



POST OFFICE
DATE
POST DIVISION

**SELECTED SPEECHES OF
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO**

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ALABAMA
GOVERNMENT SECTION
AREA OF DEPOSIT
Deposited by LAGS
Admiral 19/2/2000
2001-080

1
5
28
73
32
01?J



HIS EXCELLENCY, CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO GCFR
President, Commander-in-Chief, Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	vii
Inaugural Speech	11
Speech at the Opening of the Seminar for Permanent Secretaries ..	21
Inauguration of the National Assembly	31
Address at the Inauguration of the Panel to Review Contracts, Licences, Awards, Approvals and Appointments	41
Address at the Closing of the Special Seminar for Federal Permanent Secretaries	47
Address at the Inauguration of the Human Rights Investigation Panel ..	53
Address at the Inauguration of the Panel for the Assessment of Uncompleted Projects, Supplies and Services	59
Address on the Closing of the Nigerian Civil Service Dinner and Award ceremony	65
Keynote Address on the Occasion of the United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking	73
Keynote Address at the Inauguration of the Panel of Investigation of Federal Government Landed Property	79
Address on the Occasion of the Inaugural Meeting of the Council of States	83
Address at the Swearing-in of Ministers	91
Address on the Occasion of the Graduation Ceremony of Course 21 of Command and Staff College, Jaji	99
Goodwill Message to Officers and Soldiers of the Nigerian Army on the Occasion of Nigerian Army Day Celebration	107
Address at the 7th Graduation Ceremony of National War College ..	113
Address on the Occasion of the Passing out Parade of Officers, Cadets of the Special Short Service Course 2 from the Republic of Sierra Leone, Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna	121
Statement on Budget Review to the National Assembly	127
Statement on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the National Council on Privatisation	139
Speech at the Meeting with Heads of Tertiary Institutions	145
Address at the Launching of the 1999 National Tree Planting Campaign	151
Address at the Summit of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Maputo	159
Address at the Launching of the 1999 Human Development Report and the 1998 Human Development Report	167

CONTENTS—continued

	<i>Page</i>
Statement at the Consultative Meeting on Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa	173
Address at the Launching of the Campaign on National Rebirth	179
Speech on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission	187
Address at the Fifty-fourth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York.. .. .	191
Address at the Inauguration of Inter-Religious Council.. .. .	201
Address at the Re-launching of UBE at Sokoto.. .. .	207
Broadcast on the Occasion of the 39th Anniversary of Nigerian Independence	213
Speech at the Inauguration of the NDLEA Board	223
Address at the Opening of World Bank Seminar	229
Address at the Flag-off of the 1999 National Immunisation Day	235
Address on the 40th Anniversary Celebration of Metropolitan Club, Lagos	241
Address on World Food Day Celebration	247
Address at the Ceremonial Reception of the Last Batch of the Nigerian Contingent in ECOMOG Operation, Liberia.. .. .	253
Address at Harvard University, USA	259
Address on the Occasion of Special Convocation at Wilberforce University, Ohio, USA	275
Address at the Graduation Ceremony of Senior Executive Course 21 of NIPSS, Kuru, Jos	285
-Address on the Inauguration of the National Economic Intelligence Committee	293
Statement on the Occasion of the Visit of the Prime Minister of Canada to Nigeria	297
Address on the Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Punch Newspaper..	303
Address at the Opening of the Seminar for Newly Appointed Ambassadors	309
Address at the Opening Ceremony of the First Edition of Re-orientation Workshops for Directorate Level in the Federal Civil Service	315
Address on the Occasion of the Inaugural Summit of the Gulf of Guinea Commission in Libreville, Gabon	321
~ Budget Address to the Joint Session of the National Assembly, Abuja ..	325

PREFACE

The swearing-in of a democratically elected President on May 29, 1999, climaxed the enthronement of real democracy in Nigeria after many years of Military rule.

The President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, since assuming office, has through his actions and speeches, rekindled hope and confidence in Nigerians.

These speeches delivered at various times at home and abroad outline the policy direction of his government, including plans and strategies to restore normalcy in the political and economic life of Nigerians.

Some of the speeches especially those addressed to the international community are assurances of Nigeria's resolve to remain a responsible member of the comity of nations.

This Publication, *Selected Speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo, Volume One* begins with his inaugural speech of May 29, 1999, followed by 44 other speeches selected from a greater number spanning a period of six months.

His determination to rid the nation of corruption, improve the socio-economic fortunes of the nation and rebuild the battered image of Nigeria abroad are all captured in the mood and content of the speeches.

Since President Obasanjo took over the leadership of the country, he has restored and consolidated national unity and security, restored economic stability and progress and has given the nation a firm foundation for the survival of democracy.

The *Selected Speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo, Volume One*, is the barometer of the first six months of his administration. It is an immeasurable gift to those who seek to know the challenges of rebuilding a collapsed economy. The book is a resource material and a must on the shelf of every scholar of Nigerian History.



Professor Jerry Gana

Honourable Minister of Information

A NEW DAWN



**INAUGURAL SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
FOLLOWING HIS SWEARING-IN AS PRESIDENT OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON SATURDAY, 29TH MAY, 1999**

Your Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales,
Your Excellencies, Visiting Presidents,
Your Excellencies, Visiting Heads of Government,
Your Excellencies, Visiting Special Representatives,
Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions,
Your Excellency, the Vice-President of Nigeria,
My Lord, the Chief Justice of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Your Excellencies, Former Presidents and Heads of State of Nigeria,
My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal,
Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members of the House of Representatives,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fellow Nigerians, we give praise and honour to God Almighty for this day specially appointed by God Himself. Everything created by God has its destiny and it is the destiny of all of us to see this day.

Twelve months ago, no one could have predicted the series of stunning events that made it possible for democratic elections to be held at the Local Government level, the State level, and culminating in the National Assembly Elections. Thereafter, you the good people of Nigeria elected me, a man who had walked through the valley of the shadow of death, as your President, to head a democratic civilian administration. I believe that this is what God Almighty has ordained for me and for my beloved country Nigeria and its people. I accept this destiny in all humility and with the full belief that with the backing of our people we shall not fail.

I wish, at this point, to thank all you good Nigerians for the confidence reposed in me. I wish to pay tribute to the great and gallant Nigerians who lost their lives in the cause of the struggle for liberty, democracy and good governance. They held the beacon of freedom and liberty high in the face of state terrorism and tyranny. We thank God that their sacrifice has not been in vain. We will always remember them.

Our thanks go also to the friends of Nigeria in many lands for the commitment and unrelenting support they gave throughout the dark, ominous days of the struggle.

Nigerians living in foreign lands deserve special tribute for not forgetting their

fatherland and for making their voices heard persistently in defence of freedom. And I must commend you my home-based fellow Nigerians for the way you bore unprecedented hardship, deprivation of every conceivable rights and privileges that were once taken for granted.

I commend General Abdulsalam Abubakar and members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) for the leadership they gave the country in the last eleven months and for keeping meticulously to their announced timetable of handing over to a democratically elected government today. As officers and gentlemen, they have kept their word.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) also deserves the thanks of all of us. In the face of doubt and skepticism and great time constraints, the Chairman and his commissioners conducted elections right from Local Government level to the Presidential level. They acquitted themselves creditably and they deserve our gratitude.

Nigeria is wonderfully endowed by the Almighty with human and other resources. It does no credit either to us or the entire black race if we fail in managing our resources for quick improvement in the quality of life of our people. Instead of progress and development, which we are entitled to expect from those who governed us, we experienced in the last decade and a half, and particularly in the last regime but one, persistent deterioration in the quality of our governance, leading to instability and the weakening of all public institutions. Good men were shunned and kept away from government while those who should be kept away were drawn near. Relations between men and women who had been friends for many decades, and between communities that had lived together in peace for many generations became very bitter because of the actions or inaction of government. The citizens developed distrust in government, and because promises made for the improvement of the conditions of the people were not kept, all statements by government met with cynicism.

Government officials became progressively indifferent to propriety of conduct and showed little commitment to promoting the general welfare of the people and the public good. Government and all its agencies became thoroughly corrupt and reckless. Members of the public had to bribe their way through in ministries and parastatals to get attention and one government agency had to bribe another government agency to obtain the release of their statutory allocation of funds.

The impact of official corruption is so rampant and has earned Nigeria a very bad image at home and abroad. Besides, it has distorted and retrogressed development.

Our infrastructures—NEPA, NITEL, Roads, Railways, Education, Housing and other Social Services—were allowed to decay and collapse. Our country has thus been through one of its darkest periods.

All these have brought the nation to a situation of chaos and near despair. This is the challenge before us. Fellow Nigerians, let us rise as one, to face the tasks ahead and turn this daunting scene into opportunities in a New Dawn. Let us make this the beginning of a genuine Renaissance.

Fellow Nigerians, the entire Nigerian scene is very bleak indeed. So bleak people ask me where do we begin? I know what great things you expect of me at this New Dawn. As I have said many times in my extensive travels in the country, I am not a miracle worker. It will be foolish to underrate the task ahead. Alone, I can do little.

You have been asked many times in the past to make sacrifices and to be patient. I am also going to ask you to make sacrifices, and to exercise patience. The difference will be that in the past sacrifices were made and patience exercised with little or no results. This time, however, the results of your sacrifice and patience will be clear and manifest for all to see. With God as our guide, and with 120 million Nigerians working with me, with commitment, sustained effort, and determination, we shall not fail. On my part, I will give the forthright, purposeful, committed, honest and transparent leadership that the situation demands.

I am determined with your full co-operation, to make significant changes within a year of my administration.

Together we shall take steps to halt the decline in the human development indices as they apply to Nigeria. All the impacts of bad governance on our people that are immediately removable will be removed, while working for medium and long term solutions.

Corruption

Corruption, the greatest single bane of our society today, will be tackled head-on at all levels. Corruption is incipient in all human societies and in most human activities.

But it must not be condoned. This is why laws are made and enforced to check corruption, so that society would survive and develop in an orderly, reasonable and predictable way. No society can achieve anything near its full potential if it allows corruption to become the full-blown cancer it has become in Nigeria. One of the greatest tragedies of military rule in recent times, is that corruption was allowed to grow unchallenged, and unchecked, even when it was glaring for everybody to see. The rules and regulations for doing official business were deliberately ignored, set aside or bypassed to facilitate corrupt practices. The beneficiaries of corruption in all forms will fight back with all the foul means at their disposal. We shall be firm with them. There will be no sacred cows. Nobody, no matter who and where, will be allowed to get away with the breach of the law or the perpetration of corruption and evil.

Under this administration, therefore, all the rules and regulations designed to help honesty and transparency in dealings with government will be restored and enforced. Specifically, I shall immediately reintroduce “Civil Service Rules”, and “Financial Instructions” and enforce compliance. Other regulations will be introduced to ensure transparency.

The rampant corruption in the public service and the cynical contempt for integrity that pervades every level of the bureaucracy will be stamped out. The public officer must be encouraged to believe once again that integrity pays. His self-respect must be restored and his work must be fairly rewarded through better pay and benefits, both while in service and in retirement.

Restoration of Confidence in Government

I am very aware of the widespread cynicism and total lack of confidence in government arising from the bad faith, deceit and evil actions of recent administrations. Where official pronouncements are repeatedly made and not matched by action, government forfeits the confidence of the people and their trust. One of the immediate acts of this administration will be to implement quickly and decisively, measures that would restore confidence in governance. These measures will help to create the auspicious atmosphere necessary for the reforms and the difficult decisions and hard work required to put the country back on the path of development and growth.

The issue of crime requires as much attention and seriousness as the issue of corruption. Although the police are in the forefront of fighting crimes and ensuring our security, it is our responsibility to help the police to be able to help us. The police will be made to do their job. All Nigerian citizens and residents in our midst are entitled to the protection of life and property. A determined effort will be made to cut down significantly the incidence of violent crime.

Priority Issues

I believe that this administration must deal with the following issues even in these difficult times of near economic collapse :

- (i) The crisis in the Oil Producing Areas ;
- (ii) Food Supply, Food Security and Agriculture ;
- (iii) Law and Order with particular reference to Armed Robbery and to Cultism in our educational institutions ;
- (iv) Exploration and Production of Petroleum ;
- (v) Education ;
- (vi) Macro-economic Policies—Particularly, Exchange rate management, etc. ;
- (vii) Supply and Distribution of Petroleum Products ;
- (viii) The Debt Issue ;

- (ix) Corruption, Drugs, organised fraud called 419 Activities, and crimes leading to loss of lives, properties and investment ;
- (x) Infrastructure—Water Supply, Energy, Telecommunication, Ports, Airways, National Shipping, Nigerian Railways, etc. ;
- (xi) Resuscitation of the Manufacturing Industries ;
- (xii) Job creation, and creation of conducive environment for investment ;
- (xiii) Poverty alleviation ;
- (xiv) Housing—both
 - (a) Civilian Housing Programmes ; and
 - (b) Barrack Refurbishment and New Construction for the Armed Forces and the Police ;
- (xv) ECOMOG ;
- (xvi) Health Services ;
- (xvii) Political and Constitutional Dialogue ;
- (xviii) Women and Youth Empowerment.

In pursuit of these priorities, I have worked out, measures which must be implemented within the first six months.

Details of the focus and measures of this administration on these and other matters will be announced from time to time. I shall quickly ascertain the true state of our finances and the economy and shall let the nation know. In the light of resources available, I shall concentrate on those issues that can bring urgent beneficial relief to our people.

Cabinet

I will need good men and women of proven integrity and record of good performance to help me in my cabinet. I appreciate that the quality and calibre of the members of my cabinet and top appointments will send a positive or negative signal to Nigerians and the international community as to the seriousness of the administration to make salutary changes. In our difficult and abnormal situation, great care and circumspection are called for in appointments to the cabinet and high public positions. To be appointed a minister or to any other public office is not a licence to loot public funds. It is a call to national service. It is one of the best ways of rendering dedicated service to humanity. In this administration, being a minister or holding any other public office will not deprive you of what you have before you come into office but you will not be allowed to have conflict of interest, abuse of office or illicit acquisition. Service to be satisfying must entail sacrifice.

Regular weekly meetings of Cabinet will be reintroduced to enrich the quality of decisions of government through open discussions of memoranda in Council. Before any issues are introduced to the cabinet, the time-tested procedure of inter-ministerial

consultations would have been made. The conclusions of Council, circulated to all ministers and permanent secretaries will, as used to be the practice in the past, be the authority for executive action and for incurring expenditure of public funds. This will help the cohesion of the government, ensure discipline, and hinder corrupt intentions, since all major contracts must go to Council for open consideration.

A code of conduct for ministers and other public officers will be introduced. Other measures for individual and collective self-control and self-discipline of ministers and other public officers will be introduced.

Political Reconciliation

I am determined to stretch my hand of fellowship to all Nigerians regardless of their political affiliations. I intend to reconcile all those who feel alienated by past political events and I will endeavour to heal divisions, and to restore the harmony we used to know in this country.

Crisis in the Niger Delta

A bill will be forwarded within weeks of the inception of the administration to the National Assembly, for a law providing for 13% derivation in Revenue Allocation to be used for ecological, rehabilitation, infrastructural and other developments.

A competent group will be set up immediately to prepare a comprehensive Development Plan for the Niger-Delta Area. Dialogue will be held at all levels with the real representatives of all sections of the oil-producing communities to improve communication and better mutual understanding. The responsibility and initiative for resolving the crisis rests with the Government.

ECOMOG

Nigeria has over the years played a very active role in ECOMOG for the restoration of peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Our national interest requires the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability in the West African Sub-region. Specifically in the case of Sierra Leone, we shall endeavour to ensure a quick resolution of the crisis by dialogue and diplomatic means by increasing activity on the second track of peace and reconciliation. This will enable us reduce our commitments in both theatres but particularly in Sierra Leone.

External Relations

Nigeria, once a well-respected country and a key role player in international bodies, became a pariah nation. We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, and other international bodies. We shall continue to honour existing agreements between Nigeria and other countries.

It is our firm resolve to restore Nigeria fully to her previous prestigious position in the comity of nations.

Let me, once again, thank our international friends who fought for democracy alongside with us. Today, we are taking a decisive step on the path of democracy. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure sustenance of democracy because it is good for us ; it is good for Africa ; and it is good for the world. We call on the world, particularly the Western World to help us sustain democracy by sharing with us the burden of debt which may be crushing and destructive to democracy in our land.

The Nigerian Armed Forces

The incursion of the military into government has been a disaster for our country and for the military over the last thirty years. The *esprit-de-corps* amongst military personnel has been destroyed ; professionalism has been lost. Youths go into the military not to pursue a noble career but with the sole intention of taking part in coups and to be appointed as military administrators of states and chairmen of task forces.

As a retired officer, my heart bleeds to see the degradation in the proficiency of the military. A great deal of re-orientation has to be undertaken and a re-definition of roles, re-training and re-education will have to be done to ensure that the military submits to civil authority and regains its pride, professionalism and traditions. We shall restore military co-operation and exchanges with our traditional friends. And we will help the military to help itself.

Harmony Within the Three Arms of Government

It is my resolve to work harmoniously with the legislature and the judiciary to ensure that Nigerians enjoy good and civilized governance. I am also determined to build a broad consensus amongst all parties to enhance national harmony and stability and thus ensure success in the long struggle ahead.

Politicians have a duty, in whatever capacity they may find themselves, whether as legislators or ministers, to be committed, and be seen to be committed to the public good. Politicians must carefully examine the budget to ensure that public funds are judiciously spent. They must avoid damage to their own credibility and not vote for themselves special privileges. They must join in the campaign against corruption and help re-establish integrity in the conduct of public affairs. I assure you all that it is the policy of this government to ensure fair remuneration in service and in retirement to public servants, which includes legislators, civil servants, the police and members of the armed forces, parastatals and public-owned educational institutions.

I call on all Nigerians but particularly on our religious leaders to pray for moral and spiritual revival and regeneration in our nation.

Conclusion

I shall end this address by stressing again that we must change our ways of governance and of doing business on this eve of the coming millennium. This we must do to ensure progress, justice, harmony and unity and above all, to rekindle confidence amongst our people. Confidence that their conditions will rapidly improve and that Nigeria will be great and will become a major world player in the near future.

May the Almighty help us.

**THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE SEMINAR FOR
PERMANENT SECRETARIES IN THE
FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE**

**TEXT OF THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, PRESIDENT, FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED
FORCES, AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE SEMINAR FOR
PERMANENT SECRETARIES IN THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE
ON MONDAY, 31ST MAY, 1999**

My Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
Your Excellencies, the Dean and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests,
Esteemed Seminar Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin this address by thanking the Almighty God who has made it possible for us to witness this glorious day. This is not just about opening a seminar, because it is not an ordinary seminar. It is not even a mere forum for the sharing of experiences, since the objective goes beyond exchanging interesting anecdotes about how life has treated us under varying circumstances. The process we are about to kick-start today is significant, for the simple reason that it signals the determination of Nigerians to tackle head-on those problems that have at one time or the other threatened our survival as a nation, impaired our ability to control our destiny, and denied us the full benefits of political independence.

I entertain no disillusion about the capacity of academic fora such as this to resolve complex developmental issues. No one, no matter how naive, would expect problems which have accumulated over the years to disappear simply because we have organized or participated in a 2-week seminar. All the same, and so help us God, we expect participants at this particular seminar to avail themselves of the opportunity that it presents us all to ponder on where things might have gone wrong in the past, and how we could devise a strategy aimed at putting them right for the benefit of the present and coming generations. This underscores the importance of the seminar's overarching theme, that is, "The Role of Civil Service Leadership in Sustaining Nigeria's Democratic Advance and Implementing the National Reconstruction Agenda".

Let me seize the opportunity presented by the seminar to elaborate on the directions which we intend to follow in addressing issues of concern to our People. I must caution against the tendency to place unreasonable demands on Government. We do not have the power or the resources to fulfil everyone's expectations or to solve all problems.

Our focus of attention will be poverty alleviation and the human as well as the institutional capacity needed to implement the programme. In specific terms, we shall forge a Grand Alliance for Poverty Eradication, and do everything we can to make life worth living for the average Nigerian.

The economy will, for understandable reasons, receive our serious attention. As the biggest black nation on earth, Nigeria deserves better than the current level of economic performance, and its people are entitled to a higher standard of living. Before the discovery of petroleum in large, commercial quantities, agriculture used to be the mainstay of the economy, releasing surpluses that were productively re-invested in the development of the industrial, infrastructure, and social sectors. As our petroleum resources increased, we began to witness a new phenomenon—the disappearance of the groundnut and cotton pyramids in the north, of the cocoa plantations in the west and mid-west, of the palm products in the east, of the values of industry, thrift, and probity, and, if I may add, of orderly growth and development. While revenue from oil spurred the spectacular growth of the 1970s and accounted for the 7 to 9 per cent annual growth rates achieved then, the neglect of the traditional sectors spelled doom for the sustainability and long-term development of the economy. Today, and thanks to the volatility in oil prices, we have become highly vulnerable. Due to our failure to take charge of our destiny, we have become badly exposed to the vicissitudes of the international economic environment.

Besides encouraging private initiative and I mean, one which operates within the confines of the law—the Government will take proactive measures aimed at addressing the root causes of our economic malaise. Specifically, we intend to enact policies which are directed towards rewarding entrepreneurship, penalizing spongers as well as 419 con-artists, encouraging productivity while discouraging “trading post” and commission-agent mentality, promoting self-reliance and utilizing our human and material resources optimally. The legal and institutional framework will be reviewed bearing in mind the need to strengthen and streamline the regulatory framework, and provide an enabling environment for private sector growth.

In view of the potential value-added from research and development activities, the Government will forge a strong partnership not only with the private sector but also, and more especially, with our academic community. There is a lot to be gained from involving the so-called egg-heads at the critical stages of problem diagnoses, policy formulation, project design, and prototype development. To this extent, we hope to work in close collaboration with our institutions of higher learning in analysing constraints to growth and in charting the course towards our nation's economic rebirth and development.

In the social sector, our policy will be firmly anchored on a doctrine which places

high premium on human dignity at home and respectability abroad. For too long, Nigerians have been an object of derision within their own borders, a butt of jokes in the foreign media, a target of systematic harassment all over. Much of the blame lies at our own doorstep. By allowing the quest for material possessions to subvert our traditional values, we tend to face situations whereby our integrity comes under constant questioning, that is—regardless of how pure our motive and how noble our deeds—to find ourselves in circumstances requiring us to prove that our very existence is not synonymous with avarice, corruption, and lawlessness. Each time a Nigerian is arrested for drug trafficking, credit card or advance fee fraud, and every time a candid camera replays the picture of a bribe-extorting official, this negative image of the country and its people becomes embedded in the mind of our friends and among our detractors, an opinion confirmed.

The break-down in child-rearing and upbringing practices is partly responsible for the descent into gross immorality. Unfortunately, there is very little that our Government, indeed, any Government, can do in that area. We can only remind parents and society at large of their obligations in inculcating the appropriate values in our youth. Still, our Government will complement the efforts of the traditional youth training institutions by exploring the possibility of incorporating formal leadership and civic training in the curricula of educational institutions. The emphasis will be on the values of honour, discipline, self-reliance, individual responsibility, perseverance, and community service.

The dignity of Nigerians, like charity, should understandably begin at home. That is why I have gone to great lengths to stress the importance of ethical training and of self-control. Our law enforcement agencies will also be required from now on to observe the rights of the citizen while safeguarding the overriding interest of society.

As to the Nigerians who have almost become endangered species in foreign lands, this Government will establish a high level committee whose terms of reference include examining the root causes of crime, proposing ways of curbing internal and cross-border criminal activities, launching and co-ordinating the civic registration programme, and generally redeeming Nigeria's external image. In view of the importance which the Government attaches to the work of the committee, it will come under the direct supervision and chairmanship of the Vice-President, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, and will comprise the Ministries responsible for External and Internal Affairs, Commerce, Justice, Education, as well as the Central Bank, and the Criminal Investigation Department of the Nigeria Police Force. The Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria, the National Council for Women Societies, and the Nigeria Trade Union Congress will be required to nominate persons to serve on the committee which will draw on expert knowledge from universities as and when required.

In the meantime, and with immediate effect, the Ministry of External Affairs will

issue instructions to our embassies abroad to closely monitor the treatment of Nigerians. Never again will this country be disparaged or its citizens subjected to degrading and inhuman treatment. For our part, we pledge to continue to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries. No foreigner living in, or passing through Nigeria will ever have any reason to doubt the friendliness of our people or the genuineness of our hospitality. It is our hope that we too would be accorded the basic human courtesies.

I have thus far focused on the socio-economic issues awaiting action. The political question is much more complex to handle than any other that we are likely to face. I say "complex" because while the socio-economic bits could be pieced together and then unravelled in a logical policy framework, there is as yet no formula capable of solving the multiple equations—ethnic, religious, regional, class, and many others yet unknown—which together constitute the Nigerian political enigma. Therefore, before coming out with a definitive political programme, this Government intends to hold wide-ranging consultations with opinion leaders as well as civil society actors in order to solicit their views on the best way forward for our country.

One thing I can say right away is that the Government will encourage the gradual expansion of the "political space" by empowering civil society institutions to operate, to flourish, and to participate in the development process. In addition, pending the time that a broad measure of consensus is reached on the way forward, the Government will initiate a process leading to substantial decentralization of powers and transfer of resources to local-level bodies, the encouragement of an atmosphere in which public business will be conducted in an open and transparent manner, and the establishment, revitalization as well as empowerment of accountability (especially, ombudsman/public complaints) agencies.

I should underscore the fact that the attainment of the Government's strategic objectives will depend to a large extent on the capacity and dedication of the career civil service. After all, the leadership of the service plays a momentous role in the articulation, drafting, review, implementation and monitoring of public policy. If a policy responds to a major national concern and offers a clear direction to the future, a lot of the credit should go to the cadre of officials who, through patient distillation and analysis of data, transform political dreams into reality, declarations into programmes, and practically, wishes into horses. And if a policy has catastrophic consequences, the career officials cannot entirely disclaim responsibility, more so, as they have every opportunity to influence the content, direction, and implementation of the policy.

The American space programme which has made tremendous strides in recent years is illustrative of the role of career officials. Admittedly, it took the vision of some American presidents to launch and actively promote the programme, but this vision would have come to naught if NASA had neither developed a work ethic supportive of, nor provided

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL
DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
IN ABUJA
SATURDAY, 26TH JUNE, 1999**

Protocol

I wish to specially commend the United Nations for setting aside this special day as the United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. I also commend the efforts of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency towards ridding our beloved country of the drug menace.

2. The problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking was alien to this country until about a decade and half ago. In fact, the very first incident of arrest on drug related offence in Nigeria was in 1983. However, the situation is totally different today as we are faced with the problem of drug abuse and its numerous fall-out effects. It is a known fact that people of different backgrounds, social classes, sexes and age range indulge in this condemnable acts of drug abuse/illicit trafficking.

3. Globally, the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking constitute a major threat to the survival and effective functioning of human societies. Human lives are daily lost through drug addiction and activities of drug addicts. Significant number of deaths from accidents and violent crimes have been traced to the activities of persons under the influence of drugs. Drug dependent youths are now being used as tools in the hands of criminals and undesirable elements in the community as thugs and paid assassins. In fact, the problem of drug abuse/trafficking are innumerable. The need to fight this social menace among the general populace, particularly among the youths, has become very imperative.

4. The global problem of drug abuse requires a global solution. The signals have been loud and clear. World conferences and summits that are replete with discussions on how best to tackle the seemingly intractable problem have now become fashionable.

5. The United Nations which is in the forefront of the drug war, through the UNDCP, has again done it by choosing music as the theme of this year's United Nations Anti-drug Day. It is a well-known fact that, youths erroneously associate music-making with drug usage. Several popular musicians have actively died from drug use but music-making cannot and should not be associated with drug

usage. According to the World Book Encyclopaedia "Music is sound arranged into pleasing or interesting patterns..... People use music to express feelings and ideas".

6. We therefore call on the musicians of this land to use music to express our collective rejection of the drug use/traffic culture.

7. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in line with various United Nations resolutions on global drug control, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to co-ordinate all activities relating to control of supply and reduction in the demand for narcotic drugs and psycho-tropic substances. It is significant to note that Nigeria was the third country to ratify the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psycho-tropic Substances. In fact, we are party to all United Nations Conventions on drug control and have put in place relevant administrative structures to facilitate their implementation. In the same vein, we have promulgated legislations that ensure the forfeiture of movable and immovable assets of persons convicted of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psycho-tropic substances. By this singular act, we have ensured that drug traffickers receive penalty commensurate with their crime.

8. I feel delighted with the significant successes that have been recorded so far by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in controlling the aspect of drug supply as recorded in the reduction in number of people being arrested for drugs trafficking. In addition, in the area of demand reduction, the Agency has put in place several programmes geared towards preventive education and creation of awareness on dangers associated with drug abuse. Our joint efforts have yielded tremendous results as is evidenced in Nigeria's certification as a drug free Nation.

9. In our desire to achieve a balance between the control of illicit supply and demand, we will strengthen existing prevention structures on the ground. In this regard, I wish to direct all State and Local Governments to give adequate financial and material support to the State and Local Government Drug Abuse Control Committees (DACC) in their domains to enable them perform the functions effectively. Let me call on our traditional and community leaders to express deeper concern about the problem of drugs in their areas of influence in order to assist the Government to comb the problem.

10. My administration will leave no stone unturned in intensifying this drug war. We will ensure that the strategies stipulated in the recently launched National

Drug Control Master Plan are implemented to the letter. We are prepared to sign Memoranda of Understanding with interested countries that are willing and ready to put an end to the menace of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

11. At this juncture, I want to express Nigeria's sincere appreciation to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for its assistance to the NDLEA, NAFDAC and NGOs in the control of supply and reduction in the demand for illicit drugs.

12. I wish you all a drug-free year.

Thank you and God bless.

**THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL OF INVESTIGATION
OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY**

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL OF INVESTIGATION
OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY
ON MONDAY, 28TH JUNE, 1999
AT THE STATE HOUSE, ABUJA
AT 11.00 A.M.**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Chairman and Members of the Investigation Panel,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this occasion to perform the official inauguration of another Panel on the Investigation of Federal Government Landed Property.

In my inaugural address, I spoke of the need for a new political order, determined to quickly implement measures that would restore confidence in governance. It is in pursuit of this goal that conscious efforts are being made to ascertain the correct situation of many government landed property all over the country. There have been allegations that are too brazen to be believed. The facts need to be known and where illegality and impropriety had taken place, the nation needs to know and restoration needs to take place.

Let me at this juncture emphasise that Government attaches very great importance to this task. I, therefore, urge you to be courageous and God-fearing as you approach this important and delicate national assignment. With the quality of your membership we have no illusion that you are up to the task.

The members of the Panel include :

(a) Brig.-Gen. O. Rotimi (rtd.)	<i>Chairman</i>
(b) Chief A. N. Anyamere, SAN	<i>Member</i>
(c) Engr Abubakar Alikura	<i>Member</i>
(d) Mr Wilberforce Juta	<i>Member</i>
(e) Mr Gershom Henshaw	<i>Member</i>
(f) Mr Ugo Innocent Chima	<i>Member</i>
(g) Prof. Bolanle Awe	<i>Member</i>
(h) Mr G. O. Adebajji	<i>Secretary</i>

(a) to identify and collate all landed property of the Federal Government or its agencies, parastatals or companies such as Nigeria Airways, Nigeria Ports Authority and Nigeria Railway Corporation, wherever located in the country as at 1st day of January, 1984 and as at 29th day of May, 1999, and to determine the state of the title of the Federal Government to such landed property.

(b) to identify all such landed property of the Federal Government, its agencies, parastatals or companies as have been or are in danger of being alienated by way of sale, lease, grant, gift, or by any other means whatsoever and to determine the propriety of such transactions.

(c) to ascertain the persons, authority or organisation responsible for such alienation and the person, persons or body to whom or to which the property were alienated as aforesaid, the reason behind the alienation, the person or body to whom such consideration was paid and the use to which it was put.

(d) to determine whether such alienations of landed property of the Federal Government, its agencies, parastatals or companies as aforesaid were in the public interest, and if not, to recommend appropriate action against public officers concerned in the transactions and ways and means of recovering public property so improperly alienated.

(e) to make any other recommendations which the Panel may deem necessary in the circumstances.

Let me also add that you are free to consult and summon anybody or group of people who could be of assistance in the discharge of your duties. On our part, government will place at your disposal necessary facilities that would ensure speedy completion of your assignment, within the six months period given to you.

Distinguished Lady and Gentlemen, I congratulate you on your appointment. I wish you God's guidance and I assure you of government's support as you embark on this very important national assignment. It is now my honour and privilege to inaugurate the Panel on the Investigation of Federal Government Landed property.

I thank you all for your attention.

INAUGURAL MEETING OF COUNCIL OF STATE

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURAL
MEETING OF COUNCIL OF STATE
ON TUESDAY, 29TH JUNE, 1999
AT THE PRESIDENTIAL VILLA, ABUJA**

I warmly welcome you to this inaugural meeting of the Council of State, the first since the return to democratic governance. I want to seize this opportunity to congratulate the State Executive Governors on your success at the polls. It is my sincere hope that the confidence reposed in us by our people, and their expectations of us in terms of selfless service shall constitute the motivating force in all our policies, programmes and actions throughout our tenure of office. We all have cause to be grateful to the Almighty God for seeing us through a successful transition, and we rely on His Grace in our effort to rebuild Nigeria.

We should regard the opportunity given us, to serve, by the people of Nigeria as a mandate from them and a command from God Almighty that we should spare no effort in rebuilding faith in our country. We should understand the clear message of the Nigerian people. In giving us their mandate, they want us to revitalise our political institutions and reinvigorate the economy. They want us to alleviate their poverty and reduce corruption in our body polity. They want us to ensure security of their lives and property. They want justice and equity in a country they can truly call their own. They want improvement in the quality of their life. They want much more.

As you are all aware, the Constitution prescribes an important role for the Council of State. It is the duty of this Council to advise the President in the exercise of his powers on matters pertaining to National Population Census, the Prerogative of Mercy, the award of National Honours and the maintenance of public law and order, amongst other things. This forum should be made a veritable avenue for discussions on critical national issues and the nurturing of a good working relationship between the Federal and State Governments. I, therefore, call on all of us here present to imbibe a collective sense of purpose which will transcend narrow party loyalties and parochial considerations.

Appointments and Retirements in the Public Service

Since the coming into office of the present Administration, there has been among Nigerians a notable sense of euphoria mixed with great expectations. The advent of civilian democratic governance in place of prolonged military rule has given rise to these feelings. Recent changes affecting appointments and retirements

in the public service and the perception by the public of their fairness or otherwise have generated further excitement and discussions. I am aware of the criticisms that have trailed some of these appointments. However, I wish to inform you that the appointments were made with due regard to our vision to strengthen professionalism in the public service, including the Armed Forces. With regard to the nomination of Ministers, the cardinal principle that guided our choice of nominees was merit and geographical spread. None of the appointments or retirements was made with a view to marginalising any section of the country but to redress some of the anomalies found in the system.

Equally, retirements were done in order to protect democracy, reorientate the Armed Forces and subordinate them to civil authority. It has been observed that military officers who have held political office find it difficult to fit into regimental duties when they get back to the barracks. Their life style has been found to breed discontent amongst their colleagues who have not had the opportunity to hold political office. We seemed to have two classes of officer corps—those who held political appointments and those who had not.

Review Panels

Questions have been raised by the public concerning the propriety or otherwise of some of the appointments made to important public offices during the dying days of the previous administration. Similarly, some awards and licenses granted have been questioned. In order to disabuse the minds of the public, this Administration has set up Review Panels to examine these matters in order to unearth the truth and reassure the general public.

We cannot proceed to build new structures on wrong foundations. There is an unequivocal consensus that in the past, we have done very many things wrongly. We have set standards of public conduct which need to be repaired and corrected in order to send new positive signals which will redefined the ethics of public affairs management. If we must avoid a repeat of past errors, we should have patience to identify and correct these errors. It is for this reason that a seven-man Investigation Panel has been set up to inquire into cases of alleged human rights abuses committed by past Administrations. It is also for this reason that a twelve-man Panel has been set up to take an inventory of all uncompleted contracts, supplies and projects between 1976 and 1998. Another Panel to investigate Federal Government Landed Property has also been set up to identify and collate all Federal Government property which have been improperly alienated or are in danger of being improperly alienated. This Panel will identify persons responsible for the alienation and determine whether such alienation is in the public interest. We are

determined to leave no stone unturned in the implementation of whatever recommendations these panels may come up with. I am impressed by various reformative measures some of you have taken since you assumed office. It is an indication that you want to be partner with me in the crusade to rid our nation of the influence of corruption, greed and naked human brutality against fellow human being.

National Re-orientation

You would recall that one of the key planks of my inaugural speech was an expressed determination to fight corruption. Our policy so far has therefore focused on establishing firmly the ethics of accountability, transparency and return to established procedures in the running of our public services. To this end, the "Civil Service Rules" and "Financial Instructions" have been reviewed and given pride of place. I wish to repeat for emphasis that this government has no room for corrupt Nigerians whose idea of public service is self-enrichment and opportunism. The anti-corruption bill which I have placed before the National Assembly is a clear testimony to our avowed determination to take the fight against corruption to its logical conclusion. Furthermore, the country needs a complete re-orientation in all other spheres of our national life. We shall work conscientiously to re-engineer attitudinal change which will espouse the dignity of labour and the importance of integrity, honesty and other similar virtues in public life. The young will be moulded, the illiterate will be educated, the adult will be persuaded, while everyone will be mobilised to appreciate the virtue of a corrupt-free, industrious, honest and disciplined society.

National Security

The security situation in the Niger Delta Area remains fragile and largely volatile. In order to provide security and maintain law and order, we have had to deploy combined teams of Military and Mobile Police personnel to strategic locations. I have also personally visited the Niger Delta area and held useful discussions with the youths and elders. While encouraging dialogue, Government is also trying to find a lasting solution to the situation in the Niger Delta. In this regard, we are already developing a master-plan to guide the systematic development of the area. I, therefore, appeal for calm, patience, and understanding, to allow us enough time to bring about lasting and suitable improvements in the lives of the people of that area.

The menace of armed banditry has assumed an alarming dimension nationwide, particularly in the North-Eastern part of the country. Efforts by State Governments to curb the menace have been relentless but not completely effective. Only last week, I held a meeting with the nine State Governors in the North-Eastern and North-Western parts of the country during which we considered strategies for combating armed banditry. Besides, the Federal Government has

also taken up the matter with the neighbouring countries whose nationals are involved in this heinous crime. At the meeting with the neighbouring countries, it was resolved that concrete measures would be taken to eradicate the menace through the establishment of joint military operations, joint and continuous patrols, sharing of intelligence, prosecution of suspects, regular meetings of relevant officials and enhanced logistic support to security agencies.

Energy Supply

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Kaduna and Port-Harcourt refineries have resumed production, while the Turn Around Maintenance (TAM) of the others is nearing completion. With these developments, the fuel supply situation in the country has improved considerably. As for electricity supply, government has decided to rehabilitate the power generating stations as well as the transmission and distribution system of NEPA in order to stabilise power supply in the country. To this end, the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Federal Ministry of Finance have been directed to urgently provide funds to enable NEPA undertake the rehabilitation of its facilities all over the country.

Inter-Governmental Relations

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, even though we operate a federal system of government which confers relative autonomy and operations flexibility on the three tiers of government, we also need to co-operate with one another in order to achieve the national developmental objectives. We need each other, and we should always strive to carry everyone along in all our national pursuits. The Constitution gives the Federal and State Governments concurrent responsibility in areas like Agriculture, Education, Health, Water Supply, etc. This calls for a harmonious relationship between the States and the Federal Government in all matters because what happens in one tier of government has ripple effects in others.

The Economy

The crises of the Nigerian economy is the crises of poverty and mismanagement. The common man has borne the burden of bad policies and mismanagement for too long. The situation is compounded by the high rate of inflation, low capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector, insufficiency of food production, high import dependency and general unemployment and under-employment. As a first step in our strategy to revive the economy, we have set up a committee comprising representatives of the Public and the Private Sectors of the economy to advise and help in formulating policy on how best to move the economy forward particularly on how to halt the de-industrialisation of the Nigerian economy. With regard to food security and food self-sufficiency, we will address all

the dimensions of the problems in the agricultural sector, with particular reference to the production and distribution of fertilizer and farm implements, the efficient management of agricultural credit schemes and extension services and the role which States and local government should play in our agricultural development effort. Steps have been taken to ensure that there is availability of fertilizers to the farmers in the next couple of weeks. It may be late for some but it will still be timely.

We view the poverty situation in the country with great seriousness, most especially as policies and programmes on poverty alleviation put in place by previous Administrations have been generally ineffective. We have observed that there are in existence far too many agencies engaged in the area of poverty alleviation. At the last count, there are eighteen programmes and agencies still being served ranging from DFRRRI to FEAP. We have, therefore, commenced the process of rationalising those agencies with a view to making them slimmer and more effective. We are doing this throughout government establishments and agencies. As for employment, we appreciate that the level of employment is dependent on the level of performance of the economy. We shall, therefore, put in place every possible incentive to increase capacity utilisation in industry, and create the type of environment that will attract more direct investment in the country. In view of the unacceptable level of unemployment, particularly among the youths, we should endeavour to create new avenues for employment generation and opportunities for self fulfilment. Along this line, we are asking the State Governments to initiate policies and programmes to re-invigorate the informal sector in their respective States, undertake employment generating programmes and aid the unemployed to create self-employment. At all levels of government, supervision is poor and collusion to perpetrate crime is rife. This has led to high level of fictitious employees notoriously known as ghost workers in almost all government ministries, departments and organisations. It is both immoral and criminal and it is a form of corruption which must be fought.

The issue of minimum wage for public Sector workers has been a source of agitation in the recent past. Although there seems to be relative peace now that the teachers have called off their strikes, we have to admit that complete industrial harmony is yet to be achieved. However, as part of the progressive evolution of democratic norms and institutions, we look forward to more meaningful co-operation with the Labour Unions through the establishment of a more dynamic framework for collective bargaining. It is such co-operation, coupled with understanding and sacrifice by all, that will help us to arrive at amicable solutions to the problems of the Nigerian workers.

Education

The educational sector has suffered a lot of setback over the years. A lot of the associated problems have to do with welfare of the teachers and inadequate awareness at the parental, community and local government levels. Consequently, the teaching profession has lost the glamour it has been known for. The revival of the sector is therefore a priority of this Administration. In the meantime, the problem of the payment of teacher's salary and raising awareness deserve urgent attention. It is in this regard that a policy machinery is being devised through which the three-tier of Government in the Federation will contribute to a pool of funds from which primary education will be funded and awareness will be raised.

This administration looks forward to an economy of vibrant partnership between Government and business. Private profit must look to promote public purpose and public good. In this vein, our Administration will pursue the policy of deregulation and privatisation of some State-owned enterprises when it is judged that their performance will be enhanced and their subsequent status will be of overall benefit to the nation. We promise to provide a stable and secure enabling environment for all those seeking to do legitimate business within Nigeria. We are also keen and determined to discuss all aspects of the country's foreign debt with the view to achieving a level of relief and remission that can be secured through negotiation and that help the sustenance of our democracy.

Foreign Policy

We will re-assert our position in the international arena playing God-assigned role in West Africa, in Africa and indeed in the world.

Conclusion

Your Excellencies, Your Royal highnesses, the task of moving Nigerian forward is one that this Administration is irrevocably committed to. Federalism has worked for people in other lands ; it should also work for us in Nigeria. The onus of making it work rests on all of us, as it is the joint responsibility of all levels and arms of government to cooperate as best they could to make it work so that this nation may thrive. Although this august body does possess only advisory powers, yet it does possess great moral authority, and moral authority is at times as important as political power and authority. The Presidency will always solicit and place utmost reliance on the quality of our advice.

May the Almighty be with us.

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL ON REVIEW OF
CONTRACTS, LICENCES, AWARDS, APPROVALS
AND APPOINTMENTS
ON MONDAY, 7TH JUNE, 1999
AT THE STATE HOUSE, ABUJA
AT 10.00 A.M.**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President
of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

The Secretary to the Government
of the Federation,

Chairman and Members of the Review Panel,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my inaugural address to the nation, I emphasized my resolve to sanitise our public service. To bring this about, I decided to put together eminent Nigerians of undoubted integrity and dedication to examine the way and manner Government business was conducted during the past few months. It is therefore my honour and privilege to inaugurate today this Panel on Review of Contracts, Licences, Awards, Approvals and Appointments.

Let me point out here that the task of reviewing contracts, licences, awards, approvals and appointments made between 1st January, 1999 and 28th May, 1999 is an arduous responsibility which calls for a sense of fairness, justice and equity. Your duty in this very important national assignment is very demanding and daunting. But given your background and track records, I believe you are equal to the task.

The members of the Review Panel include :

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| (i) | Dr Christopher Kolade | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Chairman</i> |
| (ii) | Dr I. Ayagi | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (iii) | Dr I. Y. Lame | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (iv) | Mr V. Maduka | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (v) | Mr Bukar Usman | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (vi) | Mrs Theodor Azinge | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (vii) | Dr Rose Abang-Wushishi | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Member</i> |
| (viii) | Mr P. E. Odili | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | <i>Secretary</i> |

Your terms of Reference are as follows :

- A. (i) To review and scrutinise approvals for contracts and licences made between 1st January, 1999 and 28th May, 1999 ;
- (ii) To determine whether or not the procedure of award of such contracts and licences were in conformity with existing regulations, especially the open tendering system ;
- (iii) To determine the relevance and priority of such contracts and licences as well as justify expenditures involved, in the light of prevailing economic realities of the country ;
- (iv) To determine in the case of all appointments into the top echelon of the Federal Ministries and Extra-Ministerial Departments, the priority of such appointments. Specifically it should ;
- (a) Determine to what extent laid down rules and regulations including the principles of Federal Character were adhered to ;
- (b) Examine cases of irregularities and anomalies arising from appointments, transfers and other mal-practices that are not in conformity with laid down Civil Service Rules and Regulations.
- (v) To recommend as appropriate, re-negotiation, re-tendering or cancellation of the contracts and licences ;
- (vi) To recommend the cancellation and/or reconfirmation of such appointments as the case may be ;
- (vii) To consider any other issue which in the opinion of the Panel has bearing on its assignment ;
- (viii) To make any other recommendations which in the opinion of the Panel will sanitise the system of award of contracts, allocation of licences and appointments of Public Servants in the Public interest.

