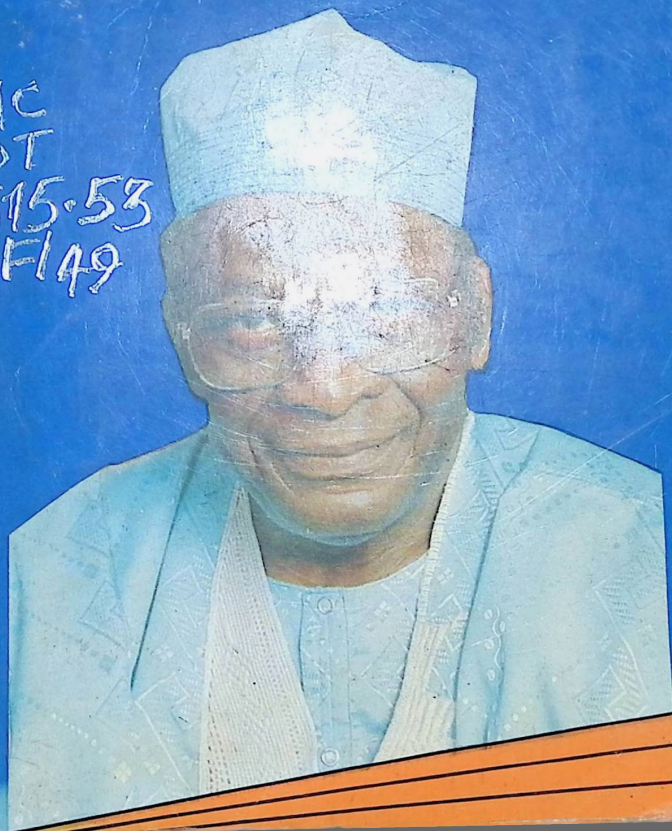


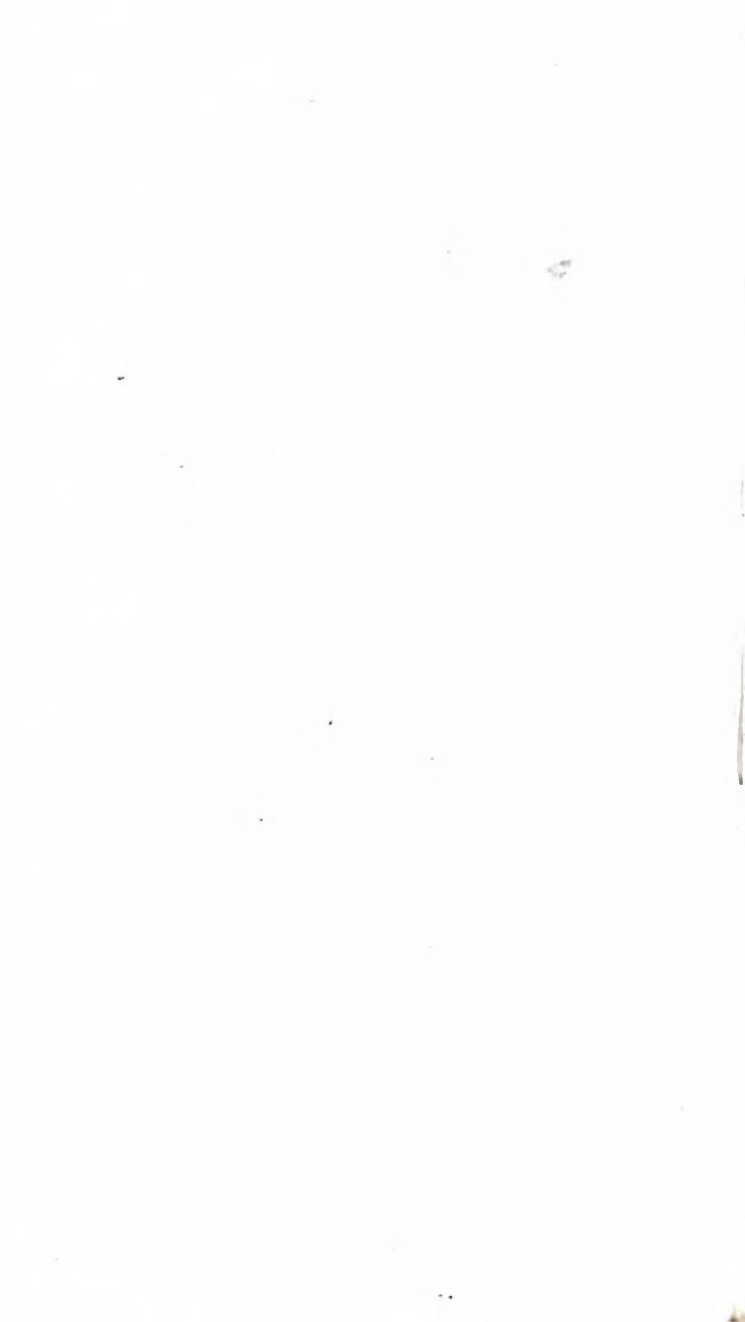
Memoirs of a

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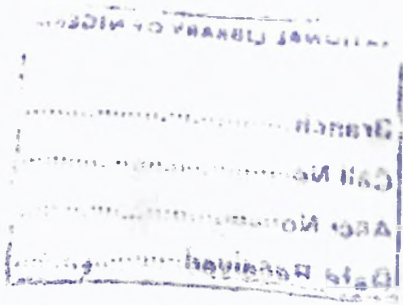




MEMOIRS

OF A NIGERIAN MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa



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DEDICATION

To our Grandchildren who are here:

Morinatu Tokunbo

Chibuike Olatunde

Aminatu Folasade

Chiamaka Temitope

Mohammed Bamidele

Chidebe Babajide

and to those other grandchildren who will come later.

PREFACE

This volume is a partial attempt to complete my memoir entitled *Up And On: A Nigerian Teacher's Odyssey* which was published in 1990 and which covered most of my earlier life till I retired as a university teacher in 1979.

One of the major reasons for writing this book is to narrate my experience as a Federal Minister of Education, highlighting my successes, partial successes, failures and partial failures. It is hoped that this will provide an insight into the running of Government agencies with lessons to be learnt from my modest achievements and my mistakes.

It is also an opportunity to give credit where it is due as no one is an island unto himself. While I take full responsibility for all the mistakes I made, I share the credit with all the staff who stood by me particularly during my three-year tenure as Minister of Education. I can only mention a few outstanding ones. These include my Special Assistants, Professors Adeniji Adaralegbe, Akin Osiyale and O.C. Nwana; Alhaji Yahaya Hamza, my Director General; Dr. A.B. Augi, Director of Higher Education, Dr. M. Abdullahi, Director of Science and Technology, Mrs. O. Abisogun Alo, Director of Primary/Secondary Education; Mr. A.B. Olaniyan, Director of Special Duties; Dr. Bunza, Executive Secretary of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Professor Idris Abdulkadir, Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Dr. Peter Orimoloye-Jibril, Deputy Director, NPEC/Special Unit, Mr. Felix Mordi, my Personal Assistant, Mr. Joseph Idachaba, Education attaché in the U.S.A. and Dr. Idris, Education attaché in the United Kingdom and Alhaji Yahaya Aliyu, the Nigerian Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and many others.

I am grateful to the Foucos Tutorial College typists for many hours of typing and re-typing the manuscript. Finally, my special thanks go to my wife, Doris Elaine Fafunwa, for her valuable editorial advice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to all those who have made invaluable contributions to the success of this book. My special thanks go to the Nigerian newspapers and their cartoonists whose entertaining, provocative and educative cartoons are always relevant to the issues of the day. These papers include *The National Concord*, *The Guardian*, *The Nigerian Tribune*, *The Daily Champion*, *The Daily Sketch*, *The Punch*, *The Herald*, *The Daily Times*, *The Vanguard*, *The Republic* and *The Triumph*. I also thank the Managements of the Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island, Lagos and Barnes and Noble Bookstores of Newington/West Hartford, Connecticut whose library and coffee shop provided me conducive environment for editing this book.

PART I

Prologue

Chapter 1

Thoughts on Leaving Academia

I joined the university system in 1961 after serving as a secondary school teacher with a doctorate degree for an eventful and rewarding year and then as Esso (Oil) West Africa's employee and public relations manager for another five years. I was the only African among ten expatriate managers and an American President. On leaving the company in 1961, I joined the University of Nigeria as a Senior Lecturer. Within one and half years, I was appointed Head of the Department of Education. Within three years (1962 to 1965), I established the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Education. Thus, in 1965, I held the position of Head of Department, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Director of the Institute of Education. I was promoted Professor of Education in April 1965. In 1966, I was appointed Acting Vice-Chancellor pending the arrival of Professor Eni Njoku to take over from me as Vice-Chancellor. Meanwhile, the Nigerian crisis of 1966 was escalating and Professor Eni Njoku was still away. I eventually handed over the administration of the University of Nigeria to him, not in Nsukka but at Bristol Hotel, Lagos.

I then moved to the University of Ife, then at its Ibadan campus, in November, 1966. I immediately embarked on the establishment of the Faculty, Department and Institute of Education at the same time. By 1967/68 session, I was again head, dean and director of education at the then University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University. Having worked continuously in two Nigerian universities from 1961 to 1979, I felt that I had done all I could in teacher education or put differently, I had done all that the system could allow me to do. I had risen from senior lecturer grade to professorship, Head of Department, Dean of Education and Director of the Institute of Education, the first African to hold each of these in English/French speaking

Chapter 1

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African countries. I had also acted as Vice-Chancellor both in the Universities of Nsukka and Ife and served as deputy Vice-Chancellor at University of Ife. I became restless. I wanted a change and my first decision was to resign from all administrative posts and duties, concentrate on research, post-graduate work and an induction programme for new lecturers with emphasis on effective teaching methods and research. However, the head of the institution at the time, Prof. Ojetunji Aboyade could not be convinced.

Resignation was the only alternative left for me even though I toyed briefly with the idea of transferring to another university. As if it was not tough enough for me to quit a profession I love, I ran into invidious bureaucratic shackles. I took steps to add up my accumulated services from 1944 when I joined the Nigerian Railways to the time I finished at University Ife in 1979, a total of 35 years but alas! because I had worked for Esso West Africa, a private oil company from 1957 to 1961, a period of four and half years, I lost the previous twelve years and a total of seventeen years of service. Thus, I was credited with only eighteen years instead of thirty-five. All pleas to persuade the Federal Ministry of Establishment to reconsider its position proved abortive. The point was that I had broken service by joining Esso West Africa from 1957 to 1961. At the time I was seeking condonation of service, Esso West Africa had become Unipetrol, a Federal Government parastatal, but this was no help to me.

My hope for a good compensation and 70% salary pension was shattered. I had to decide whether to stay in service till I reached the mandatory age of 60 or quit as planned. If I quit, I would be entitled to only 40% of my salary which was ₦400 instead of ₦700 per month. It was an unexpected development as I never anticipated this obstacle. I decided to quit anyway and hope for the best with Allah's support and my own intellectual resources.

There were other reasons too for my quitting the university system at the time I did. One important factor was the treatment meted out to Professor H.A. Oluwasanmi during the last two years of his stewardship as Vice-Chancellor. Two events took place during this period. The first was the visitation panel headed by Chief Rotimi Williams. The panel performed its task creditably. However, some disgruntled staff used the occasion to blackmail Oluwasanmi, accusing him of high-handedness, favouritism, nepotism and vindictiveness. Most of the charges were exaggerated and levelled principally to "get even" with Oluwasanmi for not promoting the aggrieved, though most of the accusers were not at that material time qualified for the posts they sought. The second event was the collapse of the female hall of residence under construction in 1975. Oluwasanmi had already left

the university. He was on a year's sabbatical at the University of Wisconsin in the United States when part of the hostel collapsed killing one person.

A judicial panel of inquiry was set up to investigate and apportion blame. Oluwasanmi was called back from his well-earned sabbatical to testify. He was drilled for hours (standing) and he collapsed at one point and had to be rushed to the hospital. Oluwasanmi defended himself very well. He said, "I supervised all the buildings on this campus personally. If I had not done that, many more buildings would have collapsed. The hostel collapsed because I was not around to supervise it". I think that statement was lost on the panel.

He was blamed anyway by the panel but the Federal Government rejected or ignored most of the panel's recommendation. When Oluwasanmi visited me at the Faculty of Education office early in 1976, he was booed by some politically motivated workers yelling "*Ole Ole*". I was livid with anger and decided there and then to quit the university as soon as practicable. If Oluwasanmi who had done so much for the university and who lost his health in the process could be so brutally attacked, what chance did I who only assisted him in his appointed mission stand?

Yet another reason was political. As the 1979 hand-over from military to civilian rule drew near, I could see the handwriting on the wall. The government had decreed that university professors must not participate in politics. I felt it was the right and prerogative of any university teacher to decide whether or not to participate in politics. I sensed that the politicians who were coming on in 1979 would interfere with academic freedom. I hoped I was wrong but subsequent events proved otherwise. Many universities, colleges of education and polytechnics were opened indiscriminately without careful planning and with no intention of completing them. University councils and governing councils of colleges of education and polytechnics were peopled by politicians. Today, many of our campuses and colleges, teaching hospitals are littered with abandoned projects which were hurriedly conceived with a view to siphoning money via the "mobilisation" system.

Some other incidents that accelerated my leaving the university were staged by Oluwasanmi's successor. I recalled the first Senate meeting under the new Vice-Chancellor. He told us point blank that he was sent to University of Ife to reform the place and put the institution on a proper footing. This was a very unfortunate and absolutely unnecessary statement by a man whose general demeanor was pleasant, cheerful and warm. Most of us at the Senate felt rightly that he was carrying out orders from above. However, this observation did not erase the fact that he had come with a big

stick to “straighten all of us out”. For my part, I did not take kindly to this situation and I suspected many senior professors felt the same way.

A few weeks after his senate declaration, the new Vice-Chancellor invited myself, Professor Sam Aluko of Economics and late Professor Adenola Igun of Demography and Statistics Department for chats, in that order, and on different occasions.

As I walked into the Vice-Chancellor’s office, he greeted me warmly and offered me a seat. In his characteristic manner, he made a joke or two before zeroing in on what was on his mind. “Professor Fafunwa, I understand that there is a Fafunwa mafia in education at Ife” he said disarmingly, “Yes, just as there is an Aboyade mafia in economics at Ibadan”. I replied in kind. He went on to state that the Federal Government had decided to discourage Nigerians, particularly the academics from seeking and receiving financial grants from foundations (obviously referring to Ford, Carnegie and Rockefeller). I must say here and now that if it were not for some of these foundations, particularly Ford and Carnegie in my case, I would not have had funds for my major research projects – primary science education and the Ife Six-Year Primary Project in Yoruba.

It was at this point that I realised that Sam Aluko and Adenola Igun were being summoned to the VC’s office for the same reason. They too, received foundation funds for some of their research projects. I told Aboyade that I was very pleased to learn that our own government was now prepared to assume its neglected responsibility. In my own case, I had made several attempts to get the Federal Ministry of Education interested in the Ife Project but I was rebuffed. “Why should we support a Yoruba Project?” one official was quoted to have said.

Having thanked the government for its good intentions, I presented the Vice-Chancellor with a budget of \$100,500 intended for the Ford Foundation as additional requirement for the Ife Project. I requested the V.C to kindly endorse it to the Federal Government for funding in keeping with the new government dispensation.

Exactly twenty-four hours after submitting my request to the V.C, he returned my proposed budget with a covering letter and in words similar to the following:

Please refer to your memorandum and the enclosed budget proposal for the continuation of the Ife Six-Year Primary Project. I am afraid you have misconstrued the spirit of my discussion with you. The Federal Government is not yet in a position to implement the policy on research grants. We must therefore await further directives on this matter.

When I read the letter, I almost laughed my head off. Luckily, I was the only one in my office at that material time; otherwise, anyone seeing me would have thought that I had gone mad. I laughed uncontrollably for a few minutes. I just could not understand the Vice-Chancellor's position. What was more, the letter neither told me to continue to seek foundation support till the time the government was ready to take over nor to desist from pursuing the request in spite of government's unpreparedness at that time. To be on the safe side, I advised my colleagues on the project to let us put the budget proposal in the cooler.

In the case of the Ford Foundation, I was told by one of its officials that the Federal Ministries of Finance and Economic Development had already discussed the new stand with the foundation; of course, the foundation was pleased with the new development as the funds meant for Nigeria would help other countries that were not in the position to fund research projects. After waiting for a year, with nothing coming from the Federal Government, I persuaded the Vice-Chancellor to give the Institute of Education a once-and-for-all grant of ₦100,000 for the Ife Project. This amount assisted the project in no small way to accomplish its objective. Aboyade deserved credit for this assistance.

When my colleagues in the Faculty of Education learnt of my intention to quit, I received several delegations from groups and individuals asking me to stay on till I reached retirement age, which would have meant five years for mandatory retirement at 60 or ten years for compulsory retirement at 65. No one could understand why I wanted to quit before I was due. The entire university was taken aback that I was leaving certainty for uncertainty. My only defence was that I was leaving while the ovation was loudest.

Several send-off parties were held for me after my colleagues were convinced that I had made up my mind and there was no going back. I was particularly moved by the speech made in one of the receptions organised for me by the Faculty of Education. The speaker was the head of department and dean of education. She said that if I had a project or proposal, I would bring it up at the faculty board meeting, speak extensively on the project and ask members to react. "Professor Fafunwa would carefully monitor the trend of discussion", Dr. Stella Olatunji said, "and when he observed that there were as many pros as there were cons or more cons than pros, he would quietly withdraw the proposal even when members pressed for a vote or when he as chairman of the board could have used his big stick to get the project approved by the board; but make no mistake about it," Dr. Olatunji continued, "the proposal would come back to the board after some

amendments and be put through the same test by the dean; the process would be repeated until the faculty board gave unanimous approval" she concluded.

In the past seventeen years since I left University of Ife, I have returned to that citadel of learning regularly and everyone was always happy to see me; well, almost everyone. I am always happy to be back to see how my younger colleagues are keeping the flag flying. I was twice invited back officially by the university; in 1986, to give the first Faculty of Education Annual Lecture and in 1987, to give the convocation lecture and receive an honorary D.Litt. from the University. On December 19, 1987, the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, awarded me an honorary D.Litt. at a very colourful and grand ceremony. Three others were also honoured. After the ceremony, pictures were being taken as is customary on such occasions when suddenly a young lady clad in a master's degree gown appeared and requested to take a picture with me and my wife. We readily obliged, but I was curious to know who the young woman was - a friend's daughter, a distant relative or just a photograph-lover? Whoever she was, I did not recognise her. "I am one of your six-year primary children" she informed me. Her group was the first set which entered in 1970 for the six-year primary project. What a happy surprise! I was deeply touched. Right there on the campus of the University of Ife where it all started seventeen years before, one of the six-year-olds who constituted the project's "lead-in" group, Miss Seyi Olojede, an assistant lecturer at the Lagos State University was receiving her M.Phil. degree in Linguistics at the same ceremony where I was being honoured. The brief encounter outside the convocation hall was the most rewarding part of the convocation ceremony and an eloquent testimony to the success of the Ife Six-Year Primary Project.

On leaving the university in 1979, my plan to set up an educational consultancy materialised in the form of Fafunwa Educational Consultancy, FAFEDUCON. But Nigeria was not ready for any educational consultancy in the 1980's. Both state and federal ministries of education officials were their own experts. At that time, money was no object and there was no reason to be prudent. Accountability was near zero. Ministry officials were very polite and promised to contact me when they had an offer of consultancy for me. It was a case of "Don't call us, we will call you". No call came. But thanks to UNESCO, I was offered part-time consultancy work from time to time. UNESCO assignments took me to Liberia, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Lesotho and Tanzania.

In between UNESCO assignments, I continued my research and writing.

Travelling within or beyond Nigeria facilitated my writing as I always took my work with me when I travelled. I wrote in flight, on stop-overs and every evening after each conference session, when there were no committee meetings, cocktails or free dinners. Before I devised this mechanism, I used to feel guilty for going to conferences while so much work was needed to be done at home. I also used to feel bored during plane flights or while waiting at airports in between flights and when conference sessions finished by 5 or 6 p.m. There were occasions when colleagues would ask whether I had completed a proposal, a memorandum or senate presentation before I travelled, especially when such papers were due a day or two after my return to campus. Although they were worried when I assured them that the said tasks would be completed and submitted on schedule. I never failed because I generally took the materials along with me on my trips and wrote the necessary papers while I was away. Indeed, I found it much easier doing so on tour than when I was at home because teaching, counselling, holding staff and student meetings and attending to domestic affairs made writing difficult. Occasionally, I had to fill in some gaps in terms of tables and statistics on my return from travels but this was no problem at all.

My retirement plan was to spend the 1979-80 academic session as my own "personal" sabbatical year, just taking things easy and thinking of what to do from 1980-81 on. I was to spend the sabbatical year in Lagos, my hometown, with my family. No sooner we moved from Ile-Ife to Lagos than I received requests from three sources. One was from my former student as University of Ife, J.U. Aisiku newly appointed professor of education at Bendel State University, Ekpoma. He wanted me to serve as an adviser to the newly-created College of Education at Ekpoma.

I was reluctant to take on the assignment principally because it would mean moving to Ekpoma, over 400 miles from Lagos. I therefore declined, but Professor Aisiku would not take no for an answer. The next thing I knew, his Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aimakhu, called on me in Lagos to plead with me to accept the assignment; I was to write my own ticket, that is, give my own terms of agreement. Before I could react one way or the other, he made a statement that completely disarmed me. He said, "Prof, you don't need us but we need you." I just gave in. I agreed to visit Ekpoma twice a term spending two weeks on each visit, holding conferences and seminars with faculty and students and teaching a course or two. I was also to explore research topics with the academic staff.

I served as visiting Professor to Ekpoma for one full year. The University provided me with transportation to and from Lagos and housed me at its

guest house. I thoroughly enjoyed the assignment and I was glad I had an opportunity to serve Ekpoma in a small but effective manner.

The second request I received immediately I left the University of Ife was from Professor Lalarge Bawn, an old colleague and the dean of education at the University of Lagos. She wanted me to join the faculty. Since I live in Lagos and it is my home, this was an opportunity to work and serve in my state. After several discussions between her and myself, I agreed in principle and I gave her my curriculum vitae. The process was long and tedious. Lalarge Bawn left the University and another dean took over. My curriculum vitae was either gathering dust or moving at snail speed. Almost two years later, I received an appointment letter which was unacceptable to me. Initially, I had indicated that I wanted to engage in research and teaching at the post-graduate level. I also made it clear that I did not want any administrative job – no headship, deanship or directorship and I would not accept such post if offered. Nevertheless, I was appointed a Professor in the faculty of education not as a research Professor. When I objected to the terms of appointment, I was told that I could negotiate the right agreement after taking up the appointment. Of course I rejected the appointment outright.

The third offer came from the Lagos State Government asking me to serve as the Chairman of the Lagos State College of Education. More will be said on this appointment later.

Chapter 2

University Councils and The Vice-Chancellorship Saga

The University of Ibadan, as we all know, is the oldest higher institution and the second oldest university in Nigeria second only to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the first full-fledged or autonomous institution of higher learning in the country. I was appointed a member of the University of Ibadan Governing Council from 1973 to 1997 and I served among others with the following important personalities:

Sir Samuel Manuwa, Chairman of the Council

Prof. Oritshejolomi Thomas, Vice-Chancellor

Justice Emmanuel Fakayode (member)

Chief Bola Ige (member)

Miss Judith Attah (member)

Brigadier, (later Major General) Ogundeko, and

Alhaji Abdulrahman Okene (successor to Sir Samuel Manuwa as Chairman).

Serving under two chairmen who were the exact opposite offered an opportunity for a study in contrasts. Sir Samuel Manuwa was a renowned and very distinguished surgeon. In fact, he was the first West African (if not the first African) surgeon. His prowess at the operation table and his deftness in the handling of the surgeon's scapel was widely acknowledged in Africa and Europe.

Sir Samuel was a stickler for details and he believed in law and order. He was a perfectionist and he expected everybody else to conform. He was always impeccably dressed in complete custom-built suit and tie and he expected us, his council members to be "properly" dressed. He had great presence and conducted council meetings with admirable skill and deftness.

He was fatherly, kind and erudite in his approach to issues and delicate situations. But he did not suffer fools lightly. In my book, Sir Samuel was a great Nigerian in every way.

I must confess that much as I admired Sir Samuel, I often felt impatient with his leisurely, (but effective) manner of conducting meetings. I came to appreciate him more when a new chairman succeeded him.

Alhaji Abdulrahaman Okene succeeded Sir Samuel Manuwa as the Chairman of University of Ibadan Governing Council in 1974. All I knew about the new chairman was that he was a retired Permanent Secretary and that he had taught some of the members of the Supreme Military Council (SMC).

The Alhaji's first day as Chairman of the Council was a great event. We members of Council had already taken our seats when the new chairman made his grand entry. We all greeted him warmly and sat back to listen to our new chairman's address. He was very brief and went straight to the point. He thanked us for our kind reception and hoped that we would give him our full support - all in less than five hundred words.

His next statement was "all members of the University should now go out." We were all dumbfounded. Slowly, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Oritshejolomi Thomas, his deputy, Prof. Victor Oyenuga and all the professors representing Senate and Congregation moved out. In all of my many years of university experience I never saw anything like it. Only the Chairman, Justice Emmanuel Fakayode, Chief Bola Ige, Miss Judith Attah, Brig. Ogundeko and I remained. The chairman then fixed his gaze on me. I knew what he was thinking, but I was not prepared to help him. My name plate read "Professor A.B. Fafunwa" and the chairman could not understand why all the other professors including the Vice-Chancellor went out but this professor just sat tight. It was Justice Fakayode who broke the ice. He said "Mr. Chairman, if Professor Fafunwa goes out, the rest of us will go with him because those of us who now remain in this room belong to the same group; that is, we are not members of the University community". The chairman smiled in relief and so did I.

Technically, the University Council was not properly constituted in the absence of the University members. We told the chairman this, but it did not bother him. He told us that there was an important issue which the government asked him to bring before the Council for deliberation and as it affected the University members, he could not raise it in their presence because it was confidential. We saw his point but we disapproved of his method.

We however asked the Chairman to re-constitute us into a special committee of Council to deliberate on the issue and make recommendations to the full Council or the Visitor. He agreed.

After two hours of deliberations, we concluded our discussions and the Chairman said "Thank you, next item". I quickly raised my hand and reminded the Chairman that our other colleagues, the Vice-Chancellor and others were still outside waiting for us. He thanked me for reminding him and they were called back in. As soon as they settled down, the Chairman said, "Next item"! Again I raised my hand and said, "Sir, we have not informed the members what transpired in their absence". The Chairman without further ado, said, "Professor Fafunwa, you summarise what went on during their absence". I was taken aback. How do I tell the university members what was supposed to be confidential? Everyone turned their attention to me. I said in measured cadence, "The Chairman informed us that there was an important matter which affects the University community and which the Federal Government wants the Council to deliberate upon. We therefore re-constituted the remaining Council members into a special committee of Council. The committee will continue its deliberations after Council's meeting and give the Chairman and the government its recommendations."

Everybody seemed relieved. The Chairman in his usual manner said, "Thank you Professor Fafunwa. Next item"! Since that day, I always called Alhaji Abdulrahman Okene, Mr. Next item! though not within his hearing.

Alhaji Okene assumed office at the time the Murtala Mohammed regime decided to retrench staff in the civil service, parastatals and the universities. The grounds for retrenchment were old age, divided loyalty, declining productivity, ill-health, etc.

The Chairman announced to the Council that all those who had reached the age of fifty-five in the university system must go. We promptly challenged that statement. I think it was Chief Bola Ige who led the protest. University regulation was clear on the issue. Unlike the civil servant whose retirement age was 55, the university's was 60. The Chairman insisted that the Supreme Military Council had decided the matter. We told the Chairman that it might be that the SMC was not aware of the law governing universities and it was the duty of the Council to advise the SMC through the Chairman. We therefore asked the Chairman to take the advice back to the SMC. The Alhaji looked diffident initially but he finally passed our advice on to the higher authorities and that was settled.

Ironically, the Chairman thought that his responsibility included interviewing academic and non-academic staff on who should be retrenched and who should be retained. Indeed, he visited some deans and heads of department, asking them to submit names of those of their staff who should be laid off. Most of them were embarrassed by this unorthodox approach.

The then deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Victor Oyenuga narrated his ordeal to some of us. The Chairman met him at his office and requested for the list of names of those to be retrenched. Prof. Oyenuga assured him that none of his staff was due. The Chairman, according to Prof. Oyenuga, just stared at him as if to say, "If no one else is due, you are certainly due for retrenchment yourself".

University of Nigeria Nsukka Council

When all non-easterners left the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in September 1966 on the order of the then Military Governor of the Eastern region, I thought it was a temporary order and that we would all return to the east in a matter of months. But alas! things got worse from day to day and led to a civil war which did not end till January 1970. I made several visits to Nsukka between 1974 and 1980 on the invitation of my colleagues at the Faculty and Institute of Education to give lectures and attend seminars but I was not officially involved with Nsukka again until 1982 when I was nominated by the Federal Government to serve in the University of Nigeria Governing Council.

I had no previous dealing with the Chairman of the Council, Alhaji Ali Mongono until I became a member of his Council. I found him to be a very congenial fellow, a complete gentleman and a democratic chairman. He was a good listener and a wise counsel. He gave the Vice-Chancellor his full support. I spent only one year with the Council before it was dissolved as a result of the 1983/84 army take-over.

The man who earned most of my admiration on Nsukka Council was Chief Emmanuel C. Iwuanyanwu. He knew me well and to my embarrassment I did not know him until I met him there. He was one of our pioneer students of engineering at Nsukka between 1960 and 1963. I taught him in the general studies course and he must have been favourably impressed by my teaching. One of the good points in favour of General Studies 103 course, as it was called, was that, a student must offer GS courses irrespective of his area of specialisation. Chief Iwuanyanwu was a civil engineering student and I was a senior lecturer in education at the time we were both at Nsukka. Chief Iwuanyanwu made valuable contributions to

the Council debates, particularly as they related to engineering problems, contract awards, consultancy fees, architectural drawing etc. He was the backbone of the Council during the brief period I served on it.

During my one-year stewardship on the Council at Nsukka, I took the opportunity to interact with my colleagues at the Faculty of Education: Professors O.C. Nwana, J. Onuoha and B. Ohuche, Drs. Ebele Maduewesi, Elizabeth Eke, Ada Onyejemezi, Magnus Adiele and others. My main interest was in promoting the "use of mother tongue (Igbo) as medium of education throughout primary education." We were warming up to the subject when the Council was dissolved.

My other aim while I was serving at Nsukka in 1983 was to revive interest in the building of the Nsukka mosque which I, along with others launched in 1965. Luckily, a few muslim students and one or two Pakistanis were already on the job. They easily rallied and we got Alhaji Ali Mongono interested in laying the foundation stone of the mosque. On the day of the graduation ceremony in December 1983, the Chairman of the Council supported by me, the deputy governor of Anambra State and some other dignitaries performed the ceremony. By the end of 1984, a small but attractive mosque was erected on the campus at Nsukka, a twenty-one year dream fulfilled.

Vice-Chancellorship

The issue of Vice-Chancellorship is an interesting topic any day, judging by how it is often seriously contested. Naturally, most if not all Nigerian Professors hope to be one some day with or without lobbying for it. Thank God, I never lobbied for it. Therefore, I never felt disappointed when I was not selected either at Nsukka, Ife, Ibadan or Lagos. While I was serving at Nsukka, three of us who were Africans were the most senior - Prof. Edward Blyden of Sierra Leone, Prof. Kalu Ezera and I. The three of us served as acting Vice-Chancellors together; that is, we were a troika. I also acted alone in 1966 and I eventually handed over to Prof. Eni Njoku at Bristol Hotel, Lagos, as I said earlier. It was one of the American Vice-Chancellors at Nsukka who confidentially warned me not to nurse the idea of becoming a Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nigeria. Curiously enough, while I was interested, I never pursued it. I just assumed that an Igbo Professor would be named when the time came.

While I was at University of Ife between 1967 and 1976, three occasions concerning Vice-Chancellorship arose. I was serving as Prof. Oluwasanmi's Deputy Vice-Chancellor when the then Vice-Chancellor of University of

Ibadan was on his way out. Someone in a top position at the University approached me and said that he would want me to be the next Vice-Chancellor of University of Ibadan. I was flattered but cautious. He said he would take me to the then Chairman of the Council for consultation. I told him that I do not lobby for posts, but I deeply appreciated his interest in me. If the Council found me suitable and offered me the post, I would accept it. Within two weeks of this encounter, I met two other colleagues who were similarly offered this carrot by the same man. What was devastating to me was something one of them said. The "Big man" told a third person who was his good friend that he was going to "knock our three heads together in this contest." Unbelievable. I felt sick to my stomach. I had always been friendly with this man and I never offended him in anyway. To go out of his way to plant mischief against me and two others was something that never crossed my mind. Since that time, I always try to keep a polite distance from him. I never thought that a man with such high professional qualification and a fellow professor of international repute could descend so low.

On another occasion, the Vice-Chancellorship of University of Lagos was about to be vacant. I was told by some friends that my name was one of those being mentioned and that I should go and lobby the powers that be in Lagos. I refused to take the advice. Another acquaintance came to inquire whether I would be interested, I said "Yes, if I am asked but I am enjoying my tenure as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ife." This statement was probably taken to mean that I was not interested. I took this in my stride. When the Vice-Chancellorship of University of Ife became vacant after Oluwasanmi left, rumours were flying around that I would succeed him. Many contestants were busy lobbying the Oyo State Governor for the position but Prof. Aboyade was appointed.

The most interesting episode for me on the issue of Vice-Chancellorship was that of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. I retired voluntarily from University of Ife at the end of the 1979 session. In 1980, I received a letter from the Registrar of the University on behalf of the Council inviting me to submit my curriculum vitae as I was being considered along with others for the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Nigeria. I could not believe my eyes. I had spent almost two decades within the university system before I retired and never before had anyone written to me that I was being actively considered for the Vice-Chancellorship of any Nigerian University. I consulted a few friends and we all agreed that I should respond positively. I had nothing to lose. What amazed me most was that the invitation came after my retirement. I learnt that nine other persons were invited to submit their

C.Vs. The process was long-drawn, taking several weeks, but amazingly, the list finally was reduced to two, namely a deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University and I. That I even got that many votes in the Senate of UNN made me feel humble. I learnt that there were hot dispatches between Lagos and Nsukka. The Chairman of the Council resided in Lagos and the final approval was to come from the Presidency. I was advised to see a very good friend who was Number Two in government but that was not in my character! I don't mind lobbying for others for a just cause, but not for myself. That has always been my motto. I refused the advice and told these advisers that if my friend in government had the final say on the matter (and he knows me well), it was up to him to go ahead and take a decision without any lobbying on my part.

The appointment was later given to the number one man on the list. Another friend later told me that he asked our friend in government why I was not chosen. His reply was: "I cannot recommend Babs for such a turbulent post". One year later, I became a member of the Council of University of Nigeria. My friend's assessment was wrong. What I found at Nsukka at that time was not turbulence, but a hurricane. The Vice-Chancellor, before his appointment, felt and rightly too, that he knew the problems and the solutions to them. However, he did not reckon with the opposition, or at best, gave them little attention in his campaign to clean the Augean stable. The opposition was formidable and required the patience of a Job and the wisdom of a Solomon to handle it, though from my own point of view, there were faults on both the side of the Vice-Chancellor and the opposition.

I later paid a visit to the Vice-Chancellor who was pleased to see me and commented that he would have been happy to have me as Vice-Chancellor with him serving under me as a deputy Vice-Chancellor. I expressed my sympathy and told him that but for the grace of God I would have been in his shoes. I am sure he wished I were. I originally said this as a joke but with the passing years, Nsukka's problem escalated and I realised that its problem was deeper and bigger than what the then Vice-Chancellor could handle. Prof. Frank Ndili's appointment was eventually terminated. He was succeeded by Prof. Chi Ikoku, a friend who did his best, though not without a few skirmishes. He was succeeded by a brilliant and world renowned scholar, Prof. Udeala who suffered an even greater indignity than Prof. Frank Ndili. I will never know what would have been my fate if I had become Vice-Chancellor at Nsukka either in 1966 when I was the acting Vice-Chancellor and or in 1982 when I was one of the two surviving contestants out of nine considered for the post. Perhaps it turned out to be

a blessing in disguise. In spite of all the above, I was extremely satisfied that throughout my university career, I never applied for the post of Vice-Chancellor. It was probably the first time in the history of the Nigerian University system that the Council of a University invited individuals to apply. That is the way it is supposed to be.

Consequently when I became a Minister of Education in 1990, I took the deceit out of the system by insisting that the post of Vice-Chancellor should be advertised and those who are interested should apply. The Council may invite individuals as well. It was indeed a shame that in the past, scores of unsolicited applications would flood the Registrar's office as soon as the post became vacant even though this was against the rules of the game.

In his jocular manner, Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola in congratulating me on my appointment as minister said: "The man whom they refused to appoint a Vice-Chancellor is now in charge of all the Vice-Chancellors. Allah be praised"!

Chapter 3

Mother Tongue

Contrary to the impression many Nigerians had when I was Federal Minister of Education, that the issue of mother tongue was picked “out of the blue” nothing could be further from the truth. My close research associates and colleagues at the University of Ife knew that I had been involved with the mother tongue project for at least twenty years before assuming office in 1990. Of all the programmes that I introduced during my three-year tenure, none inspired more newspaper cartoons than the mother tongue issue. Out of the 193 cartoons on education between 1990 and 1992, covering some 55 topics, mother tongue alone claimed 25 in 1990 and 5 in 1991, making a total of 30.

My interest in mother tongue started when I was a class 1 student at C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos in 1938. I wrote a letter to the editor of the school magazine, called *The Grammarian* suggesting that there should be a section of the magazine devoted to Yoruba contributions.

The letter was published and the editor in his remarks accepted the suggestion. I happened to be the first to write a short article in Yoruba for a subsequent publication entitled, “Writing in Yoruba Language”.

When I was an undergraduate in the United States of America, some black as well as white American students thought I spoke very good English but asked innocently whether Africans had their own language outside English. They also wanted to know whether we had our own culture, music, dresses, arts, musical instruments etc. Needless to say, these questions fired my nationalistic instincts. Instead of reacting negatively, I decided to demonstrate that Africans had their own culture and way of life before the arrival of the British, German, Spanish, French and Portuguese colonialists in Africa. This was in Florida between 1949 and 1950.

There were eleven African students at Bethune Cookman College between 1948 and 1950, ten Nigerians and one Sierra Leonian.

The group constituted itself into a troupe and organised plays, music, dances and lectures on African culture. We ordered Nigerian and Sierra Leonian dresses from home, delved into our past and jogged our memories for songs and dances performed by our people. Many of us never participated in any cultural plays and dances or even wore African dresses while we were in Nigeria and Sierra Leone but we wore the clothes with pride and with a sense of belonging in the U.S.A. We held rehearsals and practised songs from our various language groups till we felt we could give authentic performances. It was at Bethune Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida, U.S.A., a negro institution of higher learning that I developed a sense of pride in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. I read everything I could lay my hands on relating to African civilization and indeed things relating to the Black Race - Negro history, Negro poetry, songs, music, dance, literature, etc. Prior to my stay in America, I only read English literature, English History and English everything! I got distinction in English Language and Literature in my Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examination even though I memorised the essay on "A Day in Winter" and reproduced it verbatim. The Cambridge examiner never queried my school as to how an African school boy who had never been to England could "write" such an excellent essay on the subject. The history I learnt in Nigeria was how the whiteman conquered our land and brought "civilisation" to a benighted people.

The third experience that finally convinced me of the urgent need to promote mother tongue education took place not in the Yoruba West, but in the Ibo East. I was conducting a survey in primary science teaching at a local primary school in Nsukka in 1963, observing the teaching of Nature Study in primary four – a class of ten-year-olds. The teacher had a colourful picture on the wall showing different animals and vegetation. He wanted the children to describe what was in the picture. Several hands were up; infact practically every child in the class had his or her hand up. He signalled that he wanted their answers in English. Without exception, all hands went down. For me, this was so painful I almost wept.

As far as I was concerned, teaching and learning died in that class that day and in ail the classes in Nigeria in similar situations. It was in that Nsukka classroom in 1963 that I decided there and then to promote mother tongue education at the primary level for it suddenly dawned on me with amazing clarity that the most natural and effective way to teach primary science would be in the child's mother tongue.

The Ife Six-Year Primary Project (1970 – 1989)

The University of Ife Six Year Primary Project, launched in 1970 and concluded in 1989 has taught us many important lessons on African languages.

In January, 1970, the University of Ife Institute of Education launched the Ife Six-Year Primary Project with Yoruba as the medium of instruction and English as a second language.

The main objective of the project was to develop a coherent primary education programme for the child and make him an intelligent citizen of his country and to this end to:

- (a) develop a primary school curriculum that was relevant and useful both to the child whose formal education terminated in primary six and the child whose education continued thereafter;
- (b) employ Yoruba language as the medium of instruction on the assumption that the child will benefit cognitively, socially, culturally and linguistically through the use of his mother tongue as the language of instruction throughout primary school and thus bridge the gap between home and school;
- (c) teach English language effectively as a second language through specially trained teachers throughout the six years; and
- (d) evaluate the project continually with a view to determining the presence or absence of certain significant differences between the project children and those of primary schools not connected with the project.

Five major subject areas were chosen for instructional purposes. These were:

- (1) Social and Cultural Studies;
- (2) Science, including Health and Sanitation (SAYENSI)
- (3) Mathematics (MATIMATIKI);
- (4) Yoruba language and literature; and
- (5) English as a second language.

The design provided for regular intake of Primary I classes each year from 1970 to 1975. One group was experimental and the other, control. Originally, a primary school at Ile-Ife was used as the pilot school. A total of 720 children (480 in the experiment group and 240 in the control group) participated in the project between 1970 and 1980. In 1973 the experiment was extended to ten other primary schools in five "rural" and five "semi-urban" towns in Oyo State. These schools were classified as proliferation schools. Some of them served as experimental while others served as control groups. Another set of 700 children were enrolled and taught over a period

of six years.

The experimental group was taught all subjects in Yoruba except English, that is to say, Social & Cultural Studies, Science and Mathematics were taught in Yoruba throughout the six years. English was taught from the first year to the sixth as a second language. In the control classes, Yoruba was used as a medium of instruction for the first three years and English for the last three years while Yoruba was taught as a subject. It should be noted that all the text materials in Yoruba, English, Social and Cultural Studies, Mathematics and Science were written and printed by the project team over a period of five years. Two sets of each material were produced: one in Yoruba and one in English from Primary I to VI. The text materials produced for each subject and for each year comprised:

- (a) teachers' books;
- (b) pupils' books;
- (3) workbooks in Yoruba and English; and
- (4) several supplementary readers both in Yoruba and English.

A total of 183 textbooks were produced in the five subject areas at summer workshops held at Ife campus between 1970 and 1975. Each writers' panel on each subject (Yoruba, Matimatiki, English, Sayensi and Social and Cultural Studies) comprised experts drawn from the universities, principals and tutors from teacher training colleges and secondary school teachers, as well as those primary school teachers from the project schools who would teach the materials to the children when they were produced.

Yoruba Language

For the first time in the history of Yoruba Language teaching at the primary level, learning and teaching texts were developed extensively and in consonance with the units of learning recommended in the syllabus.

A total of 25 titles were developed for the promotion of Yoruba language skills. These covered the following areas:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Reading Readiness Texts; | (b) Pupils' Books 1 to 6 |
| (c) Teachers' Guides – years 1 to 6 | (d) Pupils' Workbook. |

Twenty-five Supplementary Readers and special comprehension texts were also produced.

Matimatiki (Mathematics)

The Matimatiki panel comprised university lecturers and tutors from teacher training colleges, secondary schools and primary school teachers. A total of twenty-two Matimatiki/Mathematics Books in Yoruba and English

were produced. These consisted of Pupils' Books 1 to 6, Teachers' Guides for years 1 to 6 and Pupils' Workbooks.

Some examples of Mathematics words coined, borrowed, translated, invented, etc. to facilitate learning of Matimatiki in Yoruba are cited below:

	English Item	Yoruba Item	Method
1.	addition	iropo (aropo)	coinage
2.	subtraction	iyokuro	coinage
3.	multiplication	isodipupo	coinage
4.	division	pipin	coinage
5.	length	oro	change in coverage
6.	breadth	ibu	change in coverage
7.	equality	idogba	change in coverage
8.	inequality	aidogba	change in coverage
9.	set	akojopo	coinage
10.	sub-set	akojopo kekere	coinage plus translation
11.	number	numba	borrowing
12.	figure (numerical)	ami nomba	borrowing + translation
13.	figure (geometrical)	figo	borrowing
14.	unit (digit)	eyo-eyo	coinage
15.	unit (division)	isori	coinage
16.	ten (place of position)	idi	change in coverage
17.	member (of a set)	omo-egbe	translation
18.	empty set	akojopo-ofifo	coinage + translation
19.	digit	digiti	borrowing
20.	line	ila	change in coverage
21.	mathematics	matimatiki	borrowing
22.	geometry	jiometiri	borrowing
23.	row	ese	change in coverage
24.	rectangle	rekitangulu	borrowing
25.	square	sukua	borrowing

GEOMETRY

ENGLISH	YORUBA
angle	<i>angu</i>
area	<i>eeria</i>
arrow	<i>ofa</i>
centimetre	<i>sentimita</i>
centre	<i>arin gungun</i>
circle	<i>saku, obirikiti</i>
congruent	<i>dogba regiregi</i>
cone	<i>koonu</i>
cube	<i>kiubu</i>
cylinder	<i>silinda</i>
diameter	<i>dayamita</i>
degree	<i>digiri</i>
edge	<i>eteeti</i>
east	<i>ila-oorun</i>
equilateral triangle	<i>tiraangu elegbe didogba</i>
end-point	<i>pointi ipekun</i>
formula	<i>fomula</i>
goemetry	<i>jiometiri</i>
intersect	<i>pade, kora (ko ara)</i>
intersection	<i>ikora (ko ara)</i>
isosceles triangle	<i>ikora (ipade) aisoselisi</i>
kilometre	<i>kilomita</i>
line	<i>ila</i>
line segment	<i>ege ila</i>
mathematics	<i>matimatiki</i>
movement	<i>sisun</i>
north	<i>ariwa</i>
oval	<i>ofali</i>
point	<i>pointi</i>
plane	<i>operese</i>
perimeter	<i>iwon ayika</i>
prism	<i>pirisimu</i>
parallel movement	<i>sisun ti paraleli</i>
pyramid	<i>piramidi</i>
polygon	<i>figo elegbe pupo (poligonu)</i>
quadrilateral	<i>figo elegbe merin</i>

ENGLISH	YORUBA
rectangle	<i>rekitangu</i>
ray	<i>itansan</i>
region	<i>inu operese</i>
right-angle	<i>angu to sukua, angu to gun, raiti angu</i>
radius	<i>radiosi</i>
relation	<i>ibatan</i>
rhombus	<i>rombosi</i>
sphere	<i>sifia</i>
symmetry	<i>simetiri</i>
square	<i>sukua (adigun)</i>
solid (space figure)	<i>oloperese pupo</i>
space figure (solid)	<i>figo ofurufu</i>
turning movement	<i>sisun oni yiya</i>
triangle	<i>tiraangu</i>
vertex	<i>sonso igun (sonso angu)</i>
volume	<i>folumu.</i>

Sayensi/Science

The science writing panel comprised secondary science teachers, professors of science education and science inspectors from the Western State Ministry of Education, and primary school teachers from the project schools. The panel produced: (1) Pupils' Books 2 to 6 (Yoruba and English); (2) Pupils' Workbooks 1 to 6 (Yoruba and English) and (3) Teachers' Guide Books 1 to 6 (Yoruba and English); making a total of 34 titles.

Yoruba, like all living languages, is subject to modification and adjustment and rich enough to cope with new challenges in science and technology like French and English, Italian, Japanese etc. It has many words in its vocabulary that are adequate to convey the same scientific meanings or concepts, as the following examples show.

Plant Parts

Leaf	-	<i>ewe</i>
Root	-	<i>gbongbo</i>
Fruit	-	<i>eso</i>
Flower	-	<i>ododo</i>
Seed	-	<i>koro, horo</i>

Animal Parts

Blood	-	<i>eje</i>
Heart	-	<i>okan</i>
Liver	-	<i>edoki</i>
Lung	-	<i>edo foro, fukufuku</i>
Bone	-	<i>eegun</i>
Pores	-	<i>iho-ara</i>
Body	-	<i>ara</i>
Intestine	-	<i>ifun</i>
Skull	-	<i>agbari</i>

Other Examples

Light	-	<i>imole</i>
Wind	-	<i>ategun</i>
Air	-	<i>afefe</i>
Mirror	-	<i>jigi</i>
Sun	-	<i>oorun</i>
Moon	-	<i>osupa</i>

Social and Cultural Studies

Social and Cultural Studies consists of local history, geography, civics, folklore, cultural activities, health, music, dance, ethics etc.

The panel was made up of experts drawn from the universities, colleges of education and experienced primary school teachers and headmasters. A total of 38 text materials were produced in Yoruba and English as shown below:

Social and Cultural Studies

1. *Eto ati Ilana Ibagbepo 1-6*
2. Scheme of Work 1-3
3. *Adugbo Wa*
4. *Eranko Agbegbe Wa*
5. *Igbo Agbegbe Wa*
6. *Owo Sise ni Agbegbe Wa*
7. *Ounje Wa*
8. *Odun Ibile ati Alaye Fun Oluko*
9. *Awon Akoni Ile Wa*
10. Makers of our History
11. *Iselu*
12. *Awon Osise Ijoba, Iwe Oluko*
13. *Awon Osise Ijoba ni Ipinle Wa, Iwe Akeko*
14. *Awon Egbe Iyonda Ara Eni*
15. How Nigeria Came into Being
16. *Eto Ijoba Naijiria*
17. How Nigeria is Governed
18. *Eko Nipa Naijiria*
19. Know Your Country
20. Administrators in Nigeria
21. Various Ways by Which Government Derives Revenue
22. Nigeria and its West African Neighbours

23. *Naijiria ati Awon Orile-Ede Iwo Oorun Afirika*
24. *Ile mi ati Ile Iwe Mi*
25. *Ajumokegbepo ni Ile Iwe*
26. *Gbigbe ni Ile Wa*
27. *Ayika wa*
28. *Awon Ibi pataki ni Ile Wa*
29. *Awon Eranko ni agbegbe Wa*
30. *Ijuwe*
31. *Irin Ajo oju inu yi aala Naijiria ka*
32. *Bi Naijiria ti se bere*
33. *Awon Alakoso Idasile ati Idagbasoke Ijoba Naijiria*
34. *Bi a ti se eto Ijoba Naijiria*
35. *Esin Ibile*
36. *Indigenous Religions*
37. *Ojo, osu ati odun Yoruba*
38. *The Commonwealth*

English as a Second Language

The teaching of English as the Nigerian child's second language was always the guiding principle of the Ife Six Year Primary Project.

Consequently, the English panel of experts, which included English language specialists from the Universities of Ife, Ibadan and Lagos, colleges of education and classroom teachers from the project schools, developed all materials based on the teaching of English as a second language. A total of 6 Pupils' Books, 6 Teachers' Guides, 5 Workbooks, and 23 Supplementary Readers were produced by the panel, making a total of 40 titles.

Results of the Experiment

The Ife Six Year Primary Project Experiment proved conclusively that a child learns best in his or her mother tongue.

Summary of Results

- A. *Cognitive Achievement* (deals with the effectiveness or otherwise of the medium of instruction, the curriculum and the use of a specialist teacher)
 - (a) Results showed that the experimental groups in urban setting excelled above the remaining groups in all the school subjects at the end of their primary education. The result also showed that the use of a specialist English teacher did not make any significant

difference to the result.

- (b) Again, as demonstrated in the urban setting, the proliferation experimental group in rural areas turned out to be the best achievers in all subjects towards the end of primary school education. This again indicated that the medium of instruction, Yoruba, had been effective. This group had no specialist English teacher in the rural setting, yet the group came out to be the best achievers in all subjects, including English.

B. *Public Examinations Results*

- (a) There was no statistically significant difference between the performances of experimental and control children in Arithmetic, English, General Knowledge and Bible Knowledge. The experimental children, however, performed better in Yoruba.
- (b) In the National Common Entrance, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups. These results tend to support hypotheses that “the child will benefit culturally, socially, linguistically and cognitively through the use of his mother tongue as the medium of instruction throughout the six years of primary school and that his command of English will improve considerably if he is taught English as an entirely separate subject by a specially trained teacher throughout the six years.”

C. *Affective Outcomes*

- (a) On the Students Problem Inventory (SPI) Form which compared the scores of project and non-project children at the secondary school level, the results showed that the project children reported, on the average, fewer problems than the non-project children. This was consistently so in all the sub-sections of the inventory as well as in the total scores.
- (b) In respect of the Sociometric Instrument, the results showed that the project children:
- (i) were on the whole slightly above average in social acceptability, and
 - (ii) were notably above average in acceptability as:
 - leaders;
 - study-mates;
 - trip-mates; and
 - playmates.

D. Drop-Out Rate

It is significant to note that only 10% of the Experimental group dropped out while the drop out rate for the control group was 30% during the six year period. The national drop-out rate in 1980 ranged from 40 to 60%.

E. Monitoring of project children at secondary and post-secondary levels.

The Project embarked on monitoring the educational progress of some of the project children both at the secondary and tertiary levels. From the available data on both the experiment and the control groups, the experimental groups performed better. A significant number of them gained admission into secondary schools through competitive entrance examinations in contrast to the control group which had fewer admissions. All of the first group (1975) passed the First School Leaving Certificate Examination, while a sizeable number of the control group failed.

(a) Secondary Level

In all secondary schools sampled by the Institute of Education staff between 1979 and 1984, a great majority of the project children were found to perform well, while their examination results were well above average in most subjects. The project children were found to be at an advantage academically over their counterparts in subjects like Yoruba, English Language and Mathematics.

(b) Post-Secondary Level

Due to lack of funds, the project was limited in its monitoring activities. However, it is worthy of note that many of the first 1970 group, called the "Lead-In" group, completed their primary school in 1975, their secondary education in 1980, entered university and other tertiary institutions during the 1980/81 academic year and graduated with first degrees in 1984. The 1971 set completed their university education in 1985. The third set completed their post-secondary education in 1986. The largest of the six groups was the 1987 set. Out of the 820 pupils who enrolled in Primary One in 1973, more than 300 graduated from Nigerian universities in 1987, while the sixth and last group completed their university or other tertiary education in 1989.

Experimental Adoption of the Project by Oyo State Government

In 1985, the Oyo State Government, one of the Yoruba speaking states

of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, decided to introduce the Ife Six-Year Project into its primary schools in January 1986 on a trial basis. Oyo state has an estimated population of 12 million Yoruba speaking people. The Ife Project organized a series of teacher-training classes for 70 tutors who in turn trained 700 teachers who were to teach 20,000 primary one pupils in selected primary schools in the state. In 1987, a second group of 20,000 children were admitted to year one while the 1986 class moved to the second year of the programme, making a total of 40,000 children and 1,400 teachers in the project as of 1987. In January 1988, another set of 20,000 primary one pupils were enrolled in the project, making a total of 60,000 pupils and 2,100 teachers.

The State Government adopted the programme as a pilot project. It planned to extend it to cover the entire primary school system by 1989, thus covering the primary school population which stood at 2 million pupils at that time. In 1988, 10 of the 21 states in Nigeria were using some of the Project's published books. In Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo and Kwara states, at least 2 million children are using some of the project materials in the Yoruba language today. Some of the non-Yoruba speaking states have translated some of the Ife materials, particularly science and mathematics into their own mother tongues.

To re-assess the status of mother tongue in Nigerian primary education, a survey was conducted in 1990 on the use of mother tongue as a medium of education in Nigerian primary schools. The National Primary Education Commission was assigned the task. The result covered only the twelve states surveyed at that time.

We found without any exception that in the rural areas the language of instruction in the first three years of primary education was the local language of the area.

The following states use the languages indicated against their names.

Sokoto	Hausa
Katsina	Hausa
Kano	Hausa
Northern Kaduna	Hausa
Oyo	Yoruba
Ogun	Yoruba
Ondo	Yoruba
Lagos	Yoruba
Anambra	Igbo
Imo	Igbo

Without exception, all the states indicated that only in urban area is English language used for instruction in the lower classes of primary schools. Even in urban areas, there are schools in which the local languages are used. English language is more likely to be used in classes where the mother tongue of the children is not homogenous or the language of the teacher differs from those of the children.

The following pertinent comments were made by the respondents:

- (a) That in many areas lack of textbooks in the local languages creates problems.
- (b) It is worthy of note that Niger State has translated textbooks in four indigenous languages of the state and is considering translation into other major languages of the state.
- (c) In some other states like the Yoruba states, the local language is used even in higher classes of primary schools.
- (d) Statistics available in the National Primary Education Commission show that about 70% of the primary schools in this country are in rural areas. It is therefore safe to assume that the language of instruction in the lower classes of 70% of primary schools in Nigeria is the local language of the area.

The above effectively demolishes the assertion of some Nigerian elites that it would be preferable to use English as medium of instruction from the first year of primary school.

Federal Government Support

With the encouragement and active support of the Federal Government, spearheaded by the Federal Ministry of Education between 1990 and 1992 (the period of my stewardship as Federal Minister of Education), various scholars, groups and institutions produced orthographies for over 25 Nigerian languages. Today, at least 50 Nigerian languages now have orthographies. Engineer A. Owolabi published a dictionary of engineering words and terms in Yoruba in 1994.

I have received at least one invitation a year since 1993 to attend a book launch in one mother tongue or another. It is obvious that Federal Government support for mother tongue education in 1990 has encouraged many researchers and scholars to come out of the closet and publicly identify themselves with research and development in mother tongue.

As discussed elsewhere in this book, I succeeded in establishing the National Institute for Nigerian Languages in Aba in 1992. The main objectives of the Institute are (1) to produce graduate teachers and diploma holders in

the three major Nigerian languages and (2) to develop orthographies of other Nigerian languages.

Language and National Development

Although a national or a common language is a necessary unifying element, it is not sufficient by itself. As an example from Nigeria's own history of the civil war, Gowon and Ojukwu spoke English fluently. Gowon gave his ultimatum in English while Ojukwu replied in kind in the same medium – English! We know of countries that speak the same language and are engaged in a deadly war that claimed the lives of thousands of innocent citizens.

English and French in former British and French colonies are still seen as imperialist languages spoken by the new elite who have replaced the old imperialists and who are now lording it over their own people. It is claimed that English in the case of Nigeria is the language of commerce, trade, administration, politics and international communication. But how many Nigerians are actually communicating in English inside and outside Nigeria? Perhaps 20 million out of a possible 100 million Nigerians!

Should we force all the people in the rural areas of Talata Mafara, Koma, Abakaliki or Olokemeji to learn English by force just because a handful of their people may go abroad some day as ambassadors or students, or business tycoons? It is indeed cheaper to give a dose of English, French or Russian to those few from these areas, i.e., those who are likely to proceed to the countries where the aforementioned languages are used. There is no doubt in my mind that our development has been slowed down by the use of English language. We teach agriculture in English while our farmers farm in Yoruba, Hausa, Edo, Efik, Igbo, Nupe, Kanuri etc.! If Nigeria is to become self-reliant, self-assertive and be respected by other nations, it has to promote our national languages and a *lingua franca*. The Ife Yoruba Project has demonstrated conclusively that African languages are capable of coping with scientific thought and technological construction. The only problem left to be solved is how to develop the will and the necessary confidence in ourselves and in things African.

After decades of independence, the third world has not been able to shake off poverty, disease and galloping illiteracy, primarily because of the foreign language input. Nigeria has spent over 90 billion naira in economic development in the last fifteen years, yet our rural areas remain relatively underdeveloped. Even though we can boast of over 40 relatively modern cities, what about the 7,300 villages and hamlets?

Our cities operate in English while our rural areas operate in the mother

tongue which we refuse to develop fully. At a UNESCO experts' meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in 1982, participants discussed the possibility of a continental language for Africa. Some delegates proposed Swahili because it is already being studied world-wide, particularly in Europe and America. I opposed the idea because Swahili is not as widely spoken as Hausa and what is more, Swahili is an artificial language as compared to Ga, Kikuyu, Efik, Fanti, Hausa, Igbo, Nupe, Yoruba and many other African languages. We observed that as compact as Europe is, with small population and high technology, Europeans vehemently oppose English or French as their lingua franca. Yet some of the same Europeans want Africa to adopt Swahili as the continental language!

We in Nigeria have not taken the language issue seriously. The Ouagadougou conference recommended four regional African languages as the first step toward an inter-continental language policy, namely, Arabic for North Africa, Swahili for East Africa, Hausa for West Africa and a Bantu language for Southern Africa. It was also suggested that Yoruba should be adopted as the cultural language of West Africa.

Research has shown beyond doubt that most African languages including all the Nigerian languages without exception can cope with scientific thought and technological development if we are willing to perform the necessary tasks involved.

In recognition of my work in mother tongue education, UNESCO awarded me the first UNESCO Jan Amos Comenius medal for Africa. The letter from the UNESCO Secretary-General; and, the *Punch* article of March 1, 1994 speak for themselves.

30th October, 1993

ED/UCE/I/1003

To: H.E. Alhaji Yahaya Aliyu

Ambassador

Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO

UNESCO House

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure of informing you that on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the birth of Jan Amos Comenius an international medal was created jointly by the Czech Minister of Education and the Director-General of UNESCO. The objective is to reward outstanding

achievements in the field of educational research and innovation. Ten laureates coming from all geographical regions will be selected every two years by the Director-General of UNESCO.

It is a great honour for me to inform you that the Director-General has decided to award one of these medals to Mr. Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, former Minister of Education of Nigeria, for his long-standing and eminent work in the field of educational research and development and I sincerely hope that he will accept this highly symbolic distinction.

The Director-General intends to announce his decisions together with the Czech Minister of Education, Professor Pitha, on Friday 5 November 1993 at a ceremony which will be organized for this purpose at 6.30p.m. in the hall in front of Room X in UNESCO Headquarters. It would, of course, be a great honour for us if he could be present on this occasion in order to receive the medal personally from the Director-General. If this is not possible that the medal be handed over to the Head of the Nigerian Delegation and that a special ceremony be organized by our office in Lagos.

I would appreciate your cooperation in informing Mr. Fafunwa and your urgent confirmation, if he accepts this distinction, that the Head of your Delegation would be able to attend the ceremony.

Yours sincerely,

Colin N. Power

Assistant Director-General for Education.

The Punch, Tuesday, March 1, 1994

Fafunwa bags UNESCO education distinction award
By Chinwe Ogbuka

Since 1992 when Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa left the Ministry of Education and Youth Development as minister he has not stepped into the premises of the ministry. But last Friday, the former minister was a guest of Education Minister, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu. He was accompanied by his wife. Professor Fafunwa was at the ministry to receive an award given to him by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for his outstanding

performance in the field of education.

The medal was handed over to Professor Fafunwa by the minister, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu in an impressive ceremony attended by Acting Director-General, Mr. Bola Olaniyan, Directors and deputy directors in the ministry. It was an opportunity for him once again to pose for photo journalists in professional handshake with Dr. Ayu. The occasion also afforded Dr. Ayu an opportunity to meet Professor Fafunwa who was at the helm of affairs of education for three years.

For the first time the incumbent education helmsman, as a mark of respect to his predecessor, stood up to make remarks about Professor Fafunwa and the award. Dr. Ayu who described the award recipient as "our only professor Fafunwa" said it is his singular honour to be education minister now and a privilege to present the award to him.

The minister who commended the recipient for his "richly deserved" award, said that the former minister is one person he admires in the world of education. Dr. Ayu said he has read many books on education by Professor Fafunwa who he said has written extensively about education in Africa and other parts of the world. He also commended his predecessor who is presently the president of International Council for Education for Teaching (ICET) for doing Nigeria proud by winning the award.

Though Dr. Ayu and others felt that UNESCO did not make a mistake in their choice of Professor Fafunwa who is the first African to win the prestigious Jan Amos Comenius UNESCO award, the recipient himself never expected such an award. According to him, when he heard of the award, he was "speechless because there are thousands of researchers and innovators in this wide world, Nigeria included". Professor Fafunwa, we all know will be remembered for his mother tongue advocacy and it is that advocacy that fetched him the award.

The former minister who never fails to defend his "baby" (mother tongue) said in a response after the award was presented to him that "for UNESCO to have singled me out as one of the five persons along with five institutions for this prestigious award, for the promotion of primary science education in the mother tongue and the promotion of mother tongue education generally shows that my humble efforts have not gone unnoticed."

He noted that interest in and commitment to mother tongue education was a growing concern among many Nigerians, but the interest increased phenomenally at the time he assumed the ministerial post.

He noted the recent establishment of the National Institute for Nigerian Languages at Aba, where teachers of Nigerian languages are to be produced and new orthography developed. Professor Fafunwa appealed to the minister to ensure rapid development of the educational landmark in Nigeria.

The former minister observed that education in Nigeria is in 'bad shape' but not collapsing and proffered solutions to remedy the system. One of such solutions according to Professor Fafunwa is for the government to reduce the military expenditure by 50 per cent and channel the money to the development of education.

Professor Fafunwa also urged government to introduce a 50 per cent tax on all luxury items such as Rolls Royce, Mercedes Benz (Cars), alcohol, cigarettes, perfumes and save the money for educational purposes. The award winner who maintained that military expenditure was not necessary now said "despite the skirmishes with Cameroun, we are not, nor are we likely to be at war with our neighbours and if we are worried about an attack by world powers, even our entire budget spent on arms cannot save us".

He stressed that all world powers were friends to Nigeria adding, "they are so friendly to us that they sell arms to us, arms that they know we cannot use against them". To salvage the sector, he said government must have the political will to make education the country's number one priority. According to him, Nigerians know the answer to the nation's educational problems but regretted that those in authorities refused to take the bull by the horns, adding "we simply need to get our priorities right".

Future Plans

Have I abandoned or retired from mother tongue education? Far from it. On the contrary, I believe I have succeeded in persuading the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria and the Nigerian Academy of Education (NAE) to promote technology in the three major Nigerian languages (Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo); one result of which should be to enable literates and non-literates alike in the rural areas to operate and repair machines and other mechanical gadgets on their own. The idea is to promote village polytechnics and popular mechanics. In fact, preliminary work has started on the proposal.

It was assumed for years that no Nigerian language was rich or flexible enough to express mathematical or scientific concepts. Thankfully, that assumption has at last been proved completely false and misguided.

When the Ife project declared its intention to teach Mathematics in a mother tongue, it was regarded as a wild goose chase. But it turned out to be a breakthrough. With a dedicated team and a programme that included teaching of English as a second language and all other subjects taught in Yoruba, the Ife Six-Year Primary Project (SYPP) was a hard-earned success story. Any other Nigerian language, with the same zeal and dedication on our part, can achieve similar results.

Chapter 4

Think-Tank

On 23rd of November, 1975 the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Sketch* carried a short article by me titled "Need for Think-Tanks in Nigeria" and "Let's Have A Think-Tank in Nigeria" respectively:

I NEED FOR THINK-TANKS IN NIGERIA

For too long in the Nigerian scheme of things decisions on important schemes and projects were made largely by a group of government officials and their subordinates.

This unhealthy approach has characterised the way and manner the government of this country was run between 1960 and 1975. It would appear that we now have another opportunity to rethink our approach in decision-making.

In all developed and a few developing countries, permanent task-forces, committees and think-tanks have become permanent features of governmental machinery.

Areas where we need this device urgently are on inflation, employment generation, education, particularly the UPE, airways traffic congestion and road safety, foreign affairs, health services, agricultural production, wage administration, public information and civics education, youth corps, etc.

Such think-tanks will meet at least once or twice a month and membership will be drawn largely from the general citizenry with only one or two officials as members. These people are to generate ideas and processes with a view to

improving the existing practices and think ahead not only in terms of 1980 but also in terms of 2,000 AD and beyond.

Many of our government functionaries have come to believe that they and they alone have all the wisdom it takes to plan and execute monumental projects and schemes.

In many other countries, officials are to be seen, not heard. The head of government and the ministers do all the talking. A think-tank group works behind the scene and if their ideas are accepted the head of state or his ministers will eventually launch the ideas or scheme publicly while the government officials and the think-tank group take the back seat.

Nigeria has millions of people with ideas and I hope that the new government will tap these rich and cheap resources through the system of think-tank.

When I sent the short article of November 23rd to the two national newspapers, little did I realise that the military government of Mohammed/Obasanjo would set up a think-tank, much less, ask me to head the organisation.

In his budget speech of 1976/77, His Excellency stated that, "the Supreme Military Council has decided to establish a National Policy Development Centre (NPDC) or Think-Tank to assist us in reappraising existing policies and evolving new policy dimensions." A few weeks later, the government announced the establishment of the National Policy Development Centre with the following terms of reference:

1. To undertake policy research and analysis of interest to the Federal Military Government;
2. To develop new ideas and policy guidelines;
3. To suggest new dimensions to existing policies;
4. To conduct in-depth studies of the economy from time to time and draw attention to those that are inconsistent with overall government objectives.

An Advisory Board was established comprising the following.

Chairman	-	Professor A.B. Fafunwa
Members	-	Alhaji Imrana Yazidu
		Alhaji A. Al-Hakeem (who declined)
		Mr. Y. Dikko

		Mr. A. Koko
		Dr. S. Ugoh
		Dr. E.O. Adeniyi
Directors	-	Dr. U.O. Eleazu (Co-ordinator)
		Dr. J.O. Adekunle
		Mr. U.G. Galtimari
Administrative		
Secretary	-	Mr. J.O.E. Sagay

On May 1st 1976, the *Daily Times* said in its Educational Column:

A Welcome Addition

As the newly formed National Policy Development Centre, "Think Tank", gets down to work this morning, we wish to register our support for the principles behind its establishment.

On November 26th last year, (1975), following Professor Babs Fafunwa's call for the formation of a committee of ideas men for Nigeria, we suggested that the main preoccupation of such men would be the generation of new ideas and improvement of existing ones, especially on issues that affect the internal and foreign policies of the nation.

Today, the Directorate and Advisory Board of the National Policy Development Centre, the first of its kind in this country, have been saddled with the daunting task of policy research and analysis on matters of interest to the Federal Government. They will also review from time to time government policies with a view to pointing out any inconsistencies within such policies.

These are responsibilities of no little importance to a country like ours which aims at a socio-economic target that does not only seek to promote a just and egalitarian society but also aspires to a style of government that is imbued with purpose and direction.

Significantly, the National Policy Development Centre as presently constituted, represents a cross-section of the citizenry by not over-drawing from the purely intellectual

at the expense of the mature and the knowledgeable from other walks of life in its composition. The Federal Government has, from the outset, equipped the 'Think-Tank' with the essential ingredients for success. The appointment of full-time directors supported by an advisory board not only ensures continuity but also creates an appreciable pool of expertise for the "Think-Tank".

We should, however, reiterate what we had earlier said on this issue. And that is that the Centre should not be seen as a replacement of the existing governmental procedure of generating ideas to formulate policies within the ministries. Rather, it should operate as a body begetting ideas from advantage point of thorough research and competence.

Then there is, of course, the question of integrity. There is no doubt that in appointing the members of this all-important body, the Federal Government must have been exhaustive in its search for some of the most capable materials available. Such a quest could, as a matter-of-course, have included the question of integrity, reliability and incorruptibility. We are therefore satisfied that the 10 are the right ones.

But we must at the same time draw their attention to some possible dangers or occupational hazards in their present assignments. As formulators of national policies, they will be targets of indigenious and foreign spies and enemies of the revolution who can go to any length to either influence or use them. They are therefore warned against such people.

It is also to be expected that in the course of their assignments, they will make use of the reservoir of other knowledgeable Nigerians who will be too ready to lend their support.

Judging by the performance of the present government, we haven't the slightest fear that every necessary tool, including finance, will be put at their disposal and if so, the familiar complaint of lack of or delay in releasing funds

cannot be a deterrent factor in the discharge of their responsibilities.

It is our hope that the birth of the National Policy Development Centre will speed up the on-going process of conducting the affairs of government with the primary objective of improving the conditions of the lives of the people.

The Daily Times wishes the members of the "Think-Tank" success in their assignment."

