



Sustaining the Legacy...



NATIONAL PROGRAMMES
OF COMMEMORATION
in honour of

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua
1999 - 2009

SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA CENTRE

We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our esteemed Vice Chairman, H.E. Atiku Abubakar, *Turaki Adamawa*, whose commitment to honouring the legacy of Shehu Yar'Adua remains unsurpassed.



Within weeks of late Tafida's passing, he assumed responsibility for ensuring that the ideals Shehu lived and died for were not in vain. This resulted in the establishment of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, construction of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre and development of the Foundation's programmes and projects. His immeasurable love for late Tafida and devotion to his memory endures through his determination to continue to build bridges of understanding across the nation in order to strengthen and sustain democracy in Nigeria.

As he said in a tribute to late Tafida at the 3rd Programme of Commemoration, "It seems like only yesterday that the devastating news of his death was broken to us and we slowly began to grapple with the question of what our lives would be without him. Fortunately, we discovered that the void he left is compensated in part by the inspiration his life provides. He was never intimidated or overwhelmed by challenges. He was a fantastic listener and a strong believer in dialogue. It is our duty to continue to consolidate the democratic structures late Tafida fought and died for."

May Almighty God continue to reward Atiku Abubakar abundantly for his large heart and unwavering support.

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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to present this collection of speeches and photographs compiled from the Foundation's Programmes of Commemoration in honour of late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.



Jacqueline W. Farris
Director General, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation

Our first annual programme held at Arewa House in Kaduna on March 6, 1999, little more than one year after the incredible loss of one of Nigeria's extraordinary leaders. Late Tafida's death in prison on December 8, 1997 at the hands of an unjust military ruler was devastating to his family, friends and colleagues but made them determined to establish a fitting memorial to pay homage to his legacy of service and sacrifice on behalf of the nation.

From 1999 to 2009, the Yar'Adua Centre hosted distinguished personalities from around the globe who served as Special Guest of Honour at our Programmes of Commemoration. President Nelson Mandela of South Africa graced the Foundation's launching in 2000; President John Kufour of Ghana presided over the Centre's Commissioning in 2002; Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto delivered an insightful lecture at the opening of the Centre's library in 2003. President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique presented a thought provoking address at the launching of the official biography of late Tafida in 2005. Subsequent guests of honour included President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Dr. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, and Former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania. Dr. Jonathan Fanton, President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation addressed the gathering on, "Full and Free Development: The Case for Higher Education in Nigeria".

After 10 years of a most successful programme, board members elected to establish an annual Memorial Lecture Series to take the place of the Programme of Commemoration. Rather

than an international focus, the Memorial Lecture Series features guest speakers who will attest to late Tafida's strength of character, his vision for the nation and how his legacy might continue to inspire solutions to challenges facing the country today.

We want to express the Foundation's sincere appreciation for the support and encouragement we have received over the years from so many friends and well wishers. The work of the Foundation continues to bear fruit and the Yar'Adua Centre is thriving as a conference facility, research library, exhibition hall and programme implementer.

The Foundation's Public Policy Initiative was inaugurated last year with a flagship project to publish an analysis of Nigeria's achievements as a global citizen since independence. The work addressed the nation's promotion of peace, freedom, democracy and development globally and on the African Continent; whether our foreign investment has been constructive and at what cost to our own development. Presentation of the book coincided with Nigeria's 50th independence anniversary.

Two additional projects included a Roundtable Discussion, "Promoting Two Way Communication Between INEC and Its Stakeholders" and the establishment of a Social Media Tracking Centre to explore how social media platforms worked during the 2011 election period.

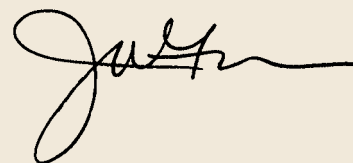
Yar'Adua Merit Scholars continue to perform beyond our expectation. Our first six graduates have gained admission to university; Mustapha Gidado was awarded The President's Scholarship by American University Nigeria, Yola to study petrochemical engineering.

The Foundation was also instrumental in establishing a partnership between the Tulsi Chanrai Foundation (TCF) and Katsina State Government for the provision of free eye care service in the state. The Katsina Eye Centre estimates that 3,000 eye surgeries will be performed each year.

As we look forward to 2012, we anticipate a productive year, fully engaged with our partners and supporters to address challenges, foster hope and serve people.

Thank you so much and may God continue to bless Nigeria.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline W. Farris

Director General

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SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA



Born in Katsina on March 5, 1943 to the late Mutawallin Katsina, Mallam Musa Yar'Adua, young Shehu was greatly influenced by his father's own spirituality, strength of character and capacity for leadership. A member of the Katsina Emirate Council, Musa Yar'Adua was one of the leading lights of Nigerian political development and a pillar of political wisdom. During the First Republic he served as a Member of the House of Representatives,

Federal Minister for Establishment, Nigerianisation and Training and later as Minister for Lagos Affairs.

Shehu Yar'Adua was educated at Katsina Provincial Secondary School and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, U.K. He returned from Sandhurst in 1964 as a young Second Lieutenant not long before the Civil War began. Major Yar'Adua's capture of Onitsha in 1967 is

regarded as a decisive battle leading to the end of the bloody conflict that consumed millions of lives.

The Civil War had a tremendous impact on Shehu Yar'Adua. Disheartened by the devastation he witnessed, he recognized the futility of disunity based on ethnicity, region or religion. He understood that a united Nigeria was prerequisite for the nation's growth and development.

Shehu Yar'Adua was appointed Federal Commissioner of Transport in 1976. As Commissioner, he was credited with establishing a blueprint for the development of Nigeria's transport sector as well as the reorganization and decongestion of the nation's ports. Upon the assassination of the revered Head of State, Murtala Mohammed in 1977, he was named Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters and promoted to the rank of Major General in the Obasanjo Administration. At just 36 years of age, he was the youngest officer to hold such rank on the African Continent.

Among many accomplishments, perhaps most significant was the administration's successful conduct of elections and historic handover to democratic rule in 1979. As the first military government to voluntarily hand over power in Africa, General Obasanjo and General Yar'Adua recognized that the enthronement of democracy was the only way to ensure stability and social harmony in the country.

After retirement, Shehu Yar'Adua joined the business world with a view to providing important private sector services. With partners and investors he established a publishing company, cultivated agricultural holdings, developed manufacturing, oil service and shipping facilities and incorporated Habib Nigeria Bank. The Islam in Africa Organization was instituted and as Chairman of the National Mosque Committee he oversaw the funding and construction of the National Mosque, Abuja. In April 1987 he was turbaned Tafidan Katsina, a traditional title inherited from his father.

But the return of a military regime without commitment to handing over to a democratically elected government led Shehu Yar'Adua to join politics. He was prepared to lead the political class through the familiar antics and obstacles set by his former colleagues in uniform.

Shehu Yar'Adua was a gifted politician. His grassroots politics was a first for the nation. Devoid of ethnic bias and religious or regional sentiment, his organization dominated the political landscape of the country, breaking what he dubbed the "siege mentality" which had dogged Nigerian politics since 1914.

His aspiration for the SDP Presidential ticket was inspired by a desire to give the nation the committed and responsible leadership the country so desperately desired and deserved. He advocated a new National Purpose that was designed to enrich lives, inspire patriotic pride and serve the common good of all.

As a presidential candidate, Shehu Yar'Adua continued to break barriers, beating formidable home based opponents and winning elections across the nation to become his party's nominee. Just when he was poised to become the nation's next executive President, his election was annulled, and he was banned from further participation. Without bitterness or rancor, Shehu Yar'Adua devoted himself to playing the role of advisor, mentor and counselor through new rounds of elections. He continued to steer the country toward democracy as the single most influential politician in the country.

Always a courageous leader, Shehu Yar'Adua stood in the forefront of those who demanded a timely handover to democratically elected government. The regime that sought to perpetuate itself in power however, plotted to arrest and jail him, Chief Obasanjo and others in order to remove any obstacles that stood in their path.

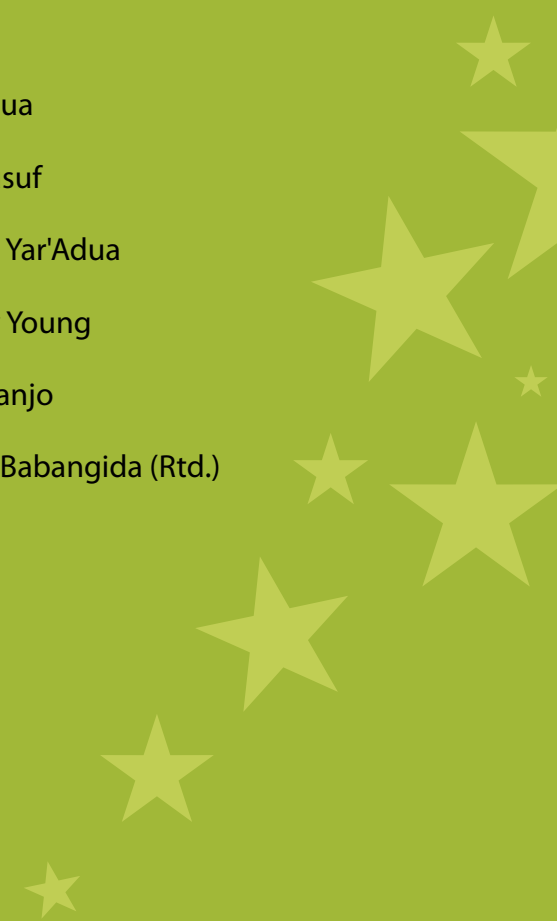
Shehu Yar'Adua was sentenced to death in March 1995 by a Military Tribunal. The death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. Even when his sentence was passed, his spirit and determination were not broken. From Kirikiri Prison in 1995, he wrote, "Please do not worry too much about me. It is the sacrifice some of us must make for our country to be free".

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua died two and a half years later in Abakaliki Prison. The country lost a gentleman and a hero, but the structures he built could not be destroyed. The democracy the country now enjoys is testimony to his courage and leadership. It is his courage and his leadership that we continue to celebrate today.



1st
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 6, 1999

- Welcome by Asiya Shehu Yar'Adua
 - *A Patriot Lived* by Aisha Umar Yusuf
 - Message from H.E. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua
 - Tribute by Ambassador Andrew Young
 - Address by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo
 - Tribute by H.E. General Ibrahim Babangida (Rtd.)
- 

WELCOME ADDRESS

ASIYA SHEHU YAR'ADUA



I want to welcome all of you this morning who have come to pay tribute to our late father, Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, and to endow and establish a Foundation in his memory.

This is a very touching moment for our family. We recall the tragedy and untimely death of our father, yet we are nevertheless pleased at this momentous audience in his memory.

It is more than one year since he died and returned to his creator. Yesterday would have marked his 56th birthday. Like all of us, our father wanted to live. He had tremendous hopes and aspirations, not only for himself and our family, but also for all our fellow countrymen and women. Yet, he was never afraid to give his life for what he believed in.

As he wrote from Kirikiri Prison shortly after his arrest in March 1995:

"Please don't worry too much. I am okay. It is the sacrifice some of us must make for our country to be free."

I want to especially welcome the President-elect, General Olusegun Obasanjo. Our father would have been proud that the only man he called "his boss", willingly accepted again the burden of leadership of this great nation that he loved so much. I welcome Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the Vice President-elect. I pray that our father's vision for the country will be of some guide and inspiration for the leadership and governance of our country in the days ahead.

I also want to welcome Ambassador Andrew Young. We are honoured that you have come to be with us today. We thank you for your many efforts on our father's behalf while he was incarcerated.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of our entire family, we welcome all of you and we thank you for coming.

God bless you.

A PATRIOT LIVED



Once not too long ago,
In this land we call our home,
A patriot lived,
Who had a clear vision
And made for himself a mission
To lead the land to greatness.

That man was Shehu Yar'Adua,
A general and a visionary,
Katsina-born from Yar'Adua ward,
The son of Musa the nationalist.
And like his father before his time
Dreamt indelible prints
On the sands of time.

Alas! Some would have none of it.
So they plotted
But called Shehu the plotter,
And had him locked away.

They wouldn't let his dreams come real
Nor let people like Shehu live.

And so it was
One sad Monday morn,
We woke up and the world was stunned.
A great man had died
Or was he killed?
In a prison cell
Away from all he loved.

At 54 Shehu was gone for good.
Three years earlier he was put in chains.
Far from Binta,
The wife he loved,
And nine lovely children
Whom he cherished so well.

Shehu died alone
But oh not in vain.
Honoured in life by his very own,
The Katsina people made him
Their Tafida.
A white turban became
Part of his attire.

But in death he looms so much larger.
For he was mourned
At home and yonder,
By those he knew and
Those who only knew him.
May the Almighty grant him eternal peace.
May He grant us courage to follow his path.

- Aisha Umar Yusuf



MESSAGE

H.E. UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA



The first message that I will deliver by proxy is a letter which he wrote to his son from Abakaliki prison on September 12, 1996. I quote a lengthy paragraph from that letter.

"I am today in prison, not because I want political power, or to be President as most people think. I do what I do because I love you, because I do not want my children to grow up in a country that has no future. A country that you cannot be proud of.

You see my son, I believe a person is nothing if he has no pride in himself. I am talking about the kind of pride that comes as a result of achievement and inner strength. The kind that makes its possessor humble.

I would not have achieved anything if after I am gone all I leave behind for you are empty houses and some bank accounts. For these are nothing. They can be acquired by any idiot. I want to leave for you something you can be proud of, a legacy of public service and sacrifice which will influence our country for good; which you will be proud to inherit and which I will be proud to pass over".

The second message is a letter he wrote to President Jimmy Carter on August 14, 1997 in Abakaliki prison. I am not betraying confidences. I'm quoting this letter because when he wrote it, he asked me to read it and give him my opinion. When I read it he asked me, 'What is your opinion?' I said to him, I'm going to photocopy it and keep for the future. That is all I said. I think that letter is as good as that. I will quote just the last paragraph.

"Mr. President, my country is today in the grip of a very greedy and inept dictatorship. Its once viable economy is in tatters but even worse, its institutions are being destroyed. In the face of all this, one's personal problems appear inconsequential.

In short, Mr. President, much more than General Obasanjo and myself, Nigeria needs saving. Please help save my country".

His Excellency, Ambassador Andrew Young has already informed this gathering that Shehu did communicate recorded messages through me

to some of his friends abroad. He also recorded messages to his friends here at home. I consider the first one a message to this nation at the time he recorded it.

“Things are not going so well outside here. You know what I mean. I understand that people are really, really in great difficulties. Food is getting rather difficult to come by. Not that it is not available, but it is too expensive for the vast majority of the people. And I think this year that the Federal Government decided in its wisdom to withdraw the subsidy on fertilizer. So a bag of fertilizer which officially used to sell as of last year for, I think, N200 is officially selling at N1,300. But worst of all, it is actually not available. So, we are really seriously facing the prospect of famine next year.

I hope and pray to Almighty Allah that He does not allow this to pass. Because in all these things that are happening, the Government’s intransigence, the stupid measures and so on and so forth – our incarceration and all that. Much of it really is through no fault whatever of the ordinary Nigerian who forms about 95% of the population. And it will really make me sad if they suffer. Because there is no reason for them to suffer. No reason whatever for people in this country not to have enough food. There is no reason for them not to have enough to wear. And at least, those are basic necessities everywhere.

Nigeria, even under the present circumstance, is rich enough to afford to do this. To at least make it possible for people to have these absolutely, fundamental basic amenities”.

Your Excellencies, the second phase of this message is a very, very short one, and it was recorded in September, 1997. I considered this second message to be a message to those of us who are certain that to Allah we come, and to Him, is our return.

...from the Qu’ran, “Oh people, Listen to my words. For I do not know whether I will be amongst you for another year. Just as you regard this month, this day, and this city sacred, so regard the lives and property of all amongst you as sacred and inviolable.”

Oh my people. It is true that you have certain rights with regard to your wives. But they also have certain rights. Treat them with kindness and love, for you have taken them in trust. Keep always faithful to the trust placed in you. Do not sin.

Oh people. Listen to me in earnest. Worship Allah. Say your five daily prayers. Fast during the month of Ramadan. Give zakat generously. Go if possible on a pilgrimage. You know that you are each other’s brothers and are all equal. No one is superior except in devotion to Allah and in good works. Guard against committing injustices.

