will negotiate discounted—and in some cases, subsidized—access for our members to attend premium workshops, certification programmes, and continuous development offerings.

Beyond technical legal skills, we will promote business and law practice management training—especially for solo and small law firms. Our lawyers must be equipped with the systems, structures, and strategic insights needed to build sustainable practices. These sessions will be introduced as regular fixtures on the branch's training calendar.

To deepen practical exposure, I will introduce a Local Secondment Programme in partnership with mid- and large-sized law firms. This initiative will allow interested members—across seniority levels—to gain first-hand exposure to internal systems, workflows, client strategies, and structures, without breaching confidentiality boundaries. It will be a unique opportunity to broaden perspective, build networks, and foster professional growth.

Lastly, we will institutionalize a comprehensive New Wigs Induction Programme designed to bridge the gap between law school theory and the professional realities of legal practice. This programme will introduce new entrants to the opportunities available within the NBA Lagos Branch, equip them with essential practical knowledge, and offer clarity on career pathways within the private bar, public sector, corporate world, and emerging sectors.

Our aim is clear: to raise the collective competence of our members, to ensure no one is left behind, and to reinforce the NBA Lagos Branch as the pacesetter in professional excellence.

# MENTORSHIP: BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS GENERATIONS

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Throughout my career, I have experienced firsthand the transformative power of mentorship. It is not merely about receiving guidance—it is about cultivating meaningful connections, fostering growth, and preserving legacy. Mentorship is one of the most enduring tools of professional development.

My administration will prioritize the revitalization of the mentorship framework in NBA Lagos. My vision is to establish a comprehensive, inclusive, and intentional mentorship programme that fosters real connection across all levels of the profession. We will institutionalize mentorship as a continuous culture and a pillar of professional advancement.

Structured mentorship pairings will be created across various practice areas and career stages. One-on-one mentor-mentee relationships will be encouraged and actively facilitated. Group mentorship formats—both small clusters and large-scale town hall engagements—will also be developed. Peer-to-peer mentorship will be promoted, and intermediate-level lawyers will be encouraged to support and guide their junior colleagues, while senior lawyers will be mobilized to provide top-level mentorship across the Branch.

As the Coordinator of the Mentorship Session for the NBA Lagos In-House and Government Counsel Forum 3- in 1 event, I designed and led a landmark programme that brought together 21 outstanding mentors with over 200 mentees in a structured, interactive group mentoring environment. The success of that event underscored a fundamental truth—mentorship is not optional; it is indispensable to the future of our Branch and the legal profession as a whole.

My administration will build on this success by establishing mentorship as a permanent fixture in the NBA Lagos Branch. We will provide support systems and tools for mentors and mentees, and institute a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure each relationship is impactful, meaningful, and sustained.

A Bar without barriers must be one where every lawyer—regardless of age, stage, or sector—has access to mentorship that nurtures talent, strengthens professionalism, and builds bridges between generations.



# LAWYERS' WELFARE & PROFESSIONAL DIGNITY

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Welfare is the cornerstone of a dignified profession. No lawyer should struggle to meet basic living standards while serving as a guardian of justice. The economic realities confronting many of our members today—across all demographics - young, mid-level, and senior lawyers—are deeply troubling and unacceptable.

A particularly disturbing trend is the reality of lawyers charging unacceptably low fees. This practice not only undermines the sustainability of individual law practices but contributes to a broader erosion of standards across the profession. We must begin to sensitise our members on the importance of charging appropriate professional fees. Lawyers must be reminded that the fees we charge directly impact the value and perception of the legal profession as a whole.

To that end, my administration will plug into ongoing efforts at the NBA National level to ensure the practical implementation of the Remuneration Order through sustained institutional engagement and legislative collaboration. Beyond rhetoric, we will take concrete steps to defend the professional income streams of lawyers. We will work closely with relevant regulatory agencies and the Lagos State House of Assembly to protect legal practitioners' fees—particularly in the real estate and commercial sectors.

Real estate developers and non-lawyers who continue to unlawfully usurp the professional space of legal practitioners—especially by charging legal fees—will be confronted with clear, advocacy-driven action and legislative measures that hold them accountable and enforce compliance.

In furtherance of economic empowerment, we will reactivate and strengthen the NBA Lagos Cooperative Society to deliver real, tangible benefits to our members. Through the Cooperative, we will facilitate access to finance, affordable land schemes, solar power solutions, car financing arrangements, and other essential support tools that directly improve our members' quality of life.

Additionally, we will provide subsidized access to legal technology and productivity tools such as legal research platforms, and law practice management software. These tools will be especially valuable to solo practitioners and small law firms, helping them streamline operations, reduce costs, and remain competitive in an increasingly digital legal marketplace.

I will work hand-in-hand with the Welfare Secretary and the Welfare Committee to ensure that welfare initiatives are not just conceptualized, but actively and effectively implemented. Together, we will build a welfare system that is practical, responsive, and far-reaching.