The Board started work in earnest with considerable enthusiasm and a sense of mission. As is often the case with innovations, the Centre encountered many obstacles in its attempt to implement it terms of reference. The major obstacles were shortage of manpower, financial constraints and lack of responsiveness on the part of many government functionaries who saw the Think-Tank as a "fault-finding busy-body." We were, however, encouraged by the maximum cooperation received from other officials who saw the Centre as an enabling agency and a useful partner in nation-building. What follows is partly culled from the final report of National Policy Development Centre (1979) along with the author's comments.

Organisational Structure

The N.P.D.C. was established with an Advisory Board of seven members and a directorate of three. The members of the Advisory Board served part time, while the three directors served full time. Functionally, it was not exactly clear at the initial stages what the role of the Advisory Board was to be. For example, was the Advisory Board advisory to the Head of Government on policy matters deriving from its studies, or some other agency? What would be the relationship of the Board to Head of Civil Service, or the relationship of the Directorate to the Civil Service which traditionally was the source of advice to the Head of Government? Because these matters were not clearly spelt out quickly, the arrival of the N.P.D.C. was greeted with a cold reception by the Civil Service.

In May 1977, exactly a year after its establishment, the Think-Tank was still operating in *one* room at the cabinet office. All efforts on the part of our secretariat to find office accommodation were unsuccessful. In fact, a couple of times, we secured good accommodation only to be taken over by the military.

Finally, I led a delegation to the Head of State to seek his assistance. On

our arrival, he ushered the four of us to a sofa, took a seat near us and started to brain-storm with us for the next four hours. It was unrehearsed. I must confess that my estimation of General Olusegun Obasanjo rose by two hundred percent. I must also confess here that his appearance on the T.V. was almost always uninspiring to me but get him off his prepared speech and you discover one of the sharpest, most profound and extremely articulate heads of state that ever sat on the political throne of Nigeria. We discussed a range of topics from Lagos traffic congestion and Israel's invasion of Uganda's airport to energy conservation and issues to the year 2000 AD and beyond.

When we expressed our concern about Nigeria's unpreparedness for 2000AD, General Obasanjo countered by saying that unless there is today, there cannot be tomorrow. To prepare for tomorrow, we have to start today. He opined that a time will come when Nigeria will reach a go or no go situation. When that time arrives, the country will either take-off or crash. Knowing Nigeria, he said, he had no doubt that the country will take-off.

We then directed our discussion to the safety of Nigeria's airspace vis a vis Israelis' invasion of Uganda. We of the Think-Tank were worried about Nigeria's situation where telephones did not work and "traffic congestion" had brought activities down to snail speed. I said, if Israelis were to land at our Ikeja International Airport, they would not need to be in a hurry. Patriotic telephone calls even when telephones worked would be thwarted by irresponsible telephone operators. Even if the telephone message got through to Dodan Barracks and the Head of State decided to act, how could a convoy of soldiers move through the Lagos "traffic"? It would take hours from Obalende to Ikeja and the Israelis need not be in a hurry to complete their operation. The general smiled and said that the SMC had all kinds of plans to combat that kind of action but he could not tell us for security reasons. We told him that all we wanted was an assurance that Nigeria was safe.

We broke for lunch and continued the unrehearsed marathon dialogue. At the end of our discussion, I told the Head of State of our fruitless search for accommodation and how his second-in-command, Brig. Yar'Adua took the last building we got away from us and gave it to the army. I said, "Sir, it would appear that you alone are committed to the idea of a Think-Tank, not your military lieutenants or top civil servants," and I concluded, "After one full calendar year, sir, the Think-Tank has no place to think in." Obviously moved by my last statement, he went back to his desk, made a couple of phone calls and came back to us, saying, "I'll see what I can do about it."

Within a week of our visit to the Head of State, we got accommodation at Ikoyi - a self-contained storey building.

Early in 1977/78, the idea of a directorate was dropped in favour of a single director and the role of the board defined as being that of review of studies done by the Centre and making recommendations based on such studies and deliberations. In addition, the new Secretary to the Federal Military Government directed that an informal administrative committee comprising the Permanent Secretaries in charge of Public Service Department, Research and Political Departments in the Cabinet Office should be consulted to deal with some of the administrative problems of the Centre such as staffing, housing, office accommodation and easing the way of research officers in their dealings with the public service generally.

Staffing

The original idea was that the Centre should be able to draw personnel for its work from universities, the civil service and from the private sector. They were to work for up to two years and then return to their jobs. This excellent idea could not be fully implemented for a number of reasons at that time.

1. For those in the University, such appointments would be a break in their careers. Useful as the experience might be, it meant that they had to leave the comfort of their homes on campus and come to be quartered in Lagos in less comfortable accommodation, invariably for long periods in a hotel environment which is not ideal for either thinking or research. Beside those who were willing to come asked for extra financial incentive, but being public officers, the Cabinet Office ruled that they had to come on their salaries. As a result, no one could be attracted to take up full time appointment.
2. There was no systematized way of seconding private sector personnel to the public sector. It meant that any one who opted to join the Centre was in danger of losing his job since he would be needed for the managerial cadre and no one at that stage in his career would want to risk it. In fact, one person who agreed to work for a year was nearly fired by his employers from his over ₦12,000 job, which was twice a professor's salary.
3. Because of the "benign neglect" attitude of the civil service, they were reluctant to post civil servants to the Centre as research officers. In fact throughout the three years, only one under secretary was so posted.

In the circumstances, it was decided that the Centre should recruit its

own staff, which meant going through the whole process of advertising the vacancies, interview, selection, placement and then the problem of housing those appointed in Lagos. Our efforts in this regard however, yielded some fruit. Another approach to the problem was to farm out studies to researchers where they were or to indigenous consultants. For this purpose, the Centre conducted a talent search in 1976/77 and collected resumes of well over five hundred lecturers, senior lecturers and professors from the older universities, Kaduna Polytechnic, Ibadan Polytechnic and Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu, as well as a list of consultants from industry willing to undertake research for the Centre. However, because of other commitments and inadequate financial provision, we were able to recruit only nine research staff.

Activities of the Centre

Between 1976 and 1979, the Centre engaged in three kinds of activity though not all with the same degree of success. The first was the *discussion forum* in which members of the Advisory Board discussed some problems of the society. Ideas were just thrown around which might later be followed up with in-depth study. One such forum dealt with "What is wrong with Nigerians?" Another was organised by the Directorate for a selected group of Nigerians in key positions in industry and commerce. It focused on the relation between government and private sector and the need to maintain an open channel of communication.

The second kind of activity was the *conference*. Three conferences were held, two in 1977 and one in 1978.

1. The first was the *National Conference on the Draft Constitution* organised in conjunction with the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and was held in Ibadan in April, 1977. This conference attracted well over two hundred scholars, administrators and trade unionists and explored the social and economic implications of the draft constitution. Papers presented at this conference were published by the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) later.
2. *Conference/Workshop on Discipline in Schools* was organised in July, 1977 in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education for 300 principals of secondary schools drawn from all the 19 states of the federation as well as from the Federal Government Schools. This conference focused on the social, environmental and psychological factors underlying indiscipline and lawlessness in schools. The report

of the conference was widely distributed to the states. Unfortunately, the plan to follow up at the state level failed to materialise due to financial constraint. I repeated the workshop on discipline in schools in 1991 during my tenure as Minister of Education, under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President, with Gen. Obasanjo as keynote speaker. We were unable to follow up at the state level again for lack of funds.

3. *Towards a Comprehensive Energy Policy* was the subject of the third conference held in Jos in August, 1978. The conference attracted over one hundred scholars ranging from energy economists to chemists, physicists and engineers interested in one form or another in energy research. All the government agencies concerned with energy were represented. The objective of the conference was to identify scientists working in the field of energy research as well as to discuss the best approach to developing a comprehensive energy policy for Nigeria. The report of the conference was published and as a result of the recommendations of this conference, the Federal Military Government decided to establish a National Energy Commission.

Research Activities

Apart from public relations activities, the major task of the Centre was research. What is not often realised is that research is money and time consuming and often the result may not be of immediate interest to policy makers. The Centre dealt with two types of problems: (a) those referred to it by the government, and (b) those which it originated.

Of the former, there were four such referrals which resulted in a series of studies and occasional reports. Some could be classified as institutional research aiming at strengthening or streamlining systems capabilities or eliminating a known anomaly in the system. Others were review and evaluation type of studies.

Summary of Research Projects Completed

Below is a summary of the research activities undertaken during the period under review (1976-79):

Institutional Research

1. *Payrolling of New Employees*

This study examined why new employees in most government departments spend as long as two to six months before getting their

- first regular pay (1976).
2. *Financial Management and Accounting Procedure in Government*
A preliminary report was issued and it led to the review of the Financial Regulations and Budget Procedure (1976).
 3. *A Study of the Efficiency of Government Information System*
The study reviewed the structure of the Federal Ministry of Information in relation to the objectives of the government and its information needs (1976/77).
 4. *Research in Government Agencies*
This study was initiated by the Centre to enable it determine its own relationship with the civil service (1976).
 5. *Growth in Government Spending*
This matter was referred to the Centre in 1977. After a preliminary survey, the following studies were commissioned under it:
 - i. Government Spending: A Case Study of the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) Programme.
 - ii. Case Study of a Government Corporation: The Nigerian Airways.
 - iii. Too Many Cooks (Over-establishment and Government Spending).
 - iv. Government Procurement System.
 - v. Proliferation of Government Bodies

These studies examined the phenomenon of growth in Government Spending and some of the factors responsible for such growth. It also involved examining ways and means of curtailing such growth and reducing government spending generally.

Another major area of research was the Economy and Society. As a result of the brain-storming session on "What is wrong with Nigerians?", a number of studies were planned. Almost simultaneously, the Head of State asked the Centre to undertake a comprehensive study of the roots of indiscipline and lawlessness in Nigerian society. The following studies were completed:

- (a) Volume I: Aspects of Indiscipline and Lawlessness in Nigerian Society:
 - (i) Law Enforcement and the Court System
 - (ii) Aspects of the Police Force as an Institution
 - (iii) Law Enforcement and National Discipline
 - (iv) Delay in Administration of Justice as it Affects the Law Enforcement Agency
 - (v) How Policemen Feel about their Work
 - (vi) Campus Unrest in Nigerian Universities
 - (vii) Indiscipline and Lawlessness in Road Usage

- (b) Volume II of the same study contains the following studies:
- (i) Investigation on the Problem of Drug Abuse in Nigeria.
 - (ii) The World of Suzie Martins: Explorations into Advertising and Ostentatious Living.

Public Policy Review Series

As mentioned earlier, one of the major functions of the Centre was to review government policies from time to time and to draw attention to those that are inconsistent with overall government objectives. But we assumed that what was public policy in any area could easily be discovered. As we quickly found out what was policy was scattered in various speeches by the Head of Government, commissioners, decrees, laws, regulations and circulars, etc., so that in some ministries, not even the permanent secretary would tell off-hand what the policy was on any given issues. We therefore decided that first and foremost, we must start by collecting and collating bits and pieces of information so as to inform ourselves and others what the policies and policy objectives were supposed to be. Late in 1978, a public policy review exercise was initiated. About 42 lecturers and professors were selected for the study. Originally it was intended to cover the following areas (a) Food and Agriculture, (b) Housing, Urban Development and Environment, (c) Resource Use and Management, (d) Maritime and Marine Policies, but because of manpower constraints, and the need to avoid duplication of efforts, the review was narrowed down to Food and Agriculture, Housing, Urban Development and Environment, Marine and Maritime Policies.

During our review of public policy we found that the Implementation Committee on the National Policy on Education was conducting a comprehensive review of education. Also the Ministry of Industry announced that it was going to hold a conference with NISER on a review of Industrial Policy. The Ministry of Finance also sponsored a conference on Self-Reliance and Self-Sufficiency. The N.P.D.C (Think-Tank) was invited to these and our staff contributed papers. Without suggesting that it was the Centre's attempt that triggered off some of the in-house reviews, there seemed to be general awareness and acceptance of a need for periodic feedback from whatever source into the policy-making process. The impression however was that there was resentment when feedback came from a source that was seen as extraneous to the establishment.

One of the early discoveries of the Centre was that the process of data gathering, information storage and retrieval and the accumulation of baseline data were all fragmentary and in some cases rudimentary. It was therefore

decided that as soon as possible, the Centre should explore the possibility of establishing a central data bank for the government so that the Federal Government could be advised on how best to go about it. Since this was going to involve the use of computers, it was decided that the first phase of the work would be to conduct a survey of what was available in the way of computer hardware and software, skilled personnel and versatility of the existing computers. The second stage would be to collate information and data generated by various government agencies, their information needs, etc. This would then be subjected to some systematic analyses.

National Merit Award

The National Policy Development Centre (Think-Tank) proposed the National Merit Award for the consideration of the then Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo. The aim of the award was to accord proper and due recognition to intellectual and academic distinction by Nigerian citizens who have made valuable contributions to national attainment in science, technology, medicine, the humanities, arts and culture and any other field of human endeavour. The Military Government accepted the recommendation and promulgated Decree No. 53 of June 23rd 1979 to this effect.

Future Studies: Nigeria in the Year 2000

In the belief that development planning is an attempt to shape or choose a particular kind of future, the study of the future has become an academic enterprise in itself. This however, must be differentiated from literary creations of utopias, because future studies utilizes mathematical models, forecasting techniques and trends analysis, to construct scenarios of the future which are more or less consistent with past decisions, present policies and future commitments. The board therefore decided that the Centre should embark on future studies.

The Conference on Energy was the beginning of what was to be a major effort in forecasting energy needs for the future. The question had been asked about what the energy needs of an industrialised Nigeria would be by the turn of the century. Another study planned under this heading was to be entitled "Resources for Future Development". It was hoped that this would lead to a more rational policy on resource use and management.

Other Activities

In addition to the work of the Centre, the Director and other Centre staff were in constant demand to present papers or give talks at conferences.

seminars or other fora on one aspect or another of the public policy or the work of the Centre. The following papers were written and presented by Centre staff at various conferences:

1. "The Future of Nigerian Society - Alternative Scenarios" (National Workshop on Planning Strategy for the 1980s).
2. "The Administration of Development Plans" - (National Workshop on Planning Strategy for the 1980s).
3. "The Role of the Budget as a Tool for Managing the Economy". (FMF/NISER Workshop on the Making of Budget).
4. "Think-Tanks and National Development" (Public Lecture at the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs).
5. "Study of the Future: An Approach to Policy Analysis" (Public Lecture at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka).
6. "National Development and the Non-Oil Economy"
7. "Energy Requirements in the 80s" - (Nigeria Labour Congress Seminar on Energy).
8. "Goals of and Policy on Technology in Nigeria" (Conference on the Role of Technology in Nigeria's Industrial Development, Faculty of Technology, University of Ibadan).
9. "A Review of Nigeria's Industrialisation Policy" (FMI/NISER Workshop on National Industrialisation Policy and Strategy).
10. Participation in the Workshop on Modern Information Systems and their Relevance in Nigeria. (University of Ife, 1978).

The Centre also participated at symposia and conferences actively even when papers were not presented, as in the following instances:

1. Participation in the Nigerian Society of Engineers Conference on Energy Policy for Nigeria.
2. Participation at the symposium on "Energy from the Sun" (Institute of Gas Technology, Chicago).
3. Participation at the International symposium on Integration of Science and Technology with Development Needs in less developed countries. (Florida International University, Miami).
4. External Membership of the Faculty Board of Technology, University of Ife 1978/79 Session.

The following research projects were started but not completed

- (1) A survey of Computer Distribution and Usage.
- (2) Nigeria in the Year 2000 AD
 - (i) Material Resource Availability Survey;

- (ii) Energy Need Assessment;
 - (iii) Nigerian Demographic Patterns in 2000 A.D.;
 - (iv) Implications of the above for development.
- (3) Possibility of Health Insurance Scheme for Workers. The group who were to undertake this study demanded remuneration and conditions which were unacceptable to the Cabinet Office.
- (4) The Penal System and Incidence of Recidivism. This is an aspect of the study of indiscipline in Nigerian society.

The National Policy Development Advisory Committee was dissolved in May, 1979. The Committee made the following observations:

As the country is preparing to move back to civilian rule and under a presidential system, the question may be asked whether there is need to continue to have a policy research unit. It is to be remembered that the argument for a government Think-Tank is not because the ministries are incompetent, but rather because the typical ministry official is concerned with solving short-term problems rather than medium and long-term ones. It is often argued that even the most efficient civil servant tends to develop a certain in-built inertia because the tenure of office of its members is usually longer than that of the political ministers. As a result, while the civil service may be good in interpreting what the ministers want to do, it is not so proficient in discerning what it ought to do.

Besides, the pressure of day-to-day business tends to crowd out long-term planning and quite often, there is no time enough to review what has been done before another assignment comes up.

The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPPS) located in Kuru, near Jos succeeded the National Policy Development Centre in 1979. As a former Director-General of NIPPS, Retired Major General Charles Ndiomu said, "The National Policy Development Centre (Think-Tank) is the father of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS)."

I cannot end this section without paying tribute to the distinguished Nigerians whose innovative ideas and imput to the Centre were immeasurable. They were university colleagues, senior executives in public and private industries, some civil servants and private legal and medical practitioners. Above all, I am especially grateful to the members of the Advisory Board for giving me their maximum cooperation throughout my

three-year tenure as Chairman of the Board. These stalwarts were: the Director-General of the Centre, Dr. Uma Eleazu, a dynamic and committed Nigerian, the late Yahaya Dikko, former General Manager of the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria, Alhaji Abubakar Koko, former permanent secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education, Prof. E.O. Adeniyi of the University of Ibadan, Dr. Sylvester Ugoh, Dr. I.O. Adekunle, Mallam U.G. Altimari and Alhaji Imarana Yazidu, all of whom served selflessly and with distinction. I am also grateful to Dr. U.O. Eleazu the former Director-General cum Co-ordinator of the National Policy Development Centre, Think-Tank for his contribution to this section.

Finally at the risk of being immodest, it will be a welcome idea if all the members of the National Policy Development Centre (Think-Tank) and General Olusegun Obasanjo who approved the establishment of both the Think-Tank and later, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, are made honorary members of the Kuru Institute, with the appellation, HMNI.

II CALL FOR A TRUTH INSTITUTE

When I proposed a truth institute for Nigeria in 1987, some of my friends felt that I was living in a fool's paradise. They thought the idea was too radical for Nigeria. It was therefore very refreshing when South Africa under the leadership of Nelson Mandela set up one in 1997 with Bishop Desmond Tutu as its chairman, ten years later.

The major reason that informed my call in 1987 still prevails in Nigeria of 1998 as shown below in my 1987 letter to the editor in the *New Nigeria* of Sunday April 26, 1987, page 5.

Let's have a Truth Institute

A spectre haunts Nigeria today more than ever before. It is tribalism cum religious intolerance. Tribalism led us to the civil war of 1967-70. Perhaps more by chance than by our own ingenuity we survived as one country. Today we are faced with an even greater threat – religious strife. We have reached a water-shed in our history and we must as a matter of national emergency start to campaign actively for a country free of tribal strife and religious discord.

I agree with Sulaimon Osho who said in the *Daily Sketch*

of March 16, 1987 that "From all indications, however, at least judging by the history of religious crisis in Nigeria, Muslim and Christians are mostly guilty of breaching the peace by being at each others' throats." I also share the views of Rtd. Gen. Danjuma who was quoted by Dayo Adeyeye in the *Punch* of March 16 as saying "No nation survives two civil wars." Even if we could survive it no one in his right mind would want to risk it.

The President has clearly stated his government's stand on the issue. The Constitution is also categorical on this. Nigeria is a multi-religious country, but the state is a secular state, thus giving every citizen the inalienable right to worship according to his or her conscience and indeed not to worship at all if he or she so wishes.

Government can and should make decrees, edicts and laws against discrimination and religious intolerance, but we must through public enlightenment educate the general citizenry of our country as well. Many of our Christian and Muslim religious leaders have failed their followers in this regard and even they themselves can benefit from re-orientation in this direction.

No religion in the world teaches violence.

We urgently need a Truth Institute

I therefore propose the setting up of a Truth Institute. This is a study group that addresses itself to specific issues with a view to finding out causes of disaffection and conflict between or among groups, e.g., ethnic groups, religious groups and the like. "Truth" in this context is not universal truth as such.

For example, suppose A refuses to associate with B because B comes from a certain ethnic or religious group. A has heard all kinds of unfavourable comments about people from that particular group. The truth is that A believes what he's heard, even though it may be false, but the fact remains that he believes it and until he convinces himself or he is convinced otherwise, that belief will remain true for him.

Aim of the Institute

The aim of the Truth Institute is to establish a permanent basis for mutual respect and tolerance for each and every Nigerian irrespective of his or her ethnic group or religious persuasion or lack of it.

To achieve this goal, the Institute will explore ways of fulfilling this objective through study, opinion surveys and examination of experiments that have achieved success both in this country and elsewhere and will eventually devise educational and public enlightenment programmes for children and adults.

Composition/Membership of the Institute

It is proposed that the Institute have a total of 12 or 13 members of carefully chosen men and women of integrity, with sound academic or professional background who are noted for their spirit of give and take and who will approach their task with an overriding interest in the promotion of ONE NIGERIA where no one shall be oppressed because of his ethnicity or religious belief. It is never too late for Nigeria to establish this.

III THE STUDY GROUP ON FUNDING OF EDUCATION

By a letter dated 31st August 1984, addressed to all members of the Study Group and the Secretary, and signed by the Secretary to the Federal Government and Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, the Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Major-General Mohamadu Buhari, C.F.R., appointed the Study Group on Funding Education, composed as follows:

- | | | | |
|--------|----------------------------|---|----------|
| (i) | Prof. A.B. Fafunwa | - | Chairman |
| (ii) | Prof. Sanya Onabamiro, CON | - | Member |
| (iii) | Alhaji A. Koko | - | " |
| (iv) | Mrs. Theresa Bowyer | - | Member |
| (v) | Dr. J.A.O. Sofolahan | - | " |
| (vi) | Chief J.U. Etukokwu, MFR | - | " |
| (vii) | Prof. Segun Adesina | - | Member |
| (viii) | Alhaji Yahaya Hamza | - | " |

(ix) Mr. Nnaemezie Malo - Secretary

The Study Group held its inaugural meeting on the 17th of September, 1984.

Our terms of reference were:

Having regard to the Federal Military Government's Policy on Education which provides that education should be the responsibility of the federal, state and local government and parents, each contributing its share and conscious of the prevailing economic situation, the Study Group is required:

- (a) to review the existing arrangements for funding education at all levels.
- (b) to ascertain the extent of the financial involvement of the federal, state and local governments in education at all levels.
- (c) in the light of the prevailing economic realities, to propose an arrangement for funding education which takes cognisance of the possible role of voluntary organisations, communities, individuals and parents.
- (d) to make any other recommendations as deemed necessary.

The Study Group had up to the 31st October 1983 to submit its report.

During the preliminary meetings of the Study Group, it mapped out for itself a *modus operandi* which included assigning papers to members according to their expertise, visiting all the states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, distributing questionnaires to the states to draw out information on enrolment figures and financial costs at all levels of education and calling for memoranda from the general public.

The Study Group put out an advertisement on September 17th inviting memoranda from the general public. Such memoranda which should be in two copies based on the terms of reference of the Study Group were to reach the Secretary to the Study Group by September 28th 1984.

In recognition of the unique role which some organisations play in the direction of education in this country, the Study Group invited memoranda from the following:

- (i) The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology;
- (ii) The National Universities Commission;
- (iii) The Committee of Vice-Chancellors;
- (iv) The National Board for Technical Education;

- (v) The Science Teachers Association of Nigeria;
- (vi) Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools in Nigeria;
- (vii) Conference of Principals of Teacher Training Colleges in Nigeria;
- (viii) Committee of Heads of Polytechnics;
- (ix) Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education;
- (x) Committee of Deans of the Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities;
- (xi) The National Teachers Institutes;
- (xii) National Council for Women's Societies;
- (xiii) The Christian Council of Nigeria;
- (xiv) The Muslim Council of Nigeria;
- (xv) The Nigerian Union of Teachers.

The closing date for these solicited memoranda was 12th October 1984. Altogether the Study Group received a total of sixty-eight memoranda but only five out of 15 organisations specifically commissioned to submit memoranda did so.

We visited the 19 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory from 24th September, 1984 to 12th October 1984 and had discussions with the Military Governors, Minister for the Federal Capital Territory, Commissioners of Education and top officials in charge of Education in the various states and the Federal Capital Territory. We also held discussions with some Vice-Chancellors and some members of the University community. The Study Group resumed sitting on 15th October 1984 till the time it submitted its report.

Some of the most important recommendations made by the Study were as follows:

Primary Education

1. Primary education should be within the reach of every Nigerian child irrespective of whether the parents can pay fees or levy or not.
2. An amount covering the payment of teaching staff should be taken from the Federation Account and set aside for that purpose. This amount should be put into an Education Account or an Education Development Fund and should only be spent on Primary Education.
3. A "compensatory" sum should also be taken from the Federation Account to be made available for educationally disadvantaged states. The exact amount is to be decided by the federal government.
4. State governments should provide teachers' instructional materials.
5. Local governments should provide school furniture and see to the maintenance of the school buildings. They should also provide housing

accommodation for teachers in the rural areas, mobilising community effort for this purpose.

6. Parents should provide their children with textbooks, exercise books, writing materials, school uniforms and mid-day meals. In educationally disadvantaged states where parents may be reluctant or unable to provide these materials, state government may come to their aid.

Secondary Education

7. State governments should accept responsibility for the running expenses of secondary schools, but parents should assist with provision of books, stationery, uniform and boarding (where required) for their children.
8. Federal and state governments should charge tuition fees for secondary education.
9. State governments should be responsible for all capital projects in secondary education, and should involve communities as necessary.
10. Federal government should assist state governments with provision of technical equipment in Junior Secondary Schools and Technical Colleges, and of science equipment in all secondary schools for the successful technological take-off of the country.
11. Federal government should continue to run and fund the unity schools on a less grandiose scale until they are phased out. Tuition fees should be charged in all Federal Government Colleges.
12. State governments should consider mass production and bulk purchase of equipment including school uniforms and textbooks.
13. Secondary schools should themselves invest in profitable ventures like commercial agriculture, both for their training and to reduce costs.

Higher Education

A. Universities

14. We recommended that our universities should redirect their efforts to the purpose for which they were established.

We acknowledge the fact that the Federal Military Government has already merged four out of the seven Federal Universities of Technology with older institutions. We felt this was a commendable act.

We strongly felt that the remaining three Federal Universities of Technology should be enough for the rest of the century and urgent measures should be taken to ensure that their academic and professional programmes were not duplicated.

Altogether, the sixteen Federal Universities should be split into the

following three categories:

- *Category A*: Consisting of a few universities that would devote their time to the development of undergraduate, as well as post graduate learning and research.
- *Category B*: Consisting of a greater number of universities that would devote their time to undergraduate teaching only.
- *Category C*: Consisting of the specialized Universities of Technology at Minna, Akure and Owerri.

We proposed that the National University Commission be empowered to review the programmes of all the Federal Universities, determine their status, and classify them accordingly into categories A and B.

16. We were of the view that there was too much duplication of professional faculties in the universities (e.g. Law, Medicine, Agriculture, Pharmacy, Education and Engineering). We recommended that these faculties be reduced and properly funded. In addition, we recommended that the Federal Military Government should invest the National Universities Commission with sufficient powers to ensure that the universities comply with its own guidelines, rules and regulations. State universities were also to conform with the National Universities Commissions' guidelines and regulations with respect to the establishment of faculties and departments.
17. The management of human and materials resources in our universities was one that had been viewed with grave concern. We recommended that universities should not be under any obligation to provide accommodation for its staff, (teaching and non-teaching) but should pay some housing allowances, the details of which should be worked out by their respective Governing Councils. Temporary accommodation arranged by the university for new staff should not exceed a duration of 30 days.

Needless to say, these recommendations were put in the cooler during General Babangida's tenure. However, four years later (1988), General Ibrahim Babangida established the National Primary Education Commission during Prof. David Adeniji's tenure as Minister of Education and I was appointed the Commission's first Chairman.

I had nearly completed the Study Group assignment when my partner, Prof. Peter O. Okunribido and I decided to establish Foucos Tutorial College, the first of its kind in Africa and South of the Sahara. We both had earlier had a flourishing service in 1982 for students who wished to enrol in the UK for both A levels and universities as well as in U.S. Universities

and Colleges.

The military coup of December 1983 brought the programme to an abrupt end, as the new military regime cancelled foreign fee remittances for new students. Instead of closing our offices, we opened the non-boarding Foucos Tutorial College in 1984. Although there were numerous continuing and adult education schools and classes before 1984, there was no English style Tutorial College with the ratio of one tutor to ten or twelve students in Nigeria before Foucos came to the scene. Foucos therefore became the first to pioneer this idea early in 1984 under the able leadership of Mrs. Josephine Mohammed and a core of dedicated pioneer staff. Now there are many such schools not only in Lagos but in Ibadan, Enugu, Kaduna, and other state capitals.

Over the last fourteen years, Foucos Tutorial College which offers remedial courses has rehabilitated over 2,000 students, most of whom are now university graduates in arts, science, humanities, engineering, medicine, pharmacy, law, computer science and accountancy.



PART II

Tasks and Initiatives

Chapter 5

Unexpected Call to Duty

On 11th July, 1989, I received a telephone call at my office from Chief Olu Falae, the then Secretary to the Federal Military Government saying he had a message for me. We agreed to meet at his office the next day.

When I got there, he informed me that I had a message from President Babangida who wanted me to serve as minister of education! I shouted so loud in utter surprise that one of his staff peeped in to see what the matter was. It was, for me, so shocking news because it was so totally unexpected. Not that I never dreamt of being a minister of education. In fact, I secretly nursed the ambition during the six-year civilian regime between 1960 and 1966 but the idea faded with the military take-over in 1966. It however resurfaced occasionally until 1979 when I voluntarily retired from the university. I gave it up finally in 1983 on reaching the age of sixty. I then settled down to my vocation, educational consultancy.

After getting over the initial shock on President Babangida's offer, I told Olu Falae that I would need time to think about it. He readily agreed but said that I should please not reject the offer because Nigerian education was faced with enormous problems at that particular time and the President needed a seasoned and experienced person like me. I promised to give it a serious thought and left. I asked for a week to enable me examine the issue critically. I was at that time serving as the Chairman of the National Primary Education Commission – a major innovation on the funding of primary education. I was happy in that position and considered that assignment of such vital importance that I did not hesitate to relinquish my penultimate assignment as the Chairman and Pro-Chancellor of University of Calabar; a supposedly more prestigious position than the primary education post. I understood later that when my name was proposed to President Babangida

to head the Primary Education, he questioned whether I would wish to relinquish the more prestigious position of Pro-Chancellor for the Chairmanship of the Primary Education Commission.

Prior to the invitation to serve, I had had three contacts with General Babangida. The first was in 1984, a few months after General Buhari took over government from President Shehu Shagari. A brain storming five-day conference was organised by the Nigerian Army's Think-Tank, TRADOC in Minna town. A cross-section of business people, academics and a crop of old and young armed forces personnel attended and I was invited to participate. It was during one of the lunch breaks that my path and that of the then Major-General Babangida crossed. I was sitting quietly by myself at a corner in the dining room of Shiro Hotel. At the opposite side was a group of army personnel and some civilians. I had heard so much about Babangida, particularly during Murtala Mohammed's days and the Dimka coup but I didn't remember ever meeting him face to face until that day. As I was busy enjoying my pounded yam and *egusi*, his voice rang out from the opposite corner saying, "Prof., don't you like our company? Why not join us?" I smiled, picked up my plate and joined the group.

It was also at one of the TRADOC seminar sessions that General Shehu Yar'Adua and I had a banter. General Yar'Adua in his lecture told the story of a lecturer who spent enormous time and energy to prove that a housefly could not fly if divested of its wings. According to Yar'Adua, the lecturer then went through the painful process of pulling out one wing at a time until there was none left. The silly thing about it all, said Yar'Adua, is that any fool knows that, without wasting any time trying to prove the obvious. Everybody laughed heartily. I then raised my hand to make a comment. The general gave me the floor and I said, "General, I know that story. The fellow involved with the experiment was not a lecturer but a Lt. Colonel!" The remark almost brought the roof of the conference hall down!

My second encounter with General Babangida was in early 1986 after he took over from General Buhari in a bloodless coup. It was at a mini-Dodan Barracks conference on funding of education with about fifteen individuals attending from inside and outside government circles. General Babangida presided over the half-day meeting. Prof. Jibril Aminu, the then minister of education was in attendance and I assumed that I was invited to the meeting because I was the chairman of the Study Group on Funding of Education submitted to General Buhari in 1984. Buhari did nothing about our recommendations. I was privately told that the recommendations were too radical for him. Perhaps President Babangida would have a different perspective.

Arguments raged back and forth mainly on the economy and the funding of education. I was glued to my seat as I watched the majority of discussants arguing against free primary education! It was a most discouraging aspect to see otherwise liberal and extremely articulate and eminent Nigerians arguing against free primary education! I finally raised my hand for recognition. As briefly but as comprehensively as I could marshal my thoughts, I summarised the findings of my Study Group and its recommendations. I made it clear that free primary education is a right, not a privilege. It is indeed an inalienable right of the Nigerian child. It is the least we can do for our children and it is a *sine qua non* for Nigerian citizenship. We need literate farmers, carpenters, mechanics, fishermen and market women. "I know that all of us around this table can afford to pay ₦1,000.00 school fees per month for our children if we have to, but what about the children of the poor, the beggars, the handicapped etc.? Who will pay for them?" I asked. "Can you imagine a primary school as elegantly built as this Dodan Barracks with well equipped classrooms, laboratories, workshops etc., with bright and eager children, ready to learn yet the teachers have not been paid for two, three or even six months? Which one of us here around this table will work cheerfully without three months' pay, if we come to work at all? This means that all of our investments on building and equipment are colossal waste without guaranteed payment of teachers' salaries." "Mr. President" I concluded, "I will gladly sell some universities and put the money on primary education if that is what it will take to guarantee the Nigerian child, a minimum of six years primary education". Many of the members looked bemused but it was President Babangida who broke the silence. "But, professor" he intoned, "who will buy them?" Of course everybody laughed.

Despite the apparent levity with which he took my contribution I left that conference confident that I had pricked the conscience of the President and at least some of the participants. In retrospect, I assume that that was at least one of the reasons why I was invited three years later to take over the Federal Ministry of Education. After consulting with a number of close friends and elders whose opinion I respect, I gave my positive answer a week later.

Five Agonising Months

When I later telephoned two of my children, then in the United States doing their masters degrees, (one at M.I.T) Massachusetts and the other at Stanford in California). I was taken aback by their reaction, for they were very skeptical. Their attitude was, "We'll believe it when it happens!"

After giving my consent to Chief Olu Falae, on July 19th, I assumed that within a week or a month at most, the Federal Government would reshuffle the cabinet and name new ministers.

Chief Olu Falae finally rang on Monday August 28, "Congratulations," he said, as I mused to myself, "It's about time I heard from you!" I then said, "thank you" and he went on, "You and Professor Harrison have been selected as the 1989 Nigerian National Merit Award Winners!" I was dumbfounded. This was not what I was expecting, but it was surely a wonderful welcome surprise. It took me a few seconds to recompose myself as the enormity of the announcement dawned on me. I said, "You mean I won the NNMA award?" to re-assure myself that I heard him aright. "Yes, heartiest congratulations. This award is even more important and more permanent than a political office" he said, and for the next few minutes both of us were chatting animatedly on the importance of the new award. The expected ministerial appointment faded into the background, at least temporarily. Olu Falae told me that the investiture ceremony would take place sometime in December 1989.

From the time I said "yes" to Olu Falae until the time the appointment was finally announced, that was July to the end of December 1989, I was in a state of suspense. As I indicated earlier, I consulted many close friends, some relatives and elders who had held prominent public offices in government. Everyone encouraged me to accept the challenge. Some however warned me not to compromise my principles, no matter the cost. Everyone of them believed that Babangida, in spite of some of his obvious weaknesses, would fulfill his promise to return the country to civil rule. I myself was confident that he would; otherwise, I would not have accepted the appointment. Some of the people I consulted beside my immediate family included a former secretary to the military government and a retired judge who is a close friend.

I had previously planned to visit the U.S.A. for a month between August and September, partly to attend the International Council on Education World Assembly and partly to spend two weeks holiday before I returned to Nigeria. As the Executive Director of Foucos Tutorial College, since 1983, I generally took 30 days off for annual leave. I never missed my holidays. But not knowing when the appointment would take effect or if it was going to be made at all, I decided to spend only two weeks abroad instead of four. I left my contact addresses with my staff, relatives and friends as to where I could be reached within twenty-four hours. I spent two fruitful weeks with some of my children and grandchildren. I had originally planned to devote

full attention to my family but this was not to be. I only succeeded in the first week of the holiday. By the beginning of the second week, I could not keep Nigerian education out of my mind. What would be my overall approach to the many problems confronting the system? I started identifying the problems and challenges at each level: primary, secondary, tertiary education and mass literacy. I must confess that at least eighty percent of my three-year stewardship was carefully mapped out during the second week of my vacation. Of course, I had to flesh this out in the subsequent three months that preceded my appointment - assuming that it would come!

I returned to Nigeria at the beginning of September 1989 and continued to wait. I still wonder whether any other minister ever waited for six months before such appointment was announced. Yet throughout this period, I had to keep my own counsel except for the few people I had consulted.

I remember one acquaintance who confronted me and said, "Babs, I learned that President Babangida is planning to appoint you as a minister"! I said, "I have heard the same rumour". I was back in my job as the Executive Director of Foucos Tutorial College, Ebute-Metta, Lagos after my holiday.

On December 1, 1989, President Babangida invested Prof. Harrison and I with the Nigerian National Merit Award medalion at a colourful ceremony at the Government House, Marina; Harrison for medicine and I for education in a moving ceremony preceded by biographical citations in the presence of all the ministers, the members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), friends, relatives and dignitaries in government, business and religious circles. President Babangida presented us with the insignia and warm handshakes. On that day, the General did not give anything away either by look or wink or word. He was just his congenial self

On Friday December 29, I had the onerous duty of spending all morning at the Lagos mortuary to complete burial arrangements for the burial of my 79 year-old cousin, Chief-elect. Idowu Fafunwa Onikoyi. The family and friends completed the burial ceremony and we returned to the Fafunwa Family House in Idunmota, Isale-Eko, Lagos. My wife and I were with a circle of friends when someone rushed over to inform me that it had just been announced over the 7p.m. radio news that I had been appointed the minister of education. Suddenly, everyone at the ceremony heard the news and the occasion turned sorrow into instant celebration. My wife and I had planned to leave the venue by 8p.m. latest. But some of my relatives begged me to stay on till at least twelve midnight! To me, the moment was a time for reflection, not for celebration. I took my leave anyway telling my relatives

Chapter 6

Inside The Federal Ministry of Education

Nigerian education is still the biggest industry and the most labour intensive in the country; but it is beset with many problems, of which inadequate funding and poor management are the major drawbacks.

In 1996, the education system was made up of 42,000 primary schools with a pupil population of 15 million; 6000 secondary schools with 5 million students population; 39 universities, 50 colleges of education and 38 polytechnics and many other tertiary institutions, e.g. schools of nursing, agriculture, survey, oceanography etc. It also had 36 state ministries of education, plus the one at Abuja.

In terms of personnel, there were 42,000 head teachers and 450,000 regular teachers at the primary level. At secondary level, there were 6,000 principals and 160,000 teachers while at the tertiary level, there were 127 vice-chancellors, provosts and rectors and 15,000 university teachers.

At the apex of all these is the Federal Ministry of Education whose role is as stated below:

1. The Federal Ministry of Education is charged with the responsibility of harmonising educational policies and procedures of all the states of the federation through the National Council on Education (NCE) which is the highest policy-making body in educational matters in Nigeria.
2. In order to execute its basic functions successfully, the ministry is divided into eight departments, each with a director, deputy and assistant directors, education and professional officers, plus other administrative and technical supporting junior and intermediate officers. The departments are (a) Formal Education, (b) Youth Development, (c) Educational Support Services, (d) Planning Research and Statistics,

(e) Technology and Science Education, (f) Federal Inspection Services (g) Personnel Management, and (h) Finance and Supply. These departments are further sub-divided into branches and sections for effective management. In addition, there are three units under direct ministerial control namely: Policy and Public Relations, Legal Unit, and Internal audit.

The main objectives of the Ministry are to (a) formulate, open, review and amend Nigeria's Policy on Education and to ensure development from time to time while making sure that such a policy is in line with the growing needs and progress of the Nigerian society; (b) coordinate with the State Ministries of Education to maintain uniformity of education throughout the country; (c) control the quality of education through inter-regional and international scale; (d) develop African inter-regional and international scale; (e) develop standard curricula and syllabi for all primary and secondary schools in the country; (f) ensure through periodic monitoring that the standards of education at all levels are strictly maintained in the country.

In addition to the units already listed, there are special units and departments under the Ministry on behalf of the ministry.

- Nigerian Commission;
- Nigerian Education Bank;
- Nigerian Technical Education;
- Nigerian Vocational Education;
- Nigerian Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Board;
- Nigerian Education Centre;
- Nigerian Education Centre, 1991-1992 and 1993-1994.

Newly Established Units and Parastatals during my tenure:

1. National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration;
2. National Institute for Nigerian Languages;
3. Nigerian French Language Village;
4. Nigerian Arabic Language Village;
5. National Board for Educational Measurement;
6. National Business and Technical Examinations Board;
7. National Teachers Council (which is yet to come on stream).

As mentioned earlier, most of these new units were made possible through the Ministry's own meagre budget between 1991 and 1992.

Dialogues Galore

I have always believed that dialogue is an effective instrument for promoting understanding, avoiding conflict, promoting collective self-education, and above all keeping in touch with the latest happenings within one's sphere of influence or establishment. It is also desirable for top officials or top echelon of the organisations with similar interests to come together to address common problems and get the benefit of one another's knowledge and experience.

During my three-year tenure as minister of education, I interacted with the following major establishment and organisations:

1. The National Council on Education (NCE), which is the highest advisory council on educational matters in the country. It holds a bi-annual meeting of all the commissioners of education in the 36 states plus Abuja with the Federal Minister of Education as chairman. Its meetings rotate from state to state. All issues related to education at all levels including adult and mass literacy are discussed. The issues may originate from any state or from institutions of higher learning, or the professional education bodies, e.g., NUT or ANCOPS, as long as such issues are first presented and deliberated upon by the next highest advisory body, namely, Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCC) which comprises all directors-general of education or their representative, NUT, Institutes of Education, Executive Secretaries of all Federal Ministry of Education parastatals etc. The Chairman is the Federal Director-General of Education or his representative. Certain issues are decided at this level while others are recommendations for the approval of Federal Government, e.g. change of school year, new policy for any level of education, discontinuation of certain policies, e.g. discontinuance of Grade II or III Teachers Certificates as entry

qualification for teaching, etc.

2. Committee of Pro-Chancellors and Chairmen of Councils of Federal Universities.
3. Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Federal Universities. (My attempt to include Vice-Chancellors of State Universities did not succeed).
4. ASUU
5. NASU
6. SSAUTHRIAI
7. Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT)
8. All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Schools (ANCOPS)
9. Directors and Executive Secretaries of all Federal Ministry of Education presided over by me. (I introduced this innovation at the beginning of my tenure).

I summarise below the minutes or communiques of some of these bodies.

The 37th Meeting of the National Council on Education (NCE) Held in Kano, Kano State from 22nd - 23rd March 1990

The 37th Meeting of the National Council on Education was held in Kano, Kano State from 22nd - 23rd March, 1990 under my chairmanship. Present at the Conference were state commissioners of education, their directors-general, top educationists and administrators from the twenty-one states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, chairmen and executive secretaries of parastatals of the ministries of education, officials of the Ministries of External Affairs and Budget and Planning, as well as representatives of the Armed Forces and the Police. The meeting was preceded by a two-day meeting of officials under the Chairmanship of the Director-General, Federal Ministry of Education.

The Military Governor of Kano State opened the meeting and commended the Council for its notable achievements particularly the establishment of National Primary Education Commission which is one of the most revolutionary attempts to address some of our educational problems. He also mentioned the establishment of highly viable programmes such as that of the Nomadic Education and the School for Gifted and Talented Children as some of the achievements of the Council. He expressed the hope that the Council was making adequate preparations for achieving the programme target of Mass Literacy by the year 2000. The Military Governor pointed out that the success of the Mass Literacy Programme and its impact on the lives

of our citizens could only be felt if the literacy training was conducted in our local languages.

In my keynote address to the Council, I reiterated the Federal Government's long-standing policy on the use of the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction up to a certain level of our educational system with English taught as a second language. Every child, I emphasised, had a right to be educated in his or her mother-tongue.

On the issue of scarcity and high prices of books in the country, I assured Council that efforts were being made at different quarters to find solutions to the problem. I reported that the World Bank, at the invitation of my Ministry, had conducted studies on all sectors of education in the country and particular attention was paid to books in each of the studies.

I expressed deep and grave concern over two important developments in our educational system namely:

- (i) fagging in our secondary schools, particularly those with boarding facilities; and
- (ii) the emergence of secret cults in our secondary and tertiary campuses across the country.

I then implored the members of Council as well as teachers, parents and local communities to help prevent these anti-social behaviours.

Finally, I expressed gratitude to Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida for the four hundred and twenty million naira made available to the Federal Universities for the urgent rehabilitation and upgrading of their existing facilities.

Council considered and approved the Draft Blueprint and Action Plan for Mass Literacy. It observed that Mass Literacy is aimed at being able to read and write at least in one's mother tongue and to calculate numbers for everyday use. Council therefore urged all agencies connected with Mass Literacy to work together in order to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000.

Council received the report of the Committee on the nine-year Compulsory Education Programme and decided to set up a Technical Committee to work out the modalities for implementation and report back to Council. Council allayed fear that the scheme might obliterate the 6-3-3-4 system.

A report of the Task Force on School Statistics and Public Examinations was reviewed by the Council. Council noted the findings of the Task

—a Nigerian Minister of Education -- Professor Aliu Babatunde

indicated among others that overall school enrolment was falling at both primary and secondary levels. It then considered a number of recommendations which were designed to increase school enrolment.

It considered the report of the Committee on Rationalization of Primary and Secondary Schools in great depth with regard to the selection of recommended texts and reduction of unit cost of textbooks. It decided that the suggested list in the report could be used as the base. Council re-affirmed its earlier decision that textbooks should last six years for primary school and three years for junior and senior secondary schools.

It also considered the recommendations of the Committee set up at its 35th meeting to examine the problem of sexual harassment in education in Nigeria. It agreed that for now, the measures adopted at its last meeting were adequate to combat the problem. It urged states which had not set up their own sexual harassment committees to do so and also practicalise other measures to combat sexual harassment.

It also considered its decision to replace General Certificate of Education (GCE) School Certificate Examinations for private candidates. It also considered the launching of the World Decade for Cultural Diversity which is a national programme mounted by the Federal Government through the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and called on the state governments to support it.

It also considered Overseas Awards and Teacher Recruitment was considered by Council. It noted that during the 1989/90 academic year, 100 undergraduate and 71 post-graduate scholarships were awarded to Nigerians under various bilateral agreements. Council commended the effort of the Federal Government in awarding a total of 171 undergraduate scholarships to deserving Nigerians during the session.

Council expressed its concern about the continued shortage of science teachers and Nigerian language teachers in our schools. Whilst it considered a variety of approaches to these problems, Council urged both the Federal and State Governments to intensify efforts in combating the shortage. Council also noted the widespread incidence of fagging in our secondary schools and appointed a Committee to examine the issue and make recommendations.

A Blueprint on Education for the Handicapped was presented to and approved by the Council.

Council received the progress report on the Federal Government's Book Aid Programme. It noted that under Phase I of the programme, books in the subject areas of Mathematics and English were being delivered to the states for distribution to primary schools. Council also noted that in Phase II, books in the subject areas of Mathematics, English and Integrated Science were being delivered for distribution to junior secondary schools while copies of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and English dictionaries were being delivered for distribution to junior and senior secondary schools.

Nigerian Union of Teachers' Meeting

It was quite an august occasion when I met and dialogued with the entire executive committee of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT). They were fifty-nine and they came from all the nooks and crannies of the federation led by Chief B.C.E. Ugwa, the National President and the General Secretary, Mr. Gabriel O. Falade. The meeting was held at the Conference Room of the Ministry on May 16, 1991. The Director-General, Alhaji Yahaya Hamza, the Director of Post-Secondary and Higher Education, Dr. A.B. Olaniyan and Dr. Peter S. Orimoloye-Jibril, Acting Director of Special Programmes were present.

My meeting with the NUT on May 16, 1991 gives some insight into the relationship between the ministry and the union.

In my opening remarks, I said that though this was my third time of meeting with NUT, this was a remarkable one as all the exco-members were present. I impressed upon them the fact that NUT is a recognised professional body, promoted by the Ministry and that was why the Union is represented on the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the National Teachers Institute (NTI), the National Commission for Adult Education and Mass Literacy and other bodies. I observed that the goals and objectives of the Ministry and those of the NUT were mutual and re-affirmed my belief in dialogue for understanding each other's position on vital issues and resolving any conflict that might arise from time to time. This, I said was the spirit of the day's meeting.

I expressed my gratitude for the prompt attention given by the NUT members to my invitation for the meeting. I then declared the meeting open and called on the President of the NUT to raise whatever issues his union

wished to discuss.

The President began by introducing the Union's Executive. He stated that their non-agreement on the FGN's decision to transfer funding management of Primary Education to Local Government Authorities was the reason why they were at the meeting. He also stressed that their main grievance was on the fact that by the Government's action, the basic foundation of education and welfare of the Nigerian child had been dragged in the mud. He added that the Union was of the opinion that local government authorities would not be able to shoulder the responsibility judging by previous experience. He then read out a state by state report of a catalogue of problems emanating from the decision to transfer funding and management of primary education from National Primary Education Commission to Local Government within the last few months. They included:

- (a) Mismanagement of funds,
- (b) Malicious transfer of teachers,
- (c) Indiscriminate termination of appointments and unlawful dismissal of teachers,
- (d) Recruitment of non-qualified teachers,
- (e) Inadequate or lack of physical resources,
- (f) Over-crowding of pupils in classrooms.

The NUT president urged the Minister of Education to use his office to help abrogate Decree 3 which gave the local governments powers over finance and management of Primary Education. He noted that there were about 453 local governments in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and that each of these was using its own policies and confusing the situation.

He further observed that Decree 3 was politicising education. This he said, was putting the innocent teacher in a state of always saying "yes" when he actually meant "no" if his political beliefs were not the same with those of government authorities. He said that government should carefully examine the problems highlighted, such as the recruitment of non-qualified teachers, non-payment of teachers salaries and the present teacher-pupil ratio of about 1:50, all of which tended to debase primary education. These and more revelations, the union asserted, gave it the belief that local governments could not respond positively to public demands on the issue.

Continuing his argument on the matter, the NUT president asserted that Primary Education was gradually dying and that we were supervising its death. It added that it would be better to nip it in the bud than allow the situation to continue to the point of our witnessing the eventual burying of the system, which according to the President of the NUT, history would not forgive us.

He likened the situation to that of a match box given to a child to play with. He said that if the situation was not monitored properly, it could prove very harmful to the child. He said that if "the match box" (Primary Education Management and its funding) was not taken away from the hands of the local government authorities within 30 days, the federal government should expect some resistance from the union.

Responding, I recalled the spirit behind government decision to transfer the management and funding of primary education to local governments. This, I said, was in line with the government's democratisation process especially as it affects grassroots level. I added that a definite start had to be made even though there would be problems, I also added that many of the new local government chairmen are former members of the NUT and the union could not regard its members as unqualified for the job. I then implored NUT to be concerned with how to make the present arrangement work and how the local governments could be made to function more effectively. I added that the Ministry of Education has created a special outfit to monitor standards of primary education throughout the country. Moreover, I said, five months was not enough period to pass a vote of "No Confidence" on the local government authorities. I said they should be given enough time to prove their worth.

I then stated that it was not fair for NUT to give government an ultimatum and that while I would be presenting NUT's case to Mr. President, I would definitely not want to tell him about an ultimatum. Government, I said, should be given enough time to look into the issue and solve problems therein. I observed that what was needed was solution and not necessarily reversal of Decree No.3. I promised to present the Union's submissions to Mr. President and would contact the Exco thereafter.

I thanked the Union once again for its prompt attention to the invitation and wished members safe journey back home.

The President of the Union absolved the parent Union from the recent demonstrations of teachers in various local government areas of the federation. He assured the Honourable Minister of Education that they knew nothing about them. He then expressed their gratitude to the Minister's unequalled patience exercised as a concerned father listening to the cries of his disgruntled children.

In July 1992, I met members of the National Executive Council of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) for the discussion of a proposal for an Appeal Fund to enable them construct a National Teachers' House at Abuja, and to bring to my attention other pressing issues amongst which were the

Regular Meetings with Ministers and Deputies of FME

On inauguration of office, apparently, I started radically from the style of my predecessors, i.e. meeting and including all senior ministry officials regularly, whereas with me not such other

My meetings with the representatives of parastatals and departmental heads, deputy directors, assistant deputy directors and heads of divisions were all important to me. The idea of meeting the top ministry officials was introduced by me from the first year. I felt it kept all better informed about the activities of the entire ministry. Each member, an division and section was fully aware of what was going on in other sections. Questions were encouraged from anyone who wanted to find out what was going on in other sections. I hoped this free flow of information and everyone to feel that he or she belonged and that rumours and misinformation would be cleared. For nothing could be more injurious to an organisation a member of its team peddling rumours about events in another section.

Apart from discussions concerning the responsibilities of the minister general, we deliberated on staff welfare, time for staff transport, cant and end of the year party and young men award for outstanding staff. We set up a small unit headed by a staff in the administration to attend to needs of retired officers who came in from time to time to assist which was the prerogative of the ministry, e.g. pension and gratuity, admission to schools etc. awarded by the staff children. The previous practice was that of giving to staff and they had left the service. Unless they had started to change before I left.

The interaction with my colleagues within the ministry of education was of the new stimulating and enjoyable aspects of my job.

Committee of Vice-Chancellors

I had a number of meetings with Committee of Vice-Chancellors (CVC) and its sub-committee. One example is as reported below by the occasion chairman.

"The Chairman of the CVC thanked the Honourable Minister for the publication of the CVC report and granting them audience. He was said to have emanated from the National Universities Commission (NUC) which originated the Vice-Chancellors in a very uncompromising way. They were accused of slowing down the pace of work. The publication described the manner in which Mr. President had graciously

projects were carried out as "slovenly".

Incidentally, many of the Vice-Chancellors were attending the Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of Universities in the West African Sub-region in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria at that time. They expressed great shock and embarrassment at the publication and they held an emergency meeting to discuss the issue.

The Vice-Chancellors present at the meeting expressed the opinion that the publication was inaccurate and that it was possible that the NUC did not have full details of the situation in the various universities before issuing the statement for publication. They felt that their views should have been sought before such a damaging press statement was issued against them. They were greatly disturbed because the publication painted them as incompetent and irresponsible chief executives who did not have the interest of their institutions at heart. They, therefore, requested for a redress of the damage done to their persons and offices.

The Honourable Minister expressed regret at the embarrassment that the publication caused for all concerned including himself. He, however, assured the Vice-Chancellors that the publication did not emanate from the Ministry, the N.U.C. or the National Monitoring Committee. But he could not rule out the possibility of the monitoring report leaking to the press.

He recalled his meeting earlier with the Committee of Pro-Chancellors where he expressed the emergency nature of implementing the projects which might even necessitate their approving the award of contracts on behalf of their Councils, even though some of them expressed reservations on such a procedure.

The interim report of the National Monitoring Committee was presented at the meeting. The report showed that only seven (7) of the Universities had done anything substantial by presenting fully their proposals, programmes and cash flow as at 17th May, 1990. The Honourable Minister recalled that the report was challenged by some of the Pro-Chancellors who reported that their own Universities had performed better than what the report indicated.

Finally, the Honourable Minister expressed the view that some of the vice-chancellors had not shown enough enthusiasm about the projects and their emergency nature. He expressed the unhappiness of Mr. President that the universities had not done much with the Special Grant. He enjoined all to show the desired enthusiasm in carrying out the projects.

The Chairman of the National Monitoring Committee on the Special Presidential Grants gave a progress report of the implementation of the projects on which the grants were committed.

The highlights of the report were as follows:

- On 13th March, 1990, the release of ₦8m initial grant to each University was announced.
- On 2nd April, 1990, the universities were summoned to a meeting at Kaduna. All but one attended the meeting. It was agreed at the meeting that by 30th April, 1990, each university should get ready its programme of work backed up with cash flow spread. The programme must be in line with what had been earlier prioritised by each University.
- By 17th May, 1990, only 7 universities had fully complied; 8 others had partially complied; while the remaining 6 had nothing yet to show.
- On 28th May, 1990, a circular letter was despatched to the vice-chancellors requesting them to submit their programmes and cash flow spread latest by 4th June, 1990. The same information was passed on to the Chairman of the Local Task Force of each university. They were requested to get the details ready for the impending inspection tours of members of the Committee which would commence on 4th June, 1990.
- The tours had been undertaken and the reports were being collated.
- The Committee had decided not to talk to the press, but to leave the decision on press statement to the Executive Secretary, N.U.C.

Each Vice-Chancellor or his representative reported the situation of his/her University. A majority of them refuted the allegation that their universities were slow in the implementation of the projects. Some claimed that the Monitoring Committee did not visit their institutions, so could not have given any accurate assessment of their programme implementation. In many cases contracts had been awarded and contractors were already on sites.

Many of them reported that they were having problems with the contractors to whom their universities were indebted. Such contractors would want their payments to be settled from the special ₦20m grant. It was a difficult job trying to persuade them (contractors) that the special grant was tied to specific new programmes.

They put forth the following suggestions:

- The National Universities Commission and the Vice-Chancellors should not be antagonistic to each other. It should be borne in mind that they are one in catering for the progress of the university system.
- There should be no unnecessary hurry in the implementation of the projects. The first three months of the programme should be regarded as planning period when the necessary procedure should be put in place.

- There must be responsible implementation despite the urgency factor. The necessary procedures of award of contracts have to be followed in order not to fall foul of the NUC guidelines. If the guidelines must be sidetracked there must be written documentation to that effect to guide the Vice-Chancellors in advising their Councils since no Council or Tenders Board would wish to take decision on contracts without going through the necessary procedure.
- There is no way in which a handful of individuals making up the National Monitoring Committee can monitor projects in so many universities. The best way is to release the funds to the universities and let them handle the projects in their own way under their Councils. The Monitoring Committee should only come to see how the work is progressing.
- It is advantageous to release the balance of the N20m at once so that the projects can be implemented without any cash flow impediment. By doing this, it may be easy to make some advance payment to the contractors for purchasing materials. This will also help to minimise fluctuation in the prices of materials.
- The NUC and the Monitoring Committee should interact with the Vice-Chancellors directly as they are now Chairmen of their institutions' Task Forces.
- There is communication gap between the Vice-Chancellors and the Monitoring Committee. This must be bridged.
- The Monitoring Committee should not stereotype things; they should take note of the peculiarities of each university.
- In order to allay the fears of Government and also to avoid adverse media publication, Vice-Chancellors should invite pressmen periodically to see the on-going projects. It will be necessary also to explain things positively to them.

In his response to the reports and suggestions of the Vice-Chancellors, the Chairman of the Monitoring Committee summarised as follows:

- Some Vice-Chancellors were just submitting their programmes that day at the meeting.
- Any submission made within the last ten days would not have been to the knowledge of the Monitoring Committee as all members were out on inspection.
- Many of the people handling the projects in most of the universities are not experienced enough. This should be looked into.
- Universities should document accurately the type of rehabilitation they

- intend to carry out on buildings by making use of experts.
- Release of the balance of ₦20m at once is a policy issue that can only be handled by the Honourable Minister.

The Honourable Minister summarised as follows:

- Mr. President is not interested in interfering with the way the authorities of the universities plan to execute the projects. Universities can be cautious in handling the projects, but at the same time work fast on them.
- The question of abandoned projects should be put behind after this exercise.
- Monitoring helps to ginger things up and so should be used.
- Universities should try to do whatever can be done before the expiration of the 18 months. There must be evidence at all times that work is going on.
- All universities, particularly those of Technology, should engage in local fabrication of spare parts.
- Universities should appreciate the special grant (₦20m each) as the polytechnics and colleges of education are also asking for similar special grants.
- A way of easing pressure on the student hostels in the universities is to go the American system of building students' centres on the campuses where students can have all the conveniences (toilets, washrooms and cafeteria) for their use during the day, but retire to their various homes outside the campuses after the day's work.
- The Honourable Minister will consult with his advisers on the issue of the release of the balance of ₦20m at once, and feed the Vice-Chancellors back.

The Vice-Chancellor of University of Benin observed that the University Laws had still not been amended. The issue of amendment was becoming imperative in the case of her own University where she needed the assistance of two Deputy Vice-Chancellors to cope with the numerous problems of the University. The Honourable Minister gave the assurance that the procedures for the amendment of the law were in the final stage.

The Vice-Chancellor of Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto reported that there were cracks in the students hostels' buildings and that with the minor tremor that occurred recently in Sokoto, the cracks had been widened. Students had been moved out of the affected buildings.

Some Vice-Chancellors wanted to know the reaction of government to their protest on NEPA's astronomical bills. The Honourable Minister assured

them that the matter was still being pursued. He, however, advised that each university should continue to pay some amount to NEPA every month so as to avoid embarrassment. The assurance he had got from his colleague in the Ministry of Mines and Power would be communicated to the universities later.

The Vice-Chancellor of University of Nigeria, Nsukka recalled that Government approved a sum of ₦2.5m for his University for land acquisition, but the money had not been released and the University had been taken to court over its land acquisition. He appealed that the money should be released. The Executive Secretary, NUC reported that only ₦2.1m was received from government debt settlement. The Honourable Minister advised the Vice-Chancellor to spread the little money he had received to all those to whom the university was indebted before judgement caught up with the university.

The Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors thanked the Honourable Minister for granting the Committee the audience. He promised on behalf of the Vice-Chancellors, that they would work harder on the projects so that they would complete them in good time."

A Typical Consultation Day with Mr President

Outcome of a meeting held by Mr. President,
General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, cfr, fss, mni,
with the Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development,
Professor A.B. Fafunwa, on 24th January, 1992 at Abuja.

1. Rehabilitation of Old Secondary Schools in Nigeria – Mr. President promised to make funds available, but could not guarantee availability of the whole amount.
2. This ₦2m donation to ICET Endowment Fund – Mr. President thought that funds had been made available, but promised to discuss the matter with the Budget Committee with a view to releasing the money.
3. Appointment of Vice-Chancellor – Federal University of Technology, Owerri – Mr. President thought that he had already approved the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, but stated that the matter would be discussed with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.
4. Governing Councils of Colleges of Education – Kano, Ondo and Zaria – Mr. President stated that he would check, but felt that he had taken action on the matter.

23. The establishment of additional examination boards (N4m & N2.5m).
24. Combating Examination Leakages (HME).
25. Student Indiscipline & Fagging at Secondary School Level (HME).
26. Retrieving the N1m pledge of Mr. President to ICET (HME).
27. The resident's pledge of turning the sod of the National Library Building at Abuja later in the year: Cost of N300 million? (HME)
28. National Council of Education (NCE) Papers for April (end of Ramadan) (Deputy Director Policy: 20 or 21 April).
29. Creating Inspectorate Offices in the nine newly created states or streamlining the Inspectorate Services by zoning the offices to limited zones of Nigeria, following the special programme unit, Kaduna example.
30. Mr. Oshunkeye's proposal to the HM for a National Council on Special Education and for Braille Press & Codes in Nigerian Languages for the Blind.
31. Mr. Balogun's (Director, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria) memo to the HME for an Annual Grant of N16,440,720 from the FME in support of Continuation of Educational Broadcasts to Schools and Colleges (HME/Niji).
32. Professor E.A. Yoloje's proposal for Evaluation of Educational Broadcasting in Nigeria.
33. Outstanding Legislations on Education.

Pensions

One good thing General Babangida did concerned the issue of pensions for expatriate retirees.

Chief E.C. Anyaoku CON, Secretary-General of Commonwealth Secretariat, London sent me the following letter from London in March 1990:

Dear Minister,

Please forgive me for bringing the matter of the attached self-explanatory exchanges to your personal attention. I need hardly say that whatever you and the government feel able to do to help this group of twenty retired members of staff of three of our universities would be most welcome.

Chief E.C. Anyaoku. CON

One of our retirees, an outstanding professor made a very passionate case in presenting her predicament and those of her fellow retirees in a

letter addressed to Chief Anyaoku in February 1990:

Dear Chief Anyaoku,

May I first take this opportunity of congratulating you on your appointment as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth? This is very exciting news for those of us associated with University of Ibadan. May your term of office be successful and rewarding.

You may recollect our meeting at the University Alumni gathering when Dr. Hill and I spoke to you about our pension problem, a matter which Professor Peter Williams had mentioned to you at an earlier date. This problem, a financial one, followed the implementation of SFEM in Nigeria emoluments over the period to date.

Last June, we were optimistic of a resolution because of the University Council's magnanimous proposal to supplement our pensions from the institution's own resource and restore them to their 1985 sterling level. All that was required was for the Federal Ministry of Education to approve this proposal and we awaited the outcome with some degree of confidence. However, as the months went by our hopes waned until a personal telephone call from Professor Aminu in December gave me the opportunity of raising the pension problem with him once again. The Minister was very sympathetic and assured me that he would actively investigate all possible means of resolving this problem. We are still anxiously awaiting news of the outcome.

It was impossible for us here to envisage what other action we should take in trying to resolve our critical financial difficulties. The overall outlay needed to honour this commitment is quite small: only 20 people from all the Nigerian universities are involved (see attachment). Yet, the individuals concerned are subjected in a distressing manner to problems associated with escalating living costs because their pensions are now only 12% of what they were in 1985. We have already appealed to the British Government for their assistance, but their view is that the responsibility for our pensions rests firmly with the university concerned.

I thank you for your concern and interest and would be most grateful for any suggestions you may offer.

Nigerian Universities - Retirees Pension

Number of Expatriate Retirees on Nigerian Pension:

University of Ibadan	8
Ahmadu Bello University	8
Obafemi Awolowo University	4
Total	20

Sterling-Naira Equivalents: Recorded for the December months

	£	Naira
1985	1 =	1.1689
1986	1 =	4.2535
1987	1 =	7.6245
1988	1 =	9.8003

As a result of this moving plea, I sent the following letter to the President

My dear Mr. President,

Nigerian Universities Expatriate Retirees on Pension

Mr. President would please find attached a letter from Professor Dinah M. James to Chief E.C. Anyaoku, CON, Commonwealth Secretary-General and the Chief's covering letter on the matter under reference. I also refer to my previous discussion with Mr. President on the same issue.

These twenty expatriate staff who were on tenure appointment during their services in this country retired on the then existing Nigerian pension fund scheme. They were getting their retirement benefits in local currency. Before 1986, the value of the local currency as against other currencies was considerably higher. Consequently, these retirees enjoyed a good exchange rate when they converted their pension benefits and/or retirement benefits to other currencies such as the pound sterling for the purpose of repatriating these benefits. At that time it was also relatively easy to obtain the currency exchange to effect transfer.

Since the introduction of structural adjustment programme in this country, the value of the Naira has gone down considerably. For instance, in 1985, £1 sterling was equivalent to at least ₦12. Consequently, these retirees being paid their retirement benefits in Naira have been experiencing considerable difficulty in the amount they eventually obtain when they convert the Naira to pound sterling. In addition to this, it has become increasingly difficult also to obtain the pound sterling equivalent for the transfer. This is of course part of the national economic recovering measures.

The situation has now gotten so bad for these retirees that they have, on several occasions appealed to the Nigerian Federal Government to reconsider the situation to the effect that they be allowed to continue to receive their retirement benefits based on a conversion of the Naira value against the pound sterling at the 1985 conversion rate. This request has, of course, no legal or obligatory basis because if the situation were reversed, these retirees would not complain. However, Mr. President Sir, on compassionate ground and on the grounds of the selfless service which these retirees rendered to the nation and particularly to the University System, I would like to appeal to you Sir for considering this request but with modification.

I would, therefore, suggest that these retirees be allowed to receive their pound sterling equivalent of the Naira retirement benefits at the exchange rate as at 1986 i.e. £1 sterling equivalent of ₦4.2. This situation will considerably increase the value of their retirement benefits while it also takes into consideration the fact that the National economy has suffered some set back and all concerned must share the burden. As itemised in the letter from Professor Dinah M. James, twenty expatriate staff within the Nigerian University System will be affected if this appeal is granted. These are made up of eight (8) staff from University of Ibadan, eight (8) from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and four (4) from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife.

I enclose letters of appeal from Professor Dinah M. James and Chief Anyaoku, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

I submit to Mr. President for your kind and gracious approval of this request.

Yours very sincerely, Sir,
Professor A.B. Fafunwa
Honourable Minister of Education

The President's comments below penned in his own handwriting reflect an interesting aspect of the man's personality:

Hon Minister,

The "settlement rate" must be seen to be fair to them; after all they served. Why don't we use the current exchange rate? You can go ahead either way.

All those involved are enjoying their well earned pensions now. I cannot however say the same for myself and other academics.

The President's proposed full pension for professors

The President was invited to address the opening of the Fifteenth Annual General Seminar of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors holding at the Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi on April 15, 1992. He graciously accepted the invitation and came in person to deliver his own address. It was a remarkable day for CVC as the committee is called. What the President did on that occasion was beyond anybody's wildest imagination. The last and concluding part of his address was his own idea which he inserted during the plane flight between Abuja and Jos. I wish I could claim credit for it but it was all his own decision and I quote the concluding section of his address:

"This administration has been fully alive to its responsibilities to the people to try to ease their pains and soothe their wounds. By extension, we feel obliged to render whatever assistance we can to our universities in the process of discharging their sacred duty of sustaining themselves as centres of scholarship. That was why we have always extended a generous hand to our institutions of higher learning in the provision of funds by direct grants.

We are prepared to examine the conditions of service of university staff in order to enable them to stay at their posts instead of seeking for greener pastures elsewhere.

Accordingly, and for a start, I am hereby directing the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development to inform all the universities that, henceforth, any Professor who serves in any university, fully here at home, to the point of retirement and who, during service, left the university only on approved national or university assignments shall be entitled to collect as pension his or her full salary and

allowances as at the time of his or her retirement. I also authorise that the Student Loan Board receives a grant of two hundred and fifty million naira (N250 million) to beef up their loans scheme so that our youth will be able to finance their tertiary education with ease.”

But alas! this scheme is yet to be implemented six years after the pronouncement”.

Multi-purpose Students Centres

I have observed over the years that the university community in most of our institutions tends to ignore (or fails to recognise) the needs of off-campus students. Indeed there is a tendency on our part to feel that once we provide amenities for students in residence, all will be well. Yet in most universities today, more students live outside the campus. To me, this is the same mentality that indicates that once we provide for 64 unity schools, the remaining 4,936 schools would fend for themselves! I felt and still feel that some amenities should be provided for off-campus students; hence my proposal to all the universities in 1992 that each Nigerian university should build a multipurpose student union centre comprising a cafeteria to seat at least 200 students at a time, a lounge for 100 students, toilet and bath facilities for 25 to 50 students at a time, a shop for snacks and drinks (non alcoholic), a reading room to seat at least 500 students and recreation room for indoor sports. This complex would cater largely for off-campus students who come in as early as 7 or 8 am and stay on campus till 9 or 10pm. This arrangement should reduce pressure on hostel facilities such as toilets, showers etc.

Each university was requested by me to set aside at least N5 million from the N20 million grants given to each Federal University in 1992 for a multi-purpose student center. Ironically, when the funds were made available to the universities, many of the Vice-Chancellors and Pro-Chancellors refused to make the multi-purpose centre their priority.

I had to threaten to withhold part of the grant before they saw reason. I am happy to say however, that a number of Vice-Chancellors complied without my arm twisting.

Proposed Reform in the Federal Ministry of Education

The Federal Ministry of Education, as we have shown, is the apex ministry in the Nigerian educational scheme of things. Its duties have been identified earlier in this chapter. Since its inception in 1903 no attempt has been made to review its operations, even though the system it supervises witnessed

many reviews and renewals – primary, secondary and tertiary. In order to have a result-oriented Federal Ministry of Education, the first major step to be taken is to divest it of the administration and management of the sixty-four federal secondary schools, styled unity schools. At present over sixty percent of the ministry's time, energy and money is spent in the operation of these few schools while little attention is paid to the remaining 4,936 secondary schools in Nigeria.