B. The Panel is empowered to call for memoranda (written and oral) or witnesses as the case may be and all Ministries and Extra-Ministerial Departments are expected to give the Panel fullest co-operation and support.

This Administration places very high premium on the honest and responsible discharge of this assignment. You must, therefore, see yourselves as impartial arbiters. In this connection, you should be seen to be dispassionate, selfless and objective, so that your recommendations can earn the respect of all concerned.

In addition, your examination of all contracts, licences, awards, approvals and appointments should be done in strict compliance with the criteria of merit, justice, fair-play, the principle of Federal Character and in the public interest. Government on its part will closely monitor your proceedings to ensure a uniform application of agreed standards. You should be prepared to consult broadly with relevant organs of Government in areas of particular difficulty. We are determined to do everything possible to address all issues that tend to bring dissatisfaction, injustice and the perpetration of corruption in the Public Service. All the rules and regulations designed to promote honesty and transparency in dealings with Government will be restored and enforced.

I wish to emphasise that this Administration is determined to change our attitude to public office, away from what we could get out of the system to what we could contribute to sustain it. Nigerians must, as a matter of priority, decide to create more wealth, so that the role of Government could be restricted essentially to the provision of the enabling environment.

Finally, let me congratulate you on your appointment and wish you success in your assignment. Please be informed that you have three months to accomplish your task, while interim reports should be submitted weekly to Government for consideration and decision.

I now have the singular honour and privilege to inaugurate the Panel on Review of Contracts, Licences, Awards, Approvals and Appointments.

Thank you.



**CLOSING OF THE SPECIAL SEMINAR
FOR FEDERAL PERMANENT SECRETARIES**

**TEXT OF THE ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE CLOSING OF THE
SPECIAL SEMINAR FOR FEDERAL PERMANENT SECRETARIES
BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
ON THURSDAY, 10TH JUNE, 1999**

Distinguished Resource Persons,
Seminar Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you again to witness the conclusion of your eleven-day seminar. The seminar is, in my view, a unique event in the recent history of Nigerian public administration. While it is true that, prior to this seminar, conferences, workshops and other seminars have been organised on the theme of public service management, nothing to the best of my knowledge compares with the experience you have just been through.

I am reliably informed that the past two weeks have witnessed a dramatic change in your perception of the challenges facing our country and of the civil service's role in responding to those challenges. In the course of your deliberations, you covered such diverse subjects as the role of the Federal Public Service in governance, the duties, social and moral responsibilities of Permanent Secretaries and other higher Civil Servants ; Poverty Alleviation Strategies ; Policy Analysis and Strategic Planning ; Public Service Productivity, the Preparation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Ministerial and Departmental budget ; and issues of concern to civil servants. But more importantly, you had the interactions that you had never had before. Most of you were knowing yourselves for the first time. That, to me, is a positive outcome.

The "report card" which Professor Adedeji, the Seminar Co-ordinator, has just presented indicates that, as a group, you have acquainted yourselves creditably. He has scored most of you high on punctuality, on willingness to tackle complex problems, and on keenness to imbibe new ideas and learn new skills. I commend you for your dedication, your high sense of responsibility, and your determination to anticipate and respond to the challenges ahead. But there are other areas such as values as higher public servants where some of you fall below expectation.

While the interim assessment of the outcome of the seminar can generally be regarded as positive, we must face the fact that the process of revitalising the civil

service has just begun. The seminar has undoubtedly prepared you for the challenges and subjecting yourselves to further exposures and training. Only a fool will not learn from his experience and from others. Life itself is a continuous process of learning and improving on the job. This Administration has signalled its intention to improve the living conditions of our people. I enlist the entire civil service in the war against poverty, institution decay, embezzlement, wilful misallocation of resources, over-budgeting, declining productivity, and corruption.

As the leadership cadre of the civil service, you all have a vital role to play in tendering professional advice on the policies and programmes of this Government, and in mobilising the human, financial and material resources essential to the realisation of our strategic objectives. As I urged you at the beginning of the seminar, it is essential that you obtain a copy of my inaugural address and keep it as a reference document. Without prejudice to the cherished values of non-partisanship and professionalism, the leadership of the civil service plays a significant role in the articulation, drafting, refining, review, implementation and monitoring of public policy. If a policy responds adequately to a major national concern and offers a clear direction to the future, a great deal of the credit must go to the cadre of officials who, through patient distillation and analysis of data, transform political dreams into reality and declarations into programmes. By the same token, if a policy has catastrophic consequences, the career officials, cannot disclaim responsibility since they must have had every opportunity to influence the content, direction, and implementation of the policy.

It is my intention to hold you collectively and individually responsible for the planning and implementation of the changes contemplated by this administration. From now on ; it will no longer be "business as usual". Excellence will be rewarded and mediocrity will not be tolerated. This country, and certainly this Government, deserve greater effort from you and have every right to expect substantial improvements in the services provided to the public. How you apply your policy analytic and strategic planning skills in bringing this about is the challenge ahead of you.

I have already stated the position of this Administration regarding the enforcement of rules and regulations. Let me reiterate that the time when rules were flouted with impunity is over. We are strongly committed to change and to rapid improvements in the standards of living. However, this commitment will not be at the expense of public accountability. If any rule proves to be an obstacle to change, the official concerned would have to exercise the utmost restraint and ensure that the agreed processes for amending the "difficult rule" are exhausted. To abandon the rule or to short-circuit in any way is to encourage corruption or to eliminate the standard of performance.

Government will not condone negligence, or collusion on the part of those charged

with the responsibility for rules enforcement, nor will Government recognise the status of “an innocent bye-stander” as far as rules enforcement is concerned. A state official who craves personal survival and comfort over public good has distorted the notion of public service and rendered his position untenable. A highly placed official who remains silent when the nation’s vital interests are threatened is as guilty as the direct perpetrators of the crime. If in the course of safeguarding the interests of the country, a civil servant is threatened in any way, my Government will protect and defend the civil servant concerned. But there will be no godfatherism. And you should see yourself as I see you irrespective of the accident of your place of birth or origin—a Nigerian highly placed official, with broad outlook and patriotic fervour working patiently and industriously, to bring over all development and progress into this country in peace, justice and unity. We will eliminate the culture of pleading and external interference from the civil service. You will be judged by the totality of your performance.

I cannot over-emphasise the need for team work. Inter-personal or inter-ministerial rivalry is capable of hampering government business to the disadvantage of the communal interest. It is therefore essential that areas of disagreement be resolved well before they get out of control.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our resource persons for agreeing to participate at this seminar and for doing so marvellously well. I am particularly grateful to Professor Adebayo Adedeji, the Seminar Co-ordinator, and the formidable team comprising such seasoned civil servants as Chief Allison Ayida, Alhaji Liman Ciroma, Alhaji Adamu Fika, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, Madam Teju Alakija, Professor Grace Alele Williams, Chief S. B. Awoniyi, Chief Omowale Kuye, Mr Olu Fadaka, Alhaji Abidu Yazid, Professor Adebayo Akinde, Mr Jeremy Pope, Professors M. J. Balogun and A. D. Yahaya, Dr Asmelash Beyene, and others. May we continue to have achievers like these that we may be able to call upon in times like this. I should also thank the secretariat staff who put in extra hours to ensure the success of the seminar. It is my hope that their efforts will be rewarded with a professionally competent, morally and ethically upright, development-oriented, and forward-looking Civil Service always ready to deliver service to the people of Nigeria. Let us now follow the rules and the procedure.

Finally, let me warn again that no slipshod work, disloyalty, indolence, lawlessness, absenteeism, disobedience and misconduct will be condoned. Civil Servants are meant to offer civic responsibility. We expect nothing less.

Once again, let me congratulate you for attendance at this seminar. I have pleasure to declare the seminar formally closed.

May God Almighty bless you all.

**THE INAUGURATION OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATION PANEL**



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATION PANEL
ON MONDAY, 14TH JUNE, 1999
AT THE STATE HOUSE, ABUJA
AT 11.00 A.M.**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria,

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Chairman and Members of the Human Rights
Investigation Panel,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all to this very important occasion which marks the formal inauguration of the Human Rights Investigation Panel. The Investigation Panel being inaugurated today is consistent with this Administration's policy of openness and transparency in the conduct of Government business as well as our determination to heal the wounds of the past and quickly put the ugly past behind us so as to continue to stretch our hands of fellowship and friendship to all Nigerians for complete reconciliation based on truth and knowledge of the truth in our hand.

We want to reconcile all those who feel alienated by the past political events, heal wounds inflicted on our people and restore harmony in our country. We want the injured and the seemingly injured to be reconciled with their oppressors or seeming oppressors. That is the way to move forward. I have, therefore, invited eminent Nigerians of high repute to investigate cases of human rights abuses committed since last democratic dispensation and to make appropriate recommendations. This all important assignment calls for dedication, fairness, firmness, justice and equity. I know that with your proven integrity, coupled with your track records, you will discharge your responsibility without fear or favour. And you will help us to scale over an unprecedented wicked and oppressive era in our history and propose measures for such an era never to repeat itself.

The members of the Investigation Panel are as follows :

- | | | | |
|--------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|
| (i) | Justice Oputa | .. .. . | <i>Chairman</i> |
| (ii) | Abubakar Ali Kura Michika | .. .. . | <i>Member</i> |
| (iii) | Rev. Matthew Kuka | .. .. . | <i>Member</i> |
| (iv) | Mrs Elizabeth Pam | .. .. . | <i>Member</i> |
| (v) | Alhaji Adamu Lawal Bamalli | .. .. . | <i>Member</i> |
| (vi) | Dr Tunji Abayomi | .. .. . | <i>Member</i> |
| (vii) | Mrs Modupe Areola | .. .. . | <i>Member</i> |
| (viii) | Mr T. D. Oyelade | .. .. . | <i>Secretary</i> |

Your terms of reference are clear, namely :

- (i) To ascertain or establish, to whatever extent the evidence and circumstances may permit, the causes, nature and extent of human rights violations or abuses and in particular all known or suspected cases of mysterious deaths and assassinations or attempted assassinations committed in Nigeria, since last democratic dispensation.
- (ii) To identify the person or persons, authorities, institutions or organisations which may be held accountable for such mysterious deaths, assassinations or attempted assassinations or other violations or abuses of human rights and to determine the motives for the violations or abuses, the victims and circumstances thereof and the effect on such victims or the society generally.
- (iii) To determine whether such abuses or violations were the product of deliberate state policy or the policy of any of its organs or institutions or individual or whether they arose from the abuse by state officials or their office or whether they were the acts of any political organisation, liberation movement or other group or individual.
- (iv) To recommend measures which may be taken whether, judicial, administrative, legislative or institutional to redress past injustices and to prevent or forestall future violations or abuses of human rights.

This Administration will do everything possible to address all issues that tend to bring our country into dispute, or perpetuate injustice, conflict and the violation of human rights. You should therefore appreciate the magnitude and importance of the work expected to be carried out by you. The task before you is not only demanding, but also vital for the socio-political well being of our people and the nation. All the rights of every Nigerian as enshrined in our constitution must be protected and respected.

Ladies and Gentlemen, bearing in mind the sensitive nature of your assignment and the importance attached to it, you are expected to be tactful, and at the same time to maintain a very high level of integrity. You are also empowered to call for memoranda as you deem fit. I have every confidence that you will live up to the high expectations of our people and will carry out your duty diligently and without fear or favour but with love and justice which should be the foundation of our interaction in this country.

Let me, at this juncture, congratulate you and wish you every success in your assignment. I now have the honour to inaugurate the Human Rights Investigation Panel.

Thank you and God bless.



**THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL FOR THE ASSESSMENT
OF UNCOMPLETED PROJECTS, SUPPLIES AND SERVICES**

.

■

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL FOR THE ASSESSMENT
OF UNCOMPLETED PROJECTS, SUPPLIES AND SERVICES
ON MONDAY, 21ST JUNE, 1999 AT THE STATE HOUSE, ABUJA
AT 11.00 A.M**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President of the Federal
Republic of Nigeria,
The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Chairman and Members of the Panel,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my inaugural address to the nation, I stressed the determination of this Administration to ascertain the true state of things particularly our finances and the economy. I also promised to concentrate on issues that can bring urgent relief to our people. I believe it is timely for us to now turn our attention to critical economic issues affecting our polity, including the assessment of uncompleted projects, supplies and services. Initially this exercise is meant to cover from the period January 1984 to December 1998. That period delineates the end of the democratic government and the beginning of military rule. This has been misconstrued as probing the past governments or the past government leaders. This is far from the objective. It is to give us first and foremost an inventory of uncompleted projects, supplies and services no matter when commenced. And now to allay fears as to the objective of the exercise, we have extended the period to cover from January 1976 to December 1998. If then it is to probe past governments or government leaders, then I am being probed and my previous government is being probed by the panel.

We need to know where exactly we are to be able to know how to move forward. To this end, government has decided to set up a Panel made up of men and women of proven integrity and record of good performance like your good selves to handle this rather onerous, sensitive and important assignment.

Members of the Panel include :

(a)	Alhaji Iguda Inua	..	..	..	..	Chairman
(b)	Arch. A. Anyansi	..	..	..	..	Member
(c)	Alhaji Abba Bashir	..	..	..	..	Member
(d)	AIG S. A. Daura (rt&)	..	..	..	..	Member
(e)	Engr Jerry Ovuewhorie	..	..	..	..	Member
(f)	Engr Adamu Ibrahim	..	..	..	..	Member
(g)	Alhaji Isa Tahir	..	..	..	..	Member
(h)	Arch. Ahmed Dasuki	..	..	..	..	Member
(i)	Mr Wole Banjo	..	..	..	..	Member
(j)	Alhaji Mohammed Salihu Aremu	..	..	..	..	Member
(k)	Ms Tina Iyoha	..	..	..	..	Member
(l)	Mrs Eniola Alakija Sagoe	..	..	..	..	Member

The terms of reference are as follows :

(a) To take inventory of all uncompleted projects, supplies and services for which contracts were awarded by the Federal Ministries, Departments and Parastatals between 1st January, 1976 and 31st December, 1998.

(b) Examine all records and documents relating to the uncompleted projects, supplies and services having due regard to established procedure and guidelines for the award of such contracts.

(c) Assess in each case the level of work executed, the amount of money paid to the contractors by the client up to the time the work stopped and determine whether the actual work executed was commensurate with the amount of money paid out at that time taking into account the time of award and the stage of completion of the contract.

(d) Examine the reasons given, if any, why the projects, supplies and services were not executed in accordance with the terms of the Contract Agreement between the client and the contractors at the time of the award.

(e) Consider and make appropriate recommendations regarding any action that might have been taken by the client Ministry, Department or Parastatal as a result of the contractor's inability to complete the work or render such other services as may have been required.

(f) Determine the projects that are not viable.

(g) Make appropriate recommendations in order of priority, which of the uncompleted projects, supplies and services should be completely finished and work out the estimated total cost to complete each of the recommended projects, supplies and services.

(h) Recommend to Government any other measure(s) that may be taken to prevent the recurrence of such lapses in the future.

In carrying out your assignment, I wish to assure you that government would place all necessary facilities and assistance at your disposal to enable you complete your task within a period of nine calendar months. There is no doubt in my mind that, in the course of this sensitive assignment, you may come across some difficulties and unforeseen bottlenecks which I trust that your experience and determination will see you through.

I wish to remind you that, abandoned and uncompleted projects, supplies and services which are common features in the country in part arise as a result of the abuse of the open competitive tendering system. Instead of adhering to existing rules, most Ministries/Extra-Ministerial Departments deviated from lay-down procedures leading to corruption and abandonment and uncompletion of the projects. Your assignment will be expected to be accomplished with thoroughness so as to form the foundation on which a solid economy can be rebuilt.

Finally, let me congratulate you on your appointment and wish you success in your assignment.

I have the honour to inaugurate the Panel for the Assessment of Uncompleted Projects, Supplies and Services.

Thank you and God bless.

**THE NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE DAY DINNER
AND AWARD CEREMONY**



**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
ARMED FORCES, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE DAY
DINNER AND AWARD CEREMONY
ON 23RD JUNE, 1999**

Your Excellency the Vice-President of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Alhaji Abubakar Atiku,
The President of the Senate,
The Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Honourable Chief Justice of the Federation,
Honourable Senators and Members of the National Assembly,
Honourable Ministers,
The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
The Head of Service of the Federation,
Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission,
All former Secretaries to the Federal Government and
Heads of the Federal Civil Service,
Secretaries to State Governments and Heads of Service,
Permanent Secretaries,
Heads of Extra-Ministerial Department,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Gentlemen of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy that Nigeria is, for the first time, joining other African countries to celebrate the Civil Service Day. I understand that the genesis of this celebration is the 1994 Tangier Declaration by the Biennial Conference of Ministers of Civil Service in Africa under the aegis of the African Training and Research Centre in Administration and Development that the 23rd of June every year should be commemorated as the Africa Day of Administration and Civil Service.

I note that many other African countries had been celebrating this Day since the Tangier Declaration and cannot find the reason why Nigeria, a leading member

of the organisation, waited for five years before doing so. However, it is fortuitous that this maiden celebration coincides with the commencement of our Administration. This Administration is committed to giving the Civil Service a new lease of life so that it can be a virile partner and an effective organ in the implementation of policies and programmes of government. With God on our side, we will restore the core values of honesty, impartiality, professionalism, transparency for which the Nigerian Civil Service was known as well as ensuring that Civil Servants regain confidence in themselves. This commemoration offers us the opportunity to reflect on the glorious past of the Civil Service and to embark on the restoration and regeneration of the Service so that it can once again play its role as an efficient and effective organ for the formulation, implementation, evaluation and review of government policies and programmes.

The Civil Service, however, requires large doses of restorative and regenerative therapies to bring confidence back so as to summon enough courage to advise faithfully and fearlessly, to refuse orders which are manifestly illegal and not supported by extant rules and regulations, and for the members to see themselves as the tool for generating socio-economic development and meeting the needs and aspirations of our people.

Our Administration, in realisation of the state of the Civil Service today, has already embarked on measures to sensitise the top echelon of the Civil Service to their duties and responsibilities in the current dispensation. In our first week in office, a ten-day special seminar was organised for Permanent Secretaries, where they deliberated extensively on the state of the nation, refocusing and redesigning the service as well as engineering attitudinal and mental re-orientation, in order to equip them for the challenges ahead. In my address to the seminar participants, I espoused my vision of the Civil Service which Nigeria requires at this time of our national life when everyone is yearning for a change. There is a yearning for genuine democracy and rule of law. There is a yearning for a change from poverty to prosperity, from scarcity to abundance, from distrust to mutual trust, co-operation and confidence in Government and change, from real or perceived marginalisation and exploitation to justice and equity.

With the hope and confidence which this Administration is bringing into governance, we are geared to the construction of the public service into a creative, information-based and productive change agent. A Civil Service that is modern, efficient and effective is critical to the performance of Government. The public service which will meet the challenges of the next millennium will be one that is people-oriented rather than self-serving, innovative rather than role-bound, capable

of forging constructive partnerships with outside groups rather than being insular. He is professionally competent and free from corruption. He constantly subjects programmes to relevance and effectiveness tests rather than being complacent ; and uses hierarchical control as a means of strengthening management accountability rather than as a device for stifling initiative and creativity.

The civil servant administrator is the expert adviser to the political leadership of his Ministry. He must not be disloyal to this political leader. While the civil servant must carry out the decisions and policy laid down by the political leadership, he must resist illegitimate political demands or pressures. The civil servant must resist political encroachments on the internal self-regulation of the civil service system. There must be respect for the rule of law and adherence to the rules and regulations as enshrined in the Civil Service Rules, Financial Regulations and the Administrative Guidelines Regulating the Relationship between the Parastatals/ Government-Owned Companies and the Government. A comprehensive review of these documents has recently been undertaken and I am happy to announce that I have approved the revised documents. I have consistently emphasised that the affairs of the Public Service should be conducted in accordance with extant Rules and Regulations. I am aware that the environment in which the Civil Service operated in the last 15 years did not promote this ideal, but this Administration is determined to provide the enabling environment and protection for the Civil Servant to perform his duties without fear or favour.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let us put behind us the gory tales about the Civil Service of the past and look forward to a better future where the Service itself will be sufficiently empowered to play its role. As I have emphasised in some other fora since my assumption of office as President, I have a vision for the Civil Service which, for the avoidance of doubt, I want to restate briefly here :

(i) a competent, professional, development-oriented, public-spirited and customer-friendly Civil Service capable of responding effectively and speedily to the needs of the society ;

(ii) the restoration of core values of the Service such as political neutrality, impartiality, integrity, loyalty, transparency, professionalism and accountability ;

(iii) a Civil Service that is guided by equity, where things are done in the right way based on extant rules and regulations but with room for discretion, which should be exercised in public interest ;

(iv) creation of a suitable environment where civil servants are assured

of protection and job security in the faithful discharge of their duties and responsibilities ;

(v) a competitively well-remunerated and motivated Civil Service.

Reward will be based on merit and not on ethnic, religious or "old boy" consideration. I wish to reiterate my earlier warning during the closing ceremony of the Special Seminar for Permanent Secretaries on 10th June, 1999, that the practice whereby some Civil Servants used traditional rulers, clergyman and other powerful persons to curry favour in the past or to cover up misdeeds will not be tolerated by this Administration. The Civil Servant will be assessed by his performance ; no short circuiting ; no godfatherism.

At this juncture, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen ; while it is a bit early to pass any judgment, I am, however, happy to say that there are observable positive signs of a good start on the part of the Civil Service. For instance, I have observed that lateness to work which hitherto was the order of the day is now giving way to punctuality. This situation should not only be maintained but should be improved upon for meaningful productivity.

The Civil Service now has a "Head", a situation which has corrected the damage done to the Civil Service by the operation of the repealed Decree 43 of 1988. I hope the Civil Service will take advantage of the appointment of the Head of the Civil Service to foster the much needed *esprit-de-corps* in the Service and bring sense of direction to the Service once again as one body and one soul.

To our eminent past civil servants who are being honoured today, the awardees, I say hearty congratulations. It is gratifying that while many public officers lose their relevance immediately they leave office, you have continued to glow and blossom. This should be an inspiration to all officers who are still in service. I note with appreciation that most of you have continued to show interest in the activities on the service. As I have fondly referred to some of you as the "moving archives" of the Civil Service, I have no doubt in my mind that you will continue to enrich the service with your wealth of experience.

With the journey so far, I have a feeling that the confidence which this Administration has restored in the Service will be justified. There is a heavy burden placed on the Service to assist the government to implement urgently its policies and programmes. Among the immediate priorities of my government are the resuscitation of decaying infrastructures, raising the capacity utilisation of our industries, eradicating corruption from our national life and restoring the confidence of our people in government. None of these can be achieved if the Civil Service is

inept or corrupt. I, therefore, urge each and everyone of you in position of leadership in the Civil Service to make his Ministry an island of integrity and by so doing the value of a corrupt-free productive society will permeate the society at large.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish the awardees long life and prosperity and more fruitful years of service to Nigeria. Let us all be stakeholders in the political and socio-economic development and regeneration of our country. We must do it together. Join me in giving three happy cheers to the awardees, three hearty cheers to the Civil Service and five hearty cheers to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you very much for your support and encouragement. God bless you all.



**THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY
AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL
DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
IN ABUJA
SATURDAY, 26TH JUNE, 1999**

Protocol

I wish to specially commend the United Nations for setting aside this special day as the United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. I also commend the efforts of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency towards ridding our beloved country of the drug menace.

2. The problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking was alien to this country until about a decade and half ago. In fact, the very first incident of arrest on drug related offence in Nigeria was in 1983. However, the situation is totally different today as we are faced with the problem of drug abuse and its numerous fall-out effects. It is a known fact that people of different backgrounds, social classes, sexes and age range indulge in this condemnable acts of drug abuse/illicit trafficking.

3. Globally, the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking constitute a major threat to the survival and effective functioning of human societies. Human lives are daily lost through drug addiction and activities of drug addicts. Significant number of deaths from accidents and violent crimes have been traced to the activities of persons under the influence of drugs. Drug dependent youths are now being used as tools in the hands of criminals and undesirable elements in the community as thugs and paid assassins. In fact, the problem of drug abuse/trafficking are innumerable. The need to fight this social menace among the general populace, particularly among the youths, has become very imperative.

4. The global problem of drug abuse requires a global solution. The signals have been loud and clear. World conferences and summits that are replete with discussions on how best to tackle the seemingly intractable problem have now become fashionable.

5. The United Nations which is in the forefront of the drug war, through the UNDCP, has again done it by choosing music as the theme of this year's United Nations Anti-drug Day. It is a well-known fact that, youths erroneously associate music-making with drug usage. Several popular musicians have actively died from drug use but music-making cannot and should not be associated with drug

usage. According to the World Book Encyclopaedia "Music is sound arranged into pleasing or interesting patterns..... People use music to express feelings and ideas".

6. We therefore call on the musicians of this land to use music to express our collective rejection of the drug use/traffic culture.

7. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in line with various United Nations resolutions on global drug control, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to co-ordinate all activities relating to control of supply and reduction in the demand for narcotic drugs and psycho-tropic substances. It is significant to note that Nigeria was the third country to ratify the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psycho-tropic Substances. In fact, we are party to all United Nations Conventions on drug control and have put in place relevant administrative structures to facilitate their implementation. In the same vein, we have promulgated legislations that ensure the forfeiture of movable and immovable assets of persons convicted of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psycho-tropic substances. By this singular act, we have ensured that drug traffickers receive penalty commensurate with their crime.

8. I feel delighted with the significant successes that have been recorded so far by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in controlling the aspect of drug supply as recorded in the reduction in number of people being arrested for drugs trafficking. In addition, in the area of demand reduction, the Agency has put in place several programmes geared towards preventive education and creation of awareness on dangers associated with drug abuse. Our joint efforts have yielded tremendous results as is evidenced in Nigeria's certification as a drug free Nation.

9. In our desire to achieve a balance between the control of illicit supply and demand, we will strengthen existing prevention structures on the ground. In this regard, I wish to direct all State and Local Governments to give adequate financial and material support to the State and Local Government Drug Abuse Control Committees (DACC) in their domains to enable them perform the functions effectively. Let me call on our traditional and community leaders to express deeper concern about the problem of drugs in their areas of influence in order to assist the Government to comb the problem.

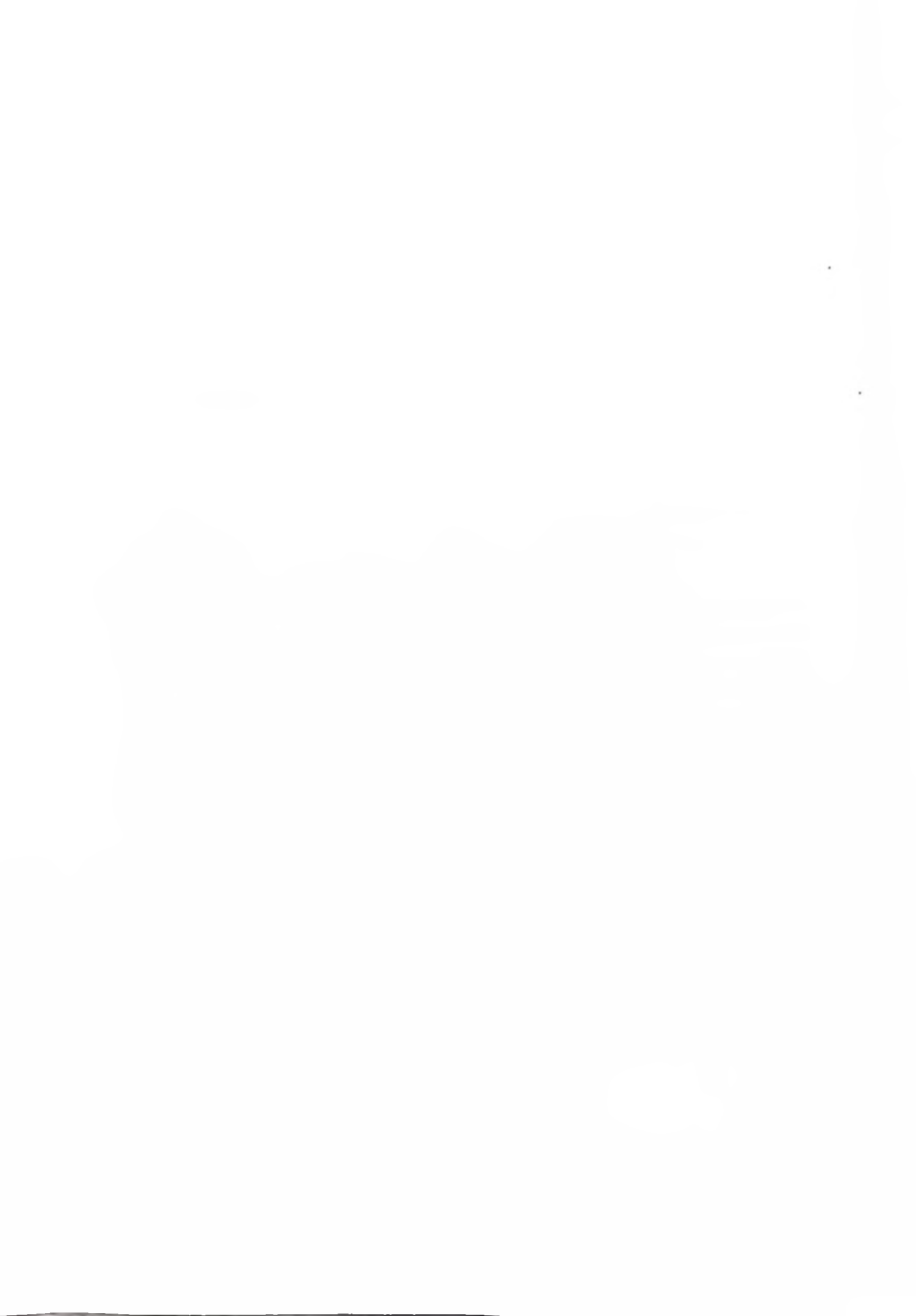
10. My administration will leave no stone unturned in intensifying this drug war. We will ensure that the strategies stipulated in the recently launched National

Drug Control Master Plan are implemented to the letter. We are prepared to sign Memoranda of Understanding with interested countries that are willing and ready to put an end to the menace of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

11. At this juncture, I want to express Nigeria's sincere appreciation to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for its assistance to the NDLEA, NAFDAC and NGOs in the control of supply and reduction in the demand for illicit drugs.

12. I wish you all a drug-free year.

Thank you and God bless.



**THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL OF INVESTIGATION
OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY**



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE PANEL OF INVESTIGATION
OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY
ON MONDAY, 28TH JUNE, 1999
AT THE STATE HOUSE, ABUJA
AT 11.00 A.M.**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Chairman and Members of the Investigation Panel,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this occasion to perform the official inauguration of another Panel on the Investigation of Federal Government Landed Property.

In my inaugural address, I spoke of the need for a new political order, determined to quickly implement measures that would restore confidence in governance. It is in pursuit of this goal that conscious efforts are being made to ascertain the correct situation of many government landed property all over the country. There have been allegations that are too brazen to be believed. The facts need to be known and where illegality and impropriety had taken place, the nation needs to know and restoration needs to take place.

Let me at this juncture emphasise that Government attaches very great importance to this task. I, therefore, urge you to be courageous and God-fearing as you approach this important and delicate national assignment. With the quality of your membership we have no illusion that you are up to the task.

The members of the Panel include :

(a) Brig.-Gen. O. Rotimi (rtd.)	<i>Chairman</i>
(b) Chief A. N. Anyamere, SAN	<i>Member</i>
(c) Engr Abubakar Alikura	<i>Member</i>
(d) Mr Wilberforce Juta	<i>Member</i>
(e) Mr Gershom Henshaw	<i>Member</i>
(f) Mr Ugo Innocent Chima	<i>Member</i>
(g) Prof. Bolanle Awe	<i>Member</i>
(h) Mr G. O. Adebajji	<i>Secretary</i>

(a) to identify and collate all landed property of the Federal Government or its agencies, parastatals or companies such as Nigeria Airways, Nigeria Ports Authority and Nigeria Railway Corporation, wherever located in the country as at 1st day of January, 1984 and as at 29th day of May, 1999, and to determine the state of the title of the Federal Government to such landed property.

(b) to identify all such landed property of the Federal Government, its agencies, parastatals or companies as have been or are in danger of being alienated by way of sale, lease, grant, gift, or by any other means whatsoever and to determine the propriety of such transactions.

(c) to ascertain the persons, authority or organisation responsible for such alienation and the person, persons or body to whom or to which the property were alienated as aforesaid, the reason behind the alienation, the person or body to whom such consideration was paid and the use to which it was put.

(d) to determine whether such alienations of landed property of the Federal Government, its agencies, parastatals or companies as aforesaid were in the public interest, and if not, to recommend appropriate action against public officers concerned in the transactions and ways and means of recovering public property so improperly alienated.

(e) to make any other recommendations which the Panel may deem necessary in the circumstances.

Let me also add that you are free to consult and summon anybody or group of people who could be of assistance in the discharge of your duties. On our part, government will place at your disposal necessary facilities that would ensure speedy completion of your assignment, within the six months period given to you.

Distinguished Lady and Gentlemen, I congratulate you on your appointment. I wish you God's guidance and I assure you of government's support as you embark on this very important national assignment. It is now my honour and privilege to inaugurate the Panel on the Investigation of Federal Government Landed property.

I thank you all for your attention.

INAUGURAL MEETING OF COUNCIL OF STATE



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURAL
MEETING OF COUNCIL OF STATE
ON TUESDAY, 29TH JUNE, 1999
AT THE PRESIDENTIAL VILLA, ABUJA**

I warmly welcome you to this inaugural meeting of the Council of State, the first since the return to democratic governance. I want to seize this opportunity to congratulate the State Executive Governors on your success at the polls. It is my sincere hope that the confidence reposed in us by our people, and their expectations of us in terms of selfless service shall constitute the motivating force in all our policies, programmes and actions throughout our tenure of office. We all have cause to be grateful to the Almighty God for seeing us through a successful transition, and we rely on His Grace in our effort to rebuild Nigeria.

We should regard the opportunity given us, to serve, by the people of Nigeria as a mandate from them and a command from God Almighty that we should spare no effort in rebuilding faith in our country. We should understand the clear message of the Nigerian people. In giving us their mandate, they want us to revitalise our political institutions and reinvigorate the economy. They want us to alleviate their poverty and reduce corruption in our body polity. They want us to ensure security of their lives and property. They want justice and equity in a country they can truly call their own. They want improvement in the quality of their life. They want much more.

As you are all aware, the Constitution prescribes an important role for the Council of State. It is the duty of this Council to advise the President in the exercise of his powers on matters pertaining to National Population Census, the Prerogative of Mercy, the award of National Honours and the maintenance of public law and order, amongst other things. This forum should be made a veritable avenue for discussions on critical national issues and the nurturing of a good working relationship between the Federal and State Governments. I, therefore, call on all of us here present to imbibe a collective sense of purpose which will transcend narrow party loyalties and parochial considerations.

Appointments and Retirements in the Public Service

Since the coming into office of the present Administration, there has been among Nigerians a notable sense of euphoria mixed with great expectations. The advent of civilian democratic governance in place of prolonged military rule has given rise to these feelings. Recent changes affecting appointments and retirements

in the public service and the perception by the public of their fairness or otherwise have generated further excitement and discussions. I am aware of the criticisms that have trailed some of these appointments. However, I wish to inform you that the appointments were made with due regard to our vision to strengthen professionalism in the public service, including the Armed Forces. With regard to the nomination of Ministers, the cardinal principle that guided our choice of nominees was merit and geographical spread. None of the appointments or retirements was made with a view to marginalising any section of the country but to redress some of the anomalies found in the system.

Equally, retirements were done in order to protect democracy, reorientate the Armed Forces and subordinate them to civil authority. It has been observed that military officers who have held political office find it difficult to fit into regimental duties when they get back to the barracks. Their life style has been found to breed discontent amongst their colleagues who have not had the opportunity to hold political office. We seemed to have two classes of officer corps—those who held political appointments and those who had not.

Review Panels

Questions have been raised by the public concerning the propriety or otherwise of some of the appointments made to important public offices during the dying days of the previous administration. Similarly, some awards and licenses granted have been questioned. In order to disabuse the minds of the public, this Administration has set up Review Panels to examine these matters in order to unearth the truth and reassure the general public.

We cannot proceed to build new structures on wrong foundations. There is an unequivocal consensus that in the past, we have done very many things wrongly. We have set standards of public conduct which need to be repaired and corrected in order to send new positive signals which will redefined the ethics of public affairs management. If we must avoid a repeat of past errors, we should have patience to identify and correct these errors. It is for this reason that a seven-man Investigation Panel has been set up to inquire into cases of alleged human rights abuses committed by past Administrations. It is also for this reason that a twelve-man Panel has been set up to take an inventory of all uncompleted contracts, supplies and projects between 1976 and 1998. Another Panel to investigate Federal Government Landed Property has also been set up to identify and collate all Federal Government property which have been improperly alienated or are in danger of being improperly alienated. This Panel will identify persons responsible for the alienation and determine whether such alienation is in the public interest. We are

determined to leave no stone unturned in the implementation of whatever recommendations these panels may come up with. I am impressed by various reformative measures some of you have taken since you assumed office. It is an indication that you want to be partner with me in the crusade to rid our nation of the influence of corruption, greed and naked human brutality against fellow human being.

National Re-orientation

You would recall that one of the key planks of my inaugural speech was an expressed determination to fight corruption. Our policy so far has therefore focused on establishing firmly the ethics of accountability, transparency and return to established procedures in the running of our public services. To this end, the "Civil Service Rules" and "Financial Instructions" have been reviewed and given pride of place. I wish to repeat for emphasis that this government has no room for corrupt Nigerians whose idea of public service is self-enrichment and opportunism. The anti-corruption bill which I have placed before the National Assembly is a clear testimony to our avowed determination to take the fight against corruption to its logical conclusion. Furthermore, the country needs a complete re-orientation in all other spheres of our national life. We shall work conscientiously to re-engineer attitudinal change which will espouse the dignity of labour and the importance of integrity, honesty and other similar virtues in public life. The young will be moulded, the illiterate will be educated, the adult will be persuaded, while everyone will be mobilised to appreciate the virtue of a corrupt-free, industrious, honest and disciplined society.

National Security

The security situation in the Niger Delta Area remains fragile and largely volatile. In order to provide security and maintain law and order, we have had to deploy combined teams of Military and Mobile Police personnel to strategic locations. I have also personally visited the Niger Delta area and held useful discussions with the youths and elders. While encouraging dialogue, Government is also trying to find a lasting solution to the situation in the Niger Delta. In this regard, we are already developing a master-plan to guide the systematic development of the area. I, therefore, appeal for calm, patience, and understanding, to allow us enough time to bring about lasting and suitable improvements in the lives of the people of that area.

The menace of armed banditry has assumed an alarming dimension nationwide, particularly in the North-Eastern part of the country. Efforts by State Governments to curb the menace have been relentless but not completely effective. Only last week, I held a meeting with the nine State Governors in the North-Eastern and North-Western parts of the country during which we considered strategies for combating armed banditry. Besides, the Federal Government has

also taken up the matter with the neighbouring countries whose nationals are involved in this heinous crime. At the meeting with the neighbouring countries, it was resolved that concrete measures would be taken to eradicate the menace through the establishment of joint military operations, joint and continuous patrols, sharing of intelligence, prosecution of suspects, regular meetings of relevant officials and enhanced logistic support to security agencies.

Energy Supply

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Kaduna and Port-Harcourt refineries have resumed production, while the Turn Around Maintenance (TAM) of the others is nearing completion. With these developments, the fuel supply situation in the country has improved considerably. As for electricity supply, government has decided to rehabilitate the power generating stations as well as the transmission and distribution system of NEPA in order to stabilise power supply in the country. To this end, the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Federal Ministry of Finance have been directed to urgently provide funds to enable NEPA undertake the rehabilitation of its facilities all over the country.

Inter-Governmental Relations

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, even though we operate a federal system of government which confers relative autonomy and operations flexibility on the three tiers of government, we also need to co-operate with one another in order to achieve the national developmental objectives. We need each other, and we should always strive to carry everyone along in all our national pursuits. The Constitution gives the Federal and State Governments concurrent responsibility in areas like Agriculture, Education, Health, Water Supply, etc. This calls for a harmonious relationship between the States and the Federal Government in all matters because what happens in one tier of government has ripple effects in others.

The Economy

The crises of the Nigerian economy is the crises of poverty and mismanagement. The common man has borne the burden of bad policies and mismanagement for too long. The situation is compounded by the high rate of inflation, low capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector, insufficiency of food production, high import dependency and general unemployment and under-employment. As a first step in our strategy to revive the economy, we have set up a committee comprising representatives of the Public and the Private Sectors of the economy to advise and help in formulating policy on how best to move the economy forward particularly on how to halt the de-industrialisation of the Nigerian economy. With regard to food security and food self-sufficiency, we will address all

the dimensions of the problems in the agricultural sector, with particular reference to the production and distribution of fertilizer and farm implements, the efficient management of agricultural credit schemes and extension services and the role which States and local government should play in our agricultural development effort. Steps have been taken to ensure that there is availability of fertilizers to the farmers in the next couple of weeks. It may be late for some but it will still be timely.

We view the poverty situation in the country with great seriousness, most especially as policies and programmes on poverty alleviation put in place by previous Administrations have been generally ineffective. We have observed that there are in existence far too many agencies engaged in the area of poverty alleviation. At the last count, there are eighteen programmes and agencies still being served ranging from DFRRI to FEAP. We have, therefore, commenced the process of rationalising those agencies with a view to making them slimmer and more effective. We are doing this throughout government establishments and agencies. As for employment, we appreciate that the level of employment is dependent on the level of performance of the economy. We shall, therefore, put in place every possible incentive to increase capacity utilisation in industry, and create the type of environment that will attract more direct investment in the country. In view of the unacceptable level of unemployment, particularly among the youths, we should endeavour to create new avenues for employment generation and opportunities for self fulfilment. Along this line, we are asking the State Governments to initiate policies and programmes to re-invigorate the informal sector in their respective States, undertake employment generating programmes and aid the unemployed to create self-employment. At all levels of government, supervision is poor and collusion to perpetrate crime is rife. This has led to high level of fictitious employees notoriously known as ghost workers in almost all government ministries, departments and organisations. It is both immoral and criminal and it is a form of corruption which must be fought.

The issue of minimum wage for public Sector workers has been a source of agitation in the recent past. Although there seems to be relative peace now that the teachers have called off their strikes, we have to admit that complete industrial harmony is yet to be achieved. However, as part of the progressive evolution of democratic norms and institutions, we look forward to more meaningful co-operation with the Labour Unions through the establishment of a more dynamic framework for collective bargaining. It is such co-operation, coupled with understanding and sacrifice by all, that will help us to arrive at amicable solutions to the problems of the Nigerian workers.

Education

The educational sector has suffered a lot of setback over the years. A lot of the associated problems have to do with welfare of the teachers and inadequate awareness at the parental, community and local government levels. Consequently, the teaching profession has lost the glamour it has been known for. The revival of the sector is therefore a priority of this Administration. In the meantime, the problem of the payment of teacher's salary and raising awareness deserve urgent attention. It is in this regard that a policy machinery is being devised through which the three-tier of Government in the Federation will contribute to a pool of funds from which primary education will be funded and awareness will be raised.

This administration looks forward to an economy of vibrant partnership between Government and business. Private profit must look to promote public purpose and public good. In this vein, our Administration will pursue the policy of deregulation and privatisation of some State-owned enterprises when it is judged that their performance will be enhanced and their subsequent status will be of overall benefit to the nation. We promise to provide a stable and secure enabling environment for all those seeking to do legitimate business within Nigeria. We are also keen and determined to discuss all aspects of the country's foreign debt with the view to achieving a level of relief and remission that can be secured through negotiation and that help the sustenance of our democracy.

Foreign Policy

We will re-assert our position in the international arena playing God-assigned role in West Africa, in Africa and indeed in the world.

Conclusion

Your Excellencies, Your Royal highnesses, the task of moving Nigerian forward is one that this Administration is irrevocably committed to Federalism has worked for people in other lands ; it should also work for us in Nigeria. The onus of making it work rests on all of us, as it is the joint responsibility of all levels and arms of government to cooperate as best they could to make it work so that this nation may thrive. Although this august body does possess only advisory powers, yet it does possess great moral authority, and moral authority is at times as important as political power and authority. The Presidency will always solicit and place utmost reliance on the quality of our advice.

May the Almighty be with us.

**THE SWEARING-IN OF MINISTERS
THE HISTORIC MISSION OF NATIONAL RESTORATION**



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY,
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
AT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF MINISTERS
ON WEDNESDAY, 30TH JUNE, 1999**

Vice-President,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Head of the Federal Civil Service,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome you all to this swearing-in ceremony with great joy and hope that the work, which the people of Nigeria expect from this Government, can now move forward in full swing. By my election to the office of President, the good people of this great country have entrusted to me the enormous task of national renewal and national reconstruction. Their expectations are high and I have been under no illusions, whatsoever, that I alone cannot singularly execute the challenge of revitalising and rebuilding our nation. This is why I feel elated that I have a team of able and experienced men and women, of proven record of accomplishment being sworn in today.

I congratulate each and everyone of you on your appointment as Ministers and Ministers of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I should like to reiterate that you have all been chosen in recognition of your past contributions to society and on the basis of your ability to contribute positively to the great venture we are embarking upon at this critical juncture in our history. You must remain aware, at all times, that it is a rare privilege and honour to be called upon to serve one's country in such distinguished positions. This is especially so in Nigeria which is blessed with a large pool of eminent and distinguished people in all fields of human endeavour.

