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PLATFORM STATEMENT

Position: IAPSS AFRICA CHAIR

I am writing to express my interest in the IAPSS Africa Chair position. My quest for platforms and opportunities through which I can demonstrate my skills in pursuit of defined and transformative objectives, as well as the desire to build capacity towards steering extant and future solutions, ignites my interest in this position.

Beyond the position, I am drawn by IAPSS' exploits over the years in driving global impact in the sphere of political science and the world of development, in general. The association is uniquely defined by the platform it offers students and young professionals globally for demonstrable impact, stronger academic profiling as well as opportunities for building positive and productive networks. I share IAPSS' vision in stirring individual consciousness towards the creation of "improved political and social environments". This is signalled by my past and extant embrace of opportunities through which I can acquire and demonstrate skills needed to contribute to a world and future desired by all. I also embrace learning opportunities in this direction, which informed my decision to pursue a master's degree in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies at the London School of Economics (LSE), after completing a bachelor's degree in Political Science. In both degrees I have been exposed to the theories and praxis of development thinking, public engagement, international relations, politics, strategic advocacy and campaigning, and research, among others.

Furthermore, across learning sites and spaces, I have been privileged to interact with students in the field of Political Science and other allied disciplines. During my undergraduate study, I served as a Student Representative in the Department of Political Science, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, for four years. Not only did this position refine my leadership skills, but it also brought me much closer to the needs and priorities of students in the field of Political Science. Also, currently at LSE, I sit on the Student Education Panel of the institution, where I and other panelists across the university, lend our voices on the most pressing issues as they concern student education experiences. Through this platform, we seek to amplify the voices of minoritised groups at LSE. We discuss topics covering assessment; community and belonging; in-person, online and blended learning; inclusive education; student wellbeing and support; and student voice, representation, and partnership. I am also a member of the LSE International Development Society, where we plan and coordinate events for members of the development community at LSE. These experiences lend evidence to the wealth of knowledge I have drawn interacting with the student community across academic fields and countries.

Having served for about a year as the IAPSS Projects and Events Coordinator for Africa, I acknowledge the fact that the time has come for me to take my work forward by leveraging the networks, experiences and skills I have built over the past one year. In the past one year as Projects Coordinator, I have been able to identify gaps that needs to be bridged. I have also noted opportunities for transformative impact in Africa, through which the Political Science Students community can be SHIFTEd towards more individual and collective

fulfilment. On this bedrock will my leadership as IAPSS Africa Chair be steered by the SHIFT agenda.

- S – Solutions to the development needs of the African continent
- H – Holistic impact spread across 54 countries in Africa
- I – Inclusive leadership and representation
- F – First-class opportunities for students and emerging professionals in Africa
- T – Technology-mediated access, networking, mobilisation and impact

I believe it is time for the long-anticipated SHIFT in Africa. Students yearn for opportunities, expanded networks, and privileges to make sense of a field of study they perceive to be devoid of prospects, given the many challenges that plague Africa and its youth population. We should build IAPSS Africa into becoming that hub of human, intellectual and financial resource; and the consortia of transformers and change pioneers. This is my desire, and this is what I hope to pursue as Chair of IAPSS Africa.

The foregoing said, I envisage being able to apply my skills and abilities towards steering the course of IAPSS Africa to the end that anticipated results are birthed. I also hope to complement the global agenda of IAPSS, by working collaboratively with leaders in other continents and the IAPSS global secretariat.

For these reasons, I am enthusiastic about this position and hope that I am given the mandate.

Thank you.

Boluwatife Ajibola

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