These Federal schools should either be returned to the states or handed over to boards of trustees along with a ₦500 million grant. While these schools should be run on an economic basis, 10% of the student intake should be reserved for bright but indigent students and another 10% based strictly on merit.

Having divested itself of this unnecessary burden it will have more time, money and energy to vigorously pursue its major functions which are:

- (a) to formulate national policy on education
- (b) to maintain standards of education throughout the country
- (c) to control the quality of education in the country
- (d) to effect cooperation in educational matters on an international scale and
- (e) to ensure minimum educational requirements for all educational institutions in the country through periodic monitoring.

The national policy on education has been formulated and put in place. The 6-3-3-4 system was introduced in 1976 and officially decreed in 1979. What it largely required is adequate funding and effective monitoring. In my hand-over notes to my successor in January 1993, I said the following:

“The Inspectorate Services Department is charged with the responsibility for ensuring minimum standards, and for the establishment of new institutions. It is also responsible for quality control in education, and it reports directly to the Honourable Minister of Education.

The Department is perpetually understaffed in terms of the nature of its assignment, although it regularly supervises some of our 64 Federal Government colleges annually and a few State Secondary Schools. I am not particularly happy with its coverage when one realises that there are over 5,000 secondary schools in Nigeria. During the course of my tenure, I attempted to remove the anomalies and duplications that exist between the Inspectorate and other agencies within the education system.

A few meetings were held, but the issue is yet to be resolved. I recommend that this issue be more closely examined with a view to streamlining the Inspectorate System in Nigeria. This Department should normally be responsible for inspecting all the secondary schools in Nigeria in collaboration with the 30 State Ministries of Education and the Department at Abuja. This may be the key to the maintenance of minimum standards in our educational system. You may wish, therefore, to give some attention to this issue on assumption of office"

To therefore monitor 42,000 primary schools with 450,000 teachers in 36 states plus Abuja, today we will need at least a combined team of 2000 federal and state inspectors whose major assignment would be to help the schools and teachers under their jurisdiction rather than serve as "supervisors" and fault-finders. The same goes for the supervision of the 5,000 secondary schools and the 160,000 teachers.

It would be necessary from time to time for the Federal Ministry of Education to meaningfully intervene for the improvement of the infrastructure of the secondary schools. The ministry has done so in the area of book and equipment supplies to some secondary schools which were not Federal Schools. Such efforts are minimal due to limited funds. While I was in the ministry, I estimated that the huge amount being spent on 64 unity schools was more than what was being spent on 500 state schools.

As reported elsewhere in this book I tried to rehabilitate 10% of the 5,000 secondary schools with a grant of ₦1,000,000 each. The President approved a grant of ₦450 million for the rehabilitation of the 450 oldest secondary schools in Nigeria in 1990. Unfortunately I succeeded in receiving only ₦45 million from the Federal Ministry of Finance in late 1992, as stated elsewhere in this volume. The target areas for rehabilitation of the old secondary schools in terms of the proposed ₦1 million grant each were:

- (a) Science laboratory equipment and supplies
- (b) Library books
- (c) General face-lift (repairs and painting).

A committee comprising representatives of the state ministry, the old boys/old girls associations and the Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.) of each school was to be assigned the responsibility of effecting the rehabilitation programme.

It was hoped that at the end of the exercise the old students' associations would continue to assist the state ministry of education in the maintenance

of the physical facilities of their school and ensure that the school did not revert to a state of disrepair. As far as primary education is concerned, the local governments should eventually administer the system. Accountability and open administration must be guaranteed and monitored. Thus, at the end of the day, primary schools will be run by local government, secondary by the state while tertiary will be jointly run by the state and the federal governments.

All educators and non-educators will agree that the training of teachers is crucial to the development and growth of education at all levels. Yet, it is inexplicable why the same teacher who is crucial to educational development tends to be the most neglected staff in the system. After many years of debates and arguments I succeeded in persuading the federal government to promulgate a decree establishing the National Teachers Registration Council which would enhance the professionalisation of teaching in 1991. Four years after the promulgation of the decree, the document was still gathering dust at the Federal Cabinet Office in Abuja.

Like the decree on the establishment of the National Teachers Registration Council referred to above, the decree establishing the Governing Councils for the nineteen Federal Colleges of Education was promulgated in 1986, four years before I became minister of education. Under the decree, each council has the overall responsibility for directing the affairs of the College. Prof. Babatunde Ipaye in his lecture entitled, "The Fafunwa phenomenon in Nigerian Education", given at the First Fafunwa Foundation Annual Lecture in September 1996 said, and I quote:

"The Fafunwa Study Group recommended on page 121 item 31 of its report as follows: to correct the various anomalies among the Colleges of Education, we strongly recommend the establishment of National Registration Council for Teacher Education that will perform for the large number of Colleges of Education such functions as the National Board for Technical Education and the National Universities Commission perform for the Polytechnics and the Universities respectively. There is no doubt that a vacuum exists for such a monitoring accreditation and professional body for the College of Education.

On the basis of this recommendation the National Commission for Colleges of Education was established in 1986, two years after the recommendation was made to government.

It should be recalled that the NCE programme was introduced by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where Professor Fafunwa worked, by the then Head of Department of Education, Professor John Hanson, at the 11th Plenary of the JCCE in June 1961. Professor Fafunwa (then Dr.) attended the JCCE for the first time in June 1962, having taken over from Prof. John Hanson as the Head of Department of Education at Nsukka. At the 14th Plenary in December 1962, the JCC decided that holders of the Grade II teachers certificate should spend three years on the NCE course, while those with Grade I Teachers Certificate or GCE Advance Level passes in two approved subjects should spend two years in order to obtain the Nigeria Certificate in Education, (NCE).

Professor Fafunwa having got the NCE programme approved by the JCCE in 1962, also recommended the establishment of a monitoring accreditation and professional body for the programme in 1982. The NCCE is now actively functioning as the “third tripod of tertiary education in Nigeria. (see Lassa, 1995)”

The composition of the Governing Council is spelt out in Section 3 of the Decree. The Council of each College, other than a Federal College of Education (Technical), shall consist of 13 members as follows:

- (a) a Chairman to be appointed by the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces;
- (b) the Permanent Secretary (or Director-General) charged with responsibility for matters relating to education or his representative;
- (c) a representative of the alumni association of the College;
- (d) a representative of the University to which the College is affiliated for moderation;
- (e) six persons of note in areas of Science, Arts and Applied Science, at least one of whom shall be a woman, to be appointed by the President.
- (f) a representative of the Academic Board of the College;
- (g) a representative of the National Teachers Institute; and
- (h) the Provost of the College.

The Council of the Federal College of Education (Technical) shall be composed of 15 members as follows:

- (a) A Chairman to be appointed by the President;

- (b) the Permanent Secretary (Director-General) of the Federal Ministry charged with the responsibility for education or his representative;
- (c) a representative of the Nigerian Society of Engineers;
- (d) a representative of the University to which the College is affiliated for moderation;
- (e) six persons of note in the areas of Science and of Technology, at least one of whom shall be a woman, to be appointed by the President;
- (f) a representative of the alumni association of the College;
- (g) a representative of the Academic Board of the College;
- (h) a representative of the Armed Forces;
- (i) a representative of the National Board for Technical Education; and
- (j) the Provost of the College.

Within six months of my assumption in office I was able to persuade the Federal Cabinet to allow my ministry inaugurate the councils. In 1991, I inaugurated the Chairman and Council members of sixteen of the 19 Colleges.

The three remaining College Councils not inaugurated were Adeyemi College, Ondo which was still part of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Advanced Teachers College, Kano and Advanced Teachers College, Zaria which were affiliated to and run by Ahmadu Bello University. The three councils were established a year later.

But alas, the Councils of all the institutions – Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics, were dissolved by my successor in 1993. Ironically, the Councils of Universities have been reconstituted twice within three years of the first dissolution, (1995-96); that of the Polytechnic, once, while the Councils of Colleges of Education remain un-reconstituted up till the end of 1997! Why the Councils of the Colleges of Education have not been reconstituted as were those of the Polytechnics and Universities, is still a mystery.

Chapter 7

Establishment of Six New Federal Ministry of Education Parastatals

When I joined the Federal Ministry of Education in January 1992, the ministry was responsible for 23 Federal Universities, 19 Polytechnics and 19 Federal Colleges of Education.

Certain specialised functions of the Ministry were also undertaken through its parastatals, as identified in chapter six.

Almost two decades ago I had vigorously campaigned for the decentralisation of the West African Examination Council. In the *New Nigerian* of December 15, 1979 page 4, I had written:

“Scrap WAEC and Establish N.E.C.

Seven years ago, I made a strong plea to the WAEC officials and the International Council of WAEC to consider very seriously and as a matter of urgency, speedy decentralisation of the Council, particularly in Nigeria.

A close study of the WAEC over the past ten years revealed the following:

- (1) A considerable increase in the number of candidates entered for the various examinations of the Council both in quantity and variety, viz: WAEC, 'O' level, 'A' level, Primary Six Examination, Common Entrance, City and Guilds, RSA, Teachers Certificates etc. Specifically the number of candidates who entered for the Council's examinations in Nigeria alone rose from 490,172 in 1974/75 to 648,797 in 1975/76.
- (2) The craze for examination and mere paper qualification in Nigeria had reached a manic stage and one

wondered whether Nigeria was running an educational system or an examination system.

- (3) While we all believe in continental and sub-continental cooperation in the area of economic and political activities, there is no need for a monolithic and monopolistic examination system for Africa or West Africa. Certainly, there can be established a loose association or an advisory examination council but a tightly centralised West African Examination Council is not only unwise, it is tyrannical and counter-productive. Nigeria is big enough to run six more examination bodies. The U.K. which we copied partially has at least eight examining bodies for its 60 million people and their certificates are interchangeable. In the final analysis, it is not the certificate one holds that counts. It is how well its holder can perform on the job that should be the determining factor. In the light of the above, I propose as follows:

- (a) Make the Nigerian branch of WAEC an autonomous body as an immediate first step. Those of us who have served at the International Council level of WAEC know how a certain West African country dictated WAEC's tune while Nigeria paid the bill. It was and still is the case of the tail wagging the dog. The so-called international panel had turned down well thought-out syllabi and subjects submitted by Nigeria for approval on several occasions. All of such proposals were designed in each case to meet the specific needs of Nigeria. No country, no matter how friendly should unduly influence any curriculum change or development of another country in any shape or form, for it makes the latter subservient to the former. The examination weapon has been used too often to stifle curriculum growth and development in Nigeria. This has to stop if our educational system is to

reflect our societal needs. No two countries in the world are exactly alike. Even in the United Kingdom, the Scottish system is different from the English and the two co-exist with different educational and examination systems.

- (b) Turn WAEC into a purely advisory body with representatives from each country meeting once a year or every other year just to consult and exchange notes on an informal basis.
- (c) Carve out four examining bodies from the present Nigerian WAEC set-up and give them different names, e.g., Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern.”

My call was backed up by a lively editorial in the *New Nigerian* newspaper of December 19, 1979. I had also written other articles and presented papers on this issue at every opportunity between 1979 and 1988. On assuming office therefore, I decided to set up a task force to examine the issue of decentralization more closely and make recommendations.

Establishment of Two New Examination Boards

It will be recalled that the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) was set up in 1952 as a corporate body with the responsibility of conducting examinations required in the public interest. In Nigeria, WAEC found itself at one time or the other conducting about 15 different examinations every year.

The increase is not only in the number of examinations; there is also a tremendous increase in the number of candidates who take the various examinations every year. For the School Certificate/GCE 'O' level examinations alone, the number of candidates rose from 74,983 in 1975 to 320,000 in 1982 and to 1,180,000 in 1989/90. A tribunal of inquiry set up by the Federal Government in 1977 led by Mr. Justice Sogbetun, noted the excessive work-load of the WAEC and pin-pointed this as a major factor causing the frustrating delay in the release of examination results. The tribunal recommended that WAEC should be relieved of conducting five out of its numerous examinations. Unfortunately, only two were transferred, namely; Teachers' Grade II Certificate (TCII) to National Teachers Institute and Civil Service Examination to the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON).

The WAEC admitted before the House of Representative Committee on Education in October 1981, that there was a need to set up other examination boards to reduce the burden of WAEC. This admission by WAEC led to the setting up of the Angulu Panel in 1982.

The Angulu Panel recommended the setting up of six Regional Examination Boards:

- (i) Board for Technical and Commercial Examinations
- (ii) Board for Teacher Grade II Examinations
- (iii) Western Senior School Examination Board
- (iv) Central Senior School Examination Board
- (v) Eastern Senior School Examination Board
- (vi) One Board to conduct the GCE type of examination for private candidates

The Sogbetun and Angulu Panel Reports agreed on the need to transfer five of WAEC examinations to other bodies, and the need to establish more examination boards. The Angulu panel report was considered by the Federal Executive Council in 1985 but no decision was taken before the change of administration in August, 1985.

In 1991, I set up a task force to study both the Sogbetun and Angulu Panel Reports to enable me advise the Federal Government. The task force found, among other things that

- (i) the WAEC was still conducting about 13 examinations;
- (ii) there was a need to create more examining bodies to relieve the WAEC of the responsibility of conducting some of the examinations;
- (iii) the Regional Examination Board system recommended by Angulu was being practised in developed countries but would be expensive to adopt in Nigeria;
- (iv) more examinations were emerging from time to time and there was an urgent need to reduce the work-load of WAEC;
- (v) the excessive work-load of WAEC had always contributed to the delay in the release of examination results and perennial examination leakages.
- (vi) the Centre for Educational Measurement was already in existence to handle some of these but there was need to revamp and beef up the Centre to take over some of the examinations from WAEC.

The task force recommended that:

- (a) the existing body, the Centre for Educational Measurement (CEM), be converted into an examination board with the responsibility of conducting:

- (i) the National Common Entrance Examination
 - (ii) JSSE for Federal and Armed Forces Institutions
 - (iii) aptitude tests for Federal and Armed Forces Institutions
 - (iv) selection test to Suleja Academy.
- (b) a new board called National Technical and Commercial Examinations Board (NTCEB), be established to conduct:
- (i) commercial examinations for technical colleges
 - (ii) technical examinations for technical colleges
 - (iii) Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and City and Guilds Examinations, and
 - (iv) Entrance Examination to Federal technical colleges.

Costs for setting up and running the new examinations bodies were figured as follows:

CAPITAL

	Year		
	1	2	3
NBEM	₦3.5M	₦3.2M	₦2.7M
NTCEB	₦5.3M	₦4.0M	₦2.9M

RECURRENT

	Year		
	1	2	3
NBEM	₦4.6M	₦4.8M	₦5.0M
NTCEB	₦4.6M	₦4.8M	₦5.0M

The committee considered that costs could be greatly reduced (a) by developing the new boards out of existing bodies, (b) by taking up office accommodation from within uncompleted buildings of the National Education Technology Centre, and (c) by sharing high cost facilities such as the Computer Centre.

The committee further recommended

- (a) that the budgetary costs of the two bodies for 1992 should not exceed ₦4 million and
- (b) it finally proposed that the Honourable Minister should seek the anticipatory approval of Mr. President to establish the two new bodies not later than the second quarter of the financial year 1992.

Establishing Parastatals on Shoestrings

I must confess that I was able to establish six new parastatals only by creating them from my own ministry's recurrent budget. I decided to save 10% of my recurrent budget to enable me finance, though on a modest scale, essential projects and programmes that would not have materialised if I had waited for new votes or special government grants. In most cases, when I sought the President's anticipatory approval, I received it without difficulty. My letter to the President concerning the first two new boards speaks for itself:

Jan 21, 1992

My dear Mr. President,

Two New Examination Boards

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Mr. President of the need to set up two new examination boards and to seek your anticipatory approval.

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) is at present undertaking the conduct of 13 examinations which amount to an excessive load and resulting into loss of productivity and efficiency as was eminently discovered by the Sogbetun Tribunal of 1977, the Angulu Report of 1982 and a Task Force of 1991. All of these panels agree that to overcome the problem of WAEC, additional examination boards are desirable.

The best solution to the setting up of the new examination bodies was found to be in developing them from existing departments/parastatals of the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development. Consequently, it was proposed that the National Board for Educational Measurement be developed from the existing Centre for Educational Measurement, while the National Technical and Commercial Examinations Board would be developed from the National Board for Technical Education.

The budgetary cost for setting up and running the two bodies for 1992 has been put at ₦4.0 million, which sum is to be accommodated within the suppressed budget of the ministry for 1992.

I am seeking therefore Mr. President's anticipatory approval for the establishment of the two examination bodies.

Respectfully submitted.

Professor A.B. Fafunwa

Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development.

The President gave approval on the same day he received my letter. The National Board for Educational Measurement (NBEM), has since taken off, ably headed by Professor Dibu Ojerinde, one of Nigeria's leading experts in tests and measurement. The Board is located in Minna, Niger State. Likewise, the National Business and Technical Examination Board has taken off in Benin City, Edo State under the able leadership of another expert in technical and business education, Professor Olu Aina.

Four other parastatals were established during my tenure.

The National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration

The National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), located on Laje Road, Ondo, was inaugurated by me on 17 December, 1992. Prior to this event, an international conference was jointly sponsored in December 1991, by the International Institute for Educational Planning, (IIEP) Paris, and the Federal Ministry of Education on Planning Needs of Educational Planners in Nigeria. This resulted in the establishment of the institute.

The Institute is multipurpose in outlook and functions, integrating training, research, data storage and dissemination, as well as consultancy activities. The objectives are:

- (a) the provision of specialised and relevant planning skills for Nigerian educational planners and administrators;
- (b) the continuing professional development of practitioners in educational planning and management;
- (c) the development of relevant programmes for the improvement of the nation's educational system;
- (d) the projection and forecast of future trends in educational management practices and their relevance to education in Nigeria;
- (e) the monitoring and review of regional and world trends in educational management and planning practice; and
- (f) serving as a resource centre and network of information in educational planning in Nigeria.

The functions of the Institute are:

- (a) to offer initial exposure in planning and administration to Ministry of Education officials (Federal and State) assuming responsibility in the planning units of the ministries;
- (b) to offer continuous in-service programmes for various categories of officers on tertiary, secondary and primary education levels as well as

- at Federal, State, and Local Government education levels;
- (c) to provide specialised training programmes through diploma or annual training programmes;
 - (d) to provide courses on demand to special groups or associations;
 - (e) to serve as the repository of all educational data in the country; and
 - (f) to produce publications in the form of books and journals.

The pioneer director, Prof. Stella Olatunji, worked hand in hand with the then Director of Planning Research and Statistics in the Ministry, Prof. M.J. Shuaib and one of my special assistants, Prof. Adeniji Adaralegba. The two were experts in the field of educational administration and planning. Again, the institute took off at its temporary site, the defunct Federal School of Arts and Science at Ondo, with a budget of ₦2 million from my recurrent budget for its operational work in respect of recurrent and capital expenditures which included staff salaries, renovation, office furniture etc. as opposed to the estimated expenditure of ₦11 million that was originally proposed.

Thus, on December 17, 1992 as the Minister of Education and Youth Development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and with my prayers for a successful take-off, I invited the Director of the Institute to accept the keys, symbolic of all authority to embark upon all activities – physical restructuring and/or building, administrative and academic staff structuring, book procurement and academic programmes.

The National Institute for Nigerian Languages

The establishment of the National Institute for Nigerian Language was borne out of the urgent need to meet the requirements of the National Policy on Education as laid down by government as follows:

The Importance of Language

In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process, and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) other than his own tongue".*

Since I was not particularly happy about the progress being made ten years after the National Policy on Education (NPE) was launched, I solicited the assistance of Professor Ayo Bamgbose, Nigeria's leading exponent on

* National Policy on Education 1981 Edition, p.9.

linguistics and Nigerian languages and Prof. Funso Akere, another expert in linguistics to organise a seminar to evaluate the language provision of the national policy. Distinguished academics and practitioners in Nigerian languages were invited to the five-day seminar.

My opening keynote address as summarised below set the tone for the seminar:

Address by the Honourable Minister of Education: summarised by Prof. E. Akere

The Task Before the Seminar

“In his opening address the Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, charged the participants at the seminar, who he said were specially selected, to take a serious look at the theme of the seminar, deliberate on it and thence make pragmatic and far-reaching recommendations to government on the implementation of the language provisions of the National Policy on Education (NPE). Specifically, the Honourable Minister requested participants to:

- (a) re-examine the implementation of the language policy within the framework of the nation’s educational development and national goals and aspirations;
- (b) assess what had been done so far or is being done;
- (c) recommend strategies for implementing the language provisions of the NPE especially in relation to adult and general literacy, mother tongue education, the teaching of the major Nigerian languages as second languages, the teaching of English in the school system and finally the production of instructional texts for languages and literatures in the school system.

Government’s Commitment to Language Policy Implementation

The Minister also used the opportunity of his opening address to inform the seminar participants of the outputs and activities of his ministry which have direct bearing on the implementation of the language provisions of the NPE. These include the provision of approved syllabuses for Nigerian languages, English, Arabic and French; the setting up of a technical committee on the production of teachers for the three major Nigerian languages; funding of a National Workshop on the production of teachers of the major Nigerian languages; and the organisation of a National Curriculum Review Conference.

Language Development Activities of LDC/NERDC

He specifically highlighted some relevant language projects which have been completed by the NERDC, notably the development of orthographies for thirty-one Nigerian languages, the production of Primary and Secondary School Curricula for Nigerian languages, the production of texts on the vocabulary of Primary Science and Mathematics in nine Nigerian languages, the publication of a Quadrilingual Glossary of Legislative Terms in English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba and the preparation of metalanguage manuals for the three major Nigerian languages. The Minister then requested participants to also examine ways in which the Language Development Centre of NERDC, in collaboration with other relevant establishments, could act effectively to accelerate the implementation of language policy in the country.

The Proposed National Institute for Nigerian Languages

The Honourable Minister also informed the seminar that arrangements for the establishment of an institute for the study of Nigerian languages were already at an advanced stage. He told participants to feel free to submit their suggestions and recommendations on the structure and functions of the proposed Institute to a Working Committee which had been set up by his Ministry to plan its take-off. He said that it should also be of interest to participants at the seminar to know that Professor Ayo Bamgbose was the Chairman of the Working Committee and Professor Funso Akere a member.

Concluding Remarks

The Honourable Minister then ended his speech by going through the topics for discussion at the seminar, recognising that the tasks before the participants were onerous but expressing confidence that the seminar would be able to come up at the end of its deliberations with a blueprint that would inform and direct action on language policy implementation for the rest of this decade and the next.

Like the three other parastatals that preceded it, the National Institute for Nigerian Languages was given ₦2 million from my depressed ministry budget for its take-off. I decided to locate the Institute in Aba at the defunct site of the Federal School of Arts and Science.

Incidentally I closed down all the Federal Schools of Arts and Science in 1991 since the sixth form courses had been scrapped with the introduction of the 6-3-3-4. I assigned the Victoria Island Federal School of Science to King's College, Lagos; the Ondo site became the temporary site of the new Nigerian Institute for Educational Planning and Administration while I

converted the Sokoto site into the first Federal Senior Science School.

Another eminent linguist, Professor E.N. Emananjo, Professor of Language and Provost of College of Education, Warri was named the Director of the Institute.

The Institute's major objective is to promote the study and use of the various Nigerian languages; specifically, the Centre is to serve as:

- (a) an active teaching and learning centre for the study of Nigerian languages;
- (b) a resource centre for specialised professional services to the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy and
- (c) A Nigerian centre for research into Nigerian languages.

The Institute is to operate within the multidimensional strategy of language acquisition for the benefit of the following:

- (i) primary and secondary school teachers of Nigerian languages;
- (ii) tertiary educational institution lecturers of Nigerian languages;
- (iii) government and non-government personnel interested in acquiring communicative skills in Nigerian languages;
- (iv) diplomats, foreigners, business associates, etc., interested in learning Nigerian languages;
- (v) such other persons as may be interested in research in Nigerian languages.

The Institute is to encourage the development and publication of materials, including books, journals and teaching aids for proficiency programmes in tertiary institutions, and for primary and secondary schools.

It is my hope that the institute will metamorphose into a full degree-granting institution in all aspects of language education offering bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees as well as short diploma courses and summer/holiday classes.

Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry, Lagos

The idea for the establishment of a Nigerian French Language Village was that of Jibril Aminu, my predecessor in office. He set up a task force early in 1989 to examine the feasibility and make recommendations. The committee was headed by Prof. S. Ade Ojo of the University of Lagos, who is one of the leading exponents of French Language education in the country. The committee submitted its recommendations to Prof. Aminu before he left office. The document was one of the items pending when I assumed office. I have long supported the idea of a French language

immersion programme in Nigeria. As Dean of Education both at Nsukka and Ife, I had experienced considerable difficulty in placing students in France or Togo for the programme. However, I am not a rabid French language enthusiast and I still prefer Nigerian languages to either French or English. Being surrounded by French speaking brothers however, it is a good idea for some of our citizens to learn the language.

I invited Prof. S. Ade Ojo, the Chairman of the task force to a meeting to discuss the report and to advise on the next step. From then on, the programme was on course. We had the initial problem of location but this was resolved in favour of Badagry. I succeeded in persuading Col. Raji Rasaki, the then governor of Lagos State to donate the site of the defunct Domestic Centre in Badagry to us. He readily agreed. I invited Prof. Ojo to serve as the pioneer director of the village which he willingly accepted and the rest is history.

The Director's letter to me five years after I left office (Jan 23, 1997) is an eloquent testimony to the fact that the village is achieving the purpose for which it was founded.

Prof. Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa
9, Bendel Close,
Victoria Island,
Lagos.

Dear Sir,

Activities marking the celebrations of the Nigerian Language Village at Five

The Nigeria French Language Village, an Inter-University Centre for French Studies, was established in 1991 by the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to cater primarily for undergraduate students of French from all Nigerian Universities and Colleges of Education, as an autonomous institution under the ambit of the National Universities Commission.

As a centre of excellence, committed to the promotion of the learning of French in Nigeria in particular, and, in Anglophone West Africa as a whole, the village, which has become a household name with an outstanding international recognition has been championing the cause of government and well-meaning individuals in their bids to actualise the country's leadership in the sub-region by making more of her citizens

speak French in addition to English.

As you would recall, Sir, on the 6th of January 1992, the gates of our centre were officially opened to receive the first set of one hundred 300-level undergraduate students of French from six (6) Nigerian Universities.

In just 5 years, the village has clearly distinguished itself as an international centre of excellence for French studies. It has so-far catered for a total of three thousand four hundred and five (3,405) NCE students from twenty-nine (29) Colleges of Education, one thousand three hundred and fifteen (1,315) undergraduate students of French from twenty-six (26) Nigerian Universities and more than one thousand three hundred (1,300) corporate/executive and other adult learners of the French language...

When I established the Village in 1992, little did I realise that the Village, would expand so rapidly as to cater for a total of 6,020 within such a short period of time.

All these, of course would not have been possible without the dedication and the commitment of its director, the registrar and the entire staff. My faith in the leadership of the Village has been vindicated.

In addition to all other advantages, the Village is saving Nigeria considerable foreign exchange.

Nigerian Arabic Language Village

By the same token the Nigerian Arabic Language Village located in Gamboru in Ngala Local Government Area of Borno State, promotes the study and use of the Arabic language in Nigeria by exploring all relevant and available avenues, potentials and resources. It serves as:

- (i) an active teaching and learning centre for the study of Arabic;
- (ii) a resource centre for specialised professional services to the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy; and
- (iii) a Nigerian inter-university centre for Arabic studies.

The function of the Arabic Village is to encourage the learning of the Arabic language in an environment that will prepare the students in the village to:

1. speak Arabic fluently;
2. acquire proficiency in Arabic;
3. acquire competence in the writing of the Arabic language.
4. translate to and from the Arabic language with reference to English

and Nigerian languages;

5. eventually interpret simultaneously and consecutively to and from the Arabic language with reference to English and Nigerian languages.

The programmes of the Village are designed to benefit university undergraduates, students and teachers, government and non-governmental personnel.

None of these six parastatals would have been established had I not created them initially from my ministry's depressed budget and converted existing facilities for their initial take-off.

Chapter 8

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), NASU, NUT and Others

Introduction

Trade dispute between ASUU and the Federal Government has been a long drawn battle. The central core of the problem revolves around better conditions of service for academic staff of Nigerian universities. The first strike carried out by the Union against the government was in 1972 when General Gowon, the then Military Head of State ordered the teachers to return to work or quit their subsidized university accommodation. The teachers returned to work disgruntled and frustrated. Since that time, a number of disputes had been declared and settled unsatisfactorily including Dr. Sam Cooley's Committee settlement.

In 1987, the Union was banned again on the issues of poor salary and poor working condition which was not conducive to teaching and learning.

The Academic Staff Union

When I assumed office as Minister of Education on January 2nd 1990, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) lay incapacitated having been banned for four years. Local campus ASUU or its equivalent was not, however, dead or incapacitated. As the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Calabar from 1986 to 1988, I had occasion to deal with the local campus ASUU on issues that affected staff and other related matters. The situation was the same in most of the nation's campuses as of January 1990. At the same time, there seemed to be no love lost between the Committee of Vice-Chancellors on one hand and the Federal Ministry of Education and the

Federal Government on the other hand. I was afraid that this strange situation must have informed the President's decision to keep his distance from the academics, particularly his own Vice-Chancellors yet he was the Visitor for all the federal universities. I was therefore very cautious in my approach to unban ASUU and bring both the President and the committee of Vice-Chancellors closer together. What still amazes me was the ease with which my proposal for "unbanning" ASUU was accepted by President Babangida and his willingness to open the Committee of Vice-Chancellors' conference at the University of Ilorin. Even the Vice-Chancellors themselves were pleasantly surprised. The President mixed with them in a warm and friendly manner and they in turn reciprocated the gesture.

The "unbanning" of ASUU in August 1990, made it possible for the Union to hold election of officers and Dr. Attahiru Jega was elected as the president of ASUU. On May 24, 1991, the Union invited me to address its first conference in Badagry, near Lagos. I had an informal chat with its new executive before I returned to Lagos.

On July 16, 1991, the Executive of ASUU met with me in my office and presented the following items for discussion:

Major Problems

Brain-drain and the causes

2. Underfunding

Education has been sliding down in the priorities of government as reflected in the development/rolling plans from a high priority in 1960-63 to a low level in 1990-91 when it is not even one of the seven priorities.

3. University Autonomy

The following measures are necessary: Planning curricula and day-to-day operations in the universities.

Advocates for the nurturing of the culture of democracy in the universities; freedom of nurturing ideas.

The Committee system needs to be reviewed, re-introduced and be allowed to work.

B. Suggestions for Revitalizing the Universities

1. Recognise the role of universities in development; review the university salary structure such as to accord recognition of the specialist nature

of qualifications required for the university in contrast to the other sectors of tertiary education. Some African countries, e.g., Malawi pay far better than Nigeria.

2. Non-salary conditions of service should be improved. The Union acknowledges the on-going effort to introduce a new non-salary package.
3. Recognise the special nature of teaching in universities.
4. Set up a Negotiating Committee consisting of University Administrators, Government Representatives and ASUU Representatives to negotiate as was the case in 1982. The process should be initiated within one month. The union has already set up its machinery for participating in such negotiations.
5. Consider re-opening of the closed universities and the release of those students who were detained. Anyone found guilty should be dealt with fairly and justly under the law.
6. Housing for academic staff through a revival of a realistic housing policy.
7. Car refurbishing loan is desirable — this would be appreciated by the Union.
8. ASUU should be recognised as partners in progress.

On January 2, 1992, the Federal Cabinet was dissolved by General Babangida and reconstituted on January 15, 1992; dropping some ministers and replacing them with new ones. I was re-appointed with additional portfolio; emerging as the Federal Minister of Education, Youth and Development. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) also became part of my portfolio.

Before I resumed on January 15th, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), had declared an industrial dispute with the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Governing Council of each Federal and State University, the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development and the National Universities Commission over three issues viz:

- (i) Gross underfunding of Nigerian universities
- (ii) Conditions of service of academic staff
 - (a) Salaries
 - (b) Non-salary conditions of service
- (iii) University autonomy and academic freedom.

On 13 February, 1992, in a meeting with acknowledged representatives of ASUU, I agreed that government would set up a team to negotiate with

ASUU in view of my conviction that ASUU had made a case for the need to negotiate, even though the White Paper on the Report of the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria was yet to be released.

On 7 April, 1992, the two parties started negotiations with the following membership:

Government Team

Mr. Senas Ukpanah, Honourable Minister of Establishments and Management Services.	-	Leader
Chief Arthur C. I. Mbanefo, Pro-Chancellor, Ahmadu Bello University.	-	Member
Mrs. Tejumade Alakija, Pro-Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.	-	Member
Alhaji Abdullahi Danburam Jada, Pro-Chancellor, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto.	-	Member
Professor A. A. Ilemobade, Vice-Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Akure.	-	Member
Professor Isa Mohammed, Vice-Chancellor, University of Abuja.	-	Member
Prof. Francis Idachaba, Vice-Chancellor, University of Agriculture, Makurdi.	-	Member
Mr. J. O. Ajibola, Director, Planning, Research and Public Service. The Presidency, Abuja.	-	Member

- Dr. Maduka Nwakwesi - Member
Director, Productivity, Prices
and Income Board, Representing
Ministry of Finance.
- Mrs I. R. Njokanma, - Member
Principal Legal Officer
Representing the Federal
Ministry of Justice.
- Professor Idris Abdulkadir - Member
Executive Secretary
National Universities Commission.
- Dr. Abdullahi Rafi Augi - Member
Director, Post-Secondary and Higher
Education, Federal Ministry of Education
and Youth Development.
- Alhaji T. A. Uthman, - Member
Director, Trade Union Services
and Industrial Relations.
Representing the Federal Ministry of
Employment, Labour and Productivity.
- Mr. M. B. Ligali - Secretary
Deputy Director (Universities)
Federal Ministry of Education and
Youth Development.

ASUU TEAM

- Dr. Attahiru M. Jega Bayero University, Kano - Leader
National President
- Dr. Sola Olukunle University of Ibadan - Member
National Vice-President
- Mr. Abubakar Momoh Lagos State University, Ojo - Member
- Dr. Rufai A. Alkali University of Maiduguri - Member
National Financial Secretary

Prof. Tunde Oduleye	University of Ilorin	- Member
Prof. Eskor Toyo	University of Calabar	- Member
Dr. Abdullahi Mahdi	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	- Member
Prof. Aaron. T. Gana	University of Jos	- Member
Prof. Akin Oyebo	Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti	- Member
Dr. Mustapha A. Danesi	University of Lagos	- Member
Dr. Peter Ozo-Eson	University of Jos	- Member
Dr. Oladipo Fashina	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	- Member
Dr. H. Assisi Asobie	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	- Member
Prof. Omotoye Olorode	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	- Member
Prof. Bright Ekuerehare	Edo State University, Ekpoma	- Member

In Attendance

Mallam Bashir Kurfi	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	- Member
Mr. S. A. Fadipe	Senior Administrative Secretary, ASUU	- Member

The negotiation eventually broke down. Government agreed to increase university staff salary by 45% but ASUU would have none of it. ASUU claimed that in other African countries viz: Ghana, Zambia, Botswana,

university staff received at least three times the salary of their Nigerian counterparts. ASUU then decided to resume its strike action.

I was away in Paris attending a UNESCO meeting in July when news reached me that the Federal Government had again banned ASUU. I cancelled the rest of my trip and flew back to Lagos. On my return, my first problem was how to get the university staff back to the negotiation table. I first received the blessing of the Federal Government to go ahead, but the ban was to remain.

ASUU had in the meantime formed another union, the Association of University Teachers (AUT). But the Vice-President, Augustus Aikhomu, had said that the Government would not negotiate with any academic union. Undaunted, I decided to go ahead, being informed by the following logic: "The ASUU is banned but the University teaching staff are still in place and teaching their courses". I was prepared to negotiate with the academic staff, not with ASUU. To achieve this objective, I decided to request each of the university Vice-Chancellors to send two staff delegates to Lagos; this meant about 50 representatives. These fifty would then select a negotiation team of twelve or fifteen. That was exactly what happened when the first meeting under this new arrangement was held.

About 12 noon that day, an hour before the representatives' meeting, the president of the proscribed Union (ASUU), telephoned me that he had not gotten an invitation for the meeting. I informed him that each Federal University was sending two delegates and if Bayero University, Kano decided to send him, he would be welcomed. I suspected that he was pleasantly surprised. He did not attend the meeting because he was not selected as a delegate. I was amazed when some newspapers carried the news of the meeting the next day as "an imaginary" meeting over which the minister presided. One newspaper even showed the empty Federal Ministry of Education Conference Room to prove that no meeting took place.

I reproduce below the minutes of that "imaginary" meeting.

"Meeting of the Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development, The Honourable Ministers of Employment, Labour and Productivity, Establishments and Management Services and Minister for Special Duties/Chairman, National Planning Commission and the Government Negotiating Team on the one hand and representatives of the academic staff of Nigerian universities on the other hand, held in the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development on Wednesday, 12th August, 1992.

*Attendance**Federal Government Team*

1. Prof. A. B. Fafunwa - Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development - Chairman
2. Alhaji Bunu Sheriff Musa - Minister of Employment Labour & Productivity.
3. Mr. Senas Ukpanah - Minister for Special Duties/ Chairman, National Planning Commission (former chairman Government Negotiating Team).
4. Owelle C. P. Chikelu - Minister of Establishments & Management Services.
5. Alhaji Yahaya Hamza - Director-General, Federal Minister of Education & Youth Development.
6. Prof. O. O. Akinkugbe - Chairman, Implementation Committee on Longe Commission White Paper.
7. Chief Arthur C. I. Mbanefo - Pro-Chancellor, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
8. Alhaji A. D. Jada - Pro-Chancellor, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto.
9. Prof. Idris A. Abdulkadir - Executive Secretary, NUC.
10. Prof. A. O. Osiyale - Special Assistant to the Honourable Minister of Education & Youth Development.
11. Prof. F. S. Idachaba - Vice-Chancellor, University of Agriculture, Makurdi.
12. Prof. A. A. Ilemobade - Vice-Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Akure.
13. Dr. A. R. Augi - Director, Post-Secondary & Higher Education.
14. Mr. J. O. Ajibola - Director, PR&S, The Presidency.
15. Rev. J. T. Okon - Deputy Director, Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity.
16. Mrs. I. Rita Njokanma - Principal Legal Officer, Federal Ministry of Justice.
17. Mr. M. B. Ligali - Deputy Director, (Universities), FME & YD – Secretary.

Representatives of Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 18. Dr. Cyril | - University of Agriculture, Makurdi |
| 19. Dr. L. A. Ukachi | - University of Jos, Plateau State. |
| 20. Dr. Nse Ekpo | - University of Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State. |
| 21. Mr. P. O. Ezepue | - Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. |
| 22. Prof. E. I. E. Ofodile | - Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. |
| 23. Prof. K. O. Ologe | - University of Abuja. |
| 24. Prof. E. I. Banigo | - Federal University of Technology, Owerri. |
| 25. Prof. G. Onuaguluchi | - University of Nigeria, Nsukka. |
| 26. Prof. C. Iloba | - University of Nigeria, Nsukka. |

In Attendance

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 27. Mrs. E. O. Alo | - Deputy Director, National Universities Commission. |
| 28. Alhaji T. A. Abdulkadir | - Secretary, Implementation Committee on Longe Commission White Paper. |
| 29. Mrs. E. O. Giwa | - Federal Ministry of Education & Youth Development. |
| 30. Mrs. J. I. E. Njoku | - Federal Ministry of Education & Youth Development. |
| 31. Mr. A. Nwokorie | - Federal Ministry of Education & Youth Development. |

Opening

The Chairman's Opening Remark

The meeting started at 1.45p.m. and was presided over by the Hon. Minister of Education and Youth Development who opened it by welcoming the participants. He reiterated the commitment of the government to finding a lasting solution to the problem with the academic staff of universities. Giving a brief history of the case, he revealed that the Ministry had looked into the industrial law and constituted an arbitration panel to look into the problem. He cautioned that whatever was arrived at should be affordable and implementable by the government.

Introduction of Members

Following his remarks, the Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development (HME & YD) introduced the members of the Government Negotiation Team as well as the Ministry staff. The representatives of the Academic Staff also introduced their members.

Hon. Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity

In his own comments, the Honourable Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity expressed regret that in spite of all efforts, the matter could not be resolved till ASUU was proscribed. Observing that negotiations had broken down because of lack of understanding, he repeated his appeal to all concerned to keep to the law and to assist the academic staff to tidy up the matter. He emphasised his belief that the present administration (of all that this country had so far) had shown the greatest regard for the universities, adding that in 1991, Mr. President introduced a new approach to negotiation. He therefore felt that government could not be accused of insensitivity to their plight. He appealed to the Academic Staff representatives to persuade those of their ranks who did not understand, with the note of caution that this country did not deserve any crisis at this time and that it was out of peace that we could all gain. He added that it was to the credit of all that Nigeria had been peaceful in the last 20 years. He concluded his comments by supporting the view of the chairman that whatever was to be offered must be within what was available and affordable.

Honourable Minister of Establishment and Management Services

In his comments, the Honourable Minister of Establishment and Management Services remarked that this issue had been dragging on for the past 6 months between the government team and the University academic staff, and that the Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development on the 5th August announced the proposal to hold the present meeting. Also reviewing the brief history of the dispute so far, he revealed that well-meaning Nigerians had appealed to government and government had responded as evidenced by that day's meeting. He mentioned the 3 areas of the discussion viz:

- (a) salaries
- (b) funding and
- (c) academic freedom and university autonomy.

These were all covered by the Longe Report. The Government white paper on it had offered 30% salary increase; and though academic

freedom was also covered by the Report, the white paper had either left it out or not covered it adequately and that was the main reason for the meeting. He appealed to all to adopt a positive attitude in order to get the problem resolved, especially as the present situation was not good for the country.

Contribution from Academic Staff

Contributions from the academic staff included the following points: The problem between the academic staff was caused by lack of communication or misunderstanding between the two parties. They alleged that some irritating statements made by government negotiators contributed to the problems. While admitting that some statements were also made out of wrath by ASUU on campuses, they alleged that the country did not appreciate their position; and that in fact, it did seem that the country did not care about the imminent collapse of the university system. They observed that the way things were going, the university system would not be able to reproduce itself. Complaining further that academics was becoming a dying profession, they appealed that government should adopt a more positive attitude so that the problem could get resolved.

They expressed their fervent wish for the re-opening of the Universities. They appealed to government not to hold any press conference until the matter was resolved, adding that the objective should be pursued *in camera* and in all seriousness.

On the memoranda earlier submitted by ASUU, they felt that government should still examine it and come up with a minimum requirement that would encourage the university staff. They added that even the package announced in June had not yet been paid.

They admitted that salary alone was not the issue but the poor conditions of the universities generally. Citing the examples of the Universities of Ibadan and Ife, they complained that Nigerian universities could no longer compare favourably with their counterparts in the world. Furthermore, they complained that the government White Paper on Longe Commission did not consider those loopholes that made the universities to continue to suffer. They mentioned concrete evidence of poverty in the universities such as:

- (a) dearth of books, journals and equipment,
- (b) inability of the average lecturer to own a car,
- (c) meagre subvention

(d) difficulty in recruiting teachers, etc.

They emphasized the need for the academic staff to be able to meet again, and for government to meet urgently with them to iron out all the problems.

Response from Government Side

Members of the government side regretted that more of the members of the academic staff did not honour the invitation to the meeting.

There was general agreement with the academic staff on some points.

For example,

- (a) that the lot of the academic staff needed improvement
- (b) that apart from salaries, other areas like conditions of service should be examined.

They appealed to the academic staff to go and examine the Longe Report again and come back with the points of disagreement and inadequacies for purposes of further discussions with government.

They revealed to academic staff that government could not solve the universities' problems overnight especially as the problems had been unfortunately left for so long.

They promised to continue to help the universities until all their problems had been solved, but in a piecemeal manner, because other areas also needed attention.

They revealed that unbanning ASUU was out of the question but academic staff could still meet and discuss among themselves on how to continue negotiation with government effectively.

Decisions Reached

The following agreements were reached at the end of the meeting:

- (1) Each university would convene a meeting of the academic staff to discuss the White Paper on Longe Report and forward its observations to the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development not later than Friday, 28th August, 1992.
- (2) The 45% increase in salary for academic staff and 30% for non-academic staff, effective 1st June, 1992, would be paid as soon as possible, but not later than the end of September, 1992.
- (3) It was expected that normal classes would resume in all the universities.
- (4) Negotiations would resume soon after the receipt of the universities' submissions by the Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development.

Closing

The Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development thanked members of the meeting for their positive contributions and expressed a wish to see all again as agreed. The motion for adjournment was moved by Dr. L. A. Ukachi of University of Jos and seconded by Dr. Cyril of University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.

Although, the attendance of the meeting was poor, the important thing was that the meeting took place and it sent signals to all other university staff that I meant business. Before the meeting of the negotiation teams resumed on August 24th, 1991, the academics had re-organised themselves, held meetings and named a thirteen-man team made up of representatives of thirteen universities and headed by Dr. Attahiru Jega of Bayero University, Kano.

The meetings commenced every morning from 10a.m. till 1a.m. the following morning from Monday, August 24th to Sunday, August 30th. I stayed in my office for consultation by the Government team throughout the period and was in constant contact with the Vice-President, Augustus Aikhomu in Abuja. Every major point was cleared by him before the Government team could express agreement with the university staff team.

On the first day of the meeting, Monday August 24th, I flew to Abuja by 7.00a.m. and had detailed discussions with the President and Vice-President with General Sani Abacha in attendance. I flew back to Lagos by the 5.00p.m. plane the same day and then back to my office by 7.00.p.m. and stayed with the negotiation teams till midnight. The negotiation teams comprised:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Owelle G. P. O. Chikelu
Honourable Minister of Establishments and
Management Services. | - Leader |
| Professor O. O. Akinkugbe
Chairman, Implementation Committee of the White Paper
on the Report of the Commission on the Review of
Higher Education in Nigeria. | - Member |
| Alhaji Abdullahi Danburam Jada
Pro-Chancellor, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto. | - Member |
| Chief Arthur C. I. Mbanefo
Pro-Chancellor, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. | - Member |

Professor Idris Abdulkadir - Member
Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission.

Professor I. B. Mohammed - Member
Vice-Chancellor, University of Abuja.

Professor A. A. Ilemobade - Member
Vice-Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Akure.

Mr. J. O. Ajibola - Member
Director, Planning, Research and Public Service,
The Presidency, Abuja.

Rev. J. T. Okon - Member
Deputy Director,
Federal Ministry of Employment,
Labour & Productivity.

Dr. Abdullahi Rafi Augi - Member
Director, Post-Secondary & Higher Education,
Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development.

Mr. M. D. Ligali - Secretary
Deputy Director, (Universities Division),
Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development.

The Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities were represented by:

Dr. Attahiru M. Jega - Leader
Bayero University, Kano.

Dr. Sola Olukunle - Member
University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Dr. Abdullahi Mahdi - Member
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Mr. Mustapha A. Danesi - Member
University of Lagos, Lagos.

Professor Eskor Toyo - Member
University of Calabar, Calabar.

Professor Tunde Oduleye University of Ilorin, Ilorin.	Member
Professor Akin Oyeboade Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti.	- Member
Professor Bright Ekuerharc Edo State University, Ekpoma.	- Member
Dr. H. Assisi Asobie University of Jos, Jos.	- Member
Dr. Peter Ozo-Eson University of Jos, Jos.	- Member
Dr. Oladipo Fashina Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.	- Member
Dr. Rufai A. Alkali University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri.	- Member
Mr. Abubakar Momoh Lagos State University, Ojo.	- Member

Advisers

Professor Omotoye Olorode
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Professor Aaron T. Gana
University of Jos, Jos.

Mallam Bashir Kurfi
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The meeting agreed on the following agenda for its deliberations:

- (i) Resumption of classes by Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities
- (ii) Funding
- (iii) University Autonomy and Academic Freedom
- (iv) Status of the Agreement
- (v) Any other Business.

The negotiations were based on two documents, Viz:

- (1) How Nigerian Universities can survive; ASUU's negotiating document towards resolving the industrial dispute between the union and the federal government of Nigeria;
- (2) Views and Comments of the Federal Government on the report of the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria; and the Federal Government Circular on Review of Fringe Benefits.

Some of the negotiated agreements reached were as follows:

Funding of Universities

Introduction

The issues negotiated under this heading were:

- (i) The determination of a quantum of resources required to fund the university system adequately.
- (ii) The sources of funding
- (iii) The provision of restoration grant to enable universities to rehabilitate their facilities.

The quantum of resources required to fund the Universities at adequate levels

It was agreed that the following levels of resources would be required:

- (a) *Recurrent Expenditure* (1992 to 1995)
 - (i) 1992: N2.28b (inclusive of additional N1.08b arising from the agreed new salaries and allowances).
 - (ii) 1993: N2.60b
 - (iii) 1994: N3.12b
 - (iv) 1995: N3.74b

- (b) *Capital Expenditure*

It was agreed that, given the need for restoration, development and sustenance, capital requirements till 1995 be set as follows:

- (i) 1992 : N1.2b inclusive of additional N560m arising from this agreement).
- (ii) 1993 : N1.2b (N0.048b for equipment).
- (iii) 1994 : N1.2b
- (iv) 1995 : N1.2b

- (c) *Special Budgetary Provision for the Library*

It was agreed that budgetary provision for library services should be

under a special head of its own and that the head should account for not less than 10% of the total recurrent budget.

Sources

(a) *Higher Education Tax*

It was agreed that a 2% pre-tax profit levy to be called Higher Education Tax and applicable to all companies in Nigeria shall be instituted. The universities' share of this tax shall be applied primarily for the following purposes:

- (i) Work Centres
- (ii) Staff Development and Conference Attendance
- (iii) Higher Education Library System
- (iv) Research and Equipment Procurement and Maintenance
- (v) Higher Education Book Development Fund.

(b) *Stabilisation Fund*

It was agreed that a stabilisation fund of N1.5 billion be established to protect universities from fluctuations in budgetary allocations. It was further agreed that N0.5 billion be provided annually for three years beginning from 1992. The fund shall be managed by a Board of Trustees.

(c) *Transfer of Landed Property in Lagos, Abuja and Other Places to the Universities.*

It was agreed that the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall allocate and/or transfer some land and landed property in Lagos, Abuja and other places to universities for revenue generation. It was further agreed that a University Property Company be set up to hold and manage property handed over to universities by the Federal Government. All universities shall be entitled to have shares in the company. It was also agreed that individual universities should make requests to the various Governments for allocation of land in any part of the Federation for the purpose of revenue generation.

(d) *Patronage of Universities' Consultancy Services*

It was agreed that the Federal Government shall patronise university consultancies as an additional means of revenue generation. The Government shall also take necessary steps to encourage state governments, other parts of the public sector, as well as the private sector to patronise university consultancies.

(e) *Partial Introduction of Fees*

There was no agreement.

(f) *Funds from Alumni Association*

It was agreed that contributions of funds by Alumni Associations to universities should be encouraged through direct fund raising endowments, bequests, etc.

(g) *Private Sector Contributions*

It was agreed that the private sector of the Nigerian economy shall be actively encouraged to make voluntary financial and material contributions to Nigerian universities in order to sustain them and enhance their development.

(h) *Contributions by Voluntary Agencies and Philanthropic Individuals*

It was agreed that financial and material contributions to Nigerian universities by voluntary agencies, individual entrepreneurs and philanthropists, shall be encouraged.

Other Funding Matters**(a) *Federal Government's Provisions for the Annual Recurrent Expenditure of Universities***

It was agreed that government should provide adequate funding to the universities through its budgetary framework. However, universities shall be encouraged to continuously improve their internal revenue generating efforts and capacities.

(b) *Involvement of the Private Sector in the Commercialisation of Inventions and Discoveries*

It was agreed that the commercialisation of inventions and discoveries emanating from Nigerian universities by or in collaboration with the private sector of the Nigerian economy, shall be encouraged. Raising funds for the development of universities should, however, not be the major aim of this measure. At best, this measure is a very irregular source of income for the universities.

(c) *Cost-Saving Measures*

It was agreed that each Academic Department in the Nigerian universities shall be provided with a minimum set of equipment to enable it to execute its programme.

Conditions of Service***New Salary Structure for Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities***

It was agreed that there shall be a separate salary scale for university academic staff to be known as University Academic Staff Salary (UASS) with seven grades as follows:

		Minimum		Maximum
UASS 01	-	₦13,476	-	₦17,826
UASS 02	-	₦14,578	-	₦22,794
UASS 03	-	₦15,469	-	₦26,779
UASS 04	-	₦20,289	-	₦34,769
UASS 05	-	₦24,690	-	₦37,008
UASS 06	-	₦26,135	-	₦41,483
UASS 07	-	₦29,211	-	₦46,221

Academic Allowance

It was agreed that there should be a range of academic allowances to be paid to the university academic staff as detailed below:

Allowances Payable to all Academic Staff

(i) *Journal Allowance*

Professor/Reader	-	₦6,000.00 per annum
Senior Lecturer	-	₦5,000.00 per annum
Others	-	₦4,000.00 per annum

(ii) *Research Allowance*

Professor/Reader	-	₦3,000.00 per annum
Senior Lecturer	-	₦2,500.00 per annum
Others	-	₦2,000.00 per annum

(iii) *Learned Societies Allowance*

Professor/Reader	-	₦3,000.00 per annum
Senior Lecturer	-	₦2,500.00 per annum
Others	-	₦2,000.00 per annum

(iv) *Examination Supervision*

This is applicable to all academic staff of the rank of Assistant Lecturer and above. Twenty percent (20%) of the basic salary shall be paid per annum as examination supervision allowance to every academic staff in these categories up to a maximum of ₦7,200 per annum.

General Allowances

(i) *Housing Allowance*

It was agreed that an allowance equal to 56% of basic salary shall be paid to all categories of academic staff who are not provided with official accommodation. When both husband and wife are academic

staff, and are not provided with official accommodation, each will be entitled to his/her housing allowance. Where both husband and wife are academic staff who share a university accommodation allocated to only one of them, the other shall collect a housing allowance and pay as rent $8\frac{1}{3}\%$ of his/her salary or (fifty naira) ₦50.00 per month which ever is lower.

(iii) *Meal Subsidy Allowance/Entertainment Allowance*

(a) It was agreed that each academic staff, from UASS 01 to 04, shall be paid a meal subsidy at the rate of ₦3.00 per day.

(b) It was agreed that there will be an entertainment allowance payable as follows:

UASS 05 - ₦1,200.00 per annum

UASS 06-07 - ₦2,400.00 per annum

(iv) *Utility Allowance*

It was agreed that a utility allowance shall be paid to all academic staff as follows:

UASS 01 - 03 - ₦25.00 per month

UASS 04 - - ₦40.00 per month

UASS 05 - - ₦60.00 per month

UASS 06 - - ₦80.00 per month

UASS 07 - - ₦100.00 per month

Agreements were also reached on funding, autonomy and academic freedom.

The agreement was jointly signed by Owelle G.P.O. Chikelu, Minister of Establishment on behalf of the Federal Government and Dr. Attahiru Jega on behalf of the academic staff of Nigerian Universities.

Newswatch magazine of September 21, 1992 summed up the outcome succinctly:

The Gains of ASUU

University Teachers Chalk up Several Concessions in A Bid to Rescue their Institutions from Decay.

“Academics of Nigerian universities may have a cause to smile. Their gruesome negotiations with government have ended with a certain measure of success. As Attahiru Jega, president of the proscribed Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, said last week in Lagos, “academics have now obtained a well-deserved recognition as experts with special needs for the first time in the history of this country. The agreement, which was signed Thursday, September 2, by Gilbert Chikelu, establishment and management

services minister, leading the federal government's delegation and Jega provides the basis for optimism. It touched on the three knotty areas that have agitated the minds of academics for a long time: conditions of service, university autonomy and funding of the university system. Although details of the package have not been made public, as the lecturers had earlier agreed with the government not to make "unnecessary propaganda" of it, *Newswatch* investigations revealed that the new salary is "mouth-watering." It offered what a source described as a "three-step movement" above 45 percent salary increase earlier granted to academics by government. In addition to the increase in general allowances like rent, transportation and kilometer runs for official assignments, the agreement also covered the granting of allowances for research, utility, meal subsidy/entertainment, journals, learned conference, supervision, travelling and the review of pension allowances.

Research allowance will cover the conduct of research relevant to the upliftment of the respective disciplines. Attendance of conferences and membership of professional organisations now attract allowances categorised under the "learned conference allowance". Supervision of undergraduate and post-graduate theses is also to attract some allowances termed, "Supervision allowances." Academics are also entitled to higher allowances in lieu of accommodation when they travel outside their respective station to attend conferences and other official engagements. In the past, they were entitled to just ₦64 per day. The review of pension scheme will, for instance, now make the position of professor pensionable with his salary and allowances.

The procuring of up-to-date journals, which have become gold for many lecturers, will be eased up as the "journal allowance" will cover that.

The total salaries and emoluments may see an assistant lecturer, who is the least-paid teacher, smiling home with a take-home pay of a little above ₦36,000. The professor's first step is now about ₦70,000, with an optimum which is a little beyond ₦100,000. As Kayode Adetugbo, a professor of medicine at the Obafemi Awolowo University, (OAU), Ile-Ife, told *Newswatch*, at least, more conducive environment has been created for academic work.

The academics even have a greater cause to rejoice as the agreement moved many steps towards the issues of university autonomy and funding. On the question of autonomy, it was agreed that the powers of the National Universities Commission, NUC, will be curtailed, particularly in areas where they conflict with the statutes establishing the universities. The Joint

Admissions and Matriculation Board, JAMB, will no longer have powers to admit students as is the case now. It was agreed it should serve only as a "clearing house" for admission. It provides for a more democratic procedure for choosing Vice-Chancellors and their deputies. The appointment of the University Chancellor is now to be done by the respective university governing council. The new procedure, in the words of Jega, gives the university community the right of final choice, except on disqualification based on "security considerations" unknown to the university. Even when that is the case, the government will ask the university for another choice. The government's role in this regard has been restricted to giving its consent to the choice of council. The removal of the Vice-Chancellor is also to be done by council, with the sanction of the government.

I was delighted to receive the following telegram dated September 7, 1992 from an old colleague who is a labour consultant:

"Warmest congratulations on successful resolution of varsities trade dispute by negotiation. Your dogged endeavours, maturity, experience and patience were patent at all times. May Allah continue to guide you. Professor Tijani M. Yesufu No. 7 Boundary Road, Benin City".

Both the Government team led by Owelle Chikelu and the Academic staff team led by Dr. Jega deserve the gratitude of Nigerians. They all did Nigeria proud.

But alas, I cannot say the same for my successor who declared the agreement illegal. The problem he created in 1993, was to haunt the academic community and indeed the entire nation till 1997 and perhaps, beyond.

During the entire period of ASUU negotiation, I found Dr. Attahiru Jega the then President of ASUU, a very pleasant personality. Cool headed, soft spoken and determined; he was ASUU's best advocate. He appeared to be transparently honest and totally committed to the union, its members and the well-being of the university system.

I was delighted when he phoned me on the eve of my leaving office as minister to thank me for my assistance and to wish me the best of luck for the future.

**The Senior Staff Association of Universities, Teaching
Hospitals, Research Institutes and Associated Institutions
(SSAUTHRIAI) of Nigeria**

and

**The Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated
Institutions (NASU)**

Both the Senior Staff Association (SSAUTHRIAI) and the Non-academic Staff Union (NASU) separately presented memoranda on conditions of service of their members. They backed their demands up with declarations of trade disputes and strike actions at various times.

I met with the representatives of the two Unions on July 1, 1992 and we agreed that negotiations on their demands should be set in motion. The Government team was subsequently named, under the Chairmanship of the Director-General of the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development. Negotiations commenced on August 3, 1992 and ended on August 24, 1992 on a strong note with the union pointing out the disparity of the salary scale between the Non-Academic and Academic Staff of Institutions.

Government subsequently reconsidered the issue of parity and agreed that basic salaries of the academic and non - academic staff in the various institutions should be at par at every grade level.

An upward review of its former position on the salaries of non-academic staff (i.e. members of SSAUTHRIAI and NASU), was also agreed on.

On September 26, 1992, a circular from the Ministry went out to all the heads of parastatals of the Ministry, all rectors of federal polytechnics and all provosts of federal colleges of education, spelling out details of the new salary and the various allowances for all the staff of the parastatals and institutions.

The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT)

In October 1992, the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) presented to me a memorandum on Review of Teachers' Salary Scale and Working Conditions. I met with the leaders of the Union but no agreement could be reached. The Union declared a trade dispute and the Hon. Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity referred the issues in dispute to the Industrial Arbitration Panel. These were:

- (i) Central funding and management of Primary Education and the abrogation of Decree 3 of 1991 with the establishment of a national

- centralised body and the state primary education boards.
- (ii) Establishment of new conditions of service and salary structure for teachers.
 - (iii) Review of the terminal salary position/promotion of teachers in line with the 1988 Civil Service Reforms.
 - (iv) Improved career prospects for teachers.
 - (v) Provision of instructional facilities especially in technical and vocational fields and science and technology.
 - (vi) Provision of infrastructural facilities such as tables, desks, buildings, offices, specialised subject rooms, libraries and workshops.
 - (vii) Regular payment of salaries and allowances of teachers.
 - (viii) Employment of more teachers to fill vacant positions and reduce excessive class size.

In an attempt to settle the matter in-house, I summoned the leaders of the Union to another round of discussions. We did agree that the proposed amendments to Decree No. 3 of 1991 on the transfer of primary school administration to the local governments would remove the fears and anxieties of the Union in respect of funding of the schools and the conditions of service of the teachers. We also agreed that the issue of the Teachers' Registration Council was being handled with utmost dispatch and that the decree would be promulgated soonest.

However, we reached a stalemate on the issue of the Review of Teachers' Salary and Conditions of Service, as we pointed out to the Union that we, representing the Federal Government, could not negotiate on these in the absence of the State and Local Governments, who were the employers of members of the Union.

On that note, the matter had to go back to the Industrial Arbitration Panel. The verdict of that Panel was being awaited when I left the ministry.

Establishment of an Industrial Relations Unit in the Ministry

The number of industrial actions by the various staff unions at all levels of our institutions and even by some unions at the local level among the staff of the Ministry convinced me beyond any doubt of the need for the establishment of an Industrial Relations Unit in the Federal Ministry of Education. I therefore, directed that a proposal for the establishment of the Unit should be put up for consideration by Government.

It is my belief that such a Unit (if properly staffed and managed by experienced trade union experts and/or those to be trained in industrial relations practices) would nip in the bud many of the industrial actions which

had, in many instances, paralysed the smooth running of the institutions. It would also remove the communication gap which has existed between the management and the staff of the ministry.

It is my hope that before long, all allowances, car, housing, lunch, hardship, inconvenience, examination, night, day, and furniture allowances will be consolidated and each staff will take care of his needs from this consolidated salary as is the case in many countries of the world. As inflation rises, increases or salary adjustments will be made to reflect the inflationary trend from time to time.

It is my hope also that we move away from an over-centralised wage system. The governor of a poorest and least productive state has no business earning the same salary as the governor of a prosperous and productive state. Time was when the governor of New York State earned five times more than the governor of Mississippi or Alabama in the United States. Teachers, clerks, engineers and doctors in Alabama earn less than their counterparts in New York and California. This is as it should be in any country that is development - oriented. Our motto should be *management by objectives, payment by results*.

Teachers' Registration Council

For decades, teachers have been agitating for professional status; that is, to make teaching a profession. Naturally, I was and still am part of the crusade. When I became the Minister of Education in 1990, one of my major goals was to make teaching a profession. Indeed, as far back as 1975, I presented a paper at a major conference pleading that the Nigeria Certificate of Education, NCE, be regarded as the minimum teaching qualification and that all holders of B.A, B.Sc., M.A. and Ph.D degrees without teaching qualification be treated as auxiliary teachers.

The 1984 Study Group on the Funding of Education set up by General Buhari, the then head of state and headed by me strongly recommended the establishment of a Teachers' Registration Council. The 34th meeting of the National Council on Education (NCE) held in Oyo State in 1989 endorsed the immediate establishment of the Council.

I was particularly moved by a letter addressed to me by the President and General Secretary of the Nigerian Union of Teachers early in 1992, which read in part: "*Please Sir, permit us to use this opportunity to remind you of an issue you have contributed so much to bring to light: that is the professionalisation of teaching in Nigeria. Our fear is that if it is not accomplished during your tenure, it may not see the light of day in the next ten years.*"

In March 1992, I presented the following memorandum abridged to the Cabinet of Ministers under the chairmanship of the President entitled:

Establishment of Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria

The National Policy on Education (Revised) 1991, provides that teaching, like other professions, will be legally and publicly recognised as a profession, bearing in mind that Nigeria is already a signatory to the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO 1966 recommendation on the status of teachers. The provision further states that Government will set up a Teachers' Registration Council whose functions, amongst other things, will be to make regulations concerning the accreditation, certification, Registration and Discipline, governing the teaching profession and that teachers already admitted into the profession without the requisite qualification will be given a period of time within which to qualify for admission or leave the profession.

In the second National Development Plan period, efforts were made to speed up the production of qualified teachers, in appropriate numbers and subject areas, for the various levels and aspects of education and for the educational system as a whole. The underlying factor of this definitive government policy was to facilitate the early phasing out of the then existing programmes of mass importation of teachers into the country and to reduce the number of unqualified teachers in the system. Although some progress was made in both directions, the emergency nature of the need for teachers in all areas of education necessitated special attention, since the demand for schooling at all levels was dramatically intensified as the country drew near to the end of the first Universal Primary Education cycle in 1982. This in turn, gave rise to a phenomenal increase in recruitment of teachers with little or no attention paid to their professional qualifications.

The Ministry reviewed the development and presented to the National Council on Education a comprehensive position paper on the subject with the full implications for our education sub-sector growth spelt out. Realizing that this situation was adversely affecting the efficiency of our educational system, the National Council on Education (NCE), at its 34th meeting held in Oyo State under the chairmanship Prof. Jibril Aminu endorsed the proposal for immediate establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, giving details of structure, functions, composition and the tenets of professionalization of the teaching career. Consistent with the deliberations and decisions on the subject, the National Council on Education at its 36th meeting in Kano, in March 1990 under my chairmanship approved amendments made on the proposed objectives, membership, structure, functions and other related activities of the council.

After the meeting, it became necessary to implement the decisions reached and in order to achieve this objective, the Federal Ministry set in motion a series of consultations with the Nigerian Union of Teachers in order to arrive at a consensus on the establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria and of the issue of the professionalization of teaching as a career. At the last Consultative meeting held in February, 1992 with the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), the modalities regarding the establishment of Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria was arrived at.

The main features of the Teachers' Registration Council include the fact that it would ensure the production of quality teachers and the maintenance of minimum standards in all institutions handling teacher education at all levels. The Council would initiate the formulation of common policies on Teacher Education. The Council would also determine who are professional teachers, set standards of knowledge and skills to be attained by persons seeking to become members of the teaching profession, as well as review these standards as and when considered appropriate. Furthermore, the Council would establish and maintain a register of persons entitled to practise the teaching profession and publish such lists from time to time, maintain discipline within the teaching profession, ensure the general welfare of members of the teaching profession at all times, remove the name of any teacher found guilty of professional misconduct from the register where this is considered necessary and appropriate, disseminate to members regulations, laws and orders governing the teaching profession, and perform all functions conferred upon the council by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

I then proposed that the Council, when established, should be a Category "A" parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education and should consist of a chairman who should be or who had been a teacher, to be appointed by Mr. President on the recommendation of the Minister responsible for the education portfolio and the following other members:

- (a) Nine (9) persons to be appointed by Mr. President on the recommendation of the Minister responsible for Education portfolio, with at least one from each of the following groups:
 - (i) The committee of Deans of Education and Directors of Education in Nigerian Universities.
 - (ii) Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education;
 - (iii) Committee of Rectors of Polytechnics;
 - (iv) Committee of Principals of Technical Colleges;
 - (v) The National Universities Commission;

- (vi) The National Commission for Colleges of Education;
 - (vii) The National Board for Technical Education;
 - (viii) The National Teachers' Institute;
 - (ix) A representative of the Federal Ministry of Education.
- (b) Six (6) representatives of the State Ministries of Education of the Federation.
 - (c) Two (2) members of the Nigerian Academy of Education elected by the Academy.
 - (d) Three (3) members of the Nigerian Union of Teachers; at least one of whom must be a woman.
 - (e) The Registrar of the Council.

The Board would provide the general policy guidelines for the council.

The essentials of the proposed decree are as follows:

Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria

1. (a) There should be established a body to be known as the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (hereafter in this Decree referred to as "the Council").
- (b) The Council should be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.

Functions of the Council:

2. The Council would be charged with the following general duties
 - (a) determining who are qualified teachers;
 - (b) ensuring the establishment and maintenance of a register of persons entitled to practise the profession and the publication, from time to time, of lists of such persons;
 - (c) regulating and controlling the practice of the profession in all its ramifications;
 - (d) maintaining discipline within the profession in accordance with this Decree;
 - (e) classifying as appropriate members of the teaching profession;
 - (f) performing the other functions conferred upon the Council.

Maintenance of the Register

3. The Council should prepare and maintain, a register of teachers (hereinafter in this Decree referred to as "the register").
4. The register should list names, addresses, approved qualifications and such other particulars as may be specified by the Council, of all persons who are entitled in accordance with the provisions of the Decree to be

- registered as teachers and who apply in the specified manner to be so registered.
5. The Council may make rules with respect to the form and keeping of the register and the making of entries therein, and in support of applications for the following items:
 - (a) regulating the making of applications for registration and providing for the evidence to be produced in support of applications;
 - (b) providing for the notification to the registrar, by the person to whom any registered particulars relate, of any change in those particulars;
 - (c) specifying the fees to be paid to the Council in respect of the entry of names on the register and authorizing the Registrar to refuse to enter a name on the register until any fee specified for the entry has been paid.
 6.
 - (a) It should be the duty of the Council to cause a list of persons whose names and qualifications are contained in the register to be printed, published and put on sale to members of the public not later than twelve months from the beginning of the year in which this Decree comes into force.
 - (b) A document purporting to be a print of an edition of a register published under this section by authority of the registrar in the current year, or documents purporting to be prints of an edition of a register so published in a previous year and of a list of correction to that edition so published in the current year, should (without prejudice to any other mode of proof) be admissible in any proceedings as evidence that any person specified in the document or documents read together, as being registered, is so registered, and that any person not so specified is not so registered.

Registration of Teachers

7. (1) Subject to laid down rules a person should be entitled to be registered as a teacher if:
 - (a) he possesses requisite qualification(s) recognized by the Council;
 - (b) not being a Nigerian, he holds a qualification granted outside Nigeria which for the time being is recognized by the Council and he is by law entitled to practise for all purposes as a teacher in the country in which the qualification was granted:

provided that the other country accords Nigerian professional teachers the same reciprocal treatment and that he satisfies the Council that he has had sufficient practical experience as a teacher.

- (2) An applicant for registration should in addition to evidence of qualification, satisfy the Council that:
 - (a) he is of good character;
 - (b) he has not been convicted in Nigeria or elsewhere of criminal offence.
8. The Council should from time to time publish in the Gazette a list of any qualifications in the profession recognized by it and, subject thereto, the Council should not recognize any qualification granted by an institution in Nigeria unless such qualification has been approved by the appropriate agency(ies) designated by law for such purpose.
9. A certificate under the hand of the registrar to the effect that any person was or was not registered as a teacher under this Decree at any time or during any period specified in the certificate or as to any entry in the register or as to any act or proceedings of the Council should, until the contrary is proved, be sufficient evidence of the matters specified therein.
10. The Registrar should, as soon as practicable, after the entry in the register of any person's name, or after the removal of such name from the register, cause to be gazetted and widely publicize such action.