This occasion is significant because after this ceremony the inaugural meeting of the Federal Executive Council under the new democratic dispensation will commence. Similarly, our lawmakers have certainly settled down to business as so visibly demonstrated by your successful screening in the Senate. It is, therefore, evident that the institutions of democracy have begun to function in our country. We can take pleasure, therefore, in the fact that democratic governance is proceeding apace.

In my inaugural address on 29th May, 1999, I emphasised the enormity of the challenges facing this Administration. Our beloved nation had been

virtually on the brink of collapse. At least the past one and a half decades have been characterised by calamitous retrogression in almost every conceivable sphere of life.

Nigerians have, indeed, passed through harrowing times and watched their standards of living plummet drastically just as their human rights were steadily eroded. Life became almost "short, brutish and nasty". Those were surely the most difficult days for Nigeria since the end of the civil war in 1970. Consequently, our people yearned for the restoration of democracy and its promise of justice and freedom. They prayed for a rebirth of values such as integrity and moral rectitude. They prayed to be released from the iron grip of suffering and hardship of unprecedented scale. I, therefore, deem it of utmost importance to remind you again, as you assume office, that your conduct and performance must reflect sensitivity to the aspirations of our people and the best ideals of democratic governance. We should not allow the dark days of deprivation and misery to return.

Incidentally, I detect among our people, a feeling of cautious optimism in reaction to the measures we have taken in recent weeks. This is encouraging in view of past disenchantment and loss of confidence in Government. However, this Administration must not pause to seek applause for the new mood of hope that has been generated, but toil harder still in order to restore trust in government as a starting point for rebuilding and redeeming our nation.

The inauguration of this Cabinet is, therefore, no more than a first step in our effort to tackle the great challenges that face this country. There are many things crying for attention. Our battered national economy is certainly one of them. The consequences of past economic mismanagement are glaring. For instance, the poverty gap in our nation has widened during the years of misrule and millions of our people are ravaged by hunger and weakened by disease. Such people cannot be expected to be fully productive members of society. The grim condition of many of our citizens was worsened by the deterioration of public services whereby access to pipe-borne water and affordable healthcare became a pipe dream and the supply of electricity became epileptic and irregular. Communication networks are outmoded, expensive, and unreliable in an era in which globalisation has made such service ubiquitous and cheap. Agricultural production is a far cry from its actual potential while capacity utilisation in industry hovers around 30 per cent which is a waste of installed assets. Investment is not much more than the level for the replacement for depreciated parts, which amounts to de-industrialisation. All these ills have impacted negatively on employment opportunities for our youth.

This Administration, therefore, faces the urgent task of re-engineering our economy in order to induce growth and development. We must improve the welfare and living standards of Nigerians and restore smiles to the faces of all by evolving sound policies that will endure the test of time. Doing so would require that we harness all our resources, reduce waste and fight corruption to a standstill. Ours is a mission of national restoration.

In more specific terms, this Administration commits itself to bringing about an economic revival in which we seek to :

- (i) Re-invigorate the productive sectors of our economy, especially food production, agriculture and manufacturing ;
- (ii) Strengthen the education sector ;
- (iii) Revamp our social and economic infrastructure, such as power and water supply ;
- (iv) Revamp the healthcare system and provide affordable medical services ;
- (v) Alleviate poverty and provide jobs for our people, in order to reduce the army of unemployed youths, many of whom are graduates ; and
- (vi) Supply dignifying and affordable housing to our people.

All hands must be on deck in pursuit of these goals. As a Government, we should recognise that we do not have all the answers since we do not have a monopoly of wisdom. Besides, governance in this modern age has become more complex and intricate that it is not solely the preserve of politicians and public officials. The contribution, which can be made by the private sector, cannot be underestimated. In fact, about two weeks ago, I met captains of industry on the question of how to revive the economy. I see our Government, therefore, continuing to work closely with the private sector. We should seek their co-operation, ask for their advice, and use their services where necessary. We must do so, however, in a manner that does not compromise the public interest.

As this Administration endeavours to promote the material well-being of the masses, it cannot ignore the need to ensure an atmosphere of peace and security without which development can hardly take place. Foreign investors need such guarantees. The people of this country also deserve to live in security of their lives and property. This will entail strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agents to combat crimes and make our neighbourhoods safe.

As I implied in my address at the retreat held over the weekend, and this bears repeating : the end of government is the promotion of the public good. It is

a call to duty, indeed, selfless and patriotic service. Let us, in fact, focus on the ordinary meaning of the word, Minister. In reality, we are all servants of the people and I am quite convinced that if we can behave as such, the success of this Administration will be assured and our nation will be the better for it.

A corollary of this is that governance is too serious a business to be trifled with. Ministers and, indeed, all public officials, have an obligation to see public office as a sacred trust. It should not be viewed, if I may emphasise once more, as an opportunity for self-enrichment but for selfless and devoted service to the nation. Public office should not be used as a prebend, or for the practice of nepotism and godfatherism. Rather, it must be utilised as an opportunity to contribute to the common good and protect the public interest.

This brings me to a recurring theme in all my recent speeches in which I decried the extent to which corruption has eaten into the fabric of our society. The recklessness with which public officials resorted to bribery, extortion, and other forms of corruption has done incalculable harm to Nigeria. Serious damage was done to the economy as investors, both domestic and foreign alike, were put off by the cost of doing business and the dangers of confronting rapacious officials. Most painful was the global association of our country with morally reprehensible and grievous acts, which have done incalculable harm to our self-esteem as a nation.

This Administration has declared a war on corruption, which must be taken seriously by all members of this Government. The pervasive licentiousness in our society about the use of state resources for personal ends cannot be allowed to continue, for it rewards swindlers, demoralizes honest officials and acts as a lethal poison in the body politic of the nation.

There are cynics who try to reduce our posture to a case of *déjà vu*. We must prove them wrong by not merely sloganeering but taking firm and effective measures to prevent or punish corrupt practices. You have a responsibility as Ministers to plug loopholes that allow for the bending of rules and pilfering of state resources. You must not allow any act of corruption in your respective Ministries and Departments to be condoned.

As you are aware, I have sent an anti-corruption bill to the National Assembly for passage into law. I have also directed re-issue of the "Civil Service Rules" and "Financial Regulations" for immediate distribution to public servants. You should ensure compliance with these within your respective Ministries. You, as well, should become fully conversant with the rules and regulations that guide the day-

to-day conduct of government business as observing them will reduce the danger of making grievous errors of judgement. Moreover, I expect you all as Ministers to be above board in your personal conduct. You should live by example and conduct yourselves with integrity and decorum at all times. Transparency and accountability must be your watchwords. The eyes of Nigerians and the world are on you just as they are on me. We are exposed and we cannot hide.

Governance can be enriched not only through tapping the resources and skills of the private sector but also by reaching out to the public at large. A basic feature of democracy is freedom of speech. You ought, therefore, to be tolerant of criticism and should expect close scrutiny of all your actions and decisions. Equally, you should remain open to ideas irrespective of their origin. Such ideas, particularly from experts outside the public service can engender improvements in the articulation and implementation of public policy. We should be innovative and blend ideas from all sides in order to promote efficiency. Maliciously motivated criticisms may be hurled at you. Never you be discouraged. But like Ceasar's wife you must always be above board.

In the same way that members of this Administration should be receptive to ideas from the public, so is there advantage in being tolerant of views within the Cabinet itself. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Members of this Government must operate as a team. In that way, we can achieve a great deal, since we can profit from each other's special talents. In fact, I look forward to constructive debates in Council meetings. For me, the harmony of our team does not mean that we share only one view. No, I expect that there will be a variety of views. Members of this Government should feel free to air genuine differences of opinion from which we will be able to hammer out sound policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is so much to be done and so little time available. We must at all times, therefore, aim at reaching profound decisions, which are needed to address stubborn problems. Consequently, I am going to be hard driving and I crave your understanding. We have to move at a gallop and not at snail speed if this country is to attain true greatness in accordance with our manifest destiny. This Council, will, therefore, be meeting regularly—weekly, every Wednesday.

It is clear from the goals being set that this Administration will be doing things that will make us tread on toes but we must not shy away from doing those things because they are in the best interest of our people. Leadership is not only about providing a vision for a people but also about showing the courage and resolve to forge ahead in the face of daunting odds. I believe that you are all people who will be able to resist pressures intended to deter us from our goals.

This Government has been put in place by the mandate of Nigerians. We cannot afford to let them down. We equally cannot afford to disappoint the world that is watching us, and whose partnership we need. The new dawn must be converted into ensuring prosperity and happiness for the people of Nigeria.

Accordingly, I ask your co-operation to make this Council an effective body. I exhort you to fire the spirit of the new dawn in the discharge of your responsibilities. I urge you to motivate and inspire your staff and set them an example of dedication and discipline. I implore you to be result-oriented, by working with imagination and innovation. Finally, I charge you to gird your loins so that our beloved nation, Nigeria, can under God, have a new lease of life of happiness and plenty for our people.

May God help us. May Almighty God continue to bless Nigeria.

**GRADUATION CEREMONY OF COURSE 21 OF THE
COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE, JAJI**



**ADDRESS BY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY
OF COURSE 21 OF THE COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE, JAJI
FRIDAY, 2ND JULY, 1999**

JAJI '99

The Honourable Minister of Defence,
The Permanent Secretary Ministry of Defence,
The Executive Governor of Kaduna State,
The Chief of Defence Staff,
The Service Chiefs,
The Commandant, CSC,
The Commandant, ICS,
Your Excellencies,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
His Royal Highness, the Emir of Zazzau,
Other Staff of the Command and Staff College,
Families of the Graduating Students,
The Graduands of CSC Course 21,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us thank God for the guidance and protection of this Staff College, since its inception to this historic day.

It was precisely on September 12, 1977, that I had the honour and privilege to formally open this Command and Staff College. Since then Nigeria's political wheel has been turning, and I thank God for this opportunity to return once more as your Commander-in-Chief for the graduation ceremony that will correspond with the last one of this century and indeed the millennium.

Let me congratulate those who are today passing out of here with enhanced ability to serve the nation. For you, the staff officers here and future intake to come, the passage of time since 1977 contains vital lessons which I intend to stress in the course of this address.

The story so far has been that many graduates of this Staff College since its inception have been so involved in national politics that many Nigerians have formed the wrong impression that here is our University for Politics. Apart from a brief interlude of 4 years—1979-1983—the Military have held the reins of power for 18 out of twenty-two years that the Staff College has been in existence, thus

compounding the unfortunate statistics of 29 years of military rule out of 39 since the country regained its freedom from colonial rule.

This pathetic record was, of course, not envisaged when in 1979 we expressed our commitment to democratic rule by handing over power to the civilians. If anything at all, our hope was that such a record should never happen.

Personally, I have remained unshakeable in my belief in democracy and resolute in my actions towards the cause of good governance through the will and choice of the people. This is the sole basis and essence of my so called 'Second Coming' of four weeks ago, when I found myself at the receiving end of the only legitimate transfer of power since 1979.

The Lesson is a simple one : the road to good and just government must traverse solidly established democratic institutions. There is no other way ! Military incursion into politics, whatever the reasons and excuses, may at best be seen as explicable historical accident, but must always be perceived as an aberration.

For the popular opinion of this country the merits of military rule are no longer debatable. There is only one verdict : Nigerians no longer want military governments. The international community will neither harbour nor encourage them.

It is most tragic that a handful of individuals, blinded by ambition, chose to ignore this verdict. For too many years, these individuals tyrannically battled against the will of the people, killing many, brutalising many more, and traumatising the nation as a whole.

By the Grace of God, those 'dark years' were finally brought to an end with a transition programme that has now culminated in the installation of a new government of the people. So let us thank God for the hope of the new beginning and the chance to reconstruct our society.

However, the sad reality is that the behaviour of the few—and they are very few compared with the overall size of the military—has left the military with the most tarnished reputation in the history of the country. To the extent that some mistaken Nigerians have called for actions that would be tantamount to witch-hunt against the officers or doing away with the military.

Our Administration has no plans to witch-hunt anybody. We accept the military as an integral part of our constitutional life from which our mandate derives. It is our duty to ensure that all individuals and institutions abide with their respective roles as defined by the constitution, in order to achieve harmony, justice and peaceful coexistence in our society.

In my bid for the mandate to be your Commander-in-Chief this second time, I have argued that the voters see me as bridge between the civilians and the military. I meant that. I still do. And you must so regard me, as our Administration works out the formula for re-establishing the military in its constitutional and professional role for proud and patriotic men and women who, in their service of the nation, are prepared to lay down their lives. Throughout human history, the nobility of your profession has been second to none !

As a measure of the premium attached to your constitutional status, the unit price of training an officer has always cost the nation far more than for any other profession.

'An Officer and a Gentleman' is a universal expression for the traditional product of the military establishment, with its rigorous discipline and clear sense of decorum. A gentleman is an embodiment of the best in character, virtue and duty.

The responsibility for restoring the honour and revamping the image of the military begins with each and everyone of you. That is my principal message to those passing out today : You have acquired the training, please use it with the sense of duty and devotion to be at the vanguard for a morally reformed military within an ethically revived nation.

The tasks and challenges before our Armed Forces as well as their operational environments are increasing in scope and magnitude. You will therefore need to continually re-adjust, re-address, adapt and develop your professional capabilities in order to retain relevance and effectiveness in your role of defending the territorial integrity of Nigeria. Our Administration intends to provide the wherewithal to help you achieve this.

Government fully appreciates the crucial role which our cherished military institutions play in developing and enhancing the operational readiness of our Armed Forces. That is why we shall within the available resources, do our best to ensure that these institutions are adequately supported to enable them maintain their high standards.

I assure you that the necessary support will be provided to ensure that the CSC and all relevant military training institutions are properly equipped to discharge their obligations of preparing officers and men for efficiency, proficiency and higher responsibilities in their military careers.

This is more so in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving technological

world where there is greater preference for smaller but more efficient Armed Forces with properly trained skills and technological competence to guarantee national defence and security.

There should be a growing tendency towards the development of rapid deployment capabilities with the implication for joint services, and combined operations. I want the military to be well aware of these trends and be guided by them in carrying out their duties as well as in preparing future plans, doctrines and training.

Let me say again here that the recent action to ease out of the military all those officers who had held political appointments, was as a matter of principle and meant to be in the interest of the military. It was not a disciplinary action. With that exercise over, there is no substance to the rumours about any further impending mass retirement.

Aides-de-camp (ADCs) and military assistants are considered to have been on normal military assignments. However, if any officers, no matter what appointments they are holding or have held, should be found wanting, they will have to be severely dealt with. The military must return to complete discipline, order and orderliness. This is an era of moral and ethical regeneration with full implications for Nigerians in all walks of life.

The military must also return to its well-known maintenance culture, financial discipline and accountability. Let the military lead in the new dispensation of change for the better.

As I have stated unequivocally at the inception of this Administration, the maintenance of the sovereign unity of our nation, the protection of our rights and values, the survival of our country as a nation are not negotiable and therefore will not be compromised in any way.

Democracy cannot flourish under conditions of intolerance, unbridled hostilities and fratricidal wars. These negative forces will only dissipate our energy which otherwise could have been directed at uplifting the quality of life of the citizenry.

All citizens are required to support the government in its sincere bid to ensure the country continues in its path of glory. We shall continue to count on the loyalty, patriotism and support of the officers and men of our Armed Forces as we strive to fulfill our electoral promises in government. I assure you that government will do its best to ensure that at the end of the day, the confidence and faith you have vested in its leadership is not misplaced.

Once again, I heartily congratulate the graduands for successfully completing their course today: I do hope you would not relent in your efforts in search of knowledge even after your graduation.

I am pleased to have in our midst today, foreign officers who have successfully completed the CSC Course 21 programme. As you leave for your home countries please convey our love and warm affection to your Government, families and friends. We are glad for the chance to assist other countries to have their training here in Nigeria. Our other training institutions remain open to friendly countries who may wish to share both cultural and military knowledge with us in future.

To the spouses and families of the graduands, I salute you for providing the conducive atmosphere by holding the home front firmly. Your encouragement, perseverance and patience remained a moving force behind the success of your spouses today.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, finally, I commend the Commandant and Staff of the CSC for their untiring efforts in maintaining and improving upon the standard and excellence that is strongly associated with this highly esteemed institution. Please keep the College Torch glowing.

I thank you, and may God bless you all.



GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO TO OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS OF
THE NIGERIAN ARMY ON THE OCCASION OF NIGERIAN ARMY
DAY CELEBRATION ON 6TH JULY, 1999**

Officers and Soldiers of the Nigerian Army, I congratulate you on this occasion of your Army Day Celebration. I salute your loyalty to our great Nation. I equally cherish your dedicated service and your firm resolve to ensure that democracy was once more restored in our country. Your involvement in the body polity of this nation has no doubt had its side effects on your professional calling. I will like you to use this opportunity to shake off the past and approach the future with more determination that never again will you derail from your constitutional roles to venture into politics. Indeed, your choice of the theme "Meeting the Challenges of National Defence in a Democratic Setting, the Nigerian Army Perspective" is already indicative of a perceived determination to firmly establish your will-power to be more loyal and subordinated to a civil authority.

Your prime role as constitutionally enshrined, remains the preservation of the territorial integrity of Nigeria. This clear definition of your role puts your mission in clear focus having shed the political excess baggage you were forced to bear for so long. Now you are on familiar terrain for which you are best trained and adapted. You can now dust off your precis and Standard Operational Procedures and zero-in on true professionalism. This is the way our founding fathers planned it. This indeed, is the way all armies in all nations of the world are established to be under, and subordinated to civilian political control in order to defend the nation. I am happy to note that you all are relieved to be back to barracks doing the things soldiers do best working hard and training hard to prepare to defend their fatherland.

It is unfortunate that over the years, the super-glue that bonds service personnel *esprit-de-corps*—has suffered almost total abandonment. In the recent past, it was eroded by manipulation, intimidation and state terrorism organised at the highest levels. Officers who are trained to speak out their minds became muted by fear and were united in a conspiracy of silence. Conferences became avenues not to confer, but to issue verbal orders and threats. I urge you to use NADCEL 99 as the renaissance of a robust mess life. Endeavour to rediscover the camaraderie of *esprit-de-corps* and the joy and beauty of military traditions and conventions. The army thrives on tradition and conservatism and true professionalism.

True professionalism can only be achieved by constant and realistic training. Unfortunately, training was abandoned in pursuit of political and other extraregimental employment for too long to the extent that the Armed Forces lost focus. The government will provide the facilities and the wherewithal for retraining. You must, therefore, undergo a deliberate process of re-education, re-orientation and retraining. It is in furtherance of this process that officers who served in political capacity were recently disengaged from service. Let me restate here, once more, that the exercise was undertaken not to slight anyone or to show displeasure for a bad job, but to ensure that we approach the new dispensation in the spirit of mutual trust, respect, true professionalism and above all *esprit-de-corps*. The exercise was no doubt painful, but it should be taken as a national sacrifice. I am happy to note that your training institutions are still functional and with appropriate input of resources, they will resume full training curricula. Fortunately, democracy has spawned a renewed interest in friendly nations to give our officers and soldiers more vacancies for overseas training. I urge you to avail yourselves of these opportunities to attain professional excellence.

I want to commend, in a special way, the performance of our forces on peacekeeping operations around the globe. The Nigerian Army has been in the vanguard of these efforts that have yielded peace and democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Be rest assured of continued support by government in these world-acclaimed endeavours. I hasten to re-affirm government determination to seek diplomatic and peaceful ways to settle the conflict in Sierra Leone so that we can begin to reduce our commitment there and bring our forces home. As we celebrate therefore, let us observe a moment's silence for the souls of our dear ones departed in the course of national and international service in ECOMOG, Bakassi and elsewhere.

Our administration will endeavour to provide the operational and logistic requirements necessary to make your quest for professionalism realisable within the shortest possible time. You are of course, aware of my deliberate efforts to be cost-conscious in resource utilisation. I can assure you that care will be taken to ensure that reasonable living and working conditions are not prejudiced thereby. On your part, I demand that you ensure prudence, probity and accountability in the management of resources placed in your care. You should spare no effort in punishing anyone found corrupt amongst you. We need to fight corruption in all its ramifications if we must develop as a nation. I need you to join me in this crusade of stamping out corruption in our national life.

I note with satisfaction the renewed state of discipline in the Nigerian Army. There is, however, room for improvement. Commanders must be firm and fair.

Enforcement of discipline should be within the ambits of law as codified in the Armed Forces Decree (as amended) and the Constitution. Note, however, that though the Decree is a tool of command, military justice is expected to also pass constitutional tests. Commanders should not, however, be hamstrung by this but explore other regimental and creative ways to enforce discipline.

Finally, I demand of you as your C-in-C, loyalty and dedication to service to our beloved fatherland. Let us in the words of our National Anthem chorus :

Arise O Compatriots
Nigeria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labours of our leaders past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with love and might
A nation bound in freedom
Peace and unity.

Let us together recite the National Pledge :

I pledge to Nigeria my country
To be faithful, loyal and honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity
And uphold her honour and glory
So help me God.

Happy NADCEL 99.



**THE 7TH GRADUATION CEREMONY OF
THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE**



**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
AT THE 7TH GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE NATIONAL WAR
COLLEGE, ABUJA, SATURDAY, 24TH JULY, 1999**

I am happy to be here with you on the occasion of the 7th Graduation Ceremony of the National War College.

Let me commend the efforts of the current, as well as past Staff of this College who have managed to keep alive the objective of establishing this flagship of military training institutions. And I want to congratulate the 51 distinguished Officers who are graduating today.

Let me also welcome new graduates to one of the most exciting and challenging times in the history of our nation. The timing of their graduation is in tune with the original objective of this institution which says : "Within a democratic framework, to relate the higher management of defence to the broader national interest". Symbolic words, indeed, for the new dispensation.

Seven years ago, 1993, to be exact, the first graduates of this institution passed out into a Nigeria that had just been plunged into darkness. July 1993 would have been a couple of weeks after ignominious 'June 12', when the public image of the military suffered a dramatic drop into abysmal depths where it has remained odious until the recently concluded transition programme.

To you graduates of this year, I have a special message :

You must spearhead the complete redemption of the image of the military as an institution with patriotic men and women of honour, integrity and professionalism. The new dispensation demands nothing less. And I dare say, that is the expectation of Nigerians, and indeed the whole world.

In my inaugural address on 29th May, 1999, I made it clear that military incursion into government in post-independent Nigeria had ended in a complete disaster, for Nigeria and for the military itself. No matter how noble the intentions of the pioneer coup makers may have been, the prolonged involvement of the military in the administration and management of the state had aggravated the problems of political instability and deepened corruption within our society.

A succession of governments produced by undemocratic processes have severely stunted the nation's political evolution. Furthermore, military autocracy concealed certain societal grievances and cleavages that would have been more meaningfully addressed had they been properly aired within a democratic environment.

The consensus today is that, in the long run, the country's political development and her quest for lasting unity and enduring stability would be best achieved through dialogue and debate that are part of the democratic dispensation. The political class must be allowed to make its mistakes and learn from its failures, as is evident from the history of successful democracies elsewhere in the world.

The damage caused by military rule extends further than the stultification of political life.

We are all familiar with how it virtually destroyed the fabric of what used to be rated among the nation's most respected institutions. To start with, the very act of coup making made nonsense of the hierarchical order which is an essential element in the military.

Military incursion into politics also led to the withdrawal of many capable officers from purely military duties into political assignments, thereby exposing them to sycophancy and temptations that were antithetical to the ethics of the military profession. This deployment of officers in non-military roles, deprived the Services of the knowledge and experience of such officers, in their various areas of specialisations.

With some officers tied down to political assignments, the tempo of professional training and other important military activities was drastically compromised. Continuous involvement in politics also introduced into the Services the deplorable practice of officers actively lobbying and campaigning to be appointed to "visible" and "lucrative" positions. The perception, rightly or wrongly, that certain officers were unduly favoured by such appointments, while their equally competent colleagues were continuously neglected, only bred envy, suspicion and resentment among officers and men. With time, professionalism, cohesion and *esprit de corps* were severely undermined. Political appointment became synonymous with corruption and indiscipline.

This destruction of all the values that make the Armed Forces what it ought to be, has been continuously lamented by all those who knew what a glorious institution the Nigerian Armed Forces used to be. From 1990 to date, a number of top military officers, dead and alive, have decried the professional degeneration brought upon the Armed Forces by their meddling in politics. In particular, during the period from 1993 to 1998, the Armed Forces became more decadent than any of us could ever have imagined, propped up by an unprecedented degree of state terror on the one hand, and undisguised sycophancy on the other. Public respect for the institution, within and without the country, sank to an all-time low.

It was against this background that I indicated in my inaugural address that "a great deal of re-orientation has to be undertaken and a re-definition of roles, re-training and re-education will have to be done to ensure that the military submits to civil authority and regains its pride, professionalism and tradition". As a first step in these processes, the Administration accepted the retirement of those senior officers who sought to disengage from the services voluntarily. Then the Administration directed the compulsory retirement from service of other officers who had held political appointments between 1985 and 1999 and whose continued retention in the services was considered no longer conducive to the grooming of a new and truly professional Armed Forces for Nigeria.

The challenge of nurturing the new Armed Forces, however, goes far beyond the retirement of a few officers. This exercise must also be accompanied immediately by a new doctrinal orientation on the part of officers and men, by a sustained commitment to funding, equipping and re-training of Services and by scrupulously observing the norms of good governance which constitute the most effective bulwark against both military intervention and civil anarchy. Only by meeting these three conditions can we begin to assume that we have effectively outgrown any possible relapse into authoritarian misrule.

First, as you prepare to confront the challenges of the 21st century, you must embrace in its totality, the fundamental doctrine of military subordination to civil authority. This doctrine, in its simplest terms, involves the following :

- (i) *acceptance* of the Constitution as the sole and supreme document defining the role of the Armed Forces ;
- (ii) *acceptance* of the elected civilian Chief Executive as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and of the supremacy of elected officials of state over appointed officers at all levels ;
- (iii) *acceptance* of civilian headship of the Ministry of Defence and other strategic establishments ;
- (iv) *acceptance* of civilian or legislative deliberation and decision-making over the military budget ;
- (v) *acceptance* that the decisions regarding the goals and conduct of military operations must serve the political and strategic goals established by the civil authority ;
- (vi) *acceptance* of the application of civilised principles to all military investigations and trials ; and
- (vii) *acceptance* of Civil (Supreme Court) authority to review any actions or decisions taken by military judicial officers.

The implications of these principles must be brought home to all officers and men. They imply, to start with, that all officers and men must understand their constitutional duty as no more than defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nigerian state under the terms of administration defined by the Constitution and the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and with utmost respect for democratic values.

The Armed Forces must consider itself as a servant of the nation, and must therefore be obedient, professional, non-partisan and respectful of the political order established by the sovereign will of the electorate and every change resulting therefrom. Furthermore, in performing its primary role of guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the Republic, the Armed Forces must ensure friendly relations with the civilian society, and the continuous conduct of healthy dialogue on national defence and security matters.

At this critical stage of our national development, when all citizens have been invited to join hands in consolidating the foundations of our new democracy, the military must not be left out of this historic challenge. Officers and men of our Armed Forces must be prepared to respond effectively whenever they are called upon to assist the civil authority. Such assistance may involve the conduct of search and rescue operations, internal security activities or counter-insurgency operations. In preparing for such eventualities, officers and men must be properly educated on the correct principles for such operations in civilised societies and on the need to strictly adhere to such principles whenever they are called upon to assist the civil authority.

As I mentioned earlier on in this address, the second ingredient in the fostering of a truly professional Armed Forces is adequate funding and proper equipment. I wish to assure you that this Administration is taking the necessary steps in this regard. Indeed, as we usher in the 21st century, the Nigerian Armed Forces cannot afford to be left behind in its quest to be an efficient fighting force that will be proud of its training and inventory and adequately responsive to challenges and opportunities presented by higher military technology in the new millennium. In this regard, every effort will be made to enlist the co-operation of our traditional friends abroad, in enhancing the nature, scope and quality of training available to members of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

Training programmes for military personnel will be effectively upgraded with regard to the use of modern weapons technology. Programmes will also be formulated for the training of specialised units for counter-insurgency operations, search and rescue operations, peace-keeping duties and so forth. Computer systems will be adopted and integrated within all levels of the Services, with a view to enhancing speed and

flexibility in the chain of command and in various decision-making processes.

We are in no doubt, whatsoever, that in spite of its shortcomings in the recent past, the Armed Forces remain one of the most important institutions of the Nigerian state and must therefore be properly equipped to play its role both as a guardian of the nation's sovereignty and as an instrument for the furtherance of international peace and stability.

Distinguished officers, ladies and gentlemen, the present Administration recognises fully that the most potent tonic for democracy and the most effective armour against military incursion into politics is good governance. I wish to assure you, as I swore on oath publicly at the Inaugural Ceremony on May 29, 1999 that I will apply myself relentlessly to the norms of good governance. Under this Administration, all public officers, both elected and appointed, will stick to a strict code of accountability in their allocation and application of funds, promotion of economic well-being of society and provision of safety and security for citizens.

The actions of government will be transparent in all matters relating to public procedures, processes, investments and acquisitions, contracts, leases and appointments. Every effort will be made to ensure wide participation of citizens in respect of government policies and programmes. The rule of law will be respected, and rules and regulations will be applied evenly, without preference or prejudice, to all members of society, at all times. These are the minimum irreducible terms of the contract with the Nigerian people. And I expect that these terms will not only be honoured for their intrinsic worth, but must also be upheld in order for our nation to march forward in unity, justice, equity and prosperity.

The 21st century will be characterised by a number of trends which are already evident all around us. Notable among these are : the global acceptance of democracy as the best system of governance ; the acceptance of collective security arrangements and pre-requisite for regional economic integration ; improvements in the sophistication of armaments ; and an upsurge in peace-keeping operations around the world. In order for us to respond effectively to these developments, we must evolve, through intensive training and vigorous manpower development, highly professional Armed Forces. I urge you all to join hands with this Administration in ensuring that we realise this goal.

In conclusion, I must once again congratulate the officers who are graduating today. This is an exciting period of history. I wish each and every one of you a fulfilled career in your respective countries, Services and Organisations.

I thank you all. God bless.



**THE PASSING OUT PARADE OF OFFICER CADETS OF THE
SPECIAL SHORT SERVICE COURSE 2 FROM THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE, NIGERIAN DEFENCE ACADEMY**



ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PASSING OUT PARADE OF OFFICER
CADETS OF THE SPECIAL SHORT SERVICE COURSE 2 FROM THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, NIGERIAN DEFENCE ACADEMY
KADUNA, SATURDAY, 24TH JULY, 1999

Your Excellency the President of Republic of Sierra Leone
The Senate President, Federal Republic of Nigeria
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State Governors
Honourable Ministers of Nigeria and Sierra Leone
Presidential Special Advisers of Nigeria and Sierra Leone
Honourable Members of the National Assembly
Honourable Speakers and Members of State Assemblies
The Chief of Defence Staff of Nigeria and Sierra Leone
Service Chiefs of Nigeria and Sierra Leone
The Commandants, Nigerian Defence Academy
Your Royal Highness
My Lords Spiritual and Temporal
Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Staff and Cadets of Nigerian Defence Academy
Passing Out Cadets of the Special Short Course 2
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the second time in two months, we are witnessing the graduation of cadets of the Special Short Service Course from the Republic of Sierra Leone. Today's occasion marks another significant milestone in the rich history of the Nigerian Defence Academy. It is a strong affirmation of the bond of solidarity and friendship between Nigeria and other African Countries. It will be recalled that in May this year, 81 officers graduated under Course 1. Today, some 100 officers are graduating under Course 2. The ultimate aim is to train some 500 officers for the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces.

May I therefore congratulate the Commandant, officers, staff and soldiers of the Academy on this auspicious occasion. Equally deserving of commendation are the support staff from the Republic of Sierra Leone who blended so well with their Nigerian colleagues to impart the necessary training for today's graduation. I am delighted that in addition to the training of our regular combatant officers

which includes cadets from some African Countries, the Academy has taken up the additional challenge of training officer cadets solely from the Republic of Sierra Leone. This effort fully vindicates the objectives for which the Academy was established.

On an occasion like this, one must salute the courage and perseverance of the graduating cadets. Having survived the rigours of physical and mental training in one of the most outstanding military institutions in the world, you must understandably feel proud as you transform from officer cadets to commissioned officers. The colourful, highly ordered parade we have just witnessed, marks the culmination of several weeks of intensive training. You now have all the requisite physical and mental qualities of officers and gentlemen.

When you return to Sierra Leone, you must put to work the fine qualities you have acquired here which earned you the commission as officers. You must always remember that the same qualities are required of you if you are to be successful in your chosen career. There are no substitutes for loyalty, hardwork, dedication, perseverance and obedience to lawful authority. You must never exhibit the opposite qualities.

The Armed Forces of Sierra Leone, as indeed the rest of Africa, is the dawn of a new era, there are tremendous challenges ahead, unity, peace, stability and prosperity have eluded your great country for far too long. The human and material costs are simply monumental. Other countries in the West African sub-region continue to render what assistance they could to help a brother in need. You will agree with me that this can only be a temporary solution. The onerous responsibility of peace keeping carried out by ECOMOG under the umbrella of ECOWAS, is only a stop-gap measure. A disciplined, loyal, patriotic and professional national Armed Forces are a crucial component in the long-term resolution of the problems of Sierra Leone in particular and Africa as a whole. You must bear this in mind as you return to your country. Nigeria will continue to play a constructive role in Sierra Leone in aid of domestic effort at the resolution of the conflict. You must play positive role in this direction.

The recent Lome Peace Agreement provides more than a window of opportunity. It holds the promise of the kind of permanent solution we all hope for. I wish to urge the various groups in Sierra Leone to ensure that this Agreement sticks and works. Remember that you have no other country but Sierra Leone. Remember also that other countries cannot bring peace to your country unless you yourselves want it and work conscientiously for its attainment.

At this juncture, let me restate that Nigeria will continue to play active roles in the resolution of sub-regional and global conflicts within the framework of ECOWAS, the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations. Our declared intention to withdraw Nigerian troops from Sierra Leone should not be misconstrued for abandoning our Sister State at its continuing hour of need. Recently, we issued new operational guidelines to our forces in Sierra Leone consistent with the Lome Peace Agreement. While we remain committed to a phased withdrawal of our troops, we have interest in the stability of the new Government of National Unity and the successful implementation of the Peace Agreement. We shall continue to assist in any way we can to realize these lofty objectives.

The root cause of much of Africa's problems is developmental. A most critical condition for development is a government which is open, transparent, humane and participatory. Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole have been traumatised by bad governments and mismanaged to the point of desolation and penury. For far too long, our Armed Forces have been pre-occupied with matters for which they have neither training nor constitutional legitimacy. This trend has been ruinous to the nation as well as the Armed Forces. At the risk of repeating what I have already said, let me sound a note of warning to any serving personnel who thinks that he is in service as a gateway to a political appointment. Such personnel is advised to leave the service in his own interest because there is no place any more for the political soldier.

After recent changes in the composition of the officer corps of our armed services, I received assurance of support from members of our Armed Forces for our effort to restore professionalism. I am glad that the message has been received loudly and clearly. Let me therefore repeat here, for the benefit of our prospective officers now undergoing training as cadets in this Academy, that this is an institution for the training of professional soldiers, not future dictators. It is not too early for those who cannot conform to withdraw. You must shun political ambition and imbibe the culture of loyalty and dedicated service. You must remember that your interest as professional soldiers is better served by permanently subordinating yourselves to constitutional authority instead of subverting it.

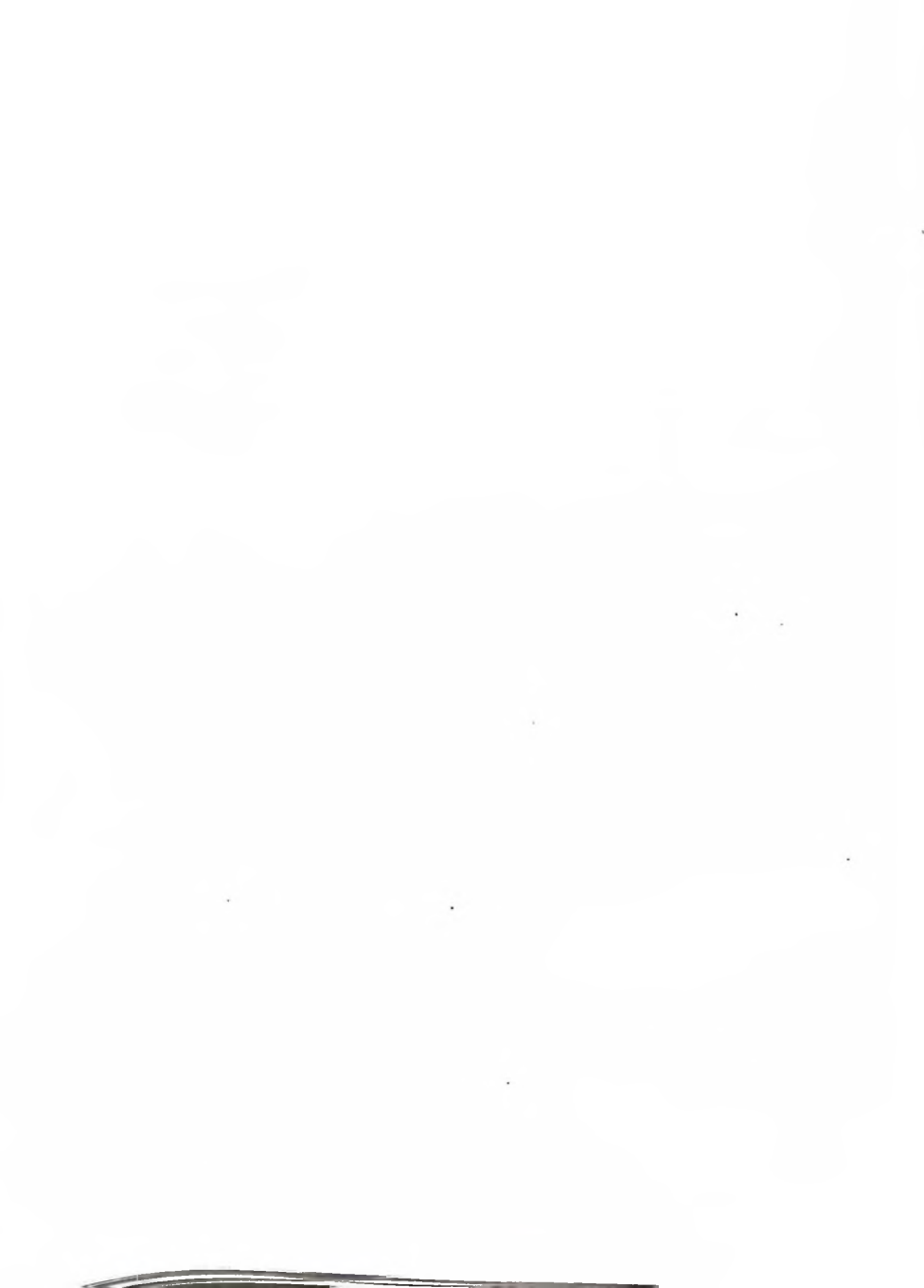
For its part, Government will continue to support the military in discharging its constitutional responsibilities. The material needs of all the services will continue to be provided within available resources. Similarly, the welfare of service personnel will continue to receive attention.

Once again, I warmly congratulate the officer cadets of the Special Short Service Course 2 from the Republic of Sierra Leone on this very happy occasion. You will soon be commissioned as officers of your national Armed Forces. I am confident that by your physical and mental training, you are capable of resisting partisan and sectional pressures. I am equally confident that you will not be dissuaded from the task of your nation's renewal after the traumatic events of the last one year. Remain unflinchingly loyal to your oath. This is the path to personal and national glory. There is neither reward nor honour in doing the contrary. I wish you success in your chosen career.

Finally, I wish to express my most profound gratitude to the Government and people of Sierra Leone for the continuing confidence in the quality of training in the Nigerian Defence Academy. For any country to train up to 500 officers of her Armed Forces in another country goes beyond friendship. It is an affirmation of brotherhood. We shall not fail you and you are most welcome.

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you immensely.

**THE BUDGET REVIEW
TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**



**STATEMENT ON THE BUDGET REVIEW
BY HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ABUJA
TUESDAY, 27TH JULY, 1999**

ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

Your Excellency, the Vice-President
Honourable President of the Senate
Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives
Distinguished Senators
Honourable Members of the House of Representatives
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let us thank God for this opportunity to address the National Assembly for the second time during the brief but very eventful period of democratic governance of our nation. The need to revise our national budget, the subject before us today, is contained in the challenges of the change necessary to advance towards our common vision of reviving the fortunes of the country.

In my first address to this Assembly, I tried to give you a clear picture of the grim realities of the economy as inherited by this Administration. It was obvious to us then that the 1999 Budget did not harmonise with the economic vision of our Administration. In several aspects, the budget failed to adequately consider the overall economic consequences of the recently concluded transition, both in figures as well as in the spirit of new dispensation. Also, as I pointed out at the time, the spending pattern would have led us to catastrophic results by the end of the financial year. and was therefore unsustainable.

Soon after assumption of office on May 29, 1999, I directed a review of the 1999 Budget for the remaining seven months, with a view to aligning revenue and expenditure profile with the current realities of the economy. I also directed that, the increase in world crude oil price notwithstanding, government would maintain a tight fiscal stance.

This position was informed by the fact that at the end of May, 1999, a deficit of 256 billion naira or eight per cent of GDP had been sustained. The foreign reserves (net of commitments) at the end of May, 1999 was over 3.1 billion US dollars, down from 7.1 billion US dollars in January 1999. Economic growth had remained low and continued to be impeded by structural bottlenecks in the area

of infrastructural facilities and unevenness in economic policy implementation. All together, our national economy is still very much in dire straits:

It has been necessary to take stock, review the fiscal measures that had been put in place so as to address the structural problems and imbalances in the economy. This process would ensure a solid foundation for effective structural reforms and sustainable long term growth of the economy.

I am pleased to inform you that the Budget Review has now been completed and can now be presented to you for approval. In this revised Budget, we have a total of 208.2 billion Naira accruing to Federal Government. Capital Expenditure is 40.1 billion naira, while total recurrent expenditure is 192.8 billion naira. This gives us a deficit of 24.7 billion naira or 1.35 per cent of GDP.

Immediate Economic Problems

The immediate economic challenges facing this Administration are numerous and formidable, although surmountable :

(i) The large external debt stock and high debit service burden are excruciating. This makes it difficult for resources to be released for productive investment.

(ii) Physical and social infrastructures are in a deleterious state.

(iii) The manufacturing sector continues to produce considerably below installed capacity.

(iv) Mass poverty is prevalent among the majority of our people.

(v) The economy continues to rely on a single sector (Petroleum) for government revenue.

(vi) We are still very much an import-dependent nation and a large portion of our foreign exchange earnings is consumed by imports.

Monetary Policy

Consistent with Government's objective of ensuring domestic price stability, the Central Bank of Nigeria has implemented policies aimed at containing the growth in monetary aggregates. Since May 29, 1999, the CBN has applied its statutory instruments to rein in the excess liquidity situation that my Administration inherited. Some of the measures include :

(i) increase in cash requirement of commercial banks and its remuneration at nominal rate of interest ;

(ii) raising interest rate on treasury bills to near market—determined ;

- (iii) issue of treasury certificates with six and twelve months maturity ; and
- (iv) increase of the liquidity ratio of banks from 30 to 40 per cent.

The CBN will continue to apply these and other measures, fine-tuning them as necessary to ensure that domestic price stability is achieved within the shortest possible time.

Since the announcement of the 1999 Budget, operators in the private sector have complained about some aspects of the fiscal measures in the Budget which they considered damaging to their market positions.

After detailed discussions with the organized private sector, a Presidential Consultative Committee on the Revitalisation of the Economy (PCCRE), under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President, was set up.

This Committee has since agreed on the need to take necessary action to improve the competitiveness of locally manufactured items, *vis-a-vis* the imported equivalents. It was also agreed that some of the measures needed to remedy the issues would require detailed examination before being put in place.

On the request for the restoration of 25 per cent rebate on raw material imports and making the duties on items recently removed from import prohibition to be more protective of locally manufactured substitutes, it would be necessary for the Inter-Ministerial Tariff Technical Committee to study and synchronize their proposals with other aspects of our tariff structure. The Technical Committee will meet in September, 1999 to carry out the assignment. The committee's recommendations would then form part of the fiscal measures in the Budget for the year 2000.

Socio-Economic Orientation

The details of this Budget Review are designed to strengthen the pillars of the socio-economic policies of this Administration, as I will now outline :

Food and Agriculture

Our priority is to attain within the shortest possible time food security for all citizens. Our aim is that within the lifetime of this Administration all Nigerians should have access to enough food at affordable prices, for a healthy life.

To this end the Administration will encourage and facilitate large investments in agricultural production, storage, transportation and marketing :

- (i) There will be incentives, for borrower's and lenders alike, to encourage investments in the chain of agricultural production, in order to reduce the financial risks inherent in the sector.

(ii) Special schemes will be devised to enhance positive and adequate return on investments by farmers.

(iii) More efforts will be put into researching and developing high yielding and pest-resistant varieties of crops as well as processing and storage.

To assist small and medium scale farmers, Government will make various agricultural inputs and implements available at affordable prices. Cottage agro-processing industries will be encouraged.

It must be stressed that the farmers are partners with government, at all levels, Local, State and Federal, in the venture to provide food security for our nation.

No effort will be spared at ensuring that waste is reduced to the barest minimum. In addition, existing agricultural insurance schemes will be fine-tuned to ensure adequate indemnity against losses.

Privatization

By the Grace of God, Thursday this week will see the inauguration of the National Council on Privatization, under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President, as required by the Constitution. This Administration thus affirms its commitment to the process of privatization.

That is not to say that we are ignoring the debate which privatization all over the world has tended to generate. The opposition stance is that national assets should remain the property of the people through government ownership.

Once upon a time I personally saw the merit of public ownership of some companies that operate with significant role for the national economy. But times and ideas have changed.