Oh people. No prophet or apostle will come after me. And no new faith will be born. Understand my words. I leave behind me two things, the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Follow these and you will never go astray. Beware of Satan and safeguard your religion. Pass on my words to others and those to others again. And may they understand my words better than those who listen to my words directly. Be my witness, Oh Allah, that I have conveyed your message”.

Your Excellencies, the last message is a prayer which he used to pray every morning. This was a prayer which was recited before the early morning prayers by the Holy Prophet, *salah allahu allehu wasalam*. He liked this prayer and he was reciting it everyday to the extent that he found it necessary to record it and send it to some of us.

“Oh God. I ask you for mercy from you. By which you guard my heart. By which you rebuild my integrity. By which you help me recover myself from confusion. By which you keep trials away from me. By which you restore my piety. By which you protect my interior and elevate my exterior. By which you purify my work. By which you give me honor. By which you inspire me with my right course. And by which you guard me against every evil.

Oh God. Give me a sincere faith and certitude, which admits of no return to unbelief. Give me the compassion by which I reach the honor of receiving your grace in this world and the next.

Oh God. I ask you for success according to your decree. For the ranks of my trials. For the way of living of the happy ones. For victory over enemies and for association with prophets.

Oh God. I submit my need to you. Verily my intellect is weak and my artifice small. My work falls short and I am in need of your compassion. I ask you, oh protector of affairs, oh healer of breasts, to grant me protection from the punishment of the blazing flame and from the call to perdition. And from the trial of graves as you grant protection to the seas.

Oh God. The favor for which my intellect is too short and for which my work is too weak. And which my intention and aspiration do not reach. The favor which you have promised to any of your servants or the favor which you bestow upon any of your creatures. This favor I request of you and this favor I ask of you, oh Lord of the Worlds.

Oh God. Make us guides and guided not astray and misguided. In war against your foes and in peace with your friends. We love through your love those of your creatures who obey you. And we fight through your hostility against those of your creatures who disobey you.

Oh God. This is the supplication and the answer belongs to you. This is effort on our side and dependence is on you. Verily to you we belong and to you we return. There is no might and no power save in God, the Exalted, the Magnificent, the Possessor of the strong rope and the upright comment. I ask you for security on the day of threat and for Paradise on the day of eternity. Together with those who are brought near to God and witnessing. And those who often bow and prostrate and keep their covenants.

Verily you are compassionate and affectionate and You do what you will. Glory be to him who wears might as a garment and speaks in it! Glory be to him who puts on grandeur and shows generosity in it! Glory be to him who alone is qualified to monopolize glorification. Glory be to the possessor of grace and favors! Glory be to the possessor of might and generosity. Glory be to him who counts everything in his knowledge!

Oh God. Give me a light in my heart. A light in my grave. A light in my ear. A light in my eye. A light in my hair. A light in my skin. A light in my flesh. A light in my blood. A light in my bone. A light before me. A light behind me. A light on my right. A light on my left side. A light above me. A light below me.

Oh God. Give me more light. Give me light. Make me light.

Your Excellencies, we the Yar'Adua family bore our period of trial with dignity. And we mourned the death of Tafida not with tears of rage or hatred but with prayers and the celebration of Allah's praise.

The tears we shed were of pity for those of us who, when bestowed with power by Allah, chose to misuse it in an unjust and misguided manner.

We also shed tears of compassion for those of us opportuned to speak out against injustice who chose to be silent or even made haste to seek favour with the unjust ruler.

We often wondered at the collective conscious of a nation that stood transfixed and bewildered as the forces of injustice and destruction raged like a wild fire throughout the length and breadth of its borders. So with the trial of the Yar'Adua and other families during that period, was the greater trial of the nation.

For the first time in our national history, those things we had always taken for granted were no longer guaranteed – the freedom of expression, the freedom of association, the right to liberty, the right to life – in short, the most basic of our fundamental human rights.

Indeed, the nation was so firmly caged that it required nothing short of a national struggle to regain its freedom. But in the end, a national struggle was never necessary as Allah in His infinite mercy intervened to save the situation. With this divine intervention, the first phase of our trial was over.

However, every major trial has its own significance in the historical development of a people. An examination of this period and the lessons of significance to be discerned from our collective experience must, of course, be left to the students of history.

But certainly, the one lesson that stands out clearly is that we must never again take for granted our basic fundamental rights. We must learn to cherish and defend them. For it is only what we cherish and hold dear to our hearts that we defend with all our might. And indeed, the might of the people is far greater than that of the ruler.

To be truly free, we must as a people learn to cherish the ideals of freedom, justice and the rule of law and resolve to defend them at the slightest abuse. This, Your Excellencies, is the second phase of our national trial.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE

AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG



Shehu Musa Yar'Adua has helped to redeem this nation and indeed to redeem all of Africa. Those of us who watched Nigeria from abroad would get very, very discouraged. Because we would see so much potential, so much greatness being squandered. And yet, when we heard from our friends, even in prison, they never gave up on Nigeria and so neither could we.

Shehu Yar'Adua wrote to me from prison and shared with me, through his brother, recorded messages. He never lost faith in this nation and he willingly sacrificed his own freedom and even his own life that the people of this nation and of Africa might enjoy the freedom and life which he loved and adored so much.

Nigeria and Africa very much need now, more than ever before, the spirit of mercy, the spirit of forgiveness, the spirit of love of all human beings from every region of this earth in order to once again rise to the greatness which she enjoyed during those years when a few young men not only helped to establish a strong Nigeria but fought with us to bring about the independence of Zimbabwe and Namibia and even South Africa. If Africa is saved from the present chaos and confusion, it will be because the spirit of Shehu Yar'Adua lives and breathes in all of us and in this great nation. I'm sure it does.

May God bless us all and be merciful.

ADDRESS

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

IN HONOUR OF A TRULY GREAT NIGERIAN



Today's event of commemorating Shehu Yar'Adua is very special for me because of a number of reasons. In the first place, it offers me a unique opportunity to honour the noble memory of a man who for a larger part of his life was a professional comrade, a bosom friend, and indeed a brother.

This National Programme of Commemoration, taking place today, his posthumous birthday, is a concrete and enduring way of keeping alive the ideals for which he lived and died.

Shehu Yar'Adua and I shared an absolute belief in democracy and good governance. For those who need reminding, Shehu and I agreed that for the sake of democracy we would do ourselves out of jobs at the highest level. Shehu was just thirty-eight years old. Later when he, like many Nigerians, watched his legacy destroyed by evil forces, he took up the challenge to do something about it. He paid the supreme price in the process.

Shehu was a nationalist of the first order. He fought for the unity of this country with complete dedication to the idea of a great Nigeria in which fairness and justice will reign. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the history of our struggle for national unity, democracy and good governance cannot be

written without ample reference being made to the patriotic, visionary and heroic role played by General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.

It is thus significant that this event is being held at this point in our country's history. As we all know, Nigerians as well as the rest of the world have focused attention on a process that began three months ago and climaxed exactly a week ago. Believers in democracy all over the world have rejoiced with us as we signaled the end of military rule by making our choice in a process generally adjudged to have been free, fair and peaceful. I was particularly saddened by the absence of Shehu from my maiden World Press Conference as President-elect at Abuja last Tuesday. It was a historic moment he would definitely have cherished. Nevertheless, I was glad that on the high table with me, among other dignitaries, was his ever faithful wife, Hajiya Binta Yar'Adua.

At this point may I request that we rise for a one minute standing ovation in honour of this courageous woman who is determined that her husband's ideals and labour will never die.

Today's event is no doubt a solemn one. Is it possible to recall the tragic and mysterious circumstances in which this most fulfilling, promising, and useful life was cut short and not

be sad? As recounted in my recently published book, *This Animal Called Man*, my reaction to Shehu's death was: "It cannot be true, but if it is true the nation must know how and why it happened." Was it murder? Was it negligence? Who was to blame? What lesson, I asked myself, could we learn from the tragedy of another bright star being prematurely and untimely extinguished from the sky of Nigerian national life?

From the scanty communication we maintained during our incarceration, I can testify here that he was neither downcast nor depressed. If anything, he was in high spirits. He had told me in October 1995 that he was prepared for the worst, and how, in anticipation, he had tried to put his personal affairs in order.

In his final days, Shehu became more spiritual than I had previously known him. He was unable to comprehend how Abacha could expropriate his shares in an oil services company. He said to me: "If Abacha can be so mad to do all he had done to you without just cause, he can be mad enough to kill me without justification."

He referred to the very dark episode of Nigerian history as 'Abacha madness.' On January 21, 1998, I posthumously received a letter written by Shehu on 9th November 1997. The contents of this letter speak for itself. It reads:

*Dear Sir,
It is such a great pleasure to receive your note. Especially after having given up hope of hearing from you.*

As you have picked up, I am fine and I am keeping myself fairly fit by playing some sort of tennis. I am also glad to let you know that I stopped smoking. As at date, I haven't smoked a cigarette for two months. So I can safely claim to be rid of the habit.

My family are fine and they are bearing up very well. My first son, Murtala has just finished his MBA and is about to start his NYSC – they do grow very fast, don't they?

I am sure you know that Nigeria will always be at the forefront of my thoughts. You need not fear about my continued commitment to the welfare

and well-being of Nigeria. My present worries and prayers are that the present junta do not so devastate the country that it becomes impossible to rehabilitate. We will continue to pray.

*Sincerely yours,
Shehu*

I hope this letter finally disproves the ridiculous talk of me being aware of Shehu's death from depression.

But then we also have cause to thank God for the life that Yar'Adua lived. The caliber of people gathered here today from all walks of life and representing a broad cross-section of Nigerian society vividly demonstrates that great men like Yar'Adua never die. They live on in the fond memories of the numerous lives they have touched positively. That we have all willingly and enthusiastically gathered here today to contribute our share towards immortalizing the thoughts and ideas of this great patriot and statesman is a testimony to the outstanding impact he made as a leader of men in several spheres of life.

Perhaps, we are moving too fast. As someone who knew and related very closely with Shehu in private, public and professional life, it is appropriate for me to give some insight into the man.

There are indeed, several interesting lessons to be learnt from the kind of person Shehu was. When you consider, for instance, that he was born into an aristocratic family, Shehu's incomparable simplicity and humility were simply amazing. Despite his pedigree and success as a businessman, his compassion for the less privileged was legendary. Even though he could have chosen to live a life of ease given his privileged background, Shehu chose the strenuous and most demanding profession of soldiering.

His rise in the military was entirely predicated on merit. He was a brave, competent, loyal, reliable, intelligent and quietly efficient officer. Shehu was not a man of many words. His life showed that very often wisdom does not lie in eloquence or a profusion of words.

General Yar'Adua was unequivocally committed to the unity and viability of the Nigerian nation. He was a genuine patriot and nationalist to the core. It is on record that he put in everything to fight against the disintegration of the country during the civil war. He believed in good governance, democracy and federalism as necessary conditions for the unity and stability of Nigeria. Thus when the military regime in power in 1974 reneged on its promise to hand over power to a democratically elected government in 1976, Yar'Adua was one of those who were vehemently opposed to indefinite military rule.

Consistent with his belief, he played a key role as number two man in our administration which successfully and voluntarily transferred power to a democratically elected government in 1979. Throughout the period when he served as Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, I found him loyal, steadfast, humble and reliable. He was honest and above board in all his dealings. Indeed, I can readily recall that as 1979 approached Yar'Adua became anxious about where to house his family after life at the top. He did not have a house of his own. Yar'Adua's first house, built in Kaduna, was financed with a bank loan for which I stood as guarantor. Those were the days of transparency and responsibility in public office. We must go back to those ideals.

It is a testimony to Yar'Adua's versatility that on retiring from the military he rapidly transformed into a successful businessman with interest in diverse areas including publishing, shipping, banking and industry. But it was in the sphere of politics that he made his most enduring contribution to national development. Politics for Shehu was not an idle pastime. It was a serious business. He saw politics as a vehicle for achieving development and improving the lives of all Nigerians. He saw politics as a means to an end; the end being the service of humanity.

Towards this end, Yar'Adua displayed a remarkable ability to build political bridges across different cleavages that are the realities of Nigeria, thereby erecting an enduring political

structure that now stands acknowledged as a monument to national unity.

When he contested the SDP Presidential primaries in 1992, it was thus not surprising that he emerged as a genuine national figure and won votes across all geo-political zones of the country. It is no exaggeration to say that Yar'Adua bestrode the political scene like a colossus. His influence and support, political analysts tell us, played a crucial role in the emergence of Chief MKO Abiola as the SDP Presidential flagbearer at the Jos Convention of 1993. That he continued to take an active interest in politics and the democratic process, even though he suffered several set-backs, such as being banned or disqualified at different times, was a demonstration of his unstinting commitment to democracy. This, surely, is the kind of spirit we must also strive to emulate if democracy is to thrive in Nigeria and for all times.

If Yar'Adua had not cared enough about democracy and good governance to speak out and fight for them, he would probably have been alive today. We all know that his untimely death was a direct consequence of his unjust incarceration for opposing the perpetuation of military rule. But a man who does not believe in a cause strongly enough to die for it is not fit to live. Yar'Adua believed in democracy.

Shehu lived, fought and died for what he believed – democracy. This is not the time to look back in anger or bitterness. We cannot even afford to waste valuable time on contemplating vendettas. Rather, we must look ahead positively and work hard to ensure that the essential Yar'Adua evolves into a major national institution for promoting the ideals of democracy, national unity and good governance, ideals to which Yar'Adua dedicated his life.

We can pay no greater tribute to late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua than to strive to keep alive the ideals he lived and died for.

May Almighty God help us.

TRIBUTE

H.E. GENERAL IBRAHIM BABANGIDA (RTD)



I have been caught off guard by no other person but Yomi Edu and his conspirator, Professor Ango Abdullahi. In paying tribute to a friend, I will first of all like to pay tribute to a great man called Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. But I will also first of all like all of us to remember that before Shehu, there was a man called Musa Yar'Adua, Mutawallin Katsina. Now, anybody who knows Shehu's father should attest to the fact that he had a very, very good upbringing by this man, Mutawallin Katsina.

Shehu has been a colleague, he has been a friend. Events they say make history and Shehu's life has been very eventful. I remember in 1967 I was just coming back, to be precise it was July 1967. A young officer, he was just trying to go to the war front and I flew in from England. Shehu sent a car to pick me up straight to his house for lunch. When we talked about the war, I was getting into the war, I wasn't sure what was going to happen. But he said 'Look, we will all go through it and you have no fear'. I think from then on, we established a very good relationship.

Again, events make history. In 1975, after the war, we were all working in Lagos and we traveled to watch a match at Surulere Stadium and as we moved around in the car, Shehu said, 'Well, one day, things have to change in this country'. As a military man, I knew what he was getting at and we talked extensively. After watching that match, I think in about two, three weeks, I saw what happened and all of you are living witnesses today. It just shows you the depth of his feeling, his commitment towards this county.

In 1989 he visited me, this time I was in Abuja. He came on official work. Then I said, 'Shehu you are going into politics'. He said 'Yes'. I said, there are a lot of problems in politics. He said, 'That's the main reason why I'm getting into it. Because those problems are there. Somebody, somewhere has to solve them'. We spent almost one hour talking about politics. But you could see a resolute look of determination by a man who had a singular purpose and vision and he knows what is required for our great country. I think for the younger generations who are coming behind, Shehu Yar'Adua is a study in politics, a study in humanity, a study most importantly on determination and trying to know exactly what is good for this country and pursue it. But because he had the military background, I wouldn't talk much about the military because my senior military officers are here including the President-elect. But then, really, what we call one of the first principles of war, 'selection and maintenance of aim' and this has always been Shehu's conviction either in politics or in any other thing he pursued. It is my honest desire that one day, people will try to write about the events that really made this man a very great man.

We miss him. We will continue to miss him and the younger generations I do hope, will continue to carry on from where he left.

May Allah have mercy on his soul and may God give Binta and the children the courage to sustain this great loss.

Thank you.



2nd
**PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION**

MARCH 4, 2000

- Tribute by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
- Remarks by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo
- Address by President Nelson Mandela
- Tribute by Kola Abiola (Ground Breaking Ceremony)

TRIBUTE

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR

THE VISION OF SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA



Like it has just been said, we are racing against time. Our Special Guest of Honour, President Mandela, has to leave us in the next half hour on his way back to South Africa. I have been asked to pay a second tribute to the late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. I have decided to put my speech aside so that I can make the best use of the time at our disposal.