Professional Discipline

11. (i) There should be established a body to be known as the Teachers' Disciplinary Committee, which is to be charged with the duty of considering and determining any case referred to it by an established panel.
- (ii) The Teachers' Disciplinary Committee should consist of the Chairman of the Council and ten other members of the Council appointed by the Council.
- (iii) There should be a body in each State to be known as the State Teachers' Investigating Panel which should be charged with the following duties:
 - (a) conducting a preliminary investigation into any case within the State where it is alleged that a person registered has misbehaved in his capacity as a Teacher;
 - (b) deciding whether the case should be referred to the

- disciplinary committee; and
- (c) submitting a report on any action taken by an Investigating Panel to the disciplinary committee.
 - (iv) The State Investigating Panel should be appointed by the Council in consultation with the State Ministry of Education, and should consist of five members, one of whom should be a legal officer.
 - (v) It should be the duty of the head of any educational institution to report cases of misconduct to the State Teachers' Investigating Panel immediately on the occurrence of such misdemeanor.
 - (vi) The Registrar should act as secretary to the Teachers' Disciplinary Committee.
 - (vii) The Disciplinary Committee may give a directive to reprimand a teacher or order the Registrar to strike his/her name off the register, permanently or for a shorter period as the case may be in the following instances where:
 - (a) a registered person is adjudged by the disciplinary committee to be guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect; or
 - (b) a person registered is convicted in Nigeria or elsewhere by any court or tribunal having power to award punishment for an offence (whether or not such an offence is punishable with imprisonment) which in the opinion of the disciplinary committee is incompatible with the status of a Teacher; or
 - (c) the disciplinary committee is satisfied that the name of any person has been fraudulently registered;
 - (d) the disciplinary committee may, if it thinks fit, defer or further defer its decision as to the giving of a directive until a subsequent meeting of the disciplinary committee, but no decision should be deferred for periods exceeding 6 months in the aggregate; and
 - (e) a person should not be treated as convicted unless the conviction stands at a time when no appeal or further appeal is presiding or may (without extension of time) be through in connection with the conviction;
 - (f) when the disciplinary committee gives a direction it should cause notice of the direction to be served on the person to whom it relates;
 - (g) a person whose name is removed from the register in pursuance of a direction of the disciplinary committee should

- not be entitled to be registered again except in pursuance of a direction in that behalf given by the disciplinary committee on the application of that person;
- (h) a direction for the removal of a person's name from the register may prohibit an application by that person until the expiration of such period from the date of the direction.

Miscellaneous Offences

12. (1) Any person, not being a person duly registered who:
- (a) for or in expectation of reward practises or holds himself out to practise as such; or
 - (b) without reasonable excuse takes or uses any name, title, addition or description implying that he is authorised by law to practise as a registered teacher would be guilty of an offence.
- (2) It is an offence for anyone to employ as a teacher any person not registered by the Council.
- (3) If any person, for the purpose of procuring the registration of any name, qualification or other matter, recklessly makes a statement which is false, he will be guilty of an offence.
- (4) If the Registrar or any other person employed by the Council wilfully makes any falsification in any matter relating to the register, he will be guilty of an offence.
13. A registered teacher should be entitled to practise as a teacher throughout the Federation.

Not only did the Council of Ministers approve the establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council it caused a decree to be drafted to this effect. Indeed the decree was published early in 1993.

It is not only sad but appalling that six years after the promulgation of the decree, the Teachers' Registration Council is yet to see the light of day. One cannot help wondering whether the Nigerian Union of Teachers' prediction is going to take its full course (i.e. 2002AD), before the Council materialises. I sincerely hope not.

Chapter 9

The Longe Commission and the Change of School Year

Before I assumed office in January 1990, two issues were on my top priority list:

- (1) Need for a review of higher education in Nigeria and
- (2) Change of school calendar year from January–December, back to September–June.

Antecedent

The first review of Nigerian higher education took place in 1959, moving higher education in Nigeria into its second phase of development when in April 1959 the Federal Minister of Education appointed a commission “to conduct an investigation into Nigeria’s needs in the field of post-school certificate and higher education over the next twenty years”. The setting up of the commission was of special importance for a number of reasons:

- (1) It was the first time in the history of education in Nigeria that Nigerians themselves, as represented by the Minister of Education and the Nigerian Federal Cabinet, decided to examine the higher educational structure in terms of the needs of Nigeria, not only for that particular time but for a period of twenty years.
- (2) It was the first time in Nigeria that a team of educators (three Nigerians, three Britons and three Americans) was given an opportunity to combine experiences and intellectual resources in order to give Nigeria the best advice in the field of education.
- (3) It was the first official comprehensive review of higher education in

Nigeria to be undertaken by a team of experts, although an earlier (unofficial) study had been done by the author in 1955 for a Ph.D. degree at New York University. The main purpose of the thesis was to discover the extent to which higher education was meeting the social, economic and political needs of Nigeria during the period under review (1928-1953).

The commission was often referred to unofficially as the Ashby Commission, but its official name was "The Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria". It consisted of nine members with Sir Eric Ashby as chairman.

In the course of their work, the Commission interviewed a large number of people connected with secondary and post-secondary schools: ministry officials, representatives of voluntary educational agencies, public service commissioners, the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association, religious bodies, research institutes, regional governors and premiers and selected individuals. Their findings were submitted to the Minister of Education on September 2nd, 1960, only a month before Nigeria's Independence.

In defining the magnitude of its task, the Commission rejected the conventional approach which tends to provide 'cautious, modest and reasonable' improvement in terms of a limited budget. It contended that:

"the upsurge of Africa is so dramatic and so powerful that proposals which today appear to be reasonable and sensible will in a very few years appear to be short-sighted and timid".²

By any yardstick, the Commission was realistic and far-sighted, and it went on to explain its stand further:

"One has to read reports on West African education written fifteen years ago to realize how even wise and experienced men underestimated the pace at which West Africa is growing up".³

This was in reference to the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa. In 1945, it had expressed hope that 'within a century, within a half a century ... a new African State will be born, strong, virile and vocal, and will need its own counsellors', etc. The Ashby Commission, unlike the Elliot Commission, thought and planned on a large scale. It considered that anything less ambitious than its proposals would be inadequate for Nigeria's development and would be an admission of defeat from the start.

There was only one higher education institution in Nigeria at that time –

Ibadan University College. For over a decade, the university authorities misled the public into thinking that the college could not find enough qualified students to fill its admission quota. It was not until the investigation of the Commission that it was admitted by the university authorities that:

“over a thousand Nigerians, all qualified to enter a university, applied to come to University College, Ibadan, last year (1959); and there were places for only about three hundred of them”.

The Commission recorded its general dissatisfaction with the lack of balance in the educational structure, particularly at the post-secondary level.

However, the Commission singled out one aspect of education for special criticism. This was the literary emphasis placed on education at the secondary and post-secondary levels in the Nigerian educational system. This literary type of education was imported to Nigeria by expatriate administrators, many of whom were arts graduates. These expatriates were symbols of prestige, success and power. Consequently, by contrast, agriculture, technology, engineering, commercial and other vocational courses won little esteem; and most of the school certificated boys and girls shunned schools that offered post-secondary education in these fields.

The Commission based its overall proposals for university education on Harrison's estimates⁴ of the need for high-level manpower, although it did not lose sight of other relevant needs that could not be measured by manpower needs per se. The Commission averred that its main aim was to ensure that it was “the rate of flow of students that matters, not the building up of manpower to some prescribed level”. As its report later indicated, the Commission really meant that the aim was to build up to a certain target and thereafter maintain a steady flow to ensure continuity and further expansion as the need arose.

The main task of the Commission was to report on university development in Nigeria. It recommended that planning should ensure that at least 7,500 students would be enrolled in universities by 1970, with a substantial growth beyond that figure in the decade 1970-1980.

All universities in Nigeria should be national in outlook and general in policy. Each university should admit, without discrimination and on the criterion of merit alone, students from any region or ethnic group.

Care should be taken to avoid unnecessary and uneconomical duplication of expensive courses.

There should be wider diversity and greater flexibility in university

education if it was to be relevant to the needs of Nigeria. The Commission averred that the whole intellectual and professional life of the country depended, for its quality, on sound university standards.

It stated that it should be the duty of all Nigerian universities to promote work and research in the field of African studies, and recommended that every university in the country should have an Institute of African Studies. Such an institute could co-ordinate research which was being conducted by various university departments.

Professional qualifications in subjects such as accountancy, banking, secretaryship, insurance and transport should be gained through university courses in commerce, as well as by professional training. Students of such courses would receive a Bachelor of Commerce degree, B. Comm.

Provision should be made at a university for courses in higher management studies at the post-graduate level.

In order to assist in the preparation of graduate teachers, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education, B.A. (Ed.), should be introduced in all Nigerian universities. The degree course would consist of four subjects in the first year and three in each of the second and third years, with some pedagogic instruction.

A Bachelor of Engineering Degree, B. Eng., should be instituted which would be biased toward the practical side. Post-graduate courses leading to master's degrees in special subjects could be added at a later date.

The Commission recommended the establishment of University of Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University, formerly known as the University of Northern Nigeria, and the University of Ibadan. The Commission recognised the existence of University of Nigeria under the leadership of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, which opened before the Commission submitted its report to the Federal Government. Thus *four* universities were recommended by the Ashby Commission. But the then Government of Western Region led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo protested the exclusion of the Western Region as a site of a new university while Eastern and Northern regions were favoured.

Of course the Commission assumed wrongly that Ibadan would largely serve the West, but Ibadan had always been a Federal Institution which caters for the entire country. The Federal Government accepted the four universities proposed by Ashby commission as well as a regional university for the West which later became University of Ife.

Ashby recommended a student enrolment of 7,500 in the five universities by 1970 but by 1966, enrolment rose to 8800 and to over 25,000 in the 1973/74 academic session. The University of Benin, which started as an Institute

of Technology, became a conventional university in 1971. Ashby also recommended a periodic review of higher education at ten or fifteen years intervals.

Education: Looking into the Future

Although I had thought of myself as a forward looking individual, as evidenced by my predictions in the following article from *Sunday Times* of April 12, 1970, page 10, subsequent events proved otherwise.

WE SHALL NEED TEN VARSITIES BY 1999

A number of states or groups and even individuals have expressed the need for more universities in Nigeria. Some of these demands are based on "state pride," or real need necessitated by geography and others on mere wishful thinking.

There is no doubt however, that sooner or later, Nigeria will be forced either by compelling needs or political pressure or both to build new universities or university colleges.

It is of utmost importance therefore for the Federal Government in co-operation with the National Universities Commission to establish a firm policy on the opening of new universities. Such a policy must be forward looking. It must attempt to assess Nigeria's higher education needs between 1969 and 1999.

As of now there are two federal institutions fully financed by the Federal Government and three Regional/State universities jointly financed by the Federal and the appropriate state or group of states.

The ability of the Federal or State Government to establish new universities will depend largely on three very important criteria. These are proven need, present and future financial resources and staffing.

In order to tackle this problem, we must look into the future. There are at present 12 states within the Federation. It is most likely that in the long-run, that is, within this century, each of the 12 states will demand or require one university or university college.

This is not an unreasonable prospect, Britain with less than 50 million people has 48 universities. The United States of America with 200 million people has over 1,000 universities and colleges. Ghana with 7 million people has three universities.

Granted that conditions and resources vary from country to country, it will still be reasonable to expect 10 to 12 universities and colleges in Nigeria probably ten years from now and certainly by 1999. It cannot be over-

emphasised therefore, that the Government must look ahead and plan ahead.

The two federal institutions are located in Ibadan and Lagos (West and Lagos States). The three state or regional universities were in the three former regions (West, North and East).

With the creation of new states, the Eastern university (Nsukka) may eventually serve the East Central, South-Eastern and Rivers States although strong reservations have been expressed against this prospect and it would appear that demands are being made for another institution, say in Port Harcourt, to serve the needs of the South-Eastern and Rivers States.

The Mid-West has expressed a wish to have its own university. Ahmadu Bello University will be unable to cope with the needs of the six states unless it establishes new university colleges that will reduce geographical and psychological distances.

Other demands are bound to be made in the near future for more higher education facilities by states, groups, churches and even individuals, both foreign and local.

To guide and control the growth of universities in the country, and to avoid mushroom and unco-ordinated development, a set of rules must be established and executed by the National Universities Commission.

The growth and development of universities in Nigeria indicate that two principal agencies are responsible for it - Federal and State Governments. A third possibility for the future is the church or groups of individuals.

It is difficult to anticipate the view of Governments on this possibility. We shall therefore direct our attention to Federal and State Governments as the two main enabling agencies in these matters.

On the present arrangement and the need to tailor it to future needs and demands, we recommend a bilateral arrangement between the Federal and the State Governments as is the case at present. In constitutional terms, we are recommending here that higher education should remain on the concurrent list.

If this principle is to be followed, there will be need to re-designate some of the existing institutions in order to put things on a more rational basis.

On the basis of geography, we propose the following: Lagos University to be converted into a State University, "City of Lagos University."

University of Ibadan to remain Federal and serve the Western, Mid Western and Lagos States. University of Ife to remain a State University and serve as model for the establishment of other State universities in the future;

Ahmadu Bello University to become a Federal University to serve the North Western Area;

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka to either become a Federal University serving that area as well as Rivers and South Eastern states or remain a State University like Ife while a new Federal University is established in Port Harcourt to serve the area instead.

To effect a balanced distribution of higher learning, there may have to be only four, possibly five, Federal Universities and Colleges, two to serve the areas north of the Niger and two or three to serve areas south of the Niger.

The four or five Universities will be the only ones to be fully supported by Federal Government. All other universities and colleges will be partially supported by State Governments and partially by Federal Government. Such Federal support will not exceed 50 per cent of recurrent and capital expenditures.

Centralisation of the university system appeals to a number of people and it has been suggested that all the existing universities should be federalised. This scheme has a number of advantages - central control, uniformity in degree structure, avoidance of duplication in cost, personnel, equipment, building, faculties and courses.

The disadvantages outweigh the advantages. It is possible that Federal Government in spite of its limited financial resources may be able to assume full responsibility for the five existing universities.

Once it does this, however, it must be prepared to support all new ones on the same basis and it is not unlikely as we indicated earlier that at least twelve to fifteen universities and colleges may come into being between 1969 and 1999.

It may even be more. This means that the Federal Government will bear the cost of all such institutions. This will certainly be an unwise policy both from the financial and academic points of view.

Contrary to my "radical" prediction of 1970 which was roundly criticised by some Nigerian academics and administrators as "irresponsible" and extravagant, there was an unprecedented growth in higher education between 1970 and 1989. Many voices including the author's were calling for a review of higher education, but the various governments had other priorities and the cries fell on deaf ears.

University Expansion

The introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1976 was swiftly followed by universal fee - free university education in 1978. However, students paid for hostel accommodation and books. Nigerian universities witnessed unprecedented growth between 1970 and 1982. In 1970, there

were only six universities in the country - Ibadan, Nsukka, Ife, Lagos, Zaria and Benin. In 1975, the Military Government established seven new universities: Bayero, Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Sokoto. The Military Government handed over power to a civilian government in October 1979. Between 1980 and 1982 the civilian government opened the following additional universities, styled Federal Universities of Technology (FUT): Owerri (1980), Akure (1981), Minna (1982), Yola (1982), Abeokuta (1982), thus bringing the total of federal universities to eighteen. The University of Abuja was later opened in 1990 making a total number of twenty-two. By 1993, Ogbomoso in Oyo State, Uyo in Akwa Ibom and Azikiwe University in Anambra State were added to the list, making a grand total of twenty-five federal universities.

The Era of State and Private Universities

The 1979 Constitution returned education to the original listing in the concurrent legislative list. Taking advantage of this constitutional provision, many state governments came out early in the Second Republic with statements of intention to establish their own universities, but in the end, some of them dropped the idea, partly because of the expressed intention of the Federal government to expand facilities such that each state would have a federal university located within its borders and partly from the realisation of the immense financial and human resources that are required to support a university but which were not generally available. Nonetheless, some states went ahead and established their own universities.

(1) State Universities

Thirteen state universities were established between 1980 and 1992 in the following states: Enugu, Ondo, Imo, Rivers, Lagos, Cross-River, Ogun, Edo, Oyo, Kano, Benue, Anambra and Delta.

Thus within thirty-five years of Nigerian Independence, the country witnessed the birth of thirty-eight universities. That is to say, we established universities at an average of over one per year! Indeed, from almost zero growth between 1859 and 1959, Nigeria established 38 universities, 57 colleges of education and 38 polytechnics, making a total of 133 higher education institutions for the country between 1960 and 1996.

There is hardly any country in the world that can match this phenomenal growth in higher education. But alas, this enviable record was marred by unsustainable development. It is relatively easy to put up 100 or more edifices within a short period of time particularly for the politicians who want instant

fame, ready votes and contract awards for cronies and loyal party men, whether civilian or military. It is another thing to furnish and equip the workshops, libraries and pay good wages to those who work in these institutions.

(2) Private Universities

As if to say that Nigeria was under-supplied with universities, private individuals took advantage of the 1979 constitution which empowered private individuals to open universities, by establishing mushroom institutions, particularly in the eastern part of the country; Pope John II University, Nnamdi Azikiwe University (not connected with Dr. Azikiwe), Eze Ogueri University etc.

Some of the institutions were located in private homes and flats or garages and all were below university standard in all respects. Since the constitution or the civilian government did not set up a minimum standard for establishing such institutions, the permission to open depended solely on political patronage.

When the Military again took over the reins of government in December 1983, one of its very first acts was to close all privately owned universities "with immediate effect". It also closed four of its own universities and merged them with some of the older ones. The Federal University of Abeokuta was merged with Lagos; Yola with Maiduguri; Bauchi with Ahmadu Bello, and Makurdi with University of Jos. The four were later reopened in 1988 as autonomous institutions.

Abeokuta and Makurdi were renamed Federal Universities of Agriculture while Yola and Bauchi re-opened as conventional universities of Arts, Science and Technology.

I. THE LONGE COMMISSION

On October 12, 1990, I addressed a memo to the President, stating therein:

"Commission on Review of Higher Education in Nigeria

In April 1959, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up a Commission to conduct an investigation into Nigerian needs in the field of Post School Certificate and Higher Education over a twenty-year period. The Commission on Post-Secondary School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria (The Ashby Report) submitted its Report to the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1960 and this formed the basis of higher education development in Nigeria, from 1960 to 1980.

Nigerian Minister of Education - Professor
Department of Higher Education
Recommendations
1977

Nigeria since the last comprehensive report of the 1960 Commission on post Secondary and Higher Education in Nigeria.

3. Determine the middle and high level manpower supply and demand of the country, and advise in the area of under/over production and under/over utilization of same.
4. Examine the availability and adequacy of academic staff in higher education and advise on training for teaching in higher educational institutions.
5. Re-examine the administrative structure in post secondary and higher educational institutions with regards to specialised functions of their staff as well as their time and cost effectiveness.
6. Investigate the nature, sources and criteria of funding in higher educational institutions with a view to improving the situation and guaranteeing steady source of funds for optimal functioning of these institutions.
7. Re-examine the role of students in the administration of higher educational institutions.
8. Examine the access of women to higher education and make recommendations which will improve the situation.
9. Suggest the mechanism and forum for effective co-ordination among the three supervising agencies:
 - (a) National Universities Commission (NUC)
 - (b) National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)
 - (c) National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)
10. Review the general conditions of service of staff in post secondary and higher educational institutions such as salaries, pension and retirement benefits, housing loans, etc., especially in relation to other arms of the public and the private sectors and particularly with a view to stemming the brain-drain phenomenon.
11. Review the admissions requirements for post secondary and higher education institutions and advise changes where necessary.
12. Review the present administrative structure of the university system in Nigeria with a view to streamlining it in terms of future development vis-a-vis the collegiate system.
13. Propose eligibility criteria for the establishment of future universities in Nigeria.
14. Review the criteria for appointment of administrators in post secondary and higher educational institutions including the vice-chancellors, provosts, rectors, registrars and other principal officers, their terms of

office and the process of renewal of their appointment.

15. Examine any other relevant issues on higher education and make appropriate recommendations.

In addition, Mr. President, I would also like to suggest that the Commission should have the power to co-opt members who will make meaningful contributions to its deliberations.

The Commission shall have nine months to submit its report.

II *Proposed Membership of the Review Commission*

- (a) A Chairman who should be a Nigerian with vast experience in public, private and educational management,
- (b) A seasoned academician with experience in educational administration,
- (c) An experienced administrator from the private sector,
- (d) The Secretary-General of the Nigerian Union of Teachers,
- (e) A Representative of the Nigerian Academy of Science,
- (f) A Representative of the Nigerian Academy of Education,
- (g) Representative of the National Council of Women Societies,
- (h) Five members representing other interest groups.

A Secretary who should be a serving officer of at least GL. 16. In line with the above, Mr. President, I propose the following persons as chairman and members of the *Review Commission on Post and Higher Education in Nigeria*:

1. *Chairman - Chief Gray Longe*

A seasoned Civil Servant and a one time Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education as well as Secretary to the Federal Government before he retired from service. He is now a successful business man and Pro-Chancellor of the University of Technology, Akure. Mr. Longe's exposure to government, education and general public administration makes him eminently qualified to chair such a commission. He is fair minded, a good listener and keen observer. These qualities make him suitable as Chairman of such an important Commission.

When I submitted my memorandum to the President's special assistant on Oct. 13, 1990, I had hoped that I would get permission to go ahead before the end of the year, but I received approval within a week without an invitation from General Babangida to defend my memo. It was like a dream come true. To be able to move the government to approve a comprehensive review of Nigerian higher education thirty years after Ashby (1960), was to me one of the landmarks in my ministerial tenure.

On December 5, 1990, less than two months after the presidential assent, the Commission on Review of Higher Education in Nigeria was inaugurated by General Ibrahim Babangida at Dodan Barracks, Ikoyi, Lagos.

The members were:

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| (i) Chief Gray Longe, CFR | - | Chairman |
| (ii) Professor O. O. Akinkugbe, CON | - | Member |
| (iii) Alhaji Abdulhamid Hassan | - | Member |
| (iv) Ambassador James Kolo | - | Member |
| (v) Professor O. O. Ladipo | - | Member |
| (vi) Professor R. O. Ohuche | - | Member |
| (vii) Professor I. A. Akinjogbin | - | Member |
| (viii) Mr. Mark Odu | - | Member |
| (ix) Professor Flora Nwapa
Nwabuche, OON | - | Member |
| (x) Dr. Rex Akpofure, OFR | - | Member |
| (xi) Dr. A. R. Augi | - | Member |
| (xii) Engr. Otis Anyaeji
(Representing Nigerian Society of Engineers) | - | Member |
| (xiii) Mr. V. N. Egungwu
(Representing Nigerian Employers
Consultative Association (NECA)) | - | Member |
| (xiv) Professor C. I. O. Olaniyan
(Representing Nigerian Academy of Science) | - | Member |
| (xv) Professor N.E. Obioha
(Representing Nigerian Academy of Education) | - | Member |
| (xvi) Mrs. Clara Osinulu (Representing National
Council of Women's Societies) | - | Member |
| (xvii) Dr. O. D. Umoh
(Representing Nigerian Union of Teachers) | - | Member |
| (xviii) Chief N. O. Nsefik
(Representing Nigerian Bar Association) | - | Member |
| (xix) Professor E. O. Olurin
(Representing Nigerian Medical Association) | - | Member |
| (xx) Alhaji Yusuf Aboki | - | Co-opted Member |
| (xxi) Mr. E. J. Akpan, Registrar,
University of Calabar | - | Secretary |

The fifteen terms of reference of the commission were as stated in my letter to Mr. President seeking approval to set up the Commission. Immediately after the inauguration, the Commission held its first meeting at

the Federal Ministry of Education and deliberated on the address of the President and the Honourable Minister of Education, reviewed its terms of reference, the scope of work and its programme of activities.

The Commission called for memoranda through the media and received two hundred and forty-eight submissions. Between January and March 1991, it visited thirty universities, fifty-three colleges of education, twenty-nine polytechnics and six colleges of agriculture. It also visited a number of Federal Ministry of Education parastatals and held meetings with the Committee of Pro-Chancellors, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and held special sessions with General Olusegun Obasanjo, the author, Prof. Ransome-Kuti, Prof. Aminu, Chief Simeon Adebo, Prof. T. M. Yesufu and many others.

The Commission which submitted its report on October 11, 1991 was in continuous session for over a nine-month period and covered every facet of the terms of reference.

It reviewed the system comprehensively by:

- (a) defining the role of higher education in Nigeria,
- (b) examining the manpower needs of the country; and making appropriate recommendations on (a) the administration of higher education (b) funding (c) student welfare (d) conditions of service for staff and (e) meeting the nation's aspirations for the future of higher education.

These recommendations, according to the commission were informed by three concepts: rehabilitation, restoration, and consolidation.

When the Commission interviewed me and asked for my views, I first made it clear that they had a free hand to deal with all the terms of reference as they deemed fit; and that I wanted my views on any issue to be treated as personal opinion, not the official view of the Honourable Minister of Education, the Federal Ministry of Education or the Federal Government. While I had absolute confidence in the commission (after all, I selected the team), and I trusted their judgement, I wanted them to give very serious attention to (a) education tax (b) appointment of Vice-Chancellors and (c) the establishment of private universities.

I proposed an education tax of two percent of declared company profit to be shared among the three levels of education - primary, secondary and tertiary. Fifty percent of the amount was to be earmarked for primary education, ten percent for secondary and forty percent for tertiary. One half of the amount for tertiary institutions should be allocated for the university system and one quarter each to colleges of education and the polytechnics.

I was never happy about the method of selection of Vice-Chancellors.

Although the search committee made up of Senate and Council members were to search for suitable candidates, it was always the ambitious candidates that searched for the committee. Many qualified candidates who were too modest to lobby were almost always left out. As far back as the late 1970s, I was campaigning for the post of Vice-Chancellor to be advertised but without success. My position is that all those who are interested should respond to the advertisement. The search committee should also encourage those it considers as suitable candidates to apply without any promise or commitment that just because they were approached, it meant they were the chosen candidates.

While the advertisement procedure has improved the situation and the Visitor can approve or reject only one candidate recommended to him, one at a time, there are still problems of vested interest. My own long term solution that would be free of rancour, vendetta and settling of scores between winners and losers, is to rotate the Vice-Chancellorship among professors, starting from the most senior. Some professors may not be interested and the opportunity will go to the next in line. Finally, if Vice-Chancellorship cannot be rotated among the professors, as stated above, I strongly suggest that no Vice-Chancellor of any federal university should serve in his/her own home state.

We need to approach the issue of founding new universities, whether Federal, state or private with hard-headed thinking. Universities are not local amenities. They are institutions for training and producing high level man and woman power. Our future depends on education and no politician should be allowed to play politics with it.

The general conclusions of the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria, otherwise known as the Longe Commission, are therefore instructive and need serious consideration by any leadership that is fully committed to the notion that education is the key to any meaningful development of a country that aspires to be great as a nation. I therefore take the liberty to quote some passages from the Report of the Longe Commission:⁵

“In general, since the Ashby Commission, it is evident from the foregoing historical perspective that higher educational institutions have grown far more rapidly in number than the Ashby Commission could possibly have projected. The reasons for such growth and expansion have been many and varied but it is clear that political considerations have been the predominant single factor. The distribution and rate of establishment especially over the last decade have

created unrealistic aspirations of continued expansion: which today are totally out of step with available resources. The hard decision which will now have to be made by governments as well as private proprietors is where and how far further expansion should take place in the light of total available human and material resources and whether consolidation rather than new expansion should be the first guiding principle. In order to assist that decision, the Commission has suggested below certain basic considerations which underlie the criteria for determination of future institutions of higher education:

- (i) **Fund Resources:** The Commission believes that the issue of adequate funding and resources precedent to the funding of a new higher educational institution is self-evident; but it is the determination of what these are and how far they must be a *sine qua non* that may be debatable. Based on the nation's experience post-Ashby and particularly in the last 10 years of deterioration in the institutions due mainly to inadequate resources, the critical importance of assured resources to institutional health and development must be recognised by all potential proprietors. This is because once established, an unviable higher educational institution is both a millstone round its proprietor's neck and its merger or closure often a disaster to many socio-economic groups whose existence had become tied up with it.
- (ii) **Educational Standards:** The products of new institutions take time to establish their acceptance and credibility. The products of first generation Nigerian universities owed their world-wide recognition to the unrelenting standards established by and for these institutions over the years. It is without contention that new institutions must both begin with a high standard and be able to sustain these as well as develop new areas of competence and excellence. The risk of institutions being stigmatised by tags of poor academic standards must be avoided from the start, not to talk of becoming synonymous with poor or watered-down academic achievement.
- (iii) **Established Professional and Job-Market Needs:** Institutions must only arise in response to clearly established-not imagined-professional/technical areas of need, as well as manpower or job market requirements. The Commission has noted that graduate and other high level unemployment is already a problem in Nigeria and has arisen from a complex of causes such as employment policies, the mismatch of products and needs, low relevance of professional training etc. New

higher educational institutions must clearly be in response to a manpower need identified as existing and over a clear time scale.

- (iv) **Clear Mission:** Related to the manpower need is also an identifiable mission as an institution but a mission which cannot be adequately fulfilled in existing institutions or by existing arrangements. The clear definition of an institution's mission must be regarded as a basic condition before opening a new institution or locating one in a particular environment. This means that its student population and a substantial percentage of its teaching staff in the appropriate mix for meaningful academic programmes must be available.
- (v) **Geographical Distribution of Related Institutions:** While this issue is also related to job-market needs, the decisions to establish new institutions will be made by different proprietors and agencies in different States. This means that a co-ordinated approach is essential and adequate feasibility studies must inform the decision to establish a university anywhere in the country. In this way a national planning forum, with an overview of the geographical location of the different and related institutions, will be essential to ensure the availability of institutional resources and the viability or otherwise of new institutions.
- (vi) **Priority Rating and Timing:** This too is an issue which requires examination at a planning forum such as the Federal or State level. In this connection, the accuracy of statistical data, especially of forecasts and projections, is of vital importance. Without them, decisions as to the priority or urgency of a perceived need will clearly be unsound. The Commission has commented on the issue of the Manpower Board and its importance in the manpower determination of the country (See Chapter III).

In most developing countries, the political factor tends to loom excessively large among criteria for establishing new institutions, to the grave detriment of sound professional and technical considerations of viability. The exercise of such political fiat often works severe hardship on the future and the orderly evolution of the nation's tertiary education system. The Commission urges our Governments to weigh most carefully the chances of institutional success and counter-balance against the political gains which institutional establishment might bring as part of the decision whether new or existing facilities, are the right answer to a perceived need.

The foregoing issues are considered fundamental to the establishment of conditions and the necessary criteria for establishing new higher education institutions. In the sections that follow, we now indicate specific details of criteria to be met before new institutions can be set up in future.

Eligibility Criteria

- (i) Sponsorship/proprietorship should be by the Federal or State Government, a corporate body or any Nigerian citizen or group of citizens of high repute.
- (ii) Licensure must be sought from the Federal Government by sponsors. The laws establishing the institution should operate within current NUC, NBTE/NCCE guidelines.
- (iii) The name of the institution should, as far as possible, reflect the philosophy and objectives for which it would be established. It is considered more desirable to name universities after the towns/areas in which they are located rather than after persons.
- (iv) A well articulated mission and set of objectives is mandatory. Such objectives may be original and innovative but must be seen to be in consonance with the nation's socio-economic and political aspirations.
- (v) It is highly desirable that such institutions in their administrative structure should not depart too radically from established norms to create and sustain credibility and confidence from the start.
- (vi) Ideally, a new institution should cater for areas of felt needs in its academic structure and spread of disciplines; it must have an eye on the impact of its future products on the nation's economy. In this wise, it is important for the institution to provide adequate and realistic manpower projections based on a feasibility report submitted on application, to ensure that its graduates are readily absorbed into the nation's workforce.
- (vii) Adequate funding (capital and recurrent) by the sponsoring body is a *sine qua non* and should be available on approval to open. Sources of funding need to be diversified to make for resilience. A new institution can set up income-generating enterprises to encourage the spirit of self-reliance from the earliest stage.
- (viii) Fixed, enabling assets (funds, land, movable and immovable assets) for establishing a new institution should be ascertained by the Federal Government or its accredited agency, and deemed adequate based on such factors as type of institution envisaged, its philosophy and objectives, cost of goods and services prevailing at the time, etc.
- (ix) A proposed institution should have a clearly spelt out master plan for infrastructural and programme development for 20-25 years. Such plans should make adequate provision for land space, aesthetic beauty and fixed financial assets. Minimum land area - 100 hectares or more - in a salubrious site is essential. The site's distance from an urban complex

should take into consideration availability or otherwise of municipal services-water, transportation, private accommodation and consequential difficulties in its community (i.e. town and gown).

- (x) A new institution should have an adequate enrolment base and should be open to all Nigerians irrespective of ethnic derivation, social status, religious or political persuasion. In line with the foregoing, its laws and statutes should not conflict with conventional responsibilities in academia nor interfere with avowed traditional institutional autonomy.
- (xi) There should be a clear policy on student and staff accommodation, and catering facilities to pre-empt problems of inadequate municipal facilities.
- (xii) A new institution should guarantee adequate academic and support staff from the beginning. Otherwise, its growth and credibility will be hampered with time. Staffing guidelines should meet NUC/NBTE/NCCE staff/student ratio based on the courses contemplated.
- (xiii) Library, laboratory and workshop facilities should be adequate and long-range plans should be put in place for sustaining them. Accreditation should depend on the adequacy of instructional tools and consumables.
- (xiv) Part of its planning or feasibility report should include proposed contacts and affiliation with existing similar institutions and plans for co-operation and interaction.

While recognising the constitutional provision for private citizens and corporate bodies to establish tertiary institutions, laws/rules should be made by the Federal Government to guide the implementation of this constitutional right and ensure that it is used constructively and under controlled conditions and criteria.

Conclusions

The Commission has considered the issues of consolidation or future expansion including the risk of institutional proliferation in higher education over the next decade and immediately beyond. It has also examined future available resources in the light of our experience and efforts to re-adjust the structure and growth pattern of the nation's economy - as well as the issue of institutional distribution and a more even manpower development in the different parts of the country. It has come to the conclusion that an indiscriminate proliferation of tertiary institutions should not be permitted.

It considers that until at least the year 2000 AD no new conventional universities should be established, unless enrolment in the present ones has reached an average of 20,000 each for the first generation universities.

10,000 for second generation and 7,000 for the third generation universities.

It is in the area of polytechnic education that manpower needs indicate a more aggressive expansion of enrolment through the establishment of new institutions, and increased enrolment in existing polytechnics. Even here the planned and orderly growth of these institutions is not only necessary but also should be strictly informed by the stringent application of the criteria set out above.

Similarly, the need for colleges of education, in order to meet the yawning gap in trained teachers for the educational system, makes this level of institutions an urgent priority. Current figures indicate a shortfall of 219,253 teachers for the primary schools (NCE holders) and 40,000 for the secondary schools (graduates). Expansion by way of new institutions should proceed *pari passu* with enrolment expansion in these institutions.

At the same time, the Commission believes that the restoration and rehabilitation already proposed for existing institutions (see Chapter 5) must precede the foundation of new colleges of education, again on the basis of the foregoing criteria.

The Open University

The Commission considered the open university as one other area of expansion which can meet the demand for manpower production i.e., through the Open University. This is particularly commended as a means of spreading access to higher education for large numbers who cannot find or cannot physically attend a university full time. In addition, its ability to maximise its outreach through modern communication technology means that the minimum physical infrastructure will be applied to produce more manpower in the situation of our current and projected resource profile.

The Commission notes that the University of Abuja was recently re-opened (1990) as a conventional university and as a centre for Distance Learning. It considers that the university should expand by concentrating on developing its open university facilities of education, arts, natural and social sciences and law. It should resist the pressure to expand enrolments in its present conventional facilities, and its funding over the next ten years should grow on this basis.

The critical issue of educational imbalance suggests that a feasible growth pattern in the next decade in the context of our resource limitations should seek to accelerate expansion in the disadvantaged states partly through differential ceilings in higher institutions located in different parts of the country and partly by ways of the Open University. In effect, this means

that manpower requirements in and from higher institutions could be produced as identified by the various states or areas through this University. Similarly, such states will need to articulate and put in place specific plans for accelerated expansion both by their own shoe-strings and by sharing facilities in existing institutions of higher education.

The eligibility criteria for establishing any new institution in the future as open universities should be the same as recommended in paragraph 8.20 above, except for the minimum land area requirement stated in (ix on p. 160).

A Post-graduate University

The Commission examined the concept of the Post-graduate University as an institution distinct from post-graduate facilities in conventional universities. Proponents of this concept argued that:

- (i) As more conventional and specialised universities emerge, already numbering 31, and with possibilities of more in the foreseeable future, it is right and proper to designate or develop an institution where post-graduate research and learning would be undertaken as a centre of excellence, targeting on problems of special relevance to national development.
- (ii) Such a centre would save costs, if and when, the country decides to embark on such programmes as: Energy and Space Studies, Information and Cultural Studies, Operations Research and Management Studies, Environmental Studies, Strategic Studies.
- (iii) The establishment of such an institution would make for better co-ordination of training and research within and between the various institutions and encourage the free flow of human and material resources across disciplines.
- (iv) The Post-graduate University would be an effective way of stemming the present brain-drain, as scholars can more readily find fulfillment in the pursuit of their scholarly activities.

Opposing views expressed in the Commission based their reservations on the following premises:

- (i) **Duplication of Effort:** There are already a plethora of universities and by implication, of post-graduate schools in the country. Starting a post-graduate institution might thus jeopardise the viability of existing postgraduate activities in conventional universities and further denude their academic staff complement.
- (ii) **Finance constraints:** By the same token, resources for first degree programmes are already thin on the ground. Imposition of further

burden on an expensive institution like a post-graduate university would mean even less resources for the existing universities.

- (iii) It would be difficult to imagine the role of under-graduates (however small the ratio) in such an institution, and if it were entirely post-graduate, it might as well be called a National Institute and not a University. Naming it a university would have the implications of a substantial overhead and administrative bureaucracy.
- (iv) It is probably better to allow such institutions to emerge from an existing conventional university marked out for excellence in research (like the California Technology in the U.S.A) rather than create one “de novo”.

The Commission carefully weighed the pros and cons of these arguments and concluded that while the principle of a post-graduate university was laudable and sound, it would be difficult to justify it at this phase of the development of higher education in Nigeria. It was, therefore, to be regarded for now as a concept for the country’s future agenda in tertiary education. Its development, foreseeable beyond the confines of the present decade.

* * * *

The Federal Government then issued a White Paper on the Long Commission’s Report in April 1992 entitled: “Views and Comments of the Federal Government on the Report of the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria.”

As usual the Federal Government accepted many of the recommendations, noted some and rejected others.

Following the release of the White Paper on the Report, I set up the National Implementation Committee on the Report on Review of Higher Education in Nigeria headed by Professor O. O. Akinkugbe of University of Ibadan and a member of the Long Commission. Other members of the Committee were: Dr. (Mrs.) A. S. Afolabi, Professor C. O. Njoku, Alhaji B. Kotun, Dr. P. T. Mirchaulum, Professor A. Akindoyeni, Dr. (Mrs.) H. Ali, Chief M. S. N. Mbajiorgu and Alhaji T. A. Abdulkadir (who also served as Secretary). Later Dr. N. A. Yakubu joined the Committee in replacement of Dr. A. T. Abdullahi and Dr. G. C. Eximora as a new member.

At its inaugural meeting in June, 1992 I charged the Committee with the following functions:

- (a) Taking full charge of the implementation of the accepted recommendations of the Commission on Review of Higher Education in Nigeria;
- (b) Co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the accepted recommendations;
- (c) Advising the Federal and State Governments on all financial, material

- and other implications of the recommendations;
- (d) Advising the Federal Government on the legal framework for establishing private higher educational institutions;
 - (e) Assisting the Federal Government in reviewing various higher educational laws, including laws and regulations of the federal universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and the co-ordinating agencies;
 - (g) Advising on any other matters that may facilitate the implementation of the accepted recommendations of the Longe Commission.

Perhaps by far the greatest achievement of the Committee was in the early identification of the areas needing legislation (either *de novo* or amendment of existing ones) so as to facilitate the actualization of the accepted recommendations. Areas identified initially included legislation to facilitate:

- (i) collection, sharing and disbursement of the education tax;
- (ii) establishing institutions of higher learning;
- (iii) introducing uniform administrative structures in all the tertiary institutions; and
- (iv) adjusting the composition of the various supervisory agencies as well as JAMB.

While action was in progress, the academic staff of Nigerian Universities embarked on an indefinite industrial action. This made the government to open negotiations with their representatives, at the end of which certain agreements were reached which had far-reaching implications on the pace and progress of the Committee's work in the area of legislation. Draft legislation had to be recalled so as to reflect the provisions of the new agreement.

By mid-November, 1992, the following decrees were ready and were forwarded to me for further action:

- (i) Education Tax Decree 1992;
- (ii) Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) (Amendment) Decree 1992;
- (iii) Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree 1992;
- (iv) Federal Polytechnics (Amendment) Decree 1992;
- (v) Federal Colleges of Education (Amendment) Decree 1992;
- (vi) National Universities Commission (Amendment) Decree 1992;
- (vii) National Board for Technical Education (Amendment) Decree 1992;
- (viii) National Commission for Colleges of Education (Amendment) Decree 1992; and

(ix) Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (Amendment) Decree 1993

The decrees on all the nine items were completed and published before I left office in January 1993.

All the decrees were promulgated, but the Education Tax is yet to be fully implemented. As at 1997, over six billion naira (₦6 billion) had been collected from companies between 1993 and 1997, but the Federal Government had not been able to set up a Board of Trustees for its distribution. This certainly is a sad reflection on the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Education, particularly at the time all of our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions are in such disarray. It is one thing to say that funds are not available, but it is the height of mismanagement and ministerial irresponsibility for an agent of government to leave ₦6 billion undisbursed to our distressed educational institutions.

II. Change of School Year

One of the most controversial issues during my tenure of office was the change of school year from January–December, to September–June.

When the change of school year was mooted in 1987 I appealed to Professor Jibril Aminu, the then Minister of Education not to go through with the plan. The major reasons for the proposed change were that the secondary school pupils would be free to help their parents on the farm and the secondary school leavers would have a one-year break before seeking admission into the university and other higher education institutions in the country. The one-year break would make them more mature as quite a sizeable number of the present-day school leavers are between 16 and 17 years of age.

The two reasons advanced can easily be faulted. First, on the issue of pupils helping their parents on the farm (which is a laudable idea), what happens to other pupils whose parents are civil servants, traders, soldiers, artisans, or clerks in commercial houses? Second, on the issue of a one-year break before seeking admission into the University, pupils who enter the tertiary level at the age of 16 and 17 are fewer than those who enter between 18 and 20 years of age. Indeed, many students repeat their JAMB examination two or three times before gaining admission, due largely to the elimination system called JAMB.

All these points were mentioned to the then Minister who was not convinced and so the change of school year was introduced in 1987.

In 1962 the Joint Consultation Committee (JCC), the then highest consultative machinery in education, comprising officials of Federal and State Ministries of Education and representatives of University Faculties

Education and NUT, presented a proposal to change the school year to September-June. The debate on the change of school year lasted for nearly a decade – 1962 to 1971. I participated fully in that debate as dean of the faculty and director, institute of education, both at Nsukka and Ife.

Jibril Aminu's proposal was effected within a few months. It came to light later that the decision to change the school year came from "above" and that the JCC and NCE just rubber-stamped it, that is, they had no option.

I accepted the decision as there was nothing I could do about it. I even rationalized that although the idea of children helping their parents was not working in the south, it probably worked in the north; that is to say, half of the country was benefiting by it.

When I became Minister of Education in January 1990, I enquired from the Federal Ministry of Education officials as to how well the new school year was working, but to my astonishment I was told that it was not working at all. When I countered that it must be working up north, so we could claim fifty percent success, I was told that it was not true. Some officials and some members of the public, Tai Solarin included, also objected vehemently to the change and to the one year delay of admission to tertiary institutions experienced by school leavers.

Thus, here was a scheme that was not working anywhere in the federation and which had disrupted the university admission system and eliminated summer remedial education and in-service training for students and teachers. In addition, it did not make much sense for any country to have two different school calendars - one for primary and secondary (January to December) and another for the tertiary (September to June). It would have made more sense for the two systems to go one way or the other.

It was for all these reasons that I decided to take steps to re-introduce the old school calendar before greater damage was done. Deciding to take steps to revert to the old school calendar was one thing; to achieve this objective was another. I usually held informal discussions with the President before I raised a memo to him or to the Council of Ministers. Whatever may be Babangida's weakness, and he had many, he was an excellent listener, a great absorber of details and a very perceptive individual. He was prepared to listen to anything, even if it was unpleasant.

Before I consulted the President on this issue, I assumed that he felt very strongly about the topic since he and the cabinet must have approved the earlier change. With this thought at the back of my mind, I prepared myself for the President's veto, but I wanted to make sure that I mustered all the

necessary arguments in favour of the old school calendar. I hardly mentioned the topic of my presentation when the President cut in and said: "I have a strong view on the issue of change of school calendar. You may wish to discuss it at the next meeting of the National Council on Education (NCE)". I was so elated that I forgot to discuss other matters I had on my pad. I discussed the change of school year with the President early in February 1990, some five weeks after I assumed office. The 37th National Council on Education was to be held in Kano from March 22nd to 23rd 1990. This immediately caused a Federal Ministry of Education position paper to be prepared for presentation at that council meeting.

Unknown to me and my top officials and advisers, two members of the council prepared a joint memorandum on the same subject. When I discovered this at the beginning of the meeting, I withdrew the Federal Ministry of Education memo and listed the two members' memo.

The two members of the National Council on Education that presented the memo were Abuja Federal Territory and Cross Rivers State. They tabled a motion before the Technical Committee of the NCE praying council to adopt a motion for the harmonization of the present school year with that of the tertiary and higher institutions in the country.

The Technical Committee of the NCE comprises the Director-General, Federal Ministry of Education, all director-generals of State Ministries of Education, including the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja.

Traditionally, the Technical Committee vets the proposed agenda for the NCE and recommends proposed action for the consideration and approval of the NCE. After a detailed and exhaustive consideration of the merits and demerits of the proposed change, the Technical Committee voted overwhelmingly for the proposed change as follows:

For17

Against2

Undecided3

After due deliberation, the National Committee on Education unanimously, and by acclamation, passed the proposed change for the kind consideration and approval of Mr. President.

Within one hour of this resolution some of my senior officials loyal to my predecessor telephoned Lagos and I received calls from Lagos hinting that the news was making the rounds in Lagos that I had started to reverse my predecessor's policy.

There were cartoons and editorials galore for and against the change. But I never met one single parent who was against the change to the

September to June calendar year. Indeed all parents and guardians, except some partisan officials, were very happy about the news.

Arguments for/against the Proposed Change

It had been argued that the return to January–December school year would enable the nation to adapt its education system to the climatic, agricultural and econological conditions of the country, and that school pupils and students would be able to help on the farms.

Experience thus far had not supported this yearning. Sample survey carried out in the northern, eastern and western areas of Nigeria indicated that neither the farming cycle and seasons nor the climatic and weather conditions necessarily constitute impediments to the school year. When farmers are not preparing new or old grounds for farming, they are sowing; or they are tending and weeding as well as nursing the crops; or they are engaged in selling the crops. In any case, school children, where properly motivated, can be mobilized to help as farm hands in and out of the school year and during any of the holidays.

When the school year was harmonized with that of the tertiary and higher institutions of learning: secondary school students took advantage of vacation courses in the higher institutions of learning to improve their education.

Primary and secondary school teachers also benefited from such vocation courses to improve on their professional competencies and academic qualifications for the betterment of the quality of education in the schools. Faculties/Institutes/Colleges of Education offering part-time diploma and degree courses for teachers and others who could not afford to leave their jobs used the vacation courses to assist the education system to help teachers and headmasters of schools:

- to *develop* new curricula packages;
- to *procure* new teaching materials;
- to *enhance* more effective classroom instructional supervision;
- to *ensure* better continuous assessment of student progress;
- to *assist* teachers and headmasters in maintaining effective school and class discipline; and
- to *enable* school officials to maintain effective financial management and accountability.

With the change-over in 1987, neither the students nor their teachers and school officials had been able to benefit maximally from such vacation courses. Worse still, many teachers skipped classes to attend regular university courses. In one state, teachers skipped Fridays to attend courses and children were left to roam the streets.

The above situations have created problems of teacher absenteeism in most schools round the year as these teachers rush to attend courses in the tertiary institutions in order to fulfil the re-training conditions imposed on them by the demands of the new policy on education - all the 230,000 teachers must be certificated by 1992.

Parents and guardians had cause to complain, with respect to the nine month waiting period before further children could be admitted to the tertiary institutions and the extra financial burden the above new developments imposed on them. The social problems which the waiting period creates among these youths include problems of:

1. drug abuse
2. sexual promiscuity resulting in unwanted pregnancies
3. incidence of armed robbery
4. joblessness, restlessness and frustration.

It had been widely claimed by WAEC and JAMB personnel that the new system, since 1987, provided them ample time to process the School Leaving Certificate and the Joint Matriculation Examination (JME) results, prior to admission to higher institutions of learning. However, reasons for the usual failure to produce these results, particularly the WASC results, are due largely to those of human, financial, mechanical and organizational nature. These could be overcome with a little bit of imagination and creativity irrespective of whichever school calendar is adopted. After all, examinations are made for man and not man for examinations.

Suggestions regarding keeping the current school year relate to:

- constituting the youngsters into another army of under eighteen or nineteen National Corpers, i.e., launching youth corps for secondary school leavers;
- mounting public enlightenment programmes to educate these primary/secondary school leavers and the public on the proper utilization of the 9-month waiting period;
- providing such student enrichment programmes such as music, drama, excursions, etc., that will keep them off the streets;
- continuing education and mass literacy campaigns for these youths in their local areas;
- school-to-land activities;
- skills acquisition such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, etc.,
- exposure to local cultural activities; and
- introduction to competitive games and sports.

Good as the above creative suggestions appear, they are not only cost-

intensive to carry out but they also demand an equally grand army of adults to execute and supervise, were the huge funds to be made available.

It was in consideration of the totality of the above submissions, among other compelling reasons, that the National Council on Education at its 37th meeting resolved to pray Mr. President, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, to graciously consider and approve the harmonization of the school calendar with that of the tertiary/higher institutions of learning with effect from September 1990.

Although the NCE unanimously recommended the change at its March 1990 meeting, the final approval by government was not forthcoming till March 1991. The next six months (March – September) witnessed intensive activities in the ministry; these included publicity, orientation for teachers, head teachers, principals and ministry officials, re-organisation of time tables, new holiday breaks, curriculum re-organisation, change of WAEC and JAMB examination dates, etc. It meant compressing nine months of school year into seven months, that is to say, January – July 1991 as one school year and September 1991 to July 1992 as the second school year. It also meant two admissions exercises in the same year, January and September 1991.

Contrary to expectation, the transition was smooth and trouble free. Both WAEC and JAMB officials performed creditably.

The change of school year generated so much debate that the discussion on this issue will not be complete without presenting some public views as represented by some editorial comments from some Nigerian newspapers as well as the Presidential Advisory Committee headed by the late Prof. Ojetunji Aboyade.

Minutes of the Honourable Minister of Education's Meeting with
Members of the Presidential Advisory Committee held on Monday, 7th
May, 1990 on the issue of Change in School Year

1. *Introductory Remarks by the Chairman*

The Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee, on behalf of other members of the committee, congratulated the Honourable Minister of Education on his appointment, and also for surviving the recent abortive coup attempt. The Chairman stated that members of his committee had the privilege of pursuing the Honourable Minister of Education's letter addressed to the Secretary to the Federal Military Government requesting a change of the present January - December School Year Calendar.

The Chairman added that as background information, the committee would

like the Honourable Minister of Education to note that the current school calendar emanated from the deliberations of the committee. He maintained that the former Honourable Minister of Education did not initiate the policy.

2. *Honourable Minister's (Education) Comments*

The Honourable Minister of Education thanked members of the committee for giving him audience.

The Honourable Minister of Education drew the attention of the committee to a statement made in a newspaper credited to the Chairman of the Committee to the extent that he, (Chairman) was in favour of the current school calendar. The Honourable Minister of Education was surprised that the Chairman could make such a statement on an issue that was already before his committee. The Honourable Minister of Education further stated that he had additional information on the matter. He maintained that the school year had become a national issue. The Honourable Minister of Education informed members of the Committee that it was at the 37th National Council on Education (NCE) meeting that Akwa-Ibom and the Federal Territory, Abuja presented a memorandum on the issue. The matter was subsequently tabled at the National Council on Education meeting held in March 1990 at Kano. At the National Council on Education meeting, 17 states (out of 22) were in support of changing the current school year (January to December) to its *status quo ante*, that is September to July. Two states objected to the change and 3 were undecided. Consequently, the support for a change to the old system of the school year was overwhelming.

The Honourable Minister highlighted the problems created by the operation of the present system as earlier stated above. They included the following:

- (i) The unwelcome period of 9 to 10 months during which candidates have to wait after completing Senior Secondary Education and before being admitted to tertiary institutions;
- (ii) The disruption of studies in schools by teachers who abandon classes on Thursdays and Fridays every week to enable them undertake various courses;
- (iii) The problem of about 231,000 uncertificated teachers who could no longer undertake courses during the long vacation because universities would be in session when the teachers were on holiday; this is as a result of the fact that 1992 had been set out as the deadline for uncertificated teachers;
- (iv) The danger of youths engaging in drug business during the 9 to 10 months period of waiting before entering into tertiary institutions;
- (v) The fact that the beginning of the school year in January after Christmas

and New Year used to create financial difficulties for parents.

The Honourable Minister of Education further stated that the objective of the current school year in terms of farming by adolescents has not been achieved because most of them were not interested in farming either in the north or the south.

3. *Comments of Members of the Presidential Advisory Committee*

After a careful deliberation on the facts presented by the Honourable Minister of Education, members of the committee expressed divergent views on the matter. They felt that there was a need to have a stable school year. In view of the issues raised by the Honourable Minister of Education, six of the members were in favour of a change of the current school year while two supported the idea but wanted additional work to be done before arriving at a logical conclusion. The committee raised the issue of the number of candidates aspiring for higher education in comparison with the larger number who have to wait indefinitely, maintaining that the number was insignificant.

The committee also suggested that the present school year could be adjusted in order to afford the uncertificated teachers the opportunity to undertake courses during the long vacation. It was also suggested that a different Youth Corps Scheme could be arranged to cover the 9 months after senior secondary education but the cost of this scheme was considered prohibitive.

On the issue of delay in releasing results by WAEC, the Honourable Minister of Education stated that a few years ago, he advocated for the decentralisation of WAEC, but it was opposed. He assured members of the committee that machinery would be set in motion to effect a change in the system.

The Honourable Minister also emphasised the need for harmonisation of the school year for both pre-tertiary and tertiary institutions. He reiterated his earlier statement that a majority of the members of the committee were in support of change in the school year. Consequently, members of the committee were enjoined to use their good offices to effect the required change.

Members of the committee emphasised that much as they were not opposed to a harmonisation of the school year with regard to pre-tertiary institutions, the Ministry of Education should conduct research on the determining factors governing the school year in Nigeria, vis-a-vis those of other countries, as well as ascertaining the number of students likely to be affected.

The Committee also expressed the feeling that a different Youth Corps programme could be organised for secondary school leavers. The Honourable Minister informed them that the cost of running such a programme would be colossal.

After careful consideration of the issues raised at the meeting, the following decisions were made;

- (a) that there is need for a change in the school year, and that the change need not be immediate but could be effected in 1991;
- (b) that further research should be carried out on the proposed harmonisation of the school year;
- (c) that the modalities for the change should be worked out by the Federal Ministry of Education with input from the committee;
- (d) that as a temporary measure, the holidays could be adjusted to enable teachers to attend various courses during the holiday;
- (e) that efforts should be made to harmonise the academic calendar of the universities with that of pre-tertiary schools.

Members of the committee expressed the view that it would be necessary for them to meet again with the Honourable Minister of Education before budget exercise to discuss issues of mutual interest such as religious education, the OIC, NANS, Nomadic Education, the Gifted Children and Women Education.”

The President later approved the change of school year.

The *Daily Times* editorial, page 8 of Saturday March 2, 1991 read:

The change in school calendar

For the third time in 18 years, our education policy formulators have found it 'necessary' to change the school calendar for primary – secondary schools throughout the country. Giving reasons for the change this time around, the Minister of Education, Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa argued that there is a need to have a uniform calendar for all levels of educational institutions in the country - primary through tertiary.

He also noted that the previous system did not make adequate provision for secondary school teachers to improve on their knowledge through sandwich courses organised by the universities. Another argument in favour of the change is that the nine-month break between the completion of senior secondary school and enrolment into a tertiary institutions is unnecessarily long for students.

We note that the new school calendar with all the advantages it is claimed to have over the old one, is not after all a novel idea in the Nigerian education

system. For thirteen years from 1973 until 1986, the calendar was the same for all levels of educational institutions – primary through tertiary – beginning in August for primary and secondary schools and late September/early October for tertiary institutions and ending in May/June for the latter and June/July for the former. However, in January 1986, the government announced its decision to change the school year to make the long holidays coincide with the “farming” season.

The argument then was that there was a need for the school children to be fully engaged in their parents' farms during the season. In retrospect, that never happened. The school children never picked the hoes and cutlasses. Their education – primary and secondary schools – did not teach them that. Instead, they moved into the cities and added to the social problems of our urban congestion.

We do not believe that shortening the period of 'idleness' through changing the school calendar is the solution to the crisis facing our educational system.

The biggest challenge our education administrators should address is 'implementing the “National Policy for Education” that will outlive government. There is, at present, little indication that this is the case. The inconsistency in public pronouncements of key education administrators for the country in the last 15 years points to some degree of confusion. To cite just a few examples: In the 1970s when the UPE programme was introduced, government set 1976 as the year for Free Universal Primary Education and 1979 as the target for compulsory enrolment of all primary school-aged children into schools. By November 1989, government was talking about a 1992 target for free and compulsory education for all Nigerian children. And only last year, government once again shifted its target to the year 2000.

Our policy makers need to understand the difference between making policy statements and just expressing their hopes. Policy statements need to be backed by a very thorough research and serious consultations that will make the policy infallible no matter who is in power. We need some minimum continuity and stability in policy to make any progress in life. We pray with Professor Fafunwa that "this is the last time we shall be changing the school calendar.”

The Daily Sketch editorial, page 2, Wednesday March 6, 1991

The School Calendar

The announcement of a reversion of the school calendar to the old system, spanning September to June, was generally received last week with cheers by parents, teachers and all people concerned with educational planning in

the country. This reaction is not unexpected having regard to the problems which the January to December school year has brought to the students and many of the school programmes meant to enhance the standard and quality of education in the nation's institutions.

While welcoming the change, we wish to state that the time has come for this country to learn to stand by time tested policies which make for progress and meaningful continuity without the usual resort to policy changes dictated by the whims and caprices of people who happen to be at the helm of public affairs.

For when such capricious changes are made, it is the nation that suffers for it. The case of the school year is a good illustration of this unfortunate phenomenon which continues to have an adverse effect on the nation's forward march to progress.

We recall that the thrust of the argument that compelled the change of the school calendar to January – December was the attempt to synchronise school holidays with farming periods in many parts of the country, and to allow students to help their parents on the farm while on holidays. However, experience has shown that the farming periods are not the same all over the country. Thus the purpose for the change has not been realised and moreover, the losses the change has brought in its wake have far outweighed whatever gain the initiators hoped to bring about.

This new school calendar has a lot to recommend it. First, it will allow for a streamlining of secondary school programme with the programmes of higher institutions in the country. A challenge to educational planners, this streamlining would make for better planning to enhance the quality and standard of education in the nation's schools.

Besides this, the change would instruct the authorities of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) to release results to their examinations on time.

In fact, the advantages to the teachers are immense. Those of them on in-service training programmes would now have time to face their studies without undue disruption of the teaching schedules. Moreover, parents' monitoring role over their children and wards would be easily enhanced as there would be effective collaboration between the home and the school in the area of moral training. This would lighten the burden of the teachers and ensure better social adjustment for the students.

For those students aspiring to greater educational heights, the change would remove the agonising waiting time for them before going into the universities, polytechnics or colleges of education.

Whatever problems may attend the transition period, we commend the

change to all well-meaning people in the country and we hope that policy changes in the future would occur after a careful consideration of the welfare of the people for whom the changes are meant and the progress of the nation at large.”

Vanguard editorial, Tuesday, March 5, 1991, page 6, read:

Back to the old calendar

“The school calendar is to finally revert to the old system. The old calendar had been changed by ex-Minister of Education, Professor Jibril Aminu. He had sought to synchronise the school calendar with the country’s farming regime, and in that way, make pupils useful during the holidays.

The change met with a barrage of criticisms. Some argued the obvious difference in the farming regimes of Southern and Northern Nigeria. Others maintained that no useful skills or gains could be reaped from such an uncoordinated plan.

But more fundamental, perhaps, was the inordinately long nine-month wait that pupils had to endure before enrolling in the higher institutions. This was besides the disruption of sandwich programmes due to the shorter holidays that came with it.

Now, by a vote of 17 states to 4, a reversion to the old calendar is to be effected.

It should be a measure of how unpopular the change was that 17 states voted against it. And the aim of realigning the school calendar to higher institutions must be welcomed. It would remove the long wait before enrolment into higher institutions and solve the problems encountered by sandwich students.

We do not, however, understand the reason for wishing to shift Joint Matriculation Examinations to September. The higher institutions, as we understand, presently begin their academic year in September. Due to JAMB’s delays in releasing results, they have had to be shifting resumption of the academic year to October, sometimes November.

If one reason for reverting to the old calendar is as stated above, then the JME should begin much earlier. Or is the higher institutions’ calendar to be changed too?

Whatever the case, we hope, just as the Minister of Education hopes, that this would be the last time the school calendar will be changed. Or if not, then only for fundamental or unavoidable reasons.”

Nigerian Tribune editorial, Friday, March 8, 1991, page 9 read:

New School Calendar

“The controversial January – December calendar adopted in 1987 for the nation's primary and secondary schools has been jettisoned for the previous September – June calendar within less than four years of its operation. Speaking on the change, the Minister of Education, Professor Aliu Fafunwa, said the reversal was to, among others, evolve a uniform calendar for all tiers of education in the country; enable teachers participate in sandwich courses organised by the universities towards improving their professional skills; and reduce the nine-month waiting time between the completion of secondary education and enrolment in the universities.

The decision vindicates our stand on the issue. In our comment of 10 September 1986, titled ‘Aminu's Legacy’, we described the decision to change the calendar as “a product of beclouded thinking and confusion.” In another instance, 17 out of 22 members of the National Council for Education (NCE) also called for the adoption of the September – June calendar at their meeting last year. The call proved that the change never enjoyed the blessing of the Council.

The January – December calendar was the brain child of the then Minister of Education, Professor Jibril Aminu. Defending the proposal then, Professor Aminu claimed that it would provide an opportunity for pupils to help their parents in farming and give WAEC enough time to mark examination scripts and process final results.

The duration of the calendar, however, did not produce any positive impact on food and agricultural production. Furthermore, the efficiency of WAEC never recorded any significant improvement. On the contrary, children roamed the streets in the urban centres, getting involved in nefarious and other anti-social activities. Parents will have to buy books twice this year for their wards. Similarly, school children have to be rushed from one class to the next. This instability could have been avoided, if education planners had acted with circumspection.

We commend the Minister of Education for allowing reason to prevail in his latest action. It is hoped that the calendar has come to stay. In fact, there are far too many other pressing problems affecting education in the country. It is our belief that the solution to such problems should be the pre-occupation of education officials. Tinkering with the school calendar should not be their preoccupation.”

As I said when the change of school year was approved, I pray that this will be the last of such exercises.

References

1. Investment in Education: The report of the Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria, (The Ashby Report), 1960.
2. Ibid., p.3.
3. Idem.
4. Prof. Fred Harrison conducted a manpower survey on Nigeria for Ashby Commission
5. Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria: Nigerian Higher Education: 2,000AD and Beyond.
6. There are too many leaders in Nigeria and elsewhere who are afraid to listen except to their own flattery. General Olusegun Obasanjo is another leader who shared the same attribute with Babangida. I was not at all surprised when Wole Soyinka and Tai Solarin said the same thing about Babangida.

Chapter 10

The Proposed 9-Year Compulsory Free Education Programme that Failed and Mathematics Incentive

The objective of the Compulsory Free Education Programme was that every child who registered in primary one class for the school year 1992/1993 beginning in September 1992 would remain in school for nine years at no cost to parents in respect of tuition.

The National Council on Education at its 36th meeting in Akure, Ondo State in September, 1989 set up a Planning Committee to examine the ways and means of implementing the programme and advise on the following:

- (i) additional enrolment expected in the primary school sector;
- (ii) the total additional enrolment in Junior Secondary School having regard to transition rates in various parts of the country;
- (iii) additional number of classes, teachers, and other facilities that would be required to fully implement the injunction;
- (iv) the realistic financial resources that need to be provided and by whom, in order to make these additional facilities available;
- (v) how the burden of the provision of additional resources would be shared among various levels of government and society;
- (vi) the adjustment that would need to be made to the structure and content of the 6-3-3-4 programme to take into account the new arrangement;
- (vii) the financial, administrative and political impact of the new arrangement on the existing programme of implementing our educational policies as they were;
- (viii) possibility of meeting the target date set by government for achieving the objectives;

- (ix) any other reasonable and related recommendations which would help the country to achieve this noble injunction that had been inserted into our 1989 constitution.

The report of the special planning committee set up to work on its implementation made the following major recommendations:

- (i) that the programme be centrally controlled, organised and funded, with each tier of government complementing it;
- (ii) that all concerned must mobilise and put in the necessary structures beginning from June, 1990, as the programme would require 49,919 additional classrooms and 400,000 additional Grade II teachers at the primary school level between now and 1992;
- (iii) that a realistic estimate of the cost of a 9-year Education Programme be put at about ₦15 billion (fifteen billion naira) for primary education and about ₦500 million (five hundred million naira) for the Junior Secondary Education every year;
- (iv) that the proposed programme be taken in phases in such a way that new entrants into Primary I and Junior Secondary I in 1992 will constitute the initial beneficiaries.

The National Council on Education adopted the planning committee's report but decided to appoint a Technical Committee which should work out the modalities for implementing the Nine-Year Education programme. The report of the Technical Committee focused on the cost and challenges of the proposed scheme. It was calculated that the sum of ₦15 billion would be required as the capital and recurrent cost of the Nine-Year compulsory education programme in its first year.

The Technical Committee considered alternative cost-cutting strategies of implementing the scheme and suggested the following:

- (i) a gradual expansion of existing secondary school facilities in readiness for the period when transition from the primary school will become total;
- (ii) a shift system with lessons going on till evening;
- (iii) a one-on-one teaching strategy with every literate member of the community teaching a group of illiterates to enable them to acquire basic literacy skills and
- (iv) concentration of high cost facilities in a central location and staffing it with competent teachers (Magnet Learning Centre).

During deliberation on the report of the Technical Committee it was considered desirable that in view of the national and strategic significance of the subject, another sub-committee of the National Council on Education

should examine the proposal further. That Sub-Committee met and after thorough examination of all the possible ramifications of The Proposed Nine-Year Compulsory Education Programme they recommended:

- (i) that at the primary school level a ten-year period would be feasible to have all children in school starting from 1991 while 100% transition at JSS level should be given a twenty-year period.
- (ii) that each state should progress towards the transition target at its own pace.
- (iii) that states should generate more revenue to ease the burden of financing the programme.

The recommendations of the three different committees of the National Council on Education which examined The Proposed Nine-Year Compulsory Education Programme could be summarised as follows:

- (i) The proposal for a nine-year compulsory education programme would appear to have general support, provided that all tiers of government are involved;
- (ii) The principle of gradualism, one that allows new entrants into Primary I to benefit in the first year of the programme is recommended;
- (iii) Each state should be assisted to increase its enrolment capacities, using multiple approaches such as the shift system, establishment of new schools and Magnet Learning Centres, introduction of neighbourhood school system etc.;
- (iv) The costs of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Programme should be borne jointly by the federal, state and local government and monitored effectively by Inspectorate Services;
- (v) If the 1992 date for commencement of the programme stands, the Federal Government should immediately promulgate the necessary legislation and set in motion the machinery for its implementation.

The National Council on Education accepted all the above recommendations and agreed that they be submitted to Government for consideration. The Council also agreed that the estimated cost of the programme should be reflected in the next Rolling Plan.

The Cabinet was accordingly invited to note:

- (i) that the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Programme which was a constitutional injunction was expected to start in 1992;
- (ii) that the National Council on Education had set up Committees which examined the cost and strategies for implementing the scheme;
- (iii) that the estimated cost of the programme was put at ₦15 billion in its first year; and

- (iv) to approve the recommendations for implementing the programme in paragraph 6 (i-v) above;
- (v) to direct the Ministry of Budget and National Planning to include the estimated cost of the programme in the 1992 - 94 National Rolling Plan;
- (vi) to direct the Federal Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to release ₦15 billion for implementing the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Programme in its first year;
- (vii) to approve that the Federal Ministry of Education should monitor the implementation of the Nine Year Compulsory Education Programme.

Unfortunately, all attempts to persuade the Government to launch the programme failed. Realising that funds were not forthcoming, I tried to introduce the programme by the back door. My plan was to allow the primary one children who entered in 1992/93 to become the "lead in" or the pioneer pupils for the programme. We would have enrolled them normally without fanfare and allow normal increase in infrastructure to take place; that is, with a normal increase and normal budget for 1992/93. When enrolment would have been completed that year, say by December or January, we would announce that the pupils who were enrolled in the 1992/93 school year would be the first set to enjoy the Nine-Year Compulsory Free Education. The pupils who enrolled after the first group in 1993/94 would be the second group to benefit.

This type of arrangement would allow us four or five years of grace to plan for the big expansion that would take place six years later. Unfortunately, I did not succeed in putting this idea through. Although, the Nine-Year Education scheme was entrenched in the 1989 draft constitution and the Federal Ministry of Education was empowered to work out the modalities, which it did. But the Government aborted the project at the last moment.

I am sure that with more committed leadership in the future, this shall also come to pass.

Science and Mathematics Incentive Programmes

It has been a life long ambition of mine to have access to a sizeable amount of funds that could enable me to give massive support to science and technology education in Nigeria; for the simple reason that Nigeria may not survive the 21st century without scientific and technological savvy.

In the preface of my first book; *New Perspectives in African Education* published in 1967, I said:

This book is addressed to African educators, students, administrators and others interested in African education.

Some may find it stimulating and refreshing while others may consider it rash and unworthy. Either position is acceptable to the author as long as the book stimulates re-thinking and sensitise the reader to the need for a re-appraisal of the present systems of education in Africa.

It is the author's belief that if Africa is to meet the challenges of the late twentieth century and prepare for the twenty-first, it will have to take giant steps, and cover in twenty years the process that took Europe centuries to achieve. The answer does not lie in increased budgets and numbers of personnel alone, but in adopting a radical or unconventional approach to the question of finding solutions to Africa's problems. To proceed otherwise is to condemn Africa to the perpetual role of a bystander in a world that is moving at a supersonic speed. Africa's greatest potentials are its human and natural resources, and unless these are fully developed and harnessed for her services, Africa will continue for a long time to be a continent in travail.

In February 1963, two years after I joined the University of Nigeria, I was nominated to attend the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the benefit of Less Developed Areas in Geneva, Switzerland. My selection was based on a world-wide call for papers and mine was one of the papers selected by the organisers of the conference. More than 2,000 papers were submitted and participants numbered 1,665, with 96 governments from both developed and less developed countries represented at the two-week scientific conference.

It was at this conference that I started my campaign for science in African primary schools. In the report on the proceedings of the UN conference produced in Book VI entitled, *Education and Training*, pages 117 and 118, I was quoted as follows:

"The first point of attack," insisted Dr. A. B. Fafunwa of Nigeria, "should be at the elementary level. We should introduce science right from the first year at school; but the second point of attack must be on behalf of the 18 to 30 year-old's. My proposal," continued the speaker, "is that the less developed countries of the world should institute compulsory national service. Compulsory national service is nothing new in the world. It is operating in developed countries, but with the precise purpose of training for

defence or for peace as they call it, which includes military tactics. The kind of compulsory national service that I propose should be the type that would prepare illiterates to be literate, to be civic-minded, to be community-minded, to have loyalty to their country, and to be able to learn some skills.

"The last level", Dr. Fafunwa said, "should also be on the adult education level, for people between 30 and 50 years old. We should institute compulsory adult literacy classes in the evening where, again, science will be taught. Here the literate adult will teach the non-literate adult and, if we are able to launch this programme with the help of UNESCO and other international agencies, we might begin to break the science barrier."

