



To: Nigeria Governors' Forum
From: Director General
Date: December 13, 2018
Subject: **Re: Report of the 2018 Justice Oputa Annual Conference**

The 2018 Justice Oputa Annual Conference was held on 3rd December, 2018 at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

A key objective of the conference was to draw the attention of a wide spectrum of Nigerian and African audience to the necessity and insistence on good governance and promotion of accountability, transparency, efficiency and the rule of law.

In attendance were Former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Mr. Boss Mustapha, SGF, Dr. Sam Amadi, Mr. Asishana Okauru, DG, NGF etc.

Please find attached report for your information.

Director General

REPORT ON THE JUSTICE OPUTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE (JOAC)
2018

THEME, "GOVERNANCE, LAW & DEVELOPMENT"

HELD ON
MONDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2018
AT
TRANSCORP HILTON, ABUJA

FACILITATED BY JUSTICE OPUTA FOUNDATION

REPORT PREPARED AND SUBMITTED TO JOF

BY

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JUSTICE OPUTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE (JOAC) 2018, WITH THE THEME,
"GOVERNANCE, LAW & DEVELOPMENT".

Venue: TRANSCORP HILTON, ABUJA
Date: 3RD DECEMBER, 2018

Key objectives of the Annual Conference

- To draw attention of a wide spectrum of Nigerian and African audiences to the necessity and insistence on good governance and promotion of accountability, transparency and efficiency and the rule of law at all levels.
- To allow for efficient management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for equitable and sustainable development.
- To guarantee the civil society participation in the decision making process.
- To highlight the power of the electors to hold public officers accountable for policy positions to ensure service delivery.

Target Audience

- Policymakers
- Development partners
- Researchers
- Advocacy groups
- Political organizations
- Private sector and other key stakeholders from within and outside Nigeria

Registration of guests commenced at about 8:30am and the event began at exactly 10:30 am with the national anthem after which, the special guests were welcomed and introduced and the opening prayer was said by Mr. Shedrack Olufemi Adisa.

Welcome Address:

The welcome address was said by George Oputa Esq. Executive Director, Justice Oputa Foundation. Oputa who welcomed the guests to the maiden edition of the conference, stated that the theme which is on governance, law and development is borne out of the concern about the not too impressive level of governance at all levels in the country, as well as the wobbling nature of the economy. He noted that as Nigeria is approaching the election year, the goal of the Justice Oputa Foundation is to reinforce the essence and the supremacy of the rule of law, equality of all citizens before the law, accountability of all to the law, fairness in the application of law, separation of powers, legal certainty and avoidance of arbitrariness.

He also said that the goal of JOF is to highlight how to achieve sustainable development, adding that they aim to focus on how to sustain the nation's development goals by ensuring that Nigerian public services and industry apply these principles so they can function more efficiently in regard to service delivery and to achieve the desired growth in the nation's match towards 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Oputa, stated that as an advocacy organization, JOF will continue to commit itself to evolving and expanding their goals to excel within the dynamic legal communities and beyond, adding that the late Justice Chukwudifu Akunne Oputa was an advocate for a dynamic judiciary and the rule of law. He called on every one to work together to accomplish the task before them, saying also that in the coming years, they look forward to exceed the expectations of their stakeholders through programmes, workshops, events and activities designed to foster good governance, law and development.

He expressed gratitude for the presence of those in attendance and urged them to be patient to learn, engage and join hands together to develop and grow the nation.

Goodwill Messages

Mr. Charles Oputa gave a goodwill message and special greetings from the Late Justice Oputa family, where he thanked everyone that came to celebrate with the family and the team who worked tirelessly to put all things together, he also thanked his brother, George Oputa Esq. for activating the Justice Oputa Annual Conference on leadership.

Mr. Charles Oputa talked at length about his father, childhood and family, stating that the family and children feel blessed for being "OPUTA", as the late Justice Oputa laid for his family a strong, emotional and morale foundation no one can take away and he expressed gratitude to God for that. He added that the late Oputa taught his children to understand that there is no greater religion than the love of humanity and service. He also said that his father terrorized them with the burden of bearing the name "Oputa" and often made it clear to them that a good name was better than riches.