Late Shehu Yar'Adua and our present President, fought a civil war to keep this country one united country, because they shared the vision of a united Nigeria. Late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, with our present President, shared a common vision for belief in democracy and good governance, and therefore led this country to the Second Republic together. You will very well recall their period in government as one of the best military governments and one of the

most progressive governments we had in this country; a government that believed in the return of this country to democracy.

After leaving government, both individuals engaged in pursuits which, again, in their common belief, would lead this country to a united democratic country. Our President engaged himself in farming, preaching good governance, transparency in public office, and anti-corruption. Shehu engaged himself in the private sector to create jobs for hundreds of thousands of Nigerians.

Shehu then, of course, proceeded to establish and set up one of the most potent political machineries to fight for the restoration of democracy. I would like to recount an incident to demonstrate that what Shehu really believed

Shehu did not die in vain. What is left for us is to make sure that we immortalize his beliefs, his vision for this great country. It is therefore my singular honour and privilege to have been part of the realization of this project.

in was a democratic Nigeria, notwithstanding whether he was to be in charge or not. And that was the aftermath of our Jos convention when the late M.K.O. Abiola, contrary to general expectations, decided to pick a running mate that was not myself. Shehu was absolutely upset. And I knew the extent of that. And I rushed to the present President at his farm and said, "General Sir, I have come to talk to you so that you can talk to Shehu so that our party can win the next Presidential elections". It doesn't matter whether I was going to be the Vice President or not. And there were only two people, I told the present President, who could talk to Shehu to change his mind. And that was his late father and the present President.

The President said "Okay. Ask Shehu to come and see me tomorrow morning". I went back to Lagos. I called Shehu. And he said "Pick me with the first flight in the morning", which I did. And I brought him before his boss, the only person he called his boss in his lifetime. And the present President said "Shehu, we must work together to help Moshood win the election. And the late Shehu did not argue; he simply said "Yes Sir". And together we left, because the rest was between Shehu and his political associates to go to work and make sure the late M.K.O. won the election; and therefore, our party won. And this we did.

The late Shehu and our present President share a common birthday. And therefore, you can see how their lives are intertwined and their fates are intertwined. Shehu today --- the most important vision of Shehu that I know and I can recollect, is for a democratic Nigeria. Shehu sacrificed his life so that a democratic Nigeria can be brought into being. And

today we are in a democratic Nigeria. Shehu believed in good governance, transparency, accountability and social justice. And today we have a President who also is an epitome of those beliefs and convictions and commitments.

So distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Shehu did not die in vain. What is left for us is to make sure that we immortalize his beliefs, his vision for this great country. It is therefore my singular honour and privilege to have been part of the realization of this project.

President Mandela, we thank you very much indeed for coming and for honouring Nigeria, and for honouring the life of this great Nigerian who sacrificed his freedom and his life so that we can be free again.

I thank you very much.



REMARKS

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO



Your Excellency --- now, when I say Your Excellency, you will see that I was hesitant. And I was. You know why I was hesitant. I was referring to President Nelson Mandela, but he has so many names that I know him by, and I don't know which one I should start with. But I will call him by all of them by the time I finish on this podium.

Your Excellency, the Senate President
Your Excellency, the Speaker of the House
My Lord, the Chief Justice of Nigeria
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

We haven't got much time because Madiba will have to go back. He has really honoured us to be here. His programme is very, very tight indeed. But when the Board of Trustees were thinking of who will fit the bill of this programme of today, rightly, they hit the nail on the head by pointing at the man who in many, many respects, is a model for us in Africa. But a model for those of us who want to do anything good for our country in Africa. And that is no other person than President Nelson Mandela. The problem then was how do we get to him? Then if we get to him, how do we speak to him. If we speak to him, how do we make sure we will get the right answer.

Of course, you know that my path and President Mandela's path have crossed in very unusual circumstances. I believe, and I have believed this all my life, that for as long as any black man anywhere in the world is regarded as a second-class citizen of his own country, or of anywhere in the world, then I am regarded as a second-class citizen of the world. And that is unacceptable to me. That simply is my own quarrel against apartheid, pure and simple. That for as long as my brothers and sisters in South Africa are regarded as second-class citizens because of the colour of their skin, I am regarded as a second-class citizen. And that is unacceptable to me and that has to be fought.

And it was fought. So when the Commonwealth decided that some of us and for lack of a better title, decided to call us 'Eminent Persons Group', we have to go to South Africa and negotiate. I must tell you, it is one of the most difficult decisions of my life; one of them. Because my stand against apartheid is known. Going to South Africa, would that be compromising with apartheid? And then if I don't go, will I be losing that slight opportunity of being able to influence things? It was not easy for me to decide. Eventually, I decided that my only condition would be if I will be allowed to see President Nelson Mandela in prison.

As it was usual with the South African government then, they wouldn't say yes. They wouldn't say no. Well I thought that was good enough. So we went to South Africa. And that was the exploratory visit by me and the Co-Chairman, Malcom Fraser. And I kept hammering and asking. And the day before we left, the General who was in charge of the prison, what you will call the Comptroller of Prison here, or Comptroller-General of Prisons, decided to drive me to Pollsmoor. And we drove his car, the two of us and we were talking. And one of the questions I asked him; I said "Look", and that was the first thing that gave me indication that things were, things were going to change in South Africa and probably sooner than we expected. I asked him, "Look, supposing Nelson Mandela comes out and he becomes the President of South Africa, will you work under him?" He said "Why not? After all, I am a civil servant. I work under anybody." Madiba, I have never told you this story, but of course, it is all history now. Because what happened then of course, proved that man right.

We then got to Pollsmoor and they have a beautiful mess. And he wanted me to have breakfast. Since breakfast was not really what took me there, I didn't want to have breakfast. We went in to the office of the man in charge,

I think he was a Major in charge of the prison. Well, I had never met Madiba in my life. I had seen his photograph, I had read about him; I had heard about him. So I was put in the office. And of course, from what I had known about South Africa, I know that that office must have been badly bugged. Madiba too was conscious of the fact that that office must have been badly bugged. And after about five minutes, there came this lanky, good-looking, well-trimmed man, compared with my own figure. And I got up. The first thing that struck me was he was wearing a belt with ANC colours.

Here was a man who was in prison twenty --- I think by then you had been in prison for what --- since 1962. You had been in prison for well over twenty years. You know, as they say in my language, "You are cutting a figure, he is still putting ring". That he just wouldn't desist. And we sat down. And we started talking. And we started talking as if we have known ourselves all our lives. And I was struck. I came out --- we covered a lot of things and --- and I came out of that meeting, convinced. I said it at our group meeting that if South Africa will be lucky, Nelson Mandela will be released to guide that country out of the policy of apartheid. And that country was lucky. And of course, the rest is history.

There is a lot of similarity as the man there said about this situation we had here and the situation we went through, and the situation Madiba went through. The only thing was that --- well that was liberation from racism of a worst order. Ours was liberation of a different sort from oppression also of a worst order. But you had people of indomitable character and if anybody does not know that, then he would not know anything.

And that when I was asked, how will we get Madiba? I said "Well, I'm sure that if we ask Madiba, --- I was confident. I said, Madiba will come." We wrote. Then I saw Madiba. I was saying "Madiba, we are inviting you for this thing. I know that your time and at your age, we must sparingly use you. Otherwise, we will abuse you." And he said --- as he has always

joked with me, he said "Olu, whenever you call, I will come". Well, we called, and the great man is here. The icon of Africa.

A lot has been said about Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. You know, whatever you may know about a person, you will know more about him when you sleep with him. I had five days and five nights in prison to share a room and bed to bed with Shehu. And I saw this aspect of him that I never saw while we were working together. I saw the religious aspect of him. Now, for those who don't carry religion on their head, you never know how religious they are until you see them privately and intimately. But I had seen the political aspect of him. I had seen the military aspect of him. I had seen the moral aspect of him, but I saw more of it when we were in prison together.

And when I say --- when I got the news of Shehu's death, and I said, "Another bright star has been dimmed prematurely. What a pity for Nigeria". I meant it. But we have a model too in Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. A young man who dedicated his life to the service of his country and who couldn't care what it cost. And it cost him his life. If he wanted to chicken out, he would probably still be alive today. But then, maybe we won't have democracy today. What we are doing Sir, Madiba, we are not only honouring a man, a young man who dedicated his life so that we may have democracy; we may be liberated in a different sense. But we are celebrating the enthronement of democracy in this country. And we cannot write the history of the enthronement of democracy in this country today without the name of Shehu Yar'Adua being in the forefront.

Sir, Madiba, I thank you for honouring us. I cherish your love and your friendship. And we are very, very proud of you and thankful to you for what you have done for South Africa, for what you have done for Africa and for what you have done for the black man.

Sir, may I call you to the podium to make your address.

ADDRESS

PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA



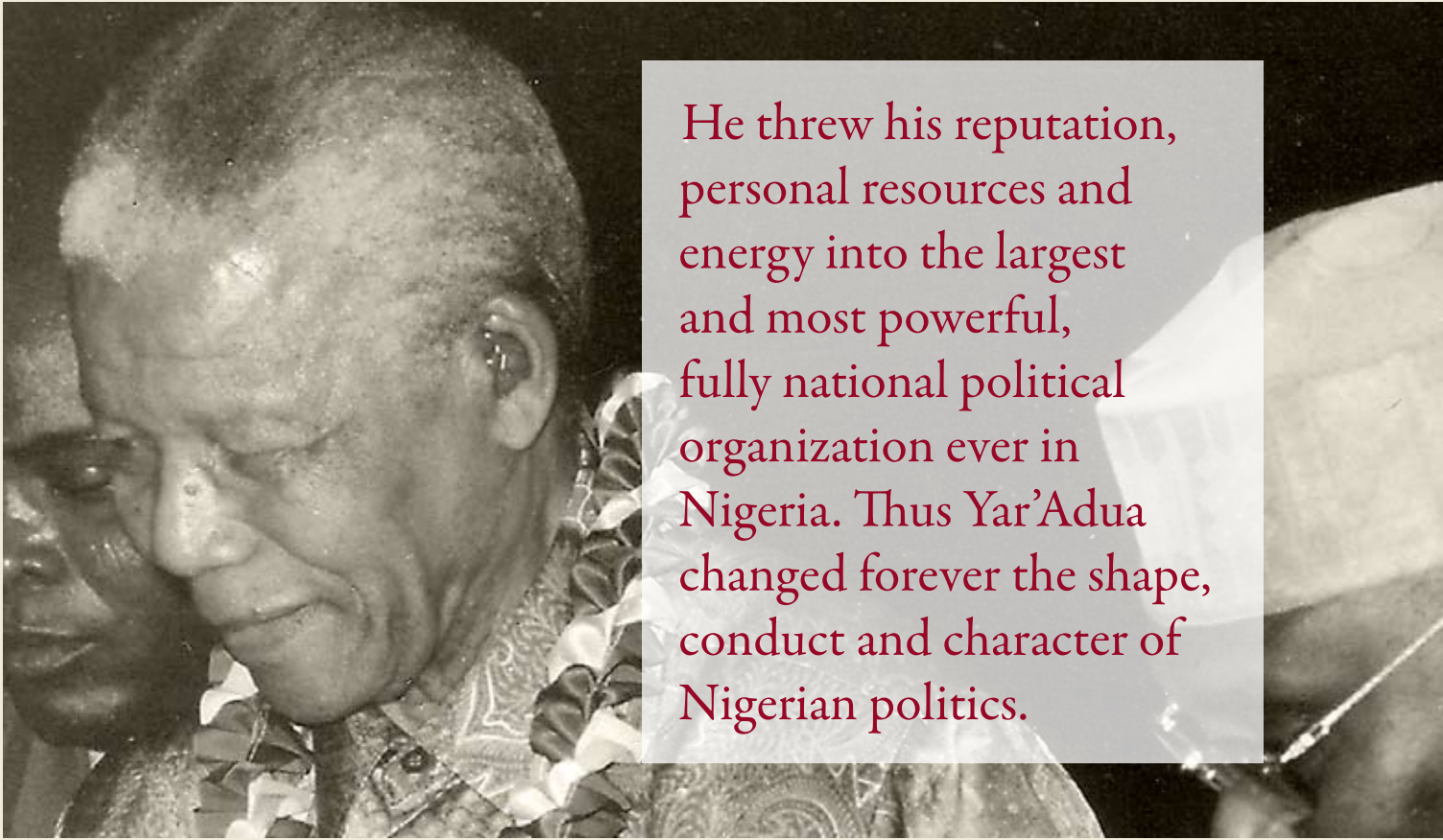
I feel greatly honoured to be here today to celebrate the life of a great African, a defender of democracy and a brave and courageous freedom fighter. Some of you who heard about it did not realize how happy I was on May 29, last year, when I had the privilege of attending with other world leaders, the inauguration of my brother, Olusegun Obasanjo as the democratically-elected President of Nigeria.

As President of South Africa, I was always greatly disturbed by events in Nigeria, especially during the dark days of military dictatorship. I am happy to see democracy taking root in Nigeria once again.

The freedom we enjoy today was won with the blood and sweat of ordinary Nigerians and with the lives of some extraordinary Nigerians such as General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. He paid the supreme price for democracy, freedom and justice. He died so that we might be rid of the anguish of horror and despair that tyranny inflicts on a people. He died so that there might be a glorious future for Africa. Full greatness or heroism is earned when a person goes out of his way to do something which uplifts his or

her people. General Yar'Adua was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. His father, as many of you know, was the Minister for Lagos Affairs in the First Republic. After his primary and post primary education, the younger Yar'Adua joined the Army and rose to the rank of a Major-General, as well as Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, which made him General Obasanjo's Deputy from 1976 to 1979. He was in his thirties when he achieved that feat, working closely with General Obasanjo. That administration gave Nigeria a dynamic and visionary leadership, until October 1st, 1979 when it transferred power to a democratically elected government.

After his retirement from the Army, Yar'Adua turned his attention to business, ranging from banking to shipping. When the political and economic situation in Nigeria began to deteriorate, which eventually led to the military intervention, General Yar'Adua did not fold his arms. He organized a national movement, bringing together the brightest and the best of Nigerian politics. His aim was not to seize power for the sake of it, but to enthrone an enduring democracy in Nigeria.



He threw his reputation, personal resources and energy into the largest and most powerful, fully national political organization ever in Nigeria. Thus Yar'Adua changed forever the shape, conduct and character of Nigerian politics.

He threw his reputation, personal resources and energy into the largest and most powerful, fully national political organization ever in Nigeria. Thus Yar'Adua changed forever the shape, conduct and character of Nigerian politics.

Today, I am told the Yar'Adua Group has remained a major political force in Nigeria. We salute therefore, the vision and legacy of General Yar'Adua. We immortalize today the extra-ordinary achievements of this great African. We thank him for enriching our lives with his own life.

I first visited Nigeria about 40 years ago when Dr. Azikiwe was Governor General and Mr. Balewa was Prime Minister. Nigeria gave us solid support which served as tremendous inspiration and courage to all the liberation fighters in our area. We will ever remain indebted to Nigeria for that support.

As the President has said, he visited me in Robben Island on three different occasions. At one time in the presence of our jailers, cabinet ministers and other senior officials of that government. He spoke authoritatively and made it clear that the international

community can no longer tolerate any kind of discrimination or suppression of human rights. He spoke authoritatively and with courage. It may well be that sooner or later, circumstances far beyond my control may prevent me from continuing with my work in general, and with my facilitation in Burundi in particular. If that moment should come, I will be confident that there are men and women, highly competent; the sons and daughters of our continent will continue and complete that one.

This Foundation enjoys my full support and blessing. Associated as it is with my friend, President Obasanjo, it will have an impact far beyond the problems of this Republic. Shehu Yar'Adua is a worthy candidate to immortality. We put him in his everlasting place, everlasting home. But his work, his role, lives far beyond the grave. Men and women come and go. Some leave nothing behind, not even their names. It would seem that they never existed at all. But Shehu has written his name large on the wall of heroes; not only as measured in comparison to other heroes in Africa, but in comparison with heroes throughout the globe and right down the centuries.