Welfare will not be a buzzword in my administration. It will be a comprehensive, deliberate, and urgent agenda—one rooted in empowerment, professional dignity, and the shared prosperity of all members of the NBA Lagos Branch.

# JUDICIARY ENGAGEMENT & SYSTEMS REFORM

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A strong Bar requires a judiciary that is functional, accessible, and respectful of the time and dignity of legal practitioners. For far too long, members of our Branch have voiced frustration with persistent inefficiencies in court processes—unpredictable scheduling, lack of timely notice, filing delays, discourteous treatment by court staff, and the dilapidated state of court facilities. These systemic issues are not insurmountable, but they demand a Bar that is both persistent and pragmatic in its approach.

As Chairman, I will prioritize sustained engagement with the judiciary—through structured dialogue, strategic advocacy, and collaborative reform. The challenges facing the judiciary are complex and layered, requiring a coordinated and comprehensive response.

We will leverage the existing Bar and Bench Forum as a tool for institutional dialogue, transparency, and mutual accountability. Our aim is not to antagonize, but to co-create solutions.

If granted the mandate, my administration will advocate for and work towards the following:  
**Improved Conditions of Service for Magistrates:** The welfare and dignity of magistrates is foundational to judicial effectiveness. We will champion better remuneration and improved working conditions.

**Training for Court Administrative Staff:** We will push for regular and targeted capacity-building for registrars, bailiffs, and other administrative personnel to ensure professionalism in case handling and timely issuance of court processes.

**Scheduling & Cause List Management:** We will advocate for digital scheduling systems and reforms to the cause list structure to reduce waiting time and enhance predictability in court sittings.

**Lawyer-Priority Filing Access:** Lawyers should not have to compete with non-legal agents in filing processes. We will engage the courts to prioritize lawyers at filing counters and service points.

**Digitalization of Court Processes:** We will advocate for the acquisition and widespread deployment of transcription machines and more efficient e-filing systems (especially in the High Court and Federal High Court) to promote efficiency and transparency.

**Infrastructure Upgrades:** With the permission of the judiciary and relevant authorities, we will support infrastructural improvements to court facilities—upgrading toilets, creating dignified robing rooms, and providing well-maintained waiting areas for lawyers and litigants alike.

Through the Bar and Bench Forum, we will deepen engagement with the judiciary and ensure that our concerns are not just voiced but acted upon. We must move beyond complaints to coordinated solutions—anchored on respect, institutional dialogue, and shared responsibility for a justice system that truly works.

## A STRONGER VOICE FOR THE BAR: ADVOCACY, POLICY & RULE OF LAW

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Under my administration, the NBA Lagos Branch will take on a more visible and courageous role in matters of governance, justice, and public interest. As the Premier Bar, we must lead from the front—by speaking boldly on issues of state and national importance and promoting the rule of law not just in theory but in action.

We will build a culture of strategic engagement, ensuring that the voice of the Branch is heard clearly on critical socio-political and legal developments. While maintaining alignment with the NBA National, we will take principled positions on policies that affect the legal profession, democratic institutions, and the wider society.

Our advocacy efforts will be anchored on:

**Legislative Monitoring:** We will actively monitor bills and laws at the Lagos State House of Assembly and other relevant bodies, raising red flags when necessary and proposing reforms where gaps exist.

**Policy Development & Dialogue:** Through structured policy roundtables and stakeholder engagements, we will contribute to shaping Nigeria's justice system and governance framework.

As Chairman, I will work closely with the Vice Chairman and the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee to ensure that the impressive groundwork already laid in the Human Rights Committee is sustained and expanded. We will continue to advocate for human rights, provide pro bono services to support indigent Nigerians, defend the rights of the vulnerable, and hold institutions accountable for violations of due process and justice.

More broadly, our goal is to restore the legal profession's standing in society—to show the public that lawyers are defenders of democracy, promoters of justice, and advocates for the common good. By rebuilding trust and holding the line for the rule of law, we will reclaim the essence of the NBA's motto: Promoting the Rule of Law.



## **STRONG NATIONAL REPRESENTATION & INTER-BRANCH RELATIONS**

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As the Premier Bar, the NBA Lagos Branch must not only live up to its name but also lead with purpose, clarity, and influence. Our Branch must be a model of excellence—fulfilling the objectives for which NBA branches were established: to promote the rule of law, advance legal practice, foster professional camaraderie, and build alliances across jurisdictions.

Under my leadership, NBA Lagos Branch will take its place at the heart of national legal discourse. We will actively contribute to policy-shaping conversations, promote collaborative engagements with sister branches, and ensure that the voice of our Branch is not only heard but respected at the highest levels of the Bar.

We will:

Strengthen our engagement with the NBA National, ensuring alignment on policy direction while asserting the unique priorities of our Branch.