He further said his father taught them respect for themselves, to be a persons of value, adding that his love for their mother also had a great impact on him and taught them that wealth does not guarantee happiness but only those who seek to understand the true meaning of life can find happiness. Charles Oputa urged parents who were present at the event to nurture their children with the right kind of values as what the children are taught counts more than the material things they give them.

Also giving a goodwill message, the Director General, Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), Mr. Asishana Okauru Esq. said that the late Justice Oputa was a leading light and compelling advocate for good governance, rule of law and economic development, adding that since the establishment of the Justice Oputa Foundation, the NGF has maintained an admiration for the principles on which the foundation stands.

He remarked that the JOF was established to advance and apply knowledge germane to the legal profession, commerce and industry and public sector through the development, conduct and dissemination of both fundamental and applied research in the areas of governance, law and development makes it imperative for the NGF to associate with the foundation, adding that it meant for them that the baby that they must partner with has been born, as these are the fundamental concepts of good governance and precisely the main scale on which the NGF likes to be assessed.

Okauru who was represented by Mr. Abdulrazak Barkindo, stated that nobody is more concerned about raising the level of governance across board in the country than the NGF which has taken it upon itself to partner with noble groups like JOF who advance governance ethics, adding that they facilitate the access of these groups to those in power at the sub-national so as to spread the benefits of such associations on a larger scale.

On his part, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha who spoke on the topic, "How to build Sustainability Principles into Policy Making in the Provision of Social, Economic and Infrastructural Development in the Public Sector", said that the annual conference has contributed in forging unity and development in the country.

He further noted that the event is refreshing and worthwhile, adding that sustainability in politics requires due process, noting also that stakeholders must be brought in at the stage of policy formulation and at the level of implementation, stakeholders' should be involved to make compliance and enforcement easier.

He revealed that the success or failure of a policy is dependent on the Government and stakeholders, stating that Corruption is an evil which everyone must fight for the social and economic benefit of all.

Keynote Address: "Governance, Accountability and Democracy Delivery", Presented by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Grand Patron, Justice Oputa Foundation

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo began his presentation by felicitating with the Oputa family, stressing that he can boldly claim to have worked with Justice Chukwudifu Oputa,

adding also that what he did had a mark that is indelible in the democratic process of Nigeria, in binding the wounds of the events before the new democratic dispensation which started in 1999. He thanked the organizers for inviting him to give the keynote address and for making him the grand patron of Justice Oputa foundation and stated that Justice Oputa was somebody whose life, time and legacies are worthy of being celebrated and thanked the family for starting the event and for making it annual, and promised to be present at the event annually. He added that the event is also the collaborative outcome of several leading institutions such as the Nigerian Governors' Forum and the Nigeria America Chamber of Commerce who are committed to the practice of good governance.

Delving into his topic, "Governance, Accountability and Democracy Delivery", Chief Obasanjo said that the theme of the conference, "Governance, Law and Development", resonates well with his mission to promote causes that will bring about good governance, accountability and delivery of democracy dividends which necessitates legitimacy, participation, responsive stewardship, ethical conduct, transparency, predictability and accountability in order to bring social and economic development that translates into reduction of poverty, job creation, wealth generation, provision of social services, policies that give confidence to entrepreneurs and investors to make, create and innovate so that jobs and other opportunities can be realized to improve the promotion of inclusive growth and a shared prosperity.

He further said that without good governance, a society cannot develop and its people cannot reach their full potentials nor arrive safely at its destination, adding that for them to fully grasp the issue of good governance, the various components of good governance must be touched; saying also that at this critical juncture of the country's national development and national life, they cannot but ensure that the people have the right perspective and are able to make the right decisions as a people on where they want to go and how they want to get there, adding that without clear destination they may not even know when they are lost.

He defined governance as, "the process that supports the exercise of legitimate authority in the provision of effective leadership in the management of men and resources that is accountable towards the achievement of set objectives of the state or the greater good of all". He added that no matter its approach and interpretation, there is an international consensus on the need to promote good governance as a foundation for development. He further said that the challenge facing all society is to strengthen institutions, processes and mechanisms that enable full participation of citizens in setting an agenda for sustainable development.