I thank you.

TRIBUTE

KOLA ABIOLA

GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY



It was my late father, Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola who once said that there were two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish. To do the latter properly, to my mind, requires a God-given gift of foresight and leadership.

Your Excellency Sir, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this was General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua had a military mind and a civil democratic heart. He was a man from the establishment, yet did not think along established lines. He was not appreciated by his elders, nor quite understood by his contemporaries yet very revered by the younger generation.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was a father figure to the younger generation who embraced his aspirations and believed in his abilities. He was so secure in the extent of his influence that he was not threatened by younger people achieving their ambitions and taking center

stage. Rather, he together with the likes of the late Alhaji M.S. Buhari of blessed memory, encouraged the young political unknowns and placed them under the protective umbrella of the Yar'Adua Group. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua in his pursuit of a greater Nigeria, first started with this group. This group became an island onto itself; an island with a bridge to all the main lands of this great country, Nigeria. If I may further add, a bridge within generations, our own generation.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was a man who understood that action is a more powerful tool of persuasion than words. That it is more powerful to get others to agree with you through your actions without saying much. He was a man of very few words. Demonstrate, don't explicate.

Furthermore, he went on to make himself totally accessible. He understood that isolation exposes you to more danger than it protects by cutting you off from valuable information.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was a father figure to the younger generation who embraced his aspirations and believed in his abilities. He was so secure in the extent of his influence that he was not threatened by younger people achieving their ambitions and taking center stage.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua might be best remembered for always taking a long term strategic view. He could always see beyond the minute tactical moves of his opponents. He was always one step ahead by being in firm control of all the options. Whichever option his opponents chose, his opponents were usually forced to make a choice between two evils, both of which served the broader purpose. They were placed firmly in the horns of a dilemma and were gored, whichever way they turned.

I was going to make reference to a lot of activities as far as regards the June 12 activities and the role of the late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. I am very glad to say that the Honourable Vice President has mentioned two instances – one last night and one this afternoon at the hotel. I was hoping that we would use this opportunity to address a lot of the misinformation as far as his role, as far as my father's Presidential

ambitions and the role he played in getting us there. I will be forever grateful to him, to Alhaji M.S. Buhari and I am, and will continue to be totally committed to the family as a whole.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this is to history, this is to a man of foresight, this is to a man who had to pay the supreme price on behalf of a generation that truly loved him and respected him. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua felt that our own generation should have the same opportunities and better. This is a man who paid the supreme price for being ahead of his time. This is a man, for me, besides working with him as a son, I also worked with in the board rooms of Africa Ocean Line and Habib Bank Nigeria. I also served as a very important bridge between him and my late father and I hope the two families continue with that over time.

Thank you very much.





3rd
**PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION**

APRIL 7, 2001

- Tribute by H.E. General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd.)
 - Remarks by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
 - Speech by Dr. Ahmad Mohammed Ali
President, Islamic Development Bank
 - Remarks by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo
 - Video Interview by Dr. Chuba Okadigbo
- 

TRIBUTE

H.E. GENERAL MUHAMMADU BUHARI (RTD.)



It is a very painful a duty for me to stand here to speak about late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua who tragically died just over three years ago in Abakaliki Prison. His death sent shock waves across the country. People mourned him everywhere and rightly so. For Shehu was one of Nigerian's foremost men. He excelled in the army, in government and in politics, perhaps unique in the history of Nigeria. I believe this occasion is for 'Remembrance and Thanksgiving'.

For me, it was a double loss. He was a close friend, a colleague and a companion and like all Nigerians, I have also lost a public officer of immense ability and capable of making a positive difference to so many lives. In fact, his death at the height of his powers was one of the greatest losses suffered by this country. However, as a Muslim, I believe that everything is pre-ordained by Almighty Allah. Nothing from the beginning of the earth through the end of time could have happened differently. Because everything has been ordained by Almighty Allah. No effort, device, maneuvering by anybody, would have made the slightest difference to events as they have been planned and willed by our Master. Therefore, instead of mourning and regretting about what might have happened if someone did or did not exist, or somebody did or did not do such a thing; let us collectively remember Shehu fondly, pray for him, give thanks to Allah for Shehu's life, his contributions and his achievements.

The organizers of this event have requested me to speak about Shehu Yar'Adua as I knew him. It will be appropriate therefore to go back in time and set the background. The 1953 Katsina Middle School Intake of 96 boys and girls was the highest on record. This was because the following year, 1954, the Middle School system in the North was to be replaced by Senior Primary and Provincial Secondary School system. Thirty-two of us were left at Katsina Middle School and 64 became the pioneers of Malumfashi Senior Primary School. Late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, then called Shehu Daudawa, was among the 64 who went to Malumfashi Senior Primary School.

After the drought and subsequent famine reached its climax in 1952, the following year's rain was abundant. The rains flattened the site of the temporary accommodation of Senior Primary School, Malumfashi. Shehu and his mates were evacuated at night and taken back to Katsina to continue as Day Senior Primary School pupils. Our class, the last school of the Middle School was dispatched to a temporary site at Kafur Souri Agricultural School as Kankia Senior Primary School. Shehu joined us. This was how Shehu and I met and remained classmates for nine years; friends and companions for life. Having spent three years in Senior Primary School, our class was allowed to sit for Secondary School exams. Shehu and I went to Katsina Provincial

Secondary School, now Government Secondary School, Katsina. Shehu was a House Captain, and the school Football Captain and was in the school's first Hockey-Eleven. In addition, he was an effective member of the school Debating and Dramatic Societies, and a member of the Cadet Corp. He enjoyed reading. He was a voracious reader. And we were almost inseparable.

Shehu and I choose the Army as a career. The major influence and encouragement was the late Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Isah Usman Nagogo. Whenever late General Hassan Usman Katsina was on leave from the Military Academy, Sandhurst, the Emir would instruct him to come and talk to Forms IV, V and VI about the attractions of the military. The Emir went as far as to lobby the Army to open a Military Cadet Corp in our school. Shehu and I were developed and sustained until we took the Army Cadet exams and were admitted into the Nigerian Military Training College as Corps V in 1963... in 1962, I beg your pardon. After six months cadet training at NMTC Kaduna, Shehu went to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant two years later and posted to 1st Infantry Battalion at Enugu.

These reminiscences would be incomplete if I do not mention Shehu's marriage to Binta, daughter of another Shehu, Sarkin Maska. Late Mutawallin Katsina, Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua, Shehu's father and astute Minister of Lagos Affairs in Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's Cabinet, was a life-long friend of Alhaji Shehu Galadima Maska, District Head of Funtua and Minister of Works and Housing of Northern Nigeria in late Alhaji Sir Abubakar Ahmadu Bello's Cabinet.

General Shehu who was named after his father's friend was not aware that at a certain stage his father had decided to get Binta married to him. When we were both Second Lieutenants, Shehu in the 1st Battalion and I at Lagos Garrison Organisation in Lagos, we were summoned and asked to go to visit Binta at Queen's College, Illorin. That was it. No better choice could have been made even by Shehu himself. In 1964, if I could recall clearly, the marriage took place. The first child was named Murtala and the second Buhari. The esteemable Binta who is sitting among us has been the faithful wife of Shehu and survived the ordeal of his death with courage, faith and patience.

During the civil war, Shehu served in 2nd Infantry Division Nigerian Army, under Generals Murtala, Haruna, Jalo and Oluleye. Subsequently after the war, Shehu was posted to Lagos Garrison as Colonel, General Staff under Brigadier-General Godwin Ali. After the 1975 coup, Shehu became Minister of Transport briefly; and when Murtala was assassinated, he was elevated to the Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters under a certain General Olusegun Obasanjo. At the end of the regime, he retired and went into business and later, politics.

Our careers virtually paralleled, as our responsibilities grew. So Shehu grew in maturity and political consciousness and awareness. A very intelligent person, he recognized the flow almost immediately an argument is developed. He had few superiors as an articulate exponent of causes he believed in. He had a passionate desire to take part or to head a government that succeeded. We sat together in Supreme Military Council and Federal Executive Council deliberations. Shehu, when he was called on to speak, was articulate, precise to the point, and always went for the important issues, seldom wasting time on frivolities. He was therefore an important and influential member of the governments he served and left a deep impression on all those who interacted with him. Nothing in private discussions got him more heated than wrong doing in government whether at local government, state or federal level. As I said, he had a passionate desire to change things for the better. That I believe is partly responsible for his decision which was carefully considered over several years to enter politics.

I do not feel particularly qualified to speak of Shehu as a politician. But I believe he brought to bear the same strength of qualities when he was in government, namely; acute intelligence, capacity to plan, belief in himself and prodigious energy. In addition, because this is Nigerian politics, he had to look for another vital ingredient: big resources. That he succeeded in politics is well known and it is an attribute to his versatility and all-round qualities. The name Shehu Musa Yar'Adua will never be forgotten in the affairs of government, military and politics as long as there is a Nigeria. All his friends and associates remember him with sadness but also with gratitude to Allah for a life well spent. Wassalamu Alaikum, Warahmattullahi.

Thank you all.

REMARKS

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



It is my honour and privilege to welcome this distinguished audience to the 3rd in the series of Shehu Yar'Adua Memorial lectures.

We are here again today to celebrate the triumph of courage and the resilience of history of a good man. Let us for a moment recall the memory of Shehu.

He was born in Katsina on 5th March 1943. He was a visionary. A leader who struggled for the freedom of the Nigerian people and pursued with vigour the democracy of the mind. He fought for a united Nigeria for stability and social harmony. His tenacity in pursuit of justice and prosperity sent ripples far beyond the borders of Nigeria. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua died in Abakaliki Prison on 8th December 1997 at the age of 54. Nigeria lost a hero, but gained the legacy of a socio-political platform on which Nigeria's modern democracy is built.

As we are here to pay tribute to him, we also need to reflect and learn. We need to learn about a leader who wanted Nigeria to be a nation with a purpose, a national purpose. He envisioned Nigeria as a peaceful and prosperous nation in which everyone would have a fulfilled life. He constructed bridges of understanding based on equity and social justice; the surrender of old fears and mutual mistrust amongst the peoples of this nation.

He preached that there is strength in cooperation and unity of purpose. It is in the context of this vision that the title of today's lecture is most appropriate – "South-South Cooperation!"

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, let us anticipate an enlightening expose.

The great lecturer today, Dr. Ahmed Ali, the President of the Islamic Development Bank was chosen because of the contributions of his bank to the growth of developing economies.

His bank, IDB had in the last 25 years assisted developing nations by financing trade, providing scholarships, supporting research and funding training and technical assistance to promote the empowerment of poor peoples.

I am sure his lecture will be a veritable addition to the body of knowledge being acquired by the Yar'Adua Foundation.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as we reflect and pay tribute to a visionary realist, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the ideals which have made Shehu a leader for all seasons.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guest lecturer, ladies and gentlemen, once again, I welcome you all to this historic lecture.



SPEECH

DR. AHMAD MOHAMMED ALI
PRESIDENT, ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK



I would first like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for inviting me to be the Special Guest of Honour on this momentous occasion, and particularly for the extraordinary warm hospitality accorded me since my arrival in this great country.

I am honoured to join you today to commemorate an illustrious son of this great nation, late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who passed away on December 8, 1997. I pray Almighty God to forgive him his sins and bless his soul (amin). I would also like to thank the family-members friends, and well-wishers of the late General Shehu Yar'Adua for their continuous support and contribution to the establishment of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation.

I shall begin by saying a few words about the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. History has recorded that the late General Yar'Adua was a valiant soldier, a successful entrepreneur, and a gifted statesman whose far-sighted vision, wise strategy, and determined struggle for the future of Nigeria contributed immensely to the democratic system in place today in Nigeria. The late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was a patriotic citizen, a philanthropist, a charismatic leader devoid of ethnic bias, religious and tribal

prejudice whose legacy will linger on in the minds of Nigerian for decades to come. His demise was a great loss not only to Nigerians but to all peace loving people all over the globe. He will be remembered for his religious tolerance, kindness to neighbours, and sense of humility to people of diverse backgrounds. He will continue to be an outstanding example for all people, especially for the new and future generations of Nigerians.

His exemplary characters are in accordance with the teachings of Islam, the religion he professed, which enjoins Muslims to co-exist with their neighbours and respect people of different religious beliefs, languages, tribes, and colour.

In addition to verses which call for unity and tolerance among mankind, evidence of the good relations between Muslims and non-Muslims abound in the life of Prophet Muhammed (May God's blessing be upon him) in Medina where he lived with a Jewish community. Sayings of Prophet Muhammad (May God's blessing be upon him) also lend support to Islam's emphasis on good relationship with neighbours. Clearly, peaceful co-existence with neighbours is part of the teachings of Islam strongly enjoined on Muslims in the Holy Qur'an.

Tolerance and dialogue among people of different faiths should therefore be the hallmark of all Nigerians. Prosperity lies in cooperation and hard work, so let all Nigerians work together for a better future. It should be stressed that unity and tolerance lead to peace and stability which in turn provide an enabling environment for economic development and social progress of a country, especially in the age of globalization. This was exactly the dream of late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua for Nigeria, which is now being pursued by the new regime in Nigeria. Under the leadership of His Excellency, President Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria is increasingly becoming more and more a pacesetter for other countries in Africa to follow.

The issue of tolerance and cooperation among different people that I have touched upon also permeates the policies and programmes of the institution to which I belong, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The IDB is a multilateral financial institution that was established in 1975. It is not a religious institution. IDB only uses modes of financing that are based on Islamic principles. The cornerstone of the IDB's operations and services is financing development projects in its member countries. All communities (regardless of their religious affiliation, tribes or languages) in member countries benefit from IDB's financing and does not meddle in their internal affairs. It also helps its least developed member countries with concessional financing, similar to the IDA of the World Bank. The IDA provides special assistance to Muslim communities in non-member countries to help them become better citizens, improve the welfare of their countries and promote social progress and infrastructure development.

Membership in IDB has spread across four major continents of the world viz; Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. All of them are developing countries demonstrating a real south-south cooperation. IDB's membership has grown to 53 today from 22 in 1975, which translates into a growth rate of 141 per cent. Forty-seven per cent of member countries are in Africa, which has the largest concentration of IDB member countries, 25 per cent are in the Middle-East, 13 per cent in Asia, and 9 per cent

in Central Asia (drawn from former members of the USSR), 4 per cent in Europe, and 2 per cent in South America. In contrast, in terms of distributing of paid-up capital structure, member countries in the Middle-East have 59%, Africa 23% and the rest 18%.

Since its inception, IDB has increased financial flows to member countries to foster their economic and social development and promote cooperation among them. To date, total financial flow of IDB member countries amounts to US \$25 billion with the social sector (mainly primary education and basic health) and poverty alleviation, agricultural development and food security each accounting for 20 per cent of the IDB's operations financing. In order to meet the additional needs of its member countries, IDB is continuously expanding its resource mobilization activities and this has culminated in the creation of several entities which now constitute the IDB group.

IDB is a role model and a true south-south cooperation institution especially in the area of financial flow among member countries of the developing south. IDB has no member countries from the developed world and so it uses the resources from member countries that are better off to assist the less well off member countries. Thus, the major contributors (such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, etc) to the capital of the IDB benefit less from IDB's project financing than the minor contributors that gain more from concessional operations and services of IDB which are geared towards enhancing the objectives of south-south cooperation such as economic cooperation, transfer of technology, capacity building technical assistance, information technology, global trade, etc.

Through its technical cooperation program, project financing, and trade operations activities, IDB has been in the vanguard of advancing and promoting the agenda of south-south cooperation. Some of the key areas in the agenda of south-south cooperation such as health, education, agriculture, food scarcity, industry, environment, trade, science and technology, and social security are included in the development themes of IDB's medium-term Strategic Agenda.

IDB has been encouraging contractors and consultants in member countries to take a more active role in south-south cooperation. This is in the form of consultants in two member countries working jointly in a third member country. So far, IDB has been using 90% of consultancy firms from its member countries for its project financing, thereby promoting south-south cooperation in the private sector.

IDB has been working as a catalyst for south-south cooperation in financing projects to support the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in member countries in Africa in collaboration with the FAO. Under the SPFS, both IDB and the FAO provide the finance and the cooperating country provides the experts and technology while the beneficiary country utilizes the services of the experts for a given period.