The report continued,

One tacit question remained however, and it was, in fact, one of the chief reasons for calling the Conference. It may be phrased thus: 'Can an under-developed country really acquire the scientific attitude?' It was Dr. A. Babs Fafunwa, of the University of Nigeria, who gave a suitable answer. "Some writers," he said, "erroneously maintained that the average African was incapable of a scientific attitude or that it would take him countless generations to acquire the logical reasoning involved in that attitude. This spurious argument rested on the belief that the idea of the wheel, the simplest and oldest scientific device, was unknown to him. Science and technology, in particular, are products of challenge and response, unlike artistic instinct.

Hence, "the scientific attitude can be acquired as a way of life in the same manner in which socialism, capitalism, communism and the like are injected into the society as a way of living."

It was also encouraging to me for *West Africa* to publicize my plea in that widely read magazine in March 1963 with the catchy headline:

"A Million Microscopes for Nigeria"

A summary for the paper entitled 'The Scope and Place of Science and Technology in General Education' given by one of Nigeria's leading educationists at the recent United Nations Conference on the Application of

Science and Technology for the Benefit of the Less Developed Areas.

For African schools today, the major problem is 'the race between the magician and the teacher as to who gets the child first'. Parents are likely to be on the side of the magician and the African child's home is of little help to his education in other ways. This was one of the points made by Dr. Babs Fafunwa, of the College of Education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in the course of a plea for greatly expanded scientific education in Africa, which he made to the United Nations conference on Science and Technology at Geneva.

Dr. Fafunwa said that in Nigeria, science was introduced to the secondary school curriculum as late as the 1930's while in 1959, of over 300 teacher-training colleges in Nigeria, only five offered science courses or had facilities for teaching science. Yet unless Africa could develop through education a 'scientific attitude', it would be impossible, for example, to improve methods of agriculture or to defeat the superstition which claims many lives. He recalled the case of a legally qualified magistrate who had cleared his court case, he alleged, someone in the court's premises was using 'charms' to beat justice.

Such a non-scientific attitude, Dr. Fafunwa continued, was found among only qualified as well as among illiterate people because African society is not based on the wide-spread teaching of science. The result was that Africa has stayed behind in the 18th century, although, at that time, pre-industrial Western Europe did not differ in the way that it does today from Africa and Asia.

The first problem was the curriculum of the elementary school, beyond which the great mass of children, if they went to school at all, would never go. At present the curriculum is basically literary. Yet children should be introduced to science from the very beginning, and taught about things such as cloud formation, the composition of water, the nature of sound waves, and other things which are already part of their daily experience. Even for the most elementary science teaching, however, equipment either does not exist or has to be imported. Every school child should be able to buy a simple microscope for not more than a shilling or a dissecting set for less. Science should form a third, or even a half, of elementary school work and should be compulsory in all schools.

Campaign for Literacy

First, the problem of adult illiteracy had to be faced, and this could only

be done if all literate citizens were drawn into a campaign. An illiterate man is 'a poor consumer of goods, a pawn in the hands of the unscrupulous politician and a victim of superstition and magic.' Economic development is impossible while the majority of people are illiterate. Nor should it be assumed that the problem of adult illiteracy is being conquered because of the vastly increased numbers of children in schools. The absolute size of the illiterate adult population is increasing, and even in African countries with universal primary education, millions of children of 10 or 12 years of age would never go to school, either because they were too old at the time universal education started, or because their parents are too poor to spare them from work.

Civics should also be taught, Dr. Fafunwa maintained, from the first year in schools. For example, Africans should learn that modern democracy was new in many European countries as well as in Africa; democracy should permeate all aspects of life and should be consciously taught in schools as a suitable way of life.

Discussing the question of 'national service' for young people, Dr. Fafunwa said that in African countries, such service should not concentrate on military training but should play a role in spreading literacy and in economic development. Suitable young people should do their service as evening tutors in adult literacy schools, while others, such as engineers, should assist in road construction and the like. Obviously, such national service could not begin without the most careful preparation and the compilation of statistics; but African countries would find national service of this kind a far better investment than military training.

Europe and Africa

Dr. Fafunwa had begun his paper by saying that before the beginning of the 18th century, 'there was little difference between pre-industrial Western Europe and pre-industrial Africa and Asia. Granted that with Europe's extensive and far-flung commercial empires, she was unable to accumulate substantial capital which, of course, was necessary or antecedent to the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution enabled Europe to forge ahead of the rest of the world, while Africa and Asia not only remained practically static, but also served as major areas from where raw materials were exported to Europe and to where finished European goods were largely marketed'. For almost 260 years Africa south of the Sahara 'remained virtually a dark continent while Europe and America continued to be continents of heat, light and electricity. While science and technology continued to change the face of Western civilisation, magic and superstition continued to plague

In August 1964 a second workshop was held, similar to the earlier one, but larger. At this gathering, in the light of feedback received, existing units were critically re-examined, teachers' manuals were written for several of the many new units, and old teachers' manuals were rewritten. Many new ideas were generated and detailed plans for the future were made. There were to be ten centres in different parts of Nigeria testing materials and continuing the work started at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, which remained the co-ordinating centre.

As mentioned earlier, it was at the 1964 science workshop that the participants agreed to re-write the primary science materials in the three major Nigerian languages - Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. This was the genesis of my "Education in mother tongue" campaign. The two workshops led to the formation of the Nigerian Primary Science Programme (NPSP) in 1964 with seven sub-centres located in Eastern Nigeria, four in Western Nigeria, one in Lagos, and two in Northern Nigeria making a total of fourteen centres.

The Primary Science Programme at Nsukka entered a new phase when a meeting on the problems of introducing the teaching of science in African elementary schools was held in Kano in February, 1965. This meeting was sponsored by Educational Services Incorporated and was attended by delegates from over a dozen different countries. ESI is a non-profit-making organisation located in Newton, Massachusetts and has been responsible for curriculum reform in the U.S.A. at many different levels.

At Kano, the delegates decided that more massive efforts were required to produce really worthwhile materials for elementary school science. In principle, it was agreed that centres similar to those developed by the Nsukka project should be established to co-ordinate the work of the university-based centres.

It was agreed that University of Nigeria, Nsukka, should remain the co-ordinating centre headed by the author and assisted by Mr. Mike Savage. The Nigerian initiative led to the establishment of the Science Education Programme for Africa (SEPA) with centres located in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda, Liberia, Lesotho and Botswana.

As all science innovators know, the final test for any curriculum or unit is whether it works with the children. The workshop participants were primarily interested in creating, with the assistance of the child, an environment that would enable him find out things for himself.

It was with this antecedent that I assumed the office of a Minister of Education, twenty-seven years later.

Mathematics Incentive Programme

The first opportunity to promote science and mathematics came when the then director of the one year old National Mathematical Centre paid me a visit to brief me *about the activities of the Centre*.

Under the Federal Government of Nigeria Decree No. 40 of 1989, the Centre is required to:

- (i) train and develop high level personnel in mathematical science, including mathematics, statistics, computer science and theoretical physics, for Nigerian and African institutions;
- (ii) create a resource centre to serve national and international communities as a focal point for advanced research and training in mathematical sciences and applications;
- (iii) enhance collaboration among mathematical scientists especially among young Nigerian scientists, and other advanced and experienced scientists from within and outside Nigeria;
- (iv) identify and encourage young talents in mathematical sciences;
- (v) stimulate enthusiasm for the physical sciences in young Nigerian students and scholars;
 -) prepare Nigeria for a leading role in mathematical sciences;
 - i) attract good mathematical scientists from all over the world into the service of Nigeria;
- (viii) encourage and support activities leading to the improvement of the teaching and learning of mathematical sciences at all levels;
- (ix) provide facilities for scientific conferences and the publication of the proceedings arising therefrom;
- (x) tackle national set goals in the development of mathematical sciences;
- (xi) conduct a series of specialised lectures or courses for the purpose of up-grading post-graduate students in the field of mathematical sciences to a level where they can begin to understand research papers;
- (xii) conduct a series of research lectures for advanced postgraduate as well as post-doctoral students and other participants based on a set of pre-assigned research papers, with the objective of generating questions that would be collated, discussed and used to determine new research directions for the participants;
- (xiii) conduct seminars, workshops and symposia in such areas as the Academic Board of the Centre may, from time to time, determine or plan;
- (xiv) establish and execute a visiting programme for mathematical scientists, under which mathematical scientists can visit the Centre for short

periods to work on their individual research problems using the library, computers and other facilities of the Centre.

The director gave the impression that the Centre's emphasis was on research and the promotion of mathematics education at the tertiary and post-tertiary levels. Much as I appreciated this effort, I felt that the level at which to effectively promote interest in mathematics is at the primary and secondary school levels! I pointed out that I was unhappy that no mathematics educator was on his staff. I named an eminent mathematics educator who could fill the bill. To the credit of the director, Prof. J. O. C. Ezeilo, Prof. B. O. Ukeje, a leading Nigerian mathematics educator, was appointed. Ukeje, an action oriented educator, was my close associate at Nsukka in the 60's. As a result of our exchange of ideas on how to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, we came up with the following incentive schemes:

1. Annual award of 100 undergraduate scholarships to eligible students studying mathematics education at the degree level, preferably in the faculty or college of education.
2. To be eligible for consideration, a candidate must have been offered admission by a Nigerian university or appropriate college of education to read Mathematics/Education or Mathematics at the first degree level and must have scored not less than 60% at the J.M.E. examination.

To improve the teaching and learning of mathematics at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, we came up with certain incentive schemes for three levels.

Since I have always believed that if you wish to popularise science, mathematics or any subject for that matter, you must start with the children at the primary school level, building the interest up to the secondary and later to the tertiary level. This idea led to the establishment of the following incentive schemes:

Scholarship and Incentive Scheme for the Popularisation of the Teaching and Learning of Mathematical Science at all levels

This programme was launched by the National Mathematical Centre in 1991. We agreed on a three-pronged approach and I guaranteed adequate funding.

Incentive Scheme at Primary Six And J.S.S. III Levels

1. At Primary Six and J.S.S. III levels the Centre conducts an Annual Competition Examination in Mathematics throughout the nation. The examination is for the selection of candidates for incentive packages at the two levels.

2. Each State of the Federation, including Abuja, is required to enter not more than 20 candidates from every Local Government Area of the State for each level of the examination. Approved private schools and Command Schools are allowed to enter not more than five candidates each at the two levels.
3. The scheme provides that the fifteen best pupils at Primary six level and the ten best students at JSS level will receive incentive packages which include the following:
 - (i) Secondary School Partial Scholarship worth ₦750.00 and ₦500.00 per session for JSS III and Primary Six winners, respectively. (These have been increased to ₦1,000.00 per session for both levels as from 1995/96 session);
 - (ii) A Certificate of Merit to all candidates who scored not less than 60% average mark at both levels;
 - (iii) A cash prize of ₦1,000.00 for each teacher at Primary Six level and JSS III level who produced at least two scholarship winners at each level;
 - (iv) A certificate of Teaching Efficiency to each teacher and each school that produced not less than two scholarship winners at each level.
 - (v) A book prize worth ₦500 and ₦1,000 respectively for each Primary School and each Secondary School, that produced not fewer than two scholarship winners.
4. Primary Six Scholarship Winners, will continue to receive the partial scholarship of ₦1,000.00 per session for three consecutive sessions, that is, until the end of JSS III, provided that they gain admission into an approved Secondary School and continue to be in regular attendance.
5. JSS III Winners will continue to receive the partial scholarship of ₦1,000.00 per session for three consecutive sessions, that is, to the end of SS III, provided that they continue to be in regular attendance at approved Secondary Schools.

Higher Education Level

This programme, which is one of the activities of the Centre, is directed towards the implementation of one of its objectives, namely, “to encourage and support activities leading to the improvement of the teaching and learning of Mathematical Science at all levels”, was launched during the 1991/92 academic year.

The programme commenced with a Higher Education partial scholarship/

incentive scheme during the 1991/92 academic session.

The scheme is for those wishing to read Mathematics or Mathematics Education at any Nigerian university, college of education or polytechnic leading to any of the following qualifications: B.Sc, B.Ed., or N.C.E.

To qualify for consideration for the incentive awards, a candidate must score not less than 60% in mathematics in the relevant qualifying JAMB examination (JMB or Poly JAMB) and must have been offered admission by a Nigerian university or college of education or polytechnic to read Mathematics or Mathematics Education at either the first degree or N.C.E. level. Candidates who have spent not more than one session in the relevant institutions, pursuing any of the above mentioned courses, and who scored a G.P.A. of not less than 3.5 may also apply.

Those who have been offered admission to other courses but are willing to change to Mathematics or Mathematics Education are also eligible to apply.

Candidates who have satisfied the conditions laid down above and who have been awarded the partial scholarship will receive the sum of ₦2,000.00 per session.

Candidates may continue to receive the award every session until graduation, provided they continue to maintain a G.P.A. of not less than 3.5. The partial scholarship is withdrawn once this level of academic performance is not maintained.

I gave one million naira (₦1,000,000) from the Federal Ministry of Education vote to the Centre and instructed the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission to include the scheme in its annual budget, which he did by granting an additional ₦2,750,000 to the scheme making a total of ₦3,750,000.

In appreciation of this financial support, the director of the Centre, Prof. James O. C. Ezeilo, wrote on November 26, 1991 as follows:

Dear Professor Fafunwa,

Incentive Scheme for the Improvement of Mathematics Education in Nigeria

Shortly after mailing off to you by courier my letter thanking you very warmly for the approval of a sum of ₦1 million for the year 1991 for the implementation of the incentive scheme for the improvement of mathematics education, I received another letter, being a copy of a letter to the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, signed on your behalf by Engr. Musa D. Abdullahi, informing the NUC of your approval for a sum of

₦2,725,000.00 to be included in the 1992 budget proposals of the National Mathematical Centre Abuja for the incentive scheme.

Now, if the approval of ₦1 million is described as a wonderful shot in the arm, how can one describe the approval of ₦2,725,000.00? I would say it is a super shot straight to the heart! On behalf of the Centre, I thank you very deeply for this manifestation of your deep interest in the activities of the Centre, and in particular in the promotion of activities that will improve mathematics education at all levels.

As before, I am taking all steps necessary to inform the chairman of our Council of this very joyous Christmas present to the Centre at this time.”

Prof. Ezeilo’s report of December 1, 1992 on the procedure followed by the Centre to actualise the Undergraduate Mathematics Scheme is also instructive:

Dear Prof. Fafunwa,

**B.Sc. Mathematics/B.Ed. Mathematics Undergraduate Scholarships
991/1992**

The scholarships under reference here are those deriving from your very welcome approval in November 1991 of a sum of ₦800,000.00 (eight hundred thousand naira) for 100 scholarships for B.Sc. (Maths) and B.Ed. (Maths) at ₦2,000.00 (two thousand naira) per each for four years.

The Fellowship and Awards Committee of the Academic Board of the Centre was approved by Council as the appropriate body to consider and award these scholarships on behalf of the Council.

Applications were invited from all over the country inviting eligible undergraduates and others to apply.

Altogether 4,035 applications were received from all categories of students. The Scholarships and Awards Committee, acting on the basis of all the criteria which had been agreed upon, was able to select the 100 candidates for the scholarship award, 50 for the B.Sc. (Maths) and 50 for B.Ed. (Maths). Cheques have been sent out to all concerned.

I attached herewith the list of the successful candidates and also appendices A and B giving the relevant statistics by States of origin and by Universities respectively of the successful candidates.

In conclusion, I want to say that this scholarship project is a very powerful incentive which has excited the interest of students in a way that I have never seen before. Very many parents have also written to thank the government for funding this scheme and have expressed the hope that it

will continue. On our own part, we are happy to be part of the due process in the execution of this project which has been funded through your foresight and support. With warmest regards.”

More recently (17th July 1996), my colleague and Co-ordinator of the Mathematics Incentive Scheme, Prof. B. O. Ukeje, was kind enough to send me a copy of the statistical compilation of Incentive Scheme Vol. I, 1991 - 1995 with the following covering letter:

Dear Babs,

Incentive Scheme

I am happy to send to you herewith a copy of the statistical compilation of the first volume of the lists of the winners of the Incentive Scheme of the Centre which was approved by you during your tenure of office as Federal Minister of Education.

Reports reaching us from all the States of the Federation indicate that this has thus far proved to be a worthy venture. Teachers are now competing among each other as to who will produce two of the scholarship winners which attracts certificates and cash prizes for the teachers. More students we are informed are getting interested in Mathematics. The schools are also showing more interest because they too get certificates of merit. This is yet another feather on your cap of innumerable contributions to Education in Nigeria.

Congratulations and God bless.”

As mentioned earlier, the Mathematics Incentive Scheme was launched in 1991. The available statistics for 1994 and 1995 showed that in 1994, 12,679 primary six pupils took the National Competitive Examination in Mathematics from all the 30 States and Abuja and 465 of them won scholarship to JSS I. From JSS III to SS I in 1994, 10,051 pupils from all the states took the competitive examination and 310 were awarded scholarship. Total awards for JSS III to SS I for 1994 and 1995 was 620.

University undergraduate scholarships at the rate of 100 from 1991 to 1996 totalled 600 for B.Sc. and B. Ed. and N.C.E. Mathematics. It is hoped that with this unique innovation, the nation's mathematical science will enter a new age, provided of course, the programme is sustained by my successors.

Third World Academy of Science Conference in Kuwait, 1992

I had another opportunity to assist the National Mathematical Centre

barely two months before I left office. The Third World Academy of Sciences was scheduled to hold its Fourth General Conference in Kuwait in November 1992. The director of the Centre rushed a memo to me indicating that Nigeria was expected:

- (1) to be well represented at the conference;
- (2) to be led by two Federal Ministers of Science and Education
- (3) to present a case for making the National Mathematical Centre as one of the six regional centres of excellence.

Normally, it should have been the sole responsibility of the Minister of Science and Technology to sponsor members of the Academy of Science to such conference and for the minister to lead the delegation. My ministry sponsored some members of the Mathematical Centre and the Academy of Science and I led the delegation to the Kuwait conference. Nigeria made an impressive showing and my ministerial plea won us the approval of being a regional centre of excellence in mathematical science in Africa. On behalf of the Nigerian Government, I invited the Third World Academy of Sciences to hold its fifth conference in Abuja in 1994.

In addition, I promised a donation of \$10,000.00 on behalf of the Nigerian Academy of Science. The Nigerian delegation got a standing ovation on the final day of the conference.

Again the Director of the Centre wrote after the conference:

Dear Professor Fafunwa,

“I write to acknowledge receipt of your letter reference ABF 1 of December 15, together with a cheque dated 9th December, 1992 for the sum of US\$10,000 for onward transmission to the Third World Academy of Sciences in redemption of the pledge which you made in Kuwait.

I attach herewith a copy of my Fax message to TWAS on this matter, and also a copy of my letter to TWAS forwarding the cheque itself.

It remains for me, on behalf of all of us of the Nigerian Academy of Science, to thank you for this wonderful gesture and support to science in Nigeria. Your speech at the closing ceremony at Kuwait was indeed a memorable one, which made everyone of us Nigerians present at that occasion very proud to be Nigerians. We pray that gesture will indeed open the door much wider for Nigerian scientists to benefit immensely from the activities of the TWAS.”

My parting gift as the Minister of Education was my good fortune in persuading General Babangida to approve an endowment of ₦1 million

each to the Nigerian Academy of Education and the Nigerian Academy of Science. The idea behind the endowment was to ensure that there would be a sizeable amount available to the secretariat of each academy to run its secretariat and organise its annual conference in perpetuity. I am a member of the Nigerian Academy of Education and one of its former presidents and know that that endowment has guaranteed our existence. I am not a member of the Nigerian Academy of Science but that Academy continues to function today.

As mentioned earlier, I invited the Third World Academy of Sciences on behalf of Nigeria to hold its 5th conference at Abuja, Nigeria in 1994. The invitation was warmly accepted. The Academy could not hold its conference in 1994 but did so in January 1995. Although I was disappointed that I was not even invited to the opening ceremony, I am however happy that Nigeria had the opportunity of hosting the Third World Academy.

References

1. United Nations Conference on the application of Science and Technology for less Developed Countries. Geneva, Switzerland, Feb. 1963 Book VI: Education and Training PP. 117 and 118.
2. National Mathematical Centre, Abuja: Statistical Compilation of Incentive Schemes Vol. 1, April 1996 PP. 3 - 4.

Chapter 11

Rehabilitation of Old Secondary Schools

Having seen to the successful establishment of the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) after a twenty-eight year battle to convince the public and the government of the importance of primary education as the foundation of an effective education system, I immediately directed my attention to secondary education in January 1990 on becoming Minister of Education that month.

As of 1990, there were 4,500 schools in the country. There was considerable pressure on the 64 so-called unity schools run by the Federal Government; some 200,000 to 300,000 pupils applied for mere 10,000 places in 1990 (rising to over 500,000 in 1996 for less than 15,000 places). The first week of my tenure of office turned out to be the most frustrating period. Admission into the unity schools was in full swing. I suddenly found myself as the Chief admission officer to the 64 Federal secondary schools. I had the last word on who was to be admitted and who was not.

I could not then and cannot now defend a system that makes its Federal Minister of Education the admissions officer for 64 schools while the remaining 4,436 state secondary schools languish. It is both insulting and demeaning to have to do so. If I had my way, the funds and time spent on the 64 unity schools would be allocated among all the remaining secondary schools.

It is a very sad reflection on the Federal Ministry of Education that so much time and money was expended on the 64 unity schools, while little or nothing was being done for the 4,436 state secondary schools and others. Ministry officials spent most of their time on maintenance, repairs, building, equipment procurement, promotions, recruitment and examinations for admission into 64 unity schools! The common entrance notwithstanding,

many parents, guardians, government officials, ministers, governors and top military officers were pressuring me to admit their relatives or friends or their staff and children.

I was a university head, dean and director of education for over twenty years and I was never an admission officer. This was principally the duty of the Registrar. Granted that the Vice-Chancellor, the dean, heads and staff did and still do get some pressure from the public for university admission, it is nothing compared with the sheer harassment that the Minister, the directors of the Federal Ministry of Education as well as the principals of these schools received annually. It would certainly make more sense for the Federal Government to concentrate its efforts on higher education and limit its role in secondary and primary education to formulation and monitoring of policy guidelines for all systems. The involvement of Federal Government in running sixty-four so-called "Unity Schools" has resulted in disunity. Setting aside 64 schools out of over 5,000 has already created bad blood. A disproportionate amount of money has been spent on these few schools; the same is true of manpower in terms of maintenance and services. Even with the enormous amount expended, many of these schools are still below standard; indeed, some state schools are certainly superior to some of the Unity schools.

Over a period of twenty-one years (in 1976, 1992 and 1997), I have stated my views publicly on this subject. As I have said many times, all of the 4,500 secondary schools should be regarded and treated as Unity schools. As most of them were in dire need or rehabilitation, I proposed to the Federal Government in 1990 that ten percent of the then 4,500 secondary schools* be rehabilitated annually; that is, 450 secondary schools, starting with the 450 oldest institutions. I proposed that the sum of ₦450,000,000 be voted for this purpose. This meant that each of 450 schools would receive the sum of one million naira.

My letter of request to the President reads as follows:

9th July, 1990

"My dear Mr. President,
Rehabilitation of the Oldest Secondary Schools and Federal Colleges of Education and Polytechnics.

Few weeks ago, I had the privilege of discussing the above issue with Mr. President. On that occasion, I proposed to Mr. President to kindly extend

*Minus the 64 unity schools

the rehabilitation programme already given to the Federal Universities to;

- (a) Our oldest secondary schools,
- (b) Federal Colleges of Education,
- (c) Federal Polytechnics and
- (d) The National Library of Nigeria.

To this end, I hereby propose as follows:

Rehabilitation Scheme

(a) Secondary Schools

- (1) Oldest in 1940 and before - 40 schools
- (2) Oldest in 1960 and before - 300 schools
- (3) Oldest in 1966 and before - 450 schools

Proposed level of funding at one million Naira per school.

- (i) If (1) above - N40 million;
- (ii) If (2) above - N300 million;
- (iii) If (3) above - N450 million

19 Federal Colleges of Education at N5 million each - N95 million.

10 Federal Polytechnics at N10 million each - N100 million.

National Library of Nigeria - N10 million

Category	Option A	Option B	Option C
Secondary Schools	N40 million	N450 million	N450 million
Federal Colleges of Education	N95 million	N95 million	N95 million
Federal Polytechnics	N100 million	N100 million	N100 million
National Library of Nigeria	N10 million	N10 million	N10 million
	<u>N245 million</u>	<u>N505 million</u>	<u>N655 million</u>

I recommend Option C above.

II. Target areas for Rehabilitation

1. Secondary Schools

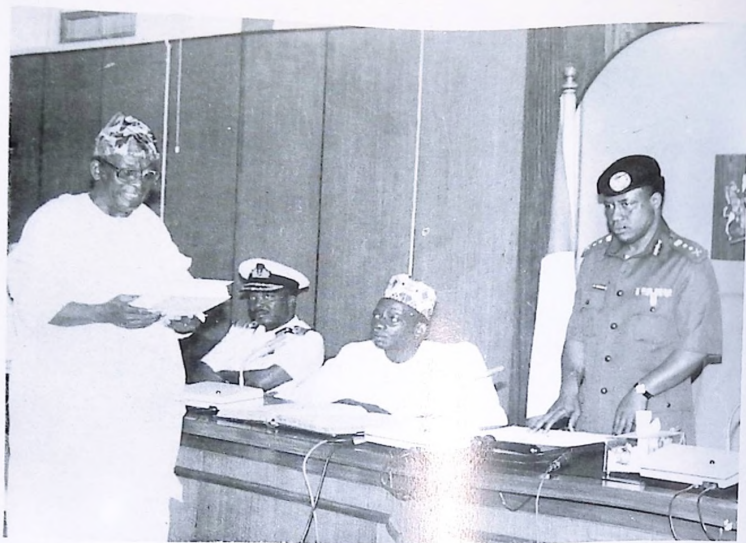
1. Science Labs. equipment and supplies - N500,000.00
2. Library - N250,000.00
3. General Face-lift - N250,000.00
- N1,000,000.00



Author and Prof. Harrison as Nigeria National Merit Award Winners for 1989



Visits to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, 14th Oct. 1991 by Prof. Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, Minister of Education, Nigeria.



Author at swearing-in ceremony as a Minister of Education at Dodan Barracks by the President in January 1990.



The in-coming and the out-going ministers. January 1990.

ETING ... THE DELEGATES &
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON
R THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE
ISTER OF EDUCATION PROF AB FAFUNWA
MARCH 1990
SECRETARIAT AND



The Author's first National Council on Education meeting (Kano)
Author presiding, March 1990.



Author receiving Touch of Enlightenment from the Vice-President
of Nigeria



Author installed Mogaji Ngeri Gungu Island Jebba North, 1996.



Author, wife and son during installation as Mogaji Ngeri - 1996

2. *Federal Colleges of Education*

Needs as identified by the Colleges and approved by the National Commission for Colleges of Education.

3. *Federal Polytechnics*

Needs as identified by the Polytechnics and approved by the National Board for Technical Education.

The above proposal is respectfully presented to Mr. President for his kind consideration and approval. With kind regards."

When I presented my proposal to General Babangida, he accepted it with enthusiasm. The following announcement was released to the press on September 20th, 1990.

Announcement by the Honourable Minister of Education, Professor A. B. Fafunwa at the National Council on Education Meeting in Calabar on Thursday, 20th September, 1990.

Rehabilitation of Old and Famous Secondary Schools

"Mr. President and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida on Tuesday, 18th September, 1990 graciously agreed to assist in rehabilitating a total of 450 oldest secondary schools throughout the country and granted the sum of N450,000,000 (Four Hundred and Fifty Million Naira) for this purpose.

The modalities for the disbursement of the funds are as follows:

"1. Priority areas of rehabilitation should be -

- (a) Science laboratory/equipment (not buildings)
- (b) Schools libraries: (supply of books and storage shelves) - (not buildings)
- (c) General face-lift (priority must be given to academic areas or sectors of the school that are most basic.

2. *Administration of the Fund*

To set up a committee with the following representatives:

- (i) State Ministry of Education - one representative
- (ii) Old Boys Association - two representatives/one of whom will be Chairman of the committee;
- (iii) Parent Teacher Association - one representative;
- (iv) The School Administration - The principal, who would be secretary of the committee.

The Committee would in addition include the Co-ordinating Inspector of the Federal Inspectorate in the state as an ex-officio member.

3. *Period of Rehabilitation*

The rehabilitation work to be carried out by the Committee should not exceed one year starting from the date of commencement of work.

4. *Criteria for Selection of Schools for the Grant*

(a) Chronology of schools in the Federation - The first three hundred (300) oldest schools in the Federation as at 1960 should be granted one million Naira each for rehabilitation irrespective of the state in which they are located. This is the first criterion of chronology nation-wide.

(b) The second criterion is that a minimum of ten (10) secondary schools in each state must benefit from the one million grant to each old school.

(c) FTC Abuja - will have at least 5 schools.

(d) All Federal Government Colleges are excluded.

5. *Actual Release of Fund*

50% of the fund would be released to each school on the presentation and approval of plan of action of the committee set up in the state. The approving authority would be the Federal Ministry of Education.

6. *Monitoring of the Project*

The project embarked upon would be monitored by the zonal Federal Inspectorate Service in conjunction with the monitoring section of the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics of Federal Ministry of Education.

7. *Final Payment*

The balance i.e. 50% of the fund would be released on completion of the first 50% of the specific project chosen in each of the selected schools."

When the news of the rehabilitation of 450 old secondary schools was announced at the 1990 National Council on Education, it received a standing ovation by all delegates, commissioners and directors-general from all state without dissension. It appeared to be my first major achievement on getting to office. But little did I anticipate the headache and the heart-ache that followed this good news.

The first opposition of the scheme came from some of the state commissioners who felt that the state ministry of education should not only chair the disbursement committee but also should control the rehabilitation funds for their respective secondary schools. One of their arguments was

that the old boy or girl who would chair the committee would not be accountable to the state ministry or Federal Ministry of Education for that matter and that a state ministry official or the commissioner as the chairman of the committee would be accountable to the state and Federal Ministries of Education. Of course, I did not entertain their request. I knew from experience that old students of given school tend to be loyal to their institution. Most of them had been and are still contributing to their school's development fund even when many ministries of education were nonchalant about their schools. I do not entertain the fear expressed by some officials that an old boy or girl would embezzle his or her school's funds. His loyalty to or his fear of the powerful and influential alumni or old students association is a big deterrent.

I thought I had surmounted all obstacles when more ugly ones reared their heads. It was one thing to get approval from the top level of government in Nigeria; it is another thing to get the funds out of the Ministry of Finance. The Finance Ministry officials, to say the least, were not forthcoming. The struggle began when my ministry made the necessary request for the ₦450 million and ran into a stone wall.

We were told that there was no fund available at that material time. My officers went back and forth several times to the ministry without any positive result between late 1990 and mid 1992. During this period, we had three ministers of finance and two directors-general to work with in succession.

About a year after the President had given approval, I sent him another letter of appeal. In my letter I reminded him that:

- (1) On September 18, 1990 he graciously approved the sum of ₦655 million for the rehabilitation of the following institutions:
 - (a) 450 old and famous secondary schools
 - (b) 54 Federal and State Colleges of Education
 - (c) 29 Federal and State Polytechnics
 - (d) National Library
- (2) The announcement of his generous grant was received by the National Council on Education with a standing ovation at its 37th bi-annual meeting held in Calabar late in September 1990. At that meeting, modalities for the selection, administration and monitoring of the grants were fully discussed and approved. The proposed period of implementation and completion was January to June 1991.
- (3) At the March 1991 meeting of the National Council on Education, I apologised on behalf of government for the delay but re-assured the National Council on Education that the commencement period was shifted to June 1991.

- (4) I had been pursuing the release of the fund since last October but more actively since December 1990. I was first referred to the Ministry of Budget and Planning and later to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and later still to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation in March 1991.
- (5) The Secretary to the Government of the Federation and I had been in consultation several times between March and June with no tangible result.
- (6) Our credibility was at stake and we could not go back on our promise of September 1990.

I said, I should be grateful if the sum of ₦655 million was released before the end of June 1991.

As if this development were not frustrating enough, rumours started to fly around as to why I was having difficulties in getting the funds released. One rumour, which I did not want to believe, was that some officials of the Ministry of Finance would not process or release approved funds unless a certain percentage of the fund was given as bribe or kick back. The other rumour which I took seriously was that “Fafunwa wants to rehabilitate the oldest secondary schools, since most of such schools are in his state (LAGOS) and his former region (Western Region)”! I found this statement most reprehensible, and the rumour-mongers myopic, tribalistic and mindless. Nevertheless, I could not ignore them as they represented a powerful cabal in Nigeria. In order to save the situation, I modified my original proposal which was to rehabilitate the oldest 450 secondary schools for the first year and continue with this pattern annually until all the 4,500 secondary schools were rehabilitated. The amendment was that each of the then 21 states and Abuja would present the list of the first 20 oldest secondary schools in their respective states to the Federal Ministry of Education for approval. Even this did not satisfy some states. They did not believe that it was necessary for the Federal Ministry to verify their lists. We drew a line and insisted, no verification, no funds. We won that battle.

Even with the amended proposal, we had difficulty getting the ₦450 million. I finally appealed to General Babangida to intervene as indicated above. This was close to two years after the initial approval.

The President promised to help, but he could not guarantee the full amount. My reputation was at stake and I was ready to take any amount available as a first instalment! Finally, the sum of ₦45 million was released in December 1992, less than a month before the end of my tenure as Minister. The amount was 10% of the total approved. This meant that instead of

giving ₦1 million to each for the 450 schools, we could only give ₦105,000 to each of them. The next issue was to spell out how the limited amount should be expended. I assigned a director on special duty, Mr. A. B. Olaniyan (who had just returned to Nigeria after serving as educational consultant to the newly independent State of Namibia), to the project. He and his team of assistants worked around the clock to ensure that a ₦105,000 cheque was written accompanied by a directive to each of the 450 secondary schools.

Each school's name was written on each cheque. Even then, many state ministries of education wanted this method changed by simply writing one cheque for say, ₦2,000,000 to cover the 20 schools in their states. They would then disburse the fund as necessary. Again, we rejected the proposal. We however wrote each cheque in the school's name and sent the 20 cheques to each ministry of education with instructions that each school must spend the money strictly for library books. Each school was to allocate a large room or rooms as Library space and use its own funds from other sources for the construction of library shelves and for the employment of a librarian.

The Federal inspectors of Education were to visit each school, assist where necessary and ensure full compliance with the Federal Ministry's directive. Any school which failed to comply was to be denied subsequent grants.

The following is typical of the letters sent to each state commissioner of education on December 11, 1992.

The Hon. Commissioner for Education,
Ministry of Education,
Lokoja,
Kogi State.

My dear colleague,

Programme of rehabilitation of some of the oldest Secondary Schools in each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory.

I am pleased to inform you that the Federal Government has released a part of the fund for the programme of rehabilitation of some of the oldest Schools in the Country.

This first release which amounts to ₦105,000.00 (One hundred and five thousand naira) per school should be used exclusively for school library development aimed at instilling a sustainable reading culture in the students.

In dispensing the fund, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- (a) A spacious room should be reserved for the library.

- (b) If the existing library has no book shelves, ₦5,000.00 (Five thousand naira) should be used to instal them.
- (c) If the library has no burglar, proof devices, ₦5,000.00 (Five thousand naira) should be used to instal them.
- (d) The remaining money should be used exclusively for purchasing books for general reading.
- (e) A teacher/librarian (where a full time librarian does not exist) should be in charge of the library.

Please find enclosed cheques, each for ₦105,000.00, for distribution to the affected schools in your state as per the attached list earlier submitted by your ministry.

The schools that benefit from the fund will be inspected at a later date with a view to ascertaining that the above guidelines have been strictly adhered to.

Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa

Honourable Minister of Education and Youth Development.

Ironically, while I was still struggling to get the ₦450 million released for secondary schools in 1992, a powerful chairman of one of the federal polytechnics was able to persuade the Government to release ₦38 million for the rehabilitation of the 19 Federal polytechnics! This was in August 1992. The ₦45 million that I finally received for the 450 old secondary schools was made available to me in December 1992!

Although, I have little information as to what has happened since January 1993 when I left office, some school principals told me that the grant was helpful to them and it was indeed the first grant they had received from the Federal Government in a long time, if ever.

This is an example of how the Federal Government through its Federal Ministry of Education should help the 4,436 or more Nigerian secondary schools to become unity schools. Of course, we did not include the 64 "Unity Schools" in the rehabilitation programme even though some futile attempts were made to do so. I have started above some of my justifications for calling on the Federal Government to get out of the business of running of any primary or secondary school. The Federal Ministry of Education should direct its attention to policy making in terms of over-all development of primary and secondary education.

Finally, our goal should be to make all the secondary schools become unity schools and not just a handfull of them. We may not be able to do this

successfully until we have disengaged ourselves from all the Federal Government Colleges.

We cannot close this chapter without mentioning in passing some knotty education issues which we must keep on the front burner.

The Boarding School System

Let us assume for the purpose of argument that boarding of children produces the best result. Yet, no country in the world can afford such luxury and Nigeria is no exception. In no country in the world is the boarding school population greater than 15%. In the U.S. and the U.K., most of such schools are private and expensive. The governments are not involved in the running of those schools.

In 1990, we had 4 million students in our 4,500 secondary schools. If as the argument goes, the boarding system is the best, then all the 4,500 secondary schools should become boarding institutions, if we are not to discriminate against any child in this country! Can we afford this luxury? Moreover, unless the government is prepared to bear the cost of boarding, I predict that if we re-introduce fee-paying boarding system, at least two million children out of the present 4 million will automatically drop out of school, simply because their parents cannot afford the luxury. In spite of ourselves, I predict that by the 21st century this country will have more and more neighbourhood secondary schools that are within walking distance from pupils' homes. Special boarding schools will be built for nomadic children and children from riverine and desert areas with government subsidies. All other boarding schools will be private; the parents will pay economic fees and government will not give subsidies to such schools.

School Uniforms and Materials

The requirement of school uniforms in state schools should be abolished, unless the price can be kept at affordable levels for poor parents and guardians. In any well-organised school system, school industries are established for the production of basic school needs at very inexpensive prices: e.g., pens, pencils, bags, caps, badges, exercise books, jerseys, etc. Essential school materials and books should be protected from economic exploitation by mindless, unpatriotic business people whose only motive is excessive profit.

Secondary School Books

For the secondary school level, I propose the same method of book

procurement used for the primary school system. We should select six to nine text books: English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo, buy the copyrights of those selected, print and distribute them free or at minimal cost to the parents.

Again, these projects should be handled by a committee of eminent and upright Nigerians who can deal firmly but fairly with publishers and government officials at federal, state and local government levels, as well as distributors and sellers of books and other teaching aids.

On the take-over, of schools from the missionary bodies, it may interest many people to know that I called for this as far back as 1967 in my book, *New Perspectives in African Education*, published by Macmillan Education Ltd., London in 1967, Page 77 to 78 as quoted below.

Most of the African schools both at the elementary and secondary level are being administered by missionary bodies, voluntary agencies and private organizations. These agencies held the fort while the colonial powers exhibited little or no interest in education in Africa. The missionary schools as well as others in their own way served Africa well, but the time has come when they should be relieved of this educational responsibility. The state should take over all schools and hand them over to the local communities; for it is unfair to leave the education of the youth in the hands of religious bodies and private organizations. This is a state function, and the separation of church and state is a desirable democratic tenet. It is not enough for the state to subsidize education by giving generous grants to the missions and others, and thereafter abdicate its responsibility; save for passing educational edicts which are to be enforced through inspectors of education.

Religious Education in School

Most Nigerian primary and secondary schools teach Bible Knowledge and Quranic knowledge in schools as literature, with a view to enabling their students pass the senior secondary school examination. At the end of the exercise, many students pass with flying colours without being affected positively in terms of acceptable behaviour, good character, integrity, honesty, etc.

Instead of religious literature, I propose civics and moral education which will include daily practice. Both the Bible and the Quran should be cited to

reinforce the teaching of those subjects, not the Bible or the Quranic alone, but a combination of both. By so doing, we in Nigeria will be producing good citizens and good Christians and Muslims, who respect and appreciate one another's beliefs.

Education in the North

Any Nigerian educator who is not genuinely concerned about the abysmal gap between the educational level of the North and that of the South is not an authentic Nigerian educator. We are all familiar with this problem, as scores of papers and seminars have been produced on the subject. While some progress is being made to bridge the gap, we have not given the problem the urgent attention it deserves. Nigeria's development is being deterred by the north's education gap. If I am given the opportunity and a free hand, I am certain I could turn the northern situation around within a decade or less. I would not need any more funds than those voted annually for the entire region, but I would need the full co-operation of all my education colleagues, north and south, and most importantly, the northern elite and the traditional rulers. But the irony of it is that if the northern elite and traditional rulers can co-operate with me, they can as well do it themselves!

Finally, secondary education should be free by 2003 AD, latest.

Chapter 12

Mass Illiteracy: Shame of a Nation

Mass literacy, adult education and non-formal education campaigns have been carried on in Nigeria since the 1940's and 1950's. Indeed the then Northern Regional Government was concentrating on mass literacy and adult education while the Western and Eastern regional Governments were actively promoting Universal Primary Education (UPE) between 1952 and 1960. Nigeria became independent in 1960 with the majority of its citizens as illiterates. Naturally, there were distress calls by many educators and administrators for Nigeria to tackle its illiteracy problems. In my book, *New Perspectives in African Education* published in 1967, I proposed a compulsory mass literacy programme for Nigeria whereby all non-literates under 50 years old must compulsorily attend mass literacy classes. I also proposed a national youth service corps with military training; the services of the Youth Corpers would largely be to serve as mass literacy tutors all over the federation. My proposals read in part:

Adult Education and National Service

"If education is the sum total of all the processes by means of which an individual develops ability, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive (and sometimes negative) value in the society in which he lives, then education as such is more than mere schooling, in that it is a process that goes on in and out of the formal school situation. Indeed, there is much more to learn out of school than inside it.

Adult education is one of many branches of education and it is assuming an important position in the area of specialized education in the twentieth century. It compares favourably as an area of discipline with nursery, elementary, secondary, technical, liberal, commercial and university education.

to mention a few. In actuality, adult education encompasses most of the areas cited above, as we shall illustrate later.

Adult education is formal and informal instruction or controlled experience for the mature person so that he may attain social, economic, cultural, political or technical competence or individual development. It is any activity with an educational purpose carried on by mature persons on a part-time basis or any voluntary, purposeful effort made toward the self-development of adults conducted either by public or private agencies such as farm extension services, churches, mosques, clubs, adult schools, settlements, town unions, secret societies, business enterprises, labour unions, social welfare departments and other governmental agencies for dissemination of information, promotion of cultural, political, vocational, professional, remedial, recreational and other purposes. The medium of instruction may follow any one or a combination of the following: general discussion, panel, round table, tutorial classes, short courses, workshops, formal classes, lectures, university or ministry extension courses, press, radio, cinema, television and the like. The subjects taught may be as specialized as thermodynamics, space exploration, conservation of energy, geomorphology, petroleum engineering, on-the-job training, consumer economics, philosophy of education, or as liberal and general as citizenship, child welfare, health, art, literature, science, driver education, community development, fundamental education or mother craft. In short, adult education is the education of the adult.

As we have said earlier on, some of the major problems of education in Africa are largely tied to the problems of ignorance, poverty and disease; these three often go hand-in-hand.

Of the three problems listed above, the most deadly is ignorance. Illiteracy is a disease that stunts growth. For instance, before the advent of the colonial powers in Africa, the African as a rule relied heavily on the spoken word and a chief's word was his bond. Many contracts and agreements were spoken and sealed over a drink or two, and they were honoured by both parties. Then came the complicated world of letters, and agreements had to be written, signed, sealed and deposited. Many Africans, including some of our own grandfathers, lost acres of land and/or part of their sovereignty due to inability to read the documents on which their thumb impression was placed. It is not uncommon to hear of the man who electrocuted himself unknowingly because he could not read the sign 'danger', or swallowed poison instead of medicine just because he was illiterate. One could perhaps multiply these instances a thousand times.

One of the most neglected national resources in underdeveloped countries

is the adult. His need for education is second only to that of the school-age child. We have also stressed that it is not a mere coincidence that illiteracy and under-development go hand in hand, and today, over seventy percent of our adult population in Africa is illiterate; that illiteracy impedes progress; and that a country with a high percentage of illiteracy cannot hope to develop to maximum capacity for as long as the situation remains relatively unchanged. It is erroneous thinking to assume that illiterate adults will die away within a generation or two. The truth of the matter is that the size of the illiterate adult population is increasing, while the pace of social and technological changes is accelerating phenomenally. In Africa today, we have millions of twelve-year-olds who may never see the inside of a school. Indeed most of these young people will be around for a long time. An economic case can be made for the education of the adult. With education, the adult is most likely to be a better producer or a better consumer of goods; he is more likely to be ready to accept changes; he is likely to be an intelligent user of public facilities and amenities. A literate farmer, fisherman or trader is more likely to seek and find better methods of farming, fishing or trading. Indeed, he is more exposed to the various channels of education for personal and further professional or occupational growth.

Of course, the adult needs more than mere literacy; he must be functionally literate. The adult must acquire the ability to read, write, perform simple but meaningful arithmetical processes, acquire civic sophistication and be exposed to scientific thought if he is to become less superstitious. A child's school experience is often negated by the illiterate parents' own superstitious beliefs and habits.

The eradication of illiteracy is a matter of national urgency for any country that is desirous of mobilizing its total human resources for social and economic development. Practically all of the advanced countries of the world have a high percentage of literacy; and as we have shown earlier on, there seems to be a correlation between mass illiteracy and under-development on one hand and a higher percentage of literacy and advanced development on the other. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, one of the first major tasks to which the Bolsheviks addressed themselves was to eliminate illiteracy. While this was a stupendous assignment from the economic and social standpoint, it appears that the Russian foresight paid off handsomely. It enabled them to equal and to some extent overtake the older advanced countries such as Britain, United States and others within a period of thirty years. While it must be admitted that the remarkable advancement achieved by U.S.S.R. was not solely due to their mass literacy campaign, it contributed substantially

towards their overall development.

Illiteracy is the twin sister of backwardness. Most of the least developed countries of the world are to be found in Africa, Asia and South America where illiteracy is very high while the most advanced countries of the world are to be found in North America, Europe, Oceania and U.S.S.R. where the percentage of illiteracy is very low. The eradication of illiteracy in Africa is a matter of national emergency, if Africa is to move rapidly into a more advanced stage of development.

But what should be the objectives of Adult Education in Africa with a special reference to an adult literacy programme? The following objectives are recommended:

1. To help the illiterate adult attain functional literacy with a view to enabling him to acquire the art of reading, writing and numeration. Our world of today is a world of letters. Ability to read and write at least in one language is an essential ingredient and a mastery of it is a *sine qua non*. One recalls with sympathy the story of the illiterate farmers who attended a series in a practical agriculture course at one of the African agricultural extension centres. The course, which was primarily designed to introduce the illiterate farmers to new and better ways of improving rice cultivation, was held for farmers living within a radius of fifty miles of the extension service centre. Considerable enthusiasm was generated by the course and most of the farmers went back home with a burning desire to try out the new methods. Months later, some farmers could not recall some of the steps learnt and were anxious to consult the centre for guidance but a journey of thirty or forty miles was too long to undertake. Some of them became frustrated and had to abandon the method. Thus, as far as those farmers were concerned, the whole experience was a stupendous waste of their valuable time. If the farmers had been able to read and write, it would have been the most natural thing for them either to refresh their memory by reading a booklet or pamphlet on the subject, or to write to the centre for help. Even educated persons, including teachers and university lecturers, rely heavily on the library or other reference sources for assistance even in the fields in which they are specialists or consultants.

The inability to read, write and count imposes considerable strain on the citizen. An illiterate citizen's only avenue of communication is through hearing and seeing. All he knows is what he hears and sees through personal contact, which is often limited to people around him. While the radio is becoming more popular in Africa, there are still millions of Africans who have no access to one radio set. Also television campaigns to urge people to 'Eats more eggs.'

or 'Use malaria prophylactic' or 'Drink more milk would be a wasteful exercise, since most of those who have television sets are already eating eggs, using malaria pills and drinking more milk. However, an adult who can read has a fair chance of reading about these in his local newspaper or in a pamphlet written for this purpose.

2. To help the illiterate adult appreciate his economic, cultural and political role within his own society. Literacy education should be functional. It should help the adult through appropriate reading materials to become a better farmer, trader or craftsman. The text materials for reading should largely be designed to educate the adult on better farming, better craftsmanship, better business and the like. It should also include simple economic theory in the subjects of demand and supply, co-operatives, banking system, transportation and so on.

It is also through the art of reading and writing that citizenship education will be imparted. Every adult needs to know what his rights and obligations are as a citizen of his country.

Compulsory Functional Adult Literacy and Science Programme

If a successful war is to be waged against superstition, ignorance and disease in Africa we must help the adult develop some scientific skills through adult education programmes. The adult can be encouraged to share in varying degrees part of the vast knowledge and abilities made available to mankind through science and technology. To break through the scientific barrier in Africa, a tremendous effort should be made to reach all of the African population. It is a common knowledge that an illiterate is likely to be a poor consumer of goods, a victim of unscrupulous propagandists and a highly superstitious individual. Mere literacy is not enough, but functional literacy is likely to meet the social, political and economic needs of Africa. For instance, when we speak of manpower and economic development, the two greatest untapped resources in Africa today are human and natural. The latter is unobtainable without the former except by imported labour; but this is almost out of the question at this stage of African development. The case for the social aspect of the problem is self-evident. With the best intentions in the world, excellent programmes in the areas of agriculture, health and welfare, e.g., slum clearance, town planning, housing and maternity centres may soon return to the 'bush' if the people are not sufficiently educated to use these facilities effectively.

There is also a tendency for the child's school experience to be negated by illiterate parents' own old superstitious beliefs. To reduce this possibility

to a negligible minimum, fresh campaigns must be made in the field of adult science literacy through organized evening classes, radio, television, mobile cinemas, posters and all available channels of communication. It would be necessary to translate meaningful and appropriate scientific materials into the local languages for instructional and adult literacy classes.

Because of the urgency of the adult education problem, and in order to reinforce other educational projects that are being carried out in all African countries, i.e., in primary, secondary, technical and university education, the following plan is proposed as a possible approach in eradicating illiteracy in Africa:

1. Set up an All-Africa Committee for the eradication of illiteracy: this committee should be representative of government, civic, religious, educational interests, etc.
 - (a) It would be the primary function of the Committee to promote adult education throughout the countries of Africa.
 - (b) The Africa Committee should set up national and regional local committees throughout Africa and administer all individual programmes. Funds should be made available by governments, UNESCO and private agencies.
2. The immediate task for the Committee should be to prepare new materials and improve old but good materials. The Committee will work with health and agricultural authorities as well as primary, secondary and technical school teachers to prepare and/or adapt appropriate reading materials on health, agriculture, general science, etc., to meet the needs of a 'Functional Literacy Programme'. For example, adaptations of materials or texts in the mother tongue on 'How to combat mosquitoes', 'The World around us, below us, and above us', 'How to make yams or corn grow bigger and better', 'How to start a small business', etc. will undoubtedly interest an adult illiterate more than a child's story. In addition to the above, the use of films, records, radio and television should be explored by the Committee.
3. In the large towns, there are armies of clerks, technicians, traders, teachers and so on from which groups a core of teachers can be drawn. In many villages, there are preachers, teachers and other literate citizens who can assist. Attract teachers by offering a small stipend. Organize short training courses for adult education teachers.
4. Establish a permanent research centre or centres in Africa for research and the proliferation of materials, equipment and other instructional materials.

Compulsory National Service for National Mobilization

In many advanced countries, every citizen who has attained the age of eighteen is expected to serve in the army for a period. All African nations new and old, stand to gain immensely from such a scheme. The entire population of Africa from eighteen to fifty years of age should be involved but the service programme would be specially designed to suit the nature of Africa's problems. For instance, instead of concentrating on military tactics and the like, as is the case in some countries, emphasis would be placed on functional literacy (which will include reading, writing, science and agriculture) and physical fitness. Those adults who are literate, viz, clerks, business professionals (lawyers, teachers, clergy etc.) would serve as evening class tutors in the adult literacy schools after short periods of training where necessary. Others with special skills, such as engineers and other technicians, would organize work gangs for the construction of roads, bridges, schools and so on, while those trained in agriculture would run farm institutes or camps. The programme if carefully planned, would achieve two goals: it would offer an opportunity to the non-literates to become functionally literate within a short period of time; it would also prepare them for specific skills which are sorely needed for African development today.**

Of the three proposals - compulsory mass literacy, national youth service and military training-only the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) came into operation in 1973. However in January 1992 when I became the Minister of Education Youth and National Development, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) came under my administration, I requested the then director-general of the Corps, Col. H. B. Momoh to include mass literacy teaching as part of the primary service of NYSC; that is, while they were doing their basic assignments as doctors, teachers, accountants, lawyers, etc, they would teach literacy classes either in the evenings or during the weekends or both.

Many Nigerian experts in mass literacy and adult education laboured assiduously to promote mass literacy in Nigeria between the 1950's and 1980's; among them were Professors Tugbiyele, Omolewa, Ayo Ogunsheye, Okedara, Chief A.Y. Eke and others. The four outstanding states which actively promoted mass literacy were Kano, Cross River, Oyo and Bauchi. I was very impressed when I visited the Kano State agency for mass literacy

* A. B. Fafunwa, *New Perspectives in African Education*, Macmillan Publishers, 1967 pp 155-161

in 1991. It was sheer delight to see middle-aged women with children strapped to their backs studying for G.C.E. examination and learning skills such as sewing, weaving, knitting etc. The Mass Literacy Centre in Kano City was a beehive of activities by scores of young and middle aged women.

In March 1990, a World Conference on Education For All (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand. Over 170 nations attended and I led the Nigerian delegation which comprised Prof. Koye Ransome-Kuti and Mr. Tony Momoh, Ministers of Health and Information respectively, a director general from Finance and representatives from State and Federal Ministries of Education. The conference called for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000 A.D. In my address to the conference, I made the following points on the important topic: **Education for all in the Year 2000** with reference to Africa in general and West Africa in particular.

“In the old African society, the purpose of education was clear; functionalism was the main guiding principle. African society regarded education as a means to an end and not as an end itself. Education was for an immediate induction into society and a preparation for adulthood. In particular, African education emphasised social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values. Children learnt by doing. Children and adolescents were engaged in participatory education through ceremonies, rituals, imitation, recitation and demonstration. They were involved in farming, fishing, weaving, carving, knitting etc., while intellectual training included the study of local history, legends, the environment (local geography, plants and animals), poetry, reasoning (logic), riddles, proverbs etc. Education was linked with economic development, culture, social and political activities. Education was an integrated experience. It combined physical training (wrestling, dancing, acrobatic display, etc.) with character-building, and manual activity with intellectual exercise. In old Africa, education was for All. Today we who are their successors seemed to have missed the road and are not searching for new direction.

Before the 18th century there was little or no difference between Europe and Africa, but the slave trade, coupled with the industrial revolution in Europe changed the socio-economic equation. Africa became the trading subordinate of Europe and later its colony. The struggle for independence in Africa spanned a period of over 100 years and the last African country to be free from colonial domination is Namibia which has just regained its independence.

As tons of statistics have shown, the greatest number of illiterates, the greatest number of “*inumerates*” (if I may coin the word), the greatest

number for the rural and urban poor are to be found in Africa today. Consequently, the greatest challenge is in Africa in terms of *Education for All by the year 2000*.

Basic education in any given society should empower every beneficiary to participate fully in the socio-economic and political activities of his community. He should be literate, numerate and co-operate with members of the community in which they all live and work.

One of the greatest deterrents to basic education is the present medium of education. The language barrier has robbed millions of African illiterates the right to basic education. It would appear that we have for too long equated education with the ability to speak English, French or Portuguese fluently. The world of science and technology seems to be perpetually shut to those of our brothers and sisters who do not speak the European language. We, the minority who speak it, lord it over the majority who do not. Yet no country can be stronger than its weakest link. It is not a mere coincidence that all the countries that have less than 10% illiteracy are developed and those with over 50% are under-developed.

The answer does not lie in more English or French, important as these languages may be; the answer lies in the use of the learner's own language to acquire skills in science and technology as was done by Japan, Korea, China and other third world countries. If we must achieve education for all in the year 2000, it has to be in the mother tongue. If not, all we can hope to achieve in the year 2000 will be education for *some*, not education for all.

It is no an idle statement that education is the best defence of nations. Education is the common thread that runs through health and agriculture programmes, science and technology, environmental protection, population growth and national defence. Indeed we would expect that these various departments and ministries should be allocated at least 20% of each country's annual budget.

As we said earlier on, the present traditional method of training and educating the people of the third world cannot bring about the desired goal of education for all by the year 2000. We must actively pursue other approaches. To this end, we need to consider the following:

By 2000 AD we must:

- (1) have 100% *involvement* not enrolment *per se* in terms of our children, and young adults;
- (2) involve all adults in the learning of skills, both scientific and technical, through the *learner's* mother tongue. The objective is to popularise scientific agriculture, promote popular mechanics and encourage village

technology in the mother tongue.

In conclusion, the war against illiteracy and "inumeracy" (if one can use that appellation) must be waged in every nook and cranny. We are aware of the effect of population growth as a possible constraint on the attainment of education for all and the need for population education.

To achieve this and other goals, we in Africa will need the support of our friends in developed countries. When we do approach them for assistance, it is my hope that the assistance will be based *on what we need*, not what they think we need."

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It was therefore very gratifying for me to have the rare opportunity of bringing the long awaited dream of establishing the mass literacy and adult education commission into existence as reflected in my inaugural address in Lagos on July 5, 1991. In that address on:

"I welcomed all the participants to the inauguration of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education.

I first congratulated the Chairman, Chief A. Y. Eke, the executive secretary, Hajiya Amina Ahmed and other members of this Commission, and wished them Allah's blessing in the all-important assignment.

I recognised that the Commission had a massive yet noble challenge ahead of it, combining as it must the successful execution of a mass literacy campaign with co-ordination of continuing education, as well as vocational, aesthetic, civic and cultural education for youths and adults.

The inauguration of the Commission had come at a propitious time, just when national and international initiatives had prepared a receptive climate for its operations. Indeed, on the 25th June, 1990, Decree No. 17 established the Commission, and charged it with "the duty of laying down a national policy on Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education geared towards the overall social and economic development of Nigeria". By this Decree, the Commission was given the national responsibility of co-ordinating all extra-formal education into a coherent plan for human resource development.

More specifically, the Decree entrusted the Commission with the formidable functions of:

- drawing up and implementing master plans of action for the permanent eradication of illiteracy, for life-long education and for youth out-of-school programmes of study;
- organizing training models for key personnel in mass literacy, adult and non-formal education;
- conducting research which will form the basis of curriculum

- development, teaching and assessment methodologies, and appropriate technologies;
- co-ordinating the activities of associations, agencies, and institutions concerned with adult and non-formal education, in such a way that such activities form an integral part of the overall national plan;
 - determining the judicious investment of funds accruing to the Commission; and
 - sensitizing the public to the values derivable from the programmes of action.

The Decree also established a National Centre for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, 'which would be part of the Commission and be subject to its control'. More than one centre might be established and all such centres would act as the principal implementation agencies of the National Commission.

As far back as 1982, government launched a mass campaign to eradicate illiteracy. The intention was to make six to eight million illiterates literate, and towards that end, ₦14 million was voted for the campaign and the establishment of a National Centre in Kano. That campaign sensitized the public to the appallingly low literacy rate. Many adult education were trained and some state agencies were established. We expected the new Commission to provide the capacity for research, planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation, and to build on the gains of the first campaign.

The spirit of the 1982 campaign had been kept alive by the professional dedicated lobby of the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education and professionals in our universities. Their contributions were remarkable and many of them, over the years, received national and international recognition. In this regard, mention must be made of those that have done us proud. In 1983, Kano State Agency for Mass Education received honourable mention for the International Reading Association Literacy Award. In 1984, under the International Reading Literacy Award, Cross River State Adult and Continuing Education Division was commended for its innovative efforts in linking literacy with vocational education for women, and its creative use of radio drama. And, in 1989, the Adult Education Department of the University of Ibadan was awarded the UNESCO – sponsored International Reading Association Literacy Prize for its training, research and organization in providing literacy to thousands of adults. The programme brought together the university and rural communities. All the citations recognized the Agency's work on eradicating illiteracy among adults and young people, including the disadvantaged and disabled.

The year 1990 was indeed a year of opportunity. That year was chosen so that the International Literacy Year (ILY) observance would coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the famous Teheran Conference on Adult Education and with the beginning of the fourth United Nations development decade. Before then, on 6 December, 1989, the Secretary General of the UN launched the International Literacy Year (ILY) and Nigeria's national launching took place on 25 June, 1990. This was soon followed by state ILY launching and the setting up of more state agencies for Mass Literacy. Currently 19 states including Abuja have Agencies. They are to work in close collaboration with this newly created Commission.

Nigeria shares the concern of the world community about the daunting possibility that Third World countries may enter the twenty-first century with disturbing segments of their population disadvantaged by illiteracy, poverty, disease and the attendant exploitation. The priority commitment is to massively reduce illiteracy by the year 2000. Our target is to raise the literacy level from its present 42% to 80% by that target date. To achieve this objective nationally, we have to employ an unconventional strategy. I therefore urged the commission to adopt the motto: Each One Teach One Or Fund The Teaching of One.

I sought a grant of ₦500 million from the Federal Government and the public to enable the new commission produce primers and readers in the three major Nigerian Languages - Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. This proposal was informed by the fact that these three major languages are spoken by 70% of the Nigerian people, both as mother tongues and as second languages by other language groups. It was my hope that one Saturday a month from 7.00 a.m. to 12 noon would be declared a period for "each one teach one" in every Nigerian household. All those Nigerians who are too busy to teach, would pay someone to do the teaching on their behalf.

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education

The functional significance of a people's ability to read and write has made literacy one of the fundamental requirements of a modern civilization. The Federal Government in its attempt to eradicate illiteracy in the country and achieve education for all by the year 2000, enacted Decree No. 17 of 1990 which established the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education and charged it with, amongst others, the following responsibilities:

- (i) To work in co-operation with all concerned, e.g., state and local

governments, individuals and organisations to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria;

- (ii) To design and promote strategies and programmes for the conduct and implementation of the National Mass Literacy Campaign in consultation with appropriate agencies of the Federal and State Governments, the Universities and non-governmental agencies;
- (iii) To monitor and co-ordinate the implementation of all activities for the eradication of illiteracy in Nigeria and ensure the collection and dissemination of information on the implementation;
- (iv) To organise in-service professional training courses for senior staff and operate training seminars for various levels of staff from government and non-governmental organisations;
- (v) To develop and disseminate teaching materials;
- (vi) To conduct research in various fields such as curriculum development, learning and teaching methodologies, appropriate educational technologies, motivation of learners and instructors and needs assessments;
- (vii) To organise an annual conference of heads of adult education departments in state ministries, agencies and institutions of higher learning;
- (viii) To organise writers' workshops in order to develop and promote teaching and learning materials in various languages, especially for primers and graded readers, including follow-up reading materials and flash cards;
- (ix) To motivate and mobilise people to participate in Mass Literacy programmes through the media, especially the mobile cinema.

In order to carry out the responsibilities itemised above successfully, the commission decided to approach the programme in the following major areas of focus:

- (a) *Basic Literacy*: This is an educational programme designed to equip the recipients with the basic skills of reading, writing and computation. The training at this level will be designed and carried out in local languages and as much as possible, in the mother tongues of specific participants. The idea is to equip the recipients with the basic skills of communication with which to expand their knowledge and understanding of their environment.
- (b) *Functional Literacy*: The programmes under this category combine teaching in some vocational skills. The idea is to equip participants with skills that may qualify them for employment opportunities on

completion of training. It is envisaged that the economic incentives may entice the adult participants to persevere and learn what is potentially useful to their socio-economic life.

- (c) *Remedial Education*: The remedial education programme is intended for people who prematurely terminate their education in the formal education system without acquiring skills that guarantee permanent literacy.

All these programmes are to be intensively pursued through the sustained efforts of various centres for adult education. However, in the context of Mass Literacy by the year 2000, the primary policy is to expose and ensure that all Nigerian adults have acquired at least basic literacy which guarantees ability to read, write and compute numbers. This is the cornerstone of the basic policy.

The attainment of the objectives of Mass Literacy by the year 2000 invariably require a careful and realistic plan with which to support and direct strategies for implementing the policy. During the preparation of the 1992 Budget, my Ministry proposed the sum of one hundred million Naira (₦100m) to start the programme. This (₦100m) if approved would have been utilised for the immediate needs of the programme in the areas of recurrent and capital expenditures. To my dismay our proposal was rejected during the budget defence. It is estimated that Nigeria, with a population of about 100 million people, has about 60 million illiterates; therefore, the task of providing basic literacy to that large number of people by the year 2000 requires considerably human and material resources. Above all, it calls for sustained political will.

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education mapped out some of the target achievements for 1992. To achieve these, the Federal Ministry of Education solicited from the Federal Government the sum of ₦100 million annually for the successful implementation of this noble objective of the Federal Government to eradicate illiteracy in our beloved country Nigeria by the year 2000. The Commission received just about a quarter of the fund requested before I left office.

The Chairman of the Commission, Chief A. Y. Eke, the Executive Secretary, Hajiya Amina Ahmed, my two special assistants, Professors A. Adarelegbe and A. Osiyale along with Mrs. Marion Sikuade, a consultant to the Commission and members of the Commission and its other staff worked very hard to promote "Each One Teach One or Fund the Teaching of One" Yet their efforts yielded little, due to paucity of funds.

Epilogue

I understand that UNDP is rendering some financial and logistic support. I hope the Nigerians themselves will lift themselves up by their own boot straps. But the Federal and state government must develop the political will and give the necessary financial support to the Commission to enable it fulfill its first mission which is to make all Nigerians literate and numerate by the year 2000 and beyond.

It is gratifying that a number of African countries adopted the Nigerian slogan of "Each One Teach One or Fund the Teaching of One". May be they will pursue this policy vigorously and Nigeria will copy their example.

Chapter 13

Some Unpleasant Tasks

In the course of my assignment as the Federal Minister of Education, I had the unpleasant duty of relieving three Vice-Chancellors, two chairmen of council and two executive secretaries of Federal Ministry of Education parastatals of their duties.

The first chief executive, whom we shall call Vice-Chancellor A, was a fine scholar and a pleasant personality but was a poor administrator. He had no control over the students and the latter exploited his weakness endlessly. Both the Senate of the University and the Council were disenchanted by him. I had several meetings with him and the chairman of Council, but all to no avail. Students rioted at the least provocation and in one instance, a student lost his life due to inaction on the part of the administrator. To prevent further deterioration in the affairs of the university, I invited the Vice-Chancellor to my office for a final chat in the presence of my Director-General and one of my special assistants. I reviewed the catalogue of events since his assumption of office barely two years before. It was a tale of woes. When I cited a case which occurred during one of the students riots in which he was alleged to be hiding under his bed at his residence, I thought he would refute the allegation but he was honest enough to say, "I was directing operations from under my bed". There and then, I advised him to tender his resignation; otherwise, I would recommend his dismissal to the President. Without further ado, he submitted his resignation. He certainly earned the respect of the three of us present because he realised his limitation and did not cover up. Interestingly enough, he appeared greatly relieved that a tremendous burden had been lifted from his shoulders. His resignation was announced routinely and his deputy vice-chancellor was asked to act, pending the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor. I am pleased that the

former Vice-Chancellor was later employed by a research oriented organisation and is doing very well in that company. The second Vice-Chancellor Executive, whom we shall call Vice-Chancellor B, was a more experienced administrator than Vice-Chancellor A. He became so over-confident in his job that he felt he could do anything and get away with it. He was corrupt, but he spent millions of naira without the council's approval. He had connections in high places.

Both his senate and council were disenchanted with his administration. Again, students were on strike for one thing or the other. The Chairman of his Council appealed to me to intervene, and I held meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and the chairman, but the problems persisted. Things came to a head when the students went on strike and there were clashes between the students and the police with many students wounded, but thank God no one died. Then word came to me that the Vice-Chancellor had been invited by a friend of his to a convocation ceremony abroad where the friend would receive an honorary degree, all expenses paid. I quickly sent an urgent letter to him not to travel in the midst of the crisis which was in fact escalating. He ignored my instruction. He went and spent ten days away. On his return my written query was waiting for him. Obviously disturbed that I would do such a thing, he came to my office to apologise and explain, but I directed him to answer my query within 48 hours. He did, but that was not the end of the matter. I paid a call to the Vice-President who was a good friend of the Vice-Chancellor and also to the gentleman who was awarded an honorary degree in a foreign country. I stated the entire episode on the Vice-Chancellor's escapades from A to Z and recommended that the offender should be removed from office. I however told the Vice-President that I would prefer that we request him to tender his resignation. The Vice-President asked whether we could give him a less rigorous punishment. I said that any decision that allowed him to stay in office would be tantamount to aiding and abetting indiscipline and the adverse effect on the campus community would be incalculable. I was relieved and pleased when the Vice-President concurred with me. Bless his soul. The Vice-President and I agreed to invite the Vice-Chancellor to the Vice-President's office.

At the meeting, I reviewed his whole case from the beginning and the Vice-President asked for his comments. He gave a weak defence and apologised for his past transgressions, including his unauthorised trip abroad. The Vice-President then said that it would be more honourable for him to resign than to be removed. He was stunned. He was asked to resign there and then but he pleaded for time to think about it. He would need to sort

things out in his mind before writing. We then agreed that he would return with me to my office and write his resignation letter there

On returning to my office, my director-general and my two special assistants were in attendance. The Vice-Chancellor begged for more time, say, one or two days of grace, but I said no. Others at the meeting advised him to comply, but he kept mute. I finally lowered the boom and said: "You have the option of resigning now (at 1 p.m.), failing which, Radio Nigeria and other media will announce that you have been sacked as the Vice-Chancellor of University XYZ at 4 p.m. today." He wrote his resignation giving thirty days notice to enable him hand-over to his successor. Acceding to that condition was a mistake on my part because they were thirty turbulent days, but we finally got him disengaged. Interestingly enough, he and I are on friendly terms today.

The third Chief Executive, Vice-Chancellor C, was an erudite scholar who was catapulted into the high office without any clue as to how to run the administration of a University. He was at loggerheads with his Council and a faction of the Senate. Ethnicity had already divided the staff and the Senate of the University. The Vice-Chancellor was accused of spending money without council's authorization, but he was never accused of misappropriation. The matter was brought to my attention and twice, I invited both the Chairman of Council and the Vice-Chancellor who was extremely naive and the Chairman, experienced, but short tempered.

Hardly a week after the reconciliatory meeting, news reached me that the Chairman and Council had suspended the Vice-Chancellor indefinitely, pending the outcome of an investigative panel. The battle line seemed drawn and trouble was brewing between the two factions on the campus; students, staff and Senate. I had to intervene by suspending the action of the Chairman and Council and setting up an independent panel of inquiry to look into the matter and make recommendations. The panel was composed of the members of a sister university located outside the state where the university in question was situated. Everyone was given a fair hearing. The panel recommended that (a) the Vice-Chancellor and the Chairman should be removed; (b) that the Council be dissolved and (c) a new Vice-Chancellor be appointed.

I fully briefed the President and recommended that both the Vice-Chancellor and the Chairman be relieved of their posts. The President preferred that we dissolved the Council, which included the Chairman. I had no difficulty in persuading the Vice-Chancellor to tender his resignation as the path of honour. This he gladly did and he expressed great relief in so doing. He thanked me for giving him an early opportunity to return to what

he liked best: teaching and research.

We announced the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor and the dissolution of the council which of course meant the end of the Chairman and Pro-Chancellor's tenure. While the Vice-Chancellor accepted the decision with grace, his Chairman behaved like a wounded lion, cursing and swearing as if the university were his personal preserve. Exploring his connections in high places, he attempted to reverse the decisions, but to no avail. He resorted to writing articles in the press, vilifying both the minister and the officials of the ministry.