He stated also that good governance is based on the conviction that channeling public resources to basic education, healthcare, employment, security and fundamental rights

and social services, adding that without such investments, sustainable development will be a pipe dream. He said that upholding the rule of law in order to bring security, stability and predictability to social, political and economic affairs is a corner stone of good governance.

He listed seven Characteristics of good governance to include:

- ❖ **Legitimacy:** He said this puts a burden on the shoulders of those aspiring to rule, the abiding principle of rule of law, respect for traditions that must have credibility with key stakeholders who will freely consent to the authority of the governing body, adding that for a government to make an entrance, it has to have legitimacy which can only come from a truly free, fair and impartially conducted election process for which the people have the inalienable right to choose those who will govern them, adding that where elections are not free and fair, then the legitimacy of that process comes into question, operators are suspect and the results are flawed.
- ❖ **Participation:** He explained this as involvement of electors or the voting public with other key stakeholders who should have a voice in the decision making process either directly through the voting process or through legitimate intermediate institutions like the National Assembly that represent their interests. He also said that participation is built on freedom of association and speech as well as capacities to participate constructively in the process. To serve as a reality check and watch dogs on behalf of the people are CSOs, media and advocacy groups who provide feedback and monitoring mechanisms from users of public services like hospitals, schools, roads, rail etc, which necessitates the monitoring of quality of services, making accountability mandatory.
- ❖ **Responsible Stewardship:** This he said, is the faithful exercise of competence, character, capacity, diligence and allegiance in the use of financial and human resources allocated to the purposes of achieving the common goals and objectives of society for which those seeking public office are entrusted.
- ❖ **Ethical conduct:** He said this includes respect for the rule of law, protection of human rights, property rights, financial assets; the upholding of law and order, judicial independence; the exercise of honesty, openness, and integrity, trustworthiness and fairness in all interactions, appointments, commitment to the spirit and the letter of laws, the constitution, norms and traditions, service to the benefit of primary beneficiaries above service to self and leadership by example. Continuing, he said that when integrity and trustworthiness are thrown out of the window, what we get is straw which may descend into anarchy. According to him, if you take character, morality and principles out of the exercise of governance, what will be left is chaff.

- ❖ **Transparency.** This requires timely access by the public at large, electors, media, CSOs and other key stakeholders to relevant and reliable information about finances, management of resources and decision making processes. This, he said makes good governance not a cloak and dagger issue.
- ❖ **Predictability:** Chief Obasanjo said it is the conduct or action of elected officials and appointed staff which results primarily from laws, regulations and role definitions that are clear and known in advance, are fair and uniformly and effectively enforced. He added that it is essential to stakeholders' confidence and public trust that stewardship will be properly exercised, that the business of government will be conducted ethically and that projected results are realistic. Responsiveness must be seen as part of predictability.
- ❖ **Accountability:** He said electors should be able to call decision makers to account for their actions, adding that effective accountability has two components, which are, the notions of answerability and consequences. The first he said is the requirement to respond periodically to questions concerning ones official actions, while the second is the need for the acknowledgement of achievements or shortcomings.

He concluded by saying that the true masters are the voters, adding that they need to be informed and educated to perform their civic responsibilities as diligently as they should, stressing that, that will be the beginning of good governance.

Book Endorsement

The former Inspector General of Police, Chief Mike Okiro Esq. Dr. Sam Amadi, former Chairman, Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission, Kanu Agabi SAN and former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, partook in the endorsement of the seven classical books of late Justice Chukwudifu Oputa, which include; Modern Bar Advocacy, Law and Dealers of Justice, Reflections on Nigerian Nationhood and Democracy, Our Temple of Justice, Conduct at the Bar, The Eyes of the Law, plus Judicial Footprint, and Justice Oputa's notable pronouncements written by George Oputa Esq.

While endorsing the book, Chief Obasanjo noted that Justice Chukwudifu Oputa worked to strengthen the country's political stability through his judicial attainment and the landmark judgments he delivered, as well as his life as an intellectual.

He further announced that the books speak for themselves and show how prolific and intellectual as well as how iconic he was as a member of the judiciary, adding that he

left his footprints on the sands of time for good and so prayed that his soul rest in perfect peace.

