WE have been invited to participate in our debate on the theme of the conference – Growth, Investment & Employment: Beyond Rhetoric for specific reasons. We indeed want to go beyond rhetoric and identify what needs to be done to stem the tide of declining foreign direct investments in Nigeria, growing unemployment and impaired development. As I indicated earlier, the keynote speakers and panelists for this year’s conference have been carefully selected to ensure, not just that the issues are discussed extensively at the conference but that, after the conference, active steps are taken to drive the agenda of the conference.

We’ve seen the NBA-SBL in recent times, forming very strategic partnerships with government, regulators, policy and law makers, such as the National Assembly; the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE); the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) which is part of the presidency; the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), etc. What are the objectives behind some of these collaborations?

The NBA-SBL is very deliberate in its objective of working collaboratively with stakeholders and regulatory agencies in order for capacity building. As a result of these collaborations, we are able to contribute to framing the policies and laws that affect the Nigerian business environment. We know that we have a major role to play in shaping the commercial sector in Nigeria and, by bringing thought leaders and policy makers together to contemplate and discuss pertinent commercial issues, we learn what direction the Nigerian commercial space is moving towards, as well as offer our own opinions in order to promote the common interest of business law practitioners locally and internationally.

Tell us more about the speakers, panellists, guests and session chairs at the forthcoming conference?

This year’s conference will have an impressive line-up of speakers, panelists and guests. Guest Speakers at the opening dinner would be the Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila.

Other speakers include Bimbo Ogunbanjo, President of the Nigerian Stock Exchange; Kingsley Moghalu, Cecelia Akinwumi, Kingsley Moghalu, Babatunde Irukera, Chief Executive Officer, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), and several others.

With all of the work bodies like the NBA-SBL are doing to develop the legal profession, how does the Nigerian economy look right now?

The legal profession is timeless. Law as a concept was made to provide proper guidelines for the behaviour of all citizens and to sustain equity within society and the government. It is an essential part of our society and evolves as the Nigerian society evolves. The Nigerian legal system is undergoing a number of changes and new laws are being considered and enacted to meet the needs of this generation of Nigerians. I am hopeful that in ten years, the legal profession would have evolved to a point where it would be comparable to other leading jurisdictions in the world. With the continued guidance of our older learned colleagues, coupled with the tenacity and drive of today’s bright young lawyers, we can rest assured that the future of the legal profession is in good hands.