The next issue to be resolved was the selection of an acting Vice-Chancellor. The entire campus was split almost fifty-fifty among staff, both academic and non-academic and even among the student body. With this type of scenario, I found it impossible to name a professor within the university to serve in his capacity, so I invited an experienced professor from a sister university to serve as an acting Vice-Chancellor. Before he took office I made it clear that he was to act for six months at most, pending the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor. I informed him that he would not contest for the post and would return to his base when a new man takes over. I also made it clear to the university community; staff and students that they should co-operate fully with the acting Vice-Chancellor, pending the appointment of a substantive Vice-Chancellor within six months.

The arrangement worked perfectly. It is sad to note that six years later, we hear of military administrators or sole administrators running universities. It is simply an abomination.

Again, there was the case of the Chairman and Pro-chancellor of another Federal University who was at loggerheads with his Vice-Chancellor. The situation was aggravated by the fact that both the Vice-Chancellor and the Chairman were strong-willed. While the Vice-Chancellor vehemently denied the Chairman's accusation of reckless expenditure without Council's approval, the Chairman in turn was charged with usurping the Vice-Chancellor's position and holding clandestine meetings with some of the staff without the Vice-Chancellor's knowledge and worse still, the Vice-Chancellor was never given any feedback. The quarrel was reported to me by the Vice-Chancellor and once again, I invited both of them to a meeting for reconciliation with my director-general and the two special assistants present. I allowed everyone to make contribution before I gave a final ruling, often based on the suggestions and contributions of others. We reconciled both parties and the two promised to work harmoniously together. A few weeks later, trouble reared its head and I tried a second reconciliatory

meeting but to no avail. At the end of the day, I had to seek the permission of the President to remove the Chairman and hell broke loose. The Chairman wrote a long memorandum accusing me of partiality and being brow-beaten by the clever and scheming Vice-Chancellor who had become a sacred cow to me and the powers that be. I kept my own counsel at that point and refused to dignify his accusations by my own rebuttal.

Another incident led to the removal of an Executive Secretary of one of the Federal Ministry of Education's major parastatals. I was the first chairman of the parastatal when it was established in 1964, twenty-six years before I became a Minister of Education. The agency had undergone many upheavals and changes both in structure and concept. When I became the Minister of Education, I reviewed all the parastatals, I noticed that many were understaffed, while others were not only understaffed, but also poorly staffed at the same time. In all cases, I took time to talk with the executive secretaries of each agency and discussed my ideas for improvement. Everybody cooperated except the head of one particular parastatal.

I decided to strengthen the three weakest departments of this parastatal by injecting a specialist from the appropriate field from Nigerian universities for a period of two or three years. These experts would help train the existing staff while the most senior official in that department would understudy the expert whom he would replace when the term of the expert expires and he returns to his university. The head of the parastatal seemed to accept the idea; yet he left my office and started to organise resistance against my plan. First, he got his Chairman to come and challenge me for trying to usurp the duties of the governing board of the parastatal. The chairman even accused me of ignoring national character, since none of the three experts proposed came from the Chairman's own "region". I first told him in no uncertain terms that I was more interested in selecting well-qualified personnel for the urgent job at hand than in playing a balancing act which would be counter-productive and thus, defeat the whole purpose of the exercise. I reminded him that he would not have dared to march in on my predecessor to lay such a silly complaint and that he did what he did because I was not from his "region". He started to apologise and I told him bluntly that I did not need his apology; I just needed his speedy disappearance from my office.

The Executive Secretary of the parastatal continued to play hide and seek with my decision by dragging his feet and giving excuses. He claimed lack of funds. I voted ₦2 million; yet he was still delaying action. At that point, I had reached the limit of my patience; I wrote and sought permission

from the President to remove him for insubordination. My request was granted and he was removed. Luckily for him, he was able to return to his university from where he was originally seconded to the Ministry.

Even then, the chap would not give up. He went to the Secretary to Government to complain that I victimised him unjustly. The SMG phoned me and related all the accusations levelled against me by the Executive Secretary, I told him that everything that the Secretary said was correct. The SMG said, "Really?" I said, "yes". He was taken aback. Then I said, "Name sake, I have twelve parastatals and if I fail with one, my score is eleven over twelve pass and that is an excellent, result". The SMG laughed aloud and dropped the phone and that was the end of the matter.

At the time I became the Federal Minister of Education in January 1990, there were twelve parastatals headed by ten Northerners and two Southerners; Yoruba and Igbo. As it was a very lopsided affair, I went against the grain, and was advised by some people to correct the anomaly but I decided against it. As long as those holding the post were competent and co-operative, they would have nothing to fear. It turned out that all of the twelve except one, fairly met my criteria. Ironically, the one who rebelled against me was a Yoruba man. Since I was not ready to embark on a complete overhauling of the system; the best I could do was to retain the Yoruba's and Igbo's irreducible minimum of one each.

———— PART III ————

International Programmes



Chapter 14

World Bank Loans

The World Bank Loan for both the then 20 Federal Universities and the Primary School Textbook Aid Project were controversial issues during my tenure of office as a minister of education.

A. World Bank Loan of \$120 million to the Universities

The \$120 million loan agreement for procurement of library books, journals and equipment was signed in October/November 1989, just about two months before I assumed office. I therefore had no input in its original form and I was left with its implementation regime. I must congratulate my predecessor, Prof. Jibril Aminu on his foresight in procuring the soft loan for the federal universities with particular reference to (a) library books (b) journals (c) workshop/laboratory equipment.

However, some of the difficulties I ran into during the implementation programme were perhaps not anticipated by Prof. Jibril Aminu. The first shock I received was to learn that the three items (a), (b) and (c) above had been advertised outside Nigeria; that is, in foreign newspapers; consequently no Nigerian company with the exception of those with foreign counterpart, representatives or partners abroad saw or knew about the call for tender! The only name connected with Nigeria among a list of those who applied was a supermarket, U.T.C, which is a foreign firm based in Lagos whose parent company is in Geneva, where the tender was opened.

Two junior officers, one from the Federal Ministry of Finance and another from the Federal Ministry of Education, represented Nigeria at Geneva. Before the two officers returned to Nigeria to give a report to me and the Minister of Finance, the representative of an English company was celebrating with champagne the success of his company on the World Bank

project in advance. A colleague called me up and asked what was going on. It looked as if this particular English company had been earmarked for the project even before the tenders were opened! I was furious.

A week later, I got a full report on the tender. The English company was ranked number one, followed by two other companies that were based abroad but had some Nigerians on their boards.

Before I received the official report, I made up my mind not to accept the recommendations of the tenders board that met in Geneva. When the report came and I was advised that the two companies that were numbered 2 and 3 out of the thirty companies listed, had some Nigerian representation, I decided to give approval to the three companies in the following proportions as represented by their scores: company X, 50%, company B, 30%, and company C, 20%. That meant each company would supply books to the university libraries in these proportions. In any case, we should not put all our eggs in one basket.

I thought I had resolved the issue but alas, as a result of my decision the storm gathered instead.

First I was told by the World Bank representative that I could not split the tender into two parts, not to mention three. It was winner take all. I remained unmoved. Several meetings were held by the representatives of the English company, ministries of education and finance and World Bank officials. Telephone calls were constantly being made to the headquarters of the company in London, to no avail. All parties stood their ground: the English company, Federal Ministry of Education and the World Bank representative.

To ensure that I kept President Babangida fully informed of my stand on the World Bank's objection to my proposal, I sent the following memo to him on November 28, 1990:

“My dear Mr. President,

Appointment of Procurement Agents for Books and Journals under the World Bank Credit Facility for Federal Universities Development Sector Adjustment Operation

Mr. President may recall that my predecessor in office, Professor Jibril Aminu, obtained approval to negotiate with the World Bank in Washington D.C., a World Bank credit facility of 120 million U.S. Dollars for development of Federal Universities. The loan agreement has been signed and preliminary project activities have started. Such activities include the preparation of the universities for meeting the eligibility criteria on which individual university

participation is hinged; the setting up of implementation offices in all the twenty participating universities, the submission to NUC of lists of the books, journals, equipment and spare parts the universities intend to procure; and the appointment of agents to handle the various procurement activities.

The project consists of three major components namely, Books, Journals and Equipment with allocations of US \$25m, \$12m and \$52m respectively. The remaining amount has been allocated to staff development, expatriate supplementation, and the strengthening of the Students Loans Board and the National Universities Commission...

The panel which evaluated the bids for Journal Procurement recommended that the contract be split between the two companies which were adjudged suitable. In like manner, the panel which evaluated the bids for Book Procurement recommended that the contract be split among "two or more procurement agents" so as not to put all the "eggs in one basket".

I accepted these recommendations and supported that the two contracts be split among the bidders that were adjudged most competent. In respect of the contract for book procurement, in particular, I was anxious that no agent got a contract for the procurement of more than 25% of the books, considering the total loan allocation to the item. Secondly, with the size of Nigeria and the fact that the twenty universities are scattered throughout the country coupled with the unpredictable transport system, it will be an impossible task for one company to procure the books and transport them to all the universities at the same time. The World Bank was duly informed of the result of the bid evaluation and our decision to split the two contracts for procurement of books and journals and our reasons for such decisions.

The Bank has reacted strongly against the splitting of the contract and claimed that is against its procurement guidelines which stipulate that such contracts should go to the lowest evaluated bidder. It is therefore insisting that the lowest evaluated bidder in each case should be selected. My own stand is that it is not in the interest of Nigeria to award contracts of such high values to single organisations, because large components of the project could be at risk if the single organisations should fail for any reason. On the other hand, the Bank insists that its guidelines must be adhered to and that the splitting of the book procurement contract would lead to a loss of up to US\$4 million worth of books. We have proposed that all the four agents should be requested to supply books at the lowest bid and if any of them failed, its share would be allocated to other agents.

The Bank rejected this proposal. What informed our position was that it was common knowledge (among students and staff of our universities) that

Company X had been celebrating its success as the only winner long before the tender was opened. The universities are planning to protest if we offer the book procurement solely to Company X. I do not want to take this risk - World Bank credit facility of US\$120 million notwithstanding.

We are therefore at a stalemate in the implementation of the project. My recommendation is that we should maintain our stand in respect of book procurement and if the Bank should withdraw its credit allocation of US\$25 million to that component of the project, as it has threatened, I recommend that the country funds it from its own resources. I also need to add that the Bank has informed us that it reserved its right to review the credit facility if our stand is maintained. I suggest that if the matter gets to this point, the country should fund the project to the extent that its resources could go and call off the bluff of the Bank.

Mr. President would wish to note the following developments on the World Bank Credit Facility for the Federal Universities development sector adjustment operations:

- (i) that bids have been invited, obtained and evaluated for the procurement of books, journals and equipment;
- (ii) that in accordance with the recommendations of the evaluation panels which were set up by the NUC, I approved that contracts for procurement of books and journals be split among companies that were adjudged most competent;
- (iii) that the Bank is opposed to (ii) above and has insisted that the lowest bidders only in each case should be selected;
- (iv) that the stand of the bank might put the implementation of this very sensitive project in jeopardy; and
- (v) that one of the major objections in our University Community was the fact that one foreign agent was being given the contract even before the bids were opened and they were correct.

Mr. President is therefore invited to:

- (i) support our stand that the contract for the procurement of books, at least, be split among the four companies that have been adjudged most competent;
- (ii) agree that if the Bank should withdraw the \$25 million allocation to the book component, Nigeria should fund it from its own resources;
- (iii) also agree that if the Bank should withdraw the credit facility of US\$120 million on this score, Nigeria should fund as much of the project as it can and call off the bluff of the Bank."

The President noted my submission.

Meanwhile, Nigerian National Students Union was up in arms against the World Bank loan for the universities. They staged several protests. They sent me protest letters and sought a meeting with me and their representatives. I met them. I was also confronted by the University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University students during my visits to their campuses. On each occasion, I indicated that I shared their concern but that we had no viable alternative. Our libraries were full of old and out-of-date books and journals.

Secondly, while we had produced 100% of the primary school textbooks and 90% of the secondary school textbooks ourselves, we had only authored about 15% of the tertiary books. Pending the time when our lecturers and professors are encouraged to produce at least 50% of our required books at the tertiary level, we have to depend heavily on overseas publications.

Thirdly, even if we have funds to purchase these materials, we would still have to buy the same books we planned to procure via World Bank loan. Therefore, the accusation that we were borrowing foreign money to buy books and thus keep the lenders fully employed at our own expense did not hold. It would have been the same scenario even if we had to spend our own funds; we still would have no choice but to buy from the same market. Meanwhile, the World Bank representative for West Africa was unhappy about the prolonged stalemate over procurement questions. He wrote the then Minister of Finance, Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji and copied me on November 4, 1991.

After several weeks of stalemate, the World Bank representatives came up with a compromise solution that would meet World Bank's requirement and meet the wishes of the Federal Ministry of Education. The solution: the English company X that won the tender would be given the contract but would give 50% distribution rights to companies B and C. I accepted the arrangement, but I insisted that company X must first of all sign an agreement of intent with companies B and C before we gave the contract to it. Company X insisted on signing the major contract first. It felt it had won the battle since the World Bank had vindicated its position. I therefore refused to sign the letter of intent. I insisted, no letter of intent, no contract. Again further stalemate. Finally company X complied. After all 50% was better than nothing!

Again my decision to allow more than one company to participate in the books contract was informed first by the need for the security of the amount being invested and secondly, to allow the two companies with substantial

Nigerian interest, namely, company B & company C to gain relevant experience which is in line with the Government policy on backward integration.

Of course the \$120 million soft loan was not for books alone. It also covered (a) the procurement of equipment and spare parts for workshops and laboratories; (b) staff development overseas; (c) topping up of expatriate staff salaries in the universities and (d) strengthening of the National Universities Commission.

The then Executive Secretary of NUC, Professor Idris A. Abdulkadiri, showed considerable competence in the handling of the \$120 million World Bank loan.

The Progress Report on the World Bank Federal Universities Development Sector Adjustment Operation submitted to me by the NUC Executive Secretary was very instructive, as summarised below:

Appointment of Procurement Agents

(a) Books

“It would be recalled that as at March, 1991 when the last Progress Report was made on the World Bank project, while the Government of Nigeria and the World Bank had agreed on the modalities for the appointment of procurement agents for books, company X which was declared the winner of the contracts being the lowest evaluated bidder could not reach an agreement with Government on what share of the books contract to give to the other procurement agents now acting as sub-contractors. Although the Government had proposed 50% to company X with the remaining 50% to be shared among the other three agents, company X wrote to us that its share should be raised to 70% and the remaining 30% should be shared equally between the two companies with Nigerian connections, thus, eliminating the American company Y from the contract. This proposal was rejected by Government and thereafter, there developed another period of deadlock which was only broken when company X came up with a more acceptable proposal.

During a meeting held on 20th June, 1991 between the representatives of company X led by its chairman and the executive secretary with members of the NUC Implementation Committee in attendance, company X finally agreed to execute 50% of the books contract as proposed by Government. However, the company had succeeded in forming an alliance with one of the sub-agents namely company C, which was being proposed to execute 15% of the contract. The two companies had agreed to jointly execute their

combined share of 65% of the contract. While I did not oppose such an alliance if only it would enable things to move forward, the representatives of company C who were also in attendance during the meeting were told that the company would be allocated its own particular universities for distribution purposes like the other sub-agents and would be held responsible for performance in those universities. In order to sort this out with the other sub-agents, company X indicated during the meeting that it intended to go into dialogue with the other sub-agents.

Perhaps it would be pertinent to report a recent development which has slightly affected the positions of the procurement agents in the Evaluation Report submitted to the World Bank in the middle of the previous year. Almost immediately after the February 1991 meeting with the NUC (represented by the Executive Secretary and the Implementation Committee), there was a signal from the World Bank that the final recommendation in the Evaluation Reports on Books and Journals was at variance with the provisions of the Bidding Documents. It was pointed out that while the Bidding Documents had stated that once agents have been found technically qualified, the final selection would be based on the financial evaluation (i.e. price comparison). The Evaluation Panel on Books and Journals had based its final recommendation on a combination of both the technical and financial evaluations.

“As a result of the World Bank observations, the evaluation report on books was amended, based on the provisions of the Bidding Documents. The amendment caused a slight change in the positions of the Agents as indicated below:

Agent	Discount Offered	Position	Percentage of Contract Allocated
COMPANY X OF UK	19.4%	1st	50%
COMPANY B WITH NIGERIAN INTEREST	12%	2nd	20%
COMPANY Y OF USA	6%	3rd	15%
COMPANY C WITH NIGERIAN INTEREST	3½%	4th	15%

The agents were informed of this change in their positions but the sub-agents were also told that they would all have to offer the same discount a company X (i.e. 19.4%) which is the only way they can be accommodated under the existing World Bank regulations."

(b) Journals

As reported in March, the two agents involved in the Journals procurement contract had already indicated during their meeting with the Executive Secretary and the Implementation Committee in February that they were prepared to work together. However, as stated above, almost immediately this agreement was reached the World Bank observation on the anomaly in the Evaluation Report appeared. This, as in the case of books, necessitated an amendment of the Evaluation Report to comply with the provisions of the Bidding Documents. As a result of this, company C which was declared the winner of the Journals contract during the February meeting had to drop from being the main contractor to the position of a sub-contractor, since the charges proposed by the Consortium were higher than those of Company B which now won the contract under the new dispensation, thus:

Agent	Charges	Position	Percentage of Contract Allocated
COMPANY B	1% Discount and 10% charges	1st	60%
COMPANY C	13% charges	2nd	40%

The two companies were invited to a meeting with the Executive Secretary and the Implementation Committee on 22nd May, 1991 during which the circumstances that led to changes in their positions were explained to them. The two companies were also informed that both would have to adopt the charges proposed by company B, which is the only way company C could be accommodated in the contract without flouting existing World Bank regulations. Once all the necessary details were sorted out, negotiations commenced on the contract document and it is hoped that this will be finalised within the next few weeks and the contract for Journals procurement signed.

Epilogue

I left office in January 1993. A few months later, specifically right after the annulled June 12, 1993 general election, one of the companies with substantial Nigerian ownership, that is, company B, was dropped because one of the contestants for the presidential election was a substantial owner of company B. That was the bad news.

The good news was that the programme was substantially implemented in full in spite of delays and obstacles encountered during the implementation period.

As we have shown in this section and as it will be further demonstrated in the next section, the World Bank should re-examine its negative and often unhelpful attitude towards its clients. Its rigid stance which does not permit adjustment of its position to reflect its client's socio-political problems or concerns tends to create unnecessary friction and promote an attitude of beggar/donor relationship, even when that so called "donation" is a refundable loan by the "beggar"!

B. World Bank Loan: Primary School Textbook Aid Project

The Primary Education Improvement Project 1992-1997 was established with World Bank credit assistance to the tune of 120 million US dollars under which the following projects would be carried out:

1. Supply of 11 million primary one books in five basic/core subjects, that is, Mathematics, English, Primary Science, Social Studies and Nigerian languages to every pupil from September 1992. By 1997 which was to be termination year, a total of 98 million text books covering primary one to six would have been produced and distributed to all the primary schools in the federation. The original design called for lending five books to each child and then withdrawing them at the end of the day. (But I insisted that each child should have two of the books to call "his or her own" preferably Mathematics and English).
2. Retraining of 360,000 educational personnel, including teachers, headmasters, supervisors, inspectors and planners.
3. Research and development projects aimed at improving educational instruments, e.g., assessment and certification, guidance and counselling, headmastership in rural and urban environments.
4. Improvement of management information and
5. Supply of audio visuals and equipment.

An earlier survey was conducted by the World Bank in 1989 to identify

educational needs of primary education *vis a vis* book scarcity and the printing capacity of the Nigerian publishers and printers. The survey claimed

- (a) that there was a serious shortage of textbooks and other teaching aids at this level, and
- (b) that the printing capacity of the Nigerian book industry was less than 15% chiefly because the printers spent eight to nine months in printing calendars, diaries, invitation and call cards, obituaries etc. and only three to four months a year on book production.

The survey concluded that Nigeria had no executive capacity to print 11 million, not to mention 98 million books over a period of six years. When the report was presented to me in 1990, I gave the lie to this claim. I have been connected with the Nigerian book industry for over thirty years as an author, editor and a non-executive Director of two publishing companies – Macmillan and Academy Press. Because of the seasonal nature of book publishing in Nigeria, printers had to occupy their time with calendars, diaries, etc. to fill in the eight months' lull in book production. If there were enough books to occupy their time all the year round, they would rather produce books than obituaries, marriage invitation and calendars!

In June 1990, six months after my assumption of office, I had to go to Washington D.C. to finalise the proposal for the \$120 million loan and sign an agreement. Two of my officers and a member of the Nigerian Embassy in Washington D.C. accompanied me. Three World Bank officials led by a Director (or Deputy Director) represented the Bank. After the usual pleasantries and coffee, we settled down to business. We reviewed the proposed loan agreement and reached a consensus on most points except a few but very important items.

One, the document indicated that in keeping with the World Bank procedure, the printing of the primary books had to be advertised worldwide to give every member country a chance to bid for the contract. Two, any good primary textbook that was adjudged appropriate by experts could be reproduced.

In response to the issue of the reproduction of any appropriate foreign primary textbook. I made it clear that Nigeria had produced 100% of all the books needed for this level and for at least 80% of the secondary textbooks, even though we were not doing as well at the tertiary level which was put at 15% or thereabout. I therefore vehemently objected to the inclusion of any Jack and Jill book or anything similar for Nigerian children. As it is the case in the UK and US, our primary books reflect our cultural ethics, unlike the situation in some French-speaking African countries where French books

are massively used including a primer which says "our grand sires, the Gauls with blue eyes and wavy hair." In fairness to the World Bank officials, they appreciated my point and agreed to restrict the production of the primary textbooks to those written by Nigerian authors and published in Nigeria.

The issue of world-wide advertisement was the most damning of all the clauses listed under the loan agreement. I told the World Bank officials point blank that Nigeria would not accept this procedure. It was Nigeria's loan even though it was at 2% interest. We therefore must have the final say on how to use the fund. To open the contract to international bidders to compete with Nigerian bidders is like making a tilapia (small fish) compete with sharks. I therefore made it clear that the books would be printed by Nigerian publishers and printers. I was reminded by the officials of the Bank that the Bank's survey of Nigeria's book printing capacity was found to be 15%. I had already debunked this erroneous statement. I made it clear that as far as the Nigerian publishing was concerned, I was a better authority on Nigerian publishing industry than the World Bank experts. I went further to state that I expected the World Bank to be keen on helping to build a viable book production infrastructure in Nigeria by encouraging and supporting small, medium and large scale Nigerian publishers and printers after the project would have been concluded six years later. Nigeria should not at the end of six years go cap in hand to the World Bank to beg for another \$120 million loan! The World Bank representatives were visibly disturbed by my statement. One of the officials said she could lose her job if the agreement fell through. I said I would certainly earn a well deserved condemnation of my country men and also lose my job if I sold them short. "Honourable Minister, is this a political stand?" said the official and I replied, "My stand is both political and economic." I further stated that I would rather cancel the loan than to shortchange my country.

Despite the erroneous generalisation that Nigerians are corrupt and foreigners are innocent and upright, I told the Bank officials that I would not accede to the World Bank's request even if I were offered 100% of the loan as a bribe!

The meeting ended in a stalemate. The World Bank sat tight and so did I. To be on the safe side, I went straight to President Babangida to report in full what happened at the World Bank meeting in Washington and he readily approved my stand. I took this step to forestall an attempt by any official, Nigerian or foreign, who might call on the President before I reported and casually seek the President's approval which might be innocently given. If this were to happen I would have lost the battle and my personal integrity.

With the President's concurrence with my stand, I continued to sit tight. Nothing was heard from the World Bank for almost four months. Some of the Bank officials, including a vice-president of the bank, called on me and the Minister of Finance, but I held to my position. The Minister of Finance Alhaji Alhaji intervened, but to no avail. I was told that the \$120 million loan would lapse in six months. I was not impressed. I could afford to stand firm.

Finally, I gave the World Bank a final compromise proposal. Nigerians would print 80% of the books while non-Nigerians would be given 20%. But all the books must be those authored by Nigerians. The World Bank agreed. Interestingly, the advertisement was placed world-wide in keeping with the World Bank's policy but it was designed to favour Nigerian publishers and printers! I was very impressed by the Bank's unexpected flexibility.

My next encounter was with the Nigerian publishers. I invited the Executive Committee of the Nigerian Publishers' Association to discuss the World Bank Primary School Textbook Aid Project. The purpose of my meeting the publishers was to fully brief them about the World Bank Project and appeal to them for maximum cooperation. I needed their support in order to demonstrate to the Bank that Nigerian publishers and printers were capable of successfully executing the printing of the 98 million primary text books (less 20% given to foreign publishers). I also appealed to the publishers not to treat this project as a gold mine but to settle for small profits by not over-pricing their books. I said this because I learnt that one can print books in Hongkong, Singapore, etc., for less than half of the cost of printing the same material in Nigeria, U.K. or U.S.A. At the meeting which was held in May 1991, I could only discuss the project in general terms as the details were still being worked out with the World Bank.

The Publishers' representatives assured me of their members' maximum cooperation. A few months later, I received the following correspondence from them on November 5, 1991.

Honourable Minister,

"Further to our letter of 16th July, 1991 in respect of which we still respectfully await your reaction, we submit herewith a full-length paper expressing our reflections, views and visions, as an industry, of our past contributions to national intellectual growth through book development, as well as our potential role in the successful implementation of the imminent World Bank Primary Book Aid Programme.

Although our paper discusses in detail all issues addressed, we do realise how busy you are and how little time you may have, right away, for reading

through lengthy submissions such as this. We therefore provide, hereunder, a gist of the main issues raised in the paper which we would nonetheless enjoin you, Sir, to make time to peruse.

We applaud the bold stand taken by your Ministry in insisting on the local production of as much as 80% of the total value of the World Bank Primary Book Aid package. This you had disclosed to a delegation of the Nigerian Publishers' Association which called on you last May and we believe that it is manifestly in the national interest and we hope that you will successfully resist any attempts to change this patriotic position.

Although we are convinced that being an eminent educationist yourself, you are very well aware of the key role of publishing (i.e. the development and provision of books) in national intellectual growth and well being, this has been expatiated in our paper. The stature and contributions of the Nigerian publishing industry in spite of plaguing economic and social hindrances of the past and present are also pointed out, climaxing in the lofty commendations of the Nigerian Books Sector Study Summary Report, 1990, commissioned by your Ministry and part-funded by the World Bank.

With a strong publishing industry such as this nation is fortunate to have, your Ministry, as the relevant arm of Government, has a ready resource, for technical advice and collaboration in execution, available to it in matters related to book provision for the citizenry. The industry holds strong views which it has found necessary, on occasions in the past, to channel to government through your Ministry. We trust that now, as then, these views will be considered in the nationalistic (if professional) spirit in which they are given.

The World Bank Primary Book Aid Project is a very important project for our country, not only because of the huge loan involved, but also in consideration of the lasting, positive impact it is expected to make on our "knowledge industry" which is itself the key to all economic and social development.

We are anxious, like you, Sir, that the project should succeed (i.e. make the desired lasting, positive impact) in order to justify the national debt incurred for settlement by this and coming generations of Nigerians.

With every sense of responsibility therefore, we recommend as follows:-

- (a) That the publishers whose books are selected be regarded the *primary suppliers* or "contractors" under this programme, since:
 - i. they are the *owners* of such books,
 - ii. publishers are well versed in the bulk provision of books to the nation's school system and thoroughly understand the logistics

- involved, including the negotiation of costs, selection of printers on the basis of competence, strict professional supervision of work-in-progress and distribution.
- iii. their involvement will reduce the tedium of close supervision of the multi-faceted task which would otherwise fall on already very busy government officials.
 - iv. as an autonomous party, with a permanent interest in the product concerned, their involvement in this way will constitute a veritable measure for ensuring the continuity of the project even beyond the life of the present administration (i.e. 1992-96/97).
 - v. publishers are in the best position to make the benefits of the whole project reflect, on a permanent basis, the intellectual growth and development of the country. All other actors in the scheme can only exert a temporary influence, while the non-publisher suppliers, especially, are most unlikely to reinvest profits made from the project in the long-term development of book production infrastructure, in such a way as to make a future repeat of the scheme unnecessary.
- (b) That there is need to press forward with the textbook appraisal (‘‘pre-qualification’’ segment of the programme, with a view to establishing, before long, which books will be used and what quantities of the selected books will be required. Furthermore, that it will be necessary, at a proper professional meeting with publishers, to decide what prices will be charged, what funding/payment arrangements will apply and what modifications, if any, will be required in the content and formats of the selected books before the commencement of production.
- (c) That publishers as primary suppliers/‘‘contractors’’ to the project, be provided with a list of book printers, nationwide who meet government minimum technical performance standards and who should therefore be *sub-contracted*, severally, by the individual publishers concerned in keeping with international publishing practice, to produce the books selected.

We believe, Sir, that your acceptance of the foregoing recommendations will greatly facilitate the positive professional input which the Nigerian publishing industry feels able to make towards ensuring the success of this all-important national project. We continue to await your invitation to a further dialogue on this subject.”

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Earlier, I had set up a committee to review all the primary books published

in Nigeria and in use within a certain number of years. The Nigerian Publishers' Associations views were:

- (1) Publishers whose books were chosen should be the sole contractors for the printing of those particular books;
- (2) The said publisher would in turn sub-contract to printers of their choice and of course at the publishers own price.

The Federal Ministry of Education's positions were that:

- (1) The publisher whose book(s) were selected would be well compensated and would have the right to bid for the printing of their book(s).
- (2) Tenders would be thrown open to other publishers and printers to bid for the printing of any book(s). This was to encourage small and medium scale publishers and printers to participate and gain more experience in the production of books and other educational materials.
- (3) The Federal Ministry of Education would determine the cost of producing each book after due consultation.
- (4) The Federal Ministry of Education would be in charge of (1), (2), and (3) above.

Implementation in the Breach

The year one books comprising Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, English and a Nigerian Language, were produced towards the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993. Some 50 Nigerian printers and publishers produced about 11 million copies of the year one course.

Before I relinquished office in January 1993, I set up a committee to propose effective strategies for the distribution of the books to all the states of the federation and Abuja. But alas! for some strange reasons, the books were left undistributed in several warehouses from 1993 to 1995, a period of three years during which scarcity of books was as its worst in the primary and secondary levels. The Secretary of Education who succeeded me and those who followed after him really owe the nation an explanation and a profound apology! In any country where accountability is the hallmark of good governance, those public officers whose performance is below expectation would be held responsible for this criminal act and be penalised as appropriate.

I mentioned earlier that I forced the World Bank to agree to the printing of the 98 million books for over the six years period 1991 to 1997 under the following conditions:

- (1) only primary books by Nigerian authors would be published;
- (2) 80% of the books would be printed by Nigerian printers and publishers.

These conditions were strictly adhered to when we produced the 11 million year one books.

After I left office, the conditions were altered as follows:

- (1) Any appropriate primary book would be selected for publication.
- (2) Any printer or publisher *in the world* could bid for the printing.
- (3) Years 2 to 6 would be advertised for printing and contracts awarded accordingly!

The whole principle of using the World Bank Book Loan for developing solid Nigerian publishing and printing industry was thrown out at the first opportunity. Again, the nation should ask those in charge to defend their irresponsible action.

Since I started writing this book, two very sad events took place in quick succession. On January 31, 1997 *The Guardian* Newspaper carried the following story under the headline:

Misuse of Education Commission's ₦32 Billion Raises Dust

“A top official of the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) has been indicted by the Federal Government for allegedly mismanaging ₦32 billion.

The Commission received the money as contributions from the federal, state and local governments for the management and development of primary education in Nigeria between September 1994 and last year.”

As the pioneer Chairman of the National Primary Education Commission between 1988 and 1989, my commissioners and I and the top officials of the Commission which comprised different ethnic groups worked very hard to establish the commission on a sound footing. Our goal was to ensure that every primary teacher and other staff *are paid regularly* now and for ever! With about ₦10 billion a year out of the federal, state and local governments budgets, we could successfully run the programme, provided the commission is manned by men and women of integrity. It is damning indeed that some of the top officers I sacked at National Primary Education Commission for mismanagement and fraud during my tenure as minister of education were quickly re-instated as soon as I left office. To make matters worse, the Commission was being run without a board to guide it and therefore left the administration to the whims and caprices of the re-instated officer who was later alleged to have mismanaged ₦32 billion!

I hardly recovered from this unfortunate turn of events when I learnt that the \$120 million soft loan which I laboured tirelessly for and for which I fought a running battle with the World Bank representatives in Lagos and

Washington DC, USA had been cancelled! Again *The Guardian* produced the shocking headline news.

World Bank Scraps \$100 million Education Loan

"Nigeria is to forfeit a \$100 million (N8.4 billion) World Bank aid to primary education for perceived poor showing by local administering authorities.

Also, prospects of another \$80 million (N6.72 billion) aid to secondary education on which the Federal Government opened talks in 1995 with the bank have been jeopardised.

Authoritative sources at the World Bank mission in Nigeria said contrary to the optimism lately expressed on the primary education project in official circles, the Finance Ministry has already been notified of the bank's resolve to cancel \$100 million of a \$120 million (N10.08 billion) aid granted Nigeria in 1991 to salvage the decrepit primary school system.

One source linked the impending cancellation of the aid to the less than satisfactory manner the Nigerian education authorities had implemented the national primary education project which is expected to terminate in June this year (1997)."

Mercifully after a flurry of activities by Nigerian government officials spear-headed by the Federal Ministry of Finance (not of Education), the World Bank reluctantly agreed to extend the terminal date for the implementation of the \$120 million loan from June 1997 to June 1999.

In *The Guardian* of July 4, 1997 the headline reads:

"World Bank Extends \$120m UPE Terminal Date to 1999"

The World Bank, in its bid to boost primary education in Nigeria, yesterday announced the extension of the terminal date for the implementation of the \$120 million Universal Primary Education (UPE) project to June 1999.

"Originally scheduled to end last month, the project, under the auspices of the International Development Agency (IDA), was entered into with the Federal Government in June 1991.

The World Bank Resident Representative in Nigeria, Mr. Trevor Byer, speaking in Abuja yesterday at a joint press briefing with officials of the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), however, foreclosed outright cancellation of IDA credit to Nigeria "for now".

About \$48.35 million is to be spent in the two years of grace, out of which \$19 million is expected to be expended between this month and next year while the remaining \$29 million is to be disbursed in the second year of grace ending in June 1999.

This 're-alignment,' Byer believes, is capable of revitalising primary education in Nigeria.

The Bank had last week accused Nigeria of "poor aggregation" of the six-year old grant which according to experts was characterised by low investment level, dissolution and re-constitution of implementing agencies, poor accounting and late auditing.

On the 'low disbursement' phenomenon, Byer lamented that only \$17 million was disbursed after five years and three months on the project while the remainder is yet to be properly accounted for.

At last week's workshop on 'Cost financing and management of primary education', the resident representative agreed that recent studies have shown "widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of education provided in public schools in Nigeria.

But Byer confirmed yesterday that the two-year extension was at the instance of the Federal Ministry of Finance which also demanded a reversal of an earlier proposed cancellation of \$100 million of the credit and a mission to restructure the project for more effective and efficient implementation."

Byer also announced that in the new dispensation, project implementation is to be reviewed after one year.

He stressed that the extension 'has been granted on the understanding that there is a renewed commitment of the NPEC and Education Ministry as well as the Finance Ministry for effective project implementation."

Epilogue

The irony of this unfortunate episode was this: A government that keeps telling its people that it has no money or has limited funds to finance education, got \$120 million soft loan and could not handle it. Of course the real issue is that we tend to put incompetent personnel at the helm of affairs and these sacred cows commit all kinds of atrocities and get away with them!

The Nigerian voters must demand accountability from their government from the head of state down to the government messenger. In a true democracy nobody is above the law.

Chapter 15

Some Nigerian Contributions to UNESCO

Since independence, Nigeria has been playing an active role in the United Nations and its specialised agencies; e.g., UNESCO, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, etc. I have had the privilege of serving as an Area Specialist in charge of political report from Kenya, Tanzania and Seychelles in the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 1952 to 1953. I also attended several meetings of UNESCO as a Nigerian delegate between 1962 and 1987. Specifically, I was a consultant for UNESCO on Mother Tongue education, Prejudice in Textbooks, higher Education planning and Teacher Education.

I noticed that over the years, we Africans attending UNESCO meetings in particular had no opportunity to consult one another on issues that required joint African action, unlike European, Asian and American groups. I recall that in the early 1970's, I wrote the Secretary-General of Organisation of African Unity (OAU) requesting that we organise the African Education Department under whose auspices African ministers of education, African teachers and professors of education could meet and share experiences etc. The Secretary-General was too busy with the only item with which OAU concerns itself, - politics, - to give me a reply. Till today OAU still has no education unit unlike the Organisation of American State, (OAS) and ESEAN, the Asian counterpart both of which have very strong education divisions. Without a rallying point, African delegates were working at cross purposes. Without any continental or regional conclave of our own, and without any leadership or initiative from any country, we could only meet in Paris or Geneva when the UNESCO bi-ennial general meeting was called. Of course our permanent delegates at the UNESCO do meet and consult

with one another from time to time; their ministers had no such opportunity. The UNESCO regional meeting in Dakar is a welcome development but is too "agenda specific" to provide the type of open forum envisaged for African ministers of education.

During the last year of Professor Jibril Aminu's tenure as minister of education in 1989, Nigeria sponsored and convened a conference of African Ministers of Education in Abuja. UNESCO and World Bank contributed but it was largely a Nigerian initiative and the credit went to Jibril Aminu and the Federal Ministry of Education staff. The meeting at Abuja agreed that African Ministers of Education should hold a formal meeting every two years but this was not to be as no other African country volunteered to host the next conference.

When I became minister, I decided to rally the African Ministers at the first opportunity which came in 1991 and later in 1992.

I addressed the following letter to each of the fifty African Ministers:

6th August, 1992

The Honourable Minister
Ministry of Education & Sports
Nairobi
Kenya

"My Dear Colleague,

African Ministers' Pre-Conference Meetings

The Honourable Minister would recall that at the end of our meeting with the British Council in Manchester in 1991, we agreed that whenever there was any international meeting involving all of us, for example, UNESCO, IBE, etc, we would arrange to have a pre-conference meeting a day preceding the conference in order to save funds for special meetings.

As you are aware, there is a meeting of International Conference on Education in Geneva from 14th to 19th September, 1992. I am inviting all Honourable Ministers to a pre-conference meeting on 13th September, 1992 at 6.00p.m., to be held within the conference premises. Notices will be displayed when the actual room is known.

The major item for discussion at this meeting is "Education for All by the Year 2000" programme and matters arising from the Manchester book scarcity meeting.

I look forward to seeing you on 13th September, 1992 at 6.00p.m.
Yours sincerely,"

Professor A.B. Fafunwa
(*Chairman*)

As a result of the above letter, I convened a meeting of African Ministers of Education during the 43rd Session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, 13th September, 1992. At the meeting, I was invited by other ministers of education to take the chair. I welcomed Honourable Ministers and other delegates to the meeting and thanked them for responding to my invitation. In my letter inviting them to the meeting, written on 6th August, 1992, I had stated that the major items of discussion would be the follow-up of the World Conference on Education for All and the scarcity of books for schools. They therefore suggested that those two items should constitute the agenda. The meeting adopted the agenda.

I then invited the Honourable Ministers in attendance and other delegates sitting in for their Ministers to introduce themselves. This was done.

I recalled that African Ministers of Education held a meeting at Abuja, Nigeria in 1989 convened and sponsored by Nigeria and some other sponsors. The Ministers also met at the Conference of African Ministers of Education and those responsible for Economic Development sponsored by UNESCO at Dakar in 1991 and also took the opportunity of the 26th session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in 1991 to meet and hold some consultations.

After the General Conference, many Ministers also accepted the invitation of the British Council to meet at Manchester, England to discuss the scarcity of books for schools, and there again they were able to meet to discuss subjects of common interest.

At the meeting in Abuja in 1989, it was agreed that African Ministers of Education should hold a formal meeting every two years, but this had not been possible for lack of sponsorship. The Ministers who were at Manchester lamented this situation and noted that they were only able to meet when they attend an International Conference for other purposes. They therefore decided that in future, they should hold a meeting a day before any international conference which would bring them together, at the venue of the conference. For this purpose they elected me as chairman and the Minister of Education of Mauritius as Secretary. It was under this mandate that I convened the meeting.

The meeting expressed its satisfaction with the initiative taken by me to convene the meeting and I in turn expressed my appreciation for the response of my ministerial colleagues. I stated that apart from the two items on the agenda, other subjects of common interest might be raised by any Minister.

Following the World Conference on Education for All, held in 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand, the adoption of the Declaration and the Framework for the achievement of basic education for all by the year 2000, it was also expected that each region would articulate its strategies and programmes for the realization of the Jomtien objectives.

As the African region had not done so, there were therefore no Africa-wide strategies and no proposals which could be submitted to donor agencies that promised to finance African education. If I therefore urged the meeting to try to reach some consensus on the African approach to Education for All. I knew that each African country had, since Jomtien, been working to design its programmes for EFA but that it was time to design an African programme which could be jointly presented to Donors to African Education.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that as a first step, each country should brief the meeting on its programmes and progress it was already making towards EFA. The briefing was as follows:-

Senegal

After the Jomtien Conference, a national conference was held which elaborated a programme for EFA. The programme involved a medium term objective to reach 65% school enrolment between 1995 and 1997. A major programme for literacy campaign was also discussed. A Ministry of Literacy had been created to execute the programme and to develop the use of national languages for the Literacy Campaign.

Kenya

The representative of Kenya stated that his Minister had not arrived at Geneva and he was not in a position to give a report. The Kenya National Report for the International Conference of Education (ICE) would however be circulated to the conference and would supply the required information.

Lesotho

A central plan had been evolved for 1991-96 under which primary schools would be improved to enrol 100% of school age children. There would also be improvements to the curriculum, the supply of books and the inspectorate. No percentage target had been set for literacy but the attempt is to educate

as many illiterates as possible and distance teaching methods were also being used for that purpose.

Swaziland

100% enrolment in primary education was being attempted. For literacy, volunteer teachers are working through the Savenda Institute, along with those involved in the formal education system. In 1989-90, a survey was conducted of the distribution of schools, primary, secondary and tertiary, in order to ascertain the capacity of the system. 31% of the national budget was devoted to education. However, the rate of population growth and the brain drain among teachers create problems. More resources were needed to provide books and laboratories. Sixty percent present literacy had been achieved and there were plans to strengthen primary education.

Cameroon

Since Jomtien, a general review of education had been made to ascertain the stage that had been reached. Further details of this and other programmes would be available in the Cameroon National Report to ICE.

Gambia

A national conference was held even before Jomtien to design the national education programmes and this was presented to Parliament. The plan approved was for the period 1988 to 2003 and had three objectives, namely, accessibility, quality and relevance. A 6-3-3 cycle of education had been evolved and by 2003, basic education of 9 years would be available for 75% of the children. Traditional Islamic Institutions would enter into the formal education system and qualified teachers in Islamic Institutions would receive government subventions. There was a campaign to enrol more girls in schools. A Non-formal Education Department was responsible for functional literacy where women were a special target group. An institution each for the deaf and the blind had been created to boost education for the handicapped. Positive results were already being achieved.

Tanzania

Tanzania had been ambitious in education. In 1975 two programmes were evolved to achieve Universal Primary Education by 1988, and to eradicate illiteracy by 1990. By 1990, 90% literacy had been achieved. Post-Jomtien, the problem was to consolidate achievements and to tackle special education and education for nomads. If these were overcome, there would be 100%

literacy by the year 2000. Tanzania was already working on a programme of education for the 21st century, to include the curriculum, cost sharing and the role of NGOs.

Burundi

Burundi had also been ambitious. In 1979 a plan for education was prepared to ensure basic education for all by 1992. 72% of this had already been achieved. After Jomtien, a conference was held. 100% achievement of the plan was expected despite population growth. There is however a 10% loss in transfer of students from primary to secondary. A Ministry of Crafts was created in 1991 for teaching technical skills. The head of delegation would, on his arrival, supply further information.

Angola

The representative of Angola could not report in detail in the absence of the head of delegation who had not arrived. He said that education in Angola however had to be seen in the light of the 16 years of civil war. With the peace accord of March 1991 and the expected presidential election in 1992 it was envisaged that work would start towards the achievement of the Jomtien objectives, particularly with the children who had missed school because of the war. Already UNESCO, the European Community and Portugal had plans for helping these children.

Madagascar

There was no report as the Minister had not arrived at Geneva, but on his arrival he would get in touch with his colleagues and also issue a communique.

Chad

The representative of Chad stated that he had no mandate to report until his Minister's arrival. He however observed that Chad has had a 30-year long internal conflict which had affected education. However, a 10-year programme of education at all levels had been prepared and would take into account the people who were affected by the war.

Namibia

Namibia at independence inherited a system which denied education to a section of the population. The first effort was to unify the educational system and this had been done. There was now a programme to provide education to those who were marginalised. A 10-year programme of education for all

had been designed to include pre-and-in-service teacher education, upgrading of the management of schools and the development and distribution of educational materials. Adult literacy was receiving attention with the creation of a Special Division in the Department of Formal Education. The private sector was also being included in literacy campaign and there were more than ₦750 training groups. The Nigerian concept of "each one teach one or pay for the teaching one" had caught on and even the Prime Minister took some time to teach in the programme.

Uganda

There was an Education Review Commission in 1987 which reported its work in 1989 and led to the current government plan. The plan target was the year 2003, not 2000 and it evolves an 8-year cycle. There was the possibility of a compulsory through not yet free system of education for all. First, primary 4 to 8 would be compulsory and later the lower classes and there was a shift from boarding to day schools. Both local and foreign financial resources were being explored. Government was also holding consultations to take public opinion into account. Having made his report, the Minister of Education, Uganda then put forward two items for consideration as follows:-

- (a) The reported plans of a European Company to dump toxic waste in Somalia. He suggested that the meeting should take action to frustrate this attempt.
- (b) Colonial education produced people who could look beyond their national borders such as Dr. Azikwe, Chief Awolowo, Nelson Mandela and Gamal Abdel Nasser but post-independence African education was producing inward looking people who are preoccupied only within their national borders. He invited the meeting to discuss this and offer a statement.

Discussion on these two issues brought in other questions about acid rain, drought in Southern Africa and the famine in Somalia. At the instance of the Minister of Education, Senegal, it was decided however that focus should be on the two issues at hand, since the others had been, or could be taken at other fora. It was decided therefore that a committee consisting of Nigeria, Uganda and Senegal should take up the questions and draft statements for subsequent adoption by the meeting. At the instance of Kenya, it was also agreed that the Arab Group of States should be informed of the initiative, because Somalia, the target of the toxic waste dumping also belongs to that group.

Ghana

A review of the situation in education had been conducted since Jomtien. A Task Force under the Deputy Minister of Education was set up to direct a programme to increase school enrolment. Pre-university education had been reduced to 12 years and university education set at 4 years. Since then, there had been positive results, such that there has been a 56-70% increase in primary education enrolment and 30-40% increase in secondary school enrolment. Non-formal education was being vigorously pursued with 10,000 facilitators working all over the country. Local languages are being used for the campaign for functional literacy. Forty-three percent of the national budget was devoted to education. The decline in the national income, particularly the price of cocoa, constituted a problem, as did the high public enthusiasm (for education) which was taxing government resources. In fact if the national income had been as good as in the years 1956-70, the national targets would have been achieved. However, the plan was to reach 100% literacy by the year 2000.

The Minister suggested that if other African states were suffering the same decline in national income as a result of the decline in the price of produce, the African region must open a dialogue with their European buyers of produce.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia had recently emerged from a period of 17 years of internal strife. The Transitional Government was establishing peace, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the economy. It was also laying the groundwork for democracy and educational development. A Task Force was studying the relevance and quality of education and the modalities for decentralising the highly centralised system. It was planning for EFA and the use of local languages in primary education. There are no percentage targets but it was hoped that peace and democratisation would enhance Universal Primary Education.

Nigeria

A national Curriculum Review Conference was held in 1969 to review what was a colonial system of education in order to make it more relevant to independent Nigeria. Out of that a 6-3-3-4 educational structure eventually evolved. In 1976 Universal Primary Education was launched and school enrolment jumped from 8 million to 12 million. It stood at 15 million. Post-Jomtien, a 9-year compulsory education cycle was to start from 1992.

which "compulsory" means compulsory retention, once a child is enrolled. Educational programmes had also been designed for the handicapped, the nomadic and the migrant children. There was also a programme for Better Life for Rural Dwellers. In literacy campaign, the concept of "each one teach one or fund the teaching of one" was catching on and the mother tongue was being used as the language of instruction, with primers being written in local language.

Summary

I noted that as I had expected, all African States were busy formulating and implementing plans towards EFA. I particularly commended the moral and practical aspects of the concept of "each one teach one", as a means of cost sharing in literacy campaign. I noted that while some countries were getting near the EFA target, many were still far away from it, and I reiterated the need for a regional strategy to be developed.

Closing

It was agreed that the meeting should be adjourned until 6.00p.m. on Thursday 14th September 1992 when a common approach could be formalised. It was agreed that Nigeria, Chad and Tanzania should work on a committee to plan for that meeting and produce an agenda.

I then brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting of Committee set up by African Ministers of Education, Meeting at Geneva, to discuss business assigned to it, met on 14th September 1992. The Hon. Minister of Education, Uganda, Mr. Amanywa Mushega, offered the two items which he had proposed at the previous meeting to be considered, along with those items on the agenda.

The meeting discussed the two items briefly and decided that they were important enough to be referred to a Committee which could study them and draft recommendations to be adopted later. The Ministers of Education of Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda were named to constitute the committee.

This committee met on 17th September and deliberated at length on the two subjects and came to decisions as follows:

The Dumping of Toxic Waste in Somalia

The Committee thought that this matter was so important that it had to be brought to the notice of the International Council on Education (ICE) because of the immensity of the threat to life and health in a country which was already suffering from the destructive effect of a civil war and famine. The

Committee decided therefore to seek an amendment to draft Recommendation No. 78 of the ICE to include a statement on toxic waste disposal in developing countries. However, in order to make an amendment which would be admissible by the Conference, the Committee decided to attach its amendment to paragraph 13 of the draft Recommendation No. 78, page 6 which dealt with environmental protection as shown below:

“This sense of responsibility should also extend to those industrialised nations and companies operating in them, who continue to take advantage of the weak scientific, technological and economic status of developing countries and Africa in particular to make them the dumping ground of the hazardous and toxic wastes of industrial processes.”

Integration

With regards to the problem of post-independence African Education which is tending to produce people who no longer develop Africa-wide vision, the committee thought that the solution might lie in the integration of African education. The committee therefore recommended that initiatives should be taken to encourage further co-operation and networking of institutions and programmes in education. Specifically, the committee also recommended the following actions:

1. A curricular approach to the problem so as to ensure that common African values are taught in schools. The curriculum should be designed in such a way that values of regional and continental cooperation are taught at relevant levels, right from primary to university. This should include particularly such subjects as African history as seen from African perspectives, African economy and culture.
2. For the realisation of (1), African curriculum experts should be commissioned to study the problems and design a curriculum which would be applicable to each level of education, and to design or select suitable instructional materials for teaching such curriculum. The UNESCO *General History of Africa* series was cited as being one source of suitable reference materials for teaching purposes. The committee emphasised that the initiative and development of the teaching curriculum and materials should be entirely African, but that outside assistance could be solicited where it is necessary to do so.
3. The exchange of staff, students, research workers, teaching equipment and materials among African countries should be prompted. The exchange of information should include information on available experts and consultants in all areas and such information should be pooled

produce a definitive directory of African experts.

4. Inter-university cooperation should be encouraged for more effective exchange of staff and students and for cooperative research, and this could be done through the Association of African Universities. The cooperation should also include the establishment of centres of excellence from university to university throughout Africa in order to avoid expensive duplication of efforts and maximize the use of scarce resources.
5. Outside assistance could be solicited from such organisation' as UNESCO for supporting and strengthening African regional institutions and programmes. In particular, assistance should be sought from the UNESCO Programme, Priority Africa."

Attendance

1. Ministers of Education of Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda,
2. Ambassador Y. Aliyu – Recording Secretary,
3. Dr. (Mrs.) A.O. Somefun – Translator

Epilogue

The following letter from Dr. Federico Mayor, the Director-General UNESCO aptly described Nigeria's modest role during my stewardship.

31st July, 1991

H.E. Prof. A. Babs Fafunwa,
Minister of Education,
Lagos,
Nigeria.

Dear Minister,

Upon my return to Paris, I wish to thank you very sincerely for the hospitality and courtesies extended to me during my recent visit to Lagos to attend the opening of the International Council on Education for Teachers (ICET) World Assembly.

My stay in your capital was very brief but most worthwhile. It gave me great satisfaction to have participated in this meeting with you and to have had the opportunity to stress the importance UNESCO attaches to the teaching profession and to the vital work teachers perform in all the countries of the world.

I was very gratified to hear you talk with such perception, both in Lagos and in Dakar during MINEDAF VI earlier this month, of the need to develop and promote the education of teachers of all levels in Africa. In this regard, I would like to express my admiration for the remarkable efforts being made by Nigeria under your leadership at the Ministry of Education. His Excellency the Vice-President, in the audience he kindly gave us, very rightly underlined your own special contribution to the priority area of national education.

I look forward to increased co-operation between your country and the Organisation in the future in a common effort to meet the challenges that lie ahead for all educators in Africa.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Federico Mayor

I can only hope that my successor will not only continue where I left off but also take Nigeria's participation at the UNESCO to greater heights.

To the best of my knowledge my successor did not follow up these initiatives. But how could they? Between January 1993 when I left office till the end of 1997, a period of five years, Nigeria had five ministers and four ministers of state in the Federal Ministry of Education.

Chapter 16

TOKTEN: Brain Gain

TOKTEN is the acronym for Transfer of Knowledge by Technical Expatriate Nationals. I first heard about this programme when I was in Egypt in December, 1989 to attend the World Annual Conference of the International Council on Education and I made some futile attempt to find out which of the United Nations' agencies was responsible for the programme. Then, when I was on my first official visit to the United States to discuss the World Bank loan for the Primary Education Book Project, my education attaché in New York, Mr. Joseph H. Idachaba, mentioned his unsuccessful effort to get the Federal Ministry of Education interested in TOKTEN. He said that if I was interested, he would pass his correspondence file on the subject to me. He was elated to learn that I had been searching for the agency that was in charge. "Of course it is UNDP", he said without hesitation. I promised to study his papers on the subject and get back to him later.

On my return to Lagos, I invited the then representative of the UNDP in Lagos Mr. Assefa Fre-Hiwet for a chat. He was delighted that I took interest in the project. He said he had tried to get the Ministry interested without success. We started negotiations in earnest. Under the scheme, expatriate Nigerians of international standing in the economic, technological, scientific, social and other development fields were eligible for advisory services of two weeks to three months, including possible return visits. The aim was for the visiting expatriate Nigerians to transmit their experience to recipient institutions through consultations, advisory services and seminars on problems of national priority. An indirect consequence of the scheme was the likelihood of the permanent homecoming of some expatriate Nigerians, although that was not necessarily an objective of TOKTEN. I later received the following

letter from the UNDP representative:

Honourable Minister,

“NIR/90/028 – Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate National (TOKTEN)

We have the honour to refer to our letter dated 30 October, 1991 submitting to you a copy of the signed project document for the above mentioned project.

As you are aware, the TOKTEN scheme is a UNDP initiative aimed at reducing the adverse effects of the growing “brain-drain” in the critical sectors of Nigeria’s social and economic development by re-attracting Nigerian professionals abroad to provide short-term technical consultancy through skills and expertise transfer at very low costs.

In this context, you will kindly recall that His Excellency, the President on the 18th October, 1988, set up a committee to study the problems of “brain-drain” with Professor O. Ibidapo-Obe as the Chairman. The Committee’s report which was submitted on 28 February, 1989 was well received.

It is in reference to the above and to ensure continuity as well as the full recognition of the recommendations of that Committee that UNDP, in consultation with government, has appointed Professor O. Ibidapo-Obe as the National Project Coordinator of the TOKTEN programme. The purpose of this letter is therefore to introduce Prof. Ibidapo-Obe to your goodself and to request your full support and assistance to him to facilitate the successful implementation of the TOKTEN programme in Nigeria.

Professor Ibidapo-Obe has made other notable contributions in the areas of Academia (Engineering Analysis), Management Services (1st Managing Director of UNILAG Consult), Human Resources (Civil Service Reform, Revenue Allocation) etc. We are of the view that he is a suitable candidate to coordinate the programme.

His assignment will initially last for 24 months during which we expect to mobilize the services of Nigerian Specialists living abroad to fill some of the critical gaps in human resources. For your ready reference, I enclose herewith a paper listing the major fields of specialization required. We expect to finance the costs of as many eligible Nigerians who may be ready to undertake specific assignments under the TOKTEN programme. By the end of the second year of the programme, we are hopeful that a permanent national infrastructure for “brain-gain” will have been established. Towards that end, the UNDP remains committed to put up additional funds which may be required to reach this goal...”

Please accept, Honourable Minister, the assurances of our highest consideration.”

TOKTEN**Fields of Specialization**

- A) (i) Medicine
- (ii) Dentistry
- (iii) Surgery
- (iv) Pharmacy
- (v) Nursing
- (vi) Radiology
- (vii) Physiotherapy
- (viii) Kinesiology/Leisure Studies
- B) (i) Architecture and Design
- (ii) Engineering
- (iii) Surveying, Geodesy and Photogrammetry
- (iv) Estate Management and Land Economics
- (v) Building
- (vi) Urban and Regional Planning Studies
- (vii) Water Resources
- (viii) Energy
- (ix) Environment
- (x) Rural Development
- (xi) Women Studies
- (xii) Aeronautics
- C) University and other tertiary education teaching
 - (i) Science
 - (ii) Engineering
 - (iii) Agriculture
 - (iv) Medicine
 - (v) Social Sciences
 - (vi) Education
 - (vii) Environment
 - (viii) Administration
 - (ix) Arts
- D) (i) Economics
- (ii) Accountancy
- (iii) Administration
- (iv) Actuarial Science
- (v) Insurance
- (vi) Industrial Relations

- D) (i) Chemistry
- (ii) Physics
- (iii) Biology
- (iv) Mathematics
- (v) Computer Science
- (vi) Statistics
- (vii) Veterinary Science

While the UNDP was putting finishing touches on the agreement, I instructed my Education attaché in New York, Mr. Idachaba, to sell the idea to the Nigerian professionals resident in the U.S.A.

He and Mr. T.C. Garuba of our Consulate in New York worked on the assignment. Part of the report dated March 3, 1992 is summarised below:

The Nigerian professionals who were interested in participating in TOKTEN Nigeria, expressed a few concerns, observations and suggestions in the course of their interaction with the officials:

Over 90% of the professionals whom they met at meetings, to explain the programme agreed wholeheartedly that the package was excellent and so expressed willingness to participate. Those contacted through telephone calls or merely learning of the programme called for further details.

Below are some of the observations made which they conveyed to the Honourable Minister for consideration to ensure a solid start:

- (i) The need for fair selection of consultants based purely on merit.
- (ii) The need for the government to make the necessary facilities available before commencement of programme.
- (iii) Government to reduce to the barest minimum, the bureaucratic red-tape which could frustrate, slow down the programme and possibly cause failure.
- (iv) It was suggested that the home front should educate Nigerian professionals at home to be receptive of their colleagues from abroad. They too accepted that this aspect is two-way and promised to be receptive too and not expect to be treated as special Nigerians.
- (v) They raised the need for the programme implementors to consider insurance coverage for the consultants involved.
- (vi) They all suggested that government should review the case of dual citizenship as this will give such Nigerians a sense of belonging and acceptance, so that they can put in their best in this programme and other issues of national interest. It was observed that for a non-indigenous of the United States to participate in sensitive researches, the individual has to be a United States citizen.

It was hoped that these observations would be given careful consideration by government.

I summarise below a report on findings from a study undertaken in the United States to identify prospective and qualified Nigerian professionals in diverse fields of study who are gainfully employed in this country and willing to participate in Tokten programmes in their home country, Nigeria. Following due consultations with the Honourable Consul General and the Education Attaché in the Consulate General, trips were arranged to the following centralized locations and focal points:

Date	Location	Remarks
22/1/92	New York	Meeting with Professor Lucas
26/1/92	Los Angeles	Meeting with Nigerian professionals in California and members of the League of Patriotic Nigerians.
26/1/92	Los Angeles	Meeting with the Association of Nigerians in U.S.A., a group based in San Francisco.
31/1/92-1/2/92	Washington D.C.	At a symposium convened by the Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S.A., Nigerian professionals from various towns and cities participated actively.
1/2/92-3/2/92	Minneapolis	Meeting with individual Professionals, members of Minneapolis Institute for Nigerian Development (MIND).
7/2/92-10/2/92	Mississippi and Memphis Tennessee	Meeting with Nigerian Professionals who have also formed organizations.
14/2/92	New York New Jersey	Meeting at Dr. Okpkwasili's residence with Nigerian Professionals in New York/New Jersey areas.
29/2/92	Cleveland Ohio	Scheduled to meet with Professor Linus Ogbuji of NASA and other Professionals in Ohio State.

Other cities besides New York and Washington D.C. were covered, contrary to the terms of reference, simply because the two places do not necessarily have the exclusive monopoly of the best professionals in the U.S.A. As per the results obtained; limiting the study to these two areas would have meant ignoring some of the best prospective candidates. From the resumé and other information received, it became obvious that a concentration of some of the best Nigerian professionals viz: scientists, engineers, architects and even medical personnel, is in the Midwestern and Western States. It is worthy of note that the findings from some of the above listed places were facilitated by the fact that a two-day symposium was organised in Washington D.C. from 31/1/92–1/2/92 by the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, assisted by his capable staff members. Titled “How to improve the image of Nigeria in the United States”, the widely publicised symposium succeeded in bringing together an unusual cross-sectional gathering of all Nigerians, a situation that otherwise would have been most difficult.

The names of the various groups and associations consulted were:

- Council of Nigerian People and Organisation (CONPO)
- League of Patriotic Nigerians - California
- A National Organization of Nigerian Professionals
- Akwa Ibom State Association of Nigeria U.S.A. Inc., New York
- Oji International Inc., Mission Viejo, California
- African Business Directory (Minnesota Edition 1991–1992)
- Nigeria World Network
- Association of Nigerian Engineers in Minnesota (ANEM).

A cursory look through some of the articles and memoranda of these associations, showed a determined and progressive effort toward a fixed goal. A more careful examination of the minutes of meetings held confirmed the positively consistent and orderly manner with which meetings were conducted. The overall comportment of the individuals met, left one in no doubt about the credit-worthiness of these young men and women, most of whom were students during the late seventies and eighties. It was most gratifying to note that without any exception, these professionals were working in their respective States of abode in very responsible and sensitive areas. What was even more impressive was the fact that some of them held key positions in the U.S. *Undoubtedly, they have turned out to be some of Nigeria's most active but hitherto unacknowledged Ambassadors to every nook and corner of their country of residence.*

The principal aim of all the meetings convened was to introduce the

TOKTEN Programme and concept to as many people as possible. The response of each of these gatherings was most encouraging. Following the introductory remarks on the philosophy behind TOKTEN Programmes, the initial reaction was always positive and welcoming. Some opined that the exercise was long overdue, given the felt-need which they had long ago identified. It was disclosed that several groups now in existence were the direct results of the frustrating experiences of home-sick Nigerian nationals here, who needed a collective support system similar to what obtains back home. For most of these groups, the immediate concern was on how best to effect positive changes at home. That the Nigerian Government in liaison with UNDP should affirm their earlier observation was most comforting and rewarding. Apart from one or two die-hards who expressed outright cynicism, most professionals showed wholehearted support for the programme and asked when they could "sign up".

Following each introductory exposition of what TOKTEN is all about, ample time was devoted to questions, comments and observations by the professionals. Principal among the major concerns were the following:

The Nigerian Government Policy of not allowing dual citizenship was a source of concern. Those who have already assumed US citizenship while still maintaining the Nigerian one, wondered what would be their fate should they qualify and wish to participate in the proposed TOKTEN projects.

The overall security of the Nigerians who would be selected for the execution of projects in Nigeria, bothered a few security-conscious individuals. They warned that if some of Nigeria's best brains are to be involved, utmost care should be taken to ensure their safety.

The method of selection of prospective experts was yet another recurrent theme. How does one know that fairness would be brought to bear both on the first as well as subsequent selection exercises, to the exclusion of nepotism and narrow-minded practices? Several people advocated that merit should be the watchword both for assessments and placements.

Some wanted to know if organisations would be considered for participation in TOKTEN projects. It was later discovered that some of these experts belonged to consortiums and consultancies.

Other questions were: Was there an age limit for the individuals wishing to take part? Would payments be in US Dollars or in Naira?

How would resumé of prospective candidates be treated for final selection? Would this be on a quota or federal character basis or purely on individual merit?

A general word of advice was always said to the effect that if the Nigerian

government really wanted to get its nationals back home, attractive offers of compensations must be made. Most Nigerians are patriotic and have no reason other than economic, for staying out of their home country.

A strong complaint was lodged about the fact that greater recognition is accorded to expatriates working in Nigeria than to nationals or expatriate nationals as the case may be.

As regards their anticipated experience in actual TOKTEN projects, observations were made to the effect that their counterparts in Nigeria might not be receptive of these 'expatriate' nationals when they get back home. Furthermore, people at home would most likely feel threatened by the new elements coming in from the technologically more advanced countries.

In the final analysis, grave concern was expressed about the effect on TOKTEN projects of such negative attitudes and the possible clashes that may result therefrom. The authorities in charge of TOKTEN Nigeria would be well advised to exercise adequate precaution aimed at avoiding such a development.

On October 28, 1992, I received the following good news from the UNDP Project Coordinator, Prof. Ibidapo-Obe:

"Dear Sir,

NIR/90/028 TOKEN – Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals

Please refer to your letter IEF 23/S.9/11/T/15 of October 16, 1992 in respect of the above-mentioned subject.

We thank you for forwarding the additional list of names and addresses of interested consultants to us.

The status of the project is as follows:

- (i) Roster of all Consultants is being compiled;
- (ii) 41 Consultants were initially selected and invited to participate in the inaugural programme;
- (iii) We have received confirmation from about 20 Host Institutions;
- (iv) About 30 consultants have indicated specifically when they would want to come to Nigeria as TOKTEN Consultants;
- (v) A Workshop is planned for the project. A copy of the Aide-Memoire is attached for your information."

Between October and December 1992, things seemed to slow down considerably. I sent a letter expressing my concern to the UNDP

Representative who shared my frustration as shown below by his letter addressed to me:

NIR/90/028: TOKTEN

"I thank you for your letter of 14 December concerning the subject mentioned above which I received this morning.

I can truly appreciate your concern regarding the slow progress on the implementation of this important project. However, I too personally have been frustrated about it for sometime now. But there was nothing I could have done on my own.

Since the day I had the privilege of listening to your "brain-gain" strategy, the design and approval of the TOKTEN project could not have been faster than it did. However, on my return from home leave last August, I discovered that the project was infact being held as a kind of "hostage" by some junior civil servants within FMF* who seem to have perceived the project as a possible means for achieving selfish gain. On account of this, the process of convening the much wanted *Steering Committee* to operationalise the project was effectively compromised by them.

While I feel it is not necessary for me to go into detail at this stage of rather embarrassing circumstances which was brought to bear on this national project by the officers concerned, for this has been properly documented and submitted to the authorities concerned for investigation, I should nevertheless reassure you that the initiatives which were undertaken by the National Project Coordinator were intended to forestall the total stagnation of this project. Even then, the process for the screening of the 41 TOKTEN consultants (out of 400 applicants) with the view to matching TOKTEN capacities with local needs were undertaken in close consultation with potential TOKTEN end-users and institutional Focal Points. I agree fully with you that this cannot be seen as a substitute to the functions of the *Steering Committee* foreseen in the project document. However, I have every reason to believe that the stumbling block, which stood on the way of TOKTEN, will be removed very soon by the *National Planning Commission* which, as you may be aware, has now taken over from FMF the management and coordination of External Technical Cooperation in the country.

I shall not fail to keep you posted on further progress on this matter. In the meantime, I beg your indulgence to be patient with us.

* FMF is Federal Ministry of Finance

Please accept, Honourable Minister, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Warmest personal regards.”

The implementation of the programme was effected in 1993 with twenty-two Nigerian expatriates. By 1995, the scheme had slowed down to a trickle due to the usual apathy and lack of commitment by some Nigerian officials.

I am convinced more than ever before that at least sixty percent of top civil servants are agents of under-development. They need to be brain washed if they are to be development oriented. Of course, most of our leaders in Africa are agents of under-development.

Epilogue

When I made a bid for the introduction of TOKTEN to Nigeria during my tenure of office, little did I realise that there was such enormous Nigerian talent abroad waiting to be tapped.

Alas! as for now, Nigeria continues to suffer amidst plenty both at home and abroad. But this too shall also come to pass.

PART IV

Of Matters Great and Small

Chapter 17

Matters Arising

The office of a minister has its ups and downs, it handles matters great and small, serious and trivial and results are sometimes hilarious. Below are some examples:

Circular

“All Directors,
All Deputy Directors,
All Assistant Directors,
All Chief Executives of Parastatals.

27th March, 1990

Official Name of the Honourable Minister of Education

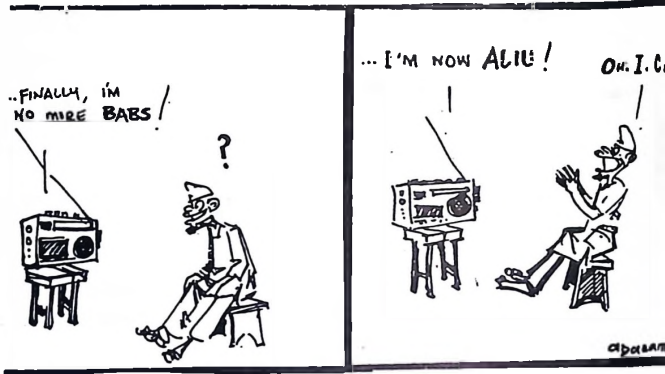
Please refer to the Circular Reference No. DGE/A/15/III/201 of 22nd January, 1990, on the above topic.

The official name of the Honourable Minister of Education is Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa or Professor A. B. Fafunwa.

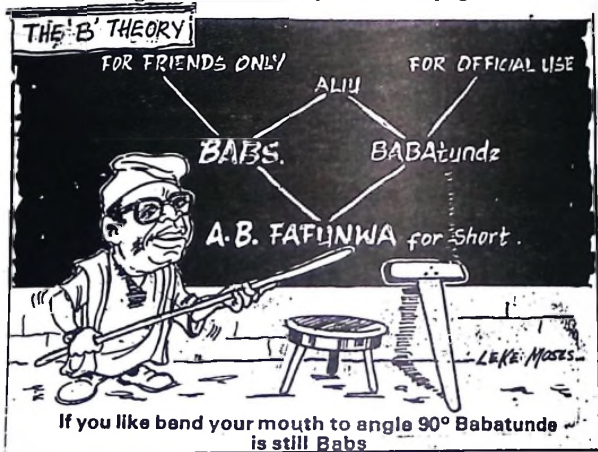
Please take note of this and ensure that the Honourable Minister's name is properly reflected in all memoranda, addresses and speeches.”

This internal memo somehow leaked into the hands of newsmen and women who were constantly pacing the corridors of the Federal Ministry of Education on daily basis, hunting for news. The news became national and was aired on the radio, television and printed in newspapers. It also fired the imagination of some cartoonists. Speaking about cartoons (and there were 193 of them depicting me and my policies over three years), two of my favourite ones on that trivial topic were:

- (a) one which insinuated that I changed my name to a muslim one in order to be appointed a minister by General Babangida and
 - (b) the one that reduced the whole issue to mathematical computation
- Both cartoons are reproduced below.



Nigerian Tribune May 11, 1990, page 2



The Punch, June 2, 1990, page 12.

The Daily champion of June 16, 1990 accurately represented my view as stated by its Ibadan correspondent, Ola Ogundipe.

Fafunwa Sheds Light on Forename

Education Minister Professor Aliyu (sic) Babatunde Fafunwa has dismissed curiosity over his duster-up forename with the Shakespearean emphasis that there is really nothing in a name.

He told newsmen at the University of Ibadan that he was still his old self. Hear him: "I did not change my name; the press did it for me, but a rose would smell sweet by whatever name."

He further said what he did was to officially standardise his initials at the ministry, "because various memoranda addressed to me carried conflicting initials."