The facts, borne out by abundant statistics, are that whereas the Government has over these years pumped huge resources into acquiring and nurturing these assets, the returns have remained either embarrassingly low or persistently negative.

The parastatals' incessant demands for additional funding, constitute a bottomless pit that has for too long drained our national resources. On top of which the performance records, particularly of the utilities, have ranged from very poor to outright national disgrace. Hence the current situation in which Government investment is lost, services are not provided and the living standards of the citizenry continue to be blighted by poor and scandalous performance.

With compelling demands for efficient social services at affordable prices, and with dwindling resources on the part of Government, one solution to further

deterioration in service delivery and reduction in losses, is privatisation. This Administration sees no other way.

Thereafter, government will concentrate on providing the enabling environment for the private sector to flourish optimally. In privatising government holdings in the entities, the ultimate aim is to ensure the effective and efficient management of the erstwhile public enterprises so that the nation can derive maximum benefits from their operations.

However, before the assets are sold or alienated into private ownership, there will be proper planning, correct evaluation of the assets and liabilities, as well as the establishment of a regulatory framework that will guarantee consumer satisfaction and the protection of the interest of the poor. The programme will be equitably conducted, and all Nigerians who can afford it will be given fair opportunity to acquire shares. We will ensure that in every instance, the ownership will not be concentrated in the hands of a few private owners such that there will be the impression of transferring public companies into private monopoly. If Government has to retain some holdings in any of the entities, it will be in sectors where the strategic importance makes it absolutely necessary to do so.

The privatization programme will be conducted in a transparent, accountable and comprehensive manner, as it holds the key for reviving our public utilities and engendering foreign investors' confidence in the direction we want to move the economy. The business and international community are making privatization the acid test of our seriousness at taking bold policy reform measures. We must act quickly and decisively.

As a first step, the government equities quoted on the Lagos Stock Exchange, namely, the cement and bank companies which are relatively easy to evaluate and dispose of will be so done before the end of this year. In doing so, the absorptive capacity of the market will be closely watched and efforts would be made to encourage core investors to take preferential allocation.

For the utility companies, such as NITEL and NEPA, considerable work would have to be carried out to prepare them for sale. We have already summoned the help of World Bank to do management and valuation audit for these parastatals. The same measure will apply to the assembly plants, sugar companies, hotels and petroleum refineries.

Oil and Gas

This Administration aims to increase our proven reserves of oil from 25 billion barrels to 30 billion barrels within the next four years. At the same time we

plan to increase our production from two million barrels per day to three million barrels per day. We will not hold back on the necessary investments in this regard.

Our Administration will encourage maximum investment in the gas industry so that this country can fully attain the status of being primarily the gas producing nation, that we really are. Arrangements have been concluded for a West African Gas Pipeline project to supply our gas to our neighbours in the sub-region for industrial purposes. Similarly, a Trans-Nigeria Pipeline will supply our domestic, industrial and household demands. Both projects will be fully supported by private capital.

Fines for flaring gas will be doubled, as part of the process to put an end to this criminal waste of our resources as soon as possible.

Our target is that within four years, revenue from gas should not only be substantial but nearly equal to that from crude oil.

Solid Minerals

Every encouragement will be given to investment in this heavily under-exploited sector of natural resources. An entire Ministry is dedicated to attaining the Administration's aims and objectives in this sector. We are confident that substantial results will be achieved within the life of this Administration. Incentives are being worked out to encourage professional large-scale investors.

Education

After thorough study, our Administration plans to re-launch Universal Primary Education, in conjunction with State and Local Governments. It will be compulsory and will underpin our efforts to overhaul our educational system. The support of the international community and multilateral agencies is being sought for our objective to ensure that our youths will be educated at all levels to the standard of the impending 21st Century.

Science and Technology, particularly as pertaining to agricultural research, will receive unstinting attention. We intend to establish a biotechnology centre. We will foster intense and productive co-operation and collaboration between our national research establishments and international research institutions and agencies. We don't intend to re-invent the wheel but we must go for adaptability, relevance and appropriateness.

Transport

Our Administration recognises the crucial importance of transport for the national economy. To this end we intend to develop a comprehensive programme

that, among other things, will aim to achieve the following :

- (i) increase our road network as well as a new policy on road maintenance ;
- (ii) overhaul our Railway system to better serve our economic needs ;
- (iii) ensure safe and affordable air travel with serviceable airports and fully modernised navigational aids ;
- (iv) ensure customer satisfaction with private investment in airlines, including resuscitation of our ailing national carrier ;
- (v) optimal utilisation of our network of rivers for water transport inland ;
- (vi) develop effective mass transit systems in deserving urban areas.

Poverty Alleviation

International poverty indices show Nigeria to be among the 25 poorest countries. Our Administration is sensitive to the statistics that indicate increase in the number of victims of extreme human deprivation which manifests itself in malnutrition, illiteracy and lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate health facilities. International poverty indices, now rank Nigeria among the 25 poorest countries in the world.

All our economic policies will contain elements aimed at poverty alleviation within our society. This Administration will be guided by the traditional African value of caring and sharing in our social policy. Besides, it is self-evident truth that the fruits of any socio-economic policy will taste bitter if its consumption is restricted to a limited few.

Infrastructure

NEPA, originally meant to be the source of energy for our social and industrial life, has become a colossal burden on the society forcing many of us to dependency on stand-by generators. And this is not for want of resources, which we have in abundance.

We have already started efforts to ensure regular and steady supply electricity. We hope that very soon the shameful epileptic nature that we have grown accustomed to will be a thing of the past.

Similarly, our telecommunication system will be improved to become lifeline of our economy. Private investment will be encouraged to enhance customer satisfaction qualitatively and quantitatively. NITEL monopoly as the only service provider between Nigeria and the rest of the world will be broken.

Health

Our goal is to provide health delivery service that will rid our society of all diseases that can be eradicated. We are currently targeting the following diseases : tuberculosis, river blindness, malaria and infant ailments that can be combated with immunisation, such as polio.

We are very much concerned about the epidemic of HIV disease. AIDS is striking more and more people, causing much misery to hundreds of individuals and their families, severely reducing the nation's population of productive labour force and leaving orphans and the aged in its wake. We will work together in collaboration with other nations where research and development into cure and control of AIDS have advanced.

Malaria has continued to be the scourge of our people's lives, causing many deaths annually and the loss of millions of working days. Yet there is sufficient scientific evidence that, with suitable planning and strategy, malaria can be tamed and even eradicated. As part of our immediate plans we will soon be hosting a world summit on malaria, in conjunction with the World Health Organisation. This will be the beginning of our efforts to take the initiative to fight this disease that is essentially ours because of its tropical nature.

Rural Development

Our Administration remains fully committed to such cardinal aspects of rural development as in :

- (i) providing water supply, that is clean and in sufficient quantity for most of our people ;
- (ii) providing regular supply of electricity for the broadest spectrum of the Nigerian population, stimulate and sustain economic activities, and to improve the quality of life generally ;
- (iii) providing adequate healthcare that is affordable, readily available, and sufficiently prevents unnecessary deaths from treatable diseases.

Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members of the House of Representatives, I cannot emphasise enough what I now call co-operative federalism by which each of the various arms of government, while performing its constitutional role, understands and appreciates the needs of each other. We have embarked on the process of democracy and this can only advance meaningfully if buttressed by sustainable development.

I hope that the measures I have put before you today will firmly set us up for January 2000 when we draw up fully the annual budget that will incorporate more of our economic vision. It is true that the situation regarding our national economy is pathetic. But it is not hopeless. We have begun to put down crucial building blocks, and we have started to plug the holes of waste. With your help and co-operation we will lay a firm foundation for a greater and more prosperous Nigeria.

I thank you all. God bless.

**INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
ON PRIVATIZATION**

**STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL
COUNCIL ON PRIVATIZATION, PRESIDENTIAL VILLA, ABUJA
THURSDAY, 29TH JULY, 1999**

THE IMPERATIVE OF PRIVATIZATION

Up till recently, there have been many years of exhaustive deliberations by stakeholders on how to put the Nigerian economy on the path of sustainable growth and development. Right now, a consensus has emerged on the imperative of privatization and commercialization of State-owned enterprises.

Today's inauguration of the National Council on Privatization is, therefore, very significant in several important respects. Firstly, it is a critical step in our Administration's socio-economic agenda. Secondly, it is a demonstration of our commitment to institutional reforms. Thirdly, the response of stakeholders in the months ahead will enable us determine, with a great measure of accuracy the extent to which we have regained international faith and confidence in our country in general and in our economy in particular.

It is important to observe that there was a time when it was considered sound economic policy for Government to establish and invest in statutory corporations and state-owned companies. Socialism existed side by side with Capitalism. It was argued that public-owned companies were better for stimulating and accelerating national economic development than private capital. The result was a proliferation of such state-owned enterprises covering a broad spectrum of economic activities, from steel plants and petro-chemicals, through banks and hotels, to mass transit and abattoirs !

It is estimated that successive Nigerian Governments have invested up to 800 billion naira in public-owned enterprises. Annual returns on this huge investment have been well below 10 per cent. These inefficiencies and, in many cases huge losses, are charged against the public treasury. With declining revenue and escalating demand for effective and affordable social services, the general public has stepped up its yearning for state-owned enterprises to become more efficient.

State enterprises suffer from fundamental problems of defective capital structure, excessive bureaucratic control or intervention, inappropriate technology, gross incompetence and mismanagement, blatant corruption and crippling complacency which monopoly engenders. Inevitably, these shortcomings take a heavy toll on the national economy.

The problems associated with state-owned enterprises and monopolies are not peculiar to Nigeria. It is true, however, that many developing countries have overcome the problems through a well-designed and single-minded pursuit of privatization programme. The rationale is that privatization permits governments to concentrate resources on their core functions and responsibilities, while enforcing the "rules of the game" so that the markets can work efficiently, with provision of adequate security and basic infrastructure, as well as ensuring access to key services like education, health and environmental protection. The objective is to assist in restructuring the public sector in a manner that will affect a new synergy between a leaner and more efficient government and a revitalized, efficient and service-oriented private sector.

In the case of Nigeria, there are over-whelming facts and figures in support of the absolute necessity to realign ourselves with these global trends. There are over 1000 State-owned enterprises in Nigeria. Many of these enterprises gulped billions of naira without yielding much positive results in terms of customers satisfaction.

It is conservatively estimated that the nation may have lost about 800 million US dollars due to unreliable power supply by NEPA, and another 440 million US dollars through inadequate and inefficient fuel distribution. And figures like this do not even tell the whole story. They cannot, for example, capture the scope of human suffering and even loss of lives caused by shortage of petroleum products. That is not to mention the frustration and debilitation of the informal sector where business centres, repair workshops, hairdressing salons, etc. depend on steady supply of electricity to function.

We are privatizing for the benefit of our economic recovery and our social life. We are not embarking on this exercise to please the World Bank or the IMF. It is not designed to share our national assets to a few rich people. We are not about to replace public monopoly with private monopoly. Rather, in our determination to be unyielding and uncompromising in the pursuit of the best interest of this country, we want to remove the financial burden which these enterprises constitute on the public and release resources for the essential functions of government.

We want to ensure that many more service providers are brought in to compete and thereby regulate the market for fairer pricing. We want to ensure that these utilities work and deliver quality services. The process will avoid any possibility of further hardship to the public. A vigorous public enlightenment programme will ensure that as many Nigerians as possible do participate in the programme. The process will be transparent and guided throughout by the best interest of the country and the Nigerian public.

Privatization is also one of the reforms we have to undertake to integrate our economy into the mainstream of world economic order. There are two interrelated aspects to this integration. In the first place, we need the technology ; the managerial competence and the capital from the developed world to enhance the performance of our utilities. Secondly, there are very serious linkages between the efficient functioning of our utilities and our ability to attract foreign investments. We cannot be talking about creating a conducive environment for foreign investments if the performance of our transport, telecommunication and energy sectors remains dismal and epileptic.

The critical issue is how we can carry out a privatization programme that is well designed, properly co-ordinated and sequenced, credible and widely acceptable. This is where the National Council on Privatization has a pivotal role to play. As the apex body on privatization and commercialization, the Council is charged, among other things with the following :

- (i) approve policies on privatization and commercialization ;
- (ii) approve guidelines and criteria for valuation of public enterprises for privatization and choice of strategic investors ;
- (iii) approve public enterprises to be privatized or commercialized ;
- (iv) approve the prices for shares or assets of the public enterprises to be offered for sale ;
- (v) approve the appointment of privatization advisers and consultants, etc.

As you all are aware, we are not starting privatization from the scratch. Some work has been done by previous Administrations. There is also a pool of knowledge and experience we can draw on from other countries that have successfully privatized their state-owned enterprises. Where such previous exercises will promote the integrity and transparency of our privatisation exercise, they will be adopted and built upon.

As a first step, we will dispose of government equities quoted on the Lagos Stock Exchange, namely, in cement and banks, which are relatively easy to evaluate. In doing so, the absorptive capacity of the market will be closely watched and efforts would be made to encourage core investors to take preferential allocation.

There is no need for payment of non-refundable deposit of 10,000 US dollars, (as recent newspaper advertisements have been indicating), for this particular exercise. When the shares are ready for sale, they will be equitably available for investors who are interested.

For the utility companies, such as NITEL and NEPA, a lot more work would have to be carried out to prepare them for sale. We have secured the support of the World Bank for a comprehensive management and valuation audit of many of these entities. Privatisation will only follow after we have established the correct value of these parastatals. The government will not be short-changed in this exercise.

The three stages of the programme will be as follows :

- (a) Phase I-(to be completed by December, 1999) include : Commercial and Merchant Banks and Cement Plants that are already quoted on the stock exchange.
- (b) Phase II-to include Hotels and Motor and Vehicles Assembly Plants ;
- (c) Phase III-to include NEPA, NITEL, NAFCON, Nigeria Airways ; and Petroleum Refineries.

As part of the efforts to ensure transparency, our Privatization Programme will involve international privatization advisers. This will not only enhance credibility but also guarantee access to the special skills and knowledge required for handling the Privatization of utilities. It is expected that the international advisers working with Nigerian professionals will help to provide the desired investment climate.

Another group that will be involved will be Core Group Investors. These are experienced groups with the capabilities for adding value to an enterprise and making it operate efficiently in the face of international competition. They should also possess the capabilities of turning around the fortune of such unhealthy enterprises. The Core Groups must not only possess the technical know-how in relation to the activities of the enterprises they wish to invest in but also possess the financial capacity to pay competitive price for the enterprise and increase their capital base.

It is now my pleasure to formally inaugurate the National Council on Privatization and to wish the Chairman and members the very best of luck.

**MEETING HELD WITH THE HEADS OF TERTIARY
INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR, AT A MEETING HELD WITH
THE HEADS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA
ON THURSDAY, 29TH JULY, 1999**

Honourable Minister,
Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Special Advisers,
Permanent Secretaries,
Pro-Chancellors of University Governing Council,
Executive Secretaries,
Vice-Chancellors,
Provosts of Colleges of Education,
Rectors of Polytechnics,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this meeting. When the Honourable Minister of Education requested I hold this meeting with you, I readily consented, knowing fully well how the events of the past few weeks have precipitated the need for this interaction. As you are all aware, this administration strongly believes that the only way to develop the nation is to develop our manpower resources. Consequently, our major policy thrust is directed at ensuring the restoration of the education sector to its previous glory.

In years gone by, our educational system was ranked among the best in the world. Unfortunately, there has been a drastic erosion of the quality of our educational system. This administration is committed not only to restoring our educational system to its past glory but also to ensuring that it ranks among the best in the world. We are aware that several problems have persistently dogged our efforts at rehabilitating the educational system. But we are also determined to overcome these obstacles.

The Problem of Cultism

The events of the past few weeks in some of our universities have prompted some urgent actions against the menace of cultism. Government can no longer sit idle while our educational establishments are converted into battlefields in which contending cult groups slaughter themselves and innocent students are butchered with glee by outlaws on our campuses. No responsible government would abdicate

its responsibility to protect life and property of innocent students in their legitimate pursuit of knowledge. To this end, I wish to re-affirm the directive I gave through the Honourable Minister of Education to Vice-Chancellors and Governing Councils of Universities, and other heads of tertiary institutions to ensure that this menace is stamped out from our tertiary educational institutions within the next three months.

Furthermore, the Inspector-General of Police and the Honourable Minister of Justice have also been directed to ensure that the perpetrators of these dastardly acts of murder in our tertiary institutions are brought to book. I assure you they are up to the task and all the relevant agencies of Government will co-operate fully in this crusade against cultism.

Management of Tertiary Institutions

I have observed that one cause of the decline in the quality of tertiary education derives from the quality of leadership in these institutions. Over the years, there has been a progressive disregard for due process and the rule of law and a whittling down of the consultative and democratic processes which the enabling statutes of our tertiary institutions have provided for. Vice-Chancellors, Provosts and Rectors have, most unfortunately, imbibed dictatorial styles and managed these institutions without regard to existing regulations. By the administrative styles of many of you, the very essence of democratic governance and the demand for due process is often viewed as dissension or opposition that must be crushed. Sometimes, the privileges and even rights of workers are dispensed not on the principle of equity and fairness but on the basis of your perception of whether the would-be beneficiary is pro or against your views. This attitude has spawned the development of informal groups, created fissures and camps in your establishments. Consequently, you spend more time fighting the resultant crises than in managing your various institutions.

If the tertiary institutions are to remain the citadels of learning and excellence, this situation can no longer be allowed to continue. It is a situation that has compounded the widely reported cases of *resource mismanagement*. At this point, my Administration's commitment to the revitalisation of the educational sector requires prompt restoration of accountability and allocative-efficiency of resources in all our tertiary institutions. In this regard, I am directing a *visitation* of all universities where this has become due. For the avoidance of doubt, the visitation is intended to check the record of each university in respect of financial management, curriculum and staff development, research programmes and the general adequacy of the condition for learning.

In keeping with the democratisation of governance in our tertiary institutions, I note that the Colleges of Education and the Polytechnics have been without Governing

Councils for some time now which has made Provosts and Rectors to run their institutions as though they are Sole Administrators. Many of the crises in these institutions have their roots in the inability of the heads to carry Academic Boards along with them in the day-to-day management of their institutions. Appropriate steps will soon be taken by the Honourable Minister of Education to ensure the appointment of the Governing Councils of all Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. It is time that the regulatory bodies are put in place to supervise these institutions. In the same vein, the Boards of the National Universities Commission, JAMB, the National Board for Technical Education and the National Commission for Colleges of Education will be put in place to oversee these agencies.

Meeting the Demands for Tertiary Education

I am aware of the yawning gap which exists between the demand for admission into our tertiary institutions and the inability of the existing facilities to satisfy this demand. That our economic development is predicated upon our potential for developing high level manpower is absolutely true. And the dilemma which needs to be resolved is in balancing our needs for high level manpower and satisfying the thirst for knowledge and academic pursuits in our people with our capacity to provide the necessary structures and an enabling environment. You have the task of ensuring that all who are desirous of tertiary education and have the capabilities to benefit from it have access to it. In order to instil sanity and order in the system, apart from the statutorily prescribed formula for the allocation of places to applicants for admission to government institutions, be they tertiary or secondary, I have directed that no other criteria will be permitted. Accordingly, the 10 per cent discretionary allocation, which had been so grossly abused in the name of the Presidency, the Ministry of Education, Vice-Chancellors, Provosts, Rectors, Deans, etc., is hereby abolished. The Honourable Minister of Education is being directed to allocate this percentage elsewhere.

Funding of Universities

I am aware that, over the years, the universities and tertiary institutions have not received the funds which they deem adequate in meeting their statutory obligations. And, in the bid to raise revenue, many have taken recourse to wide-ranging internal revenue generation mechanisms such as Satellite Campuses run under consultancy services and sometimes in environments in which quality is called into question. The problem of funding in our universities and tertiary institutions cannot be taken in isolation from that of funding the educational system. I wish to assure you that this Administration is committed to revamping and restructuring our educational system. I throw the challenge to the Honourable Minister of Education.

But it must be noted that if we must mount a new initiative to rehabilitate our educational system, there is the need for a comprehensive situation analysis of the system. That is the essence of your being here. A target has been set for you on some crucial issues. We are not in the business of waiting perpetually for the desired state to emerge. The time for action is now. Nigerians cannot settle for half-measures, as they anxiously await a much needed change. Be assured of my administration's support for your efforts as you join us to rebuild Nigeria and rekindle hope.

I say thank you in the spirit of a new beginning. Thank you for your attention and God bless you.

A TREE FOR DEMOCRACY

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA
GOVERNMENT SECTION
AREA 10 OFFICE ABUJA

Received by Checked by
Serial *157/2520* Date *15/7/2020*
S/N

10/1/19

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE
1999 NATIONAL TREE PLANTING CAMPAIGN, GOMBE
5TH AUGUST , 1999**

A TREE FOR DEMOCRACY

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today, for this very important occasion of the beginning of the 1999 National Tree Planting Campaign.

The theme for this year's campaign, *A Tree for Democracy*, is in tune with the spirit of these most exciting and challenging times in the history of our nation. This theme captures the mood of our people as we are collectively awakening to the realities of taking responsibility for the destiny of our country. The cardinal challenge is in the need to diligently nurture our freshly re-constituted democratic institutions until they blossom and eventually yield the fruits of Peace, Progress, Unity and Justice.

As we flag off the campaign today, we must not forget that all citizens are required to participate in the exercise. Similarly, as I have reiterated on several occasions, the new dispensation requires all hands on deck for the rebirth, reconstruction, revival and rejuvenation of our nation and the society within it. The choice of the theme is a reflection of our ardent desire to see our natural resources flourish, as democracy takes root and the nation and its people prosper in harmony with nature.

Gombe has been selected as the site for this momentous event in order to demonstrate how a progressive agrarian community, struggling with the twin problem of gully erosion and desert encroachment, may employ tree planting as a viable option for tackling the issues.

It is easy to take for granted the role of trees in our lives. But they are important biological resources for both our immediate physical needs as well as a critical factor in the ecosystem that supports all lives. For our physical needs, trees provide us with the wooden cradle at birth, food, building materials, furniture, medicines, fibre, resins, crafts, utensils, transportation and ultimately casket when we die. Trees also play an important role in providing life support systems for all living things. Trees are a great source of the oxygen that we breathe, soil fertility and rainfall. They also serve as wildlife habitat and reservoir of genetic resources for agricultural, medicinal and industrial purposes as well as protect soils and watershed. From the global perspective, we know that the role of trees in mitigating the adverse consequences of climate change is decisive.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, While we appreciate the necessity to exploit trees for our basic needs, the effects of unsustainable exploitation of this resource is

grave. Trees, if exploited sensibly, have the capacity to regenerate. Indeed the Almighty God in His infinite wisdom has made it possible for us to regenerate and replace all plants through seeds, seedlings and other means of propagation.

It is clear that rampant and indiscriminate felling or removal of plants without replacing them results in adverse environmental impacts which include land subsidence, soil erosion, silting of river courses, desertification, depletion of green belts in urban areas, and destruction of wildlife habitats. We, as a nation, therefore, have no choice but to protect our forests through afforestation and reforestation and conserving natural resources.

Our efforts at forest protection and afforestation date back to the 1930s when some areas were set aside as forest reserves, game reserves, sanctuaries and community forest. In 1976, there was an initiative by the Forestry Association of Nigeria (FAN) aimed at popularising tree planting at the community, local, and national levels. And in 1977, I had the honour of launching the national afforestation programme by planting a tree in the sub-sahel region of the North-West.

I thank Almighty God for today, when I have another opportunity to flag-off this year's Tree Planting Campaign. Let me commend the role and efforts of those who have contributed to the success of afforestation programme over the years, particularly the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Federal Ministry of Water Resources and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA). Also deserving of commendation, are State Governments, Local Governments, communities and traditional rulers, bilateral and multilateral agencies such as European Union, The World Bank, The African Development Bank, and non-governmental organisations including the Forestry Association of Nigeria (FAN), Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Nigerian Environmental Study and Action Team (NEST).

Today, the global attention is focused on achieving sustainable development through conservation of natural resources including forest resources. In 1992, I had the honour of participating in the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (UNCED), otherwise called the Earth Summit, held at Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, when serious concern was expressed about the rapid rate of the loss of our forest resources. The outcome of the Earth Summit includes the adoption of the Forest Principles, Agenda 21 and other important instruments. The Rio Process and its Resolutions have since continued to be the reference point and guiding principle for national and international action towards achieving sustainable development with eco-sensitive considerations.

Our Administration's policy on environmental protection and management would be largely guided by the Rio Decisions, which are based on partnership and co-operation. This Administration plans to join the rest of the world in recognising the need to sensitively

and judiciously manage our environment through co-ordinated and harmonized government policies. It is in this regard that our Administration has now created the new Federal Ministry of Environment to be responsible for designing and implementing a proper framework for the co-ordination of environmental activities in the country.

Through the Ministry of Environment, we shall implement our environmental agenda called *Environmental Renewal and Development Initiative (ERDI)*, with the following objectives :

- (i) to take full inventory of our natural resources, assess the level of environmental damage and design and implement restoration and rejuvenation measures ; and
- (ii) to evolve and implement additional measures to halt further degradation of our environment.

This new Ministry is not really the beginning of our awareness of environmental issues. In the past, environmental issues have been handled piecemeal, with agencies created in various other ministries to carry out tasks as they arose. There are literally dozens of these agencies in existence today.

The Environment Ministry has the responsibility to develop viable programmes to tackle Nigeria's major environmental problems, such as drought and desertification control. In this regard, the Ministry will work with other Ministries to produce the blueprint for a National Action Programme that will entail the participation of all Ministries and Agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations, Youths, Women and Farmers' Associations, in line with the UN Convention to protect the environment.

Our Administration is working at immediate solutions to some of our pressing environmental problems :

- (i) desert encroachment in the northern parts of the country,
- (ii) coastal erosion along our coasts,
- (iii) gully erosion in the south-eastern states,
- (iv) deforestation in the south-western and the middle-belt.

Our programme will be comprehensive and appropriate. They will also focus on the establishment of green belts across the country, landscaping in urban areas. In the rural areas there will be community wood lots, fruit orchards and windbreaks. States with problem of mining wastelands will be targeted with a campaign for land reclamation.

Henceforth, the National Tree Planting Campaign will not be a one-day affair, but rather an occasion to initiate a sustained exercise of tree planting by all and sundry, until every day becomes a tree planting day ! Our target this year is to establish 1,000 hectares of plantation, which will be followed by 3,000 hectares annually as from next year.

State and local governments are urged to involve all segments of society particularly our youth in tree planting and nursery activities. In this respect, the National Youth Service Corps and students on vacation should be deployed to areas of such need. Government will facilitate their active participation by providing appropriate incentives. I also urge the Police, Military and Para-military formations to actively participate in the exercise by planting trees in their barracks and offices. Similarly, our Royal Fathers are urged to mobilise their subjects to plant trees on their farms, around their homes, their mosques and churches and market places.

I call on the private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations to continue to participate in such activities as adoption of avenues, parks and gardens, for planting and nurturing as well as enhancement of public awareness in afforestation. Let no one cut a tree without planting at least another one in replacement.

Government is resolved to strengthen the capacities of relevant research institutes and centers of excellence including Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN), Rubber Research Institute, Nigerian Institute for Horticulture (NIHORT), Center for Arid Zone Studies (CAZS), and Centres for Energy Research (CER) to enhance their effectiveness. These institutions will appraise fast-growing local economic tree species and develop appropriate silvi-cultural practices for our tree planting exercises. They should also develop appropriate training modules and public awareness materials to empower local communities to undertake plantation management. To complement our efforts at afforestation, the Government will encourage research into developing and popularising alternative energy and energy-efficient technologies such as solar and gas cookers, biogas, biomass stoves, etc., to reduce pressure on forest resources.

To our development partners, our doors are open to gestures of international partnerships. The world is increasingly becoming a global village. This is more so with respect to environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification and drought. In all these problems afforestation is a common celebrated mitigative measure. Therefore any show of solidarity in this our national endeavour will be a further demonstration of our collective commitment to fulfill our obligations under the various relevant global agreements. We are also motivated by the fact that apart from protecting and greening the environment, tree planting has the potential of alleviating poverty by providing livelihood to our people through the establishment of economic plantations for fruits, wood and resins.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, To protect the existing forests and plantations established in the course of this campaign, we shall encourage state and local governments to enact stringent regulations and prescribe stiff penalties against bush burning and wanton felling of trees.

Finally, let me seize this opportunity to thank the people and Government of Gombe State for their warm reception and hospitality extended to me and my entourage. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the people of this young State in making their environment healthy and productive for the present and future generations.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I now have the honour and pleasure to flag-off the 1999 National Tree Planting Campaign and urge all Nigerians to join me in successfully planting *A Tree for Democracy!*

I thank you. God bless you all.

CO-OPERATION AND INTEGRATION

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT
OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF NIGERIA AT THE SUMMIT OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), MAPUTO
17TH AUGUST, 1999**

CO-OPERATION AND INTEGRATION

Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Governments,
Your Excellency, Executive Secretary of SADC,
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted at the singular honour done to me and my country by the invitation to attend this august occasion. I heartily congratulate the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the establishment of the sub-regional organisation. I sincerely hope that your deliberations at this meeting will be successful and that you would appropriately advance your individual and collective national aspirations for the incoming millennium.

The Southern African Development Community has, no doubt, come a long way since those early days when it was saddled with an agenda largely determined by the need to survive the threat of the common enemy of apartheid. Let us thank God that those tragic days are not just behind us, but that we can now view the tragic episode as the ultimate chapter in the long march to the liberation of our continent from foreign domination.

At this juncture, I wish to extend my warm greetings to the last Chairman of SADC, Madiba Nelson Mandela whose person deservedly has been and will forever remain an icon of the anti-apartheid struggle. I wish him God's blessing and happy retirement. I also congratulate President Thabo Mbeki for succeeding Madiba at home as well as the new Chairman of SADC.

It is highly commendable that the Southern African region has been able to turn the advantages of geographical proximity, shared political experiences and commonality of purpose into a broad spectrum of multidimensional co-operation in most spheres of human endeavour.

Since the transformation of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) to SADC in 1992, your organisation has made giant strides in the progressive development of its core economic objectives. This has been made

possible by the priority accorded to the less controversial areas of inter state co-operation. You have managed to successfully champion the cause of integrating the various economies within the sub-region by using a model that allows for the allocation of functions, based on comparative advantage.

Unfortunately, the numerous political crises faced by your Community in the last couple of years have distracted attention from the positive aims of building appropriate capacities to enhance the welfare of your peoples. Conflicts within the region remain daunting, but your prompt response to some of the situations have been exemplary exercises in good neighbourliness and conflict containment.

Mr Chairman, if the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) predates your sub-regional organisation by a few years, it is only due to the obvious reason of earlier exit from colonial domination for many of our members. However, as you may be aware, our efforts at regional integration have suffered numerous setbacks, including difficulties of harmonising parallel institutions, and lately intra-state conflicts resulting in untold hardship to our peoples.

There is no doubt that the problems of ECOWAS have been compounded by the political trend in my country in the last decades. Nigeria is the largest member state in every sense and our internal leadership difficulties are proportionately transmitted to the sub-region. In the same vein, the new dispensation in Nigeria is a new opportunity for re-invigorating regional integration. Personally, since my modest contribution to the birth of ECOWAS, I have firmly believed in co-operation with our immediate neighbours as a major plank and a starting point of Nigeria's foreign policy. Our Administration fully accepts the challenge of making ECOWAS a viable regional organisation that will also serve as a major building block for the continental integration of Africa as a whole.

Mr Chairman, rapid technological innovations and advances in the telecommunications industry have reduced the world into a global village. The byword is globalisation and its main features are :

- (i) unprecedented surge in international trade,
- (ii) vast financial flows across borders,
- (iii) the exposure of the domestic markets in developing countries.

The world may be said to be entering the new millennium as a global village, but it is a village yet to be wholly made up of the total sum, as Africa trails behind, virtually delinked from the mainstream of global realities.

Africa must awaken to the imperative of globalisation. This we can do successfully if we study the examples of East and South-East Asia and Latin America in deploying the laws of *real politik* to redefine our national and regional interests and pursue them more aggressively

than before. For the Asians and the Latin Americans, the formation of their respective regional blocs reflect a desire and the will to tame the globalisation shrew, so that rather than excluding, it is inclusive, and rather than marginalising, it integrates.

Put bluntly, Africa's biggest handicap so far has been our lacklustre progress in economic co-operation and integration. In 1970 we began the process with the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act which envisaged an African Economic Community by the turn of this century. Unfortunately, the consequent progress towards our integrational goals have been slow and deficient in political will and determination.

Our main hope now is the Abuja Treaty of 1991, establishing the African Economic Community. This is the platform on which to consolidate our vision of a viable continental Community, capable of competing with the other regional blocs ; capable of promoting our common interests and capable of lifting Africa into the global mainstream of contemporary economic interaction.

We have been unable to complete the projects and programmes set out for the first stage of the Abuja Treaty. But we should not despair. We must, instead, turn this delay round and make efforts to gain lost ground. With dedication and tenacity of purpose, we can achieve success.

In spite of problems yet to be resolved in our respective regional groupings, I am convinced that SADC and ECOWAS are two dynamic organisations with enormous potential to be the cornerstones of the African integration process.

Mr Chairman, I see our two regions beckoned by history to provide the impetus for a timely realisation of the African Economic Community of our dreams. I therefore call on our two Communities to explore, immediately; the prospects and possibilities of co-operation, both at the institutional level of the two Secretariats and in enhanced bilateral interaction between the various member states, under an inter-regional framework.

I need not emphasis the need for close consultations on key African questions, with a view to co-ordinating initiatives and actions that will amplify the mutual effectiveness of our Communities and which will strengthen Africa. We can start our co-operation by sharing and exchanging information on the experiences gathered in our respective sub-regions on projects, activities and regional policies. These steps would be logically followed by the exploration of the synergies and complementarities of our two groups through the joint design, harmonisation and integration of action plans.

Within the wide horizon of co-operation we can examine sectoral efforts in such areas as trade, agriculture, manufacturing, mining, energy and communications, just to mention a few. We can take a look at our respective investment policies, fiscal

arrangements and tariff regimes so that we determine potential areas of collaboration. Equally, we should examine possibilities of co-operation in the building and strengthening of sub-regional capacities for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. This becomes more appealing, as sub-regional initiatives are increasingly being accorded primacy in the search for solutions to the various crises on the continent.

Mr Chairman, you are no doubt aware of the resolution adopted at the recently concluded 35th Session of the OAU in Algiers, making the year 2000, *Year of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa*. The initial steps to fulfil these objectives would require measures that would meet, not only the contingency of the moment, but also our future needs. Already, ECOWAS countries have adopted the moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons. The moratorium will enable Governments of ECOWAS member states to evolve practical programmes, with the assistance of the international community, aimed at controlling the spread and illicit use of light weapons. I am aware of a similar effort being spearheaded for your sub-region by South Africa. Inter-regional co-operation in ensuring the success of this Moratorium need hardly be emphasised, because small arms would no longer be available for dissident groups to carry out their destabilising activities.

Mr Chairman, in order to further advance and enhance co-operation between our two sub-regions, I wish to propose the mutual extension of the freedom of movement of persons that already exists in our sub-regions as a prelude to the establishment of a Community without barriers. Where this is not immediately possible on account of local exigencies, there should be easy and uninhibited movement of the nationals of our two communities, through minimised restrictions on genuine visitors. This, I hope, would bring to the ordinary citizen an impacted awareness of the fraternal essence and ultimate commonality of our aspirations for continental integration.

There is also the need to improve trade in products and services of the two regions through such measures as import concessions, import liberalisation and even common tariff regimes. Such potential boost to inter-African trade can be complemented by regular inter-regional trade fairs and other investment promotion schemes.

Finally, I wish to propose that we embark on drawing up a mechanism to govern these areas of co-operation, which the Secretariats of our two Organisations can work on. They should identify potential areas of co-operation between us. Thereafter we would sign a Memorandum of Understanding, or any other relevant legal instrument, that would help to cement the envisaged vistas of co-operation.

I am well aware of the physical distance that separates our two regions and other logistical constraints that lie in the path of co-operation. However, where the political will exists, various avenues abound for accomplishing the vital tasks before our two

sub-regions. We must muster the political will for co-operation. We must provide the springboard for other sub-regions to rally round our integrative umbrella for the Continent. It is thus my sincere hope that the fruits sown at this Summit will germinate into a new era of meaningful fraternal and integrative co-operation between our two Communities.

I thank you all.

DEVELOPMENT WITH HUMAN FACE

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF 1999 HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT REPORT AND 1998 NIGERIA HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT REPORT, NICON HILTON, ABUJA
THURSDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1999**

DEVELOPMENT WITH HUMAN FACE

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you to this occasion of the Launch of the 1999 *Human Development Report* and the 1998 *Nigeria Human Development Report*.

I particularly welcome the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr Zephirin Diabre and members of his entourage. I wish you a very successful and rewarding time with us during this short visit to Nigeria.

The two reports being launched today further demonstrate our firm belief in co-operation with our development partners in the international community. I am pleased to note that the 1998 *Nigeria Human Development Report* was put together largely by Nigerians, and the fact that Nigeria is among the first countries in Africa to come up with a comprehensive National Development Report.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We must not lose sight of the main focus of the National Human Development Report. As you are probably aware, the maiden issue of the Report was a logical reaction to the low ranking of Nigeria in both the Human Development Index (HDI) and Human Poverty Index (HPI) in the World Human Development Report.

The current statistics on poverty in our country is alarming. Life expectancy among our citizens is just over 50 years, only 55 per cent of adults are literate, around 49 per cent have access to safe water and health services, and just over 33 per cent will survive to the age of 40.

It is estimated that by the end of 1997, nearly 49 per cent of our citizens lived below the poverty level. Statistical evidence indicate that the rate of impoverisation between 1993 and 1997 was highest in the history of modern Nigeria. What is worse, the population of the extreme poor has accelerated even faster, from 29 per cent in 1985 to 40 per cent in 1992 and 66 per cent in 1997 of the total population of the poor. Nigeria's population of the poorest among the poor trebled within twelve years, reaching a phenomenal figure of over 37 million in 1997. It is hardly surprising that Nigeria now ranks among the 25 poorest countries in the world !

Poverty means denial of choices and basic opportunities to live a tolerable life, materially, psychologically, politically, socially and culturally.

Our Administration will pursue such economic policies that contain comprehensive strategies for tackling all forms of deprivation in which poverty manifests itself: human freedom deprivations; physiological deprivation; human deprivation; income deprivation; and social deprivation.

There is need, especially in a democratic dispensation, to constantly remind ourselves that the human being is both the instrument and the ultimate beneficiary of all development efforts. Development is about people, and democratic governance is also about people. Democracy and development are two sides of the same coin. It is very difficult—if not impossible—for any country to achieve sustainable growth and development without the full mobilisation and effective utilisation of its human resources. Equally, no country can maintain a peaceful, stable democratic policy without a certain degree of sustainable development. Democracy and development are therefore mutually reinforcing.

Our Administration is fully committed to the pursuit of policies and programmes designed to reverse the disturbing trend in poverty. We are determined to make the ordinary Nigerian the centre of development, by ensuring his access to affordable food, education and health. With food security through the revitalisation of the nation's agriculture, with educational and health institutions that are dedicated to the service of the people and, with a reasonable level of employment generated by both the public and a re-invigorated private sector, Nigeria should, within a reasonable period, produce a picture of human development that truly reflects the country's potentials. We are determined to succeed in this national endeavour.

The Report before us today is principally an attempt to examine and identify the specific causes of poverty with a view to advocating solutions for improving the standard of living in Nigeria. It should also challenge all stakeholders (Federal, State and Local Governments, Civil Society and other development partners) to face squarely the challenges of eradicating poverty in the midst of plenty. Let us all harness every available resource and opportunity to hasten the transformation of the nation into a poverty-free country. Let us dedicate ourselves to policies that enhance equitable re-distribution of wealth of this nation, creating jobs and opportunities for our people and empowering people (particularly women, the poor and the disadvantaged) to participate meaningfully in the development process.

May I seize this opportunity to emphasize that we cannot sub-contract development. Development is our national responsibility and must be built on what exists to ensure sustainability and self-reliance. In this regard, I want to particularly commend the UNDP for working with the Federal Government in the area of sustainable development. In

fact, the efforts made by the UNDP through the nine core programme implemented during the last 4th Country Cycle as well as the on-going four programme of the current 5th Cycle otherwise called First Country Co-operation Framework have brought about notable changes as serious efforts were made and are still being made to carry the people along in development activities.

I am pleased to observe that the 1999 Human Development Report is dedicated to the laudable objective of how we could all co-operate to achieve “Globalisation with a Human face”. As the report rightly points out :

“The core values of respect for life, liberty, justice, equality, tolerance, mutual respect and integrity underlie the charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They now need to be the guiding objectives of globalisation with a human face.”

I would like to sound a note of warning : globalisation with a human face cannot be a substitute for a solid national foundation based on good governance and human-centred development. The 1998 UNDP Human Development Report on Nigeria fully illustrates this point. Only a Nigeria that is politically and economically strong will be able to seize the opportunities and face the challenges of globalisation.

Poverty alleviation and eradication is a difficult task if policies are entirely based on market forces and macro-economic stability as an end in itself. The challenge before us is to fine-tune our policies and programmes in such a way as to ensure a balance between macro-economic stability and human-centred development. The plain fact is that there are many human development factors that operate outside the realm of market forces.

Government is about people and Government has a moral responsibility to ensure that such goods and services that cannot be provided on the basis of market forces must be provided by the efforts of government partnership with the private sector, non-governmental organization and civil society groups. Human development is a collective effort. Our Administration aims to provide an enabling environment in which collective efforts can bear fruit for the over-all development of the Nigerian people and the Nigerian Society.

We are also convinced that the imperative need for collective efforts in human development extends beyond national boundaries. There is need for collective co-operation at the regional level and at the global level. This is the reason why we have considered it necessary to establish, under the Presidency, a new Ministry for Co-operation and Integration in Africa. Regional economic co-operation and integration is the only way forward for Africa into the global economic system.

Globalization means competitiveness, and our countries cannot effectively compete at the global level without regional economic co-operation and integration. ECOWAS

was established nearly 25 years ago. Its progress has been less than we had expected. There is therefore an urgent necessity to move ECOWAS forward, so that together with other African regional economic groupings such as SADC, we shall provide a new momentum for the realization of the objectives of both the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

This Report has the courage of its convictions when it clearly states that "today's institutions of international governance are inadequate to the challenges of the 21st century"

Global institutions must demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards people's notion of equity and social justice. The United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization must be re-structured to make them more responsive to and more representative of people. Indeed, there is an urgent need for the democratization of global decision-making institutions.

Respect for human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights cannot be limited to national government only. Individuals and increasingly powerful multinational corporations must demonstrate a new responsiveness to the needs of people. This is more so when we realize that the three richest individuals in the world have total assets that are more than the Gross National Product of all the least developed countries with a total population of 600 million people ! We are also reminded that the 10 largest telecommunications companies in the world control 86 per cent of the world telecommunications market.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my fervent hope that efforts to produce the Human Development Report annually will be sustained so that it will continue to serve as a veritable tool for identifying our strengths and weaknesses in order to proffer solutions for the way forward in our development process. It is my hope that Nigerians will continue to take responsibilities for their own development through the development of local authorities such as we are witnessing today, to build capacities for the elimination of poverty. Total eradication of poverty must be our long-term goal. This is the vision and goal which our Administration desires to pursue to a logical and successful end.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to launch both the 1998 *Nigeria Human Development Report* and the 1999 *Human Development Report*.

I thank you all. God bless.

**THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON CONFERENCE ON SECURITY,
STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION IN AFRICA**

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
AT THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON CSSDCA, ABUJA
28TH AUGUST, 1999**

Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

Let me first welcome you to Nigeria and to Aso Rock, our nation's State House. I am gratified that you all accepted the invitation by our Foreign Minister to come here for this one day meeting which will focus on an issue of great strategic and practical implications for Africa.

We gather here shortly after the energizing OAU summit meeting in Algiers, where I enjoined my fellow Presidents to re-examine the possibility of launching a process leading to a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA).

Before we begin with our deliberations, let me share with you some of my own thoughts.

Africa has been marginalised, de-linked and may be even ostracized. We all contributed our fair share to this deplorable state of affairs. True, the neglect and disregard by many rich nations for Africa and their priorities have been a significant factor in this marginalisation process. Yet, I submit that the principal blame lies at our own doorsteps.

Africa must unite again with a sense of purpose, vision, mission and determination. Political leadership will be at the core of our success. How can we expect our nations to succeed and prosper if quarrelling persists at the highest levels, if leaders condemned to co-operation engage in and fuel conflicts, if a cacophony of arguments and recriminations drowns out the need for common goals and co-operation ?

We can and must do better !

And so I enjoin you today to revisit a proposal which had been submitted to the OAU back in 1991. At that time the Heads of State and Government acknowledged in their final communique that "there is a link between security, stability, development and co-operation in Africa". This was in response to the Kampala document, which had proposed the launching of a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) and which had emerged from a conference in May 1991, held in Uganda at the invitation of President Museveni and organised by the Africa Leadership Forum and the Secretariats of OAU and ECA.

For a variety of reasons, no further action was ever taken by the Heads of State and Government, within or outside of the framework of the OAU, to give practical meaning to the conclusion reached in 1991.

There is no doubt, especially given the course of events in Africa over the past decade : peace, security, stability, development and co-operation are closely linked. One cannot exist without the other. If we want to pursue one of these important goals, we automatically affect and depend upon the others. There is no escaping from this reality.

In 1991, the African Heads of State and Government had recognized that the problems of security and stability in many African countries have impaired their capacity to achieve the necessary level of intra-and inter-African co-operation which is required to attain the integration of the continent so critical to the socio-economic transformation of our societies. Today, the many crises afflicting and stifling our countries are sobering and heartrending. They should induce us to take coherent, urgent and joint action in this area, at least. Too much time has been allowed to lapse—and all our countries, indeed all our citizens have paid the price for lack of leadership, vision, courage and lack of faith in the power of co-operation. Other countries and continents have shown us the way in that regard and it is never too late to change course.

