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THE MAN ORTOM

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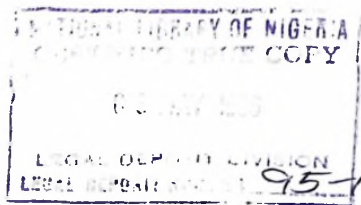


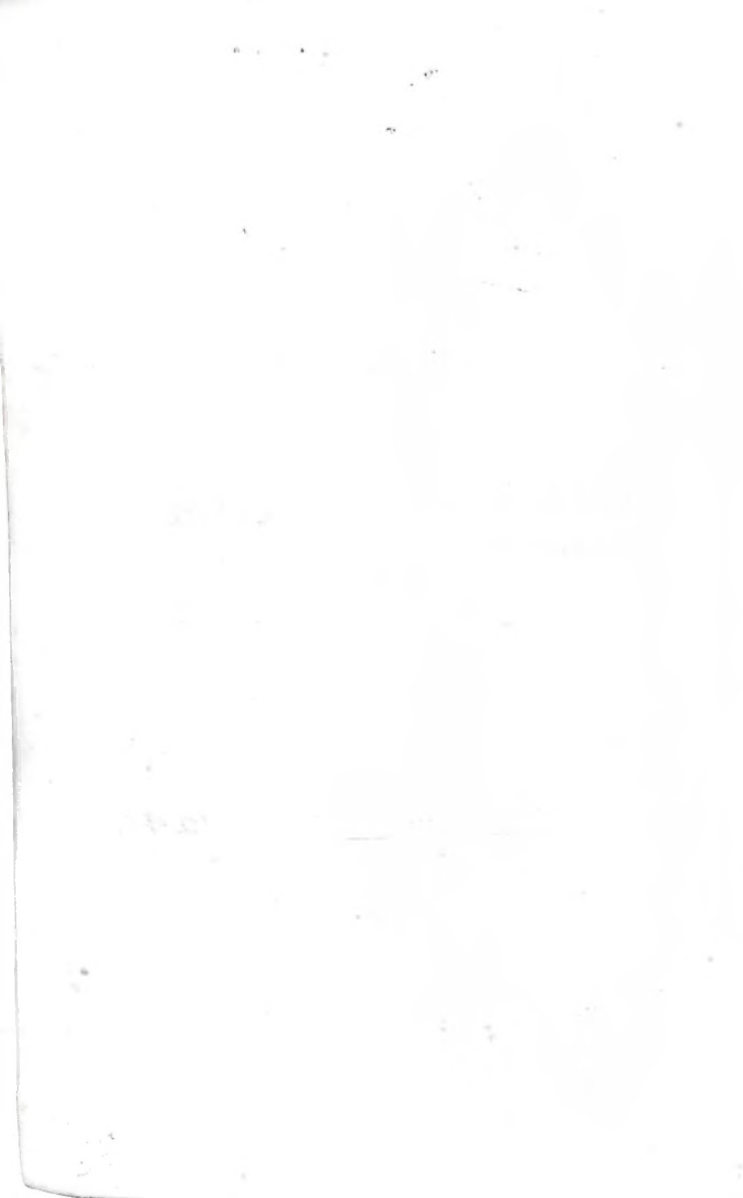
ELOQUENCE OF EXCELLENCE
A TRIBUTE

THE MAN ORTOM

ELOQUENCE OF EXCELLENCE

A TRIBUTE





DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife Scholastica Kose, Eric and Gwendolyn.

5.6

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MY CONTENTMENT

I found happiness by helping others to find it.

I found sound health by living temperately and eating only the food my body requires to maintain it.

I hate no man, envy no man, but love and respect all.

I pray daily not for riches, but for wisdom, and to do the things that will give me happiness. I speak no evil of anyone, except to honour, and I do not slander anyone for any cause whatsoever.

I am in good terms with my conscience, therefore, it guides me accurately in everything I do. My health comes from those I have benefited by sharing my Blessings. Loving people and serving them is the greatest value in my life.

HON. SAMUEL IORAER ORTOM



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The book, "The Man Ortom - Eloquence of Excellence" would not have been possible, but for the tremendous and untiring efforts of Mr. Godwin S. Iordye, who spared so much of his time reading the manuscripts. Your enormous assistance will no doubt be registered indelibly on my mind.

I want to extend my thanks, to Mr. T.T. Humbe of Staff Development Centre, Makurdi and Barrister Utile of Dooshima Chambers Gboko for their useful advice.

I am greatly indebted to my Senior brother Mr. Edward I. Kose, for his encouragement and necessary criticisms which have contributed very positively to the birth of this Book.

To my dear wife, Mrs. Scholastica Kose, who took it upon herself to ensuring that I was well supported. You are indeed a mother and sister. I owe you my love and affection.

Finally, I want to extend my Tons and Tons of appreciation to Mr. A.O. Ejeh of Ministry of Education, Makurdi who was patient enough to type and retype the manuscripts after series of adjustments.

To you all, I wish God to shower down his infinite mercies on you.

My immeasurably appreciation goes to the Publishers of this book Sato's Offset Press, Makurdi for their patience to accept last minute changes to be effected.

FRANK BIAM KOSE
Kano.

October, 1992

FOREWORD

Until now, most authors (writers) of our generation have shown interest in writing only the biographies and achievements of highly placed government functionaries at the Federal and State levels, particularly the president and commander-in-chief, chief executives of States (Military Governors), recently, Army Generals and few ones about multinational company executives.

Hardly, has any of our writers found it necessary to put in print, the biography of the people at the grassroot, people who are genuinely and silently working tirelessly to improve the lot of the neglected rural dwellers. It is against this background that the book: "The Man Ortom, The Eloquence of Excellence A Tribute", authored by Frank Biam Kose should be commended. For, it represents the first attempt to document in book form, the unprecedented achievements of a man whom most people, including his **closest** associates would have considered a novice in the art of governance. Today, his performance as the Executive Chairman of Guma Local Government has turned him into a **colossus**.

The book is not written to serve any academic requirements of students but rather as the title rightly manifest, is a tribute to a **friend, an appreciation, written fundamentally for posterity.**

It makes available some speeches of the Chairman, why he abandoned his lucrative position of a Sales Manager for politics; the struggles he went through to be a Chairman, his achievements as the youngest council Chief Executive in the State and why Guma Local Government is today enjoying relative peace and harmony and other issues.

The reader, especially his compatriots will find the book, eloquently written, immensely rewarding and fascinating.

GODWIN S. IORDYE

Gbajimba
October, 1992

PROLOGUE

When I first began to write this book my intention primarily was to produce a biography of a friend. But as the writing progressed it became very apparent and equally significant that the work should obviously embrace the sterling integrity and **resourcefulness of this equally an enterprising young man; the first Executive Chairman of Guma Local Government.**

I do not claim perfection for this work but I have at least tried to assemble and discuss here, variously, actions of the programs of his administration, and most of all as they are aimed at deliberately improving the welfare of the people he has so chosen to serve.

To non-watchers of the development of the local authorities, perhaps the big shocker is in the speed, with which Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom has taken in implementing his set objectives so far.

In my own estimation, he has done so, in an admirable way, and he has not left any stone unturned within the compass of the action of his programs. I believe that by assuming the position of number one in his local government, at the earliest, in his political career, is a clear manifestation, of the immense trust his people have reposed in him, and his stubborn desire and commitment to the improvement and development of his people.

I must say, and emphatically, that this book is a singular attempt by a friend to pay tribute in my own small way, to the tremendous success and achievement of his short, yet an impressive political career at its early stage. And if I have succeeded in this task then my objective will have been achieved; I therefore, am entirely responsible for all errors and opinions expressed in this Book.

Finally, I wish to state, and very abundantly clear that, I do not possess the monopoly of knowledge in this regard, but I am only complimenting the efforts of his numerous admirers who in due time may wish to write about him, and I expect this work to be seen as such.

FRANK BIAM KOSE

INTRODUCTION

It is a historical fact that every nation has within itself the potential seeds of both glorious rise and degrading downfall, these extreme opposites are always in a dialectical conflict, where one of them vies for predominance over the other. In between them are people who constitute the society. Whichever one of them they choose to harness will predominate.

For over thirty years, Nigeria has been floating in the air, like an aircraft whose pilot has been mystified by a deep fog. Infact, the history of this nation is comparable to the story of a strong wealthy and extravagant giant, who has become suddenly crippled, impoverished and beggarly at the peak of his fame.

The political history of this country can be seen as an undulating landscape of brave ambitions and unqualified failures, of a record of enduring struggles between a nation's lofty dreams and its harsh unyielding realities, the heart breaking saga of a people whose material quest has made a full circle from privation to affluence and again to privation. Those who liberated us, those who are struggling now to save us from the ruins of destruction are all Nigerians.

For some years now, the political history of this country has been subjected to unabated rough deals. Our political fathers have failed, therefore we had no direction politically.

It was as if the art of governance was the prerogative of the elders in our society. For most Nigerians this has resulted in a drastic deterioration in the standard of living and quality of life. Thus the misery of the vast majority make the affluence of the very few an intolerable and shameful spectacle.

In a bid to re-direct the political ship of the nation and save what could be saved from the ruins of destruction, General Ibrahim Babangida inugurated the Political Bereau in Abuja on the 13th of January, 1986. This opened the floodgate of multi-ferous political debates aimed at ensuring that every interested Nigerian makes a meaningful contribution towards the search for a solution of the problem of political instability and development of this country. This no doubt motivated our political fathers

who in their **characteristic** came up with thirteen political associations which were later dissolved for they could not meet the set requirements by the National Electoral Commission.

To ensure that development reaches the rural areas, General Ibrahim Babangida created nine new states and 189 new Local Governments in 1989. When the ban on politics was finally lifted and with the inability of Nigerians to form broad based political Parties, the President, announced the formation of two Political Parties for the country. The National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

The manifestoes of these parties were very carefully drawn by the federal government; and Nigerians were asked to rather choose to be a member of either of the two political parties.

Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom having studied meticulously the manifestoes of the two political parties, calculatively pitched his tent with the Social Democratic Party, whose programs were tailored in such a manner that development could get to his people faster.

Having warmed himself very dearly to his people, he was asked to come forward and lead them. With irrevocable committment to development, and his mission to ensure a better standard of living for his people, this young dynamic and progressive local government Chief Executive promised his people to pull them out of squalor, abject poverty and ignorance.

Therefore on the 5th of January, 1991, Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom was sworn-in as the first Executive Chairman of Guma Local Government by the Military Governor, Lt. Col. F.A. Makka.

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COLOSSUS AT GUMA

One of the world's most quoted authors, William Shakespeare, can rise to every occasion. Writes he in one of his plays: Some are born great, some have greatness thrust upon them, while others yet achieve greatness.

Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom, could by any stretch of imagination be considered as having achieved greatness. Born third in the line of 10 children, to the family of Ortom Adorogo, a retired Police Officer, and Wajina of blessed memory, attained his present position through hardwork.

And a mission of greatness he set out to accomplish, when he started his primary school at St. John's Primary School Gboko in 1970. By 1976, he proceeded to Idah Secondary Commercial School.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe wrote, a chick that would grow up into a cock is spotted the very day it is born. This no doubt, clearly is shown in Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom, who vehemently rejected to be weighed down by the tremendous cost of Training a child in Nigeria in the early eighties. By 1984, the young Samuel Ortom had obtained his Diploma in Salesmanship through Correspondence from the National School of Salemanship at Manchester, United Kingdom.

It is a fact that, Hon. Ortom fought his way to the top. When he joined the Gyado Foods, makers of Pepsi, he was employed as a Salesman/Driver - 1984. It will interest you to note that, between 1984 and 1985, this dynamic young man had run three promotions: A feat indeed.

In 1985 he was a Senior Sales Supervisor. In the same 1985, Hon. Samuel Ortom was already an Acting Assistant Sales Manager. You may wonder why. But the answer is simple. For Hon. Samuel Ortom to have gotten three promotions in one year then his tremendous amount of hard work was visibly noticed by the Management of the Company. So towards the end of 1985, there was a vacuum along the ladder, so instead of employing the services of an Assistant Sales Manager, the records of Hon. Ortom gave him the position. He was 24 years then. It is only

those who work hard that have rewards awaiting them. During his sales career at Gyado Foods he had work real hard to get far.

At the age of 25, in 1986, he became the substantive Sales Manager of the Company. A position he held until he was called by his people to come and serve them.

During his impressive tenure at the Gyado Foods; Hon. Ortom left behind an indelible mark of performance and productivity. His hard work warmed him admirably into the heart of the management. While there, he attended so many Seminars in Management.

It is on record that, he was the first Sales Manager to sell above the target set by the Company of 100,000 cases of Pepsi a month. He expanded the market force for the Company. Such places like Akwanga, Keffi, Lafia all in Plateau State had Depots. He also uponed up depots at Wukari in Gongola State. Soon the demand was getting right up. The 150,000 cases which were his record set at the Gyado Foods became equally impossible to be met.

No doubt Hon. Samuel Ortom was born with brains and not only that he had a streak of patriotism in them.

Married to Mrs. Hannah Mbalamen Ortom in 1980, Hon. Samuel Ortom has four children.

Grace Ngusen Ortom, aged 11, David Terdoo Ortom nine years, Ngohide Blessing Ortom seven years, Rita Sewuese Ortom four years.

The call by his people to serve no doubt has changed his future course. He once said "now that I have chosen to serve my people, I pray God to give me enormous capacity to serve them well".

The Hon. Ortom was in August, 1992 Awarded Honourary Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Auditors, to be a master at the game, he has enrolled with the University of Abuja - in the Distance learning programme as a Political Science student.

The Honourable Ortom no doubt will grow into a political force of note not only in Guma and Benue but the whole of Nigeria - a political giant - take your pick, Hon. Ortom is on the map already.

IN THE PUBLIC GLARE

When Henley wrote this Poetic lines - "I am the master of my fate, I am the Captain of my Soul", he could have informed us that we are the master of our fate because we are masters, first of our attitudes, our attitudes for sure shape our future. This is a universal law. And this law whether destructive or constructive depends on which side you, the master heap your great emphasis. It is also very important that we translate our attitudes into physical reality no matter what they are, constructive or destructive. When our attitude towards ourselves is big and our attitude towards others is generous and merciful, we attract big and generous portions of success - Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom is truly a great man.

Hon. Samuel Ortom's positive mental attitude started right when he was a kid - of less than 14 years. Recalls his immediate senior brother Robert Faga Ortom - "He was a brother who had great feelings for the others - not only to his brothers to all who cared to come near him. He was particularly generous to an annoying point. There were times when he spend his school fees for others, and when asked by his father, what he thought by spending his fees he would tell the father, being rich does not necessarily mean going to school, but the mind you set on achieving that". He quickly added, that, "he however was a very intelligent boy". Robert Faga Ortom continued - Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom was very sensitive to issues and was always thinking ahead.

To a great number of people, Hon. Samuel Ortom is a spectacular person. The Party Chairman of the SDP in Guma Local Government, Alakari Haaga said he knew or rather heard of the young Chairman through some other people and when he finally was to work with him he took a special kind of interest in trying to know if really the man Ortom was what people had told him already. He said - "I have found that, I don't really have

exact words to describe him. He is just splendid". This is a man who does not show social difference, he has during his period kept the elders together, and peace which frequently broke down is completely in control, has great regards for party members, handles anybody who comes close to him very finely". "He" according to Haaga is simply the best, 'can't be compared with any serving Chairmen of the entire local governments in Benue State during their tenure.

Though potentially a man is schooled to lead by the generous merits of human patrimony. He is first led, then he learns to lead suit, then he should choose to protect the social status and life of his subjects. Talking about, qualities of leadership, there is no doubt in my mind and numerous others that, Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom has chosen to protect his people, as glowing tribute from the people clearly manifests.

Moses Iorkyar the leader of the Guma Local Government Legislative Council said:

"The Hon. Chairman is dynamic, listens to suggestions, accepts faults, considers the views of other members of the council if it is in the best interest of the people - frankly, I must tell you, he has the qualities of a great leader, infact his relationship with other members of the council is just fantastic".

Hon. Michael A. Adyo, the Deputy Chairman was even more forth coming in his contribution to this great achievements of Hon. Ortom. According to him, he has not been left out in the scheme of things he is fully part of the team - which he personally scored very high.

Authoritatively, he said that "some local government Chairmen, act as if they are sole administrators leaving the local government Deputy Chairmen with virtually nothing, no function to perform". The Deputy Chairman is particularly happy over the peaceful atmosphere that exist since their assumption of office. He beats his chest, "We in Guma Local Government are the only one in the State that have not experienced strike action". This according to him is the special relationship that existed between the entire council members. The Deputy Chairman concluded in the following words: "The

Chairman Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom has qualities of a great leader. One thing, my personal relationship with him is very cordial, quite understanding and co-operative. We share the same political ideas, and along together we have been able to cart successful course of development of our local government. Infact he gives me a lot of responsibilities and share very much my ideas, and with him we have both achieved tremendous success, noteably, in the following areas; Health, Education, Rural Development and good staff relationship”

Infact, if Hon. Samuel Ortom’s impressive tenure of office as the Chairman of Guma is anything to go by, then this man has, in the complex political set up of local administration, proved an excellent servant to his people.

The fact that leaders, great leaders are born or made, this can only be appreciated when one speaks to some of the staff of the then Gyado Foods Limited, now Coca-Cola. There he did not limit himself to the class of “Managers”, as one of them put it, he definitely had no class distinction, could work freely with all types of workers. Sometimes, even preferring the lower class; and would treat anybody just as much as the same as in the office and outside.