Actively participate in NEC, national committees, and cross-branch initiatives, with structured follow-up mechanisms to translate participation into impact.

Collaborate with branches, fora, and sections across the country—and with professional bodies within and outside Nigeria—on joint initiatives that reflect our shared values and professional goals.

Promote interaction, mutual support, and knowledge exchange between members of our Branch and colleagues in other jurisdictions, while reinforcing the collective strength of the Nigerian Bar.

Our identity as the Premier Bar must be reflected not just in our size or legacy, but in the quality of our participation, the clarity of our voice, and the consistency of our presence on the national stage.



## **INCLUSIVITY & INTEGRATION: A BAR WITHOUT BARRIERS**

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A Bar Without Barriers must be a Bar for all. Inclusivity and integration will sit at the heart of my administration—not in name only, but in action and structure. The Bar must reflect the rich diversity of its members in age, gender, sector, and specialization. Every lawyer, regardless of background or area of practice, must find belonging and value in the NBA Lagos Branch.

We will work to ensure that young lawyers—who constitute the majority demographic—are no longer seen as mere attendees but as active participants, contributors, and future leaders. Their growth will be prioritized through targeted capacity-building initiatives, visible representation in committees, and platforms that equip them with practical skills and professional confidence. At the same time, we will continue to engage our senior colleagues, whose wisdom and presence provide essential grounding for the profession, while empowering mid-level practitioners to bridge the gap and mentor those coming behind.

We recognize the unique experiences of women in law and will be intentional about creating an enabling environment that supports their growth and visibility. This includes considerations around parenting support, inclusive scheduling, leadership grooming, and broader representation in policy and programming. The same commitment will apply to colleagues in corporate and commercial practice, many of whom feel disconnected from Branch activities. We will design initiatives that reflect their realities and encourage their full participation.

As Liaison Officer to the In-House and Government Counsel Forum, I have seen the immense value that this group brings to the legal ecosystem, yet they remain largely unsung. We will ensure that their expertise is not only recognized but also integrated into Branch decision-making and programming. Their contributions will no longer be peripheral—they will be central to how the Branch engages, appoints, and advocates.

In fostering inclusivity, we will also build on the success of unifying platforms such as the Premier Bar League and other recreational initiatives that cut across age, sector, and gender lines. These activities bring our members together beyond the courtroom and boardroom, strengthening the bonds that sustain a vibrant Bar.

Under my leadership, inclusivity will not be tokenistic. It will be structural. It will be deliberate. And it will ensure that no voice is lost, no contribution is ignored, and no practitioner is left behind.

# **DIGITIZATION, INNOVATION & TECH-DRIVEN LAW PRACTICE**

The future of the legal profession is digital. We must embrace this shift, not resist it. My administration will prioritize digitization—of our records, our communications, our dues payments, and even our elections.

We will develop a mobile-friendly member dashboard and app for real-time engagement. Beyond digitization, we will launch a Tech & Innovation Series featuring trainings on AI, cybersecurity, legaltech, and automation.

Innovation is not a luxury—it is a lifeline for modern legal practice.

The future of the legal profession is digital, and as members of the Premier Bar, we must not only keep pace but lead the charge. As Chairman, I will work closely with the Branch Secretary and relevant committees to ensure that digitization becomes a foundational part of our operations. We will create a secure, accessible digital repository for Branch resolutions, committee reports, and historical data—ensuring continuity, transparency, and institutional memory.

Beyond administrative efficiency, we will invest in building our members' capacity through tailored trainings on emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, legaltech, data privacy, cybersecurity, and automation. These sessions will be practical, inclusive, and designed to help our members adapt to the fast-changing demands of the legal profession. Innovation is not a luxury—it is a necessity, and we will ensure that every member of the Bar is empowered to embrace it with confidence.

## **THE BAR CENTRE: A SYMBOL OF OUR COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

The NBA Lagos Branch is the Premier Bar, yet, we lack a befitting Bar Centre. This is more than an infrastructural gap—it is an institutional one.

As a member of the Building Committee, I have an insider's understanding of the project's progress and potential. As Chairman, I will make the completion of the Bar Centre a top priority. We will follow through on fundraising, fast-track construction, ensure transparency, and deliver a functional space that serves as our intellectual, cultural, and professional hub.

The Centre will host trainings, meetings, tech labs, alternative dispute resolution rooms, and member services. It will be a living symbol of our legacy.





# CONCLUSION:

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The office of Chairman of NBA Lagos Branch is not about a title—it is about transformation. It is about building a Branch that reflects the excellence, courage, and dignity of its members.

I offer myself to serve with integrity, transparency, and purpose. Together, we can build a Bar without barriers—a Bar where no one is left behind, where ideas thrive, and where the future begins now.



**Uchenna Ogunedo Akingbade**

Candidate for Chairman, NBA Lagos Branch

*A Bar Without Barriers.  
The Future is Now!*