The 1991 proposal for CSSDCA is as relevant today as it was some 10 years ago. Let me add my personal experience that the peace agreement recently signed for Sierra Leone is CSSDCA applied at the sub-regional level. I believe the same holds true for Congo if the peace agreement will be implemented as signed. As neighbours and African kin, we cannot and will not stand idly when people suffer, when lawlessness spreads, when guns speak louder than reason and when development is subjugated to brute force, corruption and other evil machinations.

Furthermore, what we are doing in West Africa is to institutionalise what we have been able to operationalise, namely to create a sub-regional defence accord in the framework of ECOWAS. This will lead to an ECOMOG which is not being seen as NIGERIAMOG, but as a truly West African undertaking.

We have a historic responsibility and to launch a full-fledged CSSDCA process. Nigeria is ready to assume its responsibilities in such an initiative and I invite you all—and the other African countries—to work together in the quest to create a new Africa architecture which will equip us to face the challenges of the 21st century.

As one of the original initiators of the CSSDCA proposition, let me emphasize that CSSDCA is not supposed to be an event, rather it is designed as a process with sustained and progressive engagement and commitment, leading to a true co-operation among African countries.

CSSDCA would provide the umbrella which would guide all our efforts in the arenas of security, stability, development and co-operation. Let the Kampala document be our starting point in crafting this new agenda for Africa into the new millennium.

International fora and discussions are replete with the magic of the millennium. As others define new vistas and ambitions to the unknown, our countries are struggling with the economic realities of marginalisation, neglect and diversion. When the Berlin Wall fell, many of us warned of a counter-productive diversion of aid flows to the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Our fears were dismissed then as phantoms—and yet they became a sad reality. Diversion of resource flows and official assistance flows at the beginning of this decade had set the stage for a constant downward spiral in ODA to Africa to the present abysmal levels. Has this trend bottomed out? I doubt it. Indications are that in the wake of the exceedingly costly war in Kosovo—in eleven days the war effort on the part of NATO consumed a sum equivalent to the totality of annual ODA—and the preparations for rebuilding Kosovo and the Balkans, Africa once again will be paying a steep price. In the light of the first indications of reductions in development aid, the Administrator of UNDP has already characterised such action as “taxing Africa to finance Kosovo reconstruction”. Shameful as this trend is, we must face it fairly and squarely. International neglect, which can no longer be obscured by lofty declarations of good intentions, will force us all to muster our energies and strengths together. Africa is on its own—let there be no doubt. And let us take the necessary action to help ourselves. CSSDCA can be a solid start in that direction.

I look forward to a frank exchange of views on the proposition of CSSDCA among this illustrious group of participants and I hope that at the end of the day we will be able to reach consensus of the next steps ahead, coupled with commitments of what each and everyone of us will do.

Finally, I understand that some of you had to overcome some obstacles in checking into the hotel. Please accept my sincere apologies for any inconvenience that may have been caused.

Let us begin by a brief round of introductions of the participants around the table

Let us now begin the debate with a brief introduction of the history of CSSDCA, its intent, objectives and modalities as conceived in 1991.

**THE NIGERIAN DECLARATION OF
HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

**BEING TEXT OF AN ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FORMAL LAUNCHING OF THE CAMPAIGN ON NATIONAL
REBIRTH, EAGLE SQUARE, ABUJA
10TH SEPTEMBER, 1999**

Your Excellency, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar,
The President of the Senate,
The Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Chief Justice of the Federation,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members of the House of Representatives,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a little over one hundred days today since we all gathered at this venue, the Eagle Square, to herald the advent of what a vast majority of our people believed was the Dawn of a New Era for our nation. There is no doubt that in the period between my election in February and the inauguration in May there was a revolution of rising expectations among our people. Our people saw in the return of democracy the hope for solutions to the numerous ills afflicting our society : from general insecurity of life and property to poor infrastructure ; from mass unemployment and mass poverty to disrespect of the fundamental rights of citizens and from the perception of Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations of the world to its status as a pariah state among the comity of nations. I must add with a sense of modesty and humility that many also saw in me a likely miracle worker, the leader they had been yearning for.

These expectations and my own firm belief in the great potentials of our nation, given the right leadership, and my conviction that leadership is a trust from God and that every leader shall one day be called upon to account for his or her actions in the hereafter, propelled me to accept the challenge and to resolve not to fail the people. On my release from prison, a little under fifteen months ago, I went into a pact with my Lord to do His bidding at all times. I saw my survival and freedom as a message from God to do what needs to be done in Nigeria. I could not disregard the call of God to duty.

As I indicated in my address on May 29, the event of that day should be seen by all Nigerians as the beginning of a genuine renaissance for our nation on the eve of the 21st century and third millennium. That process of National Rebirth, I noted, will involve

a series of fundamental, structural, attitudinal and behavioural changes in our style of governance and in ways of doing business. It will also involve deep changes in our individual and collective orientations and expectations of government and its various agencies and institutions.

In that address and in my addresses during the campaign and after, I identified a number of priority areas for our government. I pledged to run an inclusive, open, transparent and accountable government. I pledged to fight corruption. I pledged to improve on the security situation in the country, I pledged food security for the nation, I pledged to revitalise education, I pledged to attend to the root causes of the Niger-Delta crisis and to find solution, I pledged to resuscitate our decaying infrastructure and I promised to win back for the government the trust of the people among other promises. Even more significantly, I swore on that day before God Almighty and before man to uphold the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I swore to serve Nigeria with all my strength, to defend her unity, uphold her honour and glory and conduct the affairs of state without fear or favour.

Since May 29, we have worked assiduously to fulfil most of those promises. Our cabinet is the most inclusive cabinet in the political history of this country. For the first time, all political parties are represented in the cabinet. It is no more a zero-sum-game where the winner takes all and the loser is left to be plotting the fall of the government. We hold weekly cabinet meetings where matters are discussed openly and frankly for decisions to be reached. Furthermore, we have not hesitated to clarify issues as they arise. Indeed, very soon, the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on National Orientation and Public Affairs will open channels of communication with me. You can write to me, fax to me or e-mail to me and you can be sure that your mails will be answered.

On transparency and accountability, we re-introduced the Civil Service Rules (the old General Orders) as well as Financial Regulations. We have also submitted a draft bill to the National Assembly on corruption. We have introduced a code of conduct for all members of our government just as we re-introduced subsidy on fertilizer to ensure greater harvest. In fulfillment of my pledge, I was at the Niger-Delta a couple of weeks into my tenure, and we have already prepared and submitted a draft bill on the Niger-Delta Development to the National Assembly. That bill brings three major actors together to solve the problem of the Niger-Delta—the Oil Companies, the States and the Federal Government. At the same time and in fulfillment of my pledge to resuscitate our decaying infrastructure, our government has made a substantial grant to the National Electric Power Authority, NEPA, to rehabilitate its facilities.

Primary school teachers who were on strike on our assumption of office have returned to the classroom after we had paid the salary arrears. Only a couple of weeks

ago, while on a visit to Gombe we were told of how the incidence of armed banditry has subsided dramatically since we assumed office and we set up a special joint police-military operations in the North-East and North-West.

Ladies and gentlemen, what we have tried to do in the last 100 days is to work hard to fulfil some of our promises to the people so that the Nigerian people will once again begin to trust their leaders. We ran our campaign on the platform of trust. We will do everything to keep that trust. I believe that it is a pre-condition for any progress to be made. It has not been easy. But we never had any illusions about the tough job and tough choices ahead. We have registered some significant successes. I believe that we will register even greater success if the people come out and play positive roles in the development process.

It is understandable to note that at the moment, the general orientation of our citizens towards the government is one of demanding our rights—those rights enshrined in the Constitution. But with rights go duties and civic obligations and responsibilities.

In our various traditional societies, the people did not ask for their rights from community without at the same time ensuring that they have met their responsibilities. What has happened to that lofty tradition? As we dedicate ourselves to the Rebirth of our Nation, I would like to appeal to every Nigerian to seriously consider whether he or she performs his or her duties and responsibilities to his or her fellow citizen and to the state.

While I will continue to abide by my oath of office, to work tirelessly to improve the life of our people, I shall expect every citizen to also live up to his or her responsibilities. For too long, our people have demanded their rights from the state without at the same time performing their responsibilities. Many ardent critics of NEPA, for example, do not pay their NEPA bills as and when due. Nor the critics of poor welfare services pay their taxes as and when due. Many people who complain about accidents on our roads drive recklessly and become a source of danger on our roads, constituting a threat to other road users. Many people see crime being committed and turn away. Invariably, they blame the police. I can assure you the police is on the way to improving.

It will not help our nation if people just sit and demand for their rights or privileges without thinking of their own responsibilities to others, their communities, their State, their neighbours, and even their families. If every parent would conscientiously shoulder his or her responsibility towards his or her children; if every teacher will conscientiously teach his or her wards; if every citizen will treat his neighbour as he would like his neighbour to treat him; if every person will make deliberate efforts towards upliftment of his community, Nigeria will certainly be a much happier place for us all.

Fellow countrymen, much of the success we have recorded in our first 100 days was mainly attributable to the government's determination to succeed. I believe that we have earned a bit of your trust in the last 100 days. We shall now want to move in full swing to introduce programmes aimed at National Re-Oriented of the psyche of our people in both public and private sectors of life. The aim is two-fold : first, it is to educate both the public official and the ordinary citizen about the limits of the power of the former as well as the limits of the legitimate demands of the latter. Secondly, it aims to educate particularly the ordinary citizens about their duties and responsibilities to the state, their communities, their families and even to themselves.

I believe that our people are naturally helpful and considerate. Traditionally, we have a communal and caring society. If our people have not exhibited those traits in their relationship with their neighbours and the state in recent times, it is perhaps because of some creeping alien influences or breaking up of communal ties which must be checked. It is worthwhile to note that the nation's Constitution is explicit on the rights of the people without giving equal attention to the responsibilities of the people. Both are crucial to national development. It is in recognition of this fact that we are today launching the Nigerian Declaration of Human Responsibilities. The Declaration is the first of its kind by any government of this country. It is conceived as a handy reference material that highlights the duties and responsibilities of the citizen in a simplified, non-technical language. It aims at taking the discourse on civics and human rights to the grassroots. That declaration which I will formally present to the public during this ceremony contains those dos of the citizen that will assist us in our struggle to make Nigeria great for us all. Indeed, it is what can be called our Pact with the People. In the Declaration, the rights of the citizen are enumerated, so are his privileges. Next are enumerated the duties of the state towards the citizen. It does not stop at that but goes on to state the responsibilities that go with the enjoyment of the rights identified for the citizen. In other words, if you expect me to improve your living conditions, I am also going to request that you perform your socially expected roles.

We adapt this Declaration from the work of an international group of eminent persons, which I had been part of and supported.

Our administration proclaims and upholds the Declarations contained in the Charter, as a binding ground norm in our governance of the Nigerian state. Fellow Nigerians, beginning today, we have flagged off our Campaign for National Rebirth. I expect Nigerians from all social strata to make resolutions from today, if they had not done so already, to change for the better. We have to resolve to think positively, talk positively and act positively so that Nigeria can be great again.

The Declaration enjoins us to expect from others and from the State while it also enjoins others and the State to expect from us. It complements Human Rights with Human Responsibilities. And both are two sides of the same coin. A coin with only one side may be regarded as counterfeit or unspendable. Human Rights without Human Responsibilities will be incomplete and so will Human Responsibilities without Human Rights. Let us resolve to demand the Rights due to us and to offer the Responsibilities that are demanded of us.

Let us march forth for the Rebirth of Nigeria as I present to you the Declaration of Human Responsibilities.

Long live Nigeria !

**INAUGURATION OF THE REVENUE MOBILISATION
ALLOCATION AND FISCAL COMMISSION**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY
THE PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
ON THE INAUGURATION OF THE REVENUE MOBILISATION
ALLOCATION AND FISCAL COMMISSION
ON MONDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1999**

Vice-President,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Chairman and Members of the Revenue Mobilisation,
Allocation and Fiscal Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this occasion marking the inauguration of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission. Let me begin by congratulating members of this Commission on your well deserved appointment. In nominating you to the Senate for confirmation, I was convinced that you are all men and women of integrity and vast experience. I remain confident, therefore, that you will discharge your duties satisfactorily.

I must state also at the outset that it is not a coincidence that this Commission is one of the earliest to be empanelled and inaugurated by my Government. It is rather an appreciation of the important institutional role that the Commission must play as we strive to promote respect for the principles of federalism in our dear country as well as revamp the national economy severely battered by the misrule of the past fifteen years.

For the avoidance of doubt, the functions of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission are enumerated in paragraphs 32, part 1 of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution. May I note in this connection, as you all assume office as members of this Commission, that its institutional role is one of its most important functions. For, as we endeavour to nurture our fledging democracy, a most crucial requirement is that we learn to live by the rules and settle differences by negotiation and compromise. In this regard, your Commission, charged with oversight of one of the most challenging aspects of a federal relationship, that of generating, sharing and managing resources should lead by example by observing such virtues in the conduct of its business.

Transparency and accountability should remain the watchwords of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission as it embarks on its most challenging assignment. This is crucial because the nature of your duties is sensitive and requires trust if the outcome is to be acceptable to all concerned. It is therefore not surprising

that it is a specific requirement of the 1999 Constitution that members of the Commission be persons of unquestionable integrity.

Revenue allocation is very important since it lies at the very core of fiscal relations in any federation. In order, therefore, to ease tensions and achieve mutual understanding, it is essential to get this most crucial of relationships between the constituent units of our Federation right. Your Commission has the duty to advise me on proposals for revenue allocation to be put before the National Assembly. As such, I expect it to be guided by constitutional provisions for the allocation of revenue while making proposals to promote equity in allocation and efficiency in the use of funds.

Of course, in popular consciousness, revenue allocation is seen as the main function of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission. However, as its name shows, this is but one part of its onerous duties. As all tiers of Government grapple with revenue constraints and rising expectations, your Commission will have to come up with innovative means of mobilising resources to enable the provision of social services without killing the incentive to work and invest. In this regard, you are expected to advise on fiscal efficiency and methods by which the revenue of Governments can be increased. Quite naturally, increased mobilisation will require that you monitor accruals to and disbursements from the Federation Account closely to ensure that all revenue is captured and that there is no leakage from the account.

You have the delicate task of determining the remuneration of political office holders at a time that Nigerians are monitoring spending on public officials with an eagle eye. I therefore expect that in arriving at your recommendations you will make proposals that take full account of existing salary structure while providing public office holders with a salary that enables them to live honestly and with dignity. I trust that you will carry out this job with circumspection and all sense of propriety.

As I said earlier, the task before you is a challenging one but I am sure that you will all rise up to the occasion. I wish you every success in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

It is now my honour and pleasure to formally inaugurate the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission.

Thank you.

**NIGERIA, AFRICA AND THE WORLD
IN THE NEXT MILLENNIUM**



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
AT THE FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1999**

NIGERIA, AFRICA AND THE WORLD IN THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

Mr President,

A little over two decades ago, I addressed this Assembly as Head of a military Government in Nigeria. On that occasion, the focus of my statement was the urgent need to terminate colonial rule in Namibia and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and dismantle the racist Apartheid South Africa. Today, it is a great source of joy for me and my delegation, that a distinguished son of Namibia is presiding over the affairs of the 54th session of the UN General Assembly. My delegation assures you of its full co-operation and unwavering support throughout your tenure.

May I also convey, through you, Mr President, our deep appreciation to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency, Mr Didier Operti of Uruguay, for the able and efficient manner with which he conducted the proceedings of the 53rd session.

Our appreciation also goes to the Secretary General, His Excellency, Mr Kofi Annan, for his visionary leadership and the invaluable work of the Secretariat under his stewardship.

Permit me also to warmly welcome, on behalf of my country and delegation, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru and the Kingdom of Tonga, who have just joined this family of Nations.

Mr President, I stand before this Assembly today very proud to be the leader of a Nigeria that has successfully managed the transition to democracy, after a decade and a half of military rule. I would like to seize this opportunity to express the profound appreciation of all Nigerians for the international support and encouragement, which combined so effectively with the relentless determination of Nigerians themselves to reconstruct and transform their country into a vibrant democracy.

Our Administration has raised the hopes of Nigerians, and their expectations are correspondingly high. We are well aware of the enormity of the challenges that we face. But we are fully resolved to tackle our numerous social, economic and political problems head on. And by the Grace of God, we will not fail.

Since assuming office some four months ago, our Administration has put in place an

institutional framework for the purpose of reconciling competing interests and groups in our society. Our democratic institutions are now operating effectively within the system of checks and balances enshrined in our Constitution. Furthermore, we have opted for a policy of inclusiveness in all our political appointments, with a cabinet, for instance, in which all registered political parties are represented, thus moving away from the divisive practice of "winner-takes-all".

Our Administration has initiated policies aimed at re-vitalising the economy in order to create an enabling environment for investment and economic growth. We have also put in place appropriate legal framework for the protection of foreign investments and repatriation of legitimate profits.

Other measures we have taken include :

- (i) a vigorous anti-corruption campaign ;
- (ii) the promotion of transparency and accountability in public life ;
- (iii) the abolition of decrees and regulations which hindered the inflow of foreign investment ;
- (iv) the generation of opportunities for employment and income savings for domestic investment ;
- (v) the privatisation of key state enterprises such as electricity and telecommunications ;
- (vi) legislation and measures to redress obvious cases of neglect and injustice done to ethnic minorities, particularly in the oil-producing areas of the Niger-Delta region, and to deal with the problems of the environment ;
- (vii) investigation of past human rights violations with a view to promoting and protecting fundamental freedoms ;
- (viii) strengthening the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to promote law and order as well as security, and to deal more effectively with the problem of drug trafficking.

Mr President, Africa is indeed proud and glad to see the end of this century coincide with the total elimination of colonialism and the twin menace of constitutionalised racism in the southern part of the continent. The United Nations deserves our warm commendation for the crucial role it has played in this process.

Let me also, Mr President, pay tribute to the thousands who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom so that those of us alive today can proudly say we have the destiny of the continent in our own hands. It is, however a destiny which poses monumental challenges in our effort to improve the quality of life on our continent. We must strive to alleviate the grinding poverty and material deprivation that has persistently remained a feature of our political freedom.

Africa and Globalisation

Mr President, as we approach the dawn of the new millennium, the defining feature of our increasingly interdependent world is accelerated globalisation and the liberalisation of production, trade, investment and finance.

But, for us in the developing world, the reality today is quite different. Globalisation, in its various manifestations, is already experiencing a troubled relationship with the imperatives of development.

Mr President, it is rather tragic that Africa, the least developed of all the regions and the least able to cope with external shocks, has borne the brunt of the adverse effects of globalisation of the world economy. There are grim statistics which indicate that the well-known marginalisation of the African continent has turned into de-linkage from the global scene :

(i) Since 1992, Africa's exports and imports as a share of world trade have declined from four per cent to two per cent.

(ii) Africa's development is presently strait-jacketed by a debt burden of around 300 billion US dollars.

(iii) The continent is experiencing import compression, weak productivity and low output. On the average, factories that are still operating, do so at less than 30 per cent of installed capacity.

(iv) Africa's share in total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to developing countries has dropped from eleven per cent in the late 1980's to less than five per cent in the second half of the 1990s and to a meagre 1.2 per cent of world FDI flows in 1997.

And may I point out, Mr President, that this trend has continued despite the efforts of African countries to implement far-reaching economic reforms and maintain macro-economic stability, particularly through the introduction of more open and business-friendly investment environment, and the provision of incentives to attract foreign investment.

In the quest for a better and fairer management of a globalised world economy, it is now incumbent on us to direct our searchlight on the unsatisfactory evolution of the multilateral trading system. In participating in the historic Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations that ushered in the new rules-based trading system, the developing world had hoped that the new trading regime would enhance their trading fortunes, facilitate their effective integration into the world economy, and arrest their marginalisation from the global trading system.

Unfortunately, however, the vast majority of developing countries, particularly in Africa, have so far been unable to reap the benefits arising from their membership of the

World Trade Organisation. Africa's trade prospects continue to be hampered by the non-implementation of the special and differential provisions that favour developing countries, and the increasingly protectionist measures that are being imposed against their export products. Besides, the paucity of technical and financial assistance that would have enabled the developing countries to take advantage of the limited market access opportunities that exist, continues to deepen Africa's marginalisation in the globalised world economy.

Debt Overhang

Mr President, without doubt, the biggest monetary and financial obstacle confronting developing countries is the chronic debt overhang. According to UN figures, the global debt of all developing countries stood at 567 billion US dollars in 1980, and 1.4 trillion US dollars in 1992. In that 12-year period, these countries made foreign debt payments totalling 1.6 trillion US dollars. Now, out of the 41 countries which the World Bank describes as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), 33 are African countries, a group that, some believe, is richly deserving of their own special category, called Severely Indebted Low-Income Countries (SILICs).

Today, in sub-Saharan Africa, every man, woman and child owes 357 US dollars. This is a continent where millions live in abject poverty earning around 100 US dollars a year, or 27 cents a day. Some African countries now spend as much as four times on servicing debts as they do on education and health care. Some countries spend up to 40 per cent of their national budgets on debts servicing. Furthermore, it is reliably estimated that for every dollar given in official development aid, three US dollars go back to the rich countries in debt service payments.

Mr President, I make bold to assert that debt relief for developing countries is not a plea for charity, but an urgent matter of social and economic justice. It has to be redressed if there is to be peace and stability in the 21st century. Therefore we propose the following :

- (i) Definitive debt cancellation, not just reduction or rescheduling of the debt service regime ;
- (ii) Eligibility limited to unpayable debts which for Africa, means the bulk of the 300 billion US dollars current stock of debt ;
- (iii) Debt remission that is not predicated on the institutionally harsh conditionalities of structural adjustment programmes ;
- (iv) Recognition on both sides of the bargaining table that lenders and borrowers share joint responsibilities for debts incurred in circumstances that are morally questionable in the first place ;
- (v) Debt cancellation that benefits ordinary people.

Mr President, Nigerians rightly expect democracy to yield perceptible dividends in their lives. Our Administration will, however, find the task of meeting this expectation virtually impossible without substantial reduction of our debt burden, especially as we call on the same citizens to make sacrifices implicit in the recent measures aimed at prudent management of our national economy.

I wish to invite the attention of this Assembly to the related issue of illegal capital flight from Africa. It is an open secret that much of Africa's wealth has been illegally siphoned out of the continent by corrupt regimes and unpatriotic individuals working in collaboration with foreign partners. Nigeria and many African countries would be able to pay off large portions of their debts if only they could recover some of the capital illegally stashed abroad. We thus believe that now is the time to collectively deal with this issue.

In this regard, Mr President, Nigeria calls for a concerted effort of the international community through an international convention for the repatriation to Africa and the developing world of all capital illegally transferred from these countries.

Such an international convention or agreement is legally feasible and morally sustainable. It will compel participating banks to disclose the source of the illegal accounts they hold, repatriate them to the countries of rightful ownership, and subject the guilty parties to the full weight of national and international law.

Mr President, it is with a heavy heart that I raise the issue of the HIV AIDS pandemic throughout Africa. Our continent is bearing the brunt of this terrible disease which now kills around two million Africans annually, thus officially overtaking malaria as Africa's number one primary health care problem. This situation is even more frightening in that it has now left six million children orphaned in eastern and southern part of Africa. In West Africa, the disease has been spreading just as rapidly. Unlike malaria which is location specific, HIV/AIDS knows neither climatic nor regional boundaries. Global co-operation is an imperative if we are to succeed in dealing with this scourge.

Conflict resolution and peace-keeping

Among the immediate challenges facing Nigeria and Africa today, is resolving the many conflicts raging on the continent. Today, as many as 19 sub-Saharan countries are engaged in armed conflicts. The negative impact of these conflicts in human, social, economic and environmental destruction does not need to be described here.

Nigeria, and indeed the entire West African sub-region have devoted considerable human, material, political and diplomatic resources to the resolution of the crises in the sub-region, starting with Liberia and subsequently Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

Similarly efforts are being made in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Angola towards peaceful resolution of their conflicts.

Indeed, African leaders at the recent Summit of the Organisation of African Unity in Algiers, and at the urging of the Nigerian delegation, agreed to declare next year as the Year of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa. By this declaration, we have dedicated ourselves to making the year 2000 the year when Africans direct all their efforts into effectively eliminating armed conflicts on their continent. We hope to build on the fresh momentum for peace occasioned by the budding peace initiatives in Congo, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Angola.

We are also agreed on the overriding need to uphold codes of decency, ethics and minimum standards of decorum among African Governments and their leaderships. Gone are the days when the OAU turned a blind eye to the excesses and abuses of power by member-governments. Forceful and undemocratic changes of governments will no longer be overlooked or tolerated. We intend to condemn in absolute terms all violations of these codes, and ostracise their perpetrators. It is our duty and moral responsibility to treat our citizens decently and humanely.

Mr President, My country has always believed that the threat to international peace and security from any corner of the globe should be considered a threat to the peace and security of the world as a whole. While the maintenance of international peace and security remains the primary responsibility of the Security Council, the Charter provision for the complementary role of regional and sub-regional groups has also proved to be critical to the maintenance of peace at the regional and global levels. The establishment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is a clear testimony of our commitment to sub-regional peace. As the records show, ECOMOG succeeded in putting an end to the Liberian war in 1997, re-instating the democratically elected President of Sierra Leone in 1998, and also bringing about the current peace agreement for Sierra Leone signed in Lome, Togo in July 1999. The time has come however for the Security Council to assume its full responsibility, specifically in Sierra Leone and other flash points of conflicts in Africa. For too long, the burden of preserving international peace and security in West Africa has been left almost entirely to a few States in our sub-region. The non-implementation of the peace agreement and Nigeria's continual burden in Sierra Leone is unacceptably draining Nigeria financially. For our economy to take off, this bleeding has to stop. The United Nations needs to do more in providing logistics and financial support to assist regional peace-keeping and peace-building efforts as well as enhancing the welfare of refugees world-wide without discrimination.

Reform of the Security Council

Mr President, My delegation believes that it has never been the purpose of the

United Nations Organisation to prescribe Democracy and Change for its members and yet make little or no progress in the democratization of its own organs such as the Security Council. My delegation accordingly urges the General Assembly, during this Session, to conclude deliberations and reach agreement on the modalities for the reform and expansion of the Security Council so that the Millennium Assembly will adopt them next year and not later.

How can the United Nations continue to perpetuate and justify a situation whereby Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat in the Security Council? In order to promote reform and democratization of the Security Council, Africa, with 53 Member states, should be allocated at least two permanent seats, commensurate not only with the continent's size and population, but with its track record also of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr President, I wish to re-affirm our belief that the United Nations is the most universal body ever designed for collectively resolving humanity's common problems. Our organization has come a long way since its establishment 54 years ago. Although created in a different era and under different circumstances, and in spite of numerous constraints, the United Nations has continuously sought to adapt itself to the changes in the international political arena. It has been able to accomplish this to some degree, but it remains an institution whose working methods, procedures and administrative structure have in many respects become out-dated. Yet, the world as we know it today without the United Nations would be inconceivable. For it has come to symbolise hope for a better and more secure future for many, particularly in the developing areas of the world. Indeed, though a majority of our countries could not be members when it was created, we are, today, its strongest defenders and advocates of the ideals for which it stands. We believe in the family of nations, and within that family the strong members have the responsibility to protect and strengthen the weaker members.

Mr President, at the close of the twentieth century and the beginning of the third millennium, there is need for stock-taking and proper assessment of the implementation of previous resolutions emanating especially from the major World Summits and Conferences which took place in this decade. Such an effort would bring us closer to the realization of the purposes and objectives of our organization. In this regard, I pledge Nigeria's continued contributions and positive commitment to the ideals of the charter of the United Nations.



**INAUGURATION OF
THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL**



**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, ON THE
INAUGURATION OF THE NIGERIA
INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL
ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1999**

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Honourable Ministers,
Esteemed Religious Leaders,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are proud witnesses of a very historic event in the life of our nation. We are gathered here under the auspices of the two major religious bodies in this country—Islam and Christianity—to inaugurate the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC). This is the first occasion at this high level that leaders of the two religions would on their own volition come together for the common good of the adherents and for the welfare of the nation.

I am personally delighted to welcome every one of you. I commend you for your tremendous courage and initiative as the founding fathers of this Council, the establishment of which has been long overdue. That you on your own agreed to establish a common forum to work for peace, justice, harmony and development reflects on your spiritual maturity and commitment to the progress of the nation. As revered and recognised leaders of the two main religious groups in Nigeria, your status as respectable members of the society cannot be questioned. You are the custodians of the fundamental tenets of these two principal religious faiths in our country, and this certainly is an enormous responsibility.

It is, therefore, my honour and privilege today, to be here to inaugurate a body that has a vital role to play in shaping the destiny of Nigeria. I have no doubt that the establishment of this Council will promote peaceful co-existence amongst followers of different faiths and denominations. In the same way, this Council provides a vehicle for mutual co-operation to promote the welfare of adherents of your respective religions while allowing for the peaceful resolution of any friction or misunderstandings that may arise from time to time.

It is my considered view that religion, to any individual within a society, is an instrument for improving the quality of life and consequently promotes the wholesomeness of the society. This is why I believe that a body like the NIREC is an imperative for a society like ours and particularly at such a time like this.

Indeed, a forum like yours can be a veritable instrument for promoting the values of the main religious faiths for the betterment of our beloved country.

The observation that I have just made derives from the essence and the goal of religion which has both temporal and eternal value in transforming both the individual and society. In comparative religious studies, it is universally established that all religions believe in the pre-existence of God, variously described as Supreme Being, the First Cause or The Creator of Heaven and the Earth. All religions also recognise man's depravity and the need to turn back to the path of truth, holiness and fear of the Supreme God. It is in recognition of these basic beliefs that we must continue to acknowledge our oneness and be accommodating to one another.

Distinguished Members of NIREC, only the Almighty is the best judge of those who truly serve Him, but it may not be difficult to discern who is a good citizen or a bad one. In this connection, what we discover if we are to be sincere to ourselves, is that many Nigerians are unfaithful to the demands of their religions. Yet, Nigerians may be regarded as one of the most religious people, the world over. At home and abroad, they hold religiously to their beliefs, they build mosques, they found churches, they travel on pilgrimages and they sacredly hold religious titles. On Sundays and Fridays, at Christmas and Eid-el-Fitr, the outings are most colourful and ostentatious.

It is regrettable that in spite of our religiosity, Nigerian society is highly prone to unacceptable behaviour of various shades and colouration. In other words, our religiosity is devoid of genuine spirituality.

Nigeria, indeed, is a country of diversity not only of religion but also of culture and even of natural resources. However, this diversity is not and should not be a disservice but one that can be judiciously explored and exploited to promote national harmony, progress and prosperity. Our religious diversity, in particular, is not a curse; rather, it is a blessing if we are determined to make it one. Neither Christianity nor Islam preaches anything other than belief in one God and love of fellow human beings. The mutual co-existence of these two principal faiths in Nigeria is, therefore, not only a theoretical but also a practical reality.

I believe that this body, the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), has the great responsibility of fostering peace, tranquillity and harmony without which the great benefits of the rich diversities bestowed by God on Nigeria cannot be substantially achieved. In fact, there is a close relationship between the basic objectives of this

Council and those of our Administration—inclusiveness. The Council should provide moral, ethical, social and cultural pillars for the rebuilding of a greater Nigerian society.

I am happy that NIREC has been conceived to function as a non-governmental body. No one can be better informed on religious matters than all you distinguished spiritual leaders of our nation. As religious men and women, you are the undisputed leaders in this sphere of our national life. Government will be counting at all times on your wisdom and rich experience to provide positive leadership to the adherents of your respective religious faiths, a leadership which will enhance societal harmony and promote high standards of behaviour and civic responsibility among our people. Nigeria must not only be a haven of peace and progress but also a society of hardworking, honest, fair-minded and patriotic citizens. Let this country be a land of love, discipline, mutual respect, hope and fulfilment for all its citizens.

Let today go down in history, as we are at the threshold of the twenty-first century and the third millennium, that the adherents of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria as people of the Book resolve to work for peace, unity and harmony so as to faithfully serve their God and to advance the progress of their country. May God Almighty help us so to achieve.

Distinguished Members of NIREC. Ladies and Gentlemen, I once more congratulate you on this noble initiative. I urge Council members to work together for the unity, stability and progress of our dear country and its transformation into the Nigeria of our dream. Since peace is indivisible, lack of peace in any part of Nigeria is detrimental to peace in the rest of the country. Let our watch-word be peace now in our time and peace and progress forever in our land.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and pray that the Almighty God bless your efforts in promoting the well-being of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that I now formally inaugurate the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council for the glory of God and for the welfare and well-being of all Nigerians in brotherhood, love, unity and progress.

May Almighty God bless you all.



**THE OCCASION OF THE RE-LAUNCHING OF THE
UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME**



**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE RE-LAUNCHING
OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME
IN SOKOTO
ON THURSDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1999**

Your Excellency, The Vice-President of Nigeria,
Your Excellencies, State Governors,
Your Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto,
Members of the Federal Executive Council,
Esteemed Traditional Rulers,
Distinguished Legislators and Jurists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Exactly 22 years ago this month, I had the privilege of launching the Universal Primary Education Programme of the then Federal Military Government, of which I was the Head. The justification for that programme, at that time, remains much the same as it is today. There is a continuing need to provide for our children, and indeed for all our citizens, the basic educational skills they require to be useful citizens in their communities, their country, and in the world at large. Education, however, is not just a matter of acquiring skills. Education is better understood when we see it also as a means of instilling, especially in our young ones, the importance of a number of fundamental values, such as devotion to the well-being of our motherland ; respect for our Constitution and the importance of democratic governance ; a sense of the dignity of work and moral uprightness ; as well as respect for the rights of other citizens.

Twenty-two years ago, our objectives were more modest, dictated as they were by what we perceived to be our needs at that time. We were anxious to ensure that every Nigerian child, from age six, attended primary school and remained there for the next six years, under a free education scheme funded by the federal and state governments. It is a mark of the spectacular success of that programme that, between 1977, when it started, and 1980, it recorded an expansion in the number of children in primary schools from 6 million in 1977, to 12 million in 1980.

The UPE Programme was, by the middle of the 1980s, however, bedevilled by a number of unforeseen and avoidable difficulties, which rendered it virtually

unsustainable. First of all, the huge population explosion of the 1980s meant that there was suddenly a large army of primary school age children who could not readily be accommodated within the existing school structure. There were not enough schools, and there was a severe scarcity of trained and qualified teachers. Secondly, the decline in national revenue made it impossible to allocate sufficient funds to expansion of the education scheme, not to speak of improving the quality of the programme. Finally, political instability in the country led to utter confusion concerning what priority should be given to the advancement of education at all levels.

Launching the UBE here in Sokoto today is not an accident. The Sokoto Caliphate was based among other things on learning and scholarship. Its leaders were renowned scholars of high standards and sense of justice. Regrettably, we of this generation seemed to have abandoned those lofty ideals. It is the determination of this government to restore within our society the interest and dignity of learning and scholarship. Our efforts cannot, however, yield the desired results without the awareness and the full support and dedication of all our leaders at every level of our community. We cannot afford to fail this time around.

It is also worth noting that Sokoto State has the lowest primary school enrollment, as it had twenty-two years ago. This situation is no credit to the leadership that spanned that period, and must not be allowed to continue.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been a most unfortunate decline in the education sector. The Minister of Education has already been giving the details of the statistics of this decline. What they clearly suggest is that if we do not do something now, to arrest it, Nigeria will be ill-prepared and ill-informed to take on the twenty-first century.

This Administration has therefore chosen to pick up the challenge to arrest the decline and decay in our education sector, as well as expand and improve upon the UPE scheme.

The Universal Basic Education Programme, which we are gathered here to launch today, is almost the same as the old UPE Scheme. It is "free" and universal like before, but now in addition, it will be compulsory. But having carefully reviewed our current national needs, our Administration has decided to give it a broader focus. Thus, the new UBE now extends to all children from age six to age 15. It will accommodate them from Primary School to Junior Secondary School. It will devote as much attention to producing trained and qualified teachers, as to providing a large enough number of schools to take in all children who are eligible for enrollment in them. It embraces comprehensive adult literacy programme.

Funds will be made available for properly equipping the schools. The schools and the teachers will be required to teach their wards not only the standard but traditional components of knowledge. They will also be expected to teach them the responsibilities of citizenship in a complex society such as ours. Religion and morality cannot be divorced from school curriculum without education becoming hollow.

The implementation of this programme must be anchored at the community level, local level and state level to ensure close involvement and supervision for success and sustenance.

The new UBE is an ambitious programme, and a very costly scheme indeed. But it is the firm belief of this Administration that any amount of money wisely spent on the education of our children is a legitimate investment in our future. For without a solid educational foundation, nothing else that we do could prepare this country adequately for facing up to the complex challenges of the coming years. In the true sense of the word, education cannot be free. Someone is paying for it directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind. Education is too serious a responsibility and too heavy a burden to be left in the hands of teachers or parents alone. Everybody must chip in. But no one should shirk his or her own responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I was exceedingly privileged 22 years ago, to have launched the first edition of the national Universal Primary Education Scheme in the country. It is with the greatest sense of humility, and with the profoundest hopes for the future greatness of this country, Nigeria, that I now launch the Universal Basic Education Programme. And I do so conscious of the Chinese adage, popularised by the late Tai Solarin which says :

"If you are planning for one year,
Plant rice ;
If you are planning for five years,
Plant trees ;
If you are planning for the future
Educate your children."

I thank you. May God bless you all.



**THE OCCASION OF THE 39TH ANNIVERSARY OF
NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE**



**BROADCAST BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 39TH ANNIVERSARY OF
NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE, 1ST OCTOBER, 1999**

Fellow Nigerians,

I have chosen today, the 39th Anniversary of our Independence, to address you on an issue which I consider of the utmost importance to all of us Nigerians. It is not about what we have so far achieved as a country ; neither is it so much about what we hope to achieve in the future. I wish, instead, to think along with you about the moral foundations that should govern all our actions, as we continue to search for a just, free, and affluent community in Nigeria. It is opportune to do this at this relatively **early stage in our administration** and as we are at the threshold of the third millennium. **The new course we are about to chart will enable us to meet the demands of the next century.**

We have experienced, in the short span of 39 years, what many other countries have undergone in a hundred years and more. We have seen and suffered through a tragic civil war. We have witnessed violent seizures of power. We have written and discarded numerous constitutions. We have experimented with many visions of the role of the state in our lives. We have continuously agonised over what should be the proper relations between the Federal Government and the constituent states of the Federation. Our economy is in shambles, our social services in disarray. For these and many more reasons, there have indeed been times when many Nigerians have wondered aloud whether the very idea of Nigeria is a viable one ; whether it is a powerful enough idea to override all our fears about ethnic and religious discrimination, for instance. In fact, even as recently as May 29 of this year, when our Administration took office, some Nigerians were still asking, can we really make it as a united country ? Can we, even in a democratic setting, rise above the divisive forces in our society ? Will the freedoms guaranteed by democracy, in fact, not increase our tendency towards quarrelsomeness and divisiveness ?

But there is an alternative view of our destiny, equally strongly held by a vast majority of our countrymen. That view is that there must be some divine purpose behind everything that has happened to us as a country. For even in the darkest days of the Republic, during the civil war, for instance, or in the more recent days of tyranny, many perceptive Nigerians have stubbornly held on to

two basic constants of our existence, namely, that Nigeria shall remain one and indivisible ; and that it shall be governed by the people, through their representatives, and in accordance with the law.

Indeed, when you consider the abundance of our human and material resources, our energy as a people, and our seeming exemption from the terrible natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons and drought that afflict so many other countries, it is tempting to conclude that we are, without doubt, a blessed and fortunate people, and that all we need to conquer therefore is not nature, but only ourselves.

Let me remind you that human societies never grow to their highest potential merely by upholding the pre-eminence of material values. A great society does not fully thrive merely by offering its citizens hospitals and water, electricity and good roads, schools and affordable fuel, security from external aggression, and protection from the criminals in our midst. These things are important, and we will continue to strive to make them available to the largest possible number of our citizens. But material well-being alone can just as easily be provided by a monstrous, tyrannical state, as by a democratic order. Nigerians, however, have overwhelmingly rejected tyranny and dictatorship, in favour of democracy and freedom. And it must follow from this that there is something more we need from life, something more fulfilling for us as citizens in a dynamic society, which we expect to derive from a democratic culture.

It is this extra quality of our lives as citizens, this essence that transcends material values, which I define as the Anchor, the Centre, the moral and spiritual core that must bind and hold together everything that we do as government, and as citizens of this country. It is also the absence of this Centre that has earned us so many wasted, frustrated years ; so many years in which we have merely thrown money at our problems ; years in which every individual has simply looked out for himself, not caring for what happens to the commonwealth itself.

When I took the oath of office last May, it was very clear to me that our Administration had to quickly propose a new moral order that was absolutely essential, if we were to fully understand our problems, and move promptly towards resolving them. As I surveyed the canvass of our national life, I saw little more than confusion, greed, corruption in high and low places, selfishness, pervasive lawlessness and cynicism. The very state itself, to which we were all required to be loyal, had become a state full of malice and meanness. Public officials appeared to have forgotten what selfless service meant. Private citizens felt a profound

distrust of, if not hatred for the state. But the new moral order which we are anxious to put in place not only had to be simple and straightforward, it has to be permanent and applicable in all circumstances. And it had to be so structured as to command the voluntary support of a majority of Nigerians, for without their support, the entire project would be doomed to failure.

Now, what is this new moral order that I speak of, this Anchor, this Centre? First of all, we all readily admit that we do have a number of basic rights which are guaranteed by the Constitution, and which can and should routinely be protected through our courts and our legislatures. But the Constitution and our laws do not always specify in detail what our responsibilities are. Yes, we are obliged to pay our taxes and other lawful levies, and generally observe the laws of the land ; and when we do not do so, the law sometimes catches up with us, and we pay the stipulated penalties.

But the fact remains that the responsibilities of the citizen that truly matter are not written in any books, are not encoded in any statutes. Those responsibilities come from inside us. They primarily enjoin us to be our brother's keeper, to do to other citizens as we would want them to do to us. We accept and discharge these responsibilities because we all live in a community, a community whose well-being depends on all of us pulling together towards a single goal. Laws are made mainly to preserve the integrity of the state ; but the added responsibilities I speak of here are intended to preserve the spiritual basis of our community.

As a government, our Administration has committed itself to a small number of basic but comprehensive principles. We take it as our primary duty to protect and defend the oneness of Nigeria. We are sworn to, and are determined to obey the Constitution and the laws of our country. But beyond this, we take the values of justice, equity, fairness, accountability and transparency as fundamental tenets of our creed, because I believe it is the surest way we can build the country and the community of our dreams.

I will not tire of emphasising that I do not see our duty as being limited simply to fulfilling the letter of the law and the Constitution. I am convinced that there is much more to governance than that. And it is that extra value, that spiritual imperative, that can bring government closer to the people, and convince them that they too have a duty to discharge, for themselves, and for the rest of our community. I know that the word 'Compassion' often provokes laughter among the cynics in our midst. But it is not an empty or hollow word. It is the essential quality that breathes life into the mechanical provisions of law. Political leaders, from the President to the lowliest local government councillor, are invested with

immense power. That power can be, and is often abused. It is the quality of compassion that imposes limits on the powerful, and compels them to realise that leadership that is not selfless service is hollow and not of God.

Before the advent of this Administration and because of the nature of governance, Nigerians were used to perceiving official actions, policies and programmes as being determined by ethnic prejudice, religious bias, sectional interest or even personal agenda. This perception of government and government actions and decisions still lingers on, and people are still inclined to see our Administration in the same light.

Let me reiterate here once again that this Government is not beholden to any group or individual. The government was democratically elected on the platform of the People's Democratic Party. Otherwise, the Government has neither affiliation nor obligation to any political, religious, ethnic, geographical, sectional or linguistic interest group. We are resolutely committed to fairness and justice as the basis for dealing with all issues affecting the lives of Nigerians. We will punish and reward without fear or favour. Again, I say that there will be no sacred cow.

The task of reformation, reconstruction and rebirth is the task for all Nigerians and requires all hands on deck. I appeal to all Nigerians to join the crusade to make Nigeria great again. Together, we can make it and we will make it by the grace of God.

Alleviating the poverty and suffering of our people is the fundamental objective of our Administration. It is the single principle that underlies everything we have done, and will do. For those who are tempted to believe, for instance, that our struggle against corruption is utopian, I say to them that we have no choice in the matter. Corruption is not only illegal. It is bad because it corrupts the very soul of our community. In practical terms, it makes nonsense of all planning and budgeting. It wastefully depletes our inadequate resources. It breeds cynicism. It promotes inequality. It renders it almost impossible for us to address the objectives of equity and justice in our society with seriousness. And in the end, it destroys the social fabric of our society, leaving each individual on his own, to do only whatever is best for himself. Corruption corrupts, destroys and kills.

It is in this same spirit, also, that we have introduced, through the National Orientation Agency, the new campaign for National Rebirth. This campaign is intended to emphasise, not only the obligation of government to diligently seek to improve the total conditions of our citizens ; far beyond that, we are deeply

concerned to re-direct the consciousness of all our citizens, so that they will accept it as a routine principle of conduct, that each and everyone of us is an indispensable participant in the great project of transforming our country for the challenges of the coming century and beyond.

The Universal Basic Education Programme, which we have just launched is a complementary project. We have expanded the old programme to now include all Nigerian children in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools. It is intended to enable all our children not only to learn how to read and write but also to acquire basic technical and other skills. We also hope to use the scheme to teach them, at an early age, about their rights in our democratic culture, and their responsibilities both to the state and to their fellow citizens. The Universal Basic Education Programme takes on comprehensive Adult Education. Literacy and numeracy should improve the management of every citizen's life.