Panel discussions

First Panel: "Why Good Governance Matters"

The first Panel discussed on the topic, "Why Good Governance Matters" with Mr Abdulrazak Barkindo as the moderator. The panelists were; Prof. Mrs. Patricia Donli, Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre, and Dr. Sam Amadi, former chairman, Nigerian Electricity regulatory commission.

The moderator started with a preamble and asked if governance has improved between 1999 and today and said that the discussion will try to find out if what those in power are doing resonates with what the Nigerian public expects.

First speaker, Prof. Patricia Donli

While speaking on what makes a difference in governance in Nigeria, she took it from the perspective of the responsiveness of government to its people, where she said that governance to the man on the street is having access to the dividends of democracy, putting food on the table, access to quality education, employment for their children who have graduated, not having their wives die from childbirth, good roads and other infrastructure, feeling the impact of Government; noting however that what is typical of our democracy is a democracy of the next election where politicians campaign and will not be seen until the next election.

She explained that democracy is about meeting the needs of the people and asked for the development of citizen's charter that is context specific to the various communities or states that the people can hold the government accountable. She also said the charter will serve as a tool for the people in the communities to hold their leaders accountable.

She further explained that the communities and electorates do not realize the kind of powers they have, to ensure that good governance is engendered, to ensure that there is regular interface between them and their representatives as well as powers to ensure that if the right thing is not done, to recall those that have been elected to represent them.

Prof. Donli also spoke on need for efficiency and effectiveness which is about value for money, adding that the onus rests on CSOs who are the watch dog, adding that a vibrant CSO that monitors the activities, policies and plans of the government to ensure

implementation is important to have good governance. She stated also that there are so many plans without implementation such as the vision 2020. She called for a very independent media and a vibrant opposition which has its own policies to act when the Government in power is not doing the right thing, meaning a recourse to the alternative. To entrench good governance, she said the people must have zero tolerance for corruption.

Prof. Donli concluded by saying that a responsive Government is one that knows the needs of its people and meets those needs, adding that good governance is about stability and delivery of democratic dividends, about zero tolerance and ensuring that the people who elected you into power feel the impact of those who are representing them, adding that good governance translates beyond the discussion and called on those present to take action where they are.

Second speaker, Dr. Sam Amadi

He started by saying that there are two levels to look at good governance, one is instrumental values which is what good governance gives, and the second is intrinsic. He noted also that good governance is inherently a good thing and also instrumental. Speaking further, he said that the problem with electricity is the same with roads, hospitals and every other social services and added that there has not been any efficient, adequately provided and affordable services both in terms of health care, power and others, adding that electricity epitomizes the failure of service delivery.

He further said that Nigeria started earlier with regionalization and decentralized power and stressed that at the heart of the problem of failure of electricity is actually governance and structure. He revealed that from 1986 to 2000, Nigeria had less than 3000 megawatts in the grid which he said, is a legacy of failure to invest and create a system that delivers electricity.

Dr. Amadi also noted that government failed even in making the right kind of investment, saying that there is now clearer transparency and accountability which is critical to good governance, as they can now say how much they are spending, how much they have and what they do not have, stressing however, that the journey is still far.

He listed three issues that have led to poor power delivery to include:

- Building on a wrong model
- Lack of capacity on the part of entities
- Lack of financial capacity to finance improvement.

He concluded by saying that good governance is about efficiency, planning, investing resources in targeted areas, saying also that the over \$400 billion spent so far in Nigeria

Second Panel: Power of Electorates to Hold Public Officers Accountable in Ensuring Quality Service Delivery.

The second panel discussed on the topic, "Power of Electorates to Hold Public Officers Accountable in Ensuring Quality Service Delivery" with Dr. Austin Tam George as the moderator. The panelists were; Auwal Musa, CISLAC, Nigeria Chair, Transparency International and Amnesty International; Chief Mike Okiro Esq., Princess Yemisi Adeoye, Mrs. Ifeyinwa Omowole, President National Association of Women Journalists; Mrs. Chinwe Ezenwa, CEO Le Look.

The moderator, Dr. Austin Tam George, opened the discussion and said that since 1960 there has been an unfortunate tradition of impunity where people have just been looking out for themselves, noting that a mechanism such as accountability has to be established even in the best of societies, adding also that there is a need for education to stop impunity.