Said he, "I only circulated my view within the ministry as regards official memos, the press got hold of it and blew it up. Believe it or not, I am still Babs. You can go ahead and call me Babs, but officially my initials have to be written correctly."

The Education minister said his action has nothing to do with religious bias or influence, pointing out that he had always been a muslim, and had held top offices in various muslim organisations, many years before he became a minister.

He also frowned at reports that he pledged to follow to the letter, policies of his predecessor, Professor Jibril Aminu, saying, 'there are many policies I have carried out which are not Aminu's'.

When Nelson & Winnie Mandela Came Calling

The Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida invited Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Mandela to Nigeria shortly after he was released from 25 years imprisonment in 1991. It was a state visit befitting the president of a country even though Mandela had not entered politics as at that time. The entire nation came out to welcome him and his charming wife. They were wined and dined everywhere they went. I was privileged to accompany the couple throughout the day Mr. Mandela was to receive an honorary degree at the

University of Lagos. The major events of that day were visits to the Museum of African and Black History at the National Theatre and the University of Lagos Convocation. While Mr. Mandela was being escorted around the Museum and being tasked to the limit by pressmen, I had the rare opportunity of engaging in a chat with Mrs. Winnie Mandela. She was charming, gracious and very intelligent. She told me how some of her husband's colleagues were attempting to mislead him on some political issues and that the unfortunate thing about it was that her husband seemed to be taking their advice. What impressed me about Mrs. Mandela was this. While her husband was incarcerated for over two decades, it was Winnie who kept the anti-apartheid issue in the front burner. In fact if it were not for Winnie's courageous activities, many people in and outside Africa would have forgotten Nelson Mandela. In spite of everything that has happened since my encounter with her, I still consider her an African heroine and I am sure we have not heard the last about her. Mr. Nelson Mandela is of course everybody's hero. What is really amazing to me about him is, that after spending more than 25 years in jail with little access to the outside world, he is able to discuss intelligently and knowledgeably about local, national and international affairs just as if he had been around all the time. It has been said that most African leaders are agents of under-development, but Nelson Mandela is certainly not one of them.

The University of Lagos convocation was success. The Pro-Chancellor the Ooni of Ife presided while the head of state was represented by Governor Raji Rasaki. After the convocation, the dignitaries retired to the lounge of the Vice-Chancellor's for a reception. Meanwhile, I had lost my wife in the crowd and could not leave Nelson in search of her. Being an adult, I was sure she would find her way to the reception. Security was tight and she decided to use the only option left for her to gain entrance. She abandoned throwing her weight around but she did it this time. She would of course have given me very tough time if she had missed seeing Nelson Mandela. She announced that she was "the Minister of Education's wife". Immediately, all roads were cleared and all doors opened! On her entering the reception floor, I was relieved to see her. I introduced her first to Winnie who shook her hand warmly. I then introduced her to Mr. (now Dr.) Nelson Mandela who gave her such a huge hug that we were both surprised. My wife was so excited that for weeks she did not stop talking about the experience.

The Visit of Prince Charles and Princess Diana to Nigeria

The Royal couple visited Nigeria in 1991. He was to open the conference of the Nigerian Conservation Society whose President was Chief S.L. Edu. Both the Prince and the Princess were the toast of the town in Nigeria. As it is customary, president and Mrs. Babangida held a grand cocktail party for them in the frigate that brought them at the Marina. Hundreds of guests were invited. Food and drinks flowed freely. The climax of the event was the line up of ministers and service chiefs. The President introduced each of us to the royal couple one by one. When it came to my turn, the President said, "and this is Professor Fafunwa the Minister of Education". The Prince looked at me straight in the eye and said, "accept my sympathies"! The President chuckled and the Prince gave a dry smile but I was puzzled as to whether to take the remarks seriously or as a jest. I then shook the hand of the Princess whose modest and royal smile made me forget if it was a joke or kindly concern or the part of the Prince.

Illegal Use of Satellite Dishes

At one of the Federal Cabinet meetings of Ministers presided over as usual by the President, the former minister of Telecommunication, Col. David Mark made a passionate plea to be allowed to arrest and prosecute all those foreigners and Nigerians who were using satellite dishes without licence. He was convinced that many of the foreigners were using it to spy on Nigeria and transmit information to their home countries. As the dishes had to be displayed skywards, it should not be difficult to site them and enter the premises where they were located. The President quietly brought the discussion to a close when he said, "I guess I am one of the illegal satellite dish users to be arrested and prosecuted as I have no licence." The house roared with laughter and the embarrassed Minister of Telecommunication quietly dropped the subject.

Technology Transfer

Traditionally, when an officer is handing over to his or her successor, this is done in writing, e.g., by memorandum or notes as the case may be. This was my expectation when Jibril Aminu and I met at the Federal Ministry of Education on my first day at the office. We chatted briefly and he handed me two tapes instead of a memo. At first, I did not understand what that was all about. I thought they contained his favourite music or Arabic recitation. He then told me they were his recorded memo which I could ask a secretary to transcribe or play back at my own convenience. Needless to

say I was flabbergasted. He later introduced the director-general and the eight directors to me and left post haste for his new ministry. There and then I was on my own. I had thought that we would at least spend the day together as Education is one of the major Federal ministries.

Whenever I needed some clarification or ran into problems, particularly during the first few weeks, I would attempt to play the tapes. I ran into considerable difficulties. Was the issue to be found in the first or second tape? Was it at the beginning or the middle or the end? After some futile attempts I abandoned the effort.

This indeed is a technological transfer by tape that did not succeed.

An Archbishop's Unheralded Visit

It was my custom to arrive at my desk at 7a.m. and stay till 7p.m. and sometimes till 10p.m. On this particular Wednesday morning, I had visitors between 8.30a.m. and 10a.m. and I instructed my personal assistant not to route any call to me or give anyone appointment after 10.15a.m. as I had an outside engagement at 11a.m. My director-general, who was to accompany me came in at 10.30a.m. and we were going over the programme for the day when my personal assistant, Mr. Felix Mordi, came in looking quite agitated. It was already 10.40a.m. "Why the interruption?" I inquired. "You have an important visitor who has no previous appointment", he said "Is it Mr. President himself", I retorted half jokingly.

"No, Sir, it is Archbishop Okogie". My director-general Alhaji Yahaya Hamza and I exchanged curious glances. "Well show him in", I said. I was uneasy because it was getting late for my engagement so. I told the Personal assistant to phone and let our hosts know that I would be a little late. Bishop Okogie and I hold opposite views on the issue of the takeover of schools from the voluntary agencies and I wondered if that had something to do with this very rare visit.

We exchanged pleasantries and I introduced my D. G. to him. No sooner had we taken our seats when the Bishop opened a tirade for the next fifteen to twenty minutes on the issue of take-over of schools by government. He said he heard my speech on NTA the previous night on the issue (which was really no news to him), and felt so incensed that his first reaction was to go to the police station or vice-president Augustus Aikhomu but his spirit just directed him to my office! I was impressed. He went out to accuse government of stealing their schools without paying compensation. It was Yahaya Hamza who in his characteristically quiet manner, forcefully and factually answered the Bishop politely as to why the schools were taken-

over from about thirty-nine voluntary agencies, of which the Catholics were only one. "We should all work together as citizens of the same country to improve the system and not at cross purposes, with each group or individual looking after his or her own interest", Yahaya said. By the time Yahaya Hamza finished I had very little to add. I assured Bishop Okogie that I believed that he was sincere in his demand and I respected his views even though I did not agree. I then said that I hoped that he believed that I was sincere in my view and that I expected him to respect it. I suspected that he was touched by my statement. At that juncture, the angry Bishop who barged into my office blasting the government gave a small smile indicating that he felt better then than when he first came in. We had already spent over forty-five minutes with him and we were very late for our engagement. But it was worth the attention we gave him. The real climax of the visit came when I asked Bishop Okogie to sign the visitor's book. He refused and said, "I did not call here"!

My D. G. and I were bemused. We appreciated his coming for an unscheduled chat. It showed that, although we disagree on this issue, we are not enemies.

High Security at the Mrs. Aikhomu's Visit to Foucos Tutorial College

As mentioned earlier, I was running an institution, called Foucos Tutorial College at Ebute Metta. One of our rules for admission was that, a parent must come with his/her son or daughter before he/she could be enrolled because we wanted to ensure that both the parents and the child would take this "second chance" seriously, since it was a remedial course. We were not interested in a child who was not serious and in a parent who would not be supportive, both financially and academically, as well as in terms of discipline.

The Aikhomus wanted to place their boy in our school and this meant that the Chief of General Staff or his wife had to come. They sent an assistant as a substitute but we rejected him. Finally, Mrs. Victoria Aikhomu came herself unannounced. This was in 1987, three year before I took office as minister.

When I called at the office on this particular day, I found the school surrounded by armed soldiers. I was puzzled. I thought that the Government had either sent its officials to close the school or arrest me! I entered and found that the passage to my office and the principal's were well guarded by men and women body-guards. I was ready for the worst. I talked my way to my office and on the way, I saw Mrs. Aikhomu chatting animatedly

with the principal. I quietly went to my office and stayed there till the entourage left and things returned to normal in the school.

King's and Queen's Colleges

I never appreciated the awe and reverence attached to two particular institutions, Queen's College and King's College, until I became a minister in 1990. It was then that I realised that most parents - over 200,000 of them whose children took entrance examination, wanted to send their children to these two schools. Besides all the Federal Ministry of Education staff wanted places in these two schools. Many average Nigerians or low income earning Nigerians felt that their children had not a ghost of a chance to attend these schools. Of course, this was not necessarily true, but they believed so just the same. Indeed some of the children of poor parents do get into King's and Queen's Colleges. When I was in the ministry, I injected a sizeable number of such kids with proper qualifications into these two prestigious schools, and from all reports these children coped very well. One particular female parent's reaction to the news that her daughter had been placed at Queen's College was quite telling. She asked the person who brought her the good news three times whether it was true or not. The third time she heard the answer she fainted! I have heard of people who cried for joy but that was the first time I heard of someone who fainted for joy.

Nigerian Teachers' Institute

The National Teachers' Institute was established in 1976 mainly to train, upgrade and update teachers throughout the country. At the initial stage of its take-off, the Institute concentrated mainly on Grade II Teachers Certificate and over 1,330,000 grade II teachers benefited through the NTI distance learning programme.

During my tenure and with my active encouragement, the Institute introduced a Distance Learning Scheme for producing Nigerian Certificate of Education teachers. With limited financial assistance from my ministry, the Institute introduced the programme in April 1990 and I had the honour of presiding over the matriculation of the first batch in Kano during that month. The initial intake into the programme nation-wide was 32,000 students and from all reports 24,378 successfully completed the course and were awarded NCE Certificates. According to the Executive Director of the Institute, Dr. M. M. Bunza:

“Although Distance Education System is yet to be fully accepted in Nigeria, and indeed in developing countries, the N.T.I. Distance Learning Programmes

continue to excel not only in Nigeria but in our sister countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia. NTI print materials were also being requested by the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver Canada for use in other Commonwealth countries in teacher education through Distance Learning. NTI as a distance learning Institute, has so far tried to justify its establishment by reducing the gap between demand and supply of qualified teachers in our primary and post-primary institutions. Presently, a number of our graduates have enrolled for Bachelors' degrees in various Nigerian universities. Though distance learning is yet to make an impact in the Nigerian educational system, it has been recognised the world over that the conventional system of face-to-face education alone cannot meet the current needs to train the large number of teachers required in our educational system, nor can its facilities be expanded and strengthened overnight to meet the immediate needs. The desire for knowledge and the attendant pressure on the educational system cannot wait for the conventional mode to respond at its own pace and time. NTI continues to respond to the pressures by playing a complementary role through Distance Education strategies to remove the obstacles of distance, time and other technical barriers."

The first batch completed the five-year NCE course in 1995 and I had the singular honour of presiding over the second set of graduates on July 13th, 1996 in Lagos. The institute is expected to embark on long distance degree programmes in due course. Both University of Lagos and University of Abuja (Unija) are already running degree programmes by correspondence.

Technical Teacher Training Programme (TTTP)

The National Policy on Education, otherwise known as the 6-3-3-4 system, stipulates that secondary education shall be given in two stages, Junior Secondary School level and a Senior Secondary School level, each of 3 years' duration. The curriculum of the Junior Secondary School is both academic and pre-vocational while that of the Senior Secondary School is academic and vocational. Thus, the curriculum at each level has been diversified so as to cater for all categories of children who will go through them. The diversification of the curricula at the two levels therefore necessitated the participation of a large number of technical vocational teachers and Nigeria was in short supply of teachers at this level. It was as a result of this situation that Nigeria held bilateral talks with United States of America officials in 1981. The discussion led to an agreement for the training of technical teachers/educators in US institutions for the Nigerian government. This gave birth to the Technical Teacher Training Programme

(TTTP). Under the agreement, the Agency for International Development (AID), representing the government of the United States, assisted with the placement of selected qualified Nigerians in American Universities, while the Nigerian Government provided the cost of participants' training and training support services.

From the inception of the programme in 1981/82 session, a total of 1892 Nigerians have benefitted through the programme at a cost of over US \$40,000,000.60. Between 1981/82 and 1984/85 when the Nigerian naira was strong, one naira was exchanging for between 1½ and 2 US dollars. When SFEM, later FEM, was introduced, the value of the naira became very low vis-a-vis the US dollar. The drastic devaluation of the Naira consequently reduced the cost effectiveness of the TTTP being run in the USA.

During the first six years of the programme, the number of awards ranged between 232 and 324 per annum. Thus, for the period of the programme, 1981-1989, the annual awards were:

1981/82	-	232
1982/83	-	324
1983/84	-	249
1984/85	-	253
1985/86	-	251
1986/87	-	235
1987/88	-	176
1988/89	-	172
Total	-	<u>1892</u>

The number dropped to 176 in 1987 and 172 in 1988 as a result of devaluation of the naira which made the cost of the programme highly prohibitive. But the need for technical teachers for successful implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education remained very acute. The result of a survey (Aina Report, 1986) for the requirement of technical teachers showed a projected need of 135,539 teachers by 1991. In some states deficiency figures ranging from 41.8% to 94.3% were indicated, thus confirming that the need was still very high generally.

The Federal Government found it difficult to continue with TTTP because of the very high cost (about ₦200,000.00 per student). The group of 150 students selected for the 1989 award tenable in the US had to be dropped and the programme stopped. The majority of those sent to the US for the programme dropped out of sight after their first degree.

This was the situation when I joined the Ministry and I decided to stop the wastage. I set up a committee to examine the possibilities of domesticating the foreign-based technical education course.

The Committee was set up in November, 1991 to look into the issue of training technical teachers in Nigerian higher institutions of learning, a programme hitherto run in the United States of America. It was also to study the syllabi of such institutions, the facilities and resources (both human and material) available in them and select those suitable for running the programme. Another term of reference of the committee was the selection and placement of an initial 500 Nigerian teachers to be sponsored by the Federal Government on the programme.

The objectives of running the programme locally were:

- (a) to produce technical teachers adequate in quality and quantity at minimum cost in the shortest possible time to meet the needs of the 6-3-3-4 system of education;
- (b) to up-grade and update the knowledge and skill of technical teachers;
- (c) to provide avenues for training of master craftsmen, technicians, technologists, engineers and scientists as professionally qualified technical teachers for the secondary schools and technical colleges.

The committee recommended that three federal universities – the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the Federal University of Technology, Yola should be selected to run the programme at the degree level. Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, was also chosen to be closely monitored by the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Six Federal Colleges of Education (Technical) were recommended to run the programme at the National Certificate of Education level.

The committee proposed the selection of 390 candidates (15 candidates per state from 26 states of the federation) as the pioneers for the programme.

Other recommendations included the following:

- (i) that the 8 Colleges of Education (Technical) (Akoka, Gombe, Asaba, Bichi, Omoku, Potiskum, Gusau, and Umunze) should run, in addition to their main function of producing NCE(T) teachers of introductory, courses leading to:
 - (a) One year Technical Teachers' Certificate (TTC) for holders of National Diploma (BD), Advanced Craft Certificate, Full Technological Certificate (FTC), the Advanced National Technical Certificate (ANTC) or the Advanced National Commercial Certificate (ANCC);
 - (b) One year Professional Diploma in Technical Education (PDTE)

for holders of Higher National Diploma (HND), Degree in Engineering/Technology or Higher Degree in Engineering Technology.

- (ii) that in order to conserve scarce resources, the FCS(T) should be categorised so as to specialise in
 - (a) Mechanical Engineering;
 - (b) Electrical and Electronic Engineering;
 - (c) Civil and Building Engineering;
 - (d) Business Studies (including Word Processing);
 - (e) Science Education,
- (iii) that the universities (UNN, ABU and FUTY) should continue to offer B.Ed (Tech) courses and mount M.Ed (Tech) programmes in specialised areas;
- (iv) that the Polytechnics (IMT, Kaduna and Mubi) should continue with the NCE (Tech) programmes, run courses for TTC and PDTE and offer B.Ed (Tech) degrees in affiliation with the appropriate Universities.
- (v) that Technical Teachers without teaching qualifications employed by the Federal and State Ministries of Education should be sent to the FCE(T)'s to obtain the TTC or PDTE on an in-service-training basis supported by the TTTP fund;
- (vi) that the Federal Ministry of Education should use part of the TTTP fund to set up and equip workshops and laboratories in the FCE(T)'s so that they could adequately cater for the TTC, PDTE courses;
- (vii) that the Federal Ministry of Education should employ qualified science and technical teachers with B.Sc. (Ed), B.Ed (Sc.) B.Ed (Tech), M.Ed (Sc.), M.Ed (Tech), TTC and PDTE under a "Science and Technical Education Programme (STEP) and send them on request to the states to teach for periods of 2 years in the first instance.

The Technical Teacher Training Programme has been making steady progress since its transfer to selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Four sets of students were selected and a total of two thousand, one hundred and three (2,103) students were enrolled for the course between 1991 and 1995.

I am pleased to observe that this programme has not only saved the Nigerian tax-payers millions of American dollars annually but also arrested the brain drain which attended the U.S-based course.

Dissolution and Reconstitution of Federal Cabinet

On January 2, 1992 the Federal Cabinet was dissolved by Gen. Babangida

and for almost two weeks, there were no federal ministers.

During this interregnum rumours were flying all over as to which ministers would be dropped and which would be returned. Meanwhile, a constant train of lobbying was parading Abuja begging for ministerial appointments—Emirs, Obis and Obas included.

I stayed in my house and out of sight. After ten agonising days of waiting to hear one way or the other, I received a telephone call on Sunday January 12th, 1992 at 8.20p.m from my Mallam Aliyu Mohammed, the Secretary to the Federal Military Government. He said that the President “wants to see you on Monday (January 13th) in Abuja at 12.30p.m. I was also to inform seven other ministers in Lagos: Prof. Olukoye Ransome-Kuti, Prof Jibril Aminu, General Sani Abacha, Chief G. O. Ige, Dr. C. Okongwu, Alhaji Bunu Sheriff Musa and AVM Nura Imam.

To accomplish this urgent task, I employed the assistance of my wife whose job was to stay on the telephone trying to reach these ministers while Alhaji Kola Balogun, a friend and labour consultant and my press secretary were on the road delivering my personal notes to these ministers between 10p.m. and 2a.m. that night/morning! We reached them all.

We all assembled at Aso Rock Abuja at 12.30p.m. at the SGF’s Office. Between 3.30 and 4.30p.m. eighteen ministers and two ministers of state were sworn in. Some old ministers were dropped and new ones added.

I returned to Lagos in the morning of January 14th and took off the rest of the day for a real and well deserved holiday. I resumed work on Wednesday January 15th. In retrospect, it would not be worth going through such a trauma again.

My Second Hadj Pilgrimage

In May 1992, I was nominated by the President at my own request to join the official Federal Government team to perform the Hadj. I was eagerly looking forward to the pilgrimage, which was scheduled for June 3rd 1992. I was all set for this date and planned accordingly. I had even cancelled my original plan to attend my son’s graduation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was to receive a double masters degrees in Economics and Technology on June 1st 1992.

Of course, I realised early on in the job that as a Minister your official life revolves around the head of State. When he calls you, you drop everything and get to him by the most expeditious route even if you are in Kano and he is in Lagos or vice versa.

However, everything was working according to my plan to join the official

delegation to Hadj on June 3rd at 12 noon. On June 2nd, word came that there would be a Council of Ministers' meeting in Abuja on June 3rd at 11 a.m. My heart sank but I did not lose hope. I thought I could leave on the 4th or 5th latest, as the Jeddah Airport would not be closed before June 6th at 6p.m.

The Council meeting scheduled for June 3rd was postponed till June 4th at 11a.m. Again it was postponed and shifted to June 5th at 11a.m. Meanwhile, I was sweating it out at Sheraton Towers, Abuja.

The meeting was finally held on June 5th at 11 am and lasted till 2p.m. At that meeting we were told that there would be some minor cabinet reshuffle and this would be announced later.

At that point, I could not care less, as I was set to go to Mecca the next day, the very day the Mecca gate would be closed at 6p.m! I returned to Lagos at 5p.m. and went straight to the Nigerian Airways office to see the Managing Director to book the next available flight that night, June 5th, or the next and last day, June 6th; luckily for me, I got booking for the last flight for 1.30p.m. to Jeddah! I returned home at 7p.m., thanking my lucky stars.

At 8p.m. the telephone rang with a message from Abuja that the Vice-President Admiral Aikhomu wanted to see me in Abuja! I had just returned from Abuja! I spent the time between 9p.m. and 12 midnight of June 5th trying to reach him by phone without success. On June 6th I tried again to reach him by phone from 8a.m. to 12 noon. Again without success. At 12.30pm I left for the airport, not to go to Abuja to see the Vice-President but to join the last flight to Jeddah.

On arrival at the airport I got a message that the Vice-President wanted to speak to me on the phone. The Nigerian Airways MD obliged me the use of his office phone. He assured me that the plane would not leave until I completed the call. I made several attempts to reach the VP, to no avail after spending over an hour on the phone. Finally I decided to go on to Hadj instead of Abuja. The Jeddah plane left at 3p.m. carrying me and the Managing Director of the Airways. While we were airborne we heard the news that Prof Jibril Aminu and some other Ministers had been dropped from the cabinet. The "others" were not named and this of course could include me. It then dawned on me that the Vice-President probably wanted to tell me that either I had been dropped or that I was to be given another portfolio.

The thought stayed with me for sometime but I told myself that nobody is indispensable and "*Se sara sara*" - what will be will be. I also told myself that if my portfolio was changed and I happened to be offered the Petroleum

Ministry in particular, I would reject it and leave the cabinet.

Thus I flew to Saudi Arabia not really caring whether I had a job or not and I completed the Hadj without giving it another thought. When I returned to Lagos nine days later, I still had my job and the same portfolio!

MKO Abiola's Gift to State Universities

I pleaded unsuccessfully to convince the Federal Government to assist state universities with even one or two million naira each, especially since a sum of ₦20 million had been granted to each Federal University, *ex-gratia*. When Bashorun MKO Abiola casually dropped by my office one Friday morning in 1991, I broached the subject of the need to assist our state universities with him. He sympathised but made no commitment. He only asked me to give him a written proposal. I quickly summoned my special assistants and we put up a proposal the same day which he received the following week. He replied within a day or two with an astounding grant of ₦100 million to all state universities, colleges of education and polytechnics at the rate of ₦1 million each for hostel accommodation!

I am yet to meet another African who can match MKO's mammoth donation to higher education.

When I met him later to thank him for his unprecedented gift to Higher Education, he simply repeated one of his famous sayings: "Professor, money is like manure; if you keep it, it stinks but if you spread it, it grows"

Some National Universities Commission's Errors of Omission

The National Universities Commission carried out a number of assignments successfully, for which it could be justifiably proud during my tenure of office. But it also committed some errors of omission, with embarrassing and painful results.

I earlier discussed its tardiness in the handling of British expatriates' pensions and how it was left for me to redress the problem created by the devaluation of the naira.

London Office Personnel

The second case involved a Ghanaian employee at the NUC London Office. This woman had worked as one of the clerical staff since the inception of the Office in the 1960's as part of the Ahmadu Bello University London Office. After fifteen years' service, the lady was placed on contract while the rest of the staff at the London Office were placed on pensionable salaries. Ten years later, in 1988, after twenty-five years of service, the unhappy

staff member appealed to the NUC for redress, but her appeal fell on deaf ears. In 1991 she appealed to me directly, as Minister of Education. I requested the NUC Secretary to review her case and was told nothing could be done. Not satisfied with NUC's response, I called for the file of the staff member in question during one of my visits to the U.K. When the then NUC representative, Prof. S. A. Adetoro complied, I was shocked to discover that the NUC Secretary had either failed to accept the London Representative's earlier recommendation for the woman's promotion, or perhaps he was "too busy" to direct his mind to such mundane matters!

On my return to Lagos I issued a strong directive to the Secretary to place the employee on the pensionable track, supporting the directive with facts gleaned from the woman's London file. He was given seven days in which to comply, and he did so in three.

University of Ilorin Law Faculty

Yet another unfortunate blunder committed by the NUC Secretariat concerned the Faculty of Law at the University of Ilorin. In 1984 the Faculty of Law of the University was discontinued by the order of NUC, even though students had been enrolled for the course prior to discontinuance. It was a terrible blow to the University and there was no known precedent in the University system at that time. As I can recall the old students sat for and received another University's degree - from Ife, I believe and no new students were admitted from the 1986/87 academic session.

In 1990, the Visitor set up a number of visitation panels for the several second-generation universities, one of which was to the University of Ilorin headed by Justice Okay Achike. The Achike Panel recommended the reinstatement of the Faculty of Law in 1990, but the recommendation was turned down with the following comments:

- "(i) The Visitor rejects the finding of the Panel to the effect that the NUC "hurriedly" in 1988 amended its law by Decree No. 49 of that year to expand S.4 (i) of the 1974 Act to include "recommendations for the establishment of new academic units in existing universities or the approval or disapproval of proposals to establish such academic units." As a matter of fact the quotation in question is in the original Decree No. 1 of 1974 S.4 (III).
- (ii) The Visitor agrees with the comments of the Panel that the University did follow the laid down procedures for the establishment of the Faculty though if proper records were kept by both parties concerned, the Faculty would not have been closed down.

(iii) The Visitor hereby directs that the NUC re-examine the matter with a view to re-instating the said Faculty.”

The visitor's rejection was based on NUC's recommendations and my own concurrence as the Honorable Minister in charge.

Then followed a strange development. An earlier NUC letter sent to the University of Ilorin on February 2nd, 1984 (Ref. NUC/ES/138/Vol. IV) on "Procedure for the Establishment of New Programmes, academic and supporting units, shown in the list (sent by Ilorin) are approved including those for which only planning has been given". In other words, the Faculty of Law, which was closed down for running the course without approval had in fact been approved previously. How the letter got "lost" and how no one in Ilorin remembered the letter remains an unsolved mystery. But what followed after the discovery of the letter was more startling. When the letter was sent to Justice Achike, the Chairman of the Visitation Panel, he immediately forwarded it to the NUC Executive Secretary with a covering letter, and the Executive Secretary wrote the following amazing letter to Justice Achike:

“Chairman
Visitation Panel
University of Ilorin
Ilorin.

Dear Sir,

Re: Closure of Faculty of Law of the University of Ilorin: New Evidence

Your letter ref. VP/UI/01/Vol. 1/16 of 5th February, 1991 on the above refers.

We have checked the authenticity of the Executive Secretary ref. NUC/ES/138/IV of 2nd February, 1984, a copy of which you sent to us and found it to be genuine. Unfortunately throughout the one-and-one-half years of discussions and presentations between NUC and University of Ilorin (1986/87) on the determination of the fate of the Faculty, this evidence was not available to either University of Ilorin or NUC. It has only surfaced in 1991; four years after the decision was taken and now fully implemented. The last batch of students affected by the decision have finished this year. NUC's position therefore at the moment on this is enumerated below:

1. The evidence came at end of the exercise hence can not be reversed.
2. Even without the new evidence, NUC has never indicated to University

of Ilorin that it can not properly apply for a Faculty of Law at any time it feels appropriate for the Commission to consider, after the decision of the Commission would have been fully implemented.

- 3 The lesson learnt on both sides is that, proper records and preservation of vital documents such as this and within each reach by all concerned can not be over-emphasized, this will certainly in future negate such an incidence. Fortunately in this case adequate arrangements were made for the innocent students and staff affected so that there was virtually no loss of time or academic progress.

The NUC moved out of Ribadu Road to its present location in 1984, was a hurried movement and that caused severe mixing up of its files with resulting consequence of losing tract of filing order etc. This not an excuse but it perhaps contributed. Furthermore, the Chief Executive of NUC and University of Ilorin inherited the problem hence could only go by the available evidence in their files. That, they used maximally in advising their respective policy making bodies which ultimately took the decision (the Commission) and saw to it that the decision was fully implemented (University of Ilorin Governing Council).

The matter will be brought to the attention of the Commission at its next meeting in March, 1991 for its attention.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

(Signed),

Idris A. Abdulkadir

Executive Secretary”

Justice O. Achike’s justifiable anger as expressed in his elegant reply to the Executive Secretary’s letter was more than what Abdulkadir bargained for.

of 25 March, 1991

“Dear Professor Abdulkadir,

Re: Closure of Faculty of Law of the University of Ilorin: New Evidence

Your letter NUC/ES/436/VOL. IV/57 of 24th February, 1991 received the same was addressed to the Visitation Panel at the University of Ilorin Office and was re-directed by EMS speed post by the Vice Chancellor

Professor Adeoye Adeniyi. It was received today and I reply by even date.

I am pleased that your Commission has identified its letter, Ref. NUC/ES/138/IV of 2nd February, 1984, addressed to the Vice-Chancellor University of Ilorin, hereinafter referred to as "the document", as genuine and authentic. I also agree with you that it was unfortunate that the document did not surface throughout the period of one year and a half when the issue of the closure of Unilorin Faculty of Law raged; indeed, it only surfaced four years after the decision in it was taken. I was, however, profoundly taken aback when your letter positively stated, *inter alia*:

"NUC's position therefore at the moment of this (subject matter) is enumerated below:

1. *The evidence came at the end of the exercise hence cannot be reversed.*
2. Even without the new evidence, NUC has never indicated to *University of Ilorin* that it cannot properly apply for a Faculty of Law at any time it feels appropriate for the Commission to consider, after the decision of the Commission would have been fully implemented" (emphasis is the authors').

The view I take of 1 and 2 above is, first that NUC has concluded that the issue is irreversible notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence that showed, with the utmost transparency, that NUC's closure order of Unilorin Faculty of Law as insupportable as it was hasty decision reached *per incuriam*, that is, without reference to all existing evidence; second, the NUC may be willing to reconsider any re-application by Unilorin on the very same subject matter. To say the least, and with respect, this posture of NUC appears stupendous.

Indeed, I must not fail to underline the fact that the tenor of your letter, particularly with regard to 1 and 2 above, leaves one in no doubt that NUC is identifiable as synonymous with the Visitor of the University of Ilorin, and, perhaps the Federal Ministry of Education. With respect, that is a grave misconception. These are separate entities - partners in progress - hence under the Terms of Reference of Unilorin Visitation Panel the Visitor requested the Panel, *inter alia*, to -

"Determine the relationship between the University and the various statutory bodies it interacts with according to its Law for purpose of supervising, planning, finance, discipline, guidance, etc. Such bodies include the University Commission and the Federal Ministry of Education as well as the Visitor."

Permit me to make this observation, and indeed, it goes without saying that nobody, and even the highest court - The Supreme Court of Nigeria - is infallible. It is a hallmark of magnanimity, nay, fair play and justice, that every wrong should be redressed particularly where the earlier decision was manifestly shown to have been reached erroneously (*per incuriam*) either because the matter was insufficiently addressed or some new evidence has surfaced since the decision was made. Where the previous decision is insupportable in the light of the new evidence which was then not readily available, irrespective of passage of some years, that decision must be *reversed in the interest of justice*.

In retrospect, it is gratifying to me that the Unilorin Visitation Panel in its Report addressed the above subject matter at some length both in Chapter 8, under the title "the Case of the Department of Law" (pp 98 - 112) and under Chapter 18 titled "Conclusions and Recommendations" at pp 225 - 227. The Recommendation of the Panel in this regard is crystal clear. Recapitulating the felicitous words of the Honourable Minister of Education Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa on 5th March, 1991, during the ceremony for the submissions of Panel's Report, to the effect that the Reports would be given due consideration, I would wish to rest my view on the above subject matter on the Panel's Report and invite the Visitor to discharge his statutory responsibility in respect thereof.

Since the Panel has submitted its report to the visitor, it would be appreciated, for the purpose of proper documentation, if you would cause your letter and my reply thereto to be annexed as addenda to the said Report.

With personal regards.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.)

Justice Okay Achike

Chairman

Unilorin Visitation Panel"

The less than encouraging letter of the Executive Secretary of the NU to the Vice-Chancellor of Ilorin, Prof. A. Adeniyi, even after the missing letter was found, compelled the Pro-Chancellor, Prof. C. O. Taiwo to appeal to me to intervene, which I promptly did.

The National Universities Council met later and approved the reinstatement of the Faculty of Law! In appreciation, Prof. C. O. Taiwo graciously sent me the following letter:

“16th November, 1992

Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, NNMA
Honourable Minister of Education
and Youth Development,
Federal Ministry of Education,
Victoria Island.
Lagos.

Dear Honourable Minister,

Re-Instatement of the Faculty of Law

I thank you most sincerely for your help in re-instating the Faculty of Law to the University of Ilorin. It is widely acknowledged that we owe the achievement to you.

With many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)
(C. O. Taiwo)

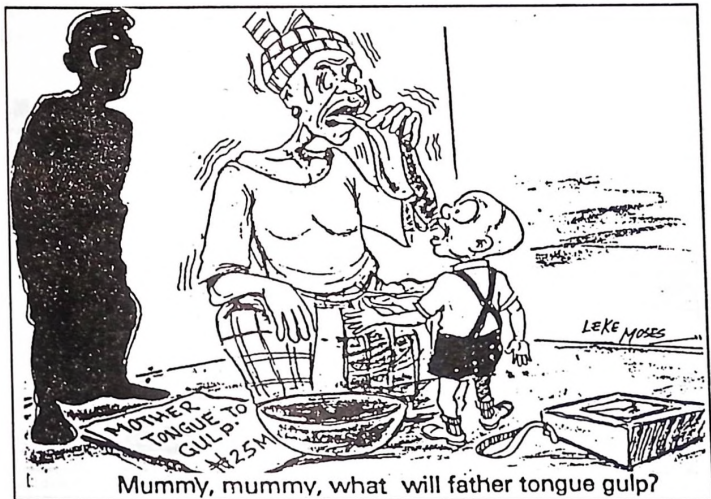
Chapter 18

Educational Cartoons

When I was growing up in Lagos, I wanted to be a journalist like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and at the same time, I wanted to be a cartoonist like Chief Akinola Lasekan. At that time, I would write a few passable essays, but I was a very poor artist. There were many times I wished I were a cartoonist, a caricaturist or a lampoonist. Later in life, writing became my vocation. I never succeeded as a cartoonist but I enjoy “reading” cartoons. Nigerian cartoonists compare favourably by and large with their counterparts anywhere. When I became a Minister, I was specially interested in “reading” cartoons pertaining to education. I must confess I never noticed so many cartoons on education until then. For whatever reason, the cartoonists seemed to find me and my programme so interesting and provocative that they produced more than 190 cartoons for the amusement, entertainment and education of the reading public. Some of the cartoons I enjoyed most are those which poked fun at me or my programmes!

When I was in office, I took special interest in collecting all these cartoons and keeping them. In all, I have about 193 cartoons on various subjects about both my person, office and policies.

While space will not allow me to publish all the cartoons, I have selected some of my favourites for this chapter. As we all know, a good cartoon is worth more than a thousand words on the same topic.



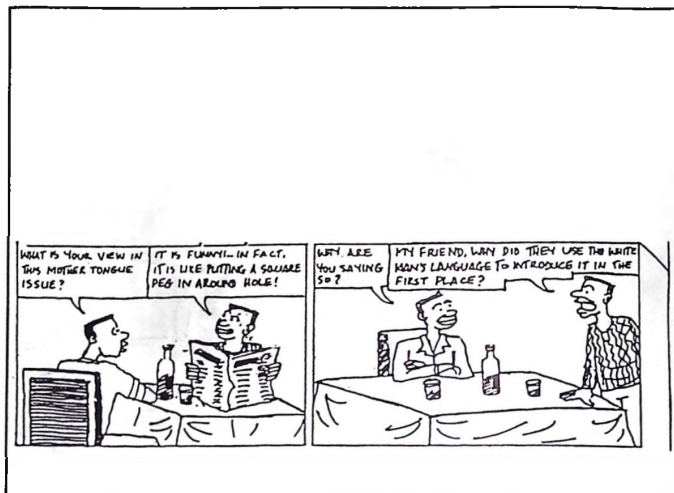
Mummy, mummy, what will father tongue gulp?

The Punch, Tuesday, November 13, 1990 Page 12

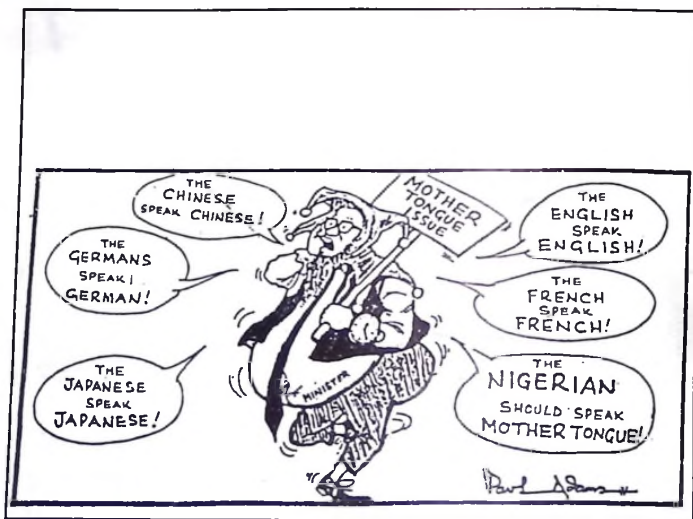


"The ndia nine bu gini? Abi you no sabi my mother tongue?"

National Concord, Thursday June 28, 1990 Page 6

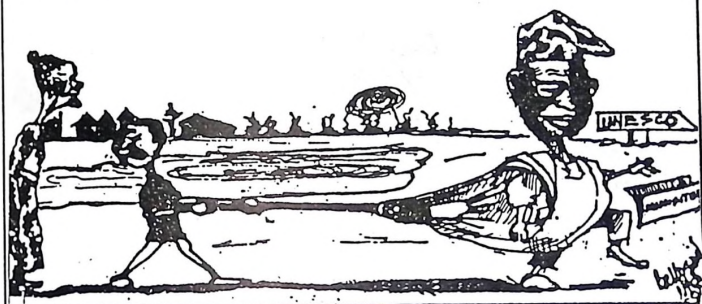


The Punch, Wednesday, June 27, 1990 Page 6



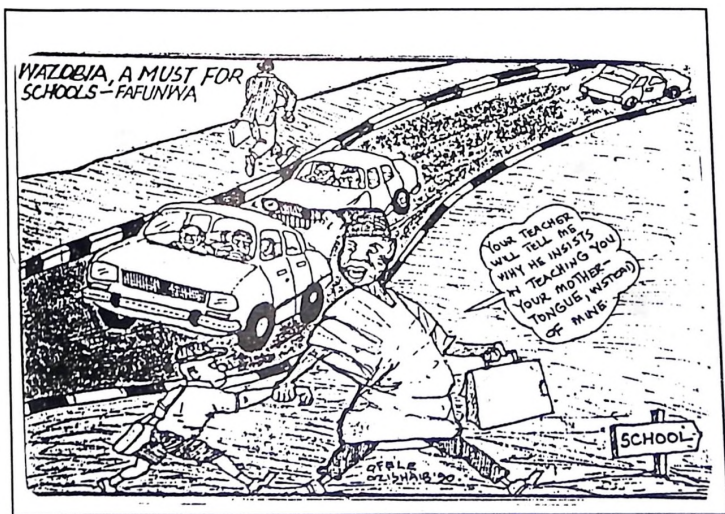
Sunday Concord, June 24, 1990 Page 6

Mother tongue debate goes To UNESCO



Before he goes Mammy, remind him of using your tongue there.

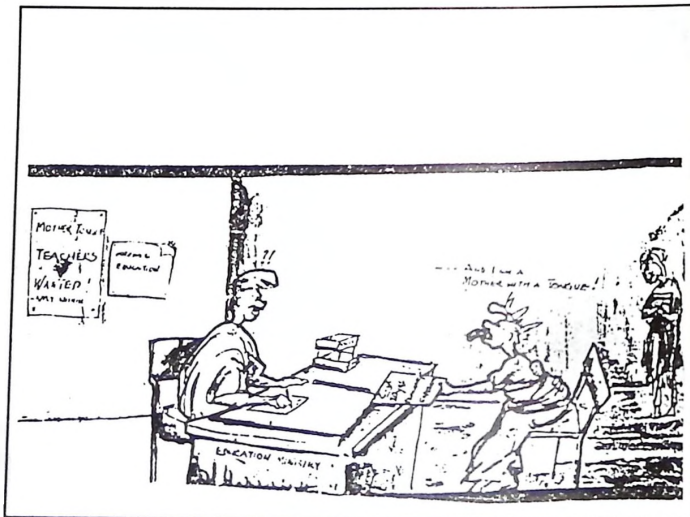
The Herald, Wednesday, July 11, 1990



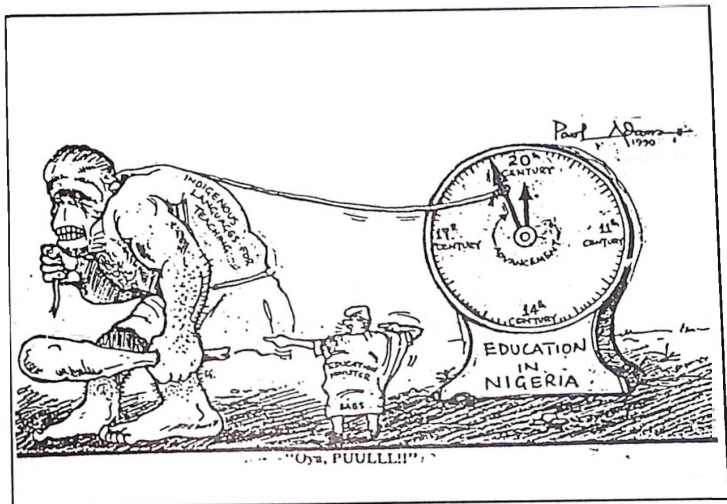
The Herald, Tuesday, June 5, 1990, Page 5



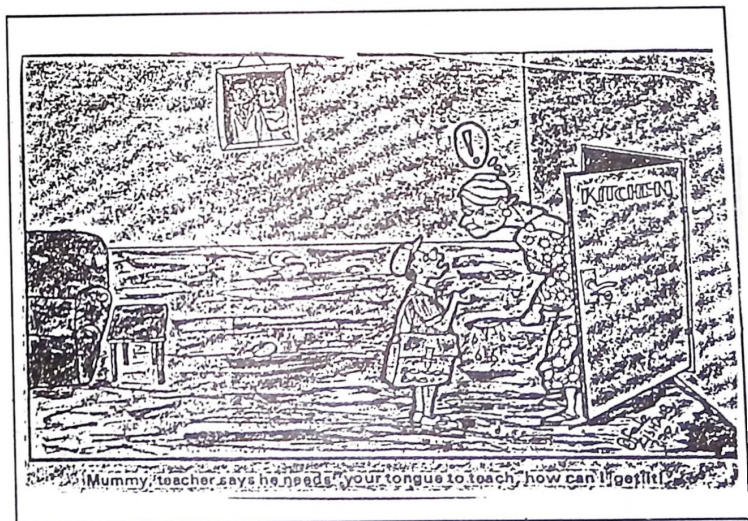
Daily Times – Thursday, May 24, 1990



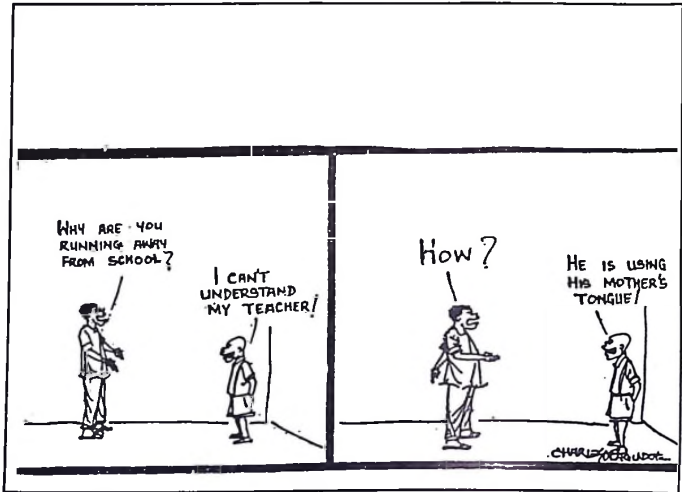
Nigerian Tribune, Wednesday, May 23, 1990



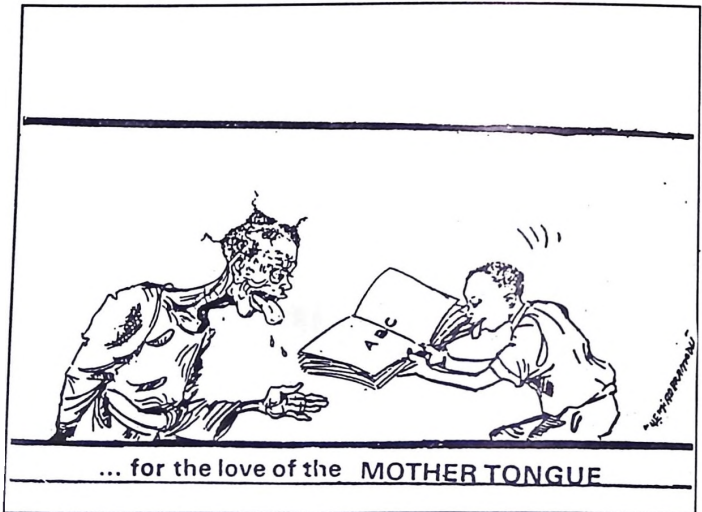
Vanguard, Wednesday, May 16, 1990, Page 6



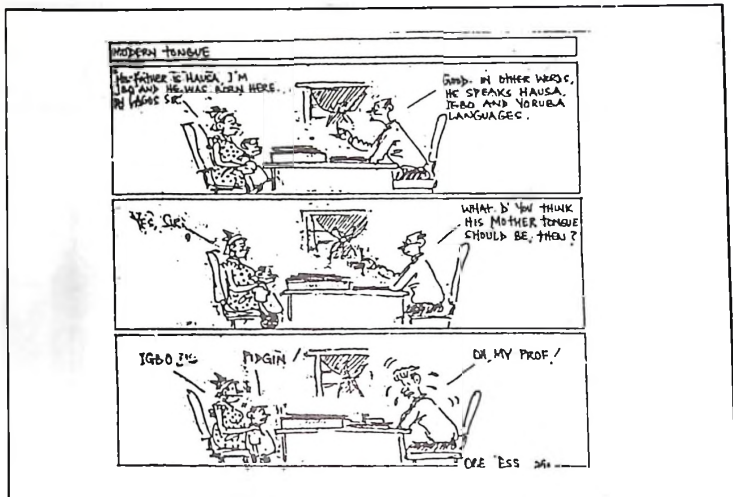
The Herald, March 28, 1990, Page 5



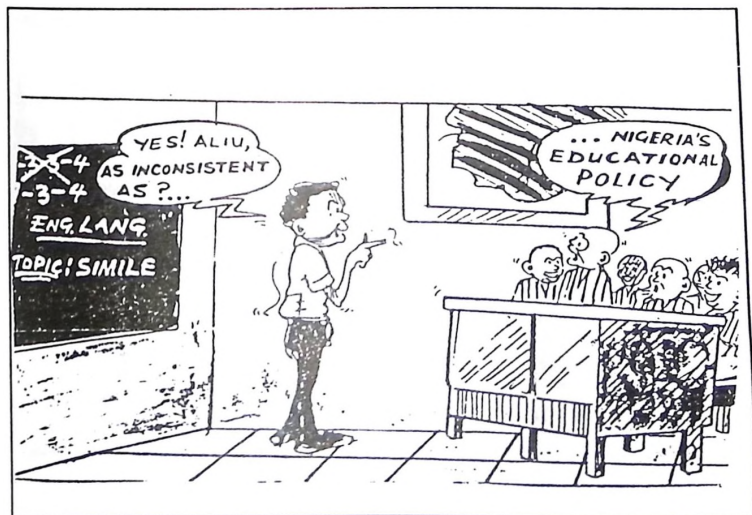
Nigerian Tribune, Friday, March 23, 1990, Page 2



Nigerian Tribune, Monday, March 12, 1990, Page 2



The Guardian, Sunday, February 25, 1990, Page 6



Daily Champion, Saturday, December 12, 1990, Page 5



Wait till I get the 'crazy thought'

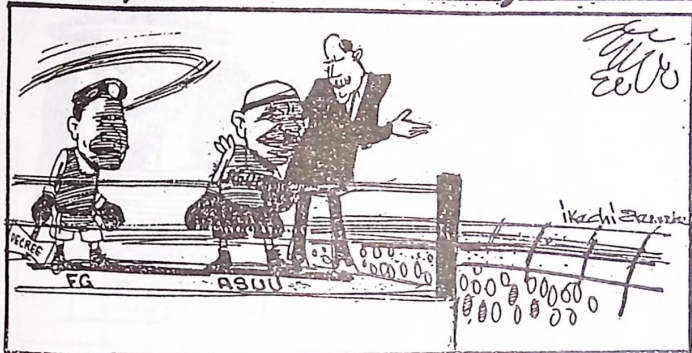
The Republic, Tuesday March 3, 1992, Page 4



Don't forget I am a former teacher and I can still teach again

The Republic, Wednesday July 29, 1992, Page 4

Opinion Page



"If you are not properly insured, then look for a crash helmet first!"

Sunday Vanguard, July 26, 1992, Page 6

SEVEN MILLION ADULTS BEGIN
LITERACY TRAINING NEXT
YEAR



WON'T BE NEEDING YOUR SERVICES NEXT YEAR
YOU SHYLOCK LETTER WRITER!

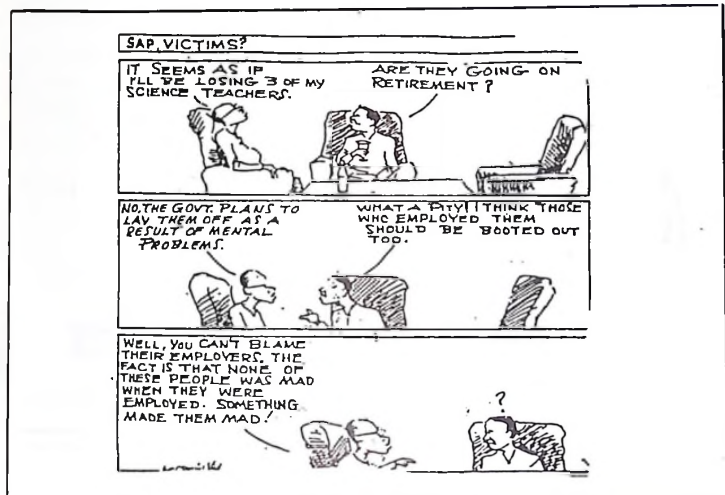
Daily Sketch, Wednesday, July 31, 1991, Page 2



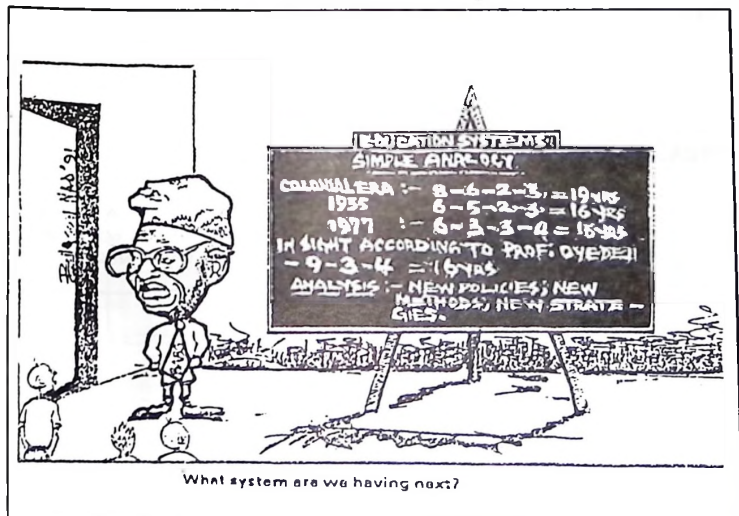
The Democrat, Thursday, February 14, 1990



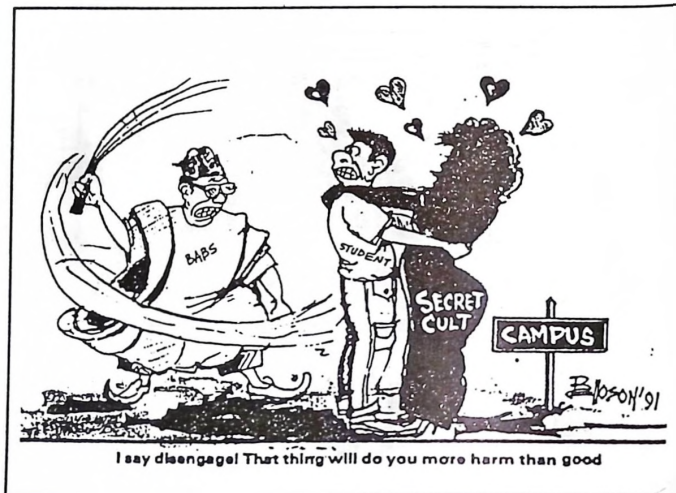
Daily Champion, Monday, August 3, 1992



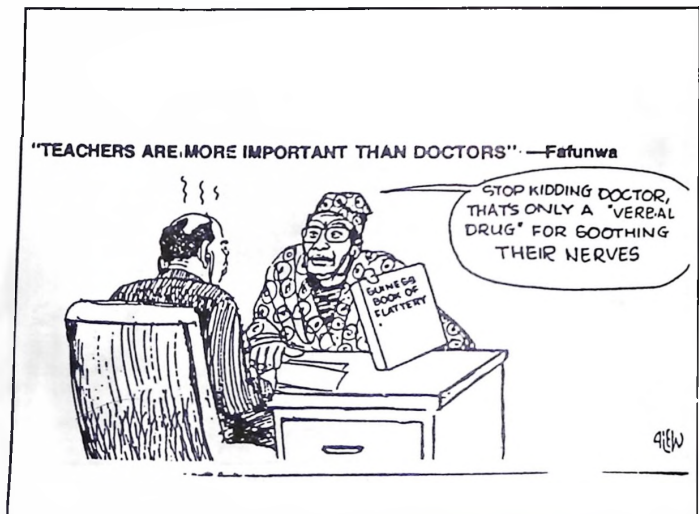
The Guardian, Thursday February 21, 1991, Page 10



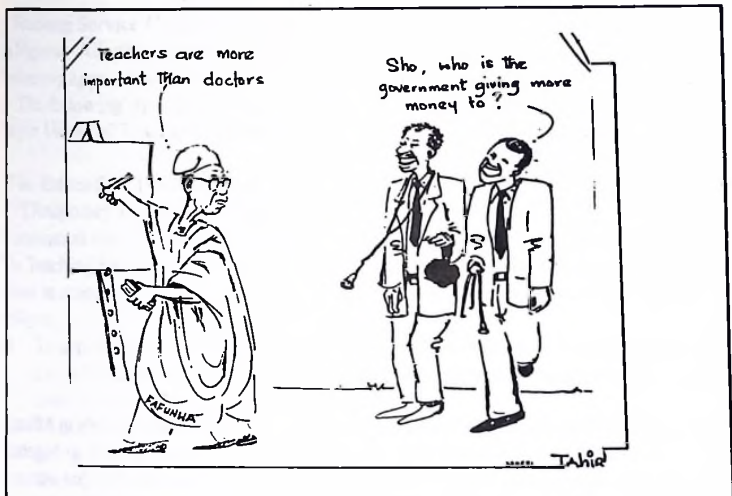
The Herald, Thursday May 2, 1991, Page 5



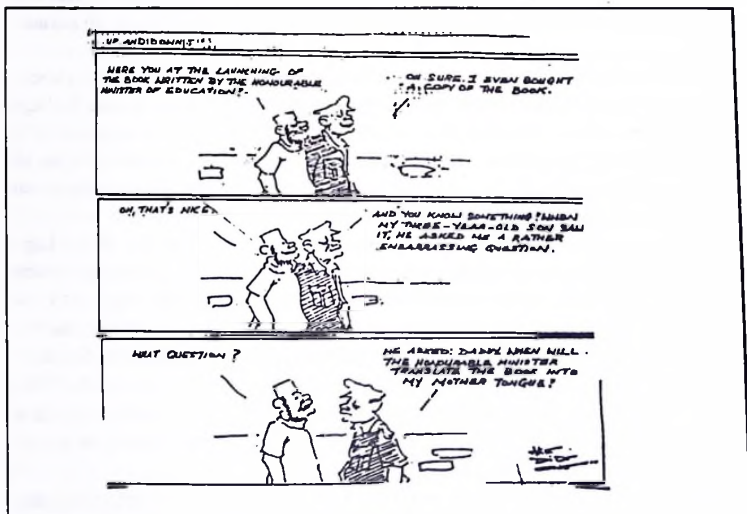
The Herald, Thursday June 20, 1991, Page 5



The Standard, Monday, May 27, 1991, Page 7



The Triumph, Wednesday, May 22, 1991, Page 2



The Guardian, Wednesday, July 24, 1991, Page 10

Chapter 19

Lagos, My Lagos

Lagos is the most cosmopolitan, accommodating and lively city in Africa. It is truly an African city in every way. Lagos gave birth to Nigeria and can rightly be called the mother of Nigeria and for that matter, mother of all states. The earlier Nigerian politicians and businessmen became known in Lagos before the rest of Nigeria heard about them. Outstanding among them were Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and many others.

In 1966 during the first constitutional crisis, I had the opportunity to serve as a member of the Lagos delegation to Ibadan to make a case for Lagos State even when people like Alhaji L. K. Jakande were opposed to the creation of such a state. The delegation was roundly booed in Ibadan but thanks to Brig. Mobolaji Johnson and Gen. Yakubu Gowon, Lagos was among the first few states to be created in 1967.

I had another opportunity later to serve as chairman of the Lagos Scholarship Board. The Board spent enormous time and energy weeding out non-indigenes who inundated the Board for scholarships while also applying for them in their home states, thus putting indigenous Lagosians at a disadvantage. Such situation is a rarity in any other state of the federation. We found the revered late H. O. Davies' native wisdom very handy: "When there is crisis in Lagos and everybody runs back to his or her state, those who remain behind because they have no other place to go, are LAGOSIANS"!

My next major Lagos assignment was on the invitation from the Secretary to Lagos State Government, Mr. (now Alhaji) Shamsi A. Thomas informing me that the late Governor, Rear Admiral Adekunle Lawal was to establish

a Teaching Service Commission for Lagos State. It was the first of its kind in Nigeria. All other states including Lagos were running Education Boards before my appointment. I was to establish the commission from the scratch.

The following minutes adequately reflect my initial encounter with the Lagos Union of Teachers and its rabid leadership at that time.

"The Education (Administration of Schools) Edict

(Temporary Provisions) Edict No. 12 of 1976, for the Teaching Service Commission was established with effect from the 29th day of April, 1976. The Teaching Service Commission was charged with the following statutory duties in respect of all primary and secondary schools, and teacher training colleges;

- (i) To appoint persons to hold or act in offices in the teaching service of Lagos State (including power to make appointments on promotion and transfer and to confirm appointments);
- (ii) To dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices;
- (iii) To prepare testimonials and certificates of service in respect of persons holding or acting in such offices;
- (iv) To prepare annual reports in respect of persons holding or acting in such offices and submit same to the State Commissioner for Education;
- (v) Assessment of salaries of teaching staff subject to guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Education; and
- (vi) Any function that may be assigned by the Military Governor from time to time.

In compliance with Edict No. 12 of 1976, the members of the Teaching Service Commission were appointed and on the 10th day of May 1976; the TSC together with the School Management Board were inaugurated. As at the inception of the TSC, the teachers in Lagos State were on strike which was already eight weeks old. The strike action was embarked upon for the following reasons:

- (i) Non-Implementation of Williams and Williams scale six months after it had been approved by the Federal Government.
- (ii) Non-recognition by the Ministry of Education of the harmonisation/promotion exercise carried out earlier in 1974.

Having been born into a crisis (as it was), it became incumbent on the TSC to find a solution to that crisis. The first of such solutions of course, was to implement the conversion of teachers' salaries from their Udoji scale to the Williams and Williams scale. The TSC went into action on the

very day it was inaugurated.

Before the TSC was inaugurated, a meeting was held between representatives of the NUT on the one hand and the Military Governor and the Head of Service, Mr. S.A. Thomas on the other hand. The meeting arrived at certain decisions connected with the implementation of the Williams and Williams Report. The decisions so arrived at were communicated to the NUT Secretary by the Secretary to the state government as follows:

“I am directed by His Excellency the Military Governor *to request you to convey to your members* the following agreement reached at the meetings:-

- (a) that the previous conversions from the Udoji Salary Scale to the Akintola Williams salary scales issued to all schools by the Ministry of Education should now be regarded as cancelled;
- (b) that the conversion exercise undertaken by the dissolved Lagos Schools Service Board should also be regarded as cancelled;
- (c) that each teacher should be placed in the appropriate grade level and scale in the Akintola Williams salary scales, having regard to his qualification, length of experience, continuity of service and satisfactory report by his principal or headmaster. Placements will not depend on approved establishments for positions in grade levels 01-11;
- (d) that promotion to the post of Principals and vice-principals in grade levels 12-14 should be based on vacancies in posts approved by the Ministry of Education;
- (e) that a machinery would be set up immediately to effect the conversion and placement on the Akintola Williams salary scales and to ensure payment of the new salaries and arrears where applicable, not later than 30th June, 1976.

As a result of the above agreement, the representatives of your Union agreed to advise their members to return to work. I will be grateful, therefore, if you would take immediate steps to give effect to this undertaking.

His Excellency, the Military Governor has asked me to express his appreciation to you and others who were present at this meeting for the cordial atmosphere which prevailed throughout.”

Contrary to the terms of paragraph 3 of the letter (that is to advise their members to return to work) the teachers refused to call off the strike. Thus, when the TSC was inaugurated on the 10th day of May 1976, it had to find a solution to the impasse. In order to get the teachers to call off their strike and go back to the classroom, it became necessary for the TSC to

hold several informal meetings with members of the NUT executives. Indeed most of such meetings were held in my hotel room.

The series of meetings after the preliminary courtesies, centered mainly on the conversion table on Williams and Williams and the final TSC conversion table with the appendix that was agreed to by the NUT during one of these meetings, subject of course to the concurrence of the Military Governor and the members of the Teaching Service Commission. The final agreement, that is the conversion table, represented the "minute" and the whole purpose of the NUT's meeting with me. On the 15th day of May 1976, the teachers called off their strike action at their conference held at Badagry and on the 17th day of May 1976, the teachers went back to their classrooms to resume normal work.

My first task was to bring order from chaos; record keeping was in shambles. It was difficult to take a teacher's file and find full details concerning age, schools attended, qualifications, date of employment, date of last promotion, incremental dates etc. There were such records before I came but many had been scattered and others, out of date. I was the chairman of the commission and there were three other commissioners, Mr. Esubiyi, Mr. William Odufisan and Dr. (Mrs.) Saida A. Mabadeje who was away on sabbatical.

The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) Lagos Branch was pressuring the government of Lagos State to increase teachers salaries and promote teachers among other things. Our job as commissioners was to apply a new scale called, "Williams and Williams". The NUT volunteered to give us staff to help us work on the project of salary adjustment. My trouble with NUT started when I politely turned down the offer. The final responsibility as to the accuracy or otherwise of the result rested squarely on the commission. The NUT demanded conversion table and placement table. The former was given but the latter was rejected as conveyed in the following letter of May 14th 1976 to the NUT chairman:

Please refer to our conversation of last night. You will recall that you requested that the conversion table be made available to you as per our earlier discussion (May 12th).

You received the conversion table from me yesterday then; you insisted on having a placement table. I discussed the impracticability of this with you but I promised to place your request before the commission.

The decision of the commission is that the normal practice anywhere is to release conversion table and not placement table. The placement of each teacher is to be based on the conversion table. Placement involves over 17,000 teachers and this is to be done as each teacher is reviewed. We may add that to the best of our knowledge, no state in this Federation issues placement table.

It is the hope of my commission that your union will now call off the strike and return to work by Monday 17th May, 1976. We are prepared to cooperate fully with your union and we hope that your union will reciprocate same.

The reason behind my letter to the NUT was that we preferred to make our own mistakes instead of outsiders making them on our behalf, especially if that mistake favours their own members. The NUT chairman was livid with anger but the commission kept its cool and decided to work day and night on the salary adjustment of over 17,000 teachers. The commissioners themselves decided to work on the assignment. We worked past 1.00a.m. everyday, turning in at least 1,000 adjusted salaries a day. We were very pleased with ourselves. I requested the secretary to the commission to begin to send out letters as fast as we produced the assessment. Then came my first shock.

My secretary, a so-called Senior Assistant Secretary told me in no uncertain terms that, "We don't operate like that in the civil service." Needless to say I was flabbergasted and I told the foolish officer there and then that he or I had to go within the next day or two. Incidentally, it took this slow poke of a secretary at least half an hour to come whenever I sent for him! I immediately left the office to pay a call to Mr. S.A. Thomas, Secretary to Lagos State Government. I told him of my experience with his officer and that I would return to the university rather than work with him. He was transferred within twenty-four hours.

I had no secretariat problem after that for the remainder of my two years and eleven months in office. The two succeeding secretaries, Mr. Badmus and Alhaja Latifa Okunnu worked effectively with the Commissioners. In spite of our sleepless nights on salary adjustment and with the secretary and other senior staff helping, the NUT was impatient. Their leaders staged demonstrations and appealed to the Governor to sack us! Governor Adekunle Lawal was firm; he gave us his full support.

When I advised the late Governor Adekunle Lawal to establish 60/40

quota in favour of indigenes in terms of admission to Lagos secondary schools during my tenure as Chairman of Lagos Teaching Service Commission, someone reported me to the then Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo who invited me for a chat. He was surprised, as most non-Lagosian would be. I had to patiently explain to him that Ogun, Oyo, Anambra, Bauchi etc. had close to 90% indigenous students. We recognise the cosmopolitan nature of Lagos and should as of necessity make allowance for it, hence, the 40% quota. Yet we must ensure that the Lagos indigenes who have Lagos as their only place of abode, should not be marginalised by those non-indigenes who have chances in Lagos and in their home states as well.

Our next assignment was to work out a code of conduct for teachers concerning the hours of attendance, fraternization with their students, punctuality, sale of goods during school hours, written request and permission before attending any meeting including NUT's, particularly during school hours; illegal collection of fees or levies, coaching fees etc. The NUT challenged us and practically ordered their members to boycott the commission. Within three months of our assumption of office, we settled all arrears, promoted those due and advertised new posts including the posts of principals and vice-principals. At that material time, some thirty-five posts of vice-principals were open. Lagos State had very few indigenes as principal and even fewer as vice-principals. To be considered, a teacher must have had ten years' teaching experience. Lagos indigenes with this qualification were not more than ten and another five with nine years in service, making a total of fifteen out of twenty-five. We decided to promote the ten and allow the five to act for the remaining year. The NUT hit the roof and accused the commission of partiality. NUT took their complaint to the then military Administrator, Admiral Kanu hoping that, being Igbo, he would support them. They even concocted a story that we gave an Igbo who sought transfer some difficult Yoruba proverbs to translate. Admiral Kanu was magnificent. He told the NUT that he would do exactly what the commission did if he were in our shoes. The NUT was incapacitated for a while, but not for long. Backed foolishly by their national executive, they called out their members on a strike which lasted for a couple of weeks and requested for a judicial inquiry into the activities of the commission.

The NUT was not acting alone. It had the support of late Prof. Awojobi who was removed as the chairman of the Education Board and Mr Gani Fawehinmi, a lawyer. Government set up a Tribunal headed by Justice Akibo Savage. This was during the third year of our three year term.

It was a prolonged exercise full of theatrical displays both by the NUT

and their lawyers. Even Prof. Awojobi who was not a lawyer was allowed to cross-examine me, with Gani Fawehinmi barging in from time to time.

I finally stopped Awojobi in his tracks. He was putting it to me as to whether it was fair to lump together staff with four or five years seniority with those with one or two years in service and place them on the same beginning scale. The truth was that that was what “Williams and Williams” did ! I then replied:

“Professor Awojobi, you would admit that I am at least ten years your senior as a professor but we are placed on the same salary scale and at the same entry point. But you did not complain or protest because it favoured you.”

The house was full of laughter; Awojobi was embarrassed. He turned to the Judge said, “This is an hostile “witness” and sat down for good”!

Gani Fawehinmi crossed-examined me for five hours a day for three days. He spent the first two days quoting from the pages of two of my books on education and asking me to reconcile my theory with my practice: He dealt extensively on teachers’ conditions of service, for example, what I said about housing, health, insurance, education of teachers’ children, pension etc. I made it clear to him that I was not the governor of Lagos State or head of Nigerian government. If I were, I would certainly be in a strong position to implement some if not all of my theories successfully and he would be in a better position to criticise me if I did little or nothing.

The Akibo Savage report vindicated the commission! It was a victory well earned in spite of the Lagos NUT, Awojobi and Fawehinmi. My other assignments with the Lagos State Government were:

- (a) as chairman of the Lagos State College of Education in 1981; and
- (b) as the chairman of the Visitation to the Lagos State University, Ojo in 1988 and 1998.

The chairmanship of the Lagos State College of Education Governing Board was another challenging task. The self-imposed task of my Board was to ensure that we had fifty percent indigenous staff and students.

It was an uphill task because the civilian administration of Lagos State was indifferent if not totally unconcerned. It is rather puzzling that it is only in Lagos State that educational institutions are built to cater for non-indigenes and if there is room left, some indigenes will be admitted! Yet Ondo, Ogun, Enugu, Anambra, Delta, Oyo, Kano and Sokoto schools are primarily built to cater for the needs of their indigenes but some non-indigenes will be admitted if there is room!

My second problem as chairman of Lagos State College of Education was with Governor Lateef Jakande himself. He ran a very curious administration, as he was practically a sole administrator of everything. The monthly salary of staff when compiled by the chief accountant and vetted by the Provost of the college must be taken to Alausa by the provost for the Governor's approval. As for capital expenditure, the Governor handled the contracts personally and assigned contractor or gave jobs to his special unit located within his office. Any request, major or minor had to be presented between the hours of 5.00p.m. and midnight or even later at his private residence where he reigned supreme. I went there once and I refused a repeat performance. I finally resigned my chairmanship via a polite letter to the Secretary to the State Government:

"Dear Sir,

Resignation: Chairmanship of the Lagos State College of Education
Governing Council

I have had the unique privilege of participating very actively in the founding and development of two universities in Nigeria in the last twenty years. I had hoped that experience would be useful in helping to develop the Lagos State College of Education when I was *invited* by the State Government to serve as the chairman of the newly created Governing Council of the college. Unfortunately, this was not to be because the State Government is not prepared to listen to expert advice, much less to take it. Moreover, the Governing Council, which was set up with fanfare by the State Government and whose members worked diligently to provide a sound foundation for the college, has been rendered impotent. The council is now a mere window-dressing, as the responsibilities, as stated in the law creating it, have been usurped by several agencies of government, including the Governor's office.

Alas, the Lagos State College of Education is the poorest in the country in terms of funds, equipment, physical facilities and staffing. Nobody can make hay without straw. It is a near miracle that the college runs at all!

I have exercised maximum patience in an attempt to persuade the authorities to see reason, but to no avail. I am therefore relinquishing the chairmanship of the Governing Council with immediate effect. Throughout my thirty years of service in and outside Nigeria I have never been anyone's rubber stamp, and I do not intend to start now!"

Col. Raji Rasaki, Governor of Lagos State set up a visitation panel for the Lagos State University (LASU) headed by me in November 1988. The

panel was to review the activities of LASU since its inception, advise on current issues and problems and make recommendations as suitable.

