FG Fetes Awute with National Honour

The Director of Administration at United Nigeria Airlines Company Limited, Linus Awute, has been named among notable Nigerians who bagged national honours as approved by the federal government.

Awute, a retired Federal Permanent Secretary, bagged the national honour of Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON).

He left the Federal Civil service in 20015 after meritorious service to the country which took him through several ministries before retiring from the Federal Ministry of Health, where he served as Permanent Secretary where he had the privilege of briefing President Muhammadu Buhari as well as handing over the ministry to him.

Awute joined United Nigeria Airlines after retirement from the Federal Civil Service as a director and Special Adviser to the Chief Executive and has been instrumental to the successes recorded by the airline which has attracted honours from government and non-governmental organisations.

Congratulating Awute on the honour, the Chairman of United Nigeria Airline, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo, said it was an honour well deserved. He said Awute is a distinguished Nigerian who served Nigeria meritoriously and retired honourably. He thanked the federal government for rewarding Awute for his patriotic service to Nigeria praying that God would bless him with more years in good health to further serve Nigeria selflessly as had done.

Commending the Federal Government for the honour of their son, the President of Ikwerre Federated Union (IFU) Dr. Paul Wowhor, said Awute was deserving of the honour. According to him, Awute “has proved himself worthy of honour”

Born on February 23, 1961, Awute had his high school education at Nyemoni Grammar School, in Abonnema in rivers state. He proceeded to the defunct Soviet Union in 1980 for further education and was admitted to the Belarussian Agricultural Academy and Tashkent Order of the Peoples Agrarian University where in 1986, he earned a Master’s Degree in Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry.

He furthered his search for knowledge and obtained an M. Phil degree in Environmental Management. Currently, he combines his job at United Nigeria Airlines with studies for his doctorate at the Institute of Geosciences and Space Technology of the Rivers State University though he has an honoris causa in Environmental Management which was awarded to him in 2011 he was awarded by the Commonwealth University, Belize.

His civil service career exposed him to executive trainings in leadership and governance in the United Kingdom, Ghana, Geneva and the United States of America, which he has brought to bear in the administration and leadership of United Nigeria Airlines.

His civil service career saw him through many public institutions where he climbed the ladder to become a director in the Federal Civil Service. He worked as Director of Planning Research and Statistics at the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Food Reserve Agency, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. All these happened between 2004 and 2007.

Awute was appointed a Federal Permanent Secretary in 2008. He served in that capacity at various ministries including the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment, the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defence and the Federal Ministry of Health where he served for two distinct periods from 2009 to 2011 and again, from April 2014 to Nov. 2015 when he doubled as Permanent Secretary and Acting Minister of Health of the Federal Republic. He also served at the Secretariat of the Government of the Federation (SGF).

As Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Health in 2015, Awute acted as Minister of Health in which capacity he joined and, or, represented the Nigerian President at both regional and global meetings, seminars and conferences with direct bearing on global and regional health security.

In July 2015, he was proclaimed the best Permanent Secretary for his transparent governance and accountability in the health sector of Nigeria and honoured with the National Leadership Award. That same year, Rotary International, District 9140-Nigeria, also honoured him with an award for excellence in Public Service.

Awute was also severally honoured by different organisations for being the core administrative factor in the successful and timely containment of the Ebola Virus Disease in Nigeria, because he was also, the secretary of the Inter–Ministerial Presidential Committee on Ebola Containment in Nigeria and the Chairman, of the Technical Committee on the Establishment of the Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Nigeria. The proclamation admitted Awute into the Leadership Hall of Fame.

An alumnus of the prestigious National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPPS), Kuru, Awute served in many governing boards and committees including the Board of Nigerian Defence Academy where he served as secretary; the Nigerian Army Council where he was also the secretary and the Defence Industry Corporation of Nigeria where he was chairman. He was also a member of the board of the National Intelligence Bureau, secretary, of the National Council on Health, member of the board of the National Universities Commission and member of the board of Standard Organization of Nigeria as well as secretary of the board of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency.

An annual guest lecturer at NIPPs, Awute was in 2020 appointed by then Minister of Health, Dr. Emmanuel Osagie Ehanire, to chair the National Committee on the Provision of Health Insurance for Retirees and Elderly in Nigeria which made far-reaching recommendations for the care of Nigeria’s senior citizens and retirees.

A double Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International, Awute is an indigene of Rivers State is fluent in English and Russian languages and served, for 20 years, as the President of Old Boy Association of Nyemoni Grammer School Abonnema, as well as Chairman of Ogbakor Agba-Ndele, a Community Development Assembly for 17 years.