Dr. George further said that even politicians are key owners of major media houses, adding, that to solve the challenges of nation building, alternative centers of power should be created, as well as the need to insulate politics and religion from governance so that people will be held accountable.

Speaking on what is lacking in the nation's social consciousness, the first speaker, Mike Okiro Esq. said that democracy has been defined as government of the people, for the people and by the people and thereby neglecting the aspect of, "with the people", adding that such neglect has taken the power away from the people.

He added also that the politicians are disintegrated from the people, noting that Nigeria is going down the drain in terms of infrastructural development, health and other social services. He stressed the need for the electorate to hold office holders accountable by putting a check list for them and to find out what they have done to merit another election or another position, adding that when this is not done, politicians will take the people for granted.

Speaking next, Princess Yemisi Adeoye called for voters' education as the election is approaching, adding that the electorate needs to know the duties of the public officials, so as to hold them accountable when they do not perform. She called for better education, more active participation of the CSOs, and emphasized the need for more information for the people to know their rights.

The third Speaker, Mrs. Ifeyinwa Omowole noted that there are a lot of politicians who are media owners, noting however that regardless of who owns an outfit, professionalism should be ensured as well as strict adherence to the laws governing the profession. She added that lack of accountability makes people to do whatever they

want. On the issue of nonpayment of salaries by media outfits, she called for laws to ensure payment of workers in media outfits, as there are presently no laws to hold people accountable when workers are not paid. While noting that Nigeria has all the laws but lack enforcement, she called for strict enforcement and regulatory bodies to enforce these laws, so as to stop media owners from not paying their staff. She concluded by saying that for any democracy to thrive there is need for a strong legislature and strong media.

Speaking on key ethical values that should guide Civil Society Organizations, Mr. Auwal Musa Rafsanjani said that there are people who believe that they will use CSO platforms to do their agenda, noting that genuine CSOs are known by the people and the Government. Musa disclosed that committed CSOs will never ask Government officials for money, stating that it is important for people to interrogate CSOs and their strategy plans before engaging with them.

He further noted that any CSO that is not promoting human rights, transparency and accountability are not CSOs, adding that the genuine ones champion the course of the people and are not anti-government but complement the efforts of Government. He ended by saying that the duties of CSOs are to look at the gaps to make Government efficient, effective and accountable.

Also speaking, Mrs. Chinwe Ezenwa who spoke on how to tackle tribalism and ethnicity. She said the people deserve the Government they get, as ethnicity, tribalism and nepotism is still the order of the day due to the fact that most Nigerians are illiterate. She said that the proponents of discrimination have destroyed education in the country especially the unity school system and that people are withdrawing their children from those schools.

While stating that people are clamoring for restructuring because of ethnicity, she opined that restructuring might stem tribalism as people will work for themselves, noting however that the National Orientation Agency (NOA) are not doing their work well, as the citizens charter is not translated in any language. She concluded that there is need to restructure.

Contributions from the Audience

The audience gave their contributions which are as follows:

- ✓ Naming and shaming might not be possible as Nigerians no longer have shame as people now praise and hail corrupt officers.

has not gone to targeted investment, adding also that transparency, freedom of information, procurement and fiscal transparency is very critical. He stated also that NERC has created transparent accountability framework but there is need for profitable framework to attract investment.

Solutions to move the country forward

Prof. Donli noted that:

*The electorate needs to be empowered to know their rights, adding that civic education is important.

*The 2019 election should not be business as usual. In choosing the leaders, Nigerians must not be guided by sentiments.

*Persons with leadership qualities and merit should be elected instead of mediocre.

*She called for strategic planning. This is important and we must not become nonchalant. We need to watch more and be the true watch dog.

*The media should be investigative and do research to know how policies are faring.

*There is the need to start interrogating how people make their money and find out the source of their wealth so that there is a naming and shaming.

Dr. Sam Amadi

*There must be real political empowerment through electoral process.

*The election today cannot guarantee good governance because it is easy to manipulate and hijack electoral process.

* INEC should step in now that politicians have failed the country. INEC needs to save the people so that the possibility of transition and change can be created. Let's have the capacity to change rulers and this will create room for them to do their best to win.