Nigeria has been playing a pivotal leadership role in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries of the south and in forging an operational linkage between technical and economic cooperation among developing countries. Nigeria is a real partner in south-south cooperation as evident from many activities such as Nigeria Trust Fund (managed by the African Development Bank) which is a fund from a developing country helping other developing countries in Africa; this is similar to the IDB's special least developed member countries' account (LDMCs account). As a great country, Nigeria has continued to take the lead in all initiatives including peace-efforts and global issues that are paramount to the success of the south-south cooperation. In recent years, for example, Nigeria has championed the debt "forgiveness" paradigm and has represented the developing countries at the G7 meeting to negotiate and press for concrete action on the issue, Nigeria has also actively participated in both the G77 and D-8 summits to demonstrate its commitment and interest in fostering the south-south cooperation initiative.

In conclusion, I would like to sum up that IDB and Nigeria are partners in south-south cooperation and are both working to promote cooperation and solidarity among developing countries. Both are also active and playing dynamic roles in the international scene in order to create a fairer and more just international

trading system for developing countries in the South. In the era of WTO challenges, the developing countries are in dire need to foster and strengthen their cooperation to be better prepared to face the challenges ahead.

Because of what IDB and Nigeria stand for, there is plenty of room for cooperation in the form of technical experts from Nigeria assisting IDB member countries. IDB and Nigeria could also cooperate in strengthening regional and sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS, and the Lake Chad Basin Commission through identifying studies that could benefit Nigeria and IDB member countries. Similarly, Nigeria can cooperate with IDB to harmonize efforts of institutions like D-8, G77, and the OAU to promote south-south cooperation.

IDB stands ready to work closely with Nigeria to keep alive what late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua stood for, especially his vision for a just world through tolerance, mutual understanding and cooperation so that his struggle will not be in vain.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is very important to emphasize the ideals of IDB which are the promotion of the standard of living of people generally and the concern for the well being of ordinary men and women. I am sure that late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua stood for the same. I am pleased to observe that the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation is also pursuing the same ideals. Here stands the common goals of IDB and the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation.

Once again, I pray to Almighty God to have mercy on late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. Please permit me, at this point, to conclude by quoting a paragraph from his speech at a dinner given in his honour in Tehran on 15th January, 1978.

"A common attachment to the dignity of man irrespective of colour or creed, and a common desire to bring about a more just and equitable world economic order which would arrest and eventually reverse the growing gap between the richer and poorer nations of the world."

Thank you all.

REMARKS

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO



We've heard a lot said this morning about Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. What I know is that those of us who know him in different walks of life and at different stages can stay here till tomorrow and we will have more to say about him. To me, what is important is simply this-- Shehu has come, Shehu has passed through, Shehu has gone.

But we are here. And we are here this morning, particularly because of the life Shehu lived. And I will want each and every one of us just to think and reflect: What will be said about you when you have gone. What will they say about you when you have gone? And the Vice President in his characteristic way said some of you that were afraid to stand up and be counted; now you are welcome on board.

Well, I have no comment on that. But I will just ask what will you want people to say about you when you are gone? And maybe, if you apply your mind to that, maybe, what you are doing today which is good you will do more of it. And what you are doing today which is not good enough, you will endeavour to stop it and probably do something that is better. So that when you are gone, the book that you have written as a result of your passing through this place, will be read. And some people may try to read different things from what you have written, but a lot of people will read exactly what you have written.

I have said several times that I learned a few lessons from my interaction with Shehu. You might say "Ah, shouldn't it be the other way round; after all, you are older." And if you cannot learn lessons from everything that is around you, then I wonder the type of person you are. I learn lessons from everything around me. I have told the story of how I learned a lot of lessons from lizards when I was in 'Inter-Centre.'

Well, in his relationship with me, I know that Shehu will never lie to me, never. If Shehu found a question difficult to answer, he will rather not answer it than to lie. I wonder what one can say about you. I have met people who, when they know they are lying and I know they are lying they say 'Allah, Wallahi Tallahi. I say Ah, 'Wallahi Tallahi' is it not calling God as a witness to a lie? Is that not what he is doing? How can you call God as witness to a lie?

Shehu placed me on a pedestal --- almost as high as the pedestal he placed his father. And I knew that there were only two of us at that time who could tell him not to do a thing. And if both of us separately told him something he wanted to do should not be done, Shehu will stop it. He will not do it. One was his father. I was the other.

I don't know whether I have told this story publicly about Shehu. But before he formed, or he went to the party --- V.P. what was your first party? What do they call it? PF? Yes PF. He came to me and he told me what he wanted to form a party. And I said, Shehu, was there anything you had wanted us to do when we were in government that we didn't do? He said, No. I said, but tell me, do you want this party as a launching pad to put you in power? He said 'No'. Then I prayed for him, and he left.

Then of course, the party went from PF to --- and then eventually, you ended up with the one slightly to the left and one slightly to the right. And Shehu went to the SDP. I didn't. After he had briefed me, whenever we met, I just asked, how is it going? He will tell me, 'It is going well.' I was not more interested than that. But he went out on his campaign, I think that time, it was for primary. And he went to a particular area in the South-East where a son of the soil was also contesting. And they had poisoned the atmosphere that any member

of that area who voted for Shehu should be regarded as a bastard. You know the usual ethnic or religious, or tribal, whatever you want to call it. And Shehu had heard this. So when he got there, he mounted the rostrum and after giving out what he would do --- then, he then said, "I have heard that people have told you that if you voted for me, you must be regarded as bastards." Of course, nobody will own up. So he said, "Well, those who said that, they are right, and they are wrong." There was pin-drop silence. 'Ah ah, how can they be right and wrong at the same time? If we vote for you, we are either bastards or we are not bastards.'

Then, Shehu went on and said, "Look, he is in this business because Nigeria needs to be served. And the situation in which we are at this moment is not a situation for experiment. It is a situation where you need tried and tested people." They were listening to him. And then he went on. He said, "Well, I'm a Fulani man, but if any Fulani man comes out today to contest, because there is no one that I believe had been tried and tested and passed, as at that time; I will oppose him. Not because he's a Fulani man. Because I believe Nigeria needs to be served." Everybody was listening.

Then he went on, and that's where he put me in trouble, and that's how I knew what had transpired. He said, 'There is only one man in Nigeria today, if he wants this job, all my outfit, I will hand over to him and I follow him. And he said, "You didn't ask me who is the man?" They said "Who is the man?" He said, "Olusegun Obasanjo." Don't clap. Then he asked, "If I do that will I be a bastard?" They said "No---oo."

He said, "Then if you vote for me, will you be a bastard?" They said "No---oo."

His politics, his life, transcended tribalism, religious sentiment, linguistic barrier, anything jingoism. That was Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. The man whose legacy we are celebrating, and the man whose legacy is worth celebrating. Once again, Dr. Ahmad Ali, we thank you for the message you have brought for us on "South-South Cooperation", and we have heard what Islamic Development Bank stands for. And I believe that we all take note.

But let us --- as we celebrate the life, the deeds and the legacy of Shehu Yar'Adua, let us tarry a while and ask what will be the legacy that you will leave behind. What will be the legacy that I will leave behind? What will they say you have done for Nigeria? What will they say I have done for Nigeria. And every day that passes, we are getting close and who knows when it will happen and how it will happen. General Buhari said it is destiny. I have no doubt about that. I believe that nothing happens that God doesn't want to happen. But why should bad things happen from your hand? Why don't you leave it to somebody else's hand? To let it happen through somebody else's hand? Why? And then you tell me that it is destined to happen that way. If I am destined to go to prison, why are you the one who put me in prison? Why? If Shehu Musa Yar'Adua is destined to die in prison, why is it Abacha that put him in prison? Why? I do not query the act of God, but I query the act of man.

I thank you.



Tafida
Performed by the
National Troupe of Nigeria

VIDEO INTERVIEW

DR. CHUBA OKADIGBO

SENATE PRESIDENT

NTA People and Events Programme



Shehu was an extra-ordinary Nigerian, a well trained soldier, who rose to the position of Major-General: an administrator, a man of power with capacity as the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, virtually, Prime Minister of Nigeria that time. After service in the military, he founded, along with others, some businesses among which included Habib Bank, a shipping business, some interests in oil services, publishing business and he was successful there also. He decided to come into politics from the civilian angle; that is where we became more closely associated. He worked very hard in the political arena to bring together men and women of different nationalities around the country; put them together in very viable organizations such as the People's Front. He helped to establish the Social Democratic Party, to get people elected on the platform of the party. He contested

himself as a Presidential aspirant and became the candidate of the SDP. In short, he was a most highly faceted man; a man of several abilities in soldiering, business, in politics and even in religion. Even the fact that the Mosque over there, the Central Mosque was largely the product of Tafida's imagination and industry. So, a man of many parts, a man of many seasons. Yes, he was that.

He worked for a free, democratic, open society - a Nigerian society. That was his general position, where bridges are built across the various frontiers - north, south, east, west; within the various social, political zones in the country. Bridges built to avoid religious conflicts within the major religions dominant in Nigeria. Dialogue, instruments of dialogue were established to discuss ways and means of furthering peace, unity, and progress in the country. He dreamt of a dynamic society and with regards to his association with late General Murtala Mohammed, whom I think was very central in his political thinking, the way and manner that Murtala Mohammed visualized Nigeria, and left Nigeria dynamically a disciplined society where things were done.

The characteristic feature, I think, politically of Yar'Adua was his capacity to get things done, not just to talk about them --- to get things done by bringing people together. He never assumed that he knew everything, he admitted what he knew, admitted what he didn't know and put people together to get them done. And once the programme was set to get them done --- systematically, to get them done, wherever it may be in the country; irrespective of barriers. He was a man who knew how to break barriers by personal association and industry; by determination. This is the kind of country that he wanted.

He wasn't afraid of problems. He wanted them identified, solutions identified. And then, he had the will power to go ahead and get these things done; to clear things that had been causing problems. That is the kind of man he was.

He remembered that it was during the era of Murtala Mohammed that Nigeria became the centrepiece of --- that Africa became the centre piece of Nigerian foreign policy and under Murtala Mohammed everything was done to liberate Africa – Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, and so forth. African liberation became a very important item in the political agenda of Nigeria for a free Africa. And if Africa has to be free, and did indeed become free, then for Shehu, that freedom must be translated into action, into dynamic action to provide the basic necessities and food and roads, bridges in Nigeria.

For example, he was the one who was responsible for the construction of the Tin Can Island Port. He wasn't thinking of the regular old ports, he was thinking of the future, he was a man of the future. Now, the port is very modern, it has been very modern, if anything is wrong now, it's because they are not maintaining it properly. But Shehu built the port to international standard, a port that looked into the future to take in events in Nigeria. The only thing at that time when he built this port, when he got this port built, we had demurrages and all kinds of blockades in the ports, making things difficult to come into Nigeria. So he opened them up.

That was the kind of man he was. A man of a great vision, a bridge builder we used to call him; a bridge builder; he built bridges. He wasn't afraid of problems. He wanted them identified, solutions identified. And then, he had the will power, you know, to go ahead and get these things done; to clear things that had been causing problems. That is the kind of man

he was. If it is a religious problem, attack it, deal with it. If it is a political problem, go straight at it you know, and bearing in mind that the future is not waiting, the future is now. That was why he accomplished so much in so short a time and why we miss him so much --- Yes.

Shehu was never a vassilator. He doesn't vassilate. He was very clear on what he wanted to do and he would bring people together to discuss them. He was a great listener; very strong willed man, but he would listen, and he was ready to change his views if there was a superior argument; he would accept the argument. Then, that argument and that dialogue must be translated into a programme of action. That is Shehu. It must be translated into programmes of action. People would be chosen to do this or that with respect to the promulgation, prosecution of the programme. Even the propaganda for the programme, all these would be set out and he would, he is like a conductor, make sure that all the actors for that particular play, did their job.

To that extent, the vassilations that we find sometimes in the PDP would not please Tafida. The General, as we used to call him. He was trying to see that there is direction when it came to matters. See, our problem has been by and large in the PDP, the management of success, you know, managing the success --- success came --- very extra-ordinary success. Control of the vast majority of the local government councils across the federation – north, south, east, west. Control of the legislatures, states and national. Control of the federal government, the federal executive; the Senate, the House of Reps; State Assemblies, Governors, the vast

majority of them are PDP. Now, how to keep these, all these people in one ship, moving in the right direction has been the problem. It requires hands and brains, who have been schooled, tutored and successful, equally successful in politics, democratic politics.

NTA:

You said, for example, that you knew him more as a man in politics than as a soldier.

Dr. Okadigbo:

You see, the extra-ordinary thing about him is --- well he is General Yar'Adua but you don't see that General in him. You see, except that it came to play in the manner that he organized political actions. You will see his soldiering come out if we organized a convention and we wanted to meet at a certain time. He would be able to say 'well, when did the people leave Anambra, what time did they leave Enugu, Onitsha.' He would use his soldiering background, geography, and time, and put them together and say, "Well, it means they would be in Kaduna at so so time. And people would come at so so time, and they would be here at so so time". So a time for the meeting will be arranged and it would just come to pass that the time he fixed was appropriate to the arrival of people from different parts of the country. That is where for example, his soldierly abilities will come to play and the programmes of action would be set out, and the logistics for that action well set out --- that was it.

Now, if he were around, he would be very worried that we have not been able to manage our successes very well. He would try to see to it that this success is translated into dividends for the people. You know, he was very worried about people, people's welfare, very, very worried. He wouldn't want to see these vacillations, policy vacillations, and differences between various sectors of the party. Or you talk of marginalization which we in the east talk about or of executive, legislative disagreements to the point that they became too hot. Shehu would have called me right away and said "Ah, Haba, Chuba, what is going on." It's true. He would listen to my point of view. He wouldn't just say 'Look, look, put them there because I wouldn't take that'. You, know. But there would be dialogue, a person like that is required now

and we are looking for that person who can bring anybody in the party, whoever high or low, round the table you see, and say, 'Let's face it', you know.

There was a way he used to do it, I remember sometimes, he would say 'okay', he would put his cap on the table and say 'Okay, let everybody lower his --- bring himself down to reality and let us solve this problem'. He was a problem solver. I think that is the thing. The victory that we achieved as PDP will not be a surprise to Shehu. He is a man of victory --- so, he wouldn't be intoxicated by victory. He never planned for failure. He would say 'I have never worked for failure'. So, before he won, he had ideas of what to do with the victory, you see.

Now, we are very happy that the Vice President in the person of Turaki Atiku Abubakar has been his close associate and has learnt a lot from him organizationally, and for that reason, has been able to a large extent to mold together what we will call Shehu's men and women across the federation. I would like to commend him for that.

Let me tell you something, before we stop. I would like to tell you --- the last time I saw him was in Enugu Prison. I went to see him in Enugu Prison, this man of hope. And I was very sad to see a whole Shehu being escorted by warders. It was a very sad experience. When he came in and I looked at him, tears were in his eyes and my eyes but it would be cowardice on my part to let it drop. So the tears were suspended in our eyes and he turned his back, and I turned my back until we recovered. Then, we sat down, before the Comptroller. In the course of the whole thing, I felt so bad -- I said, look General, give me your permission and let me find out how to take you out of this prison. We can do it. I have the capacity to take you out of here and out of the country. So I said that to him very clearly because it was unimaginable that, that is where he was, you know.

And he said, 'I have hope that things will get better. Please Chuba, don't think about that. Let's move on'. You see, this is what touched me.


NTA:

Thank you very much for coming, Sir.



4th
**PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION**

MARCH 9, 2002

- Welcome by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
 - Congratulatory Message by H.E. President Nelson Mandela
 - Tribute by H.E. Alhaji Shehu Shagari
 - Address by H.E. John Kufuor
 - Remarks by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo
- 

WELCOME

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



It is my sincere pleasure to welcome all of you to the 4th National Programme of Commemoration in honour of Shehu Yar'Adua and the Commissioning of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre.

Through your support, I believe we have succeeded in building a Centre worthy of Tafida's noble spirit.

When the Board of Trustees met last October to choose a date for the Commissioning of the Centre, we decided on March 9th, that being the closest Saturday to the anniversary of Tafida's birthday of March 5th. As you know, the National Programme of Commemoration is held each year to celebrate his birth rather than to mourn his death.