In view of our commitment to equity and justice in our country, the proposed Niger Delta Development Commission, which is now being debated in the National Assembly, is only a different side of the same coin. It is our hope, through it, to begin to right the wrongs done for so long to that area of our country, which for many years has suffered from official neglect. We anticipate speedy passage of this proposal into law.

I mention only a few of the policies being promoted by our Administration, not as an exhaustive catalogue of what we have been doing or propose to do. I do so rather in order to explain, as carefully as I can, how all these policies are linked and tied together by a single moral and spiritual conviction. That conviction is that, in order to achieve the greatness which we all want for our country, we must all move beyond the notion that only government has obligations to the governed. Every citizen, in whatever situation he finds himself, must come to accept that building a country is a collective project, and that it is best achieved when we all approach our duties as free men and women, working towards a goal we have voluntarily chosen for ourselves. Furthermore, that goal can be better and more efficiently achieved, if we all approach the task in the certainty that it is not just a legal requirement, but rather a moral obligation that we owe, one to another.

And here I must not fail to draw attention to the growing threat the nation is facing from a number of groups across the country, who may have completely misunderstood the true meaning of the freedoms which our new democratic culture confers on us all. Freedom does not concede to us the right to bear arms against the state. The new phenomenon of ethnic, religious, cultural and private armies is





**THE INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL
DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (NDLEA) BOARD**



Furthermore, you must ensure that Nigeria remains at the fore-front of the United Nations' affirmative action against illicit trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances through the formulation of efficacious policies and adherence to civilised procedures in drug interdiction and demand reduction.

Nigeria has acceded to all regular drug conventions and will stretch her hand of fellowship to all countries equally committed to making our world a drug-free one. Cognisant of this fact, your performance as members of this Board must be guided by the spirit of international collaboration capable of eliciting strategies that would complement this trend.

This ceremony is not a formality. It is to God and the nation that you commit yourselves this day. Your duty is not only to God but also to our laws. If you fail in the duties which you swear to uphold, you will be betraying not only I who appointed you in good faith but also all those who have invested their hopes in you.

I urge you to humble yourselves and reciprocate the good gesture of the nation. As wise and as hardworking as you are, there are many who surpass you in wisdom and hardwork. As public spirited as you are, there are many in our country who are more public spirited and dedicated than yourselves. You were appointed not because you had distinguished yourself but in order to distinguish yourself. And you shall distinguish yourselves not by any illicit wealth that you may acquire but by the selfless service that you render. I have nothing against the ambition of those who desire wealth. On the contrary I commend it on condition that such wealth is lawful and is used for the benefit of the generality of the people.

This is our own country. It is we who administer it. It is we who must make the needed sacrifices without which, as a people, we shall never be strong.

I thank the authorities of the agency for the good work which they have done so far. I pay tribute to all those officers of the Agency who have lost their lives in the course of the struggle to eliminate drugs from our society. If in the end we succeed, as I hope we shall, then their blood will not have been shed in vain. The supreme example of sacrifice which such officers have set is one which I urge the rest of the nation to emulate. The deplorable situation into which our nation has been plunged demands great sacrifice on the part of every citizen in order to restore hope and dignity to the nation. Every citizen is now challenged to do something for the nation. Criminals are challenged to give up crime. Drug dealers are called upon to give up their evil trade. Drug users are urged to give up the

abuse of their own bodies. Opportunities now abound for the employment of our talents and we have no justification to prefer crime. My government is committed to using the resources of the nation to provide opportunities for all our people. Those who were driven by despair to use drugs can now have hope. I urge you, I appeal to you to join me in rebuilding the nation. On the other hand, if you prefer to violate the laws and the Constitution, then I have to remind you that we shall invoke against you every necessary process of law and punishment. I therefore urge the Agency to be vigilant to utilise every power vested in it by law to eradicate the cultivation, sale and use of drugs in our society.

I assure the nations of Europe, Asia and America of our co-operation to arrest, punish or extradite our nationals who offend the drug laws of those nations. In the past, these criminals have exploited the weaknesses in our criminal justice system and escaped arrest or extradition. I am now taking steps to eliminate these weaknesses and to strengthen the law enforcement machinery. I have made provisions for better training and equipment of the Police. This will go a long way in enhancing the success which the NDLEA has recorded so far.

Thank you.





ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF WORLD BANK
SEMINAR : NATIONAL CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE ON
ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, ABUJA
THURSDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 1999

It is a great event for Nigeria to host the President of the World Bank. I am delighted to welcome President Wolfensohn to our capital city, Abuja, and I wish to express my appreciation for this visit which is his first to Nigeria since he assumed office in 1995. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr President, on your recent re-appointment to serve a second term in office.

I am particularly happy and grateful to President Wolfensohn for his untiring support for the new democratic dispensation in Nigeria, a support which predates the inauguration of this Administration. I met with Mr Wolfensohn in Washington DC earlier in March when I was President elect. I conveyed to him my vision for Nigeria and he promised that the World Bank would lend its support. I want to publicly acknowledge and express profound gratitude to him for making good his promises.

Since the inauguration of this Administration on May 29, the World Bank Group has manifestly stood by us. The Bank has sent a number of missions to Nigeria in the bid to chart a new course in our conduct of governance and the management of the national economy. Within the past four months :

- (i) the staff of the World Bank have assessed our economic management capability and designed a project for its upliftment ;
- (ii) they have carried out a Country Procurement Assessment Study for Nigeria as well as a Country Financial Accountability Assessment ;
- (iii) they have studied and made suggestions on the financial restructuring and eventual privatization of aspects of NNPC's operations ;
- (iv) they are currently on the field in Nigeria conducting various studies in the area of poverty alleviation, healthcare improvement, educational facilities rehabilitation and rural infrastructure development, to mention just a few.

The staff of the Bank have appraised and undertaken to provide consultancy support for the privatization of Nigeria Airways. In fact, the engagement contract agreement will be signed between Mr. Wolfensohn and Vice-President Atiku Abubakar later today. One is tempted to think that the Bank has been working only for Nigeria in the last four months.



In conclusion, I wish to express my pleasure at President Wolfensohn's presence at this National Congressional Conference on Economic and Development Issues in Nigeria. Apart from his presentation on the theme of the conference which I am sure will enrich the quality and depth of discussion by the participants, his presence will equally afford members of the legislature the opportunity to get to know at first hand the collaborative relationship which exists between our country and the World Bank. It is my fervent hope that our distinguished legislators will avail themselves of the presence of President Wolfensohn to lively discuss our economy and other pertinent development issues that are germane to our country's march into the next millennium.

I wish you exciting and fruitful deliberation.

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE FLAG-OFF OF THE 1999
NATIONAL IMMUNISATION DAY**

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FLAG-OFF OF THE
1999 NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION DAY, ABUJA
8TH OCTOBER, 1999**

Protocol

I am glad to address you today on this occasion of the flag-off of the 1999 National Immunization Days scheduled for 9th-15th October, 1999 and 20th-26th November, 1999, and the official launching of the Nigeria Immunization Fund (NIF) which is a private sector initiative.

These events are great strides in our efforts to eradicate poliomyelitis—a disease that cripples and occasionally kills our children, as well as ensuring sustainability in our routine immunization services.

Polio is a vaccine preventable disease. It is one of the six childhood communicable diseases targeted for control under the National Programme on Immunization.

Since 1979, Nigeria has been part of the global Polio Eradication Initiative. The Expanded Programme on Immunization was formally launched in 1984 and renamed in Nigeria as the National Programme on Immunization in 1985 so as to reflect its national identity as a programme by Nigerians, for Nigerians.

The 49th World Health Assembly in 1988, set the year 2000 as the target date for global polio eradication. Amongst key strategies for polio eradication are :

- (i) National Immunization Day which involves the administration of Oral Polio Vaccine to children under the age of 5 years ;
- (ii) routine immunization aimed at providing infants with vaccine protection,
- (iii) active surveillance reporting of cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis to measure the effectiveness of the immunization activities.

In May and June 1999, using the novel strategy of *House-to-House* immunization, over 20 million children were immunized with oral polio vaccine in the 15 states that participated in the exercise. There is evidence that the *House-to-House* strategy provided the best outreach to delivering vaccines and other health services to the greater proportion of our children. Nigeria enjoys the pride of being the first African Country to have adopted the *House-to-House* approach.

While the result of National Immunization Days has so far been impressive, it has been observed that the routine immunization has continued to decline over the years. Routine coverage for all antigens is estimated to be 40 per cent or less. Many reasons have been attributed for this. Some cite lack of political will and lack of support for immunization activities. Furthermore, there is the problem of conceptualisation of immunization services. About 5 million infants join our population every year ; these children need to be fully immunized during their first year of life. This means that government at all levels must consciously make provisions annually for these children to be immunized. Immunization services need to be boosted, maintained and sustained, otherwise the coverage begins to decline as new unvaccinated children join the population.

Currently, the Federal Government has provided routine vaccines nationwide. I hereby urge the appropriate use of these vaccines to avoid a '*functional stock-out*' leading to further decline. Indeed, '*functional stock-out*' should not exist in Nigeria as immunization is the right of every child.

The opportunities of the Nigeria Immunization Fund (NIF) cannot be over emphasised. In the past, health was commonly perceived as the sole responsibility of government. Indeed, the government has the social obligation to see that all citizens are adequately provided for in matters of health. Nevertheless, the economic realities are such that it would be foolhardy to imagine that government alone can fund the health sector. The NIF programme being launched today demonstrates that there are alternative means of taming the harshness of those realities. Also, the NIF initiative is a much welcome response to the invitation, in my inaugural address, extended to the private sector to join our administration as partners in progress.

By the legal instrument of Decree 12 of 1997, the National Programme on Immunization (NPI) was created to enhance its operational capacity towards the attainment and sustenance of immunization activities. The Decree also empowers the National Programme on Immunization (NPI) to collaborate with the private sector in all areas of implementation of its activities.

Let me commend the major contributors, such as First Bank of Nigeria, for their efforts towards ensuring that adequate funds are made available by the private sector for the Nigeria Immunization Fund. The fund will be managed by a board of trustees to ensure its continuity, as transparency and accountability.

The year 2000 deadline from the World Health Assembly is only 450 days from today ! Nigeria has got all it takes in terms of human and material resources

to achieve the goal of total eradication of polio. The Nigeria Immunization Fund will provide a much needed impetus for the achievement of this goal.

Polio has been eradicated from countries with socio-economic profiles that are similar to Nigeria's. So, we too can do it. Not that we have much choice ; polio eradication is now a global issue, and we have no option but to strive and join the league of polio-free nations. And with Nigeria having the unique chance granted by the World Health Organisation to be the first nation in Africa to apply the *House-to-House* strategy, we are rather obliged to succeed in order to encourage our brother nations in Africa.

Our Government through the National Programme on Immunization is committed to providing all the necessary political will and support that will guarantee that every Nigerian child is protected against vaccine preventable diseases.

In the pursuit of this objective, the government has not only procured vaccines for routine and supplementary immunization services, but has also set up zonal vaccine cold stores currently operational in Bauchi (North-East), Kano (North-West) and Lagos (South-West) while arrangements have reached an advanced stage for the take-off of three other Zonal Cold Stores at Minna (North-Central), Warri (South-South) and Enugu (South-East) by the year 2000. It is my hope that State and Local Governments will reciprocate the good gesture of the Federal Government by fully supporting all immunization services.

At the end of the National Immunization Days, it is expected that every household and every child under the age of five years will be identified and immunized with Oral Polio Vaccine. The exercise requires extensive social and political mobilization. It also requires massive mobilization of resources from both public and private sectors.

The *House-to-House* immunization will provide the opportunity to extend immunization services to communities that have till now been inaccessible. It will also afford us the opportunity to stimulate mass awareness not only for NIDs, but also for routine immunization services.

Furthermore, it will provide a forum for the communities to actively participate in delivering immunization services and assist in searching for and identifying cases of acute flaccid paralysis. It is obvious that this is a daunting and expensive venture and the government cannot go it alone.

I also want to urge leaders in areas where there have been communal clashes to put their differences behind them during the forthcoming National Immunization

Days, for the sake of the innocent children and to avail them the opportunity of being immunized against polio. We have lessons to learn from countries at war who had to agree to a cease-fire so that their children can be immunized. In the same vein, it must be pointed out that religious belief cannot possibly be good enough grounds for denying children access to this life-saving service.

At this juncture, on behalf of the people and government of Nigeria, I wish to express sincere appreciation to all those whose contributions have made the launching of the National Immunization possible. In particular, I wish to thank Rotary International, World Health Organisation, UNICEF, United States Agency for International Development, Department of Foreign and International Development, Christian Health Association of Nigeria, and Red Cross International. May I also use this forum to recognise the contributions of various sectors of our economy such as the oil sector (Texaco, Mobil, Shell, Chevron), food/pharmaceutical industries (Nestle, Beecham, Pfizer) and aviation sector (Nigeria Airways, Chanchangi, EAS, Okada and Kabo Airlines).

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honour and privilege to launch the Nigeria Immunization Fund (NIF) and invite our noble citizens, individuals, corporate bodies and diplomats to respond generously to this legacy. Similarly, distinguished audience, I have the pleasure and pride to formally flag-off the 1999 National Immunization Days "House-to-House" strategy. May God guide and protect every participant in the exercise as you, travel over land, water, air, hills and valleys to immunize our children.

Thank you and God bless you all.

**ON THE OCCASION OF 40TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION OF THE METROPOLITAN CLUB**



**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
OF THE METROPOLITAN CLUB, LAGOS
12TH OCTOBER, 1999**

I am pleased to be here with you today as you celebrate 40 years of the existence of the Metropolitan Club, Lagos. Indeed, you have not one, but many reasons for today's celebration. In the first place, 40 years of continuous peaceful association of like minds for the pursuit of agreed set objectives is testimony to the commitment of industrial members of your Club to some higher goal.

Secondly, it is well known that your members have been distinguished and eminent citizens who individually and collectively have made immense contributions to the development of Nigeria. There is every reason to suppose that the Metropolitan Club has been a source of inspiration and moral invigoration for the members who have so honourably served our country.

Thirdly, you are celebrating this anniversary in a democracy. Your Club was founded during colonial rule. You celebrated its first anniversary in our year of independence. Most of your anniversaries have been celebrated under military rule. But this major one is being celebrated in a democracy—indisputably the system of government that is most conducive for the thriving of free associations such as yours.

From the very beginning, you aimed to create a businessmen's club, a meeting point for the captains of industry and top calibre professionals. Like all good clubs you provided the milieu for like minds to network, share common experiences and cross-fertilize ideas. Your success is measured by how many others wish to join your company. And by all standards, you seem to have done extremely well, as I understand that there is a long waiting list of people wishing to join the Metropolitan Club.

It is interesting to note that as far back as forty years ago, when half of the members were non-Nigerians, the founders of this Club realized the need, even under a colonial government, for private citizens to fraternise in an atmosphere that had a backdrop of concern for the nation's prosperity and development. They realized the need to develop a partnership between the private and public sectors in order to move the nation forward. If that need was recognized at that time, it should be recognized even more so now. If it was feasible to see the need to be in partnership with unelected governments (colonial or military) in order to achieve

some socially desirable objectives, it becomes more desirable and even imperative now to forge similar partnerships with a democratically elected government to achieve similar goals.

Our Administration seeks to make private investment the engine of economic growth. Accordingly, we invite all captains of industry, in their individual and collective capacity, to share our commitment to this mode of fostering the prosperity of our society. We regard profit motive as essential to an economy that will be market-driven and private sector-led. At the same time we recognize the stark reality of the statistics that indicate the high level of poverty in our society. Poverty may not be indicated in the company's balance sheet, but it does show in the social account of equity and justice. This Administration thus seeks partnership with the business community in its unequivocal commitment to poverty eradication.

The private sector has a crucial role to play in the on-going crusade against corruption. Our economy is such that the government is the biggest spender, awarding the most lucrative contracts. Corruption is an evil two-edged sword of the taker and giver, the former invariably being private sector operator who wants the government official to help bend the rules of justice and probity. In the Anti-corruption Bill now going through National Assembly, any attempt to bribe officials is an offence. And with the Anti-Corruption Commission, the law will be provided with additional teeth to bite the bribe taker. We all must learn to recognize that the logic of corruption that allows illegal facilitation, short-changes the rest of the society, and that corruption in the long run is antithetical to development and national prosperity.

The success of your Club, I am certain, has much to do with members' rules and their strict application. For our Administration, there is one rule book : the National Constitution. In my oath of office I swore to uphold the Constitution. And there will be no deviation. The Constitution, as it stands, must be fully respected. The Constitution may have its limitations, as all human endeavours have. But it is as good a rule book as any can possibly be. And we must not forget that there is room and laid-down procedure for amendment so that we can adjust to circumstances that may have been omitted or to new societal developments.

There is no doubt that social clubs or associations have played important roles in various aspects of our national development. Some clubs are popular in outlook, with membership cutting across socio-economic strata. Others have carefully limited their membership to a select group. The ease with which membership is gained into a club determines how it is perceived by the public.

Clubs like yours, the Metropolitan Club, have generally been perceived as elite clubs. Unfortunately that perception has some negative connotation—the suggestion of a group that wishes to identify and separate itself from the common man. But elitism, especially when the definition coincides with being privileged, does not necessarily imply snobbery as in being anti-the masses. Indeed, some of the world's greatest revolutionaries have been privileged persons who readily fit into the social category of elites.

Your Club and its members can be part of the vanguard for the rebirth of Nigeria, a task we have committed our Administration to achieving. You can do this by continuing with the good works you have been doing. You can also do this by making it your responsibility to speak out whenever and wherever you see evil being committed in our society. You can further do this by resolving to work against all manner of anti-social acts and behaviour among yourselves, your neighbours, other citizens and those in offices of public trust. You can do this by offering advice to your neighbour. You can do this by making your neighbour's problem your concern. Not least of all, you can even do this by offering honest advice to the Government.

While commending you and members of other similar organizations for your role in national development, I would like to use this opportunity to reassure our citizens of the total commitment of our Administration to the pursuit of those goals that would uplift the standards of living of our people. We shall, in keeping with our oath of office, defend and protect the laws of Nigeria. We shall strive at all times to ensure honesty, probity, fairness, justice and equity.

We note with deep concern, the deterioration in the security situation in the country. I would like to reassure all Nigerians that government would not shirk its responsibility in this regard. We will do everything possible to check criminality and put all miscreants out of business. Life and property of law-abiding citizens will be safeguarded. We must not condone any act of lawlessness.

Let me once again sound a serious note of warning : democracy must not be taken as a licence for irresponsible and murderous behaviour. Any such act will be firmly dealt with. The culprits will have themselves to blame.

For us to succeed in our war against criminals, we need that partnership between the state and the ordinary citizens. Without the support and co-operation of the people, not much can be accomplished even by the largest and best equipped police force. The people know the criminals amidst them. They have a duty to inform the law enforcement agencies.

We must not allow anything to divert us from the path we have chosen to put the country back on track. We are irrevocably committed and we ask all men and women of goodwill to join us in our efforts. By the Grace of God, together we will not fail.

I wish the Metropolitan Club a happy fortieth anniversary.

I thank you. God bless you all.

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
19TH WORLD FOOD DAY CELEBRATION**

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
19TH WORLD FOOD DAY CELEBRATION, ABUJA,
16TH OCTOBER, 1999**

'Youth Against Hunger'

I am pleased to be with you at this important occasion of the Agricultural Exhibition to mark the 19th World Food Day Celebration. Since 1981, the sixteenth of October has been globally observed as World Food Day, when a focal theme is selected for critical examination of national food problems. This year's theme, *Youth Against Hunger*, focuses attention on the efforts young men and women are putting into the fight against hunger; and how much more these youths could achieve if their contributions and potentials were fully recognised and supported.

Agriculture and food production is a top priority for our Administration. We promised so during the election campaigns, and we have consistently maintained this in words and in deeds since inauguration. We will not relent because food is not only a matter of life and death for an individual, but also an issue of security for a nation.

There is no area in which sustainable development is more important in terms of human welfare than in the field of agriculture. Our goal is to attain food security for all citizens within the shortest possible time. Moreover, all Nigerians should have access to enough food at affordable prices. This Administration will encourage and facilitate investment in agricultural production, storage, processing, transportation and marketing.

I equally recognise the fact that most infrastructural facilities are lacking and, where they are present, they are mostly broken down. This unsatisfactory situation has contributed to massive migration of young people to the cities, and may even be a factor in the brain drain as many Nigerians have opted for what they believe may be greener pastures in foreign lands.

At the inception of this Administration, I promised a pro-active rural development scheme which the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and other relevant agencies have since been pursuing. In order to stem the scourge of illiteracy and to invest in young people for greater productivity, this Administration launched the Universal Basic Education, UBE. A Poverty Alleviation Committee is currently working on a blueprint for comprehensive government action. With a collective resolve as a people, we shall succeed in our fight against hunger and poverty.

As part of our efforts towards agricultural development, poverty alleviation and food security for the nation, I invited the Director-General of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to the country in July 1999. During his visit, five areas were identified for technical support and co-operation with FAO :

- (i) Water Resources Development
- (ii) Food Security Projects
- (iii) Animal Disease and Trans-Boundary Pests
- (iv) Agricultural Community Marketing and Food Reserve
- (v) Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture.

In addition to the above identified areas, the Government is also actively pursuing complementary programmes in the areas that include the following :

- (a) the National Accelerated Industrial and Perennial Crop Production Programme,
- (b) Plant Quarantine Services,
- (c) National Seed Service, and
- (d) Post Harvest Technology amongst others.

The National Rural Farmers Empowerment Programme Committee was set up on the 11th of August, 1999, to draw up a blueprint for a comprehensive package of assistance and support for the small-scale farmers who form the bulk of primary food producers in this country. The thrust of this programme is to provide farmers with enough funds to enable them procure vital inputs for their agricultural production and marketing activities, purchase of bulls, animal drawn ploughs and carts, backyard poultry production facilities, sheep, goats and other small ruminant animals and cattle for dairy production.

There is an urgent need to have a strong federation of farmers' associations to represent the interests of farmers. Such a federation would have as members associations based on product lines as in cereals, poultry, ruminants, tubers, food trees, just to name a few. This federation will derive from farmers' own wish to work together and will be free of government interference in any form. I am convinced this federation will be a better and more fruitful option to the current situation where farmers are politicised and squander much time and energy on issues irrelevant to agriculture. We will encourage the establishment of this federation but definitely not interfere in it.

The Federal Government has developed an extensive re-forestation programme covering all the ecological zones of the country, including the training

programme covering all the ecological zones of the country, including the training of personnel in communities for sustainability. State Forestry Departments throughout the Federation are being assisted to establish multipurpose forest plantations of suitable economic species to combat and or ameliorate environmental malaise such as desertification, soil erosion and land degradation. Some of the plantations are designed to produce forest goods such as timber, poles, fodder including non-timber forest products such as honey, gums, resins, edible fruits, nuts, etc.

About five million seedlings have been produced for these various purposes, in addition to one million seedlings that were raised for distribution during the 1999 National Tree Planting Campaign that was recently flagged off in Gombe State. A forest resources study of the country has been concluded and the evolution of a National Forestry and Wildlife law is at an advanced stage. The Federal Government has also directed the introduction of large scale planting of economic trees in commercial quantities for foreign exchange earnings. Under this programme, the planting of date palms, mangoes, citrus, gum-arabic, palm trees in areas outside forest reserves is being encouraged. It is also expected that there will be a long shelterbelt stretching from Birnin Kebbi in Kebbi State to Maiduguri in Borno State. This is a gigantic project and is expected to be handled with all the seriousness it deserves.

There is no doubt in my mind that with responsible governance, all these programmes would go a long way towards meeting the aims and objectives of World Food Day. Most of these programmes are already being implemented and would be pursued vigorously by this Administration. I have no doubt that these measures would definitely meet the critical points of the World Programme of Action for Youth in the Year 2000 and beyond, as adopted by the UN in 1995.

I wish to commend the officials of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture who have successfully put together the programme for this year's World Food Day. Let me also seize this opportunity to commend the efforts of the organisers of World Food Prize, the highest international award for food production. It coincides with World Food Day. This award has continued to buttress the image of farmers and food producers, giving them the level of prominence they richly deserve.

I thank you all and wish you successful celebration.



**THE CEREMONIAL RECEPTION OF
THE LAST BATCH OF THE NIGERIAN CONTINGENT
(NGCON) IN ECOMOG OPERATION IN LIBERIA**



**AN ADDRESS
BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE CEREMONIAL RECEPTION OF
THE LAST BATCH OF THE NIGERIAN CONTINGENT (NGCON)
IN ECOMOG OPERATION IN LIBERIA
ABUJA, 25TH OCTOBER, 1999**

Protocol

On behalf of the government and people of Nigeria, I proudly welcome you all back home, sweet home after your tour of duty in Liberia.

Your tour of duty was in pursuance of our foreign policy objectives. Since independence, successive Nigerian governments have consistently paid special attention to the plight and conditions of our brothers and sisters in Africa, indeed in West Africa sub-region. Your service with ECOMOG is a manifestation of our concern and regard for the need to give priority and clear expression to the value of the bond that is part of the history of all Africans who inhabit the West Coast of the continent.

Under very difficult and trying conditions you have acquitted yourself creditably. For us as a nation, we have made sacrifices in human and material resources. Counting the dead, those killed in action, and those missing in action, our losses amount to about 500 men. And that is not to mention the hundreds who were injured, some of them maimed for life. We will never know the number of Nigerian civilians resident in Liberia who lost their lives in the process of the Liberian conflict.

It will be recalled that in response to political events in Liberia in late 1989, Heads of Government of ECOWAS countries established the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1990 to resolve the conflict. The ECOMOG operation in Liberia became known as *Operation Liberty*.

This Operation is a major one involving our troops outside our borders. The operation started in 1990 and ended in 1997 with the establishment of a democratically elected government in Liberia. The cost of this operation has been variously estimated. I will put the estimated cost to Nigeria at eight billion US dollars !

Presently our troops are still involved in ECOMOG Operations in Sierra Leone known as, *Operation Sandstorm*. With the recent signing of the *Lome Peace Accord* between the government and the RUF in Sierra Leone, our

Administration started the phased withdrawal of our troops in line with our new mandate.

The disposal of all the seized weapons and ammunition in Liberia and your return home signify the end of *Operation Liberty*. You can feel proud that you have significantly contributed to bringing peace and freedom to Liberia.

Now at home, you have returned to a new political climate of a new democratic dispensation that has been in place since 29th May. You have returned to a nation now governed according to the provisions of our national constitution. The era of military government is over. Gentlemen, you all have the responsibility of ensuring a lasting democracy by adhering strictly to your constitutional roles of protecting our territorial integrity from external aggression. I am sure that some of the experience acquired during your recent tour of duty will be useful for the roles which you are required to perform here at home.

As members of the Armed Forces you have a responsibility to improve the tarnished image acquired as a result of Nigeria's recent unpleasant experience of military rule. You are, as you have always been, part of the Nigerian society, and the onus is on you to bear that in mind in all dealings with the civilian population.

Our Administration aims to restructure the Armed Forces towards enhanced professionalism and inter-operability of the various services. This can best be achieved through training, military exercises and a regular updating of equipment and machinery. In this regard, the Government will look into your conditions of service, welfare packages and other incentives with a view to improving them so that you will all be adequately rewarded for your services. Already the Honourable Minister of Defence is touring all military formations in the country with a view to assessing situations as they are on the ground.

But let me remind the Armed Forces that the practices of the immediate past where standard, merit and discipline were jettisoned for who you know rather than for what you know, must stop. It is another form of corruption and malpractice which destroys efficiency, *esprit de corps* and performance in any human organisation, and more so in the military. I expect all officers at all levels to ensure fairness, justice, equity and discipline in the military.

Those who seek to procure unmerited and undeserved favour at the expense of their more deserving colleagues must see themselves as the enemies of their services. And those who succumb and give such unmerited favour do not deserve the trust which their ranks and positions imposed on them. The anti-corruption

crusade covers all aspects of our national life. While bad behaviour and malpractice will be punished, excellence in performance will be rewarded.

To the Past Force Commanders (FC) who are here today, I salute your courage, leadership, and discipline, without which today's memorable gathering could not have held. The medals I will present to you are in recognition of the able leadership you exhibited as commander to the troops in particular and the good image you earned for our Armed Forces and for our country in West Africa and indeed in the world. The nation is proud of you. And the nation is grateful to you and your families who at home bore the brunt of your sacrifices.

Gentlemen, I once more welcome you all back home and wish you a happy reunion with your families. As you go back to your units, put the lessons of the operation in Liberia into your training.

Thank you for a job well done.

God bless.



**ARCO FORUM FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, KENNEDY
SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS, USA**



ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY
ARCO FORUM FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, KENNEDY SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
30TH OCTOBER, 1999

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here at Harvard, a citadel of academic excellence, whose contributions to different areas of academic and human pursuits have in a profound manner shaped the visions of our world. I am equally proud to note that a number of eminent Nigerian academicians, scientists, administrators and businessmen passed through this great institution, and they too, in the traditions of this noble institution, made worthy contributions to nation building and development of our country.

I am glad for this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on today's topic. I consider the theme to be a matter of life and death for all Africans who in private and in public have reflected on the experience of the continent's history in the outgoing century. In addressing this subject, I will be speaking from my position as one of the typical ordinary Africans who are genuinely anxious about the African condition today, because we are deeply concerned about the fate of our continent, and we have been continually searching for ways and means to brighten the future prospects for the erstwhile Dark Continent.

The enormity of the crisis of underdevelopment in Africa, as compared to most of the other regions of the world, is a painful truth recognized by all. The massive scale of poverty and unemployment, the decay in infrastructural facilities, the impoverished living standards with regard to food, housing, water supply, education and healthcare are well known. The real tragedy is that the current situation represents the final stage in a steady decline in the quality of life in post-colonial Africa.

This descent into lower levels of poverty has been further compounded by violent social and political conflicts such as civil wars, which have dramatically intensified the scale of human suffering in many countries. In several countries, the experience of violence and brutality has dramatically transformed otherwise stable and dignified African peoples into helpless residents of refugee camps,

living on charity and in conditions of extreme distress, fear and insecurity. The agonies of these people have become regular news items flashed on television screens all over the world.

In countries where the people have been spared the destructive violence of internal wars, failed economic policies and repressive political order have combined to induce a steady stream of emigration of professionals and youth to more developed nations. This brainrain of professionals and active youths, who no longer envisage the possibility of a fulfilled life in their own countries, does also represent a major loss to the development potential of Africa.

In the light of the negative development experience and social turmoil, a number of observers, including Africans, have become pessimistic about Africa's capacity for recovery and progress. For such people the new concepts of *A Second Independence*, *African Renaissance*, and *The New Dawn*, currently propounded by significant political leaders, must sound quite utopian, if not pipedreams.

Development without the People

This learned audience will no doubt appreciate that no full account of the African condition is possible without adequate and appropriate reference to the impact of colonialism. As we all know, colonialism established its stronghold on a continent that had already been devastated and depopulated by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The immediate result was unparalleled historical transformation of a continent and its peoples. In the words of one of the early nationalist leaders, late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, 'Africa has suffered in the hands of foreigners like no other continent'. It is virtually impossible to estimate the full social costs of colonialism, from its inception, through its exploitative existence, to the huge human and material resources that went into dislodging it from our continent.

Africans are entitled to celebrate the exit of colonialism from their continent, just in time before the psychological deadline of the end of this millennium. At the same time, a look into our immediate past, not to seek whom to blame for our current woes, but to critically review our realities, will show colonial legacy as an impediment to Africa's progress and development.

Let us face it, the truth is that almost all modern African nation states were conceived and established by colonial design. And until independence, governance of these nation states was the complete antithesis of democracy, being government of exploitation, by the exploiters, and for the exploiters. No matter what apologists for colonialism have to say, all manifestations of progress and development experienced by African peoples under colonialism came by default, certainly not

by the design of those who came to our continent solely for what they could take. Hence the popular sentiments of the early nationalists who preferred freedom in poverty to affluence in bondage.

African nationalists who led their nations into independence have confessed to the daunting challenges in meeting the expectations of their hard-won freedom. Leadership of the nation state felt like the captaincy of a ship which, though legitimately belonged to Africans, had been pre-programmed to move in the direction of colonial goals and objectives. To achieve real nationhood, these African leaders needed to put the African societies and peoples back into the imposed geopolitical shells. They needed to make the governance of African citizens the responsibility of Africans themselves. National development needed to have Africans as the centrepiece, such that progress could be measured in terms of positive impact on the lives of the citizenry.

Mere change of name, as many African countries did, was not enough to subdue the inevitable debate over the nature and purpose of the acquired nationhood. Leadership of the emergent nations were impelled to find quick solutions to the inherited colonial contradiction of development concept de-linked from equitable and democratic governance. Success at managing this contradiction varied from country to country, depending on such circumstances as economic conditions, geopolitical size, ethnic composition, and the number of educated elites to push their differing political visions. But invariably, there was attendant confusion, often chaos and violent upheavals, that came with the formidable leadership task of re-focusing, re-orientating and restructuring the emergent African nation states.

Hardly an African nation escaped a phase of instability as political and intellectual leaders quarrelled and fought each other over the meaning of independence and the purpose of nationhood. And the notion of benevolent dictatorship gained ground as the stable means of moving African nations forward.

Military Subversion of Democracy

Military incursions into African politics in the sixties and seventies were generally greeted with degrees of euphoria. The ordinary African felt a sense of security with the uniform, so to speak. And political thinkers, in disregard of their liberal philosophical roots in democratic theory, hailed the unelected military rulers of the post-colonial state by ascribing to them several virtues.

According to the literature of the day, unlike the politicians who were prone to corruption, the military, by training, was composed of an officer class of honest gentlemen. Whereas the politicians were parochial, the military had broader orientation towards the nationalist interest. The politicians were also burdened with alleged subjectivism and irrationalities of traditional cultural heritage, whereas the military, by virtue of their professional role, were imbued with technical rationality, as well as efficiency. These professional attributes were regarded as eminently functional for development and political stability.

So, scholars argued that what was paramount was holding the nation together, not democratic governance. It was as if the people had no rational preferences or credible expectations from the attainment of political independence. The involvement of ordinary people in the decolonisation struggles was conceived, not as an outcome of the will to be free from colonial exploitation, but as the hypnotic effect of the charisma of nationalist leaders. By this reasoning, after the defeat of the external enemy, and the charisma of the leader had waned, the people reverted to their primordial constituencies which colonization had long ago defined as being in a state of mutual antagonism. Recall that the colonial state had earlier announced itself as a mission to rescue Africans from the ordeals of inter-tribal warfare!

Three decades on, we are now wiser about the military's ability to deliver either democratic governance or material and cultural development. The empirical record is one of shocking failure, except perhaps in one or two cases. The scale of comprehensive corruption and outright plunder of national wealth is truly mind-boggling. Dictators, in some instances, became wealthier than the nation. Rather than promote peace and unity, military rule in fact intensified social conflicts, violence and even provoked secessionist movements by groups claiming to be special victims of oppressive rule. In the last decade, as military rule lost its initial social attraction, it became increasingly tyrannical, wantonly violating human rights and degenerating into a harrowing one-man rule.

In the event, even the military as a professional institution became a victim of self-destructive intrigues of coups, real and imagined, as well as wasteful retirement purges. Redeemers became destroyers.

A good study would surely reveal that the African people were the first to withdraw their initial welcome from military regimes. But while the Cold War lasted, mass resistance by way of strikes, radical journalism, human rights and pro-democracy agitations, were easily frustrated by the international community. The evil regimes were quick to learn that by proclaiming ideological allegiance to

either of the super-power blocs, they would be guaranteed external military and diplomatic support against internal opposition.

The degree of principled international isolation of the Abacha dictatorship in Nigeria would have been difficult to achieve during the Cold War. This international isolation, and the encouragement of pro-democracy and human rights groups facilitated the tempo of internal resistance to dictatorship. Thus in the present circumstance, anti-democratic regimes are more exposed. Democracy is now the byword. Africa is now in the throes of a wave of transitions to democratic governance.

A Breath of Fresh Air

Once again, to invoke the recent experience of transition in Nigeria, there has been considerable relaxation of tension in our political atmosphere. There is a broad feeling of freedom from fear and the expectation that the rule of law can be consolidated into a national political culture. Fuel scarcity and the long queues at petrol stations have in truth vanished. In the last decade of military rule, Nigeria, an oil producing and oil refining nation, could no longer guarantee regular supply of fuel to the populace. The resolution of this problem within two months of our infant democracy has quite legitimately raised expectations about what can be achieved on the economic and social fronts.

But let me emphasise that our commitment to democracy and its values is not at all a theoretical matter. It is not a leisured preference for one constitutional norm against others. It is, on the contrary, a gut reaction to a lived and abhorrent experience. We uphold today the principles of freedom and individual liberty, and renounce tyranny in all its forms, because we have seen where dictatorship can lead us, what it can do to the human soul.

Our commitment to democracy today is not an option. It is a fundamental imperative. It is the one form of government that guarantees the unity of our country in a sustainable way. It is the only system of government that effectively protects us against authoritarianism and dictatorship. It guarantees individual rights and minority rights.

African liberation struggles were all inspired by democratic values and the expectation that only democratic self-governance could deliver genuine material and cultural development. The values of human dignity, equity, justice, and freedom from oppression, exploitation, poverty, and ignorance are core values of democracy. When the realization of these values was blocked by post-colonial dictatorships, the people resumed the struggle.

In the same vein, it is incumbent on our new democracies to deliver those social advantages that are concomitant with economic prosperity. If the prevailing tide of transitions are to concretize as genuine and fruitful democratic transformations, African leaders will have to address a number of challenges, some of which I will now elaborate.

The Challenge of Corruption

A common denominator of undemocratic rule in Africa—civilian or military rule—has been the vast scale of corruption. Apart from the great loss and wastage of national resources, which could have been deployed in enhancing the productive capacities of the national economies, the overt corruption offends the deep moral sensibilities and values of our traditional heritage. To steal from the community has always been considered a very serious offence. This code of behaviour, sadly, failed to be transmitted into the values of our modern society, with the result that some of those who commit crimes against the modern state can even return as heroes to their traditional communities.

The battle against public corruption corresponds intimately to African traditional values of honesty and justice. The impression that Africans have a cultural predisposition to be corrupt is simply a travesty of the truth. We are generous of spirit, and the extent to which we go to express our gratitude and hospitality could easily be mistaken for attempt to bribe, but this is no proof of innate corruptibility. Our expression of gratitude and hospitality never involves goods of excessive value, and it is done openly and transparently. When the gesture is excessive in value and perceived to have ulterior motive, it is declined. Our new democracies can signal their immediate departure from the immoral, undemocratic political culture and begin to harvest popular confidence by the determination to fight corruption without regard to any sacred cows. And that is exactly what we are set to do in Nigeria.

The Challenge of Human Rights

The experiences, under authoritarian regimes, of sadistic tortures, harassment of individuals and the criminalisation of political dissent were truly abhorrent to our people. The right of free expression, the right to advocate a different viewpoint, and to arrive at a consensus after free discussion, must all be considered as profound human needs. In any case, it is well known that African traditions place much premium on long discussion sessions ("palaver") prior to a consensual decision in the village and town assemblies.

The Challenge of Minority Rights

As a result of colonial imposition, most African states have majorities and minorities formed on ascriptive ethnic basis. Therefore, the content or form of democracy in Africa must not only recognise the equality of persons, but also the relevance of cultural units to which each individual citizen has a profound sense of belonging. It can therefore not be a simple question of the majority dominating political power and public life of the nation. Our democratic format and behaviour must show sensitivity to the fears of ascriptive minorities. And such sensitivities will need to be accommodated in the constitutions of the state. If neglected, the anxieties of minority groups invariably build up into veritable opposition, which can threaten the survival of democracy.

The Challenge of Gender Inequality

This is a question that has received much international attention, and African nations have been signatories to various international declarations. In ensuring equity in opportunity and access to significant positions in the society for women, our democratic transitions need a double sensitivity. They must be sensitive both to the traditional as well as the modern sources of patriarchal discrimination against women.

With special regard to the involvement of women in the politics of the modern state, our nascent democracies will need to deliberately facilitate the progress of women through institutionalized affirmative action. For example, to overcome the hurdles faced by women candidates seeking political office, it could be stipulated that political parties reserve some of their candidacy slots for women. Such a requirement would be an interim measure, for a limited period, until female candidates are routinely accepted.

The Challenge of Poverty Alleviation

People do not eat slogans. Slogans, ideas and concepts, which are canvassed among the people, must be shown to have practical outcomes for the improvement of their material and social circumstances. In other words, democracy must produce development or else it would lose credibility and relevance to people's lives. For democracy to endure, it must lead to improvement in the quality of life of the people. It must lift everybody above poverty line. I am convinced that absolute poverty can be eradicated. And it must be eradicated.

The Challenge of Youth Development

Undemocratic governance and its deformed development strategies have especially marginalised Africa's youth in the closing days of the twentieth century. They are also alienated and often abused. Yet teenage youths form about half of Africa's population today. Inadequate provision of places for basic formal education, unemployment, lack of recreational facilities and organized cultural activities, especially in the cities to which teenage Africans drift, lay the youths open to seduction into a disorientating culture of hedonism, as in drug abuse.

In the absence of coherent national programmes which have as their goal the stable development of youth into self-actualizing adult citizens, many fall prey to criminal activities and preventable deviance. In recent years, the abortion of the healthy futures of many an African youth has been completed with their induction as child soldiers into armed bands of power seeking dictators.

Our new democracies will need to design intervention programmes specially focused on the problems and needs of the youth to enable them become inspired bearers of democratic values. In this regard, the rights of youth to proper education, health care and employment will have to be protected if we are to sow the seeds of Africa's democratic future on rich soil.

The Challenge of Globalization

Globalization has been held up as an inevitable process, which now makes irrelevant the salience of nation-state boundaries. It is suggested that the shrinking of the world by rapid developments of information technology now supposedly transfers critical decisions in economic transactions to trans-national forces.

While African democracies cannot afford to shut themselves out of globalization, they must adopt strategies that give them leverage as sovereign players, and not as mimic states whose national budgets must be approved by international lending agencies. In this regard, the new democracies must shed old prejudices against regional co-operation.

The industrialised nations are entering the world market as blocs, note the European Union. African democracies must likewise enhance their competitive strength by consolidating their regional co-operative efforts and multilateral arrangements. The old pan-African vision will have to be revisited to enhance the economic and security empowerment of sales.

The Challenge of Cultural Identity

The development strategies of the new democracies must be such that progress does not become a self-alienating venture. The appeal for the preservation of an African cultural identity in a democratic Africa is not the same as the self-serving cultural projects often canvassed by undemocratic regimes, which seek to short-change citizens in the enjoyment of their full human rights by projecting false models of African democratic tradition. Rather, it is to deepen the conception of human rights of the individual with the positive heritage of the rich community and family values that still exist in rural Africa and urban neighbourhoods, despite the dislocations caused by colonialism and modernization. On this, we may recall the old negritude admonition of Leopold Sedar Senghor : "Assimilate : don't be assimilated !"

Nigerian Initiatives

In Nigeria we have goals which may be summarised thus : For us, democracy is not merely about forms of government. Free and fair elections are not ends in themselves, but only the best possible means for installing representative governments that can be made responsive to the collective hopes of our citizens, and justify their faith in their ability to change things for the better. Our administration has constantly drawn attention to the need for moral regeneration in our country. We reject an exclusively materialist definition of man's destiny. Man must not live by or for bread or naira and kobo alone. We believe that the state has responsibilities to its citizens, but that every citizen also has an equally important responsibility to the state, and to his fellow citizens. Human responsibility is the flip side of the human rights coin. We have in Nigeria singled out corruption as the greatest bane of our society. The pervasive growth of corruption in public life is one of the worst legacies of misrule and bad governance in the recent history of our country. Corruption was allowed to grow unchallenged and unchecked, even when it was glaring for everyone to see. The rules and regulations of doing official business were deliberately ignored, set aside or by-passed to facilitate corrupt practices. With the Anti-Corruption Bill going through the National Assembly, we hope to deploy all appropriate resources to fight corruption to a standstill. It is an all out war.

We have established a special panel to investigate human rights abuses by past regimes and individuals. Reports indicate that the panel has received volumes of petitions by Nigerians whose fundamental rights were violated. Some notorious members of the previous regimes, who have been severally named by surviving victims as perpetrators of assassination, detention and torture of dissenting citizens,

have now been brought to court to face prosecution. This recent development has further won the confidence of the public in the prospects of democracy.

Democracy-Development Linkage

The pursuit of abstract economic growth impoverishes development, if the economy is doing well, but the people are not. People's participatory involvement in democratic governance facilitates the centrality of their goals, values and choices in the development process. People are the end of development. And their well-being is the supreme law of development. Their democratic empowerment is the imperative of every development plan or programme. There is a long list of development plans that have failed because they were conceived above the heads of the people. Only programmes which fully take account of people's choices, their values, their skills and active involvement in implementation can capture their enthusiasm. The people themselves are the best initiators of development.

One basic problem of democracy, particularly in the developing country of Africa, is that it is a very expensive project. Apart from the enormous cost of funding numerous levels of government, democracy is expensive because by its very nature, it must seek to achieve multiple objectives simultaneously. Authoritarian regimes, for instance, are not obliged to bother much with environmental impact assessments before embarking on industrial projects. But democracies must constantly weigh economic value against such other considerations as the rights, and even the sentiments, of citizens who may disagree with objectives and benefits of a development policy.

It is not without reason, therefore, that dictatorships such as we have experienced in Nigeria, tend to prefer state-controlled economies in which the minutest decisions regarding economic and industrial policy are made by a few and imposed on the many. A centralised economy, by whatever name called, is much easier to manipulate and corrupt.

Our Administration, on the other hand, is determined to evolve a system in which the role of government is primarily directed towards the making of laws and regulations, the administration of justice, and the provision of general security and enabling infrastructure ; while the private sector is left with the major role of being the engine of growth and development.

Empowering private enterprise in this way is not, however, without its imperfections and distortions. Private enterprise depends a great deal on the ability to raise capital. And since we do not live in a perfect world, it is often the case that only those who already have capital, or can raise it, have the opportunity of

acquiring even more. A major task of democratic governance is, consequently, always to so arrange the affairs of the state as to continuously expand access to capital. But in spite of this and other limitations, private enterprise does minimise graft, greed and corruption, at least at the level of state operations, and democratises the process of economic and industrial planning and growth.