Jones Adima puts - more succinctly, “The Hon. Ortom was ambitious, hardworking and he has proved it”.

Strictly speaking, the man Ortom, the Chief Executive of Guma Local Government proved that he is truly committed to the welfare of his people.

The protocol officer of Guma, clearly states that, “We are civil servants, we depend entirely on our monthly salaries, which are paid promptly. Besides, the Hon. Chairman has made gigantic efforts at building staff quarters to ease our accomodation problem. The Gbajimba - Uniagric Road is always impassable during reaning season, but now, you can freely pass through it. In my view he has performed beyond reproach”.

The die is cast now, the youth are on a solid path to contest excellence with the elders, we must stand or else overleap. If any decisive programme aimed at improving the standard of living of

the people is worth the name, and in order that the spirit of the youth will be inspired in the third republic, then, it requires at once a Herculean effort or foresight, to be thought out and Macbethan courage, to be authoritatively pronounced and followed. It is very important to mention to the youth efforts of a selfless leader who can champion this course of a stranded and disjointed society. Let therefore your light, Hon. Samuel Ortom shine before all men.



HON. S. I. ORTOM
Executive Chairman, Guma Local Government

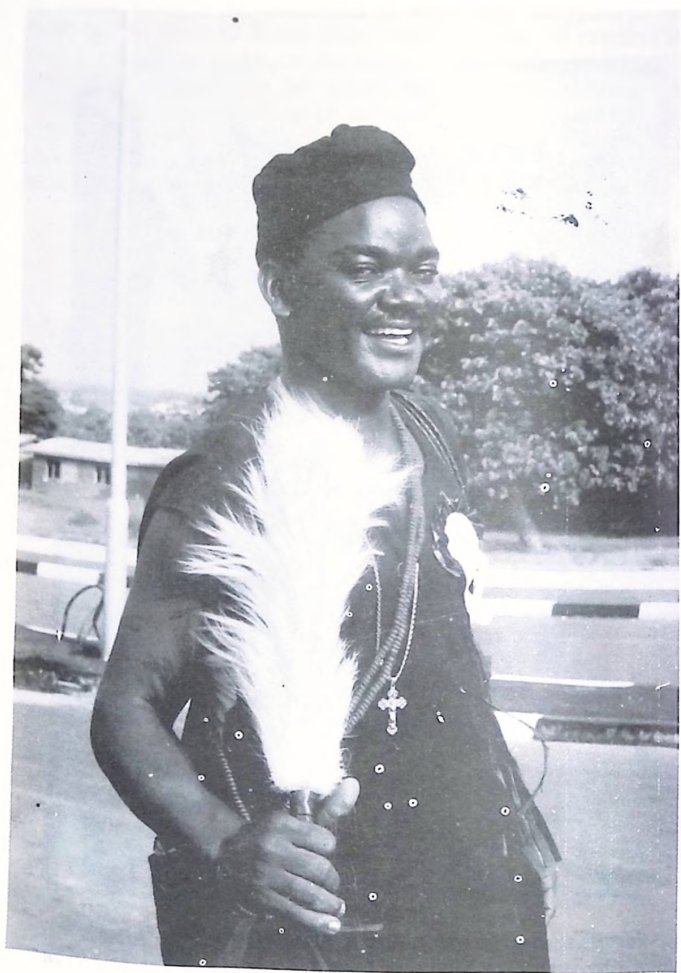


Swearing Ceremony at IBB Square, Makurdi 5th January, 1991



HON. ORTOM AND FAMILY

L-R, Hom. Sam Ortom, Mrs. Hannah Ortom, Miss Grace Ngusen Ortom, Rita Sewuese Ortom, Ngohide Blessing Ortom, Master David Terdoo Ortom.



Cultural Outing

LOVE FOR THE PEOPLE

“A moment comes in ones life, but very rarely indeed when he wants to step out and give solace to the life of the less privileged, the downtrodden, jobless, and the rural people. This is no mean sacrifice but the course I have chosen and the greater the sacrifice I am prepared to offer to my people”. Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom.

It is quite sad to find people going into politics with different reasons other than the ones they asked and sought the mandate of the people to pursue. Hon. Samuel Ortom has distanced himself from those brand of politicians as can be seen from his commitment to improved living conditions of his people. The concept of the politician in Nigeria has for long become synonym of all that is vile and vicious in human character. Even a pauper in Nigeria as it is popularly believed, once he has opportunity to lead holds his party's manifesto in the left hand and an empty sack in the right. By the time he is out of the office he has already overfilled his sack with illgotten money, while the manifesto was burnt on the first day in office.

In him the people of Guma Local Government, had already seen in a man, Hon. Samuel Ortom's vision of great irrevocable committment to their welfare. Thus their total rejection of the Nigerian popular view, that politics is a refuge for vagues who are morally dead manifested in their voting for the man of their choice.

Hon. Ortom's desires and wishes to see that Gbajimba transforms completely into a modern town dates well back in the early eighties. I still remember, one very vivid remark he made about the town, “it pains to always see that development is not fast coming to this place in order that my people would enjoy the amenities which their taxes have for long been providing comfort to other parts of the State”.

Against this background, one can see the current restlessness of Hon. Ortom's attention to greater detail. Having given the mandate now by the people, the Hon. said:- “I must and cannot afford to fail my people, at this crucial moment in our dire quest

for development, I must not embark on aimless leadership. Undue and ill-influence would not only be critical dishonesty to myself and all that I stand for but would also mean undertaking the impossible”.

Hon. Ortom has set out in his mind his target level of achievement, which according to him if he does not attain, as a professional, would mean failure - and he has not been associated with failures, he continues - “It is very obvious that the political parties build you up, and help you to a certain height and position within the society, but this is not so without the express consent of your people”.

This no doubt is a clear indication that Hon. Ortom has no room for those who are prepared to bring their sacks just for the purpose of being among the winning team.

He emphasised: “Therefore leaders once elected into power derive their legitimacy; not from the political parties but infact from the will of the people”.

To young Hon. Samuel Ortom, he does not see the acquisition of power as matter of life and death, prosperity or poverty, but the will of the people who have so trusted your ability to deliver them. Power no doubt according to him brings happiness, but this is short lived more especially when you fail to meet the aspirations, yearnings and expectations of your people.

“Power” the Hon. Chairman extols, has great potentials of dragging thousands of people in tragedies and even millions in misery; I do not see the fierceness with which it must be contested”. The crave for development of his local government is the driving force behind his going into politics.

Hon. Samuel Ortom has pathological obsession with development, what ever will promote the welfare and standard of living of his people is welcome. His people have for so long been neglected, their Moses is committed to save them with great zeal and vision. As he says, “My paramount obligation is to address the present with the past, on the basis of both in order to arrive a result oriented future for my people, intensifying efforts a stimulating interest and enhancing the spirit of oneness, fo intergrity, solidarity and progress, which I have found i incumbent upon me to address vigorously”.

No doubt, Hon. Ortom personifies action, decisiveness, full of compassion. For those who through sheer, circumstances are at a disadvantage of his life's race, Honourable Samuel Ortom is pragmatic and patient, yet he does not shy away from the unpleasant but often necessary duty of correcting those who are wrong.

For those who are close to him he is a remarkable man officially and privately. Hon. Samuel Ortom stand for stability and prodigious capacity for work and exemplary life of a man of God.



Pa Ortom Adorogo and Mrs. Wajina Ortom (Late)

COMMITTEMENT TO SERVICE

"I can hardly sit with virtually folded arms, while my people continue to live in abject poverty, **Wallow in diseases** and in total absence of the social amenities that will improve their life, there is therefore nothing I can do at the moment, than to work for the *glory of my people*". Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom.

As earlier stated, in the beginning of this Book, Hon. Samuel I. Ortom has for long identified himself practically with the welfare and development of his people. Guma Local Government has been having some boarder clashes with the people of Awe in **Plateau State**. And since assuming office as the Executive Chairman of the Local Government, he has been continuously calling on the Benue State Government to prevail on the Federal Government to come out with a clear demarcation of the Boundaries of the local government to avert further clashes over land.

Hon. Samuel Ortom has persistantly and vigorously pursued his set objectives in the politics of development. Painfully enough, Hon. Samuel Ortom would always say"

"The great masses of my people have remained content in their democractic animal ignorance and drudgery because they are confused and know of **no other life style than the one it sees and takes note of**, the conditions of our rural women, the poor village people, the jobless, need be addressed very vigorously, carefully and constructively".

This concern was clearly manifested in the speech he made at the **launching of International Literacy Year**; when he urged the literate people of his local government to make sure that each of them identifies one illiterate person and make him literate before September, 1992.

To the people of Guma Local Government it is like the Biblical Moses who is prepared, willing, and committed to take them to the promised land.

It is naturally quite right to argue about man's self preservation, but Honourable Ortom is fundamentally and naturally compassionate and peace loving.

Infact today a brief survey of Gbajimba, the headquarters of Guma Local Government, you will marvel at the speed with which the town is wearing a newlook. Access roads have been opened within the town, pipe borne water will very soon be installed.

Hon. Samuel Ortom has constantly impressed me with his carefully thought out words in relation to his love of service to the people. Though some people wrongly define politics as a game of grabbing, and grabbing, what you may wish to call the National cake, because of this precedent set by the old brigade people have had different definitions of this all too important subject - politics - so when he was awarding the contract for the rehabilitation of the Uniagric - Gbajimba road, he gave his definition of politics, said he and I quote:

“Politics is a constant struggle for survival in a social set up where, the material well being of the people takes precedence among all other matters of concern. The attainment of peace, stability and social progress depend on the extent with which those pioneering the struggle take into consideration the common interest of the people”

Knowing fully well that life has become a Sordid monotony of unberable burden of his people, Hon. Samuel Ortom set out clearly in alleviating these pains, and sorrows. It has become his resolve to provide qualitative healthcare facilities to his people. Hence the completion of Gbajimba Comprehensive Health Centre and renovation of the Tyulen Clinic, the Abinsi Health Clinic was also renovated under the leadership of Hon. Ortom.

Hon. Samuel Ortom has very stoically discouraged political sycophants. Those who had jubilated as been part of the winning team soon found out that, to Hon. Samuel Ortom, what matters most was result and not non performance.

The legacy of his administraion according to his wish should be

such that, it would set a standard and yardstick for others to
in measuring their performance and productivity.

Interestingly, Hon. Samuel Ortom balks at making enemies
is not just his style, but he recognises that there are responsibilities
that can not be compromised when things need to be done.
Things perceived by others to be unpleasant, he will do them
is in the interest of his people.

Hon. Samuel Ortom is impatient with indolent workers, but
the same time, he is touchingly emphatic. It just happens that
believes firmly and fiercely in determination and self-discipline.

Hon. Samuel Ortom is a christian by faith, Sales Executive by
profession, and a politician by condition, based firmly on
conviction to improve the lives of the lot of his people.

In him, friends, associates, admirers have solace, in him,
people of Guma Local Government have found an emancipator
a liberator, and above all a Moses who will take them to the land
of milk and honey.



Hon. and Mrs. Ortom at Tiv Day Celebrations

SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE

When Samuel Ioraer Ortom was elected as the first Executive Chairman of Guma Local Government Area; at a sitting with his friends, he told them: "As for me, my stiffest assignment has just begun, and my life's work will not be done until my people enjoy a better standard of living".

No doubt the art of governance is one that requires a very sound mind, sense of purpose and great commitment. Hon. Ortom is aware that the assignment is the stiffest, but that does not mean he is scared to be in that position.

Bearing in mind that he must assemble the best of hands to work together with him for the development of his people, the Executive Chairman had this to say to the council members:

"You have become representatives of your various wards and indeed Guma Local Government in its entirety, and not solely representatives of your various political parties. I therefore urge you to bury your political differences and work towards improving the standard of living of our people and the overall development of Guma Local Government so as to enable us catch up with other areas".

Hon. Ortom's clamour for qualitative standard of living for his people is understood. For there exist virtually no viable project in the area, the clinics were almost abandoned, primary schools were in a poor state. All these deplorable conditions of the existing facilities irritated the Hon. Chairman.

Having made up his mind on priority areas of his administration, which include the following:

1. Functional and Qualitative Education
2. Opening of Rural Roads
3. Provision of potable water
4. Improvement of Agricultural inputs
5. Primary Health Care
6. Provision of viable Industries.

Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom at this juncture proceeded to assemble his team for action. He told the council members that

the appointment of Supervisors was done on merit, and anyone of them found to be performing below standard, will without hesitation be kicked out. In order to achieve ultimate results in realisation of his goals the local government Chief Executive appointed three Committee each charged with the responsibility to harness, the potentials of the area and supervise properly implementation of government policies and programs. These committees include the following:

1. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------|
| a. | Hon. Danjuma Apaki | Chairman |
| b. | Hon. Mustapha Ibrahim | Member |
| c. | Joseph Yisa-Nor | Member |
| d. | Mr. Terfa Ayaka | Member |
| e. | Hon. Pius Ukange | Member |
| f. | Mr. Joshua Tor Uwouku | Secretary. |

2. WORKS AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------------|
| a. | Hon. Emmanuel Ukule | Chairman |
| b. | Hon. Justine Jande | Member |
| c. | Hon. Peter Injar | Member |
| d. | Mr. Frederick Anuudu | Member |
| e. | Mr. Ahom Kyambe | Member |
| f. | Mr. I.U. Gbashinbo | Secretary. |

3. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------|
| a. | Hon. Mike Adyo | Chairman |
| b. | Hon. Mbaunega Atta | Member |
| c. | Hon. Peter Damkor | Member |
| d. | Godwin Iordye | Secretary |
| e. | Mr. Clement Tyokaa | Member. |

Having very clearly assembled his team of proven intergrity, he charged them to work relentlessly in order to achieve the se objectives of his administration.

The need for development of this local government cannot b compromised according to Hon. Sam. Ortom. These Committee were therefore responsible for the following areas:

Finance Committee is responsible for organising revenue drives and harnessing all revenue yielding resources and potentials within the local government.

Works and Housing Committee to take charge of projects inspection, making sure they are carried out according to specifications and also recommend to the Hon. Chairman new development projects where they are most needed.

In the same direction as the above committees the Health and Social Services Committees are employed to carry out their duties with outmost **deligent** for the proper implementation of government policies.

“Now the machinery has been set in motion, let us put hands on deck for the development of our area”. Hon. Samuel Ortom charged.

Hon. Samuel Ortom abhors indolent workers, knowing fully well that without the co-operation and hard work of the entire staff of the local government, he would find it difficult to successfully carry out his intended programs, he has this to say to staff: “My administration is poised to fish out indolent workers and severely deal with them to pave way for the execution of the development of this local government”.

True, no one person, can work successfully at the exalted position, where Hon. Ioraer Ortom is, without the co-operation of his subordinates. To win the support and co-operation of the staff, he revealed to them a welfare package to further enhance performacne and productivity. Prominent among the package was:

- (a) Allocation of at least one plot of land to each staff of the local government
- (b) Provision of office accommodation
- (c) Monthly salaries to be promptly paid
- (d) Payment of allowances to be given renewed attention
- (e) Granting of vehicle refurbishing loan will be continued as soon as the financial base of the local government improves.

It has become a tradition in the Nigeria once elected in the office or once a person finds himself in the office he arrogates to himself the monopoly of knowledge and thereby frowns at critics. Those who dare criticise are crushed with heavy might. Hon. Samuel I. Ortom, has openly welcomed criticisms, but, they should be constructive, and is prepared to listen to any advice which is aimed at improving the lot of his people. But to those who want to constitute a cog in the wheel of development of the local government, he very severely warned them to desist from actions capable of breaking down development. For the hard working staff, he told them he runs an open-door policy and they are free to meet him either in the office or at home, or anywhere to discuss their observations on matters relating to his administration. Subsequently, he authorised the use of SUGGESTION BOX, to enable the people of Guma Local Government write to him directly their observations on issues that they feel about. He finally charged the staff of the local government to work hard for the progress of the area.

In his words: My dear staff of Guma Local Government, ours is a new local government striving to meet the development of the older local governments. All hands must therefore be on deck, to stir the ship of development of Guma Local Government to greater heights. This is the only way to save our faces in posterity”.

From the nadir of poverty, as a young man who was not born with silver spoon in his mouth, Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom rose to the enviable position of the Executive Chairman of Guma Local Government. Hon. Ortom, can be said to have done it well. He has succeeded, not jsut because he is there at the apex but the

manner in which he got there and the consequent actions he is taking. As early in life, he has identified his mission in life. His humble background did not dissuade the young Ortom from setting his sights on attaining and realising his mission. His dream was realised when he was elected the Chairman. Having consolidated his position as the Chief Executive of local government, and set the machinery of government in motion, it was his turn now to thank the people of his local government who have mandated him to pull them out of the woods.

During one of his thank you tours of the council wards, he had this to say to them:

“During electioneering campaigns, I indicated to you a number of programs I intend to pursue while in office. Now that I have assume office, I am here today to visit you at your individual wards to identify your priority needs which will form part of the over all program of action for the development of this local government”.

The challenge no doubt is enormous, the plight of his people had always been his major concern. This neglect irritates the Hon. Chairman. He was so vividly touched by lack of Bridge at River Katsina-Ala in the Shagev District, that he told the people: “If I were on my own I would have instantly linked the Shagev District by building a bridge across River Katsina-Ala at Tyulen”. Such is the pain in the heart of a man who has tremendous feelings for his people.

Such projects like building of bridges are by no doubt capital intensive, and they are the responsibility of the Federal Government, the dynamic Chairman has vowed to pursue vehemently the issue with the relevant authorities, so as to intensify efforts in the construction of the bridge. He however told the people that his administration has completed arrangements for the opening of an area development office so as to fasten the execution of government policies and programmes.

And since according to Hon. Samuel Ortom, the government cannot do everything for the people, he wants his people to

initiate and execute development projects, through self-help. 'These projects if so initiated will receive full support from my government'.

Hon. Samuel Ortom has promised to continue to open up access roads, and complete such roads that were not completed before he assumed office.

"Incidentally", continued Hon. Ortom, "the provision of potable water ranks prominently on the list of my programs I promise that the health care centre at Uzguhul will be expanded and fully staffed to provide desired health care delivery to the people of Shagev District". This no doubt confirms his commitment to the provision of qualitative health care facilities to his people.

HEALTH SECTOR

Hon. Ortom's rise from indigent humble background to the venerated height of the position of number one in his local government at this early stage of his political career shows the kind of stuff great epics are made off. No doubt this story will be unfolded as time goes on but one thing is definitely clear - **ORTOM** is committed to **SERVICE**.

Therefore, like he mentioned areas of his top most attention as soon as he assumed office, one of them was provision of health care facilities to his dear people. Barely five months into office the Hon. Chairman Samuel Ioraer Ortom took a giant step forward in the direction of provision of health care facilities. Thus exactly on the 6th of May 1991 when commissioning the local government health clinic at Tyulen, he had this to say: "... with the official opening of this clinic today, our dream of providing medicare for our people is gradually being realised.

No doubt we all believe **Health is Wealth therefore the Quest** for provision of social amenities like health in a local government like Guma must be given priority **attention**".

These commendable efforts in the health sector are also recorded at other Districts of local government. The speed with which these projects are being executed impressed his people. Said one of his admirers Mr. Edward Iorkaa of the General Hospital, Makurdi - "The intensity to which he handles problems related to the programmes is impressive, as if his entire credibility and place in history depend on its success".

Those who interacted with him at close quarters are always impressed by his concern about the welfare of his people. Spurred by total commitment to improving their living standard and ensuring that healthcare facilities are made available, the Chairman embarked upon the rehabilitation of clinics in the districts. Thus within five months in office the health clinics at Uzughul, in Saghev District was rehabilitated at the cost of ₦59,000.00 the one at Abinsi also, was at the cost of ₦39,000.00 The Udei Health Centre in Nyiev is renovated at the cost of ₦49,000.00. At Yogbo, the health clinic was completely dilapidated, this also got the nod of the Chairman for attention

and costed the local government N59,000.00.

The Hon. Chairman, also approved the construction of health clinics in the six Districts of the local government each one of at the following Districts - Uvir, Nzorov, Mbadwen, Mbabai, Mbawa each costing N100,000.00. It is true that construction of health clinics alone, does not serve the purpose. Therefore the local government went in agreement with West African Drugs (WAD) to supply Drugs to these clinics at the cost of N50,000.00.

Most important of all was the introduction of 'Visiting Doctors' Scheme. These and other achievements in the health sector has clearly demonstrated willingness and service to the people of his local government.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Guma local government under the Charimanship of Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom has experienced so far the most peaceful atmosphere in Education. Teachers going on industrial strike has been seen now in Nigeria as an entrenched tradition. It is as if those at the helm of affairs do it deliberately.

The local government has a total of 106 primary schools with total capacity of teachers at 600. This no doubt will mean an enormous payment of total emoluments, which the chairman effectively has taken care of. How would one describe the magnanimity of Hon. Chairman, when the total number of teachers stood at 600 and 500 were promoted? Not only that the inherited burden from Primary Schools Management Board were also taken care of. School are maintained at various sums of money. "Each one teach one" was the theme of 1991 international year of the literacy.

In this regard, the Honourable Chairman opened a total number of 22 literacy classes with the strength of 430 pupils - comprising 243 males and 187 females.

Indeed Hon. Ortom's total commitment to the education of his people must be stressed. He has fervently argued that, education is important to the political awareness of the people. "The mass of the society are both illeterate and poor, which makes it difficult for the majority to vote knowledgeably on issues involved. Literacy will make it possible for the people to listen to debates among the budding politicians, ask them questions and make up their minds on the basis of the mental satisfaction achieved or disappointed. People would because of their illiteracy, vote not, through conviction, but through emotional persuasions. Poverty makes the people prone to vote for any body willing and ready to shower a naira rain. People with empty stomachs are not associated with long and lasting solutions. They are prone to manipulation by the powerful and the rich. Education and gainful employment are prerequisite for a stable government".

So what in essence the Hon. Chairman, Samuel Ioraer Ortom is saying is, until majority of his people, have achieved self

respect through education their political awareness will still be a mirage.

AGRICULTURE

Guma no doubt, by its fertile vast land can feed Benue State conveniently if the land is properly cultivated. Therefore the local government has geared its efforts at encouraging farmers to produce more by providing inputs to them. Thus fertilizer which has become "Gold" is made available to his people at the beginning of every planting season.

Nursery farms have been established by the local government, to ease the problem of travelling far distances to get them. Thus a Daudu, Nursery farm 2000 and 200 citrus and mango seedlings respectively were raised as well as 500, 1500 and 250 citrus of mango seedlings at Uzughul, Saghev District. All these were budded and sold to farmers.

Hon. Ioraer Ortom has vowed to provide all the necessary support to his people in order that, their Agricultural outputs will increase from the present level.

A PRINCE OF PEACE

“The struggle to achieve peace and stability at our boarder with Plateau State is a never ending one. In spite of our best efforts peace has continued to elude us. I shall not rest until my people enjoy absolute peace and the acts of aggression against them are completely stopped”. No words can aptly describe the mood of the Hon. Samuel Ortom than what is clearly manifested in the speech above. His struggle for peace dates well back in 1989-1990, when in 1989, the people of Jangaragari, Awe and Azare collaborated with their villages and attacked Tse-Akaahena killing the District Head and three others, the Chairman, then was forthright in condemning the acts, as barbaric, inhuman, and warned that the senseless killing and wanton destruction of lives and property must stop forthwith. He was actively involved in the initiation of peace talks between the warring factions.

I have no doubt in my mind that, if as Secretary Rehabilitation Committee, he had failed certainly his people would not have mandated him to be their first Executive Chairman. It was therefore only normal that he had to continue with the work now as the Chairman of Guma Local Government. These boarder clashes were later to occur a few months when he assumed office as the Chairman of his local government.

In the heat of this careless killing and destruction of property, the Honourable under severe threats to exterminate him, was swift in action and personally visiting these areas at the same time initiating peace talks with his counterpart at Awe, with the shortest of notice. At the meeting in fact the Chairman was very forthright and frank in his discussions. He lashed at the Police for their inability to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of the 1989 acts of aggression. He said “in spite of all our efforts present and past, and indeed because of them our march forward to attainment of peace must continue; there should be no going back. I have an obligation and sacred promise to my people which must be fulfilled”.

Boarder clashes have become so entrenched in our society that at certain times they are allowed to continue at the frequency of

their occurrence without those in power blinking an eyelid. No doubt, people, at the slightest provocation, or imagined provocation wreak tremendous amount of havoc to follow Nigerians in the name of land ownership.

Hon. Ortom's swift action, even when his personal life was threatened by the "Republican Guards of the Awe" moved him even closer to his people. One of them Hycienth Mkem, said "most remarkable, indeed, is the quick action he has taken, this will go a long way to indicate to our perpetual attackers that any future occurrence will be repulsed by our people. We are no longer naked".

Not surprisingly, the people of Guma Local Government have found great use for Hon. Ortom's commitment to service. Rarely has any youth, in the recent history of this fascinating State Benue, exhibited such a tremendous and graceful sense of service.

Hon. Ortom's fine grasp of the intricacies of the boarder problems of his people is well known. His role during the peace talks was by no means the first.

Nowhere has his abilities been more appreciated than in this complicated area of finding a lasting solution to the boarder problems.

The problem according to Hon. Ortom if allowed to continue meaningful development will not be achieved as his attention will be distracted by it.

Addressing the Chairman of Awe Local Government in Plateau State with council members of both local government and District Heads, Hon. Ortom said: "The destiny of our people is in our hands we must be vigilant in defending them and must refuse to be drafted into fights whose consequences are far reaching, we must exploit to the maximum margin, areas of peaceful settlement of our problems. For those with legitimate ambitions of political leadership must establish their political base with the people. Let no one be manipulated for the gains of a selfish few. We must seek and find an effective way of meaningfully been involved in constructive dialogue. We are in a civilised world and must do things in a civilised manner".

Hon. Samuel Ioraer Ortom has warmed himself into the hearts of his people; the hardworking and dedicated youngman has plunged into his tasks eagerly. However, the achievements of this deep and deliberative man will bear extra telling in the book of history.

Elsewhere at a function the Hon. Chairman extols: "my set goal is to improve the lot of my people; and I want whatever I do to see the light of day". His courage in the position of the local government Chairman is out of his conviction that serving his people will help achieve the potentials of his local government. His courage also stems from his firm belief in the local government's future.

"I have faith in my local government. I believe the resources are there. There are alot of opportunities. It depends on how you take them. I have right from day one taken things as a challenge, and my best advice to the entire people of Guma local government is, in course of our earnest search for an appropriate and lasting solution to our chronic boarder problems, let us keep our lines open, because we may need our foes of today as allies of tomorrow".

No doubt, then his aggressive tackling of this boarder issue earned him a letter of commendation from the Military Governor of Benue State Lt. Col. F.A. Makka.

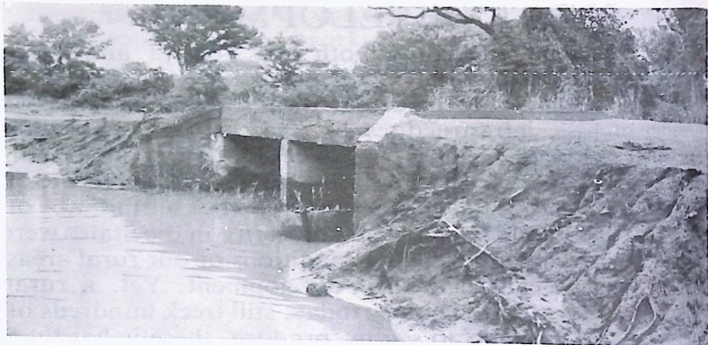
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Despite concerted efforts by both the Federal and State Governments and even Local Governments over the years to improve the standard of living of our rural dwellers in terms of provision of basic infrastructures like access roads, portable water and healthcare facilities, most of our rural areas still remain a horrible spectre. The establishment of the Directorate of Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure, the setting up of Agricultural and Rural Development Authority in the States were deliberately aimed at improving the conditions of our rural areas and concomitantly enhancing their development. Yet, a rural dweller in most parts of the country today, still trek hundreds of kilometres along footpaths to sell his produce, there is hardly a health clinic within his vicinity to treat his ailments. The guinea worm scourge has continued unabated for the simple reason that he can not afford potable water to drink. Illiteracy, which international organisations and governments all over the world having been fighting is on the increase in our rural areas.

It is against this background that, Hon. Samuel Ortom the young and energetic Chairman of Guma Local Government had this to say to the people of Nyiev at Udei in 1991 during his familiarisation and Thank You tour of the districts, "The greatest challenge in my new responsibility which you have overwhelmingly saddled on me is to improve your well being, by way of striving to provide all the good things that make life worth living". He went further to state that "I am quite aware of your problems especially as regards roads, water and healthcare facilities. All the same I have come to hear from your mouths, the most pressing ones for my immediate attention".

Ever since concluding his tour, Hon. Ortom went back to Gbajimba, the headquarters and the administrative centre and has quietly set out to tackle his peoples most pressing needs! Access roads, potable drinking water and other infrastructures.

It won't therefore be an overstatement to say here that the greatest legacy Hon. Samuel Ortom will have bequeathed to the people of Guma Local Government area in his intergrated rural



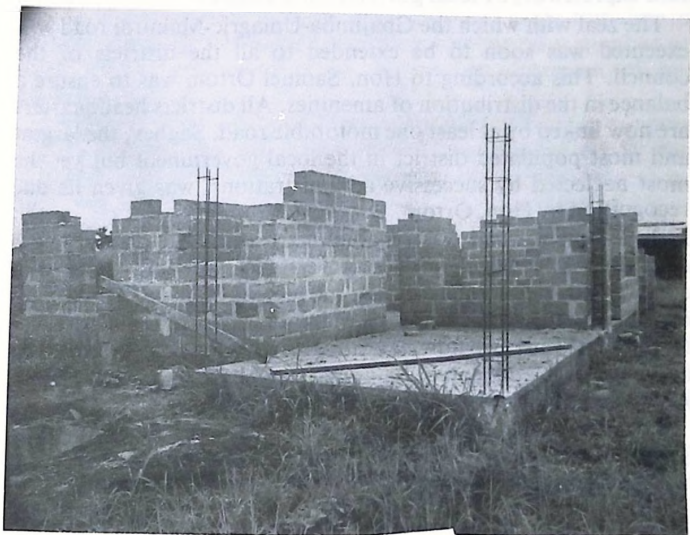
The bridge at Inundu near Guma along Uniagric Road



A section of Uniagric road



Guma Beach Hotel under construction



Guma Senior Staff Quarters under construction

development programme. Under this programme, an accelerated rural rehabilitation programme was pursued. And one such area that was zealously addressed by Hon. Samuel Ortom was the opening up of roads. His major and immediate task was the construction of the Makurdi-Uniagric road that links Gbajimba with the State Capital. Infact, one can proudly state that it was only in 1992, during the tenure of Hon. Ortom that Gbajimba was accessible by road throughout the year. In a bid to ensure this Hon. Ortom had to rehabilitate the Gbajimba-Uniagric-Makurdi road, which over the years remained a seasonal road. The Gumbridge bridge which was a stumbling block, was completed and fully paid for. Other major culverts along the road which were either constructed but not paid for have been settled and those that were yet to be constructed are immediately being built. The Makurdi Local Government portion of the road was also rehabilitated.

Today, the Gbajimba-Uniagric-Makurdi road has become mini-expressway, by local government standards.

The zeal with which the Gbajimba-Uniagric-Makurdi road was executed was soon to be extended to all the districts of the council. This according to Hon. Samuel Ortom was to ensure balance in the distribution of amenities. All districts headquarters are now linked by at least one motorable road. Saghev, the largest and most populated district in the local government but yet the most neglected by successive administrations, was given its due recognition by Hon. Ortom.

A 30 kilometre road was rehabilitated to link the district headquarters. All major bridges/culverts in the area were also constructed thereby making the movement of people within the district more convenient as one opinion leader in the district was to say, "At least, we now have a sense of belonging, we now feel as being part and parcel of Guma Local Government", He Abera Gyum, a former Councillor was to confess.

To reduce the perennial water problem in the area (local government) areas that were in dire stress of potable water, wells sunk in their villages.

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED TO STAFF OF GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN, GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, HON. SAMUEL ORTOM AT
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT GBAJIMBA,
FRIDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 1991**

The Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government
Hon. Councillors
Traditional Rulers
The Secretary to the Local Government
Heads of Departments
Staff of Guma Local Government
Ladies and Gentlemen.

As I had earlier promised during my closing remark at the occasion marking the end of year Get-together party for staff of this local government, I have specifically set aside this day to address the staff of Guma Local Government on a number of issues that touch on ensuring the smooth operation of my council.

I wish to first of all commend you on the unflinching support you had given the past administration as highlighted by the former Chairman during his briefing to me in the process of handover. Having been inspired by such a pleasant report about your hardwork and dedication to duty, my council has conceived the following package to enhance your welfare for greater productivity.

1. Staff will be allocated at least one plot each in Gbajimba town for consequent development and occupation. This measure is intended to ease the residential accommodation problem you are facing which we know has negative bearing on effective performane of your functions.
2. The issue of office accommodation will be vigorously pursued to ease the problem staff are currently encountering in this regard.
3. Your monthly salaries will be paid promptly.

4. Payment of staff allowances will be given renewed attention.
5. The granting of vehicle refurbishing loan will be continued as soon as the finances of the local government stabilises.

My dear staff of Guma Local Government, the above package is no doubt a clear manifestation of our commitment to provide a conducive working atmosphere so that we can get maximum co-operation and productivity from you. This we feel, will form the basis of the speedy implementation of the programmes we had sold to the electorate to obtain the ticket to serve as a council for this local government

However, I have observed with great disappointment the alarming spade of gross absenteeism and lateness to work within the short period of my assumption of office as Chairman of this local government. It is exasperating to notice that a majority of you come to work as from 8 a.m., stay for about three hours and by 12 noon, you sneak to town under unofficial pretence that you have gone on break and that's all for the day. Worst of all, most of you decide at random to stay away from work for as many days as you please, only to make an appearance at a day of your choice. It is disgusting that this unpleasant behaviour is observable among all categories of staff including even some Heads of Departments and Sectional heads.

First impressions are by all means lasting impressions. I must not hesitate to state that staff of this local government are yet to convince me that they are the same corps of staff which the former administration had sung praises of hardwork and dedication to duty.

I have no cause to believe that you have any reason for making a deliberate effort to constitute a stumbling block to my administration.

Your enduring negative attitude to work however has a compelling force on my reasoning to think along such lines. I want to make it clear to you that this administration is poised to fish out such indolent staff and severely deal with them so as to pave way for the execution of the development programmes we have for the people of this local government. We are only sorry for some of you who would soon start using political undertones

to misinterpret the disciplinary action that will be taken against you for bad behaviour and negligence of duty. Heads of Departments will henceforth be held responsible for the lapses of staff in their departments. I will not hesitate to report to appropriate quarters any actions of head of department that I consider inimical to my administration.