In conclusion, the moderator explained that the panelists have advocated a paradigm shift not only in the electoral process but also in the behavior of 'mumu' Nigerians. He outlined the takeaways to include:

- The need to do away with sentiments in the election of leaders
- The need to begin to behave rationally in the selection processes
- The legacy of failure must be challenged by the people

- ✓ The masses must forget their primordial sentiments and look at people that can deliver good Governance and vote for them.
- ✓ The public officials have succeeded in impoverishing and making the people illiterates. There is need for the leaders to have integrity. Nigeria must have people who have integrity in places of authority and governance. Integrity will tell you that when you cannot perform you throw in the towel.
- ✓ There is need for institutional change as the issues on ground is a basket case.
- ✓ The elites must come together, as that is the only way they can achieve anything in Nigeria. The political class must come together to rescue the country.
- ✓ The structure available does not give the women enabling space. To create a suitable society, there must be think-tank to discover where the country has missed it.
- ✓ Adopt a type of democracy that will fit into Nigeria's system.
- ✓ Have the regulatory bodies that are non-Partisan and independent.
- ✓ Leadership should be a privilege to leave a mark.
- ✓ There is need to enable, empower and encourage persons with disabilities, as Persons with disabilities have been excluded from opportunities.

Book Reviews

Reviewer 1: Dr. Sam Amadi

While reviewing the book, he encouraged people to read the book. He reviewed the books, "The Laws and the Two Pillars of Justice" and "Themes on Judicial Activism and Law". The review focused on Justice Chukwudifu Oputa's intellectual contribution to jurisprudence and rule of law. Dr. Amadi said the Law and two Pillars of Justice Zeros in on Justice Oputa's skills as a professional, adding that the books have tremendous virtues and are properly edited.

He explained that the books have thematic coherence as the essays collected fits into the overwritten themes and commended the skills of the editors for putting in coherence lectures that fit into the theme, adding that the book should be an introduction to jurisprudence.

On the second book, he explained that it has around three chapters of the same focus, looking at the judiciary as an activist, as well as how the judiciary looks at the electoral process. Amadi noted that the book looks at judicial activism, adding that the courts have become weak and no longer active in promoting rule of law and social justice.

According to him, the book argued that justice means equal access and opportunities, adding that Justice Oputa created a justification for Nigerian courts to intervene when the executive and legislature have monopolized power to the detriment of the citizens. He noted also that Justice Oputa argued that chapter two of the constitution should be accessible as chapter 4.

He further revealed that in page 35 of the book, Justice Oputa made a case for judges to look beyond the power of the executive and legislature and assert the power of the judiciary, adding that the language of the judiciary should be dignified and elevated. He explained that Justice Oputa also argued that the courts have the power of governance and are co-governors with the executive, saying also that every court must define its role. He however asked if the court will use judicial activism to protect the people's rights to choose in the forthcoming election.

Book Reviewer 2: Dr. Uwakwe Abugu

Dr. Uwakwe Abugu reviewed the book, "Judicial Footprint", where he noted that every line of the book represent droplets of wisdom and every paragraph represent a three course meal of law, philosophy and jurisprudence. He stated also that the book contains 184 pages of Justice Chukwudifu Oputa's major pronouncements from 1984 to 1989, adding that Justice Oputa has all his "lives" captured in the book.

Also reviewing the book, "Judicial footprint" compiled by George Oputa, George Oputa Esq. said that presenting the books in the public will create mini Justice Oputas in the near future and it will help shape minds in Nigeria. According to George Oputa, "Imagine that all legal departments have these 8 books, it will improve the quality of the legal department in these parastatals, education of the law students and integrity of the judiciary".

Vote of thanks

In his vote of thanks, the Project Coordinator, Mr. Bassey Essien said that Justice Oputa has continued to inspire people even from where he is, and thanked the family of the Oputas for their involvement and contribution, adding that the government recognizes the services of Justice Oputa. He further said that the Justice Oputa Foundation looks forward to a bigger JOAC which could take place anywhere in the world.

A minute's silence was observed for the late Justice Chukwudifu Akunne Oputa (1924-2014), the national anthem was rendered and the maiden edition of the Justice Oputa Annual Conference (JOAC) closed at about 2:50 PM.