The Debt Burden and its Dangers

It is at the level of internal economic relations that the idea of a free market economy begins to show the contradictions and distortions inherent in it. In the mid-seventies, for instance, the United States Agency for International Development suspended all aid to Nigeria, on the grounds that Nigeria did not at the time require international financial aid, mainly because of the revenue it was deriving from oil exports. Indeed, a great deal of pressure was put on successive Nigerian governments of the time, by international financial institutions and multi-national companies, to go out and borrow money. Successful borrowing, the governments were told, was a persuasive index of the financial and economic health of the country. The first "jumbo" loan was obtained from the World Bank at this time. It was, in relation to the massive indebtedness of Nigeria today, a mere pittance.

But today, Nigeria's debt burden stands at well over 30 billion US dollars, and continues to escalate, not because of any further borrowing, but because of the interest that continues to accrue on the money already borrowed. In 1985 we owed the Paris Club around five billion US dollars ; we have not borrowed a cent since, but arrears of principal and interest have brought this figure to 21 billion US dollars today.

Conventional wisdom enjoins us to neither a lender nor a borrower be. A certain version of economic theory tells us, on the other hand, that the capacity to borrow is evident of a buoyant economy. Our reality, however, is much more prosaic. No significant measure of development is at all possible for as long as we must continue to pay up on these loans strictly in accordance with agreed schedules. Rescheduling is a mere palliative. It does not address the substantive problem of a huge and unwieldy debt exposure. Three times so far we have had re-scheduling and if anything, it had aggravated our debt situation and impoverished us further.

Democracy as a Global Project

Before now, it could be rightly said that we in Nigeria adopted democratic norms primarily because it, was the fashionable thing to do. In recent years, however, our experience of tyranny and dictatorship has transformed that

previously formal preference into a deep-seated, internalised creed. Today, we affirm democracy and its values because it is good for us, and not because the world demands it of us.

But why should the rest of the world be concerned with our peculiar predicament? Why should the industrialised world be interested in the fate of an impoverished Third World country like Nigeria? The reasons, I hope, are sufficiently obvious.

In the case of Nigeria, we could choose to severely minimise our involvement, if not totally repudiate our responsibilities to actively participate in sub-regional, regional or even global affairs. We could declare a policy of Fortress Nigeria, and withdraw from our major role in peace-keeping and peace-enforcement activities in ECOMOG, and the rest of Africa and the world. We could then use the money we save from such withdrawals to improve the quality of life of our own citizens.

But we reject all these options, and choose instead to remain valid and hopefully viable members of the world community. Taking this latter course means, naturally, that we as a government must continue to live precariously with the ever present possibility of internal discord and upheaval, arising from popular frustration. Very few of our citizens are ever likely to accept that fulfilling our international obligations justifies the inevitable deprivations they must suffer as a result of this. The prospect of sub-regional or regional disharmony is an even more tangible danger in these circumstances, if we should choose to look to the internal well-being of Nigerians, with scant concern for what happens around us.

And for these reasons, therefore, we respectfully ask : what is the dividend that we can legitimately anticipate in so deliberately courting internal hardship and possible social upheaval, as we meticulously continue to discharge our international responsibilities in world affairs, without a visible and reciprocal concern by the rest of the world for our own difficulties? Why, in these circumstances, is it so difficult for the industrialised world to understand and concede that we and they do have a mutuality of interests which need to be vigorously protected by them and by us?

When we demand relief, in terms of reduction, from our debts, we do so because such reduction would naturally leave us with greater resources to dispose, not only of our domestic responsibilities, but also of our international obligations. When we demand that the governments of the industrialised countries assist us in recovering the vast sums of money stolen from us and deposited in foreign banks, we do so because it would make it easier for us to meet our other international

obligations, and thereby afford us greater flexibility in respect of the speed with which we discharge our obligatory domestic commitments.

Essentially, however, what we seek is not charity, not even reward, but support and understanding. We are striving in Nigeria, instead, to create an environment that is conducive to investment. And that is what we seek ; Investment. We seek a fairer and more rational understanding of the difficulties that African countries face, especially as they strive to enthrone an enduring democratic culture, and simultaneously to provide for their peoples the basic amenities of modern living as proof of democracy dividend.

If ever there was any truth in the saying, that no man is an island entirely unto himself, surely it must be now, at the end of the twentieth century, when the interests of nations and states have become so closely interwoven that every upheaval in Kosovo, or in East Timor, has the potential at least of threatening the stability of the entire world.

We can find no rational justification for what now appears to be a policy of selective intervention, on the part of the industrialised nations. Ever so often we are told, that the major deterrent to active financial intervention in countries like Nigeria is their notorious instability, and their pervasive corruption. But it is inconceivable that Nigeria, for instance, could ever be any more unstable or corrupt, than Russia is today. Yet banks and companies from the United States, Canada, Japan and Europe are constanly falling all over themselves on the streets of Moscow, looking for whom to give financial assistance to.

It is surely hypocritical, if you will permit me to say so, that the older democracies should continue to harangue us in the younger democracies, about the necessity to persevere in our efforts to build sustainable democratic cultures in our countries, while at the same time refusing to make the most elementary concessions that are necessary for this project to have a realistic hope of succeeding. Where is the promised and much needed help to the economies in transition?

Poverty is not a democratic virtue. Poverty and democracy are strange bedfellows. Instead, poverty breeds frustration, and frustration frequently breeds aggression, both domestic and external. It cannot be in the interest of the industrialised nations that Africa, indeed the developing world, should be constantly in turmoil. A concession here, in the matter of reducing the hideous debt burden that we carry ; a concession there, in the matter of the repatriation of funds stolen from us, can achieve a great deal more than all the sanctions in this world can, after things have fallen apart, and the military have again intervened,

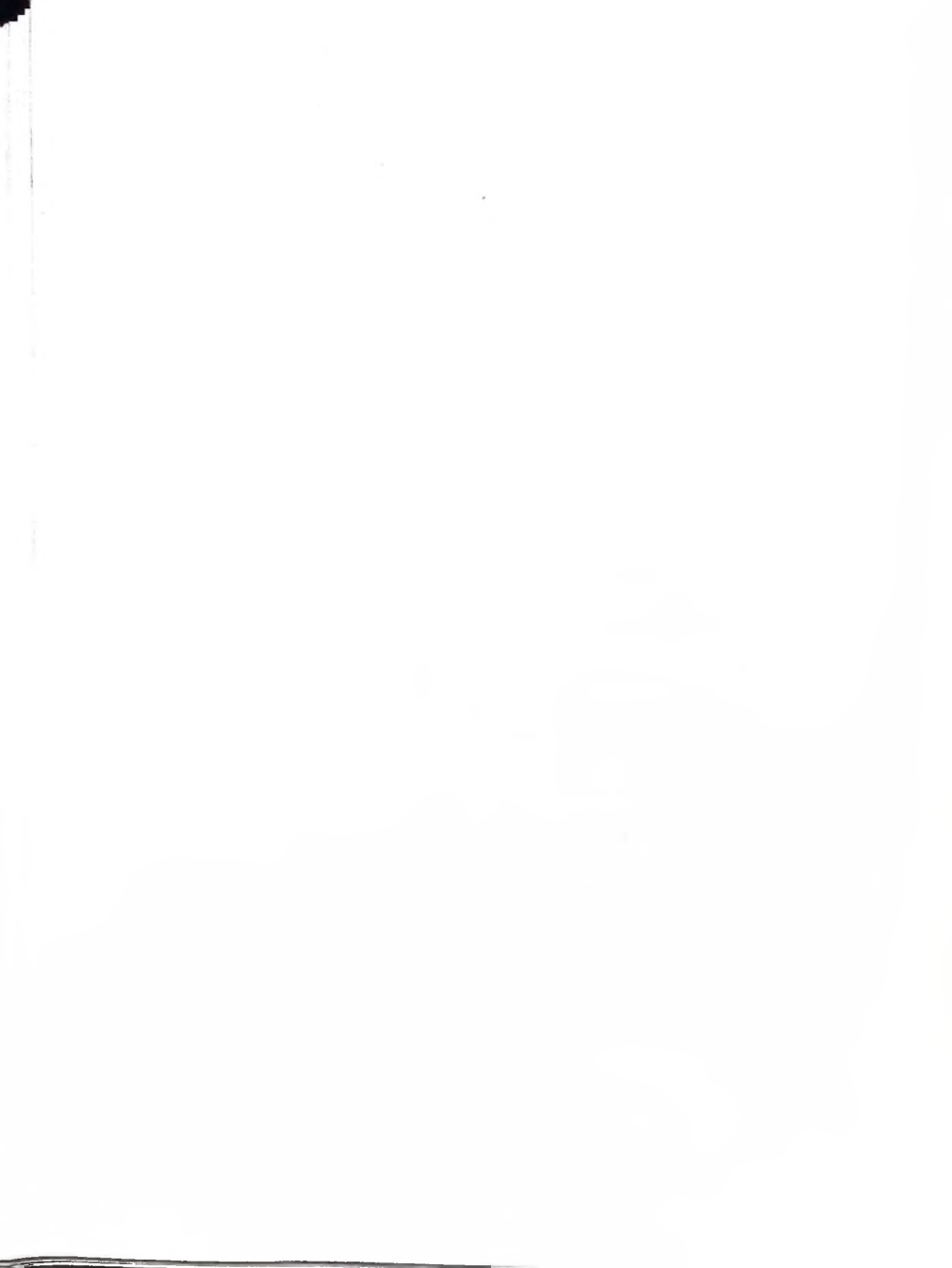
purportedly on behalf of the suffering masses. Then it would be too late. And nobody should blame us because we would have sounded enough warning.

This is the modest message I bring to you today. Let us all together work to build a fairer, more stable world in the twenty-first century. Let the strong sustain the weak. And let the weak be given a chance to pull themselves up by their own exertions. The new millennium will witness rapid progress if nations see themselves as each other's keepers. Let a lifeline be given in time where it is necessary to avoid double tragedy.

In any case, the struggle of Africans for democratic empowerment has been consistent through the ages. We feel confident that our young democracies will develop robustly in the new millennium. We are determined to move on from transition to real transformation.

I thank you. May God bless you all.

**NIGERIA : HOME FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**



ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
ON THE OCCASION OF A SPECIAL CONVOCATION
AT WILBERFORCE UNIVERSITY, WILBERFORCE, OHIO, USA
SUNDAY, 31ST OCTOBER, 1999

I would like to begin this address by referring to an apt observation made recently by one of the most outstanding African-Americans of our time, Ambassador Andrew Young, a true friend of Africa, and a brother. Describing Africa's current predicament, and the attitude of African-Americans to that predicament, he said :

Although African-Americans spend billions of dollars on air travel and investments in other continents, Africa continues to wallow in poverty and in dire need of investments because it has not opened its arms to its children in the Diaspora.

This statement encapsulates, exactly, the perennial debate over what should be the appropriate and proper relationship between Africa, the mother continent, and its siblings in the Diaspora. The age long question of the duties and obligations of all Africans, at home in the continent, or abroad in the Diaspora, remains a vexing one. One of the most persistent themes in African-American social, political and intellectual thought has been the varying conceptions of Africa, as a potentially revolutionary force in Black liberation ; as an ancestral home where true dignity, equality and humaneness can be experienced and as a 'wretched land' crying for assistance in the areas of investments and economic development.

Over one hundred years ago, Dr Alexander Crummell, a strong believer in redemption through African-American migration back to Africa, observed that the abject condition of Africa at the time cried out to all sympathetic hearts for rescue and assistance. It was, in addition, a particularly forceful appeal to all civilised men who had Negro blood flowing in their veins. Indeed, this sentiment of a home in Mother Africa has crystallised into a cluster of ideas and activities over the years, and has exploded, at various times, in such well-known historical events as the *Back-to Africa Movement*, the *Garvey Movement*, the *new Black Nationalism*, and the *Black Power Movement*. It has also found expression in such intellectual and creative activities as Negro Spiritualism, the Harlem Renaissance and flowering of Soul and Jazz music. It has also influenced the works of such prominent African-American intellectuals and publicists as Edward Blyden, George Padmore, W. E. B. DuBouis and C. L. R. James, and has even

given birth to a new field of scholarly concentration namely, African Diaspora Studies.

Thus, the search for a meaningful homeland, both in the physical and spiritual sense, for our kith and kin in the Diaspora has been one of the most challenging issues confronting the Black race since the days of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Even before the emergence of modern nation states in Africa, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, African-Americans who were disposed to return to Africa physically, often had to confront the dilemma of which country in Africa they should choose as authentic home. At different times, Liberia, Ethiopia, Ghana and even Tanzania have attracted attention, because they offered the greatest opportunity for the people of the Diaspora to help "redeem" and "regenerate" Africa. In other words, the image of a "renascent" Africa and the need for an African country to provide the bridge-head for engineering this new reality has always been present in our psyche. We have always yearned for a home in the sun, where the people of African descent would be free from the common experiences of racialism, oppression, victimisation, dehumanisation, impoverishment and exploitation.

You may recall that Nigeria, after attaining independence in 1960, began to attract the attention of our brothers and sisters in the New World, especially, as a place to invest their money, treasures, their intelligence, their mastery of art, their knowledge of the science, their practical wisdom, and every thing that would render them useful in the effort to build a strong, viable nation. Nigeria held a promise, which was widely advertised by the large number of Nigerians who flocked to the United States to study and distinguish themselves in their endeavours.

Nigeria remains today, by far, the most populous black nation in Africa, with enormous natural resources, an enterprising and talented population, and indeed a demonstrated capacity to respond to changes from without and within. Nigeria appears to be pre-destined to serve as a beach-head for African-American involvement in the regeneration of Africa. Our enormous forest, agricultural and other natural resources, our vast mineral wealth and our huge demographic mass, so fortunately capable of generating high internal demand for self-sustained growth, make Nigeria an attractive market for investors of capital, technologies and talent. I do realise, as so many of you have rightly observed, that the tragedy of my country has been her inability to convert her great potentialities into actualities. But we are prepared, and we shall do our utmost, to make her ultimately rank as one of the most industrialised and developed countries in the 21st century.

Specifically, Nigeria offers and will continue to offer a special attraction to African-Americans who are yearning for a "home" to live in, an attractive economic enclave in which they can invest their talents and capital. Here are my reasons for optimism. Firstly, despite the variations in style and emphasis, the formulation and execution of Nigerian foreign policy since 1960—the year of our independence, has stressed the restoration of black people's dignity through the elimination of colonialism, apartheid and racism around the world. We have always upheld and vigorously pursued a policy that enhances the welfare of Africans and of all people of African descent around the world.

These commitments have remained consistent elements in all our international pursuits. Indeed, the coincidence of colonialism, imperialism and racialism has integrated into the Nigerian vision of a new Africa, a pressing need to develop and strengthen meaningful linkages with the African Diaspora in America, Asia, Australia, Europe and the Middle East. We believe, also, that this commonality of interests and destiny should facilitate and promote the emergence of Nigeria as the focus and the home for African-Americans.

Secondly, the historical and cultural linkages between Nigeria and the African Diaspora in the Americas have always been very strong. As you are aware, a large number of the African slaves who were transported to the Americas, were from Nigeria. The Africans who were forcefully transported away through the Bights of Benin and Biafra, were mainly from the Yoruba, Nupe, Ibibio, Ijaw, Igbo and Hausa ethnic groups of my country. Yet, in spite of their cultural heterogeneity, and the cruelties of slavery and the slave trade, they were able to retain, establish and sustain enclaves of Nigerian Cultures in the Americas, which have survived up till this day.

I do not need to remind this distinguished audience of the vibrant Yoruba culture in Brazil and Cuba, which from there has spread to Argentina and Uruguay. Nor are you unaware of the fact that Nigerian languages such as Yoruba, Efik, Igbo, have impacted on Black English in such areas as word systems and the tonal use of pitch to differentiate meaning; and in such communicative processes as the African-American manner of self-expression. The point is that we do have in place a vibrant cultural base for erecting and broadening the understanding between Nigeria and African-Americans. This should now be extended to the area of economic co-operation.

The common educational experiences of many Nigerians and African-Americans do provide a major base for mutual co-operation. After all, early in this century, the United States of America was the place where many Nigerians

went to satisfy their insatiable appetite for education. As a land of opportunity, colleges and universities in this country provided and still provide much succour for Nigerians. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that many Nigerian intellectuals and professionals have had their academic grounding and political nurture in the American setting. They have also acquired many dynamic values in education, business and the professions.

It should therefore not surprise you that when Nigerians discuss politics, political systems and democracy, their views, attitudes and orientations are influenced by American norms. This is a major resource and a plank upon which to build the bridges of understanding and co-operation, in our mutual effort to rejuvenate and engineer a "renascent Africa".

Fourthly, in our search for props on which to anchor our new collaboration, we should not ignore, and neither should we forget the antecedents of collaborative efforts between our two worlds. You may wish to recall that many projects have been undertaken by such organisations as the *Africa House Project*, the *Council on African Affairs*, *The Garvey Movement*, the *Congressional Black Caucus* and *Trans-Africa*. You may also recall the presence in the Americas, especially in U.S.A., of a vigorous, articulate, purposeful, highly motivated and successful Nigerian community in virtually all areas of the American economy. This is a rare asset that is easily available for establishing collaborative and joint venture activities in Nigeria. Indeed, we are encouraged to find practical evidence of such co-operation in the upsurge of trade missions that have been visiting Nigeria to explore investment opportunities since the inception of the present administration. We however, need more than platitudes. We require physical presence and meaningful businesses that can quickly transform the lives of our people. This is a big challenge for all African-Americans.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the new democratic dispensation in Nigeria has created great hopes and a concrete basis for the establishment of a climate of freedom, security, equity, justice and political stability. These are values which you are fully familiar with in America, and which are equally essential for the sustained development of our country. I am aware that, for some time now, foreign investors, including African-Americans, have turned away from Nigeria, because of the insecurity, instability, and pervasive corruption, which were the inevitable consequences of long misrule of our country. Our recent experience of being a pariah within the comity of democratic nations—itsself a veritable source of anguish and agony for many African-Americans who looked to us for leadership of the Black world, has robbed us of investment opportunities. But I am happy to stand here today

and declare that this most unfortunate and traumatic chapter of our national history is closed for good. We have entered a new era in our national development effort, and we invite you to join us in a meaningful partnership for progress.

In the five months of this Administration, we have demonstrated an unflinching commitment to the sustenance of a democratic environment in Nigeria, with renewed emphasis on accountability, transparency, constitutionalism, the rule of law, equity, and justice. The anti-corruption crusade of our Administration is designed to create a transparently open and free society, which we consider essential for sustainable and enduring economic growth. The programme of privatization embarked upon by our Administration, along with the guarantees being put in place for security and protection of life and investment, should serve as an invitation to well-meaning American investors to become active participants in the exploitation of the enormous natural resources of our country. I would like to inform this distinguished audience that in Nigeria today, there exist great and profitable investment opportunities in such significant areas as Telecommunications, Information Technology, Tourism, Power Generation and Distribution, Agriculture and Food Preservation, Small and Medium Scale Industries, Iron and Steel, Transportation, Education and Environmental Protection. There is plenty of room for the discerning and enterprising investor.

On our part, we shall continue to ensure equity of access and opportunity for all Nigerians and this, we hope, will in the shortest possible time, end the agonies of such communities as may have suffered for too long from official neglect.

I am convinced that Nigeria offers the best opportunities and promise as a beach-head for the renewed project of African renaissance and rejuvenation in the next century and beyond. To play this role meaningfully, however, important policy issues must be tackled with the same vigour with which we are pursuing our transition to democracy project.

You may recall that in 1977, Nigeria hosted the First World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC). The Festival clearly demonstrated the global dimensions of the African experience, and its crucial role in the resolution of the cultural identity crisis, which has trapped the African world. Since then, there has been little sustained, systematic and determined efforts to address these concerns with concrete educational and cultural programmes, despite the commendable efforts of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation, which was set up in Lagos, among other things, to be a custodian of the artefacts that came from FESTAC.

This is clearly a situation that must be reversed. We need to do more to enlarge our pool of knowledge, and to reduce the rather high level of mutual ignorance between our peoples. To do so, I propose the establishment in one or two Nigerian universities, at the earliest opportunity, of Centres for African Diaspora Studies, to develop and promote systematic research into, and documentation and dissemination of relevant information on the global dimensions of the African cultural heritage. I firmly believe that African rejuvenation on the scale we are contemplating requires knowledge, which we must create, control and use to the mutual advantage of Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora.

As I indicated earlier, one of the stated aims of Nigerian foreign policy is the enhancement of the dignity, and promotion of the welfare of peoples of African descent around the world. In order to give renewed impetus to this objective, we shall pay greater attention to countries like the United States, with vibrant and visible populations of African descent. We shall complement this with an active engagement and involvement of the host African-American communities in the activities of Nigerian diplomatic missions abroad. We urge you—our kith and kin—to serve as important pressure groups, to help in influencing the host nations to support Nigerian positions, and Nigeria-friendly economic policies in international forums.

It is now known, and we accept the fact that two of the greatest impediments to rapid economic and technological advancement of Nigeria and indeed of Africa, are shortages of relevant technical expertise and investment capital. It is also widely known that America possesses some of the most advanced intermediate technologies of production, which are appropriate to our present circumstances. What is perhaps not sufficiently appreciated is that African-Americans, as well as recent African immigrants, notably Nigerians in the United States, equally possess enormous technological capacities and capital that can be profitably invested in the development of our country and continent. My plea and offer is that you, the African stock in the Diaspora, can act as catalysts for economic, technological, cultural, social and political development of your "home" countries. You should accept and pursue this responsibility to its fullest in the 21st century.

As we grapple with the problems of economic and technological backwardness, we shall deliberately seek to involve the expertise and capital within the African-American communities. I know that many of you are sympathetic to our condition in Africa, and are ready to participate, given the requisite stable political and economic environment, as well as appropriate incentives. In Nigeria,

we now have these in place. I invite you to join us in our project of national rejuvenation and re-birth.

Distinguished Brothers and Sisters, the social conditions in Africa today, particularly the poverty of our people, are and should be a matter of concern to all of us, particularly so, between Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora. Our kith and kin relationship is and should be an indispensable tool for our common project of African rejuvenation and regeneration, a matter which has been a major concern of African-Americans since the nineteenth century. Nigeria, today, is at the centre of this project for renascent Africa. Given her enormous human and natural resources, her enterprising, talented and highly educated population, given, indeed, our history of proven commitment to Pan-African causes, Nigeria, is now well-placed to play a vanguard and beach-head role in this new crusade for African economic and political emancipation.

Our faith in this project is further strengthened by the experience of similar groups who have successfully utilized the Diaspora concept in propelling the development of their nations. Let me therefore end this address with the apt observation by Edward Blyden, in his famous Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America .

"Behold, then, the Lord our God has sent the land before us, with its burning climate, with its privations, with its moral, intellectual and political needs, and by his Providence he bids us to go and possess it without fear or discouragement. Shall we go up at his bidding? If the black men of this country (America), through unbelief or indolence, or for any cause, fail to lay hold of the blessing, which God is proffering to them and neglect to accomplish the work which devolves upon them, the work will be done, but others will be brought in to do it."

African rejuvenation and regeneration through rapid economic, industrial, social, cultural and political development is a historic responsibility which Africans at home, and those in the Diaspora cannot shrink from. Its is a task that is fully worthy of our noblest exertions and our highest ambition. If carefully handled, it is an assignment that evokes the best hopes, and destiny of millions of people. It deserves your full support and co-operation. As we enter the 21st Century, we must move this project of renascent Africa from the intellectual and emotional plane, to the realm of moral, social and economic action. Nigeria is fully prepared to assume her responsibility in this project. I invite you to join us in the grand endeavour to awaken Africa.

Thank you. God bless.

**THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY
OF SENIOR EXECUTIVE COURSE No. 21
OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POLICY AND
STRATÉGIC STUDIES**

ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY
OF SENIOR EXECUTIVE COURSE No. 21 OF THE NATIONAL
INSTITUTE FOR POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES, KURU
6TH NOVEMBER, 1999

KURU '99 : NATIONAL POLICY PERSPECTIVES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Protocol

A graduation ceremony is not only a time for celebration, but also a time for reflection and rededication to original ideals of an institution.

It is fitting that we rejoice with the graduands who have gone through the intellectually taxing Senior Executive Course at this apex training Institute in Nigeria. At the same time, we expect that they in their turn will reflect on their activities in the last nine months, on the contribution of the Course to their intellectual development in policy and strategic matters, and on the ways and means of applying those benefits to the development of critical national issues. Let this particular Graduation Ceremony, which, incidentally, is the last at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies this century and millennium, be an occasion for the rededication of our graduands to the advancement of Nigeria's national life in all its ramifications.

Today, as we stand at the threshold of the twenty-first century, we should all commit ourselves to the concepts, methods and indeed the ethos of a new era. I urge you to join us in assuming the position befitting our nation within the new global order. Twenty years ago, Nigeria was ranked among the first forty-eight nations of the world on the economic ladder. At the time, we reckoned that with all the potential in material and human resources, Nigeria should be among the first twenty today. Little did we know that misrule, and mismanagement would drag us down into 176th and among the category of least developed nations in which we now find ourselves. Let us thank God for this opportunity to fully realise our potentialities which can make us rise to be at the fore-front of the nations of the world. We have the means. And we now have the resolve and commitment. By the Grace of God, Nigeria, by the current trend, should find herself among the first eighty nations in a decade's time.

The new trend of globalisation, which has gripped the world, cannot be an excuse for acquiescence or dependence that would allow others take over our

destiny, technologically or culturally. Rather, it is a challenge to our innate capability for innovativeness and excellence needed for the global competitiveness, which, in truth, is the essence of the much vaunted globalization process. Countries that undertake the necessary manpower development and skills, install the requisite technological capacity and are infused with the moral virtues of industry, equity, justice and transparency will compete successfully in the new world order. Needless to add that those countries who cling tenaciously to outmoded ideas, attitudes and technology, or allow moral degeneration to corrode their national sense of purpose, will surely be sidelined. Such countries will be de-linked from the forward march of progress through development.

Efficient communication is a fundamental requirement of globalization. The graduands of Senior Executive Course 21 have recognised this by making available donation of computers to the National Institute. And I commend them. But the Government also recognises the need for a thoroughly modernised telecommunications system with access to the internet and other forms of communication, whether print or electronic. Let me assure you that our Administration is committed to making available this sort of support within the shortest possible time.

In promoting the merits of globalization, the argument often seems to imply that the adoption of a private-sector led economy renders national planning irrelevant. Without gainsaying the vital role which the private sector should and must play in our economy, we rather believe that planning remains an indispensable spring-board for national development in an unequal and rapidly changing world. For a developing nation like ours, the outcome of the uncertainties and the inequities of the global economy are too important to be left to the unseen hands of the market forces alone. For this reason, I want to use the opportunity of this Graduation Ceremony to formally set forth the major outlines of our policy intentions and perspectives for the 21st century.

The Role of the NIPSS

The National Institute occupies an important place in the fashioning of a cohesive national elite appropriately equipped for the task of national development. Permit me, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as I refer to my remarks of twenty years ago at the formal opening of this Institute.

"I have in mind an Institution which opens its facilities ... to those individuals who aspire to high leadership roles in order that they can meet to learn from one another through exchange of ideas, and find solutions to national and international issues. It is therefore an institution in which all those who

have attained positions of responsibility in all professional fields, and on a national plane can bring their experiences and ideas to bear on all issues as they affect our ever-changing society, and the well-being of Nigerians. It should be an Institution where the best and most informed Nigerians are given the opportunity to apply their minds together in order to yield the best for our Society".

The National Institute has now attained the mature age of twenty-one years. In the course of its existence, it has made numerous significant contributions to the progress of the nation particularly in enhancing the leadership capabilities of top cadre Nigerians in various sectors of national life. NIPSS publications have contributed to the advancement of knowledge among executors of policy, politicians, academia and ordinary citizens. The *Nigerian Journal of Policy and Strategy* has taken up an ambitious position among learned journals globally. NIPSS books, monographs and numerous policy briefs to government on pressing national issues, have greatly enhanced the capacity of governance as a whole.

The National Institute has fostered better understanding of national problems through the Local Tours undertaken by successive Senior Executive Courses. At the international level, NIPSS has promoted good relations between Nigeria and foreign countries by means of the annual foreign tours. And, not least of all, as the ranks of the Alumni Association continue to swell, our nation stands to gain from the cross fertilization of ideas between individuals networked by mutual understanding that cuts across parochial interests, across professional pre-occupations and across ethnic divides.

Although, I must point out here the tragedy of how some alumni of NIPSS have acquired the image of being destroyers and failing to live up to the ideals and objectives contained in the founding precepts of the National Institute. And I sincerely hope all efforts will be made to quickly remove the negative rendition of mni.

When NIPSS was set up twenty-one years ago, it was our firm expectation that with the high calibre of operators we insisted on, excellence would be an everyday virtue in the environment here in Kuru. Now on the threshold of a new millennium, the hope which we invested in the National Institute is by no means diminished. Indeed, the formidable challenges and opportunities envisaged in the new global village make such an institution doubly relevant.

I am aware that the past 20 years have been like a roller-coaster ride for a fledging institution. In the rapidly changing scenes of governance, fraught with

bewildering conflicts and swings in focus and priorities, an institution like NIPSS was liable sometimes to deviate from its noble aspirations and lofty ideals. But we live to learn. The next course will be the first since the inception of the present Administration, and we will do all we can to make sure the Institute renews itself.

It shall renew itself by first overhauling its admissions procedure so that nominees are selected on a wide competitive basis and to cover a broader spectrum of society and the principal facets of human endeavour. Those who are admitted to the Senior Executive Course must have a record which is attuned to excellence. For the pursuit of excellence must begin with excellent material.

The National Institute must also renew itself by ensuring that its course content reflects the inflexible resolve to promote in-depth research, on an inter-disciplinary basis, into the social, economic, political, security, scientific, cultural and other problems facing the country.

The experience of being at NIPSS must focus in greater measure on extending the horizon of knowledge, outlook and conceptual capacity of each participant. Above all, at the end of the course, each participant should have so enhanced his or her perspective as to become a more complete patriotic Nigerian. In a nutshell, henceforth all those who possess the acronym *mni* after their names must not only earn it but must be proven catalysts for the development of *A Better Society*.

I will now turn to some of the principal areas which characterise our vision for the twenty-first century.

Political Development

There is more than a little truth in the belief that in a modern society, political development is a pre-requisite for economic progress. Nations in which the citizens enjoy true participation in the affairs of state are more likely to maximise national cohesion, unfettered by narrow sectional conflicts. It is under such conditions that harmony and social peace are entrenched such that the people can pursue their economic activities freely, purposefully and with commitment.

In the 21st century, Nigeria should fully attain the goal of participatory democracy in which the people would determine their political leaders within an electoral system. Democratic practice will not only require voting rights guaranteed to the individual citizen from the age of 18, it will also provide the opportunity of participation in the political process by special interest groups and minorities that are very often ignored in national politics. Particular care will be taken of the rights and needs of women, youths, the elderly, the handicapped, the intelligentsia, and ethnic minority groups.

A social contract, as it were, will govern the relationship between the people and the government at all levels. Government undertakes to protect and enhance the quality of life of all citizens, with good governance through inspiring leadership that is totally devoted to upholding the national constitution, and strictly guided by the moral codes of justice, equity, and accountability in all manifestations of national policies.

On their part, the people's responsibility will include dynamic patriotism, commitment to realisation of national goals, hard work, and the performance of civil duties necessary for a civilized polity.

Economic Prosperity

The economic prosperity which we seek for the twenty-first century should be prosperity with a human face. The people should not be mere numbers in macro-economic statistics but the final objective of prosperity whose welfare should be paramount.

Government will come out boldly to provide the enabling environment for prosperity through development of infrastructure, appropriate macro-economic policies and humane welfare packages that will eliminate abject poverty and despondency at the lowest rungs of society.

We are confident that the anti-corruption campaign would have been carried to its logical conclusion by the time this Administration is through with all necessary actions.

The principles that will guide economic matters should include the following :

(i) Participation of the people in the formulation and implementation of plans, policies and programmes ;

(ii) Better co-ordination and co-operation between government, the private sector, labour and the academic/research community ;

(iii) Food security as the foundation of genuine economic prosperity ;

(iv) Capacity building in the forms of manpower development in new emerging skills ;

(v) Responsible membership of the international financial community ;

(vi) Utilisation of local materials for industrial production ;

(vii) Improved management of governmental and economic affairs ;

(viii) Conscientious support for local manufacturing ;

(ix) Rehabilitation and enhancement of infrastructure and utilities ;

(x) Regional co-operation and integration.

Combating Crime

The current crime wave is threatening to place the Nigerian society under siege. As we know, this situation has the potential of crippling the economy and scaring away foreign investment. But the perpetrators of this evil will not be allowed to succeed. The Nigeria Police will be re-orientated and substantially strengthened in the next few years.

In recent times, the unwholesome connection between the level of crime and the drug issue has been dramatically exemplified in a number of foreign countries. The present intensified campaign against drug trafficking and drug abuse will continue until victory is achieved.

Education

The recently launched Universal Basic Education Programme has been designed to constitute a reliable foundation on which secondary and tertiary education will be based. The run-down Educational infrastructure—material and human—will be rehabilitated and refurbished.

A Caring Society

This Administration has clearly stated its firm commitment to eliminating absolute poverty in our land. Looking at the sheer abundance of the natural and human endowments with which this nation has been blessed, truly, Nigeria should have no truck with poverty.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it appears I have turned a relaxed Graduation Ceremony into a brainstorming session on policy perspectives for the twenty-first century. Let me now address the graduands. As you graduate, you constitute the vanguard of a new brigade assigned the task of actualizing these policy perspectives. Others will follow you. As you make progress in the realisation of these goals, Nigeria will be transformed into, a great and dynamic nation. It would also become a caring nation marching confidently towards a better society.

Finally, I extend the best wishes of the Nigerian people to the graduands. The nation looks up to you to play leading roles in our transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. May God Almighty continue to bless all your endeavours.

I thank you. May God bless you all.

**THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE
NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE**



**ADDRESS BY
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE
NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE
ON 8TH NOVEMBER, 1999**

The Vice-President,
Honourable Minister,
The Secretary to the Government of the Federation,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The development effort since independence has been characterized by huge public investments in all sectors of the economy. If we stop to take stock of total public expenditure in the nearly forty-years of our independence, we would find the sum-total to be staggering. Yet, in spite of these staggering expenditures, and in spite of our vast human and material resources, we have made only minimal progress with alleviating the sufferings of the majority of our people.

Though the short-comings of our development process include policy inconsistency as well as wrong policy prescription and articulation, the real problem is with policy implementation. Thousands of Government projects which were initiated two or more decades ago, remain uncompleted. These projects include the Ajaokuta Steel Complex, the Paper Mills at Iwopin, Jebba and Oku Iboku ; the Oshogbo Machine Tools and a number of multi-purpose dam projects, roads, etc. This situation is aggravated by the manifest inability to maintain existing structures. Those projects completed have been badly mismanaged and badly run down. In addition, corruption and lack of transparency have become formidable impediments to the efficient allocation and use of resources. They have become all-pervasive and pose severe, if not mortal, danger to our moral and civil responsibilities and commitments as a nation.

As you are already well aware, this Administration is committed to poverty alleviation through rapid economic growth and development. We will ensure efficient use of resources, speedy implementation of projects and we will tirelessly fight against corruption and indiscipline. The task before us is enormous and all hands must be on deck if we are to succeed. It is in this connection that this Administration has decided to reconstitute the National Economic Intelligence Committee (NEIC).

The NEIC was established in 1994 under an enabling legal instrument and it has performed reasonably well. This is reflected in its reports of studies, enquiries and the monitoring of projects. In addition, the NEIC has made several recommendations to Government on a broad range of issues which recommendations have helped in no small measure, in the last five years, to prevent the total collapse of our social and economic structures. It is hoped that the reconstituted NEIC will live up to expectation by facilitating the achievement of policy goals and objectives of this Administration.

The NEIC will continue to monitor the performance of the annual budgets by paying particular attention to policy formulation, policy implementation, capital projects, foreign exchange utilization, the exchange rate and interest movements as well as changes in consumer prices. It will also report to Government from time to time, on the extent to which monetary and fiscal policy objectives are effective. In addition, it will carry out other special assignments as may be directed by the President and/or the Federal Executive Council. The NEIC will be supervised by the Honourable Minister of Economic Matters and shall report through him to Mr President and the Federal Executive Council. The legal instrument for the NEIC is currently being revised to reflect Government thinking on its operations under the new dispensation.

I congratulate the distinguished ladies and gentlemen who have been appointed Members of the NEIC. I wish you a most successful and fulfilling tenure as members of National Economic Intelligence Committee.

**THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE
PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA TO NIGERIA**



4

AFTER DINNER STATEMENT
BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF
CANADA TO NIGERIA
ABUJA, 9th NOVEMBER, 1999

I have the honour and pleasure to welcome you, The Rt Honourable Minister Jean Chretien to Nigeria. I hope you and your entourage have a pleasant stay with us.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister, your visit is not only a veritable demonstration of the warmth in the relations between our two countries and peoples but indeed an expression of your confidence and support for the new path on which Nigeria has embarked. While we are all charged with a new sense of hope and great expectations in the rebirth of our country. I wish to assure you that we as Nigerians are very conscious of the requirements and demands for the entrenchment of the new order in our country. We know that we have made the right choice and are resolved to do our very best to build the new Nigeria of our dream.

Permit me, Your Excellency, once more, to express to you, your government and the people of Canada our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your commitment and unrelenting support for Nigeria and her people during the darkest days in our post-independence history. I wish here to put on record, our recognition of Canada's unique role in galvanizing international moral authority against evil in our land. The entire world was horrified by the extent to which Nigerians were being traumatised inside their own country, but many nations dithered and muffled their outrage with diplomatic expediency. Canada distinguished herself by unequivocally condemning and taking a firm stand against tyranny in our country. You were right and those who stood by diplomatic niceties were wrong. Nigerians will always remember Canada as a reliable and trusted friend. By your visit, we are reassured and confident of Canada's continued support and co-operation as we nurture our young and fledgeling democracy.

I would like you and the Canadian nation to be assured of our continued friendship and determination to entrench enduring democracy in Nigeria. You will always find in us a committed and dependable ally in the global struggle for the upliftment of humanity.

In the course of your visit, we have had the opportunity to put our heads together in discussions and agreed on specific actions not only to further consolidate and strengthen our two countries, bilateral relations but also to harmonise our position on major international issues.

Our discussions have been frank and very fruitful, reflecting the rekindling of the warmth which hitherto had characterised our relations and heralding a new dawn of understanding, mutual respect, friendship, co-operation and collaboration between our two governments and peoples.

I would want to recognise here your country's demonstrated commitment to the resolution of conflicts and peace-keeping around the world and in particular, the role and contributions made towards bringing permanent peace to the West African sub-region through the provision of logistic, financial and other forms of support and assistance to the human victims of war in Sierra Leone. With your Government's support, we have been able to establish normalcy and we are now in the process of consolidating peace in that country.

We, in Nigeria, share Canada's concern and are deeply embarrassed by the current climate of insecurity, conflict and war that have aggravated human suffering in the African continent. To us therefore, no price is too much to pay for peace especially in the African continent.

While one might make haste to attribute these to the result of misrule, misplacement of priorities of government policies, corruption and mismanagement on the part of past leaders, these alone do not completely explain the fundamental causes of the all pervading crisis which has continued to afflict Africa. The root cause of these conflicts and crisis is to be found in the impact of global economic disequilibrium, the external debt burden, lack of access to capital and declining overseas development assistance which jointly militate against the growth of states and their resultant inability to provide basic social services and amenities to the people.

These, and the situation where Africa alone accounts for 32 of the least developed countries in the world are unacceptable indices to carry into the new millennium. African leaders are very much aware of this, hence the resolve at the last Summit of the Organisation of African Unity to signpost the year 2000 as the **Year of Peace, Security and Solidarity in Africa.**

As we are resolved to do everything needed to bring all conflicts in Africa to an end, there is no gainsaying that our continent requires the support of all friends, Canada inclusive, and the international community to put an end once and for all to the unfortunate cycle of human suffering and under-development in order to prepare Africa to take up its rightful place in the global system.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to acknowledge and commend Canada's efforts towards the cancellation of Third

World debts. It is our hope that the international financial institutions and other creditors at the Paris Club would exhibit the same kind of understanding for our predicaments and grant the desired remission on our debt burden.

Your Excellency, it is also in this vein that I would like to call on your country to support and assist us in our efforts to repatriate to Nigeria, some of our monies illegally siphoned and stashed away in foreign banks. Apart from the contribution which the recovery of these monies would have on the recovery of our economy, we see this effort as part of the programme to institute accountability in our society by ensuring that public office holders understand that no place will be safe for their ill-gotten wealth and that they will no longer be left to enjoy their loot.

To Canadian investors and private business community, I wish to assure you, that this is the best time for us to enlarge the frontiers of our economic co-operation. Against the backdrop of the right investment and investor-friendly policies of our Administration, you should find that the scope and opportunities for profitable investment in Nigeria is very vast.

As you ponder over the wide areas opened for investment in Nigeria, let me, once again, assure you that the new "Nigeria" has set-off on a credible note and is committed to ensuring that the ills of the past are not repeated. We will, however, continue to look up to friends like Canada for co-operation and assistance in achieving this onerous task.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, to mark this memorable occasion, I would like to invite all present here to please rise and join me in a toast to the continued good health and personal well-being of the Prime Minister of Canada, a distinguished statesman and a great internationalist, the Right Honourable Jean Chretien, and for the peace, progress and continued friendship of the peoples of Canada and Nigeria.

Long Live Canada-Nigeria bilateral relations.

I thank you.

**THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF PUNCH NEWSPAPER**



**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
DELIVERED AT LAGOS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION
OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF PUNCH NEWSPAPER
ON THE 10TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1999**

I rejoice with you on this occasion of the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of your renowned Newspaper. I congratulate you on your remarkable achievements under extremely difficult circumstances. The courage, determination and zeal which have attended your struggles are a source of inspiration to the nation. I urge not only other newspapers but also all Nigerians to follow your example. I pay tribute to all those journalists who sacrificed their liberty and their lives in order that we could live free. With the emergence of a democratic government we can be consoled that their sacrifices were not in vain. We must, however, be vigilant to protect the freedom that we have won at so high a price. We should never forget that dictatorship and corruption, when it took root in our country, did not reside in one person alone but in various individuals and departments. These forces are still very much at work to undermine and destabilize the nation. We cannot therefore afford to relax or be complacent. Greater sacrifices are called for today than ever before. We must begin to think less and less in terms of what the nation can do for us and more and more in terms of what we can do for the nation. The transformation of our country requires the joint efforts of us all. It does not depend upon the leadership alone. It does not depend upon any one community or organisation. It must be the work of every Nigerian. No nation can achieve any significant growth without the sacrifices of generations of its citizens. Elsewhere in the world men and women are daily laying down their lives for their countries. We are not called upon to lay down our lives for our country. All that we are required to do is to give up greed, to give up corruption, to live and let live.

I am committed to the restoration of rights. I am determined that the machinery of the state should no longer be used as an instrument of oppression. I shall prosecute all those who violate the rights of others. I have already begun to do so. I appeal to all those who have acquired a culture of dictatorship to give it up. We have entered a new era : the era of the rule of law. Henceforth the nation shall be ruled by law and by law alone. Executive action shall not contravene the law and no one shall be exempted from the duty of obedience of the law. I should also point out that the Federal Government shall not hesitate to declare a state of emergency in any part of the country where there is a break down of law and order and the lives of citizens are threatened.

It is a tragedy that in spite of our great human resources we have been unable to achieve greatness. Instead we set for the rest of Africa a bad example. We used our great intelligence not to build but to destroy.

I call upon every newspaper to join the crusade against corruption. For many years your energies were directed at opposing the forces that threatened to destroy our country. Now that those forces have been overcome, you must direct your energies at reconstruction and rehabilitation. I need hardly remind you that this is your government. Together we paid the price for our freedom. Together we must rebuild the nation. On your part, you cannot do so unless you practise honest and responsible journalism. You have a duty to educate and enlighten yourself. Your duty is not just to gather and disseminate news but to educate the public. Do not therefore set for the nation a bad example by disseminating falsehoods, rumours and slanders.

I expect you to call to order those members of your profession who do not abide by the ethics of your profession. The Nigerian press must re-examine itself. Elsewhere in the world the press is agitating for freedom. Here the complaint is that you are too free. The role of the African Newspaper must necessarily be different from that of its European counterpart. You must avoid those vulgar and cheap publications which tend to deculturize our people. You must avoid publications which tend to brutalize the people and habituate them to violence. Your motive must be above, profit making.

I commend the initiative which you have taken to discuss the constitution. I assure you that I will not stand in your way. On the contrary I will do everything to aid and facilitate your work. Steps shall be taken to implement your recommendation if they meet the needs of the nation. The government's commitment to the review of the Constitution was recently demonstrated by my setting up a Technical Committee of the three political parties to make proposals for a review of the Constitution.

The 1999 Constitution, defective though it may seem, must be our starting point. The 1999 Constitution is a valid existing law and we must give effect to it until we can amend it to suit our needs. Whatever we decide to do we must follow the procedure prescribed in section 9 for its amendment. Unless we use it as the basis of our attempt at inculcating a democratic culture, the exercise will become chaotic and futile.

Many reasonable people have wondered whether in the present state of the nation it can give itself a credible and lasting Constitution. We are at the point

where corruption has become a part of the culture of the people. We can never achieve our fullest potential as long as we are corrupt. Our vision has become blurred by corruption. We are in no position to look into the remote future and make laws that will not only bind this generation but also generations to come. If we let ourselves be influenced by petty ethnic or parochial considerations, and if we bring that influence to bear on the making of our Constitution, then it cannot last. The only attitude which is valid and helpful at this time is that which recognizes our brotherhood with one another. We must proceed on the basis that we are citizens of one country, children of one God and reconcile ourselves to that destiny by which we were cast together under one roof. The Constitution must be acceptable not just to one tribe or another but to the nation as a whole. It must recognize our geo-political diversities but only for the purpose of forging a strong united nation.