But we did not realize at that time just how significant the date was. Shehu was arrested in the early morning hours of March 9th exactly seven years ago.

And so we are once again reminded that men may plan but God is the best of planners.

Many of us had the pleasure of knowing Shehu. Future generations of Nigerians, however, will only know him through the legacy he left, and our work to realize his vision for this great nation.

Shehu was an extraordinary man with an extraordinary capacity for generosity, selflessness, tolerance, patience and large heartedness.

He believed in this country. He believed in our people. He never doubted that Nigeria is destined for greatness – if only we could all work a little harder, educate and discipline ourselves a bit more, identify and nurture the remarkable talent that exists in this land.

Shehu knew ordinary Nigerians to be good and decent people. But he also understood that it

was the responsibility of leadership to ensure that these citizens were offered opportunities and provided a conducive atmosphere to live a life of dignity and self-worth.

He appealed to the goodness in people in order to inspire them to do more – to do better.

The Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation was conceived shortly after Tafida's death in prison for opposing the perpetuation of military rule. We began to discuss building the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre as well as the need to establish programmes and projects to continue many of Shehu's important initiatives for democracy and bridge building.

Of course, at that time we were not quite sure of the way forward. Mr. President was still in prison. Darkness prevailed in the land. But as in so many circumstances in life, God in His infinite mercy, presented us a way forward. The veil was lifted on the country's years of repression. Mr. President was freed and once again bestowed with the responsibility of leading this nation to democracy.

And while we recognize that democracy does not always guarantee everyone's personal aspirations, it is the best system known for the development and prosperity of a nation.

Some of our leaders may disappoint us. But every Nigerian has a responsibility to hold their leaders accountable – not for what can be personally gained today – but for what is best for future generations of Nigerians.

We must remember that our success as leaders cannot be measured by what we build for ourselves but what we leave behind for others.

Shehu always counseled patience, discipline and hard work. This administration is attempting to lay the basis for a system of governance that will succeed us as individuals. That is what Shehu worked for – and what we have chosen to continue in his absence.

He is no longer with us, but the principles by which he lived his life continue to guide us.

We trust that the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre will stand as a symbol of unity in Nigeria; and that the Unfinished Bridge will serve as a reminder for the need to continue his work to build bridges across the various divides.

We hope you will visit the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre again and again; gain inspiration from Tafida's life of service; and ask yourselves, "In what way can I also contribute to the building of this country, Nigeria, that we love so dearly."



CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

H.E. PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA
READ ON HIS BEHALF BY
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER OF SOUTH AFRICA

It gives me great pleasure to send this message of congratulations on the occasion of the Commissioning Ceremony of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre.

I was extremely honoured two years ago to serve as Special Guest of Honour at the launching of the Yar'Adua Foundation. It is gratifying to know that you have accomplished so much in the short time that has passed since then.

As I said at the launching, Shehu Yar'Adua was a great African, a defender of democracy and a brave and courageous freedom fighter. We pray today that his spirit will live on through the work of the Foundation and that the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre will continue to serve as a symbol of unity and social justice in Nigeria.

I look forward to visiting Nigeria again soon and the opportunity to tour the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre.

Thank you.



TRIBUTE

H.E. ALHAJI SHEHU SHAGARI



When my government was overthrown, I was held under house arrest for two and a half years in Ikoyi. It was after my release, while in detention in my village, Shagari, that Shehu Yar'Adua came to visit me. Anytime he was in Katsina for Sallah, he would make sure he visits me in Sokoto. He would first drive straight to the Sultan's house, and then drive to my house in Shagari. If he did not find me, he would come to my farm which is five kilometers from my house in Shagari.

I remember vividly that when Shehu came to me in the 1980s to tell me that he would be joining politics, he met me on my farm. He said, "I have come to seek your advice. I want to go into politics. I have ideas for the future of this country but unless I join politics, they cannot be not achieved". He told me, "I want to form a new political party to re-establish democracy in Nigeria. I don't want to join any other party. I will only allow good, serious people into the party". He outlined the details to bring about humane and responsible leadership in Nigeria for everybody. He said there is no place for divisiveness in his new no-nonsense party.

I told him, forget it. That is not politics. Democracy is the government of the people. Democracy is one man, one vote. It is the majority that carries the vote. If you only

admit good people, they are few. In politics, there are angels of course, and there are devils also. Politics is for everybody. It doesn't matter whether devils or angels, what counts is their votes. I know Shehu Yar'Adua to be realistic in his approach and enterprise. I tried to explain to him that he must accommodate as many people as possible because democracy is a game of numbers.

It was at a very early stage of his life that Shehu knew what he wanted to do, what he wanted to say and he pursued it vigorously with determination until he achieved it. We first knew Shehu as an administrator, then later Shehu the leader and politician serving his fatherland, Nigeria.

In the brilliant play of Shehu's life, permit me to say that this was a three part play. He achieved the first part of the play as a combat soldier pursuing the nation's indivisible ideal. He achieved the second part while in the Federal Military Government of General Obasanjo who he served as Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters. In the third part of the play, Shehu was indeed a statesman fighting for democracy and the rule of law.

He was a good leader and friend.

ADDRESS

H.E. JOHN KUFUOR
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA



Ghana and Nigeria ascended to tread the same evolutionary path since independence. I believe it is to our common goal that there now is a convergence of views on the need for democratic governance in both our countries. Fortunately, the current leadership in our two countries relate well with each other and share a common vision for the sub-region of West Africa. Our two countries will continue to learn from each other and cooperate with each other in the best possible way.

So far, it has been our misfortune that politics in our countries have not provided the faith and opportunity for people with potential leadership qualities to develop and provide inspiration for future generations. Too often, people who have held out promise have been cut off before they have had the chance to develop and mature. Too often, our countries

have had to acknowledge their greatness only after they have died.

The man we are gathered to pay tribute to today, might belong in this group which we have called "the people with unfinished business". He died early. Unfortunately for us in Africa in circumstances that are too familiar. But luckily, unfinished though his business was, he made such an impact as to be an inspiration to many of us today and for the next years to come.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua could have chosen friends and colleagues mainly from the military, for after all, he was a soldier. But he didn't. He could have chosen his friends and followers from the north. After all, he came from a well respected and famous northern family. But he didn't. And he could have chosen his friends

Every once in while, a person comes along who is driven by destiny... Of all the accolades that have been accorded him, it is that of a bridge builder that impresses me the most.

and followers from the Islamic faith. For after all, he was a devout Muslim from a good Muslim family. But he didn't. Instead, the members of the Yar'Adua Group as they came to be known, were drawn from all corners of Nigeria regardless of tribe and religion and occupation. That surely, is the reason why even though he served them as chief, the ambition of the family he left as leaders of Nigeria, it can be said, contributed in no small measure to the realization of the kind of democratic dispensation in Nigeria today.

Today, more than ever, African countries need unity to be able to tackle the challenge of lifting the continent into the main frame of the global continent. This requires a tried and committed leader which has sadly often eluded Africa. As a result, there is pessimism in many quarters at the very mention of Africa's developmental progress.

The challenge therefore for our current leaders in Africa is to face up to this reality and put our affairs in order. The only way to ensure that there is improvement in the quality of life of our people and the image of Africa is to establish and maintain the culture of good governance in our countries. The dignity of the African, although trampled upon can only be restored when the rule of law, good governance, religious and ethnic tolerance and the respect of human rights becomes the norm around our continent. These should be shared values among leaders across the continent to effect the needed positive change in image. It is in response to this challenge that African leaders have formulated and adopted the NEPAD documents activated for African development.

And at this juncture, I must pay tribute to President Obasanjo for the role he played in the formulation and adoption of the documents. African countries have freely adopted NEPAD and we must therefore be sincere to its values and committed to realizing its objectives. If we fail, we shall run out of excuses. Colonialism certainly had a debilitating effect on us. Slavery dragged us back. Unfair trade practices continue to make it difficult for us to compete on the global market. But these setbacks notwithstanding, with determination, we can make headway.

It is our hope that in time, with leadership and good governance we can go from the third world to the first world within one generation. I believe our countries need to pull together, encourage each other, be truthful with each other and point out where we are going wrong. We must make a concerted effort to heed the call and make NEPAD relevant to our people. And Nigeria must assume its significant quota of its shared responsibilities. By your size, your numbers, your resources, and the sheer exuberance and dynamism of your people, Nigeria is well positioned to move ahead the sub region, the continent, and indeed, the black race.

This past week, at the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Australia, it seemed to me that there still exists a lot of goodwill for Africa. The world is willing us on and indeed it is up to us to get our acts together and exploit the great potential we have always had.

Mr. Chairman, I have used this occasion of the commissioning of the Centre that brought me here to address the problems of leadership in Africa. Because I believe that even though Shehu Yar'Adua did not achieve his dream of getting elected as President of Nigeria, he had the attributes of an inspired leader. Of all the accolades that have been accorded him, it is that of a bridge builder that impresses me the most. Its symbolism with the unity of Nigeria and significantly for human related programmes to improve the welfare of his compatriots are in my own opinion, the most enduring aspects of his legacy. The Centre we are commissioning today has been well endowed. It is my hope that those who will use this facility will never forget the principles that go with the man after whom the Centre is built. I hope it will open its doors to people with diverse opinions from all over the world. I hope they will be inspired by the fact that the man was single-minded in the pursuit of what he believed in and above all, I hope those who come here will build bridges in their own lives, in their work places, and in their countries.

Every once in while, a person comes along who is driven by destiny. Such a person might not live very long and Shehu Musa Yar'Adua certainly died early. Such a person might not achieve his life's ambition and Shehu Yar'Adua, may his soul rest in peace, did not achieve his dream of being elected President of Nigeria. And such a person might not have been accorded the honour due him in his life time. For Shehu Yar'Adua died as a prisoner, and yet, he left a lasting impression.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua's friends could have chosen to build a mighty Mosque in his honour. They could have chosen to go to the north and establish a project to benefit only his ethnic group. Or they could have chosen to finance a military project; all these would have been well undertaken, but they would not have captured the full metal of the man. We pray that the Shehu Yar'Adua Centre will live up to expectations and be a source of inspiration to future generations. May the children and researchers who come through these doors become proud ambassadors of the Centre and may the work that is done here be useful to Nigeria, West Africa and Africa as a whole.

Thank you and may God bless us all.



REMARKS

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

I feel honoured as President of Nigeria to come out to formally give the vote of thanks. I will also want to take this upon myself as the Chairman of Board of Trustees to thank those of you who have made it possible for all of us to gather here today. Well, I am really the nominal Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The active man is the Vice President who is supposed to be my Deputy. He is the main driving force behind the edifice, the idea of the edifice, the magnificent layout, the design of the building.

Well, if you don't honour the quality of a man I have as my Vice President, from what you have seen here today, you can then attest to it.

Though, he did one thing. After we have set up the Board of Trustees, he came and said "How do we raise funds?" I said well, how do we raise funds?. He said to me "I have come to you to ask how do we raise funds?" I said, but you know how to raise funds, don't you know. He said "No Sir, I know, but how do we raise funds?". I said that's your responsibility. And if you look at your programme, you will see what he did. He then constituted a Finance Committee; he made himself the Chairman of the Finance Committee, with my blessing of course. And all the money --- as you can see --- running into almost a billion naira, to put up, not just this edifice, but all other things that goes along with it. All that money was raised by the Finance Committee. What is even more? Not only do we have money to complete this Centre, we also have money to put aside for its maintenance for the next four years. We have not stopped there, we have enough money to put substantial amount again aside for any emergency, but that does not mean you will come to the Centre and tell them you want to borrow money.

I must apologize to the Speaker now that I looked at him and recognized him. Now, those

of you who may not know what that means, the budget has not been approved. And the good thing also is that the budget will be --- this building does not have to go to the National Assembly. So there will be no resolution in the National Assembly to call the Vice President to come and tell them how he raised the money. Not only do I find it just very, very hard not to have recognized the Speaker, I have even left one person. Of not recognizing the Chairman of my party. The Chairman of PDP, nor did I recognize the Deputy Senate President. I have to look round now in order to make sure that ---- after here, I'm not President any more. All the Governors here present, you're most welcome.



Well, seriously, the main thing I'm trying to draw attention to is what is possible for the private sector, what we can do with, if it is properly organized, organized and fruitful. This Centre will turn out to be a landmark in Abuja. And it is all private sector funded.

I want to thank the builder --- we all know the quality of Julius Berger's work. I want to quickly tell you that quality costs money but not all the things that cost money are of good quality. But I think you can see from this that it is of good quality and it costs money. And it was done in time, and done as we wanted it to be done. I want to say to the Chairman of Julius Berger and to the M.D. how grateful we are for a job well done.

I want to thank all of you who contributed --- all of you. If you are an anonymous contributor,



most of you who are anonymous, we very much appreciate your contributions. And I believe that --- like I said last night, this is an indication that Shehu Musa Yar'Adua lives on. And it is up to each and everyone of us --- are we going to live on? It does not necessarily mean that we are going to have a Centre of this magnitude --- of this magnificence to be built after we have gone. We will live on for what we stand for and for what we live and know to be true.

So when I said my former colleague, then I'm talking about my predecessor, so, President Shehu Shagari would have corrected me as my predecessor as the democratically elected President. And General Yakubu Gowon is my Oga and my predecessor as you know what I mean.


Thank you very much.





5th
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 8, 2003

- Remarks by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
 - Tribute by Chief Babalola Borisade
 - Address by H.E. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto
 - Remarks by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo
- 

REMARKS

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you all to the 5th National Programme of Commemoration in honour of Shehu Yar'Adua.

Permit me to begin my remarks by thanking our Special Guest of Honour, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for being with us in Nigeria. She has travelled very far and it is indeed a privilege that she has agreed to be with us today. Late Shehu established many important links with Pakistan. As a soldier he attended a ten-month course at Command and Staff College in Quetta where he met Mrs. Bhutto's father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was later overthrown in a military coup and sadly hanged.

While in Pakistan, Shehu travelled round the country, making many friends and drawing parallels to political and economic situations facing our two countries. One of Tafida's more important contributions as a business leader resulted from relationships formed during his stay in Quetta. When representatives of Habib Bank Pakistan elected to create a Nigerian subsidiary, it was late Tafida they invited to fashion a consortium of investors. Habib Bank has continued to provide efficient and effective banking services to the public, serving as an important corporate entity in Nigeria.

Mrs. Bhutto has continued to stand in the forefront of the struggle against dictatorship and oppression. When Tafida was imprisoned and unjustly sentenced to death for his so called "role" in a phantom coup plot, it was Mrs. Bhutto, then serving as Prime Minister, who wrote a lengthy, heart-felt letter appealing to Sani Abacha not to carry out the sentence. We thank her for her caring and concern during a very dark period of our nation's history. All of us look forward to Mrs. Bhutto's important message today regarding the challenges of

building sustainable democratic structures. Shehu worked tirelessly to establish genuine grass roots democracy in Nigeria because he believed that by doing so, all members of society would possess a true stake in the process. As leaders we must work hard to ensure that the vast majority of the citizens of this country continue to hold fast to the belief that tomorrow will be better and that the future offers promise for them and their families.

Tafida would have celebrated his 60th birthday on March 5. I believe he would be proud that we are commissioning the Olusegun Obasanjo Research Library in his memory. Those of you who knew Tafida, knew him to be a voracious reader. He was hardly ever without a book, whether history, biography or novel. In addition to books, journals and reference materials in the areas of democracy, politics, conflict resolution, Nigerian, African and world history, a collection of novels by African writers as well as a children's section are featured.

The Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Collection consists of Tafida's personal papers, his notes, documents and speeches covering the period from the Civil War through government, politics, business and his imprisonment.

We are also proud to announce the Foundation's partnership with Pathfinder International to develop a leadership program incorporating the ideals and values of late Tafida; his commitment to national unity, and to building a just and democratic society for all Nigerians. We look forward to working with Pathfinder as we seek to inspire future leaders of tomorrow with Tafida's legacy of a life of service to the nation.

Thank you very much.

TRIBUTE

CHIEF BABALOLA BORISADE



...we don't have to be eternal to be immortal.

I consider it a great honour and a unique privilege to be able to stand before this unique audience to pay tribute to a patriot, late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.