The panel submitted its findings within five weeks after several sittings and interviews with the principal officers of the university and private individuals, who requested interviews with the visitation panel.

Most of the university's problems were highlighted and suitable recommendations made. Again, one of the major problems was the issue of marginalisation of indigenous staff and students in their own home university. No other state has this problem either at primary, secondary, tertiary level, or in the civil service and parastatals. Some formula is needed to guarantee Lagos indigenes a minimum of 50 or 55 percent of the places at all the levels and sectors mentioned above. After all is said and done a non-indigenous Lagosian has two chances of admission and employment while the indigenous Lagosian has only one: Lagos. Despite my numerous assignments nationally and internationally and my stay in Nsukka and Ife for over two decades, I was involved in some aspects of Lagos State activities between 1966 and 1988 viz, Lagos Delegation to Ibadan Constitutional Conference, making a case for Lagos State, Scholarship Board Chairmanship in 1972; establishment of Lagos Teaching Service for primary and secondary Education, 1976-79; chairman of the Governing Board of Lagos State College of Education (1981-82); and Lagos State University Visitation Panel, 1988. The only area of education in Lagos that I have not interacted with is the Nursery level!

Even as I was putting finishing touches to this memoir, I received another invitation from the Military Administrator of Lagos State, Colonel Baba Marwa to head another Visitation Panel to Lagos State University in January 1998. The panel made 150 recommendations to the Lagos government on how to effectively move the university forward to the next century.

There was never a dull moment in Lagos. I was either invited to solve problems or had problems thrown at me and I was never smart enough to run away from them! Nevertheless, Lagos is still my Lagos.

There is no better tribute I can pay to Lagos State than the article I wrote in *The Guardian* to commemorate its 30th year as a State in 1997:

Salute to Lagos State at Thirty

I heartily congratulate Lagos State at Thirty. It has been a long and arduous journey. Most of Nigeria's politicians, businessmen and women, professionals, socialites, and millions of other Nigerian cut their teeth in Lagos before they moved on. Before the creation of Lagos State in 1967,

indigenous Lagosians were contemptuously told that Lagos was no man's land. Yet Lagos was and is still older than Abeokuta, Enugu, Ibadan, Kaduna, and others. Lagos has a rich 400 year history, while these and some other towns are less than 200 years old.

Lagos State accommodated the Federal capital for almost 100 years. The Federal Capital was moved to Abuja five years ago but Lagos is still the commercial capital of Nigeria. The Lagos motto should be changed from "Centre of Excellence" to "Mother of All States" or "Commercial Capital of Nigeria" It is only Lagos that can assume these two titles; any other state can become a centre of excellence in due course.

Lagos has served the federation of Nigeria well. In appreciation of its services, the Federal Government should handover at least 50% of its buildings in Lagos to the State. It should allow the Lagos Secretariat at Alausa to move to the Federal Secretariat Ikoyi. The Ikoyi Secretariat can be best utilised as another secretariat. The Alausa Secretariat should become a city-university, fully equipped but with no provision for accommodation for anyone - vice-chancellor, staff or students. It will open at 8.00a.m. and close at 8.00p.m. and would be fully guarded by the police or security personnel at night.

It is hoped that the Federal Government will give the State these gifts to mark the 30th Anniversary of Lagos State. In Lagos, assets are limited, liabilities are limited, but opportunities are unlimited. Congratulations, Lagos, State of Nigeria.

Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa.

Lagos.

Allahu Akbar

The period 1984 to 1995 was the second historic decade in my life. The remarkable decade started in early 1984, four years after my voluntary retirement from university service. This period turned out to be more exciting and diverse than any previous decade in my career as teacher and administrator. It commenced with my decision to pay a pilgrimage to Mecca, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. I wanted to go to thank Allah for His mercies on me and my family and to pray for future guidance. In August 1984 I joined fifty thousand other Nigerians to perform the Hadj. It was the most humbling and at the same time the most elevating experience for me. No amount of detailed description can capture the essence of Hadj. The spiritual upliftment, the companionship of a million fellow Muslims at the

Kabbah at the same time, reciting appropriate verses of the Holy Quran and the feeling of nearness to Allah at Mount Arafat and throwing pebbles at Jamarat-Al Aqaba, are some of the highlights of the pilgrimage. Standing at Arafat, where the Quran was revealed to the Holy Prophet is the Hadj. Anyone who fails to stand at Arafat after midday prayer (Zuhr) or by night until dawn (Fajr) of the day of sacrifice would not have performed his Hadj.

It is only in Mecca during the Hadj that one can hear “Allahu Akbar” being said in unison during Jumat prayers by one million voices. It made one truly feel the presence of Allah!

After thanking Allah for sparing my life and the lives of my family, relations, friends and colleagues, I prayed for Allah’s guidance in my future endeavours. Having served my country in a small way as a teacher for over thirty-five years I prayed to God to give me the strength and the wisdom to enable me continue to serve my country in any capacity that God may direct, particularly in the field of education.

Since my return from Mecca, important events were happening in my life at the rate of one, two or even three times a year. Allah be praised!

Two weeks of my return from Hadj, I received a letter from the then Head of State, Major General Buhari inviting me to head one of the committees he had set up to study various aspects of our national life, economic, educational, political, social and cultural. I was appointed Chairman of the Study Group on Funding of Education at all levels as discussed earlier.

- 1984: Pilgrimage to Mecca: On return was appointed Chairman by Federal Government for Study Group on Funding of Education.
- 1985: Elected First Vice-President, Nigerian Academy of Education
- 1985: Chairman, Committee of Muslim International School.
- 1986: Vice President for Africa Region, International Council on Education for Teaching (Headquarters, Washington D.C. U.S.A.)
Pro-Chancellor, Chairman of Council, University of Calabar
Honourary LLD, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
- 1987: Hon. D.Sc. University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University
- 1988: Elected second Vice-President, Jamaat-ul Islamiyya of Nigeria founded by Alhaji L.B. Augusto B.L. QC in 1924
Chairman, Lagos State University Visitation Panel.

Chairman, National Primary Education Commission (NPEC)

1989: President, Nigerian Academy of Education

Nigerian National Merit Award Winner (NNOM)

Jan. 1990 to Jan 1993: Federal Minister of Education

1990: Our first grandchild, Morinatu arrived

1990-1994: President, International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET)

1992: Installed as Asiwaju of Ikoyi-Ile

1992: Second pilgrimage to Mecca

1994: First Recipient of UNESCO Comenius Award Winner for Africa.

1995: National President, Jamaat-ul Islamiyya of Nigeria and the UK

President, Nigerian Heartcare Foundation

President, Fafunwa Educational Foundation (FEF)

1996: Magaji Ngeri of Gungu (Jebba) Island

When I prayed to Allah during the 1984 Hadj thus: "O Allah, I have done all I could in Education in Nigeria and elsewhere. If there is any thing more I need to do, please show me the way", little did I realise that my cup of abundance would overflow. I had another opportunity to repeat the pilgrimage in 1992 to thank God for answering my prayers and for my successful tenure as a Federal Minister of Education.

During my tenure of office between 1990 and 1993, I was also conferred with the following titles:

1. Jagun-Adimula of Ife by His Royal Majesty Oba Sijuade, Olubuse II, Ooni of Ife. My wife was also conferred with the title Yeye-Gboyegun of Ife in 1990.
2. I was installed the Ardo of Zaria by the Zaria Nomadic Community in 1992.
3. H.R.H. of (Eze-Ogba) of Ogbaland, Rivers State conferred the title The OK: IBNEAH of Ogbaland on me in 1990. By this award I am an "Ogba Traditional Title Holder" and member of Ogba/Egbema Council of Chiefs.

All praise be to Allah.

Chapter 20

The Great Education Fraternity

It is one thing for one's peers to be nice and accommodating to you; it is another thing for them to go out of their way to organise a three-day seminar on *Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future* to mark the end of a three-year tenure as the Federal Minister of Education and Youth Development (January 1990 to January 1993). The seminar which was held in Akure from December, 15–17, 1992 led to the publication of a 421 paged book by the same title, edited by my former student, Professor Babatunde Ipaye, Provost of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo who was also the prime mover of the Ondo/Akure Seminar.

In the preface to the book, Professor Ipaye gave some reasons why the seminar was organised:

Education is the biggest industry in Nigeria as of today. In any industrial concern, there will be an individual who stands as the towering pillar, the beacon and the guiding star of the industry. Fafunwa is that individual. Two simple examples will suffice. The highest decision making body in education in the country is the National Council on Education, (NCE) which is advised by the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on Education. Right from its inception, Professor Fafunwa had played a central role. He had contributed to virtually every discussion, deliberation and thus, decision of the JCC since its inception, and by derivation to the decisions of the NCE and by further inference, to education decision making since then. (See the summary of decisions of JCC).

Second, since the introduction of Western Education to Nigeria in 1842, there had been various ordinances, codes and government pronouncements to guide education. However, none of these could truly be described as a National Policy in respect of education in all parts of the country since Nigeria became one in 1914. In 1969, however, there was a national curriculum conference where issues pertaining to this nation on education were frankly and broadly discussed. Many participants and contributors to the conference called it the first of its kind in the country; nobody since then had challenged that statement. This national curriculum conference was the brain-child of Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa.

The conference did not stop there, the decision therein eventually became what is today known as the National Policy on Education (NPE), again the first of its kind in Nigeria. The policy spelt out clearly the objectives of education in the country from pre-primary to university education. It spelt out the modalities in which education can be used as veritable instrument of national unity. Again, it could thus be said that if the NPE were looking for a father, it finds it in Professor Fafunwa. The various references made to the NPE in the chapters in this book therefore are indirect and direct references to him.

The conference was organised under five sub-themes:

Language and Education

Policy, Educational Planning and Administration;

Foundation;

Curriculum issues and,

Teacher Education.

One of the areas where people both inside and outside educational circles know and hear of Fafunwa is in the area of mother tongue in education, where a crucial debate continues. The various papers in this section point to this significant sector in Nigeria education.

... When asked to say something about his life, work and hopes, Fafunwa said that his book, *Up and On! A Nigerian Teacher's Odyssey* printed by Academy Press, 1990, contains everything he would have wanted to say. Yet we pressed him to still say something, even at the expense of repeating what is in *Up and On*. The last chapter contains what he agreed to say.

Look at, and read Fafunwa's various publications, speeches, addresses and notes carefully and, you will see and hear him saying directly or indirectly what speakers and authors here are now saying all over again. The conference had not been organised as a praise singing event, this is one of the reasons we did not commission anybody to write specifically on Fafunwa

in terms of his achievements, works or person. As it turned out to be, virtually all the chapters here had one thing directly or remotely to say about his work. We feel happy about this outcome because this is the most important mouthpiece for anybody - his or her work. The 'person' will go one day, but the work remains forever speaking for and about the person eternally, if there is eternity on earth!

Finally, a word about the papers in this book. It has to be repeated that the book is not just a conference proceeding. All the papers were thoroughly assessed. In fact, we had more than eighty papers found publishable and because we have no space to take all of them, we had to randomly select papers in the various sections after taking care of all the lead papers. The other papers may be published in the future if funds are available.

It must be said that the opinions expressed in the book are those of the individual authors and the person being honoured with the conference and the book could not be held responsible for those opinions. Neither could the reviewers nor the Editor be held responsible for those opinions except in cases where they come in as individual authors."

Babatunde Ipaye, Editor

The acknowledgement made by the editor revealed the extent of the contributions made by many academics and Macmillan Nigerian Publishers. His words:

"We had less than three months between the idea of this national conference, the writing of the proposal, the acceptance of same and the eventual holding of the conference. It is within this short period that we sent out the call for papers, and to our greatest surprise, we got a little over 120 papers from different authors.

We also commissioned 18 people to write on various topics. Again, to our very pleasant surprise, most of them wrote and submitted at the given deadline. We are grateful to all.

The preparation of the materials here into the typeset form came up at a very critical moment when it seemed there was going to be nobody to help and the project was going to fail. Yet a number of people came in at the nick of time and at a most critical moment to bail the situation out. Mr. A.A. Ayeni; the Chief Computer Operator, Mr. F-Crowther Ibikunle, Mr. Ezema, Mr. Eze, Miss Victoria Idowu and Mr. Paul Oladepo all of the Provost's office, worked round the clock.

Mr. Ofulue, Mr. Kelly Akinbanjo and Mrs. Lola Isijola spent their leave period helping us to do some typing. I am most grateful to all of them.

I thank in particular, Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited, through their Managing Director, Dr. A.I. Adelekan, for the rather enthusiastic and invaluable assistance given to us in printing the book. In his letter of 20th November to me, Dr. Adelekan, who I had met only once before contacting him on phone about this book, said, "I wish to express Macmillan Nigeria Publishers's readiness to give all assistance to a worthy scholar and administrator, Professor Babatunde Fafunwa. It is indeed gratifying that the efforts of this unique teacher are being appreciated while he is still in office." Both the Reviewers' page and the table of contents almost look like *who is who* in Nigerian education.

Reviewers' Page

I understand that the papers that constitute the chapters in the book were not just mere conference proceedings. They were all assessed and reviewed by a group of reviewers.

The reviewers were:

Professor Adeniji Adaralegbe	- Chairman/Special Adviser to the Hon. Minister
Professor Akin Osiyale	- Special Adviser to the Hon. Minister
Professor Oladele Awobuluyi	- University of Ilorin
Professor Olu Aina	- Registrar and Chief Executive, NBETEB.
Professor Tayo Agun	- Dean, Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.
Professor Peter Okebukola	- Dean, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojoo, Lagos.
Dr. G.A. Badmus	- (Reader), University of Benin.
Dr. C.B. Oguntonade	- (Reader) Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.
Professor Babatunde Ipaye	- Conference Co-ordinator.

The book, *Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future* covered a range of educational topics:

1. Nigerian Education: Unity within Diversity, by B.O. Ukeje.
2. Education Decision Making in Nigeria by Yahaya Hamza.
3. Implementation of the National Policy on Education - The Journey so far and the Road Ahead by J.A. Sofolahan.

4. Management of Primary and Secondary Education in Nigeria: Progress and Prospects by Adeniji Adaralegbe.
5. Maintaining Quality in Higher Education in Nigeria by P.N. Lassa.
6. Placement in Higher and Tertiary Education: Progress and Prospects by M.S. Abdulraman.
7. Higher Education in Nigeria: Issues, Problems and Prospects by Idris A. Abdulkadir.
8. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and Education in Nigeria by H.B. Momoh.
9. Basic Education Laws of Ondo State by Ademola Ajakaiye.
10. Basic Education at Local Level: The Legal Framework by Helen Marinho.
11. Basic Policy Making and Implementation in an Era of Economic Recession: The Nigerian Case by M.A. Adelabu.
12. School meals: A multi-dimensional focus for Education and Development in Nigeria by Elizabeth Eke.
13. Planning Education for National Development: The option for years ahead by Sikiru Lawal.
14. Language Education in Africa: Lessons for and from Nigeria by P.A.I. Obanya.
15. Language Education in Nigeria: Theory, Policy and Practice by Oladele Awobuluyi.
16. Languages and the National Policy on Education: Implications and Prospects by E. Nolue Emenanjo.
17. Using Nigerian Languages as Media of Instruction to enhance Scientific and Technological Development by A.O. Olanrewaju.
18. Curriculum Issues and Curriculum Development in Nigeria by Peter Okebukola.
19. The Roles of Research and Development in Education in Nigeria by G.A. Belo and E.O. Adeniyi.
20. The Education of Migrants and under-served Children in the Society by Chimah Ezeomah.
21. The Refractive Index of Academic Rationalism in the Nigerian Educational System by C.B. Oguntunade.
22. An Appraisal of Physical Education Programmes in the College of Education in some Southern States of Nigeria by J.A. Oyewusi and A.O. Ogungbenro.
23. Objectives and Anticipated Working Modalities of the National Business and Technical Examinations Boards (NABTEB) by Olu Aina.

24. The Use of Applications in Mathematics Pedagogy by B. Agboola.
25. Guidance and Counselling: Organisation, Implementation and Practice under the 6-3-3-4 system of education by Babatunde Ipaye.
26. The Assessment of Hearing in Nigerian Schools for the deaf by C.A. Bakare.
27. Education in Nigeria: A look into the Future by Safiya Mohammed.
28. Challenges of Teachers Education in Nigeria by E.A. Yoloye.
29. Thirty years of Teacher Education in Nigeria by John O. Afe.
30. Learning about Learning: A Builder's Bridge between Learning, People and Society by S.O. Olaitan.
31. Education: An Operational Definition for the Development of a Field and a Profession by I.O. Ogunmosunle.
32. The Content and Structure of Nursery Schools in Lagos State by Julia Omokhodion.
33. Educational Radio Broadcasting in Nigeria: The Past, The Present and The Future by Bimbo Adekomi.
34. Innovations in Nigerian Education: Past, Present and Future by Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa.

I was overwhelmed by this singular gesture of my own peers and colleagues. The concluding part of my own contribution to the volume on *Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future* summed up my view on this spectacular demonstration of camaraderie and my hope for the future:

"Nigeria, like any other developing country, offers a fertile ground for innovative ideas and practice and lack of funds is not necessarily a deterrent, but lack of will and courage is. Most Nigerians are in the habit of giving a thousand and one reasons why some things will not work, but little or no suggestion is offered as to what to do to make things work. In effect, we are experts in discouraging budding innovators and experimenters, not in helping them to realise their objective. Yet if Nigeria is to join a world that is already moving at supersonic speed, we must move with it."

There are many ideas that are waiting to be explored. Some in the field of education include:

- (1) Newer and more effective ways of teaching at all levels;
- (2) How to help a teacher teach 100 children effectively with the help of two assistants or senior students in the same school;
- (3) Use of radio for effective teaching in rural areas, riverine areas and for nomadic children on locations;
- (4) Use of battery-run televisions in rural areas;
- (5) Teaching of science and technology in Nigerian languages, etc.

Our faculties of education and indeed other faculties should accept the challenge for educational improvement. For example, there are too many mathematicians in our school system and at all levels and only a few "mathemagicians" teachers; hence the flight of students from mathematics – I will admit that there are other factors responsible but the most important as far as I am concerned, is poor teaching accompanied by unnecessary and unproductive show of contempt by teachers towards their pupils who cannot catch on quickly e.g., calling the student a dunce or yam-head.

It was said by that educational sage, John Dewey, that the end of education is more education and the only man who has completed his education is dead. There are great challenges ahead for education. Indeed we are already witnessing a bulging curriculum every where in the world, and Nigeria is no exception. Today we talk of AIDS education, environmental and population education, to mention only a few examples. Our modern day curriculum is called upon to meet the ever-changing needs of the society while vigorously maintaining certain universals such as transmission of culture, morality, good health habits and basics such as literacy, numeracy and scientific attitude to work and leisure.

Finally kindly permit me the opportunity of thanking everyone and especially the brains behind the organization of this conference dedicated to honour me.

Not only must I express my gratitude to the Local Organising Committee under the umbrella of my former junior associates and students, Professors Adeniji Adaralegbe and Babatunde Ipaye, I must also thank the whole assembly of scholars in teacher education gathered here this week to present learned papers on several aspects of education in Nigeria and on teacher education in particular during this conference. I thank you all for this singular honour. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all. I will always recall this unique occasion with fondest memory. May the cause of education never fail."

Honorary Fellowship of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN)

I have received over the years many honours and awards locally, nationally and internationally. I received the Franklin Book Award in 1973 for outstanding contribution to Educational Development in New York. My alma mater, New York University honoured me with the Distinguished Alumni Award in May, 1985. Teachers College, Columbia University awarded me its own version of Honorary Doctorate, styled, Medal for Distinguished

Service in Education in May 1973. I received an honorary LL.D from University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1986 and an Honorary D. Litt in 1987 from University of Ife and various other awards.

But the Honorary Fellowship Award of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria in August, 1992 came as an overwhelming surprise and it was the first ever honorary award of STAN. I am not at all qualified to be a member of STAN as my areas of specialisation are social sciences, English and educational administration. Of course, I have been pursuing the learning and teaching of primary school science since 1962, a period of over thirty years. I understand that I have given the largest number of keynote addresses at STAN's National Conferences so far." I quote the concluding portion of the citation below:

Science Teachers Association of Nigeria Honorary Fellowship Award

To Prof. A.B. Fafunwa , 1992

The first ever Honorary Fellowship award of STAN was conferred on Prof. Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, FNAE, NNMA the Honourable Minister of Education. The award took place on Thursday 22 August at 4p.m. in the Assembly Hall of General Murtala Mohammed College, Yola. The citation for the Award was presented by Prof. Fafunwa's former student, Dr. E.O. Alao, MUSTAN, the current Publicity Secretary of STAN. We present below the concluding part of the seven-page citation:

"Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, old but young and energetic Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa was appointed the Federal Minister of Education in 1990. When he was appointed the Federal Minister of Education, those who know him believed strongly that the mother tongue issue would come up. It may be interesting to note that the Minister's concern about elementary science and teaching and learning in the mother tongue, started about thirty years ago. By 1963, he already prepared Preliminary Reports on a Ford Foundation financed project: "Elementary Science for Nigerian Elementary Schools". In 1969, he presented a paper to the UN/UNESCO working party on the improvement of Science Education in Developing Countries. He was co-ordinator of the Ife Six-Year Primary Project in Yoruba to African Education at the Conakry Conference on Linguistic Decolonisation and African Unity in 1981. Earlier on, he was Chief Editor of the Ife Six-Year Primary Project Books comprising the pupils' books, teachers' books and

workbooks. In 1989, a book he co-edited with Mr. J.A.F. Sokoya and Dr. (Mrs.) J.I. Macaulay was released to the market by University Press. The Honourable Minister's association with STAN has been for long time. He has given the largest number of keynote addresses at STAN's National Conferences so far.

Your Excellency the Military Governor of Gongola State, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, our guest today needs no further introduction. It is with great honour and privilege that I present to you, President of STAN, in accordance with the constitution and in line with the resolution of the Science Teacher's Association of Nigeria a once-upon-a-time railway clerk, a sometime ago class prefect, the Adventurous African in Okigbo's "Young and Black in Africa" a soft-spoken purposeful and loving husband and father, Baba Awawu, Baba Sheri, Baba Tunde, Baba Sanusi Tani, an excellent and distinguished international scholar, a pioneer of many good things, a lover of children, a teacher of teachers, a Dean of Deans, the first Chairman of the National Primary Education Commission, a National merit award winner and of course, the Executive Chairman of Nigeria's largest industry, the Honourable Minister of Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria – Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa – for the award of the first Honorary Fellowship of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (FSTAN).

APPENDIX I

Table I
Statistics of Primary Education in Nigeria, 1975–1994

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Pupils
1975/76	21,223	177,221	6,165,547
1980/81	36,524	376,681	13,760,030
1990/91	35,432	339,141	13,507,249
1993/94	38,254	428,097	15,870,280

Table 2: Statistics of Secondary Schools in Nigeria, 1975–1994

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Pupils
1975/75	1,589	11,917	629,495
1980/81	2,910	33,641	1,615,201
1990/91	5,964	142,548	2,893,918
1993/94	5,959	151,722	4,032,083

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos, (Statistics Division).

Table 2
Primary Education Enrolment
Nigerian Primary School Statistics as at March 1995 by State

S/No	State	Enrolment May 1994	Attendance March 1995	Difference
1.	Abia	551,700	451,199	(100,501)
2.	Adamawa	464,616	493,551	28,935
3.	Akwa Ibom	742,572	593,005	(149,567)
4.	Anambra	437,489	335,266	(102,223)
5.	Bauchi	458,527	399,623	(58,904)
6.	Benue	730,659	589,769	(140,890)
7.	Borno	585,713	288,159	(297,554)
8.	Cross River	541,774	433,628	(108,146)
9.	Delta	634,493	446,464	(188,029)
10.	Edo	606,739	495,097	(111,642)
11.	Enugu	721,446	677,951	(43,495)
12.	Imo	573,721	529,705	(44,016)
13.	Jigawa	426,096	121,360	(304,736)
14.	Kaduna	548,171	340,151	(208,020)
15.	Kano	840,541	471,042	(369,499)
16.	Katsina	1,623,534	371,073	(1,252,461)
17.	Kebbi	198,748	143,762	(54,986)
18.	Kogi	672,552	396,438	(276,114)
19.	Kwara	267,267	270,447	(3,180)
20.	Lagos	912,779	623,256	(289,523)
21.	Niger	354,050	240,000	(114,050)
22.	Ogun	483,339	413,356	(69,983)
23.	Ondo	638,632	541,232	(97,400)
24.	Osun	823,162	586,214	(235,548)
25.	Oyo	758,160	609,872	(148,288)
26.	Plateau	806,676	559,085	(247,591)
27.	Rivers	515,586	525,044	(9,458)
28.	Sokoto	338,281	294,403	(43,878)
29.	Taraba	422,924	334,639	(88,285)
30.	Yobe	458,90		

Table 3
Summary Indications: Nigeria by State
Education Statistics 1993/94

STATE	% of children 6-11 Years enrolled in Schools			% of children 12-17 enrolled in Schools			% of literate Adults for 15 years & older		
	M+F	M	F	M+F	M	F	M+F	M	F
Abia	92	93	92	90	91	89	78	85	71
Adamawa	53	56	50	59	66	51	43	54	31
Akwa Ibom	94	94	94	83	83	83	78	85	71
Anambra	96	95	96	94	92	95	77	83	72
Bauchi	31	33	28	31	35	24	33	40	27
Benue	71	75	67	74	81	67	53	69	39
Borno	32	33	30	34	39	29	20	28	12
C/River	90	90	89	90	91	88	74	83	65
Delta	92	93	92	92	94	90	78	88	69
Edo	95	95	95	96	97	94	79	86	73
Enugu	72	73	72	84	84	83	62	72	83
Imo	93	93	93	92	92	91	77	85	71
Jigawa	26	30	21	20	24	13	12	19	5
Kaduna	58	60	55	70	59	50	50	62	37
Kano	56	58	53	62	68	55	47	58	34
Kastina	28	32	22	26	34	15	21	29	14
Kebbi	17	20	13	21	25	14	16	14	9
Kogi	76	78	74	78	83	72	48	62	37
Kwara	79	79	78	77	76	78	48	58	38
Lagos	97	78	96	92	94	90	90	94	85
Niger	64	65	62	65	68	62	44	55	34
Ogun	95	95	94	85	85	86	61	71	53
Ondo	88	89	87	85	86	84	60	70	51
Osun	95	96	95	91	91	91	62	74	52
Oyo	89	89	88	86	86	85	60	69	51
Plateau	63	65	60	69	72	64	48	59	36
Rivers	92	93	93	89	90	88	72	86	91
Sokoto	18	20	13	19	27	9	16	21	10
Taraba	45	49	40	62	72	49	32	45	20
Yobe	20	21	18	23	27	17	11	15	7
Abuja FCT	68	69	68	75	78	70	57	66	47

Source: Federal Office of Statistics (NASC 1993/94)

Table 4

Academic and Non-Academic Staff of Federal Universities 1992

Name of Institution	(A) Academic Staff	(B) Non-Academic Staff	Total	Ration of A to B
1. Nsukka	834	4339	5193	1:5
2. Zaria	1188	5386	6574	1:4.5
3. Ife	873	3170	4043	1:3.6
4. Lagos	1883	3303	5186	1:1.75
5. Ibadan	1213	4230	5443	1:3.5
6. Benin	673	2480	3153	1:3.6
7. Jos	551	1897	2448	1:3.4
8. Calabar	527	1684	2211	1:3
9. Kano	470	1415	1885	1:3
10. Maiduguri	710	2256	2966	1:3
11. Sokoto	1561	1105	2666	1:0.7
12. Ilorin	443	1755	2203	1:3.9
13. Port Harcourt	463	2043	2506	1:4.4
14. Bauchi	320	577	897	1:1.8
15. Owerri	208	746	954	1:3.5
16. Akure	256	585	841	1:2.2
17. Minna	237	442	679	1:1.8
18. Yola	307	422	729	1:1.3
19. Abuja	225	372	597	1:1.6
20. Uyo	326	997	1303	1:3
21. Awka	863	468	1331	1:0.5

Derived from NUC Statistics

APPENDIX II

KUDOS

In the last four decades, I received many awards, citations and letters of commendation from local, national and international sources. These awards may be regarded as vanity-lines or national and international kudos. I selected for inclusion in this appendix only some of my favourite ones due to limited space.

I indeed acknowledge and appreciate all others not included in this section. I must confess that some comments were over-drawn. In some instances, I felt the citation was not about my achievements but what I was expected to accomplish after the citation. Nevertheless, I cherish the fact that my fellow colleagues felt that I deserved what was said about me. One must always take praises with humility and criticisms seriously. Recipients of kudos must always remember that genuine people do not have to say anything good about you if you do not deserve it. But we must watch out for sycophants. I like the Yoruba proverb which says: "One should be glad that one is important enough for some other people to spite him. Suppose they do not even look in his direction?"

BABS, THE MAN OF GREAT VISION

This is not a Grimm's tale, but even then today "fairy" tales do come true.

Once upon a time, a wee bit of time back down the corridors of time, a venerable gentleman said (he wasn't a professional clairvoyant, either) "Look out for the little boy. He will wield even still a mightier pen and he will attain some dazzling heights."

That was in the wake of the last world war – long ago but not far away – when Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa was a small struggling pupil in the C.M.S Grammar School, Lagos.

The "Prophet" was the Reverend S. I. Kale the then vice-principal of the school. He was no doubt struck even so early by the versatility and the pungency of the pen of Babatunde Fafunwa, much the same way twenty years after today many are struck by his ready wit and solid intelligence, his modest and rigidly unpretending ways, his forensic and logical mind, his sobriety, his frankness and intellectual acuteness all of which have made him today Nigeria's number one man of vision and mission.

And it is not by chance that Babs Fafunwa has become today Nigeria's man of vision and mission No. 1. For from the very earliest, he has never been known to let go any opportunity that offered itself to him to show that the African, nay the Nigerian is on level terms, a good match for any other national.

Once at a Colgate University Conference on Foreign Policy, Babs sat out a whole afternoon listening to a most vehement tirade by a South African ambassador to America. The ambassador split his spleen over the pressure being brought by America on South Africa to treat black South Africans like human beings. The ambassador said it was ridiculous to give Africans such rights because they were less than human beings. And he said that much without mincing words.

Babs was hot in the neck, but what could he do, he had not much to offer in credentials, going by that of the South African ambassador's. But it looked like the ambassador would be running away with it and so, small Fafunwa rose and with his superlative argumentative craftsmanship, attacked the South African ambassador for breaking all rules of hospitality—he was South Africa's Ambassador to the United States and it was improper for him to have opened such a volley on its host-country, said Fafunwa.

Babs did not stop at that he told the pompous Afrikaner a word and more about civilization. He pointed out that a solid civilization flourished in the kingdoms of Benin, Mali, Songhay when his Dutch great-grandfathers were still going about in leopard skins.

If Babs Fafunwa is a political missionary he is not a rabid one. And if his mind is logical it is also calculating.

And much acutely as he feels with regard to the degradation of coloureds and negroes in some white societies, he does not always have to split his spleen, as he did in Colgate University's Conference on Foreign Policy to drive his point home. For Babs' mind is too fertile to permit of a one-way tactic.

While studying in America, he wrote a series of articles for both the Chicago Defender and the Pittsburg Courier telling either how he felt about the colour problem or telling about the role of Africa in world politics.

In fact, as long ago as the early fifties when it was madness to forecast some of the important political advances that have taken place today in Africa, he wrote in the Pittsburg Courier "Africa is the continent of tomorrow."

For Babs Fafunwa is a man of great vision.

In the Western Region of Nigeria, Free Primary Education is a story of

the past, but then as far away as the late forties when free Primary Education was a madman's talk, Babs Fafunwa, then a student in America wrote in the Nigerian Press, "Wanted: Free Education for Nigeria."

Babs Fafunwa argued then that without free universal primary education, a country could not honestly claim to have an eligible and educated citizenry on the one hand and on the other hand any plan for gigantic economic development would fail... "Nor can we," he continued, "in all reality, expect self-determination in the true sense of the word."

Education, he said was the inalienable right of the citizen and this should be made available without any consideration to affluence or circumstance of birth.

"Who knows," he ended, "how many Einsteins, Bertrand Russells and Ralph Bunches are among the many Nigerians who never made it because they never saw the inside of a school."

Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa was born in Lagos on September 32, 1923, of muslim parentage. He had his early education at the Ahmadiyya School and later at the C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos.

There is no doubt that his association with the C.M.S Grammar School not only had the effect of giving him better educational proficiency but also a more solid moral and a refined outlook on life and the society in which he was born.

It could hardly of course have been otherwise under the headship of that moralist of moralists, now Professor L. J. Lewis, and under the vice-headship of Rev. Kale.

Professor Lewis never suffered the cane but little Babs was so well-behaved and brilliant that he was one of the very few who never got a hiding from Principal Lewis.

In fact Babs was so brilliant that throughout his High School days, there was never a year that he missed receiving a proficiency certificate. He was in fact class captain in 1943, his last year in the C.M.S Grammar School.

L. J. Lewis, no doubt influenced Babs for he used to tell Babs and the other pupils then: "Stand up like a man and look at me straight in the face, I am no God."

That possibly should explain why Babs has so much of confidence in the ability of the African today.

Babs religiously believes that Africans do not have any particular disadvantage except lack of opportunities. "Give an African," Babs maintains, "the opportunity and he will show wonders. If this African cannot do it, that African can."

If Lewis influenced Babs there is no doubt that some of his contemporaries and colleagues in the school also did. For Babs was at the Grammar School at the same time as F. R. A. Williams, Akintola Williams, Chief Magistrate Sowemimo, Mr. O. O. Omololu, Ajose Adeogun.

When Babs left the C.M.S Grammar School in 1943, he joined the Nigeria Railways and was a clerk in the Stores Department.

Always very adjustable to new situations, Babs started studying for engineering although he hadn't any latent propensities for that. He took a course for the A.M.I. Mech E. diploma from a correspondence college in South Africa and also took another for the intermediate B.Sc. (Economics) from Wolsey Hall, Oxford.

When at last the opportunity of a part scholarship finally presented itself in 1948, Babs left for a small College in Florida, USA – Bethune Cookman. In 1950, he took a degree in English and Social Science. He was the first African ever to attend the College.

Because of his high academic distinction, Babs won the honour of being the College valedictorian on leaving Bethune Cookman in 1950.

He taught English and Social Science in Bethune Cookman till the Summer of 1950 when he registered with the New York University for a graduate course.

In June 1951, Babs received his Master's Degree and from September 1951 to April 1952, he was a teaching fellow of the New York University.

The question of Nigerian Independence had always interested Babs from the very beginning of things.

Before he left for the United States, he and other Nigerian youths founded the Nigerian Students' Union. It was also at this time that Babs and some other youths formed a committee which met Dr. Maja., Dr. Azikiwe and Herbert Macaulay about the necessity of forming a common national front. It was as a result of the committee's appeal that the now known National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons was formed.

So when the opportunity of "entering into politics" offered itself again in 1952, Babs joined the United Nations Division of Trusteeship and non-self-governing territories under the headship of the negro luminary, Dr. Ralph Bunche. His schedule covered Tanganyika and Seychelles in East Africa and several countries of West Africa.

MESSAGE TO THE 1966 GRADUATES

The class of 1966 in the five Nigerian universities is unique in many

ways. It will be the first class to graduate into a new Nigerian society – the Second Republic after the fall of the first one. Your class should have no illusion at this stage as to what evil forces contributed to the disintegration of the first Republic. Let me remind you that the major short-comings of the first era were tribalism, nepotism, regionalism, greed, maladministration and unethical practices in high and low places. Granted that the art of government is a difficult one; but this is no excuse for bare-faced denial of human rights or studied attempts to defraud the public. Every respectable society has a code of ethics which is jealously guarded by its leaders and its people. In such society, disapproval or condemnation is swift and each member of the society is a guardian of this priceless gem which is the society's badge of honour. Material wealth and intellectual acquisition of knowledge are meaningless and will soon perish unless these thrive in an wholesome atmosphere; that is, in a society that is ethical and corruption-free; and where every member's rights, privileges and obligations are guaranteed and protected not only by law but by the enforcement of that law by every citizen of the state.

For sometime to come, University graduates will continue to form the bulk of the Nigerian leadership. Much has been given to them by our economically poor society; but to whom much is given, much more is expected. As agents of change and enlightenment, the 1966 graduates should take up the challenge of ONE NIGERIA. They must become the undisputed champions of ONE NIGERIA. Anything short of this is a betrayal of the cause.

Armed with intellectual power, moral stamina and singleness of purpose, the 1966 graduates are sufficiently equipped to do battle with the Philistines of Nigerian unity.

May you not falter along the straight and narrow road that leads to the Nigeria of our dream.

I salute you, the lions and lionesses of Nsukka. Go ye into the world to build one Nigeria.

A. Babs Fafunwa
Acting Vice-Chancellor
University of Nigeria
Nsukka
15th June, 1966

The Christian Science Monitor*Boston, U.S.A**January 18, 1969***Obstacle to amity?****UNESCO Denounces 'slurs' in Language***By Bertram B. Johansson*

Staff correspondent of

The Christian Science Monitor

United Nations, N.Y.

Watch your language there. You might be committing racial prejudice without knowing it.

This, in effect, is the thrust of a recent report of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNESCO delegates meet in Paris to discuss how to combat racial prejudice. Agreed that a special precision and prudence are called for from all persons making extensive use of language for communication.

It aimed its report particularly at teachers, authors, publishers of textbooks and other teaching materials and those concerned with the mass media.

UNESCO advised such prudence in the use of terminology employed to describe people of differing ethnic, religious, or other groups, especially formerly colonized peoples.

The UNESCO report telescopes in on more than a dozen words which violate the new norms of unprejudicial language.

Take, for instance, the terms "tribe," "native," "savage," "primitive," "jungle," "pagan," "kaffir," "bushmen," "backward," "underdeveloped," "uncivilized," "vernacular," "Negro," "colored," and "race."

Recommendations outlined

The report stressed that such terms were, "so charged with emotive potential that their use with or without conscious pejorative intent, to describe or characterize certain ethnic, social, or religious groups generally provoked an adverse reaction on the part of these groups."

The report recommended, for instance, that:

- The word "inhabitant" should be used in preference to the word "native."
- The term "pagan" should not be applied to religions: Religions should be specified by name.

- The word “savanna” or “wooded savanna” would be preferable to the word “jungle.”

It was recommended that the use of all “contemptuous, unjust, or inadequate words be discontinued in reference to racial or societal matters.”

The UNESCO report agreed that “much of the current terminology used with reference to ‘race’ questions was a heritage of a colonial past and often perpetuated feelings of superiority and prejudice.”

Colonialist tinge cited

Many of the terms, the report said, “because of their colonialist origin, carry overtones of racial superiority vis-a-vis the one time colonies. These terms could implant the seeds of racialism in the minds of former colonizing peoples; in any event, they offend the susceptibilities of peoples who were once colonized.

The report acknowledged that it would be difficult to dispense entirely with such terms as “race” or “tribe,” which are part of current scientific terminology. “But they should be used correctly,” it said.

Much of the report was excerpted from a speech given in Paris by A. Babs Fafunwa of Nigeria.

Mr. Fafunwa said that prior to the 15th century and before the beginning of intensive proselytization and colonization, there was little reference to racial discrimination in text materials.

‘Tribe’ usage lessens

Mr. Fafunwa said it is interesting to note that the word tribe is mainly used nowadays to describe African ethnic groups. He said it used to cover groups in “Asia and other non-European communities, but since most of the Asian countries became independent between 1947 and 1954, the word gradually disappeared from the textbooks and journals, thanks to the UNESCO effort in this direction.”

He commented with some feeling: “How an ethnic group with 2 or 10 million people in East or West Africa, with a parliamentary government, can be described as a tribe and not the Irish, the Scot, the Welsh, the French, or the English, still baffles the non-European.”

Both Mr. Fafunwa’s and UNESCO’s long-range recommendations are that UNESCO, to combat prejudice and racial discrimination in text materials:

- Hold regional or international conferences of authors and publishers for the improvement of textbooks, journals, magazines and other teaching and information materials.

- Encourage learned societies in history, geography, civics, anthropology and sociology to devote a portion of their conference programs to discussions on “bias in text materials.”
- Sponsor a conference of religious leaders – Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Bahais, etc – to discuss the religious aspects of prejudice.

They recommended also that UNESCO should assume full leadership in ensuring that such words as they referred to are eliminated from text materials and learned journals. Mr. Fafunwa commented that we, the people of the world, cannot afford to ignore the epithets that tend to divide us into dangerous warring factions.

Sunday Sketch – April 19, 1970

- * *Govts should take over all primary schools*
- * *Remove denominational and religious partisanship in schools*
- * *Stop religious teaching in schools*

FAFUNWA'S RECIPE FOR NATIONALISM

Professor Babs Fafunwa, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Ife, has called on the Federal and State Governments in the federation to take over all primary schools from missions and private hands.

He also called for a complete eradication of all denominational names and religious partisanship from the schools' physical environment and their replacement with the Nigerian emblem.

Professor Fafunwa, who was delivering a lecture titled “The teachers' role in a new Nigeria” at the College of Education, University of Lagos at the weekend observed that teachers and educators have concentrated too much on the teaching of religion instead of teaching the children how to be good citizens.

He therefore blamed the failure of the first Republic on the present educational system.

Area of Specialisation

Professor Fafunwa said it was not enough for a teacher to be well-trained in his own area of specialisation, but he should appreciate the interdependence of disciplines, understand his own cultural heritage and those of others, recognise the importance of vocationally-oriented education and appreciate the dignity of labour.

He said it was politically, socially and culturally unwise to entrust the education of the youths of a country to foreigners.

"If education is a vehicle for the transmission of culture, then every conscious effort must be made by a nation to have its own nationals on its school staff at all levels" Professor Fafunwa declared.

He also advocated that religious knowledge be replaced with civics and the Nigerian flag should fly in every school compound throughout the federation.

He said the daily morning assembly in schools, should be devoted to pledge to the national flag and the singing of the national anthem in the local language.

Professor Fafunwa further called on the Federal Military Government to establish without delay a "national service register" which will enable teachers who are interested in serving outside their state to do so with security.

The body should guarantee the salaries of the Southern teachers who volunteer to go to the North for one year as gratuity if and when their services are no more required in the area where they are serving. Professor Fafunwa concluded.

University of Ife

Ile-Ife, Nigeria
16 September, 1975

Professor A. B. Fafunwa,
Dean,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ife,
Ile-Ife.

Dear Professor Fafunwa,

I have waited until you are on the campus before replying to your note of June 27, 1975 in which you gave notice of your wish to give up the Deanship of the Faculty of Education at the beginning of the 1975/76 session. I am sad at this decision but I quite appreciate your reasons for taking it.

I would like to place on record my deep personal appreciation for the tremendous contribution which you have made to the development of the Faculty and of the University as a whole. Over the last seven years, the Faculty has grown from strength to strength under your vigorous, imaginative

and able leadership. I am aware of the tremendous difficulties and opposition which the new Faculty faced but in spite of all these you have succeeded in creating an academic unit which is in the forefront of educational development in the country. A testimony to this is the numerous invitations which you yourself have received over the years to act as Adviser or Consultant to other countries in the development of their Faculties and Institutes of Education.

I wish you every best and God's abundant blessings.

Yours sincerely,
H. A. Oluwasanmi
Vice-Chancellor

Editorial: *Sunday Concord*, December 1989

Babs Fafunwa: A deserved award

The nation rose unanimously, last Friday, to confer well-deserved National Merit Awards on an illustrious son of the land, Professor Aliu Babs Fafunwa, a renowned Educationist and Professor K. A. Harrison, a distinguished gynaecologist and obstetrician.

For Professor Babs Fafunwa, the conferment of a National Merit Award was not only well-deserved, it was in fact belated. Amongst his peers, Professor Fafunwa had long stood out as a *primus inter pares*, whose commitment to and pursuit of educational values and educational development, was exceptional.

Today, Professor Babs Fafunwa towers head and shoulder as a frontline educationist. His periodic assessments of our educational system are both credible and reliable. All through his brilliant career within the university system, Fafunwa's contributions to the world of Academia had always been underlined by untainted and undiluted service to the cause of humanity.

His admirable love for and commitment to education is most evident in the various capacities in which he had served at one time or the other. He was Director of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, President, Association of Teacher Education in Africa, UNESCO consultant in Higher Education, Liberia, Commission member on Higher Education in Sierra Leone, amongst others.

As a scholar, Professor Babs Fafunwa has contributed immensely in pushing back the stubborn frontiers of illiteracy, through numerous publications which include *New Perspectives in African Education*, *History of Nigerian Higher Education*, *History of Education in Nigeria* and so on.

Even after his retirement from the university environment, Professor Fafunwa has admirably held on to productive academic endeavours, actively contributing at every twist and turn to issues which are crucial to our educational advancement. There's hardly a way by which our educational history could be written without Fafunwa's name being written indelibly.

The fact that he is at present the chairman of the National Primary Education Commission, a most fundamental and all important educational body, is profound acknowledgement of Professor Fafunwa's worthy credentials as an Educationist with distinction. Exceptional teachers like Fafunwa, have assiduously worked to debunk the stigma with which teachers are often regarded, as the wretched of the earth. Today, he stands out as a veteran teacher, whom any up coming teacher, would seek to take after.

While congratulating this illustrious Nigerian, for an honour he eminently deserved, we hope that he would continue to contribute his very best towards the cause of our educational advancement.

The Guardian

12/1/90

Dear Babs Fafunwa

By Tai Solarin

Congratulations, I say. That will do for you in the meantime. The other significant personality I want to reach through this letter is that of the nation's President, General Ibrahim Babangida and, with him, the AFRC, without whose assent you might not have become our Minister of Education today.

Babs, I am not going to address you as you sit in the ministerial chair of your high office and I, sitting opposite you in the well-cushioned chair facing you across the enormous ministerial table. I am, rather, seeing you ensconced in an armchair in my Ikenne home, away from any possible cavesdroppings. Allah – Jibril Aminu believes He is there – will forgive your predecessor, Dr. Jibril Aminu, because he did not know what he was doing for four years

running as our Education Minister. Allah – you, Babs, believe He is there – will not forgive you if you fail because, in education, you know what you are doing.

When you landed back into Nigeria in 1955, you were no less qualified than you are today, for service in the nation's highest rung of the ladder, but only Ahmadiyyah College, Agege, would accept your services. You followed it up, eating your academic pride and served as public relations manager, Esso, West Africa. It took the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to “discover” you.

Had you been minted in my type of tempestuous mould, you would have downed tools long before Nsukka and returned to U.S. where you would have been swooped on by Yale or Princeton, or MIT or Harvard or Lincoln, or by any of the other great American Colleges. Rather, you stuck it out. If today, Babs Fafunwa clears his voice to talk on education here in Nigeria, the rest of the world listens.

If you had dared look for a minute at the weight of the national yoke you were inheriting in that appointment, you would have been scared off. You probably did, and you felt fully seasoned to accept the challenge.

“The school system has virtually collapsed. The confusion has been thick and long. There does not appear to be light at the end of the discouragingly long tunnel. Higher institutions of learning are shut at the drop of a slight book. Many people no longer know when schools are in session and when they are not. And they have stopped caring. People lose interest in a legerdemain performance when the juggler introduces too many tricks; executed at a blinding pace. People expect our students to be magicians. Books are not available and where there are, they are unaffordable. Yet we are expecting doctors, engineers and other educated Nigerians who will take Nigeria out of under-development.”

That is an editorial carried by one of our eminent national papers last week, Saturday, December 30, 1989. It is most gratifying seeing Jibril Aminu out. It is most relieving that Chief Onabule's prediction – which must have been inspired – came to nought that Jibril Aminu was grafted to our unwilling body till 1992. Jibril Aminu has now gone.

Good riddance. There is enough in oil for him to lay it thick on his bread for morning breakfast. Only his epiglottis, his esophagus and his alimentary canal would suffer. Nigerian children are off from his octopodan clutch for all time.

Now, Babs, let us come down to brass tacks. There are a few things you must do, and do fast. Let us start with Jibril Aminu's latest vindictive directive.

He had asked the 600 fast academic runners not to go to university this year.

Reverse that primitive order immediately. Let them go. I wrote three weeks ago, to suggest that there must be at least 550 southerners among the 600. A federal civil servant who visited me in Ikenne last week, and whose identity will be protected, told me he did not think there were any northerners at all. Babs, do I have to repeat that you should simply liberate them? Progressive Nigerians expect you to reverse the treachantly obnoxious order. I am not going to overload this letter, and so, I am citing only one more case. Even some members of the AFRC could not see the justification for Jibril Aminu changing the school year. Ending the school year as the primary and secondary schools were doing before Aminu's jihad arrived had started to yield rich dividends in the 70s. The University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, and several other universities had become oases for academic and professional pugilism between June and September. I was on the verge of pleading for a federally operated examination board for high school students who pipped their end of year exams in the core subjects of english, maths, physics, chemistry, biology, economics, commerce to be allowed a re-sit in early August so that all who now pass them could walk with their classmates who passed earlier on to the new classes in the new year. Jibril did not let me.

Now, Babs, you have arrived at the right time to put things right. Let us go back to the academic year immediately. All who have to do with education in this land would hail you. This year's long vacation will be necessarily short, but get the whole nation mobilized, and every body to know that this year ends for all students (primary to university) at the end of August. Everybody to be prepared to start the new year in September. We can even go along with the Soviet Union, and open the academic year on September 1st, or, if we so desire, October 1st. It is a necessary revolution, and for you to spear-head it is to stamp the name, 'Babs Fafunwa' with immortality.

The number one ministry in any forward-looking country is education. And the AFRC knows that. That was why it backed up Herr Jibril, not knowing until events proved him to be, educationally speaking, a nincompoop.

Babs, has it occurred to you that Nigeria is doing you the highest honour by making you the nation's minister of education? But so is the obverse true that you are, to a large number of knowledgeable Nigerians, the best qualified in this nation today, for the responsibility. You are going to be our federal minister of education but once, even if you could retain the post for eight years running.

Only a few weeks back, we celebrated your winning one of the year's Merit Awards. As I munched my chicken leg, my eyes swept the tables. There was not a single bottle of Ogogoro anywhere. When, now we come round to 'wash' the new honour and responsibility, I will carry my own special bottle of Ogogoro to wash the amala down.

Doris, congratulations: Babs, congratulations.

Solarin was a veteran educationist and founder of Mayflower School, Ikenne.

PROFILE

The Guardian - Sunday January 21, 1990

The Noble Teacher of Teachers

Some people would appear to have the new Education Minister in mind as they go to bed these days. The questions have become rather insistent and is fast acquiring some urgency. Will he? Won't he?

Will Mallam Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa go about dismantling some of the controversial building blocks erected by his predecessor? Won't he?

They call him the teacher of teachers. Not just because he has been involved in teaching others to take up the teaching profession, but because he has enthusiastically imposed on himself the responsibility of ensuring that the nation's educational policies and those directly responsible for their execution are in tune with the dictates of the moment. He speaks, breathes and lives education.

Professor Fafunwa has come a long way, touching life, during the process, from different angles: From the studious school-boy of C.M.S. Grammar School, Bariga, Lagos, in the late 1930's to the National Merit Award winner of 1989. Although he has faced series of formal and informal tests in his 66 years of life, perhaps the road to the 1989 merit award has been the most testy. As many as 35 Nigerians entered the race to be selected as the nation's best and finest mind for that year, 1989, the largest number of entrants in the ten years of the award, whereas not more than two could be selected.

Babs Fafunwa may not be among the earliest winners of the Merit Award, yet, this is very peculiar in the sense that he is chronologically linked with

the genesis of the award. He was for instance, the chairman of the *Advisory Board of the National Policy Development Centre (Think-Tank)* between 1976 and 1979. It was the board's innovative ideas that led to the birth of the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) at Kuru, Jos. The same board also recommended to the Obasanjo regime, the noble idea of the yearly National Merit Award aimed at rewarding excellence in any endeavour among Nigerians. No wonder therefore that he expressed his over-whelming joy at being a winner, a decade after he initiated the idea.

Fafunwa's involvement in education began in a rather humble fashion. It was at Ahmadiyya College, Agege, a suburb of Lagos where he was languishing as a senior teacher on his return from the United States where he followed his peers to search for the famed 'golden fleece.' As fate would have it however, he had already spent two years on the job (1955 - 56) when he became tired of all and went to do something else that would at least give him more money, if not joy. But his primary interest remained education and so when in 1962 an opportunity came to go back to his love, he did not hesitate.

This opportunity to 'return' came, from the defunct Eastern Region where Fafunwa and a handful of other Nigerian and American young scholars were faced with the challenge of creating the Faculty of Education in the two-year-old University of Nigeria, Nsukka. It was at Nsukka that Fafunwa scored his first big goal after successfully nurturing the first faculty to award honours degree in Education in Nigeria, thereby helping to translate into reality, Eric Ashby's dream of the Nigerian graduate secondary school teacher.

After that, he moved on, this time to the then University of Ife (Obafemi Awolowo University) Ile-Ife. His task was to infuse the same Nsukka touch into another Faculty of Education there. It was at Ife that he was made a professor of education.*

Will he? Won't he? Following Fafunwa's success at Ile-Ife, he expanded his tentacles and began to offer his services to education at both national and international levels. He was appointed a member of the Commission for Higher Education in Sierra Leone in 1967, and retained that position till 1970. Perhaps his first public out-cry of Nigeria's educational system came during the civil war. He came out with his treatise on the "National Policy on Education" in which he raised an alarm calling for a complete overhaul of the system especially its philosophy, objective, curriculum, development

* Professor Fafunwa was promoted Professor of Education while at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in April, 1965.

pedagogy and its relevance to the needs of the people and the nation. Subsequently, he was among a powerful delegation to the Nigerian National Curriculum Conference whose deliberations later gave birth to the 6-3-3-4 education system embodied in the new National Policy of Education.

Fafunwa also likes to experiment, which was why he advocated a cultural experiment that would employ mother tongues for teaching all primary school subjects including science and mathematics. The experiment which lasted ten years has been endorsed by UNESCO and adopted as a project on pilot basis for use in the Third World countries. As a result, over 80,000 primary school pupils now learn all their subjects in Yoruba in Oyo State.

It is specifically this academic adventurism that gives clues to which direction Nigeria's educational policies would be moving from January 1990 to when Professor Fafunwa finishes his tenure as education minister.

He is not known to change his views most often. As a matter of fact, the only time he ever did was on his early advocate for universal free and compulsory education in his book, *New Perspectives in African Education* published in 1967. When he submitted the report from the study group of the Funding of Education to General Buhari in November 1984, Fafunwa, who was head of this group maintained that the state is rich enough to fund education for its citizens. However, two years later, he came out bluntly to say that his previous expression was given without any thought in implementation or the difficulties that would be encountered in an attempt to implement them. Although a protracted controversy followed, he has insisted since then that free and compulsory education is not feasible in Nigeria.

Fafunwa and his predecessor, Professor Jibril Aminu know themselves pretty well and appear to have a healthy respect for each other. Fafunwa presented a well-considered lecture in November 1986 when Aminu launched his first book *Quality and Stress in Nigerian Education* at Calabar. Aside from this, Fafunwa has taken positions in most of Aminu's policies, including the nomadic education which he supported few weeks after he was sworn in as minister. He agrees with most of the old policies, at least in principle. The only point he has ever worried about was the mode of implementation of those policies. The gifted children issue is quite acceptable so long as the lucky ones are not separated from other pupils before they finished secondary school. After that, "they could be separated, just to enable the gifted ones receive some special challenges from amongst themselves,

* Free and compulsory education is necessary at primary and secondary level but *not* at all the tertiary level.

and perhaps necessary attention.”

He has also stated before that he is not in support of handing schools back to former private owners. In the same way, the number of universities may not increase until the magic year, 2000.

One of the most controversial policies was perhaps the change in school calendar. Professor Fafunwa felt then that there were some things wrong over the change – the fact that climate is not similar all over the country and this would seem to scuttle the idea of allowing children help their parents in farm work within the period. He also observed that there aren't many subsistent farmers in the country whose children go to university, but that on the whole, “perhaps the adjustment of the school year to suit the different climatic conditions would be a right move; it is something one has been calling for since the past years.”

These opinions notwithstanding, Professor Fafunwa has been an outstanding teacher, a renowned scholar, and prolific writer. In addition, he takes office at a time when many vocal opinions seem to be directed at his ministry. His reputation would at least, ensure that whatever programmes he pursues would come with great care and consideration. Whether they will be as bold and as radical as those of his predecessor is another matter altogether.

To be sure, there are perhaps few other educationists who understand the problem of education in Nigeria and have put them in as many permanent works as has Professor Fafunwa. He has over seven books and countless other learned articles. The former deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ife was in addition awarded a doctorate in education by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1986, three years before he crowned his brilliance with the nation's highest honour for academic achievement, the Merit Award. He has also sat in very important committees that have implications for education, in Nigeria as well as outside it. He is still the chairman of the National Primary Education Commission, President of the Nigerian Academy of Education, the President of the International Council on Education for Teachers, a position he would hold between now and 1992.

Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa means different things to different people: an idealist, down-to-earth teacher, a respected educational theorist and practitioner.

– Ogbuagu Anikwe, with Segun Ige

A Speech Delivered in Honour of the Federal Minister of Education and Former Chairman of the National Primary Education Commission during a Formal Reception at Kaduna on Saturday, 3rd February, 1990.

His Excellency, Military Governor of Kaduna State
 The Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Education
 Members of State Executive Council
 Chairman and Members, National Primary Education Commission
 Chairmen of Boards
 Executive Secretary, National Primary Education Commission
 The Vice-Chancellor, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
 The Vice-Chancellor, Federal University of Abuja
 Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Five years ago, a man was credited with the following statement:

Education is the largest industry in Nigeria. It has more than 19 million pupils and students and over 400,000 professional/academic and non-academic staff; and with an educational expenditure of over 5 billion naira per year.

The man to whom this perceptive assessment has been credited is none other than the present Federal Minister of Education – Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, who today is at the helm of this vast educational enterprise.

So tonight, at the invitation of the Commission, we are gathered here to do honour to this great man: the first ever Chairman of the Commission; the Head of this most important industrial enterprise in our country; the last Federal Minister of Education in Nigeria's Military Government; one of the most distinguished scholars of our time; an educationist, who by right of pre-eminence has been popularly acknowledged as *Teacher of teachers*.

It is true that since he made his debut in the professional scene in the 50s, there was hardly any level of education, be it pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary or post-tertiary, that has not been influenced by his innovative impact. By the same token, there is hardly any professional area of specialization that has escaped his research work, critical appraisals and useful suggestions.

Professor Fafunwa was a pioneer in establishing great institutions in this great country. He pioneered the establishment of Faculty of Education and the Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; he pioneered the

development of the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Education, University of Ife. He pioneered the establishment of the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies at Kuru (this is with reference to its "Think-Tank" origin), and now he is the pioneer of this gigantic Commission: the National Primary Education Commission.

Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa is a man of vision who early in his professional career assumed the sacred duty of re-orienting the course of Nigeria's education so as to atune it more closely to this scientific age while not alienating it from the deep roots of our cultural backgrounds.

The Nigerian child typically constitutes the central focus of his educational philosophy. He is never tired of reminding us that every child is gifted in at least one thing. The role of education is to discover what that is and to help him/her develop it. It follows therefore that a good curriculum has to be adapted to the needs of the Nigerian child. That the teacher has to centre his teachings on the needs of the child is a constant educational theme that is typical of his philosophy. It was no surprise therefore that when the Nigerian Aptitude Testing and Research Unit was established in 1964, Professor Fafunwa was a leading member of that Board and he used his influence there to lay the early foundations of the practice of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria based on the use of home-produced psychological instruments.

At the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) his legacies are many and varied. But just as in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka he left a legacy at Ife by establishing one of the best Faculties of Education/Institute of Education ever founded by this nation.

As a believer in the science of education, his experimentation with the teaching of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the University of Ife caught the attention of the world and today the success of that programme has earned for him UNESCO recognition as a Special Consultant in the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

Professor Fafunwa is an educational theorist of the first order. But we know the task of translating theoretical formulations into action or putting policies into practice has often proved very elusive. Yet, as the mother tongue experiment has amply demonstrated, with determination, it is possible to translate sound educational principles and policies into viable and practical entities. In my view, no where would the task of translating policies into practice prove to be more of an uphill challenge than in our present attempt in the Commission to restore efficiency into the management of our Primary Education system, a sector which in itself is one of the largest coordinated enterprises in the country. It is in this regard that his contribution in setting

up the National Primary Education Commission should be seen as the crux of his service to education. The National Primary Education Commission as presently constituted is his brain child. Many are already aware that the background papers to the formation of the Commission include the 1984 report on the funding of Primary Education which Professor Fafunwa produced. Largely on account of this report, the present organization took shape. We regard it as a mark of his abiding faith and commitment to primary education that he kindly consented to be its first Chairman, which position he has held with utmost dedication and inspiration to all staff.

It is also to his credit that many of us inside the Commission have come to share with him the view that the Commission is indeed, at the moment, an indispensable machinery by which attempts could be made to restore high standards back into schooling. The Commission is based on a solid theoretical framework. It is well informed by antecedent developments of our recent past, such as the problems of UPE implementation. All that is needed to make the new primary school innovation a success is a concerted national effort where all would join hands to give educationists genuine support on nation-wide basis.

During his tenure as Chairman, Professor Fafunwa had demonstrated that with him as Chairman, the Commission was destined to advance forward at an accelerated pace. This development no doubt was made possible by the good rapport between the Chairman and the then Minister of Education. This understanding must have contributed in no small measure to the granting of 800 million Naira last year to expedite the functioning of the Commission nation-wide. Now that our former Chairman is the Minister himself, we have no doubt that the pace of development of the Commission would be further accelerated, permitting speedier progress towards the revival of our primary schools throughout the nation.

The Commission has every confidence that with the Minister at the helm of affairs we will succeed since it is a proven fact that there is hardly any one today of equal standing who understands all the intricacies of our educational system better than Professor Fafunwa.

With regard to education generally, the new course we are charting today is largely his vision. We have succeeded in putting in place a new educational structure, popularly known as the 6-3-3-4; we have developed a new body of curriculum - a curriculum characterised by its diversity of content so as to meet the needs of learners of varying backgrounds. We have adopted a new evaluation procedure which, as he has preached over the years, have firmly placed in the hands of the classroom teachers a measure of control

over the evaluation of achievements of learners, without necessarily sacrificing national standards; we have come a long way in accepting the concept of continuing education and in-service training as part of regular professional training. All these developments and similar others which we cannot enumerate here are clearly influenced and informed by the philosophy of education which he has propounded for years, a philosophy which has been widely disseminated through his many scholarly publications and through the agency of his numerous disciples.

Although he is one of the leading educational theoreticians in the country today, he would best be remembered and honoured as a man who has been very instrumental in translating theoretical formulations into sound realities, a man who has succeeded in putting principles into practice. In this regard wherever he has served he has left his visible footprints on the sand of time. Among his many programmes is a post-graduate educational structure which he initiated at University of Nigeria which has since become the national model adopted by practically all Faculties of Education throughout the country.

The number of Workshops and Conferences he initiated and directed are literally countless. Among the many which he spear-headed, one could single out the 1969 National Curriculum Conference where his philosophy of education was propagated in a leading paper devoted to Teacher Education. Most educationists would, no doubt, recall that the formulation of our present National Policy on Education is the direct outcome of that National Conference. Professionally therefore, it would be largely correct to call Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa today the FATHER of the current National Policy on Education.

Would you therefore kindly rise and join me to give a toast to one of the most eminent educationists our contemporary era has produced –
PROFESSOR ALIU BABATUNDE FAFUNWA

Former Dean of Education/Director, Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Former Dean of Education and Director of Institute of Education, University of Ife.

First Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ife.

Former Chairman, "Think-Tank" Commission.

Former Pro-Chancellor, University of Calabar.

First Chairman, of the National Primary Education Commission, Kaduna.

Recipient of the National Merit Award in Education and currently our most respected Federal Minister of Education.

Professor S.C. Aleyideino

Consultant/Director of Monitoring/Evaluation

National Primary Education Commission, Kaduna, Nigeria.

February 3rd, 1990

West Africa: 30 July – 5 August 1990

Teacher Takes Charge

Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, Nigeria's education minister, has taken charge of one of the most turbulent areas of public life. However, he is going about his job with the meticulousness and doggedness of the old school teacher that he is.

If anybody knows Nigeria's educational terrain, it is the man at the helm now. He himself says: "If I can claim to know anything, education is that area where I know something." His appointment was a New Year gift to millions of Nigerians, chief among whom were Dr Tai Solarin former headmaster of the progressive Mayflower School, and Nobel laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka. They, like many Nigerians, had become so disenchanted with the ministry's policies, that they have long advocated a change in its leadership.

It is possible that Professor Fafunwa sees himself as on a special mission, to provide a solid primary school education for Nigerian children. His belief is that if the foundation is weak, "All other levels will crumble." With 14m pupils in primary school, he is bound to have a lot on his mind. A national primary education commission has been set up to deal with the enormous problems, while the Federal Government has taken over the responsibility of funding primary schools from the states. It now pumps close to ₦800bn yearly to the states for the provision of teaching materials, salaries and maintenance of infrastructure.

Professor Fafunwa is steadfast in his belief that educational standards have not declined, as some people claim. He told *West Africa*. "A JSS second year junior pupil today, has more words in his vocabulary than Aristotle and Plato put together." Another area where Professor Fafunwa intends to direct his energy is the 6-3-3-4 system. He believes this is the answer to the seemingly elusive technological break-through. Change, he agrees, has been slow, but "we are making progress."

On the contentious quota system, the minister calls it "something we cannot avoid, a question of demand and supply. If adequate provision is not made to ensure that all the 21 states are represented in our schools, just 5 states in Nigeria can fill up all the spaces."

An old boy of the CMS Grammar School, Lagos, Nigeria's first secondary school, Professor Fafunwa's chain of degrees and laudable contributions to education in Nigeria won him the National Merit Award in 1989.

His academic career began in 1956, when he was senior tutor at Ahmadiyyah College in Agege, before he proceeded to Nsukka in 1961, as senior lecturer and head of the College of Education. Except for a short stint at Esso, West Africa, as public relations manager, Professor Fafunwa has never deviated from his calling.

A UNESCO consultant to the conference on the use of the mother tongue in African education in Burkina Faso (1978), and to a workshop on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Togo (1984), Professor Fafunwa still nurses his faith in adopting the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary schools.

Nigerian universities are notoriously rebellious, especially on issues which touch on their interests. Students take to the streets whenever their 'highly marginalised' rights are deemed to have been infringed upon. While this is partly due to overcrowded conditions and poor facilities, the education minister said this it was also due to "lack of adequate dialogue. The vice-chancellors have important roles to play."

Professor Fafunwa is at pains to state the reasons Nigeria should take the \$120m World Bank loan. The rationalisation of courses and staff of universities has been one of the major issues workers and students have kicked against. He told *West Africa* that the universities have been overstaffed at the non-academic level for so many years and it is crucial that they are reduced if they are to have enough money to pursue academic programmes. "Some of them have over one thousand workers above the limit; how do we get enough money now for research after paying such huge salaries?" he queried.

As an author, Professor Fafunwa is poised to put an end to the dearth of textbooks in Nigerian schools. With about 50 academic publications on education to his credit, the minister surely knows the importance of books in education. "We have decided that for each subject, not more than two or three books will be recommended per subject at the primary schools so that the many books being published at high costs will be forced to be sold at their normal prices" In addition, "the Federal Government intends to finance

the Iwopin Paper Mill and the one at Oku Iboku so that raw materials for books will be cheaper. Foreign aid is being envisaged from Canada, and other Commonwealth countries. However, the Minister is optimistic that as soon as a national book policy is evolved, Nigerian children can look forward to better days ahead.

Prominent among Professor Fafunwa's worries is the problem of fagging in secondary schools for which a national committee has been set up. The Minister believes this is the genesis of all the problems which are carried over to the Universities and are manifested in the clandestine activities there.

Professor Fafunwa looks to the year 2,000 in the hope that by this time all Nigerian children will be in school and indeed all Nigerians will be numerate, literate and acquire some basic skills". The Minister observed that since all developed countries have 90 percent literacy and numeracy, Nigeria should aspire to educate all its citizens.

"That's all I wish", he adds emphatically that: "Anything I can do in this position to further that cause, you can be sure I will."

A devout Muslim and the first President, and Founder of the Muslim Association of Nigeria 1959-61, the sixty-seven year old Minister, it is assumed, will retire into what he knows best: teaching. Once a teacher, always a teacher.

Poem

Introduction: A Poem to Professor A. B. Fafunwa by Ona Akpati
(J.S.S. III)

1. Its an honour to have you,
Its a pleasure to receive you
A renowned educationist that is known,
Whose fame has a spread and grown

2. Professor Fafunwa is a name that rings a bell
A prominent and exotic man to tell,
Our teachers he has promoted
The students he has elevated
Leaving us at no point of loss

3. Its an honour to you Minister,
To study now without tears
To read and not to fear
For the lanterns and candles we use no more
The tankers and buckets we know no more
4. But all you've given we are afraid to ask
To provide game courts on our land so vast,
For all work and no play makes Jack so dull
To the honourable Minister we send our call.
5. Your footsteps we shall follow
As times seem hard and hollow,
Never have we seen such wonders,
For a lot you have given us to ponder.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Founder's Day Award

The establishment of this University in 1831 was historical landmark in the emancipation of higher education in America from the structures of service to the few to freedom of educational opportunity for the many.

In commemoration of the granting of the University Charter, annual tribute is paid the Founders by signaling the accomplishment of those degree candidates and recipients of the year under review eligible for the Award, who, under such opportunity, have distinguished themselves among their fellow students through consistent evidence of outstanding scholarship.

ALIU BABATUNDE FAFUNWA

having thus achieved a place in the highest bracket of scholastic preferment recognized by the University is therefore awarded as a mark of special honor this

FOUNDERS DAY CERTIFICATE

in witness whereof we have caused this document to be issued under the official Seal of the University and signed by the authorized officers in the City of New York, this the 27th day of April, 1956.

(Signed) Henry S. Heald
Chancellor

(Signed) Harold O. Voorhis
Secretary

United Bank for Africa Plc

January 8, 1993

MD & CE/CDD/CA/28/93

Professor Aliyu Babatunde Fafunwa,
c/o Ministry of Education,
Ahmadu Bello Way,
Victoria Island,
Lagos.

Dear Professor Fafunwa,

LETTER OF DEEP APPRECIATION

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management and Staff of the United Bank for Africa PLC (UBA), I wish to express my deepest appreciation to you on the very successful completion of your tenure as a Federal Minister.

In times like these when materialism and self-gratification are the rule rather than the exception, it is commendable to see a classic example of one who has put the welfare and development of his Fatherland above personal goals and aspirations.

No doubt, when the history of this great nation is being penned by faithful chroniclers, your name will find a place of prominence, etched in gold.

I once again join other compatriots in proffering our most sincere appreciation for your selfless, visionary and industrious service. We also wish you all the success you so richly deserve as you move on to tackle other new, personal or national endeavours. May the Almighty God crown all your efforts with success.

Yours sincerely,
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.

CHIEF E. S. O. OLISAMBU
Managing Director & Chief Executive

**Federal College of Education
Osiele - Abeokuta**

FCE/AB/PO/24
Professor A. Babs Fafunwa,
9a, Bendel Close,
Victoria Island,
Lagos

11/3/93

Dear Sir,

Your letter of 19th February, 1993 came to hand a few days ago.

On behalf of the College, I want to thank you, Sir, for accepting to have our Language Complex named after you and for your physical presence during our Convocation Ceremony. Your presence was a big morale booster to us and we felt highly delighted that you could grace the occasion. As said in our earlier letter, our action was the least we felt could be done to say "thank you" to you for all your moral and financial contributions towards the development of language education and especially mother tongue education in this College in particular and the nation at large.

As the Honourable Minister of Education, you have, no doubt, made your mark and left an indelible print on the nation's educational system. Your tenure no doubt, witnessed tremendous progress and radical transformation of the nation's educational system and this will forever be remembered by all and sundry.

I want to wish you the very best of luck and Allah's guidance and

protection not only in your second retirement from public service but also in your future endeavours.

Kindly express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Mama too... for gracing the occasion with her personal presence. I hereby enclose a copy of the edited video recording of the Convocation as well as some photographs.

Thank you, Sir, for everything.

Yours sincerely,

Professor E. O. A. Ajayi
PROVOST

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