There have been agitations throughout the country, in the North as well as in the South, for a review of the Constitution. That is in the spirit of democracy. We are entitled to give ourselves a Constitution of our own choice—a Constitution which is a reflection of our culture and experience. Even as we do so we must not forget that there is in existence a Constitution. We must not conduct our affairs on the basis of what we think the Constitution ought to be. We must conduct it on the basis of what it is. We must avoid any conduct or utterances which are intended to undermine the peace and stability of the nation. One thing we shall not compromise—the corporate existence of the nation. To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done.

The fault is not in the Constitution but in ourselves. It lies in our refusal to respect the rights and interests of other citizens. It lies in our unwillingness to obey the law. We have to give the government a chance. I appeal for patience and understanding. We cannot solve overnight, problems which have been with the nation for over thirty years. With determination, courage and honesty, we shall succeed.

Once more, I congratulate you.



**THE OPENING OF THE SEMINAR FOR
NEWLY APPOINTED AMBASSADORS**

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
AT THE OPENING OF THE SEMINAR FOR
NEWLY APPOINTED AMBASSADORS
NICON HILTON HOTEL, ABUJA
WEDNESDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 1999**

NEW HORIZONS FOR NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Let me say how delighted I am by this opportunity to make a few remarks on the occasion of the Seminar for the newly appointed Ambassadors.

You deserve to be congratulated on your appointments, especially as the process has provided for the Administration an opportunity to test the elaborate mechanisms for confirming our Principal Representatives, as provided for in our Constitution.

I am convinced that you possess the qualities requisite for your assignment. Within your ranks are former Ministers, seasoned career diplomats, scholars, retired senior military officers and eminent persons from the organised private sector, men and women who can be trusted to be our spokespersons abroad.

In my Inaugural Address in May, I affirmed our resolve to restore Nigeria fully to her previous position of prestige in international affairs. As principal representatives of our country, you will be playing a major role in the realisation of this objective.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are conscious of the linkage between a sound domestic policy and an effective foreign policy. For this reason, we have begun to take vigorous and purposeful measures to revamp our economy, sanitise our society and, generally, rehabilitate the Nigerian Nation. I am firmly convinced that this will lay a firm foundation for our country, so that we can quickly resume our active and constructive role in international affairs.

The current international situation poses many challenges for our diplomacy. The hope that the end of the Cold War would result in a better, more peaceful world has, regrettably, not been realised. There are too many flash points of conflict across the globe, particularly in Africa. Our sub-region is witnessing a resurgence of old conflicts, and seeking to resolve them is taking a heavy toll on the human and material resources of our various countries.

The challenge for us in Nigeria is to nip such crises in the bud or to seek to contain them as they erupt. Your task, in this regard, will be to employ all the tools at your disposal to ensure that we achieve this goal. I ask you to spare no effort in working towards the attainment of an era of peace, security, solidarity and sustainable

development in Africa in the next millennium, in conformity with the Algiers declaration of the OAU.

On the economic front, the much expected "peace dividend" arising from the end of the Cold War is yet to be reaped. Indeed, international resource flows still remain tilted against developing countries, resulting, in the case of Africa, in a situation in which we are now net exporters of capital. The heavy debt burden, unfavourable terms of trade, as well as the drastic decline in both Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment all constitute serious challenges for us. It will be your duty to devote time and diligence towards the resolution of these economic issues which is so important for our development and future prosperity.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, as we approach the new millennium, the question of regional co-operation and integration has assumed greater momentum. Africa cannot afford to be left out of this global trend. My Administration attaches great importance to the goal of regional co-operation and integration. We place great emphasis on Nigeria's relations with countries within the West African sub-region. And to us, ECOWAS remains a major pillar in the architecture of African integration, whose objectives would be realised as our continental initiative, the African Economic Community, becomes fully functional.

As Principal Representatives of our country abroad, I would expect you to help facilitate this process by encouraging interaction between all agencies of your host countries and their Nigerian counterparts. But this project should not be limited to government to government relations, but also people to people interactions. For ultimately, the aim of African integration is to unite all our peoples so that they can achieve their full potentials.

Nigeria's foreign policy interests today extends, however, far beyond our concern for the well-being of our own continent, Africa. The Debt Burden, for instance, is not an exclusively African predicament. Many countries in Asia, the Caribbean and South America are facing similar problems with it. It is imperative, therefore, that the countries of these regions harmonise their efforts in their search for a fairer deal from the industrialised nations of the West ; and this requires of us a more global approach to world affairs than was previously the case.

Furthermore, the last years of the 20th century have seen a spectacular rise in the significance of what might be called universal values : representative government ; world peace ; human rights ; international justice ; the war against drugs, to name a few. Since we ourselves endorse these values, it is clearly our duty to support and encourage every effort from diverse parts of the world to enshrine them as fundamental principles of all

national and international conduct. This also requires of us a posture in international relations which takes the entire globe, and not just Africa, as the canvass of our exertions.

And besides, our desire for rapid economic and technological development demands of us that we explore every nook and corner of the globe in our search, not only for state of the art technology but also for more appropriate technology from the industrialising nations.

Let me take a minute or two here, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, to outline for you what I consider to be the essential duties of our Missions abroad. As you all know, the past few years have been particularly difficult for our country. At the same time as Nigeria was experiencing serious cleavages at home, we began to lose our prestige and the respect with which we were previously regarded abroad. Nigeria was ostracised from the international community. Many countries severed relations with us, and some even imposed sanctions on us. This situation has had grave consequences for us, and even though things have begun to improve, I believe that a lot still needs to be done to retrieve our image. It will therefore be your primary duty to take all necessary steps to help clean up our image, and convince our foreign friends that we are well on our way to both ethical and economic recovery.

Needless to remind you that another essential obligation of our Ambassadors would be to attract as much foreign investment into Nigeria as possible. Yet an equally important assignment is for you to provide succour and comfort to all Nigerians abroad. In recent years, many Nigerians abroad have increasingly lost confidence and faith in the ability or even willingness of our diplomatic missions to come to their aid. And even if we concede that foreign-based Nigerians tend to have misplaced expectations of what our missions can do for them, the fact remains that in many cases, our various missions do not even have accurate figures of how many Nigerians live within their jurisdiction. I therefore expect that you will all see it as your duty to promote, defend and protect the rights and legitimate interests of all Nigerians in all circumstances.

I need not remind you that we do have a rich and vibrant culture. Our achievement in literature, sculpture, poetry, music and dance, in sports, as well as our eating and dressing traditions, are well known. I therefore expect that you will adopt innovative and effective approaches in employing this rich heritage as an instrument of our diplomacy.

I urge you to approach your assignments with your heads held high, with pride and confidence in a country that has undergone many crises, but is now poised to realise its full potential. You need no longer feel ashamed of your country. Indeed, I believe you can now afford to tell the truth about your country, emphasising that which is positive about us, while at the same time conceding that we still have a long way to go. It shall be your task.

Tell your host countries that our determination to wipe out corruption is a very strong one indeed. Educate and inform them on the steps we are taking to promote good governance, accountability, transparency and other democratic ideals. Convince them that we are working very hard to ensure the security and safety of all persons, property and investment within our borders.

I also expect you all to persuade all persons of African extraction in your host countries, whether they be Nigerians, or Africans or blacks in the diaspora, that Nigeria offers them an ideal environment for the domiciliation of black capital, and that we and they stand to gain a great deal from their investment in the future of this great country.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is obvious that the challenges we face in the coming years are numerous and daunting. To face them successfully, we must go beyond traditional approaches. The era of lack of accountability is over. And that goes for all public officers whether stationed at home or abroad. The misuse or misappropriation of public funds will no longer be tolerated. The success of your mission will in part be measured by how effectively you achieve the goals set for you. Each of you will periodically be assessed on the basis of specific objectives that will be set out in your Station Charters. These will include the prudent and efficient management of your missions, the stock of goodwill and investments that you are able to generate for Nigeria, and the extent to which you project a positive image for Nigeria. Your success will also be measured by your ability to promote and protect the interests of all Nigerians in your host countries. And in doing all this, you must at all times ensure that your conduct and comportment are beyond reproach.

I wish you all a successful seminar.

I thank you. God bless.

**THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FIRST EDITION
OF THE RE-ORIENTATION WORKSHOP FOR
DIRECTORATE LEVEL OFFICERS IN THE
FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE**

**OPENING ADDRESS BY
OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE
RE-ORIENTATION WORKSHOP FOR DIRECTORATE LEVEL
OFFICERS IN THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE
AT THE FEDERAL SECRETARIAT, PHASE II COMPLEX, ABUJA
ON TUESDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER, 1999**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Alhaji Atiku Abukakar,
Distinguished President of the Senate
Chief Evan Enwerem,
Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives
Alhaji Umar Ghali Na'abba,
The Chief Justice of Nigeria
Honourable Muhammed Uwais,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary to the Government of the Federation
Obong U. J. Ekaette,
Head of the Civil Service of the Federation
Mr Abu Obe,
Chairmen, Federal Civil Service Commission
and other Statutory Commissions,
Permanent Secretaries,
Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Founder and Executive Director
African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies,
Distinguished Resource Persons,
Distinguished Participants,
Gentlemen of the Media,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand that this Re-Orientation workshop, like the one held for Permanent Secretaries in the first two weeks of our assumption of office, enjoys a number of names, one of which is "Mr President's baby". Associating me with God's greatest gift to mankind, i.e. baby, is a manifestation of the immense goodwill and love which fellow Nigerians have for me. The decision to organise this programme for the Directorate level officers in the Federal Civil Service is

predicated on the universal consensus that the public service is the core instrument and apparatus for formulating and implementing policies of government. During the intervening period between my election in February and my inauguration in May 1999, I initiated series of brainstorming and consultative fora to discuss core national issues and one of the striking and recurrent issues was the over-riding need to refocus and reinvigorate the civil service to match the stride of this Administration and meet the challenges of the next millennium.

Nigeria must be part of the global village in which nations are designing reinforcement and refining measures to provide the strategic direction needed in the area of development and meeting the needs of the people. As the experience of some countries has demonstrated, it calls for a strong State that invests heavily in the building of human and social capital. Emphasising this point, the general Assembly of the United Nations at its 50th Session, called for an administration that is responsive to the needs of the people, promotes social justice, ensures universal access to quality services and productive assets and creates an enabling, environment for sustainable people-oriented development. It also reaffirmed the importance of enhancing the quality of public administration and called for the creation and maintenance of an enabling framework without which citizen participation is like a football game on an uneven playing field.

The success of the seminar for Permanent Secretaries and its positive impact on the system has greatly encouraged me to request the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation to design a similar programme for Directors and the lower rank in collaboration with the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies. I am pleased that the programme has been designed and is finally taking-off today.

As I had observed at another forum, this Administration assumed office at a time when morale was at its lowest ebb in the civil service and when it was functioning as a rudderless ship. There was clear evidence that the civil service had been severely decimated and that civil servants had even lost confidence in themselves. I must commend the great resilience of our civil service and the speed at which it woke up from slumber to respond positively to the realities of our time. Given the right political leadership and resources coupled with training and retraining, the Nigerian civil service can regain its lost glory. This Administration will continue to give priority attention to the development of the civil service to sustain its dynamism, responsiveness and relevance to the needs of the nation. We believe that the service will reciprocate this gesture through enhanced productivity and service delivery.

The catch-phrase today in development and modernisation literature is that under-developed countries should move away from the level of government-centred economies and embrace the private sector and market-driven economic development philosophy. The success stories of many developed countries lend credence to this school of thought. It must also be emphasised in the same breath that private-sector-led development will be a mirage without a strong and stable government rolling on the wheels of a virile professional civil service.

The mission of this Administration is to move Nigeria forward to become a strong, strategic and proactive State. We want to rebuild Nigeria into a democratic State that listens and communicates ; that actively seeks partnership with civil society actors ; a State whose public service is responsive and accountable, **and** whose decision-making processes are transparent and open to public review. **The** nature of this State also defines the profile of the new public service that is **required**. The values of this service, its knowledge base, career patterns and management must be re-assessed in the light of emerging needs.

Whenever I think of the issues of good governance, I recall a Swedish labour leader who once said "my experience of bottles tells me that the bottleneck is always at the very top of the bottle". This adage clearly illustrates the importance of having good managers at the higher levels of the public service. Without appropriate top managers, an organisation cannot achieve its optimum. With sub-standard managers at the top, the performance of an organisation will be poor and operations tend to get blocked. The bottleneck is also present in organisations which lack systematic mechanisms for delegation and for accountability. Although the performance of top managers is crucial, it is, of course, equally important to have corresponding quality of performance at all management levels. This Administration will accord very high priority to institutional and capacity building in the public sector in its effort to re-engineer and re-direct the public service to become more efficient, more confident more disciplined more people and more service-oriented.

Right from our first day in office, we have made a resolute commitment to fight corruption in all its virulent forms in all parts of the system. Although the battle is far from over, the signs are encouraging. The society at large has recognised that while inadequacy of resources is one of our problems, mismanagement of the little we have, largely through corrupt practices, is the more impactful. Our people have, as such, accepted that for us to get to the promised land as a nation, we must spare no efforts in carrying the battle to corruption. Corruption is dangerous to the very soul of the nation, and this Administration refuses to stay in bed with it.

When this programme was first being put together, the venue was supposed to be one of the major hotels in town. Somewhere along the line, there was a change of mind and the venue was shifted to this building. I have been informed that, as part of the infrastructural facilities put together for this programme, an Information Technology Centre has been established in this Complex. This has been done at great expense, and I hope efforts will be made to see to it that the Centre stays functional not only while the programme lasts but even for long after it might have been concluded.

In consonance with the policy and resolve of this Administration to chart a new course for good governance in Nigeria, a great deal of premium is placed on making the higher public service the vanguard of this effort. This was what informed putting the Ministers and Special Advisers through a retreat with Permanent Secretaries even before they were sworn in. I believe the time has now come, after about six months in office, to assess how well we have executed the responsibilities of our office. I have therefore asked the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation to plan a follow-up joint retreat for the Ministers, Special Advisers and Permanent Secretaries. The Head of the Civil Service of the Federation will be informing those concerned of the details once the arrangements are completed.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to declare open this First Edition of the two-week Re-orientation Workshop for directorate Level Officers in the Federal Civil Service.

Thank you and God bless.

**THE INAUGURAL SUMMIT OF THE GULF OF
GUINEA COMMISSION IN LIBREVILLE, GABON**

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
ON THE OCCASION THE INAUGURAL SUMMIT OF THE GULF OF
GUINEA COMMISSION IN LIBREVILLE, GABON
ON FRIDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 1999**

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. It is with profound delight that I welcome my brother Heads of State and Government to this inaugural Summit of the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

I would like to express, on behalf of the government and people of Nigeria, my deep thanks and appreciation to our host, President Omar Bongo, for the warm and brotherly reception accorded my delegation and to all other participants at this important Summit. By agreeing to host the first summit level meeting of our nascent organisation. President Bongo has once again demonstrated his abiding commitment to the ideals of African co-operation and integration.

Our meeting here today, in this beautiful city of Libreville, is a gathering of brothers and neighbours committed to strengthen the notion of good neighbourliness brotherhood, friendship and co-operation.

Today we are part of history, witnessing the birth of an organisation that, I am convinced, would contribute to the promotion of peace, security, economic co-operation and integration as well as the promotion of sound environmental policies in our sub-region. These will no doubt contribute immensely to the uplifting of the socio-economic conditions of our peoples.

The aims and objectives of our new organisation are also consistent with the spirit of our two continental organisations, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the African Economic Community (AEC). They are also in consonance with the global trend towards concerted regional action aimed at addressing common concerns.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. We are all very familiar with the long history of inter-action between and among our coastal peoples, inter-action which pre-dates the advent of colonial rule. This people-to-people inter-action has confined for years. Independent of governments and other artificial barriers that were later imposed by colonialism. We as Africans are the same people, notwithstanding the ravages caused by our common colonial experience. Let us therefore resolve once again, to break down these artificial barriers by making the formation of the Gulf of Guinea Commission a successful reality.

Nations cannot escape the destiny of being neighbours. Especially when they have been brought together inexorably by the fact of a common geography, a common history with strong cultural ties. We as governments must recognise the aspirations and yearnings of our citizens for closer people-to-people inter-action, for greater cross-border economic opportunities, and for a more stable national and sub-regional environment within which to carry on their legitimate pursuits unencumbered by artificial obstacles. We must therefore give our people the framework within which to realise their full potential.

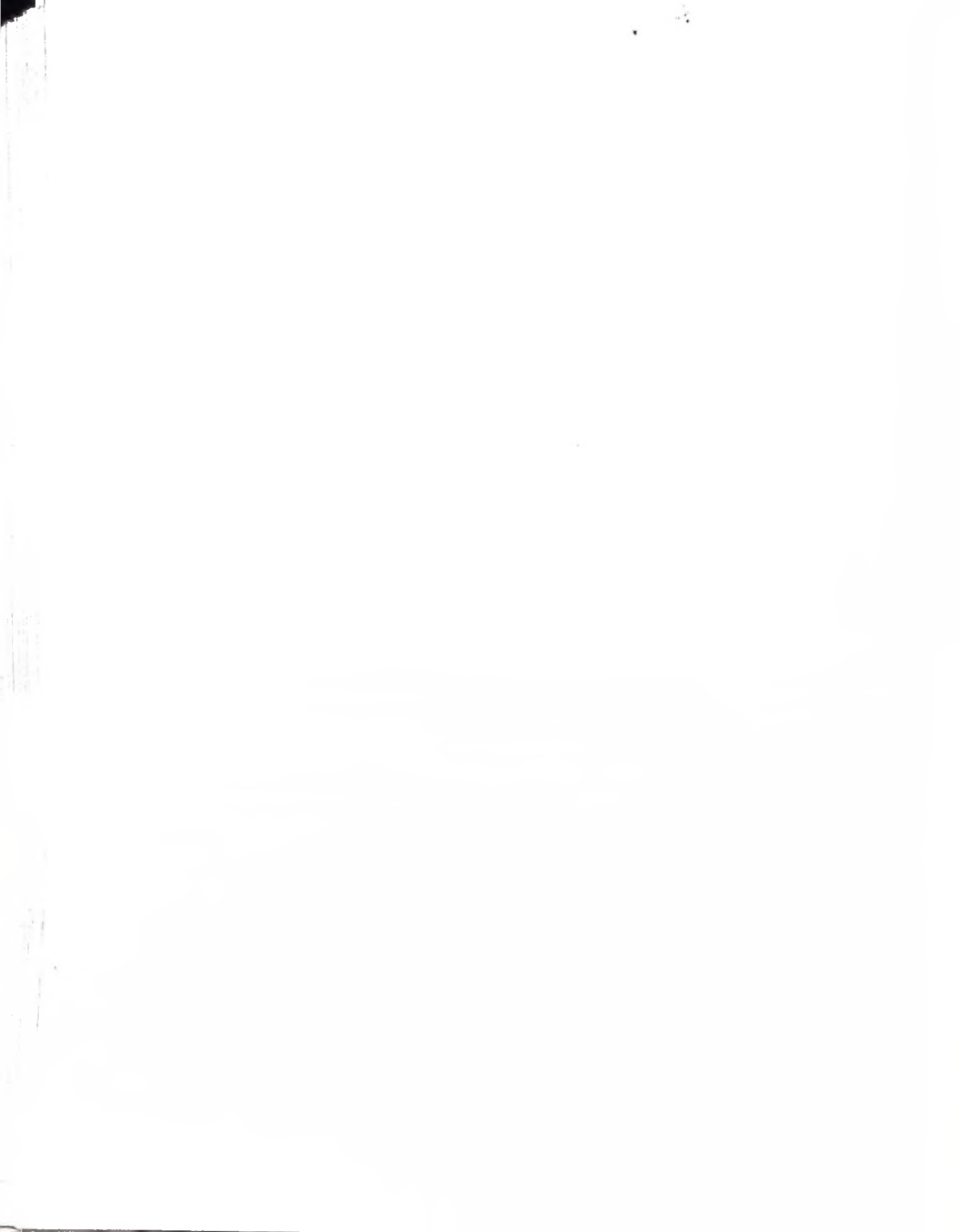
We must also recognise the need for a concerted approach to problems such as environmental pollution that would otherwise not easily lend themselves to solutions pursued individually by one country. Above all we must not allow outsiders or outside interests in our natural resources to instigate us against one another.

This inaugural Summit of the Gulf of Guinea Commission is an affirmation of our collective belief in the potential benefits of the organisation to our peoples. The Gulf of Guinea is rich in fisheries, oil and other natural resources, the exploration of which we must ensure is harnessed for the benefit of our people. We must define a framework for preventing and resolving conflicts. Human interaction has a way of generating friction but, like friction in machines, a lubricating process is necessary to reduce the heat and damage. We must succeed in preventing potential sources of conflict that unhealthy competition could very well engender among ourselves.

We must be determined to take full advantage of this historic opportunity. We owe this not only to ourselves as leaders but, more importantly, to our citizens who are at the centre and who stand to benefit from the process of development. Indeed, we owe it to Africa as a whole, the continent with the lowest level of regional co-operation and integration, to succeed, if our continued marginalisation is to be reversed in the next millennium. We cannot and should not fail in this venture.

I thank you all.

BUDGET 2000
PEOPLE'S BUDGET



**BUDGET ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
TO THE JOINT SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ABUJA
WEDNESDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 1999**

It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I present to you the budget of the Federal Government of Nigeria for the year 2000. This is unique in the sense that this will be the first full budget conceived by this Administration. When we came in on 29th May, 1999, the majority of the population welcomed the change with hope and undaunted optimism that the era of denial of individual freedom and downward spiral of the economy is over. Their hopes and aspirations were based on the belief that the new democratic dispensation will provide the basis for full and equal participation in charting the correct path for sustainable economic growth and development.

Overview of the Economy in 1999

On assumption of office, this Administration found that some of the economic measures of the immediate past exacerbated the instability which had plagued the economy for quite sometime. For instance, governments had continually failed to arrest the critical shortage of petroleum products which had disrupted the economy for some years. By the end of May, 1999, a deficit of 250 billion naira had been incurred instead of the planned deficit of 14.2 billion naira during the five months of the year.

The extra-budgetary spending compounded the excess liquidity problem. Consequently, there was pressure on the Naira exchange rate both at the AFEM and at the parallel market. Naira exchange rate at the AFEM depreciated from 86 to 95 naira for one US dollar, while at the parallel market it moved from about 88 to 105 naira for one US dollar. The downward trend in inflation was reversed. From 8.9 per cent at the end of October, 1998, it moved to about 13 per cent by May 1999.

This Administration inherited a prostrate economy, characterized by declining capacity utilization in the real sector, poor performance of major infrastructural facilities, unsustainable liquidity position and rising levels of unemployment and inflation. In response, this Administration took urgent steps to mop-up the excess liquidity in the monetary system, stamped-out the phenomenon of shortage of petroleum products and greatly improved the performance of major infrastructural facilities, especially by reducing power outages across the nation. By August 1999, inflation rate had declined to about 10.5 per cent.

This Administration submitted a Revised Budget to the National Assembly in August, 1999 with a recurrent estimates of ₦169.6 billion and a capital estimates of 40.1 billion naira. The National Assembly, however approved recurrent and capital expenditures of 113.3 billion naira and 82.02 billion naira, respectively. Although the Revised Budget was based on a crude oil price of 18 US dollars per barrel, the average realised price for Nigeria's crude oil as at the end of September, 1999 was still below 17 US dollars per barrel. This Administration has therefore been conscious of the level of revenue inflow in the implementation of the approved Revised Budget so as to avoid the emergence of a large deficit at the end of 1999.

Despite the macroeconomic achievements of this Administration, basic structural imbalances persist. These include the lingering problems of import dependence, reliance on a single economic sector—oil, weak industrial base, low level of agricultural production, a weak private sector, high external debt overhang, inefficient public utilities, low quality of social services and unabating unemployment. Policies and programmes are therefore being evolved within the framework of the budget for the Year 2000 to address these problems.

Policy Thrust for the Year 2000 Budget

The policy thrust of the budget for the Year 2000, is to lower the inflation rate, lay a solid foundation for private sector led economic growth, pay profound attention to education and agricultural production, and consequently reduce unemployment and poverty.

Thus, with this budget, the government aims to :

- (i) provide the framework for taking Government out of direct involvement in most economic activities which are best suited for private sector undertaking ;
- (ii) provide the enabling legal, fiscal and monetary environment for the private sector to become the effective engine of growth and development in the economy ;
- (iii) up-grade the performance of major infrastructural facilities ;
- (iv) continue to improve the operational capabilities of the law enforcement agencies at crime prevention, detection and control ;
- (v) continue with the policy of probity, transparency and accountability in order to reduce the cost of doing business in Nigeria ;
- (vi) fight illiteracy through the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Scheme ;
- (vii) intensify the pursuit of poverty alleviation and enhanced food security through fiscal incentives to lenders and borrowers for agricultural production ; and by encouraging each state to concentrate on at least one crop for massive

and intensive production within the state ;

(viii) improve the health of the population through the rapid up-grading of our preventive and curative healthcare delivery system, with particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS.

The year 2000 Budget will therefore open new and sustainable economic opportunities to all Nigerians for the pursuit of honest and fulfilled life.

To achieve the above stated objectives, the following strategies will be employed :

(i) government investments in companies quoted on the stock exchange are being sold off and the exercise will be completed during the first half of year 2000.

(ii) hotels, vehicle assembly plants and other manufacturing enterprises with government holdings will be actively prepared for privatisation during the course of the year ;

(iii) the privatization of utility companies and other capital intensive enterprises will begin during the year with the establishment of regulatory framework for the sectors followed by drawing up modalities for effective private sector participation ;

(iv) reduction of tariff in favour of imported raw materials and rehabilitation and resuscitation of infrastructural facilities to encourage increased capacity utilization ;

(v) budget deficit will be kept at not more than three per cent of GDP and ensuring that Ways and Means advances, where required, are kept within the statutory limit of 12.5 per cent of expected revenue ;

(vi) strict implementation of the anti-corruption law when enacted by the National Assembly ;

(vii) increased budgetary allocation to the education, health, energy and agricultural sectors ;

(viii) bilateral and multilateral negotiation with Paris Club creditors to secure debt service and debt stock reduction ;

(ix) emphasis on aerial geo-physical survey and exploration of solid mineral deposits to encourage private investment in the sector ;

(x) establishment and full implementation of the Niger Delta Development Commission.

Revenue Outlook for 2000

At 18 US dollars per barrel, and an export volume of 1.836 million barrels per day, total receipt from government crude during the year 2000 is estimated at

572.9 billion naira. Petroleum Profit tax is projected to yield 100.0 billion naira, while oil royalties are expected to generate 112.2 billion naira.

Domestic crude of 300,000 barrels per day is sustained at 1999 levels but valued at export parity and therefore estimated to yield 187.8 billion naira during the year 2000. Upstream gas and other miscellaneous earnings from the oil sector are projected to generate 41.3 billion naira in year 2000, as compared with 3.6 billion naira in 1999, the wide variance being accounted for by the projected sale of gas feedstock to the NLNG project which is expected to generate 20 billion naira in year 2000, in addition to expected increase in internal gas consumption.

Consequently, total Federally collectable revenue in the year 2000 is estimated at 1,260.0 billion naira, an increase of 274.8 billion naira, or 27.9 per cent vis-a-vis the revised 1999 Budget estimate. Total inflow from the oil sector is estimated at 1,014.1 billion naira, while non-oil sources are expected to generate 245.9 billion naira.

Federal Government Retained Revenue

Total Federal Government retained revenue in the year 2000 is estimated at 387.3 billion naira, as against 301.7 billion naira in 1999, an increase of 85.6 billion naira or 28.4 per cent. Included in the retained revenue is Federal Government of Nigeria's Federation Account share of 344.1 billion naira. Federal Government of Nigeria's share of VAT of 9.1 billion naira ; Federal Government independent revenue, net of levies, of 19.1 billion naira and privatisation proceeds of 15.0 billion naira.

Expenditure Estimates

Total Federal Government budgeted expenditure for the year 2000 is 470.0 billion naira, as against 340.6 billion naira in 1999, an increase of 129.4 billion naira or 38.0 per cent. Out of the 470.0 billion naira, 300.0 billion naira is for recurrent expenditure, while 170 billion naira is for capital expenditure.

In the face of the enormous social problems presently facing this country, ranging from unemployment, poverty, and inadequate provision of social amenities, as all of you are aware, this Administration is constrained to incur a manageable deficit budget of 82.7 billion naira or 2.2 per cent of the GDP. This is intended to reflate the economy and to create the required atmosphere for growth and development.

Recurrent Expenditure

A provision of 170 billion naira has been made for personnel emoluments to make up for the observed under-funding in public service pay in 1999 and the

additional expenditure on the members and staff of the National Assembly during the year. All the democratic institutions, legislative and executive, have to be adequately provided for. The provision also gives room for some negotiated wage increases during the year. Total vote for overhead expenditure is to increase from the 1999 level of 45.1 billion naira to 60 billion naira. Since the large deficit incurred during the first five months of 1999 had been securitised, the vote for domestic debt service is increased from 16.3 billion naira in 1999 to 70 billion naira in the year 2000.

In the effort to achieve a realistic **wage bill** in the public service, government has intensified efforts at eliminating the **ghost worker** phenomenon. Accordingly, the office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation and the office of the Accountant-General of the Federation have been mandated to commission an external manpower audit of the Federal Public Service. At the end of the exercise, the office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation would publish in the gazette, staff list of all public servants during the year 2000 which will be updated regularly.

Domestic Debts

In the last four years, government has made substantial provisions for the settlement of debts owed by ministries and agencies to local contractors and suppliers. The exercise was intended to be a short term measure. It would appear however that ministries and agencies are being encouraged by the provisions to disregard extant rules and regulations and keep incurring extra-budgetary commitments. This practice must stop. Disciplinary action will henceforth be taken against any ministry or officer involved in the award of any contract **without** ensuring that sufficient funds are available to pay for such a commitment.

Capital Expenditure

Despite the increase in crude oil prices since the second half of 1999, government's revenue forecast for the year 2000 remains very dismal. A total of 170 billion naira is proposed for funding the capital development programme of Government during the year, as against 118.7 billion naira in 1999, an increase of 51.3 billion or 43.2 per cent.

Out of the capital allocation, 20 billion naira is earmarked for the settlement of part of the debts owed on the National Priority Projects. If the proposal for 30 billion naira in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill for 1999 is approved by the National Assembly for the same item, the vote for year 2000 would bring to 50 billion naira the amount which will be used to reduce the accumulated debts on these Projects.

With effect from January 1, 2000, all the projects being implemented as National Priority Projects will be transferred to the appropriate ministries to form part of their normal capital programmes. An inter-ministerial committee has been set-up under the chairmanship of the Federal Ministry of Finance to verify, reconcile and recommend appropriate payment procedure for all the debts incurred on the projects up to 30th September, 1999. Work done by the various contractors after the date will also be covered under the allocations to the relevant ministries for their capital programmes from the year 2000.

Also, out of the capital vote for the year 2000, another 20 billion naira will be used to fund special capital items of strategic importance to the machinery of government. An additional 10 billion naira is provided to offset part of the liabilities of PTF. This amount will however be passed to the line ministries who after certifying the work done will effect the payment. I wish to seize this opportunity to re-affirm that the PTF interim management committee will not award new contracts or vary existing contracts. The remaining 130 billion naira in capital expenditure is allocated to various ministries and agencies in accordance with government priorities. The entire capital programme is focused on poverty alleviation using an inter-sectorial approach. Therefore, all projects which are being funded in the various sectors will be implemented in such a manner as to complement one another in the efforts at rapidly reducing poverty, illiteracy and enhancing security of life and property.

State and Local Government Finances

In year 2000 the Federation Account Revenue is estimated at 709.5 billion naira. The existing formula will be maintained until the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission has completed its work and the National Assembly has passed the enabling law. Therefore the States will receive 170.3 billion naira and Local Government Councils 141.9 billion naira, and Special Funds 53.2 billion naira. The sum of 61.7 billion naira has been provisionally allocated to meet the minimum of 13 per cent derivation.

Also, in year 2000, the estimated Value Added tax is put at 60.7 billion naira. In line with the VAT sharing formula, States will receive 30.4 billion naira, and Local Government Councils 21.2 billion naira, in addition to the allocation received from the Federation Account.

Indebtedness of State Governments

External debt service is currently treated as a first line charge on oil revenue. Many states borrowed without considering their ability to repay the loans as and

when due. Some have over-borrowed while others, particularly the new States are yet to do so. The present arrangement whereby external debt service is treated as a first line charge on oil revenue breeds inequity as States that have not borrowed do not get their fair share of Federation Account Revenue.

In order to introduce fairness, treatment of the provision of External Debt Service as a first line charge will be reviewed. Deductions at source should be made from statutory allocations of debtor States. However, in doing so, the amounts to be deducted should be worked out between the States and the office of the Accountant-General of the Federation.

Fiscal Policy

The Fiscal Policy for year 2000 has been designed to increase the level of government revenue and to promote overall economic development. In this regard, priority sectors like oil and gas, export processing zones, solid minerals and agriculture will receive increased fiscal incentives.

Non-statutory waivers of import duty—Since the inception of this Administration, approvals for Import Duty waivers have been strictly based on existing statutes. There is however, the need to review some statutes that have given too many incentives to certain sectors thereby bringing such incentives in line with the economic realities of the country. Towards this end, it is intended that in the year 2000, an Inter-Ministerial Committee will be set up to review and make recommendations to government which will be submitted as a bill to the National Assembly.

Port reforms—Imports destined for Nigeria are still diverted to Ports of neighbouring countries. This is due to relatively high port charges, and levies. This results in loss of revenue in terms of import duties going to neighbouring countries. Government will therefore remove all bottlenecks at our ports in order to make them investor-friendly.

The Port reformers will involve the installation of high-technology X-ray scanners in our ports. It is a useful technology in detection of illegal drugs, arms, hazardous and prohibited goods. The Private Sector will therefore be invited to install and operate the X-ray scanners services at our ports on build-own-operate basis.

Tax policy—The tax policy of government for the year 2000 is geared towards a low tax regime, with low income tax rates, generous incentives and reliefs to reduce tax burden on tax payers. The effect of these measures is to broaden the tax base and to raise higher revenue from other non-oil tax sources, particularly in the consumption tax (VAT and Duties). In the Year 2000, government will improve

the tax assessment and collection machinery. In this respect the capacity of tax Authorities will be strengthened with qualified, competent, well-trained and motivated staff. In addition, State Tax Authorities will be encouraged to put in place permanent institutional framework required for efficient and effective tax administration.

Value Added Tax—The flat rate of five per cent for VAT will continue in the year 2000. Government is determined to improve on the efficiency of VAT administration by greater penetration into all industrial groups, government agencies and small business enterprises. Consequently, the 50 VAT offices embarked upon in 1999 will become operational in the new year. To facilitate disposal of VAT cases, members of the eight (8) Zonal VAT Tribunal will be inaugurated early in the year. Furthermore, the VAT base will be widened by the removal of some items from the exemption list. However, all Agricultural equipment and inputs will be exempted from VAT.

In spite of efforts to ensure full compliance with the VAT laws, government agencies (Federal and States), as well as the Local Government Councils, have not been very co-operative. To remedy the situation, Government will introduce a VAT Clearance Certificate to be issued to all VAT payers.

Petroleum Profits Tax—The approved tax incentives granted to oil companies in recent years for exploitation and utilization of associated gas have been promulgated into law. Government will encourage the flow of investment into this sector in the new year through the sustenance of the incentives ; it is however observed that government is unduly subsidizing gas operations with Tax Payer's funds. A situation where out of the sum of 140 billion naira projected as revenue from Petroleum Profit Tax in 1999, only 26.8 billion naira was realised at the end of September, 1999, due to set-offs against petroleum profit taxes is unacceptable. Government will therefore review the issue of incentives and set-offs as they relate to the oil and gas sector. The new memorandum of understanding will come into effect during the year.

Production Sharing Contracts—In the 1998 Budget, the companies that signed the production sharing contract with the government in 1993 were granted Investment Tax Credit of 50 per cent of qualifying capital expenditure. The Investment Tax Credit so granted has been misconstrued to apply to companies that signed production sharing contract with Government after 1993. The Petroleum Profits Tax will be amended during the year to rectify this error.

Companies Income Tax

Self-Assessment—The filing of Self Assessment became compulsory for all companies as from 1998 assessment year. However, it has been discovered that many small and medium size companies are yet to embrace the practice. Government will enforce compliance in the Year 2000.

Insurance Companies—The tax laws have not kept pace with the developments in the Insurance Industry. Government will initiate the amendment of Companies Income tax Act in line with the modern trend.

Supply of Petroleum Products—It is worthy to note that Government has been the main supplier of these products through importation and local refining at a fixed pump price. This has turned Government into a monopoly and has discouraged private sector participation. In order to reverse this situation, Government has chosen to deregulate the petroleum product market in order to encourage private sector participation and ensure regular and timely supply of petroleum products. With immediate effect, the petroleum products market will be fully deregulated and domestic crude allocation to NNPC would be paid for at export parity.

External Debt Management

Efforts were made in 1999 to sustain the success achieved in the management of our external debt as was done in the preceeding years. No substantial increase has occurred in our external debt figures in 1999, as against the 28.77 billion US dollars recorded at the end of 1998. This was attributable to the fact that since the lifting of the embargo on external borrowing, no new loans have been contracted. Also, our debt figures are now more reliable as a result of various conciliation and verification measures. However, some categories of debts were not serviced, particularly those owed to the Paris Club creditor countries as well as arrears on post-cut-off date debts. Due to resource constraints, Government has set aside 1.5 billion US dollars for External Debt Service in the year 2000.

World Bank Funding

Government formally indicated intention to resume on limited basis, concessional borrowings in 1999. However, no credit was accessed in the year. The World Bank assisted projects portfolio in Nigeria has been dwindling and it presently consists of nine (9) projects. There would be four (4) projects only in the portfolio in Year 2000 if no new facilities are accessed. In view of our country's budget financing gap and development aspirations, Government will in Year 2000 access highly concessional credits from both Multilateral and Bilateral sources to

help in closing the financing gap as well as meeting the developmental aspirations of the country. In this regard, Government will seek financial assistance from the World Bank in funding social sector and poverty alleviation projects, especially in agriculture, education, health, water and sanitation, rural electrification, SME's and women and youth development.

Negotiations in respect of these proposed World Bank assisted projects, namely the Economic Management Capacity Project (EMCAP), Small Towns and Sanitation Pilot Project, Privatisation Technical Assistance Project, and Second Primary Education Project will be concluded before December 1999, while the projects would become effective before the middle of Year 2000. About 13.0 million US dollars would be drawn from the three projects in year 2000. In addition, a sum of 77.986 million US dollars is projected to be drawn cumulatively from the four on-going World bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development assisted projects during the year. However, if Nigeria successfully secures a stand-by arrangement with the IMF, it could make the World Bank grant additional financial support to Nigeria during the fiscal year.

Recovery of Stolen Public Assets

Our drive to recover stolen money continues. Since June we have recovered 119,768,530 US dollars, 100 million naira, and 13 properties valued at 325 million naira. We have succeeded in freezing accounts worth more than 600 million US dollars.

Some of our efforts abroad have often been impeded by complex legal procedures which tend to make recovery of our stolen assets not too easy. However, a number of foreign governments and institutions have been particularly helpful. We will not relent in our efforts until we have achieved significant success in getting back all that is recoverable.

The Poverty Issue

It must be seen, by every one of us, as a major source of embarrassment that over 70 per cent of our population live below the poverty line. This is in spite of the abundant natural and human resources that have been bestowed on our great nation. One of the major issues that this administration has undertaken to resolve, is this lingering poverty that has stricken our people along the length and breadth of the nation. The extent of poverty has reached frightening proportions primarily due to the neglect of past governments. This is a plague that we must jointly address, and together we must strive to conquer it. To achieve this objective, the full co-operation and commitment of the Federal Government, the National

Assembly, the State and Local Governments must be pooled effectively. We must today pledge to wipe out this scourge in the medium term, beginning from this budget.

The strategy to be employed in this respect, is to empower our citizens in both the rural and urban areas to produce, with a view to improving their quality of life. This empowerment would come in the form of the provision of the necessary socio-infrastructural tools that will make this transformation happen. If we can increase the disposable income of all concerned through real production by an average of 10-15 per cent per annum over the next 10 years, then we can, as policy makers, claim success. And we cannot afford to fail.

To begin the process, I have directed the Ministry of Finance to design a comprehensive and feasible Medium Term Poverty Reduction Plan. The plan would entail the establishment of a Poverty Reduction Fund which must begin in the year 2000. Negotiations are currently on between Government and the IMF, and depending on the successful completion of a stand-by arrangement, a donor-funded poverty deduction fund of one billion dollars will be established. Our strategy would be to identify priority, programmes and projects in the areas of rural electrification, water supply, women and youth development, primary health care, agriculture, food, security and education. This project would be grassroots initiated. The State Government and the Local Governments will be fully involved in the design and actual implementation of the programmes that best suit their environments. The Federal Government will therefore serve primarily as a catalyst and mobilizer of resources.

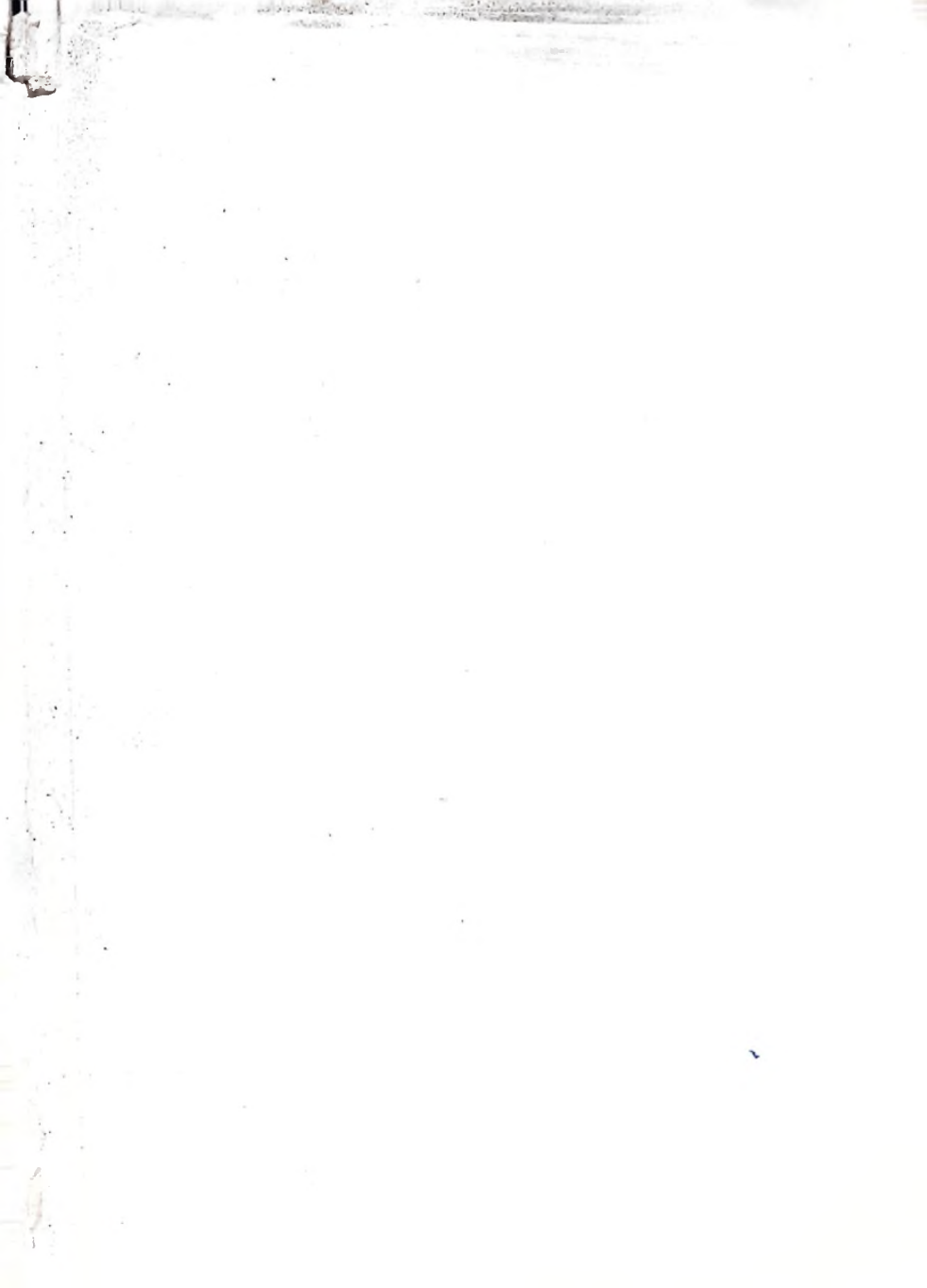
Over the next 3 years, this program will engage the attention of this Administration as well as the interested State and Local Governments. Together we shall embark on a process that will once and for all put to rest this embarrassing issue of abject poverty in our land.

Conclusion

Distinguished members of the National Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to seize this opportunity to register my appreciation for the concern and expediency you exhibited in the deliberations of the supplementary budget review submitted earlier. I would fervently appeal for your understanding and co-operation in your consideration of the Budget 2000 which I have presented to your esteemed selves today. One paramount issue of note is that Budget 2000 is our budget. By this, I mean both the Executive and the Legislature. Indeed it is the People's Budget.

I thank you.

NATIONAL BUREAU OF NIGERIA
GOVT. DEPARTMENT SECTION
AREA 10 OFFICE ABUJA
Received by Checked by
Sign: *JKD* Date: *18/7/2000*
S/N:



*A Publication of the Federal Ministry of Information, Abuja ;
Printed by Federal Government Press, Mobil Road, Apapa, Lagos*