I have also observed with great concern the extremely low returns made to the treasury by revenue collectors. It is unbelievable to discover that for a complete week little or no revenue is paid into local government coffers by revenue collectors. I have been reliably told that some revenue collectors and supervisors at the Development Area Offices have a large number of outstanding revenue earning receipts which they have not been able to make returns to the treasury department so as to be issued new ones. This situation has led us to a stalemate where revenue collectors are starved of revenue earning receipts. Most of our markets are now empty of revenue collection activity. This state of affairs cannot be tolerated by a development oriented administration such as ours. I hereby direct that all outstanding revenue earning receipts and all the dues collected on them be returned to the local government treasury on or before Tuesday, 5th February, 1991. Failure to do this, those involved will be instantly suspended from service and consequently handed over to the Police as this act will be regarded as criminal in nature. The Finance Department must submit comprehensive details of such returns and list of defaulting staff indicating their level of involvement to me on the 6th February, 1991. The details must be counter-signed by the Internal and Resident Auditors of this local government. The local government secretary should make sure that this directive reaches all the nooks and corners of Guma Local Government for strict compliance.

This administration is in no way out to witch-hunt staff. We will however not spare those that want to constitute a cog in the development machinery of this local government. For hardworking and dedicated staff, I want to assure you that this is your administration, as we are running an open-door-policy. Staff are free to meet us either in office or anywhere for that

matter to discuss their observations about our administration. We are ready to take constructive criticisms and suggestions that are geared towards a corrective sense of direction. To this end, a SUGGESTION BOX will immediately be mounted beside the door of my office to enable you drop **any** useful suggestions you may have to aid the administrative process. Remember to always write your names on such suggestions so that if need be, you can be easily traced for further discussions on such issues since the space on paper may more often than not be enough to buttress your points sufficiently.

We are poised to break the unfortunate viscous circle of gossip and **rumour** mongering that has hitherto been associated with local government administration. You can only help us achieve this by always discussing issues affecting our administration with us rather than behind us.

You are aware that the Local Government Education Authority has been transferred to us. This arrangement is familiar to us as Primary Education has always been the conventional arm of Local Government Administration.

As we are **studying** the modalities for the take over, my administration has already fashioned out a welfare scheme for teachers similar to the package I have already highlighted for **other local government** staff. It is our resolve that since education is one the cardinal programmes of our party, this sector will be given priority attention.

My dear staff of Guma Local Government, ours is a new local government that is striving to meet the level of development of older local government. All hands must therefore be on deck so that together we will stir the ship of development of Guma Local Government to greater heights. This is the only way we can save our faces in posterity.

Thank you.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE PEOPLE OF SAGHEV DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AREA BY THE CHAIRMAN GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL: HON. SAMUEL ORTOM ON THE MEET-THE-PEOPLE COUNCIL TOUR OF GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: JANUARY 28TH - 4TH FEBRUARY, 1991

My dear people of Guma Local Government, I am happy to visit your council ward today in the capacity of Chairman, Guma Local Government Council. On behalf of my Councillors therefore, accept my profound gratitude to you for giving us the mandate to serve you at this stage of the transition to civil rule programme. We acknowledge the fact that you were given two alternatives during the December 8 elections to choose the persons that would represent you. For you to choose us is a clear indication that you have the confidence that we are capable of handling the affairs of this local government.

You will recall that during electioneering campaigns, we indicated to you a number of programmes we intend to pursue while in office. Now that I have assumed office with my councillors, we find it necessary to visit you at your individual wards to discuss with you and identify your priority needs which will form part of our overall programme of action for the development of this Local Government. We are not completely unaware of what you need as rural dwellers. It is however our conviction that these needs vary from one community to the other in order of priority. For instance, while some communities may have the problem of inaccessibility, others may wish that the problem of portable water should be addressed first. We are therefore here today to establish such disparities.

I want to observe that Saghev District is not just one of the largest Districts in Guma Local Government, it is precisely the largest in the local government. The natural geographical isolation of this relatively largest District in Guma Local Government is of great concern to my administration. If I were in my own way, I would have instantly linked Saghev District by building a bridge across River Katsina-Ala at Tyulen. However

since such a venture is capital intensive and a function of the Federal Government; I will only bring preassure to bear on the Federal Government through the State Government so that attention could be given to this very much cherished project. For now, I have completed plans to create an Area Development Office in Saghev District so as to reduce the administrative and logistic problems hitherto experienced in this District.

From the welcome speech delivered by the Area Development Officer, it appears the issue of self help projects has not been fully addressed by people of this District. I want to persuade you to embark on self help projects as other Districts are doing as your attitude in this regard will form the basis of our aid to each Community. I however understand that the construction of some roads in this District had already been embarked upon by the past administration. We will surely go ahead and finish them along with those you have indicated in your request.

Incidentally, the the provision of potable water and healthcare delivery ranks prominently on the list of programmes of my administration. I hereby promise that the Health Centre at Ungugul will be expanded and fully staffed to provide the desired healthcare delivery of the people of Saghev District. Already we have completed plans to ensure continuous supply of drugs to the health centres and clinics in the Local Government. We believe that by operating the "Drug revolving system of procurement of drugs, the shortage of drugs currently experienced in our Health Centres and clinics will be a thing of the past.

Going by the request I have so far obtained from the Council wards I have visited, there is cause to conclude that the problem of portable water is common to most communities in Guma Local Government. My administration therefore considers the provision of potable water in the Local Government as a priority. Due attention will be given to the people of Saghev District in this all important aspect of human existence.

You may be aware that the Federal Military Government has transfered running of Primary Education to Local Government. The handing over process is still on and as soon as it is completed, we will commence the rehabilitation of primary schools. Saghev District will surely benefit from our activity in

the education sector.

As I have always indicated in the wards I have already visited in this Local Government, the type of assistance we intend to give you in aid of your projects will be in form of materials and/or cash. It is however sad to disclose to you that internally generated revenue of Guma Local Government is at its lowest ebb. I have observed with dismay that in a complete week, little or nothing is paid into the treasury as internally generated revenue. An investigation has already been conducted into this stalemate and it has been discovered that some of our revenue collectors are largely responsible for this wreck of our revenue generation machinery. A decision has already been taken on how to contend with the gross-misconduct exhibited by these revenue collectors. I hereby call on you all to assist us in our bid to improve the revenue base so as to enhance adequate funding of the development package we have for you. This you can do three ways:

Firstly, by paying community tax and other revenue dues to Local Government promptly. Always insist on getting official receipts for the amounts you pay. Remember that once you fail to get a receipt for any payment you make, such money paid is obviously going into the pockets of the revenue collector and not to the Local Government. You will as such be doing a dis-service to your Local Government by not demanding for receipts when you pay your dues.

Secondly, you can assist us by co-operating with our revenue collectors and revenue generation team. Please don't do anything to frustrate their official activities. Rather you should be prepared to aid them in areas they might need your help.

Thirdly, as parents to some fraudulent revenue collectors, it is your duty to call them to order when you observe an attempt by them to defraud your Local Government. If on the other hand you applaud them for being so "smart", then you should as well be prepared to welcome them home when they are flushed out of the

service of this Local Government. We need funds to implement the development programme we have for you. We will therefore not hesitate but depend heavily on anybody who stands on our way in pursuit of this noble plan for the people of this Local Government.

I recognise the fact that we had contested elections with friends and relatives before we were eventually elected into office. The competition was indeed keen but fair as no wounds were sustained by anybody. It is my belief that all of us were struggling to be voted in so as to develop Guma Local Government. Only that it was not possible for all of us to win at the same time. All that happened during campaigns should now be regarded as bygone. It is time for us to put heads together so that we can uplift the standard of living of the people. I hereby call on all of you that contested the December 8th elections and indeed, the entire people of Guma Local Government to feel free to come and contribute the useful ideas they may have to enable us achieve the objectives of our mandate as a council for Guma Local Government. Our doors are wide open for you. You can do us a lot of favour by discussing with us the observations you may have about our administration. You should however avoid the temptation of discussing these observations behind us.

You are aware that this Local Government although young, has undergone severe security stresses that have posed serious threat to peace. You know as well as I do, that there cannot be any meaningful development in an atmosphere that is bound with insecurity. It is therefore my fervent appeal to all of you to help the Traditional Rulers and Law Enforcement Agencies to maintain law and order in this Local Government. This you can do by staying clear on any activity that could culminate into breakdown of law and order. Secondly, you should not hesitate to report either to the law enforcement agencies or to us any moves that are capable of constituting security risk to the people of this Local Government.

I am happy to inform you that arrangements have been completed by the council to grant agricultural loan to farmers in this Local Government. I wish to therefore advise you to organise

yourselves into farmers co-operative unions so that you can avail yourselves of this facility. We will find it more convenient to deal with farmers that are in organised groups rather than on individual basis. We have noticed that the supply of fertilizer to Guma Local Government was not properly handled during the last cropping season. It will interest you to note that the council has already concretised plans to ensure hitch-free distribution of fertilizer to farmers this year. You will soon be informed of when and where to call for purchase of fertilizers in this Local Government. I have also taken note of your earlier request for the creation of fertilizer depots in Saghev District. As I earlier observed, the unique geographical location of this area strictly required that special consideration be given to it in terms of development. I will therefore ensure that fertilizer depots are created in this district so as to alleviate the peculiar transportation problems that have been militating against effective fertilizer distribution in this area.

Finally, may I remind you that our destiny as a Local Government is in our hands. It is therefore the duty of all of us to ensure that this new Local Government speedily takes on the features that are comparable to older Local Government. My success as Chairman of this Local Government will be a source of pride to all of you. You will in the same vein get a fair share of the blame for not putting me right where you observe that I am going wrong. Let's join hands and develop Guma Local Government.

Thank you.

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE HON. CHAIRMAN OF
GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT MR. SAMUEL I. ORTOM
AT THE PEACE MEETING BETWEEN GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AND AWE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HELD
IN LAFIA ON THURSDAY 28TH MARCH, 1991**

**Hon. Chairman of Awe Local Government council
Hon. Members of Guma and Awe Local Government Councils
District Heads of the two Local Governments
Other Participants**

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to this very important meeting taking place here in Lafia. The circumstances that has led to this emergency meeting are not unfamiliar to you.

But before I proceed, I would want to briefly recall the events that have necessitated the convening of this gathering. Last Thursday, when I returned from Makurdi, after a meeting with the Deputy Governor of Benue State, my Deputy informed me of the mis-understanding between my people (Tse-Akaahena) and your people (Jangargari).

The following morning (Friday) I went to Tse-Akaahena to find out the cause of the mis-understanding. I was told that a Fulani man who went on pasturing failed to return to the camp with cattles. When the matter was reported to the Police Post in Jangargari, they immediately sent a message to my people whom they are strongly suspecting of either kidnapping or killing the man giving them three days for the return of the man or an attack on Tse-Akaahena.

From there I dashed straight to Awe Local Government to confer with the Chairman. Though I did not meet you in person, I met your Secretary and the Honourable member representing the people of Jangargari. After a brief discussion with them, I told them of the need for us to meet at a round table and evolve ways or resolving the mounting tensions between our people.

Mr. Chairman, I am overwhelmed by the willingness you have shown by attending this meeting even though it was fixed in your absence. It demonstrates the fervent desire by you and me to tackle this intractable problem.

Hon. Chairman, you will agree with me that the people of Guma Local Government and Awe Local Government both have historical and cultural ties that dates so many decades back. Long before me and you were born, our people could eat and drink together most especially those on the border of the two Local Governments.

Today, my people do not go to markets in Awe and your people too do not come to our markets, what has gone wrong? What has estranged this relationship? Our people hardly see eye to eye nowadays.

This situation to my mind is not beyond redemption. With me and you the issues separating our people can be resolved. I am even more glad that both of us are from the same party. A party that believes in the oneness of all Nigerians.

Hon. Chairman, the recent case which has drawn our people to the brink of war is a matter that would have been handled better by the security agents than for a group of persons to begin to issue ultimatum and letters of threats. This does not augur well for our Local Governments. Where a person disappears in a suspicious circumstances, it is the duty of the law enforcement agents to investigate and arrest the culprits so that they are brought to book. This procedure is always ignored by the people of Jangargari. Last Monday, a letter threatening my life, the Deputy Chairman and other prominent persons of Guma Local Government was written to me by a group which called itself the 'Republican Guards of Jangargari, Awe Local Government'.

In August 1989, the people of Jangargari, Awe, Azare and other villages collaborated with some Fulanimen and attacked Tse-Akaahena killing the District Head and three others in a daylight raid. They looted the property of the villagers and where they could not move the loots into the lorries they brought, fire was set on them.

Two years after this barbaric and despicable act was committed by the people of Awe Local Government, no arrests whatsoever has been made by the Police in Awe Local Government of Plateau State. It is not that we are not capable of inflicting the same damage on them but just that we believe in the laws of the land, and a peaceful co-existence with our neighbours. I am

therefore calling on the Government of Plateau State and Awe Local Government council to ensure that the perpetrators of 1989 incident are arrested and tried without any further delay This will go a long way in deterring others who might be harbouring such devilish thoughts in their minds as well as restoring peace between our people.

Finally, I wish to stress that if we allow this ugly situation to continue, we shall never achieve any meaningful development in our local governments. We will always be distracted by it. Quarrels even between husband and wife are not settled through fighting. It is at a round table like now that differences among us can be resolved. If we choose to resolve our problems by fighting, we should also be prepared to bear the burden of destruction and other hardships that follow.

We are in a civilised world and must learn to do things in a civilised manner.

Thank you.

**SPEECH BY THE HON. CHAIRMAN OF GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, MR. SAMUEL ORTOM AT THE
SWEARING-IN-CEREMONY OF THE SECRETARY TO THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION SECRETARY AND
SUPERVISORS IN GBAJIMBA, WEDNESDAY 20TH
MARCH, 1991**

The Deputy Chairman
Members of Guma Local Government Council
Secretary to the Local Government
The Education Secretary
Supervisors
Heads of Departments
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am highly delighted to address you all today on this historic and significant occasion of the swearing-in-ceremony of the Secretary to the Local Government, Education Secretary and Supervisors. I call it historic because for the first time we have been given the opportunity to appoint these key officials for our Local Governments. Hitherto, the State Government had the prerogative.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the wake of the year, after our inauguration, the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida announced sweeping changes in the local government administrative set up. These changes included the politicization of the office of the Secretary, the creation of legislative council in the local government and appointment of supervisors outside the elected council.

This, according to the President, were in conformity with the Presidential system of government, which has been adopted in our constitution. This in theory, had made the local government an autonomous third-tier government. In essence it means we have more responsibilities saddled on our shoulders now than ever before.

It is in accordance with this pronouncement that, the people I have just sworn-in were appointed. I wish to stress that all the appointments were made in good faith and in the best interest of this local government. In as much as they are political appointments, I want to point out that certain prerequisites such as necessary qualifications and experience, administrative competence and personal integrity were basic ingredients that were considered for the appointments.

The people we have therefore appointed into these offices are those who have satisfied these conditions and are persons of proven integrity and capable of coping with the demands and challenges of their respective offices.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, legislative arms have been set up in local governments to perform a dual function of enacting bye-laws for the local government and providing a mechanism for check and balances on the executive arm. This, I want to stress should not be misconstrued to mean witch-hunting. Except there exists a harmonious and symbiotic relationship between the council and the executive, the goals we have set for ourselves might never be realised. It is in this regard that, I want to appeal to members of the council not to consider their new role as being different from what they were going before. We still remain the representatives of our people with the same objectives and goals. The over-riding motive of all of us should therefore be how best we can improve our people's standard of living.

As I have always stated at previous occasions and everywhere I have been to, our fundamental objective here remains and will always remain to improve the general welfare of our people and put Guma Local Government on a sustained wheel of development.

This we hope to do by pursuing an integrated rural development programme. Under this policy the council plans to open up feeder roads all over the local government so that the local government will be accessible throughout the year. The Works Department has been directed to draw up the plan for immediate implementation. In two weeks time, the Guma bridge will be completed and work on the Gbajimba-Uniagric road must have

reached an advance stage. For water supply, we have already commissioned a firm to study the hydrological terrain of the local government and determine the suitability of earth dams, wells for our various communities. The moment the study is completed and the report sent to us, we shall set in motion a machinery to tackle the perennial water problem in Guma local government.

Another cardinal objective of our administration is the provision of basic health care facilities for our teeming populace. As you are already aware, some clinics have been upgraded to basic health centres. But for these health centres and clinics to be effective, they need the basic facilities like drugs, dressing etc. to function effectively. These, you will agree with me are completely absent in our Health Centres. It is therefore our resolve to tackle this problem on a permanent basis. I am therefore happy to announce that a sum of One hundred thousand Naira (N100,000.00) has been earmarked for the purchase of drugs this month for distribution to all our health centres and clinics.

To ensure that drugs are always available, we intend to open a drug revolving account as soon as possible, where all the proceeds emanating from the sale of drugs will be kept. This will ensure the continuous replenishing of the depleted stock in our health centres.

My administration is also committed in ensuring the completion of the Comprehensive Health Centre situated here in Gbajimba. I am aware that only one contractor is intensifying efforts to complete her works, others have virtually abandoned theirs. I want to assure you that we shall get in touch with the others and if they do not resume work, their contract will be terminated.

Another step we are taking to ensure that medical care reaches our people in addition to the purchase of drugs is the introduction of a visiting doctors clinic at Udei, Agasha, and Gbajimba on a weekly basis. Consultancy days will be introduced in these three health centres for patients attending them.

Furthermore, we intend to recruit more trained personnel to man our health clinics. At present most of our clinics that are scattered all over the local government are being manned by

incompetent and untrained staff who are not qualified to handle complex cases that are brought before them. This situation does not augur well for the primary health care programme which we are implementing.

Distinguished Guests, the role of education in the development of any society cannot be over-emphasised. It is for this singular reason that countries all over the world have continued to pump in huge sums of money into this key sector of the economy. In Nigeria here, some states are far ahead of others in terms of development because of high level of education their indigenes have attained. Same goes to local governments in the state. In Guma local government, the educational situation is most alarming. Our schools lack infrastructures like classroom, seats and teaching aids. Where there are structures, there are no seats and sometimes teachers. But the most unpardonable side of it all is the poor attitude of parents in Guma Local Government. Up till now most parents in our local government have not realised the importance of education as the moral and intellectual upbringing of their children.

It is in this connection that I want to remind the Education Secretary and his deputy of the difficult task ahead of them. But while acknowledging the enormity of their task, I am charging them to as a matter of urgency to start mobilising headmasters, parents and other resources towards the provision of temporary infrastructures in our schools pending the time the state government will start the provision of infrastructure. The present situation where pupils sit under the trees is not healthy for their intellectual development. You should also find ways of changing the negative and poor attitude of parents towards sending their children to schools. In most schools, population in under 50 while a larger number stay away doing nothing. This is an agenda I am handing to the Education Secretary and his deputy and it is for immediate implementation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me also to touch briefly on revenue, which is the live-wire of all our programmes. Without enough funds, we will practically find it impossible to accomplish any of our targets.

When we came in, the revenue generation machinery of this local government was completely in shambles. We therefore set out to re-organise by first of all identifying fraudulent and incompetent revenue collectors. A committee to recover all outstanding receipts and monies was constituted. Over N55,000.00 was recovered leaving behind about N63,000.00. A sub-committee is still working on the recommendations of the committee. When the white paper is finally released, I want to assure you that disciplinary measures will be taken against such staff no matter how highly placed.

Presently, we are on revenue drive and so far, the returns have been most encouraging. At this juncture, I wish to re-state my administration's strong determination in ensuring that all our internal revenue sources are fully tapped and harnessed to meet at least our running cost and other immediate needs. Anybody who stands in our way in this area will be treated like a saboteur.

As you are all aware, a lot of projects were initiated by the previous administration. Some have been completed while others are yet to be completed. I want to assure the people of Guma Local Government that all viable projects we inherited will be completed. I therefore wish to appeal to all our contractors who have suspended work to resume immediately.

Similarly, there are people who did work for Guma Local Government but are yet to be paid. To such people, I am requesting them to give us a little time. We shall endeavour to pay them once the financial position of the local government improves.

In the agricultural sector, emphasis is laid, first of all, on the boosting of agricultural inputs. The procurement of fertilizer for our farmers is one area we shall not compromise. Over the years, farmers in this local government have been denied the opportunity of securing fertilizer for use on their farmlands. With the new arrangement made by the government, I believe our farmers will use this opportunity to procure fertilizer in good time. I am therefore calling on all farmers co-operative unions, associations and individuals to come forward and pay to the local government for early procurement of fertilizer. You should

however know that the prices are not the same again. A bag of fertilizer will now sale for ₦30.00 and ₦40.00 respectively. When it is finally procured, we shall transport it to all the ten council wards headquarters of the local government where farmers could go and collect their shares.

These and other areas I have not mentioned in this speech will be our focal points. There is no gainsaying the fact that for us to realise the above, all hands mus tbe on deck, for the challenges ahead are quite enormous and cannot be shouldered be one person. You must therefore develop team spirit and oneness. You must consider yourselves as representatives of the entire people of Guma local government. Anybody found bringing in sectional sentiments in the performacne of his official duties will be sown the way out. In the same vein, any of you found wanting in the discharge of his functions will be replaced.

To achieve optimum results, I have accordingly assigned the Deputy Chairman and the four Supervisors the following portfolios:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Michael Adyo | - Finance and Economic Planning |
| 2. Cornelius Agbe | - Agricultural and Natural Resources |
| 3. Philip Adzuo | - Works, Housing and Comm. Development |
| 4. Yankyaa Ortserga | - Education |
| 5. Ezra Bakaso | - Health and Social Welfare |

I wish to once again caution all of you against indolence and disclosure of official secrets. Any of you who constitutes a clog in the whell of development as earlier stated will be thrown out.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to members of the council and the entire people of Guma Local Government for the massive co-operation they have given me and the council so far. If I have been able to achieve anything at all within this short period of my stay in office, it is due mainly because of their co-operation we have enjoyed. While we will continue to strive to improve their wellbeing and give the local government a facelift, I still appeal and urge them not to relent.

**Your co-operation is most vital if we are to succeed in the task
you have placed on our shoulders.
Thank you.**

**SPEECH BY THE CHAIRMAN, GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, HON. SAMUEL I. ORTOM IN
GUMA DAY AT THE 3RD JOINT PLATEAU-BENUE
TRADE FAIR, FRIDAY 26TH APRIL, 1991 IN JOS.**

The Chairman of the Occasion
The Special Guest of Honour
The Lady Chairman
Members of Guma Local Government Council
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honour and privilege to most sincerely welcome you all to this historic occasion of Guma Local Government Special Day tagged 'GUMA DAY' at the 3rd Plateau-Benue Joint Trade Fair holding here in Jos.

Trade Fairs all over the world are organised with the primary objective of exposing the potentials of participants as well as fostering unity amongst them. The 3rd Plateau-Benue Trade Fair is also based on this premise and Guma Local Government Area being one of such areas with vast economic potentials deemed it necessary to participate in the fair.

I would like at this juncture, to acquaint you with the potentials that abound in Guma Local Government. The local government is strategically located in the North-Eastern part of Benue State with two Trunk 'A' roads traversing it. It has one the largest and most fertile landmass in the state with more than three quarters still lying fallow. The fertility of the soil allows many agricultural crops to thrive well in the local government. Guma Local Government is well known for yellow mellow 'EGUSI', which we are the major producers in the country. Paddy rice is also grown in large quantities in the area. Other cereal like millet, guinea corn are also grown in the area. Tubers are no less popular.

But if Guma is well known for anything, it is for her abundant fish production. Fishing is the mainstay of the economic activities of the Kabawas and Jukuns of Guma Local Government Area. Fish of various species are obtained mainly at the fishing grounds

of rivers Benue and Katsina-Ala confluence and Abinsi banks of River Benue in large commercial quantities. It is for this high level of fish production that the local government logo wears a conspicuous picture of a fish. Unfortunately fishermen in Guma Local Government have been trying to contend with the big problem of storage and processing of their large catch for long term commercial benefit. The solution to this problem is definitely not in sight. Investors therefore have this unique opportunity of establishing fish preservation and processing industries in these locations and be sure of making good business.

In addition to these, Guma Local Government is blessed with abundant natural resources yet to be exploited. These resources are located in various parts of the local government. They include salt deposits, which are found in the Tse-Taavaan and Kaseyo in commercial quantities. The deposits have been proven as having the best grade.

Alluvial clay deposits also exist in large quantities at Tse-Taavaan. These are used for the production of economic items. These items are however locally produced. At Kaseyo exist large quantities of zinc deposit. These are not yet exploited. Barite deposits have also been recently discovered in Uvir Mbabai and Mbadwem districts. There are however no industrial set-ups for the use of this all important mineral product.

These numerous mineral deposit present good business network for investors. Presently no serious industrial set-up has taken place at any of these sites. It is a great challenge for big business investors.

Guma local government also has a large potential for the tourist industry. Occupying a strategic position in the northern part of Benue State, Guma Local Government is a land of contrast. The Local Government is one of the largest in Benue that cuts across valleys, hills, and rivers. Hotel business, is perhaps, one of the greatest opportunity of tourism in the area. The local government has no single hotel of an appreciable standard. The local government has recently approved the establishment of a 1.5 million Naira Beach Hotel at Gbajimba, the local government headquarters. It is hoped that the establish

ment of the hotel will provide a conducive atmosphere for tourists and businessmen that visit that local government. Such a relaxation spot is also expected to act as a good welfare package for the teaming working population of the local government.

But in addition to Gbajimba, are Agasha and Tse-Akaahena. These big settlements provide further opportunities for the hotel industry. The hills in these two locations provide a good cool weather for the hotel business. Agasha particularly has the best weather in the state.

Several islands also provide good opportunities for hotel investment. The island at the confluence of the rivers of Benue and Katsina-Ala is the best of such islands. It will be interesting to have tourists travel by boat to the place to outside the normal hectic schedule of life.

The banking industry, a very important arm of the business world, is basically non-existent in the Guma Local Government area. The only Bank in the local government is a branch of Bank of the North at Udei, a settlement located almost 100 kilometers west of the local government headquarters. The situation is so pathetic that even the local government operates her account at a Makurdi bank. We are therefore appealing to banking executives to actively invest in this "virgin land" of the banking industry.

Gbajimba, the headquarters of the local government has been provided with a good network of township roads and drainage system. In addition the town has been linked with two good roads that makes it accessible through the year. I am referring to the Makurdi-Daudu-Gbajimba road which has been well graded and laterited. The second is the Uniagric-Gbajimba road which is under rehabilitation at a cost of N1.3m. Out of this, about N200,000.00 has been paid. The Guma River which has for decades been the greatest impediment for good transportation has now been provided with a bridge. The bridge constructed at a cost of over N800,000.00 is now being used.

Gbajimba is also accessible by water through rivers Benue from Makurdi and Abinsi by boat and also Katsina-Ala. As for water supply to the town, a water project is under construction at a cost of N1.4m, out of which about "N1m has been paid. When it is finally completed in July this year, the perennial water problem in

Gbajimba would have been tackled permanently.

In the area of health, the council is rehabilitating all the existing clinics. The comprehensive health centre Gbajimba is being expanded at a cost of N.5m. A Mini-Theatre and additional wards are nearing completion in the expansion work of the centre. Elsewhere at Agasha, Daudu, Udei and Abinsi good tarred roads link these towns. In all of these towns, pipe borne water is being supplied. Electricity projects in Agasha, Daudu and Abinsi will soon be commissioned. In addition, health and educational facilities have been provided in these settlements.

In order to rationalise our policies and create a conducive industrial climate for investors we have tried to eliminate factors that have hitherto hindered potential investors. Among these are a ten year tax free plot allocation to prospective investors in all parts of the local government. This is expected to ease the initial problems such investors may incur in their new business. Further more investors wishing to own plots will have their application processed and the plots awarded to them within a week.

The local government is also aware of the importance of inter-local government commercial activities. Thus the government has completed arrangements to link Guma Local Government with the Awe Local Government through Tse-Akaahena village. Also linking Guma local government with that of Awe is the Umenger and Keana road, and Doma local government through Yogbo-Lukobi road.

The aim fo these transportation network is not just for commercial purpose but also to provide unity and peaceful co-existence with our neighbours. We are happy to have achieved this. This is because the Guma people are peace loving and believe in good neighbourliness.

The markets within the local government are being re-organised for a greater viability. Locked up stalls are being provided and provision for security fences has been made to protect the business establishments of investors. Furthermore plans are in the pipeline to open up access roads to facilitate free movement of goods and people within the ten council wards of the local government.

Finally, I want to thank the organizers of this fair, the Plateau and Benue Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture for giving us the opportunity to participate in this all important business gathering. We also wish that the organizers will have further plans to extend this set up to the various local government headquarters within the two states. This will provide an opportunity for a greater grassroots participation. And like the political programme of the present military administration, such grassroots posture will be better appreciated by the people for whom the fair has been planned.

We than all our guests for coming far and wide to grace this day. We bid them fair-well and God's guidance to their various destinations.
Thank you.

**AN ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN, GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, HON. SAMUEL ORTOM AT
THE COMMISSIONING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
HEALTH CLINIC, TYULEN, THURSDAY, 6TH MAY, 1991**

The Hon. Commissioner for Health
The Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government Council
Leaders of the two Political Parties
Supervisors
Members of Guma Local Government Legislative Council
Head of Departments, Guma Local Government
Traditional Rulers
Members of the Press
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Today marks yet another milestone in our efforts at implementing the Primary Health Care Programme in Guma Local Government. With the official opening of this clinic today, our dream of providing medicare for our people is gradually being realised.

You will recall that during my familiarization tour of the local government area in February this year, I did promise that the council shall ensure that health care facilities are made available at the door steps of the people of Guma Local Government Area. The establishment of this clinic is therefore the fulfilment of the earlier pledge I made to you during my electioneering campaign and tour of February.

In other districts too, concerted efforts are being made to ensure that our people do not travel far distances in search of health institutions. To this end, the council is rehabilitating the Health Clinic at Unzughul in Saghev District at the cost of N59,000.00 while the one in Abinsi is costing us N39,000.00. The Udei Health Centre in Nyiev is also being renovated at the cost of N49,000.00. The Yogbo Health Clinic which is completely in dilapidated state will gulp N59,000.00. All together we are expending over N250,000.00 on the rehabilitation of existing health institutions.

Hon. Commissioner for Health, because of financial constraints, we are restricting our health programme to maintenance of existing facilities and establishing new ones in districts that presently do not have health clinics. In this connection, the council has approved the construction of additional health clinics in six districts of the local government namely: Uvir, Nzorov, Mbadwem, Mbabai, Mbawa etc. Each of these will cost the local government N100,000.00. When completed, the basic health needs of the people will be provided.

As you might have rightly observed, our health centres and clinics have been without drugs for the past five months. The council is fully aware of this sad development. However, I wish to stress that it is not our intention to deliberately starve our health institutions of drugs. We were only trying to be careful by not rushing to procure drugs in order not to fall into hands of dupes who would supply us with fake drugs. Now we are set to procure drugs. As an interim measure, a reputable drug company, the West African Drugs (WAD) will be supplying drugs worth N50,000.00 in the next two weeks. This we hope will alleviate the sufferings of our people. During this period, arrangements with the Federal Ministry of Health for the purchase of drugs and dressings for our health clinics will continue. Once drugs are procured, the Tyulen health clinic will be adequately supplied with drugs.

I am also happy to announce that the visiting doctors scheme we introduced two months ago, has recorded tremendous success so much that we are considering the possibility of extending the scheme to clinics like Tyulen and other clinics scattered all over the council area.

While the council of Guma local government remains resolute in her commitment to provide basic health needs of her people, communities in the local government too have a vital role to play towards the realisation of this goal. You can help us by establishing your own clinics in your various communities. Guma local government will be too grateful to take over such clinics by sending staff and drugs to such clinics. Secondly, you could contribute towards the realisation of health for all by the year 2,000 by setting up health committees in the various

communities. These could help in maintenance of structures of health institutions, monitoring and reporting of out-breaks of diseases and mobilise their people to keep clean environments. This, if implemented will safeguard against unnecessary outbreaks of disease and ensure a healthy living.

Our efforts at providing basic infrastructures to the people of this local government is not restricted to health alone. Other areas too are receiving our attention. For the people of Kaambe, I want to announce that the council is aware of the difficulty they encounter in moving from Agasha to Gbajimba, the headquarters of their local government. Consequently, the council has completed arrangements to award the contract for the construction of the Agasha-Gberikon road to provide easy access to Gbajimba and vice versa.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, permit me at this juncture to declare on behalf of the Executive Council, the local government health-clinic, Tyulen open.

**BEING AN ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF GUMA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, HON. SAMUEL I.
ORTOM ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF
STANDING COMMITTEES IN GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ON TUESDAY, 7TH MAY 1991 IN
GBAJIMBA**

**The Deputy Chairman
Secretary to Local Government
The Leader of the House
Members of the Legislative
The Education Secretary
Hon. Supervisors
Head of Departments
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great pleasure to address you on this occasion of the inauguration of Standing Committees for the Local Government.

You will recall that early this year, I had the privilege of inaugurating three standing committees which were constituted to help the Council in implementing its programmes. A few weeks after their inauguration, major administrative and political changes were introduced in the local government system to conform with the presidential system of government which the country has adopted. In line with the new reforms and implementation guidelines on Civil Service Reforms in the local government, we have re-constituted these committees to accommodate appropriate members.

All the committees (except that of Contract Review, which is an Ad-hoc one) are standing committees with statutory responsibilities. The contract review committee will cease to exist on completion of its assignment.

Although the specific responsibilities of each standing committee are well spelt out in the Implementation guidelines, I wish to however re-instate the specific roles of the Education and Revenue Committees because of the central position they occupy in the cardinal objectives of this administration.

The Education Committee in addition to the specific guidelines in the decree establishing it, is expected to liaise with communities to ensure that temporary infrastructure are provided in all schools. Secondly, they are expected to enlighten parents on the need to send their children to schools and ensure that pupil enrollment in our schools is increased. Thirdly, monitor the performance of Teachers in our schools and recommend appropriate measures to the Local Education Authority. I have mentioned this specifically because of the negative attitude of Teachers towards their work.

It is most disheartening to note that three weeks after schools have re-opened, some schools in Guma Local Government are yet to resume classes just because Teachers have stayed away from them. How do you then expect pupils to go to schools, when there are no teachers. This is happening at a time the Council is trying to stimulate the performance of our teachers. The Council has resolved to pay the sum of N178,000.00 to Teachers as their accumulated leave bonus that was neglected by previous administrations. I want to warn that if Teachers are not ready to reciprocate our gesture by sitting up, we shall be forced to take drastic measures against them.

As for the Revenue Committee, you are all aware of our total dependence on Statutory Allocation from the Federal Government which is not always enough for us to meet our financial obligations and commitments. To compliment what we receive from the Federal Government, you must strive to generate enough internal revenue by exploring all avenues and potentials, which abound in our local government or raise maximum revenue to meet our commitments.

From the report I have received of the last revenue drive that was conducted in the local government, I am confident that the future of Guma Local Government is bright. If we generate over N120,000.00 within one month as we did in the last drive, staff claims and running cost would conveniently be taken care of. I would therefore like to use this opportunity to thank all those who were involved in the exercise for a job well done. I am told that you were able to achieve this feat despite the fact some vital receipts were lacking during the exercise.

It is not my intention to take all your time reminding you of your specific roles because I believe this must have been communicated to you in your letters of appointment. The terms of reference of the Contract Review Committee need not be recalled here just like what the sports and cultural committee is expected to do.

However, I want to touch briefly on the responsibilities of the Works and Community Development Committee. It has become a common sight for one to see most of our projects executed without paying attention to original designs of such projects in addition to completing them behind schedule. This is having an adverse effect on our developmental programme. You will be expected to look into this when you commence work. Another area I would want you to address is when projects are to be carried out by direct labour and when imprest are granted to staff to handle such. You will be expected to closely monitor it to ensure speedy and timely completion of such projects. This will stop unnecessary delay of work like what is happening on the Round-about project in Gbajimba, even though money was fully released to the person handling it, four months ago.

The land committee is also equally important and their assignment should be carried out with despatch. The Local Government stands to realise a lot of revenue from plots allocation which applications are pending. Collection of ground rent which has been deliberately being ignored since the inception of the local government should be stepped up.

Finally, I wish to congratulate all of you on your well deserved appointments and remind you of the enormous responsibilities now placed on your shoulders. You will justify our confidence by putting in your best by achieving quick results.

On this note, it is my singular honour and privilege to inaugurate the Committees.

Committees.

Thank you.

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, HON. SAMUEL ORTOM, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF HIS HIGHNESS,
ORCHIVIRIGH ALFRED AKAWA TORKULA, THE TOR
TIV TO GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, MONDAY,
20TH MAY, 1991 IN GBAJIMBA**

His Highness, Tor Tiv IV
Members of His Highness' Entourage
The Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government
Members of Guma Local Government Executive Council
Members of the Legislature
Traditional Rulers
The Press
Ladies and Gentlemen

Your Highness, it is my great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the council, staff and the entire peace loving people of Guma to this great local government. I recall vividly how exactly one month ago you were installed the 4th Tor Tiv at a colourful ceremony in Gboko. This singular act, which witnessed virtually an assemblage of the entire Nigeria Community at the Tiv Traditional town brought to light the dignity, reverence and high esteem of the seat which you now occupy. The Guma people rejoice and congratulate you and your entire family for your ascension to this coveted throne.

Your visit to Guma local government area today is both historical and significant. It is historical for the fact that Guma is the first local government you are visiting in your first scheduled tour of the local governments under your domain. It is significant because it gives Guma people the first opportunity to have a closer look at their ruler and to lay their problems before you. Your Highness, we thank you for this opportunity.

At this juncture, your Highness, I would like to intimate you of the performance of the present council. As a new government the priority of the present council was to establish access roads to the rural areas as well as the state capital. The council immediately awarded a N1.3 million contract for the rehabilitation of the

Gbajimba-Uniagric road. I am proud to inform you, Your Highness that this work is progressing steadily and will soon be completed. On this same road we have completed the Guma bridge which for a long time has been the greatest impediment for a short access to the state capital. In the same vain the Daudu-Gbajimba road has been well graded and laterited by BNARDA. We are appreciative of that too.

In Gbajimba, the headquarters, the lateriting of the township roads and the secretariat is in progress. This, we hope, will facilitate easy movement within the township. A sum of over ₦400,000.00 is being spent on the project. In all the council wards too, we are making concerted efforts to open up access roads to link the ward headquarters and all settlement areas in the districts.

The local government is also mindful of the health problems of its people. Consequently we have completed an expansion work on the Gbajimba Comprehensive Health Centre. This include a block each for male and female wards as well as a mini-theatre. Arrangements have reached an advanced stage to procure medicine from the Federal Ministry of Health for our health programme. Council has approved the building of health clinics in the ten districts where they are presently non-existent.

It is also our intention to boost food production in our local government that is basically agrarian. This we hope to do by granting agricultural loans to selected farmers in the ten council wards which arrangement have almost been completed. We have also completed arrangements to procure fertilizer for sale to our farmers.

We have discovered that visitors to the local government headquarters find it difficult to acquire a living place. This has greatly hampered the economic development of the place. To this end the council has decided to set up her own hotel. The feasibility study and design has already been completed for this project and construction work started last week. We are also intensifying efforts to complete the Gbajima water project which was initiated by our predecessors but we are being incapacitated by lack of funds.

Guma Local Government is endowed with a lot of potentials for viable developmental projects but because of financial constraints, the council is finding it absolutely difficult to embark on such projects. Our financial problems has further been compounded with the recent introduction of the presidential system of government in the local government which has saddled us with more responsibilities without a corresponding increase our external revenue. For effective implementation of this system, I want to use this opportunity to appeal to the Federal Government to increase our share of the federation account to 20% instead of the present 15%, if we are to achieve any meaningful progress.

Your Highness if this council has achieved anything at all it is in the area of security. A reoccurrence of the 1989 episode would have occurred this year if we had not moved swiftly to avert the border crises between the Guma Local Government and the Awe Local Government in Plateau State. We have succeeded in cooling down the tension of the people in the two local governments who live along the border area: We have done this through the various peace meetings that the two local governments have held over the past few months. The two local governments have agreed on the continuity of these peace talks and therefore have planned to set up an ad-hoc joint peace committee which is hoped to bring a permanent solution to the border crises.

Despite our peace efforts the boundary problem with our Plateau State neighbouring local governments seem intractable. We still do not have a clear boundary demarcation with both Doma and Awe local governments. We therefore use this opportunity to appeal to Your Highness to please use his exalted office and request the federal government to expedite action on the demarcation exercise. This will go a long way in bringing about an enduring peace between the people of the neighbouring local governments.

Your Highness, as you are already aware, Guma local government is one of the largest in the state. Unfortunately we have only ten districts and a few kindreds. This does not give the true picture of the size of the local government. Even with the new guidelines and conditions for the creation of new districts and

kindreds, Guma local government should have more. In this regard we humbly appeal to your Highness to use his good office and liaise with the appropriate authorities for more districts and kindred in the local government.

Some of the existing districts and kindreds are without the appropriate leaders. Uvir, Mbadwem and Nzorov districts, for instance, have been without district heads since the former ones passed away. In the same vain some kindreds are without kindred heads. Mbakye, Yengev are such kindreds. We therefore appeal to you as head of the Tiv Traditional Council, to address these issues accordingly.

The absence of a bridge at Tyulen, by River Katsina-Ala seemingly cuts off a large section of Guma local government from another. We also solicit your assistance in appealing to the Federal Government to help construct this important bridge. It is also noteworthy that the construction of this bridge will help open up the local government to the rest of the country.

Finally, Your Highness, in order to promote inter-local government commercial activities and peace with our neighbours we deem it necessary to construct the Gbajimba-Iordye-Awe road ; Umenger-Keana road. However we have a financial handicap to make this dream a reality. We therefore appeal to you to help solicit assistance from the state government for these very important projects.

Once again, Your Highness, we want to thank you for given us this rare opportunity to be your first host and for taking time off your tight schedule to be with us and listen to our problems. We hope you will continue to visit us from time to time in your glorious reign.

The council, staff and entire people of Guma local government do pledge their utmost loyalty and support to you. We pray the Almighty God to guide you and give you a long and prosperous reign.

AONDO A' VER TOR!

**ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN, GUMA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL HON. SAMUEL
ORTOM AT THE LAUNCHING OF GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT CHAPTER OF THE BETTER LIFE
PROGRAMME ON FRIDAY 14TH JUNE, 1991 AT
GBAJIMBA**

**The Special Guest of Honour/Wife of the Military Governor
of Benue State**

Members of the State Executive Council

Director-General, Women Commission

Local Government Chairmen here present

Chairman of the Occasion

Chief Launcher

Wives of Hon. Commissioners

Wives of Local Government Chairmen

Monitoring Officers of the Better Life Programme

Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government

Members of the Council

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great honour and pleasure to warmly welcome you all to this august occasion of the launching of Guma Local Government Chapter of the Better Life Programme for the Rural Women in Gbajimba today.

The history of Better Life Programme in this country I believe, is not new to most of us sitting here. Three and half years ago, the Wife of the President, Mrs. Maryam Babangida, realising the enormous potentialities inherent in our rural women, initiated and launched the Better Life for Rural Women Programme in 1987. The fundamental objective of the programme was to mobilise the rural women towards realising their potentials in all human endeavours with the ultimate aim of improving their welfare and raising their consciousness.

The programme was accordingly launched in all the states of the Federation and Abuja and later in local government areas.

Today Guma local government is taking its turn to launch this unique programme, which is unprecedented in the history of the rural women of Nigeria.

The Special Guest of Honour, in Benue State today, through your vision, commitment and dynamism, the Better Life Programme has recorded tremendous success. In Guma local government area, particularly, the programme has been fully embraced by the entire women folk even though it has not been launched.

The Better Life Programme in Guma local government, although yet to take-off on a sound footing has been able to successfully mobilise the rural women in establishing twenty-seven (27) multi-purpose co-operative organisations. Eighteen out of these are registered. This feat was achieved in only two years of existence of this local government. Most of these associations have multi-purpose farms covering so many hectares of land. The Udei Agricultural Society, for instance, has a Gari Processing Machine, two hectares of Cassava farm and two hectares of Maize farm while the Kaambe-Ya Women Agricultural Co-operative Union has a Yam farm of ten thousand heaps, one hectare of Cassava farm and a Piggery farm just to ment a few.

During the last planting season, the Better Life Programme in Guma local government blazed the trail by procuring assorted fertilizer worth over ₦51,000.00 for its members. This season too, Women Co-operative Unions have responded more positively to our call for associations to come and pay for their fertilizer other than their husbands.

In appreciation of the efforts of the Better Life Committee in the local government, we have purchased a Gari processing machine for Better Life Programme. In addition, we have set up a Rabbitry Farm which you inspected a few moments ago in Gbajimba.

To keep members of the Better Life in Guma local government abreast with the development of the programme in other areas, we have made it a policy of sponsoring rural women to workshops organised both at the Federal and State Better Life Committee. Guma Local Government Better Life Committee

fully participated in the last Better Life Trade Fair in Lagos.

To further enhance the effective mobilisation of our rural women, Guma local government has started implementing the recent directive from the Federal Government for all tiers of Government to set up women affairs commissions. We have appointed a Principal Women Affairs Officer, Members of the Commission have also been named and will accordingly be forwarded to the State Women Affairs Commission.

To fully realise the gains of the Better Life Programme in the local government area, arrangements are in the pipeline to build a women secretariat in Gbajimba. The complex is expected to house the Women Affairs' Unit, Better Life Office and a Women Education Centre. The Women Education Centre will cater for the training of rural women in arts, crafts and other trades, in addition to the offering of literacy classes. This will no doubt be a gigantic project that would demand huge financial commitment.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, having stated the giant strides of the Better Life Programme and the efforts of Guma Local Government towards the programme, we cannot, however, shy away from the fact that for this young local government with a series of developmental problems to continue to carry out the noble objective of the programme successfully, we need financial assistance. We appreciate that the economic situation in the state and the country generally is not rosy. However, with your enormous goodwill, influence and personal interest and commitment, the Better Life Programme in Guma local government could be lifted off the ground financial wise. Our dream to have a Women Secretariat here in Gbajimba may remain a mirage if the expected assistance is not forthcoming.

A second major problem that has consistently impeded the effective and complete mobilization of the rural women towards the realisation of the Better Life objectives is logistics. Because of the geographical nature of the local government area free movement to the nocks and corners of the local government area is problematic. The local government is traversed by two big rivers: Benue and Katsina-Ala. We therefore use this noble opportunity provided by this occasion to request for assistance

from all and sundry so that a vehicle could be purchased to help the Better Life Committee move about freely within the local government and supervise and monitor Better Life activities.

Once again, I want to express my profound appreciation to the Chairperson of State Better Life Programme for taking time off her tight schedule to come and grace this occasion. To all our guests who have come from far and wide, I want to say that we are most grateful for having them in our midst. I hope you will also donate generously to this appeal fund.

Thank you all.

**AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE EXECUTIVE
CHAIRMAN, GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HON.
SAMUEL ORTOM AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 13TH AUGUST, 1991 IN
GBAJIMBA**

The Deputy Chairman
Secretary to the Local Government
Supervisors.

It gives me great pleasure to address you this morning on the occasion of our Executive Council Meeting. It might appear quite unusual to some of you why I am presenting a prepared address to this meeting, but I hasten to say that, it is the prevailing circumstances that has necessitated this.

If you will recall, in my address at the swearing-in-ceremony of the Secretary to the Local Government, Supervisors and the Education Secretary, I did warn all of you against indolence and acts capable of tarnishing the image of this administration. I also warned you never to bring sectional politics to bear on you in the performance of your official duties.

Unfortunately, my advice has not been heeded to. The past few months have been characterised by witch-hunting and rumour mongering among the people of this local government which from all indications emanated from you.

As I have always stated, the destiny of the people of Guma local government is in our hands. If we choose to betray their hopes and aspirations, posterity shall not forgive us. It is in this regard that I urge you all to buckle up so that our efforts at improving their welfare are translated into concrete achievements.

After assessing your individual capabilities in the past few months, it has become incumbent on me to reshuffle the executive council of this local government for effective monitoring and implementation of our programmes. Under the new arrangement, the Supervisor for Health, Mr. Ezra Bakaso moves to Finance Department, Mr. Yankyar Ortserga will now be incharge of Medical and Health Department. The Supervisor of Agriculture, Mr. C. Agbe will henceforth take charge of

Education while the Deputy Chairman formerly of Finance has been moved to Agriculture and Natural Resources Department.

The re-assignment is with immediate effect and hand-over must be completed this week. I still want to warn that I shall not tolerate any laxity from any body. If you are not capable of living up to your responsibilities, you let me know. Disclosure of official secrets is incompatible with your oath of office.

I would also like to use this opportunity to remind you of my constitutional powers as the Executive Chairman as regards delegation of authority. The constitution has provided that I can assign any duties to any of you. Decree 25 as amended by Decree 23 section 231 is even more clear on this. You must therefore take all assignments delegated to you by me with all seriousness and must also consider yourselves as my representative in any department or duties you are asked to supervise. But where any of you decides to abandon or refuses to carry out duties delegated to him, he invariably violates the provisions of decree 23.

If therefore, for any reason, I discover any lapses in a department you are supervising, you will be held responsible.

Thank you all and God bless.

BRIEF REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN, GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT HON. SAMUEL ORTOM AT THE RECEPTION ORGANISED IN HONOUR OF THE SPEAKER BENUE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, HON. STEPHEN TSAV IN GBAJIMBA ON 24TH JANUARY, 1992

The Hon. Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly

High Court Judges here present

Hon. Members of Benue State House of Assembly here present

The Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government

Members of Guma Local Government Legislative Council

The Ter Guma

Traditional Rulers here present

Heads of Department

Distinguished Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great honour and pleasure to welcome you all to Gbajimba for this historic occasion. Indeed we are overwhelmed with joy on the election of two illustrious sons to the State House of Assembly where one of them has been elected the Speaker of Benue State House of Assembly, a highly exalted office. Permit me therefore to once again congratulate you on behalf of the council, staff and entire people of Guma Local Government for this rare achievement.

As you are all aware, the reception has been organised essentially to honour Hon. Stephen Tsav, an illustrious and distinguished son of this local government who has been saddled with the responsibility of leading the legislative arm of Benue State. We therefore deemed it necessary to invite you to come and rejoice with us over Hon. Tsav's ascension to the prestigious throne, an act that has brought a lot of honour and glory to this great local government of ours.

To most of us gathered here this evening, the Honourable Speaker, Hon. Stephen Tsav is not a new face. He is a true son of the soil, for he was born and bred here in this local government. He has remained determined since resigning his appointment with

the State Government in 1987 when the ban on partisan politics was lifted. The determination and quest to emancipate his people from disease, poverty and marginalisation saw the man, who is today the third citizen in Benue State contesting elections for Daudu constituency. His landslide victory at the polls attest to his capabilities. This was to further culminate into his election as the Speaker of the State House of Assembly which has further espoused the dynamism in him as has been echoed far and wide.

We want to thank members of the Benue State House of Assembly for reposing such great confidence in our son and we believe that given the young man's dynamism, he will provide the desired visionary and purposeful leadership that is required for the assembly.

Hon. Speaker Sir, you are no doubt aware of the mounting problems of this young local government, needless to restate them here. The council alone is constrained due to lack of finance to tackle some of these pressing problems. One of such is the lack of good road to link Gbajimba, the headquarters with Makurdi, which is perhaps our most pressing problem.

The Uniagric-Gbajimba-Daudu road which is often referred to as the ring road is a state government road. Although both the State and Local Government have committed a lot of resources to make it motorable the condition of the road has continued to deteriorate.. We therefore wish to use this rare opportunity to request you to use your enormous influence and leverage and appeal to the Benue State Government to include the Uniagric-Gbajimba-Daudu road on the list of roads to be rehabilitated since the 1992 Budget has not even been announced.

Hon. Speaker, it is not our intention to bother you with our litany of problems for now believing that you are most conversant with them and will not wait to be reminded before putting pressure on the government to look at them.

It is on this note that we want to proffer one of two words of advice to the Honourable Speaker. You have now become the Speaker of Benue State House of Assembly and not the representative of Daudu Constituency in Guma Local Government on the platform of the SDP. Benue State is now your constituency.

You are representing the people of Benue State and not members of your party, the SDP. Your ultimate goal is to help redeem the people of Benue State from poverty and squalor, from illiteracy and hunger. When this is done, then your name will be written in gold on the scroll of honour, not just in Benue State but in Nigeria.

Remember, in the course of doing your job, you need not care about how many influential people you have pleased but what you will be remembered for as a one time Speaker of Benue State.

Once again, we congratulate you for this great achievement. We are particularly delighted for hosting you here today. Guma Local Government Council, I want to assure you, will give you her unflinching and unalloyed support and co-operation throughout your tenure.

I want to thank all our guests who have travelled from far and near to grace this occasion. We are most honoured for having you all in our midst today.

Thank you for your attention and God bless.

AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN, GUMA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HON. SAMUEL I. ORTOM AT
THE SWEARING-IN-CEREMONY OF THE SECRETARY
AND SUPERVISORS, TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY, 1992 AT
GBAJIMBA

The Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government
The Deputy/Acting Leader
Guma Local Government Legislative Council
The Secretary, Guma Local Governemtn
Hon. Members of the Council
Supervisors
The Ter Guma
Heads of Departments
Distinguished Invited Guests
Members of the Press
Esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me start this address by first congratulating all of you on your appointments into the Executive Council of Guma Local Government, an opportunity for you to contribute your quota towards efforts to improve the welfare of the people of this great local government. The Oath which you have just sworn to is therefore a mandate to be part of this great struggle. You are therefore most welcome aboard.

About a month ago, an administrative vacuum was created in this local government when the Secretary and four Supervisors were swept away by the currents of change, a change that is expected to usher in a new lease of life to all. It then became incumbent on me to fill the vacuum that was created by this change and in doing so, I had to scout through the breath and length of the local government for capable hands, people with a strong resolve to serve so that they would inject new blood into the administration. That process is being completed today with the swearing-in of these officials, whom I believe are prepared to put in their best.

As earlier stated, your appointment is a mandate to serve the

teeming people of Guma Local Government who have over the years been languishing in squalor poverty and disease. You have not being brought into this administration for personal aggrandisement that would at the end of the day leave our people more dejected. Such brazen act shall not be condoned.

Our administration has a well mapped out programme aimed at uplifting the local government area to a more enviable status that would become a pride to all and sundry. However, this can not be realised if the key Officers who are charged with this responsibility remain largely indolent to their duties. I have no doubt in mind whatsoever that you will be active towards the demands of your office. Your duties here will be primarily in ensuring that the decisions of the Executive Council are implemented to the fullest in the various departments you head.

One issue that has almost marred our efforts and which I want all of you to stay clear of is sectional and clannish sentiments and cleavages. Although you are directly answerable to me as the Chief Executive, you remain largely the representatives of the people of Guma Local Government and are accountable to them. You are here not as representatives of your districts but the local government and should never at any time put the interest of your district or section before the local government. Whether you are Nongov, Iharev or Jukun, the paramount objective should be how to improve the welfare of all. The moment you begin to introduce clannish politics in your official dealings, that would be the end of your assignment here. No civilised society can strive on such dangerous politics. We can only cart a new path to a meaningful development if we begin to look at ourselves as one and not as individuals with different sectional leanings. Guma Local Government is for all and not for any one group.

Ladies and gentlemen, this address will not be complete if I fail to warn you on bringing in partisan politics to bear on you in the course of carrying out your official functions. Of course, this is not to prohibit you from engaging in political discussions or party affairs, it should however not be in your offices. The office is a public place and once they are converted into an arena for party affairs, people will be scared off, even those with constructive criticism on our policies. In the same vein, been partisan in the

performance of your duties will not augur well for us as our people have different political leanings.

Similarly, the disclosure of official secrets is a punishable act. The Oath you have just taken is explicit on this. Any of you found to be wanting in this regard will be shown the way out. Although I am aware that the people who have mandated us to be here are entitled to know exactly what we are doing, however, the proper channel must always be followed.

In the past few months, I had cause to address staff of this local government on the general negative altitude of some of them towards work. Despite my several warnings and appeals, response has remained most discouraging. It has now become a common practice for staff to stay away from their office, once the Chairman is away. The presence of the Deputy Chairman during my absence has not helped matters as most staff believe they have nothing to do with him. This trend is derailing our developmental efforts and must urgently be addressed.

With the swearing-in today of the Secretary and the Supervisors, I hope this dangerous trend will be checked and I want to specifically charge them especially the Secretary to see that poor altitude to work by some staff is changed, so that together we shall steer the ship of the local government. On our part, we shall continue to ensure that their welfare is constantly catered for.

Finally, it is my privilege to assign the following portfolios:-

1. Cornelius Agbe - Education
2. Joseph Shemberga - Agric. & Natural Resources
3. Emmanuel Ukule - Works
4. Christopher Akpaki - Finance

The Deputy Chairman will in addition to his other duties, be responsible for Medical and Health Affairs.

I wish to repeat that any one found wanting in the discharge of his duties will be dropped... Once again, congratulations and thank you all for your attention.

**BEING A TEXT OF AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE
CHAIRMAN, GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HON.
SAMUEL I. ORTOM AT A PEACE MEETING BETWEEN
BENUE AND PLATEAU STATES HELD AT KADARAKO,
THURSDAY, MARCH 26TH, 1992**

Your Excellencies

The Governors of Benue and Plateau States

Secretaries to the State Governments

Members of Benue and Plateau States Executive Councils

Chairmen of Local Government Councils

Traditional Rulers

Members of the Press

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me start by expressing on behalf of the council and the entire people of Guma Local Government, my profound gratitude to the Governors of Benue and Plateau States for initiating this meeting which is fundamentally aimed at finding a lasting solution to the intractable boundary question between our people. This move, will no doubt go down in history as one of the major steps that the governments have been taking to find a permanent solution to the problem existing between our border communities.

The genesis of this seemingly intractable problem between our people dates from the days of the then Benue-Plateau State and came to the fore immediately after the creation of States in 1976, when Benue and Plateau States were carved out of the former Benue-Plateau State. Skirmishes over land between our people started occurring but with no serious attempts by the government of the two States at resolving them. Efforts made then were merely cosmetic as no effort was made towards demarcating the boundary, which is the major issue in this problem.

Your Excellencies, the relationship between the two States took a different dimension in August 1989, when the District Head of Nzorov, Tyoor Iordye Akaahena was murdered in cold blood in

his village by bandits, made up of Fulanis, Alago and the Police from Awe Local Government Area of Plateau State. The barbaric manner in which the act was perpetrated left everyone in bewilderment as there was no serious conflict over land at that particular time. It might interest you to note that, three years after this sad incident, no arrests have been made by security agents.

The following year, that was 1990 spasmodic communal clashes took place between the people of Mbagwen/Nyiev in Guma Local Government and their counter parts from Doma Local Government. The clashes were first between the Tiv people living in Doma local government and the Alago people and later spread to the Guma local government. This time around, the major issue was payment of poll tax.

These problems were hardly resolved, when new councils were elected into office and the first major security problem that welcomed me into office in January, 1991 was the case of a missing Fulani man on the border in Nzorov District of Guma local government. A re-occurrence of the 1989 incident was about to happen. Letters from unknown groups in Awe Local Government were written threatening my life and other prominent people in the area.

I therefore decided to take the bull by the horns by risking my life to visit the Chairman of Awe Local Government so that we could sit at a round table and find ways of bringing peace between our people who had hitherto lived as brothers and sisters. My visit marked the beginning of a new relationship between our people. From our first meeting in January 1991, numerous other meetings have been held between the three local governments, all in an attempt to bring peace between our people.

At each of these meetings, we have always emphasised the need for our people to live as brothers and sisters. We have always stressed the need for individuals whether a Tiv man or an Alago to pay their taxes to the local government area in which they are resident.

But as could be seen, our efforts at instilling sanity in our

people have always been thwarted by lack of a well defined boundary between the two States. Although there was an attempt to demarcate the boundary between us by a team from the Federal Survey Department but met a stiff resistance from our people because of the high degree of bias the team displayed. The team later abandoned the assignment and went back to Lagos.

Closely linked to the above is the issue of poll tax. Because, we do not have a clear boundary line between us, it is always difficult for our people to exercise their civic responsibility to where they should. This has often led to skirmishes as each local government is always trying to be smart.

Another issue that we have been grappling with is that of the Fulanis. Just last week, some unidentified Fulani men from Awe local government shot dead a man and wounded two others right on our land. This almost escalated into serious crisis but for my swift intervention. As you all are aware, our people are primarily farmers but each time these Fulani come, they prefer to graze on the farmlands of our people. Protests by our people often result into conflicts.

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude, I wish to suggest the following solutions that could resolve the impasse between us:-

- (1) The boundary between the two States should be demarcated as a matter of urgency. In doing so, the two communities through their various local government Boundary Committees must be involved to ensure fair play and acceptability.
- (2) Grazing lands for Fulani herdsmen should as a matter of urgency, be carved out in each of the local government on the border of the two States.

If the above is implemented, our people will once again, enjoy peace.

Once again, I want to thank the two governors for giving me the opportunity to address this August gathering. Thank you all for your attention.

TEXT OF AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN
OF GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HON. SAMUEL
ORTOM ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS OF GUMA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA AT THE MEETING OF GUMA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL ON THURSDAY, 30TH
JANUARY, 1992

The Deputy and Acting Leader of Guma Local Govt. Council
Ter Guma
Honourable members of Guma Local Government Council
The Deputy Chairman, Guma Local Government
Secretary, Guma Local Government
Supervisors
Heads of Departments
Clerk of the Council
Traditional Rulers
Members of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my honour and privilege to address this historic gathering of honourable members of the council and Traditional Rulers of this great local government today. If you will recall, immediately after our assumption of office, precisely in March last year, the Federal Government introduced what could be described as 'unprecedented changes into the local government administrative system with far-reaching consequences'.

This and other provisions were embodied in Decree 23 titled Local Government (Basic Constitutional/Transitional Provisions) 1991. Section 22 of the same Decree provided inter alia: "The Chairman of the Local Government shall address annually a meeting of the Council of the Local Government Area". It is in conformity and against this background that I stand here today to give a succinct account on the state of affairs of Guma Local Government Area for the year ended, 1991.

THE HEADQUARTERS, GBAJIMBA

The Acting Leader, members of the Legislative Council, you

are all living witnesses to the fact that Gbajimba, the Headquarters of our great local government is basically a rural settlement ranking among the top rural villages in the State. The general absence of social amenities like good drinking water, electricity, roads etc. are the disturbing features of Gbajimba.

When we assumed office last year, our cardinal objective was how to improve the situation, to at least make it look like a council headquarters. Since Rome was not built in a day, we had to start some where.

First, we took a bold step by awarding the contract for the rehabilitation of the Gbajimba-Uniagric road at ₦1.8m. Out of this, ₦411,209.00 has been paid. Work was to be suspended on the project by contractors because of some internal management crisis, they have agreed to resume work on the road. For the bridges and culverts on the road, they have all been completed and 98% of the total cost has been paid. The Guma bridge which was completed has also been fully paid for.

Secondly, we attempted to laterite all the town ship roads that were opened in Gbajimba to facilitate free and easy movement within, especially during rainy season. About ₦400,000.00 was earmarked for the project which we could not complete because the Grader that was doing the work broke down and was withdrawn. Today there are heaps and heaps of laterite on the roads in Gbajimba, we hope to continue with the work in the first quarter of 1992. The round-about in the heart of the town is about being completed.

Thirdly, the council in an attempt to alleviate the sufferings of visitors to Gbajimba especially in the area of accommodation, went into the construction of a Hotel - The Beach Hotel. Contract was awarded at ₦1.5m. About 40% of work has been completed, and payment up to date is ₦473,192.64. The delay in the execution of the work on the project, which is our priority project is due to the heavy rains experienced in the year, which you are aware cut off the greater part of this local government from the rest of the State. This made it difficult to move materials to the site by the Contractor thus stalling work on the project. The Works Department is in contact with Contractors and I wish to

assure you that work will soon commence and our dream will become a reality this year.

For the water project, Hon. members of the council, I had to approach the State Government for help. Government then decided to send engineers of the defunct Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development to ascertain facts about the project. The engineers discovered that the pond we wanted to draw water from could dry up easily. They advised that for a more sustainable water supply we have to draw water from the River directly. As it is now, I have asked the Works Department to study the possibility of tapping water from the River and submit new proposals.

AGRICULTURE

In the Agricultural sector, the local government during the year ended geared its efforts towards encouraging farmers to produce more by providing inputs to them. To this end, assorted fertilizer worth ₦50,000 was procured and sold to Farmers. We also refurbished a tractor at the cost of ₦20,850 and about ₦2,750 was realised from its hiring to farmers.

A nursery farm was also established in Gbajimba last year. Over 4000 citrus seedlings and 300 mango seedlings were raised at the nursery. At Daudu nursery farm, 2000 and 200 citrus and mango seedlings respectively were raised as well as 1500 and 250 citrus and mango seedlings at Uzughul, Saghev District. The aim is to alleviate the problem of travelling long distances by farmers to get improved fruit trees for planting. All the 7500 citrus and 850 mango seedlings will be budded this year and sold to farmers.

THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME

The importance attached to this programme by both the Federal and State Governments can not be over stressed. We in Guma Local Government too have realised the importance of this programme especially in the mobilisation of rural women towards improving their welfare.

To give the programme a new impetus we successfully launched the programme in Guma Local Government. Over ₦50,000 was

realised at the launching. A bank account has been opened for the programme.

The Local Government Women Commission Unit has been constituted and inaugurated to ensure effective mobilisation of women in Guma Local Government. We hope to make it autonomous in 1992.

EDUCATION

The Guma Local Government Education Authority was constituted in March, 1991 and is now fully autonomous. In accordance with Decree No. 3 of 1991, eleven persons have been appointed to serve on the Education Committee which is basically an advisory body.

As of December, the authority had 106 primary schools scattered all over the local government area with a staff strength of 600 teachers.

During the year ended a total sum of N4m was spent on teachers salary and the running cost of the Education Authority. I am also happy to inform you that Guma Local Government was the only local government in the State that did not experience any industrial action by Teachers. We were the only local government that was able to pay as and when due salaries of teachers.

To motivate our teachers for high performance 500 were promoted and twelve of them are being sponsored in various higher institutions. About 36 others were re-engaged. Arrears of referred Grade II teachers inherited from the Primary Schools Management Board amounting to N39,000 was paid and another N20,000 for various allowances inherited was also paid.

As for maintenance, N6,500 was expended on the repairs of a blown off roof at the Agasha Primary School. The local government granted the Education Authority Primary School, Agbaka N10,000 to enable it roof a structure it had constructed and another N5,000 was given to Education Authority Primary School Igyorouh for the same purpose.

Adult Education was also given its due attention. During the year ended, a total of 22 Literacy Classes were opened in January with a strength of 430 pupils (adults). Out of this, 243 were males

and 187 females, but only 248 were examined in September, 1991.

In November of the same year, when the new session commenced, 20 Literacy classes were opened with an enrollment of 395 adults. In the Post-Literacy Scheme, there were four functional centres spread across the local government with a student enrollment of 600. It is our wish to give more encouragement to Adult Education in 1992.

HEALTH

Provision of basic health facilities for the teeming people of Guma Local Government Area is the primary objective of the council. During the year ended, we tried within the limits of our resources to ensure our goals were realised. Our first task was the completion of Gbajimba Comprehensive Health Centre including the Doctors Residence.

We renovated the following clinics:-

1. Road Camp Building at Tyulen was properly renovated and furnished at the cost of sixty nine thousand naira (N69,000.00) the clinic is now functioning and serving the community.
2. Abinsi Health Clinic was also renovated at the cost of thirty-four thousand naira (N34,000) and two apartment standard pit latrine was also constructed at Abinsi Health Clinic at the cost of eighteen thousand (N18,000), also V.I.P. latrine in Gbajimba Comprehensive Health Centre was constructed at the cost of thirty-five thousand naira (N35,000). Udei Health Centre was renovated at the cost of N49,000, Yogbo N59,000. Contract for the construction of new health clinics at Uikpam, Iordye Village, Umenger, Tse-Kpanye, Yelwata, !Jzughul were awarded in 1991 and work is progressing on some of them. Each is costing the Local Government N104,000.00.



Guma L.G. Comprehensive Health Centre, Gbajimba

IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROGRAMME

Guma Local Government commenced the implementation of the Primary Health Care Programme in the year under-review.

House numbering - the Local Government has completed one of the most important activities in the Primary Health Care Programme, and that is house numbering. The sum of twenty-five thousand three hundred and thirty eight naira was expended on this project. The major aim of this project is to determine infant population for easy and proper Health planning.

In order to provide proper diagnoses of illnesses, the local government procured Laboratory equipment and reagents at the cost of twenty-nine thousand naira in the year under review. We also procured drugs at the cost of ₦50,000. The drugs have long been distributed to most of the Health Clinics in the ten council wards.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME

We have been able to complete the first and second phase of mass immunization campaign in the last quarter of 1991 and the early part of this year, we are looking forward to completing third phase in February, 1992 this year.

The first and second phases of the programme cost the local government the sum of ₦62,000.00. The money was for the hire of vehicle, purchase of equipment and payment of feeding allowance to officials.

We also sponsored officials to Primary Health Care Workshops and Seminars in the year under review. We carried out local training of our officers on disease reporting and identification. The project cost the local government the sum of ₦12,000.00. Before the house numbering, officers were trained to properly handle house numbering. This involved officers from the State Ministry of Health as facilitators. The training cost the local government the sum of fifteen thousand naira (₦15,000.00).

TAKE OVER OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINICS

Guma Local Government took over some clinics built by some communities, the clinics are:-

1. Tsavnum in Saghev district
2. Tse-Shirsha in Ndzorov district
3. Tse-Agbe in Mbawa district
4. Mba'Anger in Mbagwen district

Health Department supplied drugs and personnel to these clinics and they are functioning now.

PRINTING OF O.P.D. CARDS

In order to ensure proper record of treatment of patients in our Health Clinics and Comprehensive Health Centres, we procured out patient treatment cards with a total sum of seventy five thousand naira (₦75,000) in the year under review.

TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION ACTIVITIES 1991

Environmental Sanitation activities were stepped up in 1991 and one hundred persons were tried for various sanitary offences, and forty-seven convicted. The sum of ₦4,300.00 was realised as fines. We hope to extend it to all settlement areas of the local government in 1992.

LEPROSY CONTROL UNIT:

We have performed averagely in this aspect of health delivery. As a result of financial bottlenecks, we could not purchase D.D.S. for treatment of Leprosy patients in the year 1991.

SOCIAL WELFARE

We treated family cases, two were closed cases while the other one was not closed. There were no juvenile cases reported to the Social Welfare Unit. In the case of aid, the sum of ₦5,000.00 was granted to pauper patients as aid from the local government. Due to lack of funds certain victims of disaster that met local government approval as regards aid did not benefit from such aid. The unit did not realise any revenue during the period under review as birth/death and marriages were not registered due to lack of certificates.

REVENUE GENERATION

On Revenue earnings, we raked in a total sum of Sixteen million, five hundred and three thousand, nine hundred and ninety-seven naira, nine kobo (₦16,503,997.09).

Out of this amount, fourteen million, three hundred and seventy-eight thousand, eighty-four naira thirty-three kobo (N14,378,084.33) came from the Federation Account as Statutory Allocation, while the Benue State Government contributed one million, twelve thousand and five hundred and thirty-two naira, twelve kobo.

Internally, we generated a total sum of one million, one hundred and thirteen thousand, three hundred and eighty naira, sixty four kobo.

Our expenditure in 1991 was as follows:-

Staff salaries gulped ₦7,133,558.45 while staff allowances and training took ₦1,257,935.70 and contract payment stood at ₦5,504,959.00. The rest went for other overhead cost including running cost and others.

One area we recorded a remarkable feat was internal revenue collection. From a sum of over three hundred thousand naira in 1990, we were able to collect who ping sum of over one million naira in 1991. This shows that our measures were very effective. I want to use this opportunity and congratulate members of the council, staff and traditional rulers for this remarkable achievement. We hope to consolidate on this in 1992. For the construction of markets, I want to assure you that it will be pursued with vigour in 1992. Our revenue supervision will also be stepped up.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision of basic infrastructure to its people is always the primary objective of any government. To the council of Guma Local Government, the provision of portable water, access roads form the main trust of the administration. Moreso that ours is an elected council which made a lot of promises during the electioneering campaign.

During our familiarisation tour of the local government in January, we discovered that the greatest problem confronting our people is that of potable water and rural roads. When we came back we swifited into action. We awarded a contract for feasibility study of the topographical terrain which was expected to

determine the suitability of earth dams and wells in all settlement areas of the local government. The feasibility study has been completed and we now know where a well will bring water and where to construct an earth dam.

In 1992 we hope to go into the provision of water.

On the opening up of access roads, we contacted BNARDA and DFFRI and both agreed to rehabilitate a number of roads in the local government. These include:-

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|------|
| 1. | Gbajimba - Iordye road | - | 32km |
| 2. | Umenger-Keana road | - | 15km |
| 3. | Daudu - Ali Agudu road | - | 25km |
| 4. | Akaakuma - Uikpam road | - | 30km |
| 5. | Yelwata - Udei road | - | 31km |
| 6. | Tomatar - Tse Abi-Tse Ginde road | - | 30km |

Meanwhile, the council awarded contracts for the construction of culverts on most of the roads preparatory for their grading.

We also received ₦525,000.00 from DFFRI for the construction of 75km of rural roads in the local government. But because of heavy rains at that time, the money was used for the completion of some culverts along Uniagric-Gbajimba road, and Iordye-Gbajimba road. Part of the money was also used for the maintenance of the bulldozer we acquired for the back-filling of these culverts and the rehabilitation of Iordye-Gbajimba road. Now that rains have gone, construction expected to commence soon.

The following roads were also earmarked for rehabilitation in 1991, but because of financial constraints, work could not start on their rehabilitation. These include:-

1. Agasha - Gberikon road
2. Crescent road, Abinsi
3. Ukar - Orkar road
4. Uikpam - Ortserga - Yelwata road.

But I want to assure you that we shall commence work on them this year.

STAFF WELFARE

The welfare of staff remained topmost on our agenda. This stand was informed by the conviction that a well motivated staff will be quick in achieving results than an ill-motivated one. To this end, payment of salaries, allowances and other benefits were paid regularly within the available resources. Even when most Local Government in the State could not pay salaries of staff, we continued to fulfil our obligations. We implemented the minimum wage. Today, apart from the arrears of the minimum wage, we are not owing any substantial amount as allowances to staff.

Vehicle refurbishing loan suspended in 1990 was re-introduced. About N40,000.00 was paid out to deserving staff last year. This will continue on a monthly basis until staff entitled to it are all granted.

On promotions, over 200 staff (junior and senior) were promoted in 1991 alone. This is unprecedented in the history of Guma Local Government. In 1991 too, over 100 staff went on training in various professional fields. This too, is a record. To reinforce our manpower, about 34 staff were employed for the various departments.

To ease the acute accommodation problem for senior staff, the council has awarded contracts for the construction three No. three bedroom flats with boys quarters at a cost of N738,991.92. Work is already in progress and is expected to be completed in 1992.

We have also spent about N374,650.00 on the soft furnishing of offices of key local government officials and their residence including that of the Chariman's official residence, Leader and Supervisors.

Contract for the extension of council block which houses the Chairman's office, Deputy Chairman's office, Speaker and the Council Chambers was awarded at a cost of N146,476.50.

THE EXECUTIVE/COUNCIL RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between the executive arm and the legislative was most cordial. This is because, both the Executive Arm and

Members of the Legislature have recognised the fact that we are first and foremost the representatives of our people despite our different political affiliations. Except for one incident, when the Leader was removed and some people began reading different meanings into the issue. However, it did not degenerate into crisis and I want to thank Hon. Members for handling the issue in a very matured manner.

We have a common mission of improving our peoples welfare and standard of living through the provision of basic infrastructure. We can not be effective in an age of upheavals. I therefore wish to enjoin all of you to join hands with the Executive arm by working harmoniously for a more virile Guma Local Government where poverty, ignorance and disease will be eliminated.

SECURITY

Security is one area I would award 100% pass to the council. We were able to avert all situations that would have led to a break down of law and order both with our neighbours and within the local government. This we were able to achieve through the adoption of two approaches: dialogue and personal contact. The adoption of these approaches was informed by the fact that you cannot abate a violent situation by means of violence. We therefore went into direct negotiation with our neighbours in Awe and Doma Local Governments. Through a series of peace meetings we held last year, we succeeded in bringing about peace between the people of Guma Local Government and their neighbours. Within the Local Government, the Security Committee maintained frequent contact with the traditional rulers and issues that were likely to threaten our security were tabled in the security meetings that are held monthly.

Throughout last year, I am happy to announce that Guma Local Government did not experience any crisis with our neighbours as all security problems were nipped in the bud. We were indeed commended by the State Government for our peace initiatives.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Government has given approval for the establishment of Guma

Local Government Traditional Council (GLGTC). Already the head of the Traditional Council known as 'Ter Guma' has been appointed. He is Chief Ivokor Unongo. His status is that of a Second Class Chief.

Members of Local Government Traditional Council include ten District Heads which have all been appointed. Each district has a member.

Also to sit in the local government traditional council are the 51 Kindred Heads in the local government.

Government has also given approval for the take off of the district administration. When it finally takes off this year, grass root mobilisation will be enhanced. The Deputy Chairman will be in charge of the district administration.

It is our aim to make the Local Government Traditional Council an autonomous body and all necessary working materials including a car and offices will be provided.

SPORTS:

We have not relented in our efforts at promoting sports development in Guma. Although the dearth of sports facilities is however having an adverse impact in our surge towards the realisation of our dream.

Since winning the 1990 Governors Cup Football competition, Guma Local Government has never looked back on sporting activities. In all the sporting competitions we have competed for, we performed a remarkable feat. In the U-18 Handball competition for local governments in the State, we were placed second, at the inter local government Volleyball competition 1991 too, Guma Local Government was second after Katsina-Ala Local Government. At the U-15 Athletics competition held in Idah, we carted home three gold medals to place 4th. Yet in the just concluded Simbat Abiola U-13 Football competition in the State, we won the Trophy and went ahead to represent the State in Yola. We placed 4th in 1991 Governor's Cup Competition.

The success story of the local government in sporting competitions was due mainly to the unending support the council has been given to sports. Between January and June last year, the

council spent over ₦50,000.00 on sponsorship of her athletes to competitions. In addition, we have set up a sports committee which is charged with the responsibility of encouraging and developing sports in the local government. Another way the council is trying to enhance sports development in Guma is the provision of sporting facilities. Contract will soon be awarded for the construction of two Volleyball pitches, Lawn tennis and a Football field at the sports complex site.

DEBTS SERVICING

The former caretaker committee for the local government handed over to us a debt burden of over ₦5m. The debt was made up of Contracts awarded by the former Sole Administrator and Caretaker Committee and some are those that were not included in the handing over notes.

Out of the total debts of over ₦5m we inherited, about ₦1.5m has been paid. Since August, when additional local governments were created and with the introduction of a new minimum wage, without a corresponding increase in our share of the Federation Account, we have suspended payment on contracts. With the increase in our share from 15% - 20%, we hope to resume payment to our Contractors. I therefore wish to seize this opportunity and appeal to all our Contractors to exercise restraints.

CONSTRAINTS

Our greatest problem has remained finance. Despite our internal revenue efforts, the problem of funds seem insurmountable. With the granting of autonomy announced by the Federal Government in January, more responsibilities were also saddled on our shoulders.

With the new minimum wage which has been implemented, it became increasingly difficult to carry out the programmes we planned for our people because we are always left with nothing after payment of staff salaries.

It is in this light that I want to thank the Federal Government for increasing our share of the Federation Account to 20% instead of the present 15%.

Even though, it is a far cry considering our responsibilities, prudent management measures, like reviewing upwards all revenue dues and fees will be introduced to avoid cases of near bankruptcy that was experienced last year.

CONCLUSION

Hon. Members of the Council, from the foregoing, you will agree with me that we had a well articulated programme of development for the local government last year. Our intention was to execute all projects/programmes that were proposed in the 1991 budget but we were constrained midway into the year as we ran into financial hitches.

Notwithstanding, I am still proud to state emphatically that we did what most local governments in the State could not do.

1. We were able to pay staff salaries promptly throughout last year.
2. We succeeded in rehabilitating the Uniagric-Gbajimba road to a reasonable state.
3. The Gbajimba Comprehensive Health Centre, the Health Clinics at Abinsi, Udei, Yogbo, etc. were completed and renovated.
4. We purchased drugs and commenced the implementation of the Primary Health Care Programme. EPI activities were stepped up in the local government thus reducing infant mortality in the Local Government.
5. Guma Local Government was peaceful throughout last year.
6. Our internal revenue generation machinery was made more effective as could be seen in the revenue collected last year. We also settled some of our debts. We maintained a cordial relationship with the Legislative arm.

In the course of our activities last year, a lot of contracts were awarded by the administration. It is however, most disheartening to observe that most of these contracts which were given to mostly sons and daughters of this local government have been abandoned or work has not even commenced, thus frustrating our rural development programme.

This is most appalling. I therefore wish to announce before this Honourable House that all contracts which were awarded in 1991 and which work is yet to commence are hereby terminated.

In the same vein, we have observed with dismay the obnoxious activities of associations operating in our markets. Most have become a nuisance to our people and the local government through their atrocious operations.

Consequently, we are in the interest of the people of Guma Local Government Area banning with immediate effect all these associations. A committee shall be constituted to scrutinize all the Associations and register genuine ones that will be allowed to operate. Henceforth any association caught operating in the local government will be arrested and handed over to the Police for prosecution.

In 1992, our intention will be to concentrate on the projects initiated last year and completing them.

Finally, I want to thank members of the Council for their unalloyed co-operation throughout last year. The success we recorded last year is as a result of the co-operation the Executive Arm got from you. I would still appeal for more of such co-operation in 1992 so that we can consolidate our achievement and make Guma Local Government great. I will therefore like you to critically examine this report with a view to suggesting ways of how best to run the local government and involve our people in our development programmes.

Thank you all for your attention and God bless.

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, HON. SAMUEL ORTOM AT THE FOUNDATION LAYING CEREMONY OF BENCO ROOF TILES COMPANY BY THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF BENUE STATE, REV. FR. MOSES O.ADASU IN ABINSI, FRIDAY, JULY 3RD, 1992

Your Excellency, the Executive Governor of Benue State
The Deputy Governor of Benue State
The Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly
Members of the State Executive Council
Mr Lords, Temporal and Spiritual
His Royal Highness, The Tor Tiv
Chairmen of the two Political Parties
Chairmen of Local Governments
Traditional Rulers
Members of BSHA
Members of Guma Local Government Executive and
Legislative Councils
Distinguished Invited Guests
Gentlemen of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Executive, Legislative Councils, Staff and the entire good people of Guma Local Government, it is my great pleasure to warmly welcome you all to this historic occasion of the foundation laying ceremony of BENCO ROOF TILES COMPANY in Abinsi today.

This occasion calls for joy and celebration by all as it marks the beginning of a new era for Benue State industrialisation. It is an era of hope for the teeming people of the State. This is what the present administration in the State under the pragmatic leadership of Rev. Father Moses Orshio Adasu has come to epitomize.

Your Excellency, the people of this great Local Government Area are very much appreciative of you for citing the Benco Roof Tiles Company in their soil and for making it a launching pad of your industrialisation programme for the State.

With the laying of the foundation for this industry today, the dream of your administration and indeed the people of Benue State to harness the abundant raw materials is being concretised. We commend you for this giant stride. Given the vast outlay of raw materials for the industry and other mineral resources like salt, barite, zinc that abound in Guma Local Government, we have no doubts in our minds that Benco Company will be a success story.

We also wish to salute your courage and dynamism for getting the Federal Government's approval for the establishment of the Benue State University and the award of contract for the linking of Benue State to the 330kv electricity line. These developments are no doubt heart warming and above all, a manifestation of your industry and determination of your administration in ensuring that all your campaign promises to the people of Benue State are fulfilled. By so doing, you have not only succeeded in actualising your promises, but have put Benue State on the path of an enduring development as education and energy supply have become necessary co-efficients for any meaningful development.

Your Excellency, Sir, we urge you not to relent in your efforts of taking Benue to new heights in your quest for development by ensuring that all the industries you have proposed take off this year and not to get distracted by unwarranted criticisms and attacks on your person and administration by the enemies of our people and progress.

Mr. Governor, Sir, the council of Guma Local Government is not unaware of the efforts you have been making to get a bridge across River Katsina-Ala at Tyulen, since assuming office. We commend you for recognising the immense value the bridge will have for our people and others. This will greatly enhance our economic prospects. We use this opportunity to further urge you to continue to mount pressure on the Federal Government to construct this very important bridge.

It is also appropriate at this point to make a very special appeal to the Governor. That the Daudu-Gbajimba-Uniagric. road (Ring road) which has been earmarked for rehabilitation may soon be rendered impassable if work on it does not start in time as



Hon. Samuel Ortom with the Governor of Benue State at the foundation laying ceremony of Benco Roof Tiles Coy, Abinsi in 1992.

the rains my soon resume heavily.

We also feel highly gratified to note that adequate consideration has been given to geographical spread and merit in the appointment of political office holders. We, therefore, wish to appeal to His Excellency, to give indigenes of the local government an opportunity to prove their mettle in the administration as capable hands abound in Guma. This will help bridge the communication gap that has been created between the administration and the people of the local government.

Finally, we wish to express our profound gratitude to the Governor for giving us an industry. Guma Local Government Council will ensure that all necessary conditions for the success of the industry are created. We also wish to pledge our unflinching loyalty, love and support to the administration of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu.

Thank you all for your attention and God bless.



This book "*The Man Ortom - Eloquence of Excellence, A Tribute*" is my attempt at documenting for the first time at the local government level in a book form, the achievements of a man who within a very short period of his political career is striving to leave behind a legacy that will settle softly on the minds of his numerous admirers.

The book delves into various areas of achievements of the Honourable Chairman and ventures to mention some of them that he has performed remarkably well.

I am inclined to state that the book being the first of its kind is no doubt very highly laudable. I wish this book to be an opportunity to those who know little about Hon. S.I. Ortom's immense contributions to the development of Guma Local Government Area and to grasp in greater details certain aspects of his personal life style.

The book also gives them deeper insight into his irrevocable commitment to the development of the people he has vehemently vowed to improve their standard of living.

Finally, it is a challenge to the youth to fight against political domination especially of the older generations.

The youth must rejoice and be proud of their performance and productivity so far in the present political dispensation.

FRANK BIAM KOSE