But the main event of today, that is the commissioning of the Olusegun Obasanjo Research Library within this historic edifice is an appropriate celebration of a legacy of complementary honour for both Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The potential of this unique event and the richness of this audience is a more remarkable tribute than I can ever expect to offer today. Yar'Adua's death was thought to be an end but this end has now become everything. Because of the way his life and the manner of his death continue to influence events in this nation, there is a temptation to deify his memory. But there is no need to do so. Shehu stood tall as a human being of unique qualities. He does not need to be painted as a saint. Indeed, to sanctify his memory will be to miss the core of his being and his contributions even in death toward the efforts to build a new Nigeria.

Shehu was a standard bearer who had natural nobility but became classless; his greatest gifts were humility, and patience. These gifts underpin all other attributes that he possessed. He used both gifts very wisely. He became an institution in his own right, a reference point; a presence in the polity of this nation and in the minds of all his associates.

His thinking and approach to politics started from collective goals and moved towards the concern for individual welfare. When his thoughts matured in his thinking, he recognized that Nigeria could be great if only we could construct bridges of understanding based on equity and social justice; on the

surrender of old fears and mutual trust among the peoples of this nation. Shehu was a people's man. He firmly believed that people constitute the wealth of any nation and that a nation that fails to develop its people can hardly develop anything else. Hence, his cherished slogan was 'people first'. In his full stride therefore, Shehu traveled across the nation connecting people, building bridges of peace, understanding and unity which he prized as the hope for this nation. His ability to positively impact on other people's disposition towards a united Nigeria, to create within their hearts a desire to be better and not to be bitter citizens is quite remarkable.

Shehu was 54 when he died. One might say he had a short life but his achievements and the impact his thoughts and deeds created in the imagined history of our nation attest to the fact that we don't have to be eternal to be immortal. Shehu's death inspired courage and prompted courageous inspiration.

At the 40th day prayer after his death in Katsina, a unique environment was created. This was conjured up by the emotions generated by discussions among friends, associates and other politicians who did not quite share his style. But there was a unanimous agreement that there was need to confront the institution that terminated his life. On that day, a meeting was held in which it was decided to write a letter to General Sani Abacha, the then Head of State. The import of that letter was to say that enough was enough. This forum nucleated the network among politicians with a new vigour. And it was christened 'The G18'. Of course, G18 later became 'G34'; G34 eventually became the platform for the creation of the PDP, now the biggest party in the continent. Shehu's death also gave a gift of hope to this nation.

Mr. President, I want you to recall that after your release from prison in Yola, a few associates of Shehu visited you on your farm in Otta. On that day, you made a pledge that whatever we planned to do to immortalize Shehu's name, we should count on you for your support, provided it does not include partisan politics. You said that Shehu died because he stood for something and that anybody who cannot stand for something would fall for anything. This was an inspiring statement. On our way back to Lagos, the Vice President and I shared the same vehicle and in that vehicle, we hatched a conspiracy to join others to lure you into politics so that the unimplemented assignment of national integration for which Shehu had paid the supreme sacrifice can be advanced in the right direction. Incidentally, Jacqueline Farris, the Director of this Centre became a willing instrument to achieve that objective. I am happy to note today that after all, we were not wrong.

These two events bear eloquent testimony to the fact that Shehu's death has not become an end but a beginning of a legacy of hope

for this nation. Shehu also believed that the development of people's minds is critical. When the man is enriched, be contended, all potentials could be achieved. In his estimation, knowledge was everything and that is why he read all the time. The establishment of a research library in this Centre therefore, is consistent with his vision. I can imagine him smiling and feeling fulfilled today as we commission this library. Most of us here knew Shehu or at least knew of him; a man with few words who asserted influence on others in the most oblique and graceful manner but securing loyalty in a direct manner. He offered a course, a new purpose to follow.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as we celebrate him today, let us remember that his death is not an end, but another beginning. If we can just stand firmly for justice and remain on the side of the people, we don't have to be eternal to be immortal. Ladies and gentlemen, let Shehu rest because Shehu will always be.

Thank you very much.



ADDRESS

H.E. MOHTARMA BENAZIR BHUTTO



I am privileged to join the 5th National Programme honouring late Shehu Yar'Adua – a great patriot, nationalist and democrat.

Shehu meant different things to different people. To the President, he was a trusted friend, a tested colleague. To his people, a martyr, sacrificing his life for principles. For Pakistan, a graduate of its prestigious officer cadre trained at Quetta Staff College.

I was the Prime Minister of Pakistan when President Abacha threatened Shehu's life. I wrote asking for clemency, hoping to save the life of a man who was his people's hope. I knew that the execution of a political leader breeds political turmoil.

Mr. President and Distinguished Guests, the clemency appeals fell on deaf ears. The rest is a gory chapter in Nigeria's history.

As I took pen in hand to write against the execution of Nigeria's great son, my thoughts

turned to Pakistan. In Pakistan, military dictator General Zia ul Haq executed my father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Pakistani society has still to recover from an assassination that divided a nation and plunged it into turmoil.

As I took pen in hand, I thought of Shehu's wife Binta, of his children, his brothers and sisters, their stoicism and courage in the face of imprisonment and impending death. I thought of his party colleagues, of their commitment to him and their ideals and the test of that commitment.

Humanity condemns killers. Thus victims join the celestial skies like stars burning bright, inspiring coming generations to the heights of heroism.

Shehu Yar'Adua was in Pakistan during the tragic days following its disintegration in 1971. He realized the price paid for a politicized military that undermined the human and political rights of its own people.

My father tried to keep the military out of politics. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took politics out of the drawing rooms of the rich into the huts of the poor. His Pakistan People's Party empowered the masses, ushering in socio-economic changes with far-reaching consequences.

Distinguished Guests, I learnt from my father that democracy and development go together, that human dignity and social emancipation go hand in hand.

The great Nigerian intellectual, Chinua Achebe, in his book, "The Trouble With Nigeria" wrote: "On the morning after Murtala Muhammed seized power in July 1975, public servants were found 'on seat' at seven-thirty in the morning. Even the 'go-slow' traffic that had... defied every regime vanished overnight from the streets!" Then he added: "...alas, that transformation was short-lived... in order to effect lasting change it must be followed up with a ... consistent agenda of reform..."

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests, Pakistan is an example of the tragic consequences of dictatorship. The use of the religious card by military rulers produced sectarian strife. Doctrinal differences took on a dangerous character during the military era of the eighties. Arms and weapons flooded into the country following Pakistan's emergence as a 'frontline' state during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979.

Secondly, a number of religious schools were established to recruit and train young men from the Muslim world to fight the Soviet super-power in Afghanistan. No one dreamt then that one day some of them would take on the other super-power. By 1997 there were 2,500 religious schools in the province of Punjab alone. A number of religious schools taught intolerance between sects and between religions. Products of these schools were without skills relevant to the job market. Trained to fight wars and reject democracy and elections, they looked for a messiah to give meaning to their lives. Osama Bin Laden, preaching war against the Infidels, appealed to them. They pegged their militant skills to

outstanding political disputes in the Muslim community creating a network of militias that changed the world since the bombing of the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001.

Distinguished Guests, in this twenty-first century, and the third millennium, pluralism and tolerance are threatened by a culture of violence that alters the way we live. Discord and violence have become the order of the day. In this grim scenario, the future looks bleak, unless federalism and freedom are restored. These are the twin pillars that can build a culture of tolerance, accommodation and co-existence. Political empowerment is the vital way forward as we witness the rise of religious margins in the Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Hindu civilizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the collapse of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War bringing new dreams, hopes and aspirations of a world peaceful and prosperous.

With a heavy heart I say to you that:

- The era of peace for which we prayed, became a time of war.
- Tolerance was replaced by terrorism.
- Dictatorship replaced democracy in too many countries.
- Violent fanaticism replaced religious moderation.

As the war against terrorism enters a new phase, I urge non-Muslims to know those who use violence and terror in the name of Islam:

- Their actions contradict the teaching of Islam.
- Islam is committed to tolerance and equality, and it is committed to the principles of democracy.

The image of Muslim people is hurting because too many Muslims are living in dictatorships. Muslims are hurting because in many Muslim countries, contrary to Islam, women are discriminated against in every aspect of life.

- We spend too little on our children who lack education.

- Our businessmen and women find it hard to freely compete.
- We live in societies where judges are bribed or terrorized.
- Our human rights activists are ignored. Our political leaders persecuted.
- The voice of our people is silenced through rigged elections.

The religious parties call for religious dictatorship to replace existing military regimes and authoritarian governments. They ignore the key concepts in Islam which develop democracy. These include the principles of consultation of shura, consensus known or ijma and independent judgement or ijtihaad.

Ironically Islam brought democracy to the world long before any western country. Yet today democracy is the prerogative of the West. Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University predicted a clash of civilizations between the West and the Islamic world. Ladies and Gentlemen, this clash threatens to eclipse our future unless we avert it.

Islam is part of the Judeo-Christian heritage. We are all Kitaab or People of the Book. The Prophet Abraham is the father of Jews, Christians and Muslims. The word "Muslim" actually includes the followers of the Prophets Moses, Jesus and Mohammad (Peace be Upon Him).

Ladies and Gentlemen, suddenly Muslim countries are caught in the eye of the storm. It seems the world has tumbled out of a time when Communism was the threat, the fear, and the bloc that was to be contained. Now Islam and the Muslim nations could replace Communism as the new threat, the new fear and the new world that is to be contained.

Ordinary Muslims live in fear of another terrorist attack on the West and the repercussions it could bring for Muslim people and Muslim countries. After the victims of the World Trade Center and their families, Muslims are the most victimized community.

Muslim political problems are for the time being shelved. The ongoing violence in the Middle East, between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the killing in Kashmir, the civil war in Chechnya are ignored by a world unable to distinguish between terrorism and occupation.

Defeated and disgraced after the fall of Kabul, Al-Qaeda is now trying to peg their claim to fame on the slogan that Islam and the Muslims face a new crusade. If their call is heeded to, we could witness the dawn of a new asymmetrical battle that stains the world stage with blood, violence, death and destruction.



The course of sanity, the cause of world peace lies in democracy and human rights. It lies in promoting a culture of tolerance and accommodation where people are respected irrespective of their race, religion or gender.

I tried to promote a democratic culture in Pakistan. Under the PPP government, Pakistan integrated into the global economy bringing prosperity to its people.

- We became one of the ten emerging capital markets of the world, attracting billions of dollars in foreign investment, particularly in power generation.
- We eradicated polio in our country, reduced infant mortality, and increased literacy by building thousands of schools.
- We established a Women's Bank, run by women for women giving credit to women, although we allowed men to keep their money in it.
- We tripled the economic growth rate.
- We doubled national revenues as a percentage of GDP.

It was a remarkable transformation of a society. It was a transformation that demonstrated the strength of a Muslim society based on democracy and human dignity. It was a transformation that was bringing Pakistan into the modern era. Thus we became a threat to the fanatics.

We threatened the rise of the Taliban state in Afghanistan without which Al-Qaeda could not operate. And so democracy in Pakistan was killed. To kill democracy in Pakistan, the Prime Minister's brother was shot and killed outside their parent's home. With the eclipse of the democratic government, the Taliban seized Kabul and invited in Al-Qaeda. Without the check of good advice from neighbourly Pakistan, Bin Laden declared war on America in 1998. Without modernization and moderation, it is challenging for non-Muslims to distinguish between religion and terrorism which Muslims understand by faith and instinct.

An historical mistake was made following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989. We failed to plan for a post-war Afghanistan built on democratic principles of coalition, consensus and human rights.

Now, Islamabad's military rulers are making the same mistake. Last October's elections were a mockery of justice and fair play. The leaders of Pakistan's major political parties were banned from contesting and campaigning. After the polling closed, the results were stopped for hours and days. Turnout, estimated at 20%, doubled, tripled and in some cases exceeded 100%.

Rigged elections can give the label of democracy but they are unable to give the strength of democracy, a strength that comes from a consensus forged by public opinion. Now the religious parties control the states bordering Afghanistan. Next they might control more of Pakistan.

Dictatorship doesn't modernize nations. Dictatorship creates extremists. A democratic political structure in Afghanistan could have marginalized the Taliban and Al-Qaeda before they declared war. It is democracy and democracy alone that can create modern, moderate and tolerant societies that can co-exist in peace and stability. The greatest protection of freedom from terrorists and conflicts is replacing dictatorships with governments responsible to the people, governments based on the values of tolerance and accommodation.

Shehu Yar'Adua gave his life so Nigerians could live in freedom. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave his life so Pakistanis could live in freedom. Legendary leaders gave their lives, braving prison cells and death by hanging to keep alive for their people, their continents and civilizations the dream of freedom. Shehu Yar'Adua was one such leader. He lives in our hearts and minds. His name glows in the golden pages of history as a leader who beckoned his people to a brighter future than the darkness of tyranny.

Shehu lives today. He lives in you, Mr. President, in Mr. Vice President, the cabinet, party and in the hearts and minds of ordinary Nigerian men and women.

It is my hope and prayer that Nigeria may live up to the glorious traditions of the men who died so that its people could live in dignity, democracy and opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.

REMARKS

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO



I think it is the Americans who said the first time a thing happens, it is a mistake. The second time is happenstance. I don't know what they call the third time.

For those of you who may recollect, on one occasion when we were here, the Vice President told me that I would not have to say a word and he would not have to say a word. Then he came out, he dipped his hand into his pocket and he produced a most astonishing speech. And I was lost because I did not prepare a speech. Today, as we were entering the hall, I turned to him. I said, 'Mr. Vice President, I hope I won't have to say anything here'. He said, 'I believe you won't have to say anything'. He said 'I haven't seen the programme and I believe I too won't have to say anything'. So, we sat down. As soon as we sat down, he showed me the programme and there is something for me. When he got up and he brought out his speech, I said well, this is the second time. Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to assure you I will not allow myself to be caught the 'third time'. So any time I'm coming here with him now, I will have my speech in my pocket.

Before I make a couple of points --- salient points that I want to make, I want to thank the Vice President who, as I have always said about this Foundation and everything that is attached to it, he is actually in the driving seat. If you see the Chairman of the Foundation as me, that is nominal. The man who does the work is the Vice President and all the other members of the Board of Trustees and the Director of the Foundation, and others who work for the Foundation. I want to thank you most sincerely for the work you are doing and for sustaining the work of this Foundation the way and to the level that you have sustained it. Because it is one thing to have a flash in the pan. We have now shown that Shehu Yar'Adua Foundation is not a flash in the pan.

I want to say how much I personally have respect for our Special Guest of Honour's father. And I haven't had the opportunity really to meet and talk and have ideas shared with our Guest of Honour until this morning when we had breakfast together. And we spent almost an hour really looking at the panorama, generally of the world, but mainly of the African and Asian world and how the rest of the world impinges on the African and Asian world. And what struck me is the depth of knowledge, the awareness, the clarity of her views and the understanding of the situation not only in her own country but in the Islamic world, in Asia, in our part of the world, and how the rest of the world impinges on it.

There are two or three points I want to bring out from our discussion this morning which I believe are worth sharing with you. At a stage in our discussion, I mentioned Shehu Yar'Adua and I said, he was my colleague both in physical war and in political war. And our Special Guest of Honour asked, 'Which one is more difficult? Which one is more challenging?' I don't think I actually gave you an answer to that. But what was going through my mind and which I better give you now is that for a man who went to war --- physical war and faced the bullet and came back and survived it, and became a victim of political war, then, we don't have to look too far and too deep to say that political war may be more hazardous and more dangerous than physical war. And of course, you can testify to that. Because your father was a victim of that. You, yourself have been a victim, only not fatal and I hope it will not be fatal. Your husband remains a victim till this moment we are talking.

The Vice President mentioned what you did personally when Shehu Yar'Adua and I were incarcerated and as I said to you this morning, apart from the fact that for us it is just a matter

of principle, a matter of what we stand for, just as you stand for it, that democracy must not be taken for granted, it has to be fought. We are going to continue to fight for the release of your husband. If you like, you may even add that 'one good turn deserves another'.

The second point that I want to emphasize which we touched upon this morning when we were talking, is that since the Second World War, since the end of the Second World War, the Western world has been looking for an enemy to fight. It was the reds under the bed. And since the 90s, the reds seem to have disappeared from under the bed. Of course, none of us, none of us should do anything to give comfort to terrorists, none of us.

But I feel alarmed and I was happy that you shared my fear when we were talking this morning about the gross misunderstanding of Islam by most leaders of the west. And there is danger there. Anything that tends to equate Islam with terrorism will not augur well for the peace of the world.

And I have said that we here, and I think my brothers and sisters in Nigeria will take this very seriously, that we have something to teach the world. We are unique. We are about the only country in the world that is almost evenly divided – Muslim – Christian; about the only country in the world. And therefore, if we, as a country can pull through and live together in unity, in peace, in harmony, in progress, in love, in righteousness, we have something to teach the world. Particularly, we have something to teach the western world and the eastern world that it does not matter what faith you proclaim, you can live together and we should make up our minds as Nigerians that that is one lesson we will teach the world; that we are going to live together as brothers and sisters, in love, in harmony and the rest of the world will come here to learn and say 'well look, these, terrible Nigerians, how are they making it?' And we will show them how we are making it.

And I believe that, that is also what can be our contribution to the enlightenment of the world, and enlightenment of the wealth about what Islam is and what Islam is not. And we

need to work among ourselves here, that Islam must have the right image. We must, among ourselves, give Islam the right image so that from here, we can move out and portray the right image of Islam to the outside world, outside Nigeria, and indeed outside Africa.

Your Excellency, I can't thank you more. We appreciate you and we appreciate what you stand for and what you are doing. Democracy must not be taken for granted; we have not taken it for granted here. Many of our people have nourished the seeds of democracy with their blood, many with their sweat; many more will probably nourish it with their sweat. I hope no more with their blood. But the point is this, we must never take democracy for granted. It is too serious an issue; it is too serious a factor for us to take it for granted. And all we need to do is to see what is happening in your own country.


This morning when you came in, I said to you, well, maybe in our own case we take one step forward and two backwards. And you said, 'no, no, no, no'. In your own case, you take one forward and one back. In our own case we take one forward, and two backwards, I don't know which one is correct. But whichever one you take, we both – your country and our country, have not made as great a stride as we should have made in democracy, and we must never give up. Because there is no substitute to democracy. And I'm happy that you have said it all, that Islam is not anti-democratic; it is not anti-education; it is not anti-progress of women. Then, if you say it, I can only say I concur because you know better than I do.

Once again, I want to thank all of you who have always supported us in this endeavour here. And now we have, I think with that --- and I'm sure this must be the doing of the Vice President. There's something now we call Obasanjo Research Library. It is on my right, we are going to see that. Well, if you want to know anything that you want to know, have any information on any subject at all, you come to Obasanjo Research Library and --- thank you very much.



6th
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 6, 2004

- Welcome by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
 - Tribute by H.E. Bola Tinubu
 - Address by H.E. Joaquim Chissano
 - Biography Review by Professor Attahiru Jega
- 

WELCOME

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you all to the 6th National Programme of Commemoration in honour of Shehu Yar'Adua and the presentation of his biography: *Shehu Musa Yar'Adua: A Life of Service*. Permit me to begin my remarks by thanking our Special Guest of Honour, President Joaquim Chissano for being with us in Nigeria. It is indeed a privilege that he has travelled so far to be with us today.

Late Shehu established many important links with leaders of southern African liberation movements during his service as Chief of Staff in the previous administration of President Obasanjo. He said many times that the struggle for majority rule in southern Africa was a battle against injustice, inhumanity and oppression, involving the whole of Africa and people of African descent everywhere.

President Chissano stood in the forefront of Mozambique's liberation struggle and more recently the battle against outside aggression which led to the devastation of his country's economy and a debilitating civil war. We applaud him for his success in rebuilding his country and for his untiring commitment to restore the dignity and well being of Mozambique's people by regaining their integrity as a nation.

We also warmly welcome Professor Attahiru Jega, Director of the Centre for Democratic Research and Training at Bayero University, Kano. Professor Jega is a renowned political scientist and academic activist who has generously accepted our invitation to review Tafida's official biography. We look forward to his presentation.

We are proud to be here today in honour of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and equally proud to present to

you *Shehu Musa Yar'Adua: A Life of Service*. The book tells the story of Tafida's life and vision for the nation, set against the backdrop of Nigerian history. As those of you who know him will attest; in life he was a force to reckon with. In death his legacy remains compelling to all of us who hold positions of leadership or aspire to positions of leadership.

In reading his biography, we hope that those who knew Tafida, will know him even better. To those of you who did not know him well, we hope you will be inspired by his commitment to the nation and to making this world a better place for all of God's creation.

For those of us who played a part in his political struggle to establish participatory democracy built on national unity, this book will remind us once again of the enormous respect and admiration we had for late Tafida. His life was marked by conflict and confrontation with those who stood in the way of things he believed in and he was prepared to go to prison in his struggle to see the military leave government. He sincerely believed that military rule dishonoured and discredited an institution that he was proud to have served for half of his adult life.

Even more, we will be reminded of the work that remains undone and the need to stand firm, united and determined to realize his vision for the nation. It is our duty as leaders to continue to consolidate the democratic structures that Tafida fought and died for.

I invite all of you to purchase a copy of Tafida's biography for yourself and at least one more for a relative or friend.



TRIBUTE

H.E. ASIWAJU AHMED BOLA TINUBU



I feel highly honoured to be present here on this occasion of the formal launching of the biography of one of the most illustrious personalities that this country has produced. The late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was one of the finest specimens of the gentleman soldier; a true man of honour, valour, candour and integrity. Even in his painful absence from us at this very crucial moment of our country's evolution, the values the late General stood for are relevant as ever to our quest for national greatness.

On occasions like this, we must never fail to remind ourselves that General Yar'Adua would have been alive today if only he had compromised his principles. He would not have died in the circumstances he did if he agreed to sell his conscience and corrupt his honour for a mess of pottage. There is no doubt that those who not only detained him, but arranged his wicked murder, would have offered General Yar'Adua anything to abandon his boss, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was also unjustly imprisoned for his dogged commitment to truth and principle. But by sacrificing his life rather than betray the democratic struggle, General Yar'Adua demonstrated that there are some values like truth, integrity, honour, courage and loyalty, which are more important than life itself.

This biography is, no doubt, a major contribution to the literature of Nigerian

politics. Millions of our youths, generation after generation, will learn from the life of this unique man who was born into greatness yet consistently exhibited humility for as long as he lived. They will be challenged by the fervent belief in one Nigeria that motivated the General to fight courageously for his country's unity and lay down his life for her freedom. They will be inspired by his lifelong commitment to building bridges of unity across the diverse ethnicities, cultures, regions and faiths that comprise our complex polity.

It must, however, be said, that the hallmark of true leadership is its ability to breed worthy successors who will ensure the continuity of visionary values. Again, General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was exemplary in this regard. His political machinery, comprising scores of ably groomed politicians, under the leadership of Vice President Atiku Abubakar, remains as formidable as ever. Like the leader he followed consistently for over two decades, Vice President Atiku Abubakar remains an embodiment of patriotism, nationalism and unblemished loyalty to his boss, President Olusegun Obasanjo, easily one of the foremost pan-Africanists of our time. This is an encouraging indication that the values General Yar'Adua stood for will never die. On this note let me end by reiterating on behalf of the government and people of Lagos State, that it is a great honour to fully support this historic biography presentation.

ADDRESS

H.E. JOAQUIM CHISSANO
PRESIDENT, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE



I feel greatly honoured and privileged to have been chosen to deliver the Shehu Yar'Adua lecture. When President Obasanjo invited me I immediately accepted, for I saw this as one excellent opportunity to pay a well deserved tribute to a great son of this country and the whole continent of Africa, the late General Shehu Yar'Adua.

I also agreed to the topic "Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Africa" because General Yar'Adua made a contribution to the re-democratization of Nigeria and he was committed to the promotion and protection of democratic values, human rights, social justice, and opportunities for all. Yar'Adua is one who has to be remembered for having taken an active part, together with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, in a team of brave men who, raising high the banner of Murtala Muhammed's vision, prepared Nigeria for civilian rule and democracy. We remember his leadership in calling for civilian rule at the 1994 National

Constitutional Conference. His early departure robbed this country and the continent of a committed and dedicated leader to the cause of freedom and democracy.

Allow me to congratulate President Obasanjo and the people of Nigeria for maintaining and promoting General Yar'Adua's legacy.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In discussing the "Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Africa", I would like to divide my presentation into three parts, beginning with a contextual framework, followed by the set of challenges that I identified as the main factors in the consolidation of democracy, and conclude with a look at the responses that come from African countries individually and collectively.

I. Contextual Framework

It is now widely accepted that democracy is

not a finished product, a “ready made suit” that fits all societies in the same way at any given time. It is rather an evolving process that is consolidated in time when enabling conditions are established.

Different definitions and theories of democracy have been advanced, different schools of thought have been defended and experimented.

Some theories have viewed the democratic form of governance as the condition for human freedom, where this freedom is conceived principally in terms of the liberty of individuals to do as they choose without external constraint. A fundamental principle here is equal liberty under the law, which entails equal civil liberties and political rights. This view of democracy is informed by liberal individualism which holds the premise of individual liberty as the principal value to be protected by government and the right to private property is to be protected by the state against interference.

Other theories are more for the balance of individual liberty with that of the community such that the liberty of one does not infringe on the liberty of others.

These theories and definitions have been criticized and debated and have evolved to the form we know them today.

In order to understand democracy and democratic practices in any given society, one has to look at the political interaction between the state and the society, the rulers and the governed as the main actors in that society.

While the theories of democracy revolved around European nation-states which followed specific political interactions and paradigms of development, democracy in Africa has not, historically, followed the same path.

Political interactions in African societies have been impacted upon by the visits of Europeans, Indians and Arabs to the continent. Those encounters disrupted the African ways of political and social organization. The most negative impact was the result of slavery and colonialism that interfered heavily on the way society was organized in the continent. They defied all forms and principles of democracy.

However, in the late 1950s Ghana led the wave of independence of African countries within the boundaries established by the colonial powers. Many countries had to resort to liberation struggles to regain independence.

The fundamental purposes and principles that guided the freedom fighters were those of freedom and independence for their peoples and countries. The tenets of democracy were part of the process of liberating the continent.

II. Challenges of Building and Consolidating Democracy

At the attainment of their independence, Africans had the gigantic task of building their nations out of what were territories managed by and dependent upon the colonial rulers.

The challenges to the consolidation of democracy were, however, of a multifaceted nature. I have identified the following as the most salient challenges without any order of precedence and with differing impact in each African country.

(a) *The historical legacy that did not allow for the development of political interactions of a democratic nature*

Slavery and colonialism did not just disrupt the natural evolution of African societies but also imposed dictatorial and discriminatory forms of governance in all African countries. The culture of consultation and dialogue that characterized African societies was replaced by policies and structures that favoured the colonial powers to the detriment of the peoples and countries of the continent.

(b) *The state of underdevelopment of the African economies that generate limited resources to build democratic practices and institutions*

For example, in Mozambique as in most African countries, we require external assistance and funding for each local and general election we carry out. Democracy is an expensive commodity, though fundamental, in countries where we grapple with the provision of the most basic services to satisfy the basic needs of our people. The challenge becomes, therefore, how to generate economic growth

and development that will eradicate absolute poverty thus allowing people to participate fully in the consolidation of democracy of which they are the ultimate beneficiaries.

At the proclamation of our independence in Mozambique, we were also faced with the problem of creating institutions in a country where the rate of illiteracy was around 90 per cent. Today we are still, for instance, in the process of building the judiciary, law enforcement and defense institutions, while at the same time the legislative and the civil service institutions require high capacitation.

(c) *The prevalence of conflict in some countries of the continent represents a serious challenge to the process of building and consolidating democracy*

In these societies, the first priority should be the search for ways to a peaceful settlement of disputes that are the cause of violent conflict, for without peace there will be little room for sustained democratic practices. In Mozambique we have learned this lesson the hard way. But we have succeeded resolving the conflict through dialogue and we are now promoting a culture of peace, reconciliation, forgiveness and tolerance. Peace is essential not just for one country but for all countries of the continent as internal conflict in one affects the others.

(d) *The state of education is a key factor for the consolidation of democracy, for it is in a society of informed citizens that democracy can flourish*

Africans need also to develop local technical capacity to run their own electoral processes and to manage democratic institutions. Our people need to be educated about democracy, for there are often communication problems due to difficulties in translating expressions into local languages, including the words “democracy” and “parties”, distinguishing an ordinary association from a political party, a president from a king and so on. It is therefore, essential to reverse the current state of over 50% illiteracy rate in most African countries.

(e) *The perception and political use of Africa’s ethnic diversity to divide, exclude and generate violent conflict*

The ethnic diversity characterizing our countries is the wealth of our culture, and an asset to be valued and preserved in the spirit of unity in diversity. The same is true for our religious or racial diversity. In every religion, we are children of God and He creates us as equal human beings, as brothers and sisters that should live in peace and harmony. This is essential for this great country of Nigeria. If you take your diversity as an asset to build a stronger and better Nigeria then you will make Africa proud and richer.

(f) *The creation of an enabling environment for the exercise of democracy, namely provisions of rule of law, respect for the fundamental freedoms of citizens, including freedom of speech, press and association*

The challenge in most African countries is no longer adopting legislation establishing such conditions but the capacity to apply that legislation and mechanisms to ensure respect for the laws of the land. This will be a permanent challenge as it exists even in more developed societies where citizens legitimately demand more of their governments.

(g) *Building democracies that are suited to the specific conditions and cultural traditions of the African peoples*

(h) *The development of a democratic culture that allows ruling parties to take into account the constructive ideas of their opposition, and the opposition parties to make responsible contributions to the development of their countries and not oppose blindly everything coming from the ruling party*

The opposition parties in Africa have also to learn to accept defeat and not cry fraud whenever election results are not in their favour. The superior interests of the nation should prevail over individual or group interests. Good political governance has to be combined with good economic and corporate governance.



(i) Promotion of gender sensitive policies

Social justice cannot be achieved without involving women in decision-making and governance. Women represent the majority of our societies and they are responsible for the largest part of caring for and educating our children. They must be involved. In Mozambique, we in the ruling party have decided to give a substantial proportion of our seats in Parliament to women (and youth) and we have also a significant proportion of women in government. I have just named a lady as Prime Minister of the country to replace the former Prime Minister who has been asked to take important responsibilities in an international organization. And we are continuing the process of involving women in the key areas of development of the country.

(j) The challenge of lack of adequate infrastructure and means of communication

Education and dissemination of democracy, civic education and participation require access roads and means of transport and communication, including radio and television, among others. Tele-density in Africa is very low. This situation is compounded by the fact that, in globalization, satellite communications may reach remote parts of an African country but they transmit debates and messages of democracy

that are removed from local culture and reality.

(k) The involvement of civil society in defining the social and economic development path of the country

(l) Africans need to unite in their efforts for a more just and fair international trade and economic environment that will allow them to fight absolute poverty more effectively

They should promote more intra-African trade towards economic integration.

(m) Corruption hampers the development of a real democracy

The prevention and combat against evil, besides strong education for a radical change of attitude, requires streamlining of policies, legislation and control institutions which in turn must be served by men and women with a new mentality. The big challenge is to build these new men and women.

This set of challenges is by no means exhaustive but it represents those factors that, in the time available, I thought would be worth discussing today.

Africans have not been found wanting in the search for adequate answers to these challenges.

Responses to the Challenges

African countries have, individually and collectively, gone a long way in building and consolidating democracy. It may be argued that the shape democracy has taken in some of the other countries are perhaps not the most appropriate.

There are no perfect democracies. What is essential is that almost all countries in Africa follow the internationally accepted standards and practices, including the holding of regular multi-party elections, the division of powers of the executive, the judiciary and the legislative, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Almost all African countries have adopted a constitution and other relevant legislation providing for the exercise of Westminster form of democracy.

Representative democracy means that a relative small number of elected people can speak and act on behalf of the rest of the country. This is an incomplete way of doing democracy.

To make representative democracy more effective, it is extremely important to find ways and mechanisms of promoting public participation in policy formulation and policy implementation.

Democracy has to be seen as way of promoting equal opportunities for all, so that the people can actively participate in the consolidation of public institutions and the promotion of social and economic development.

Democracy is more than the right to vote and freedom of expression. The key word in democracy is PARTICIPATION. In democracy we must encourage gradual decentralization of the decision making process to allow people from the grassroots to participate with creative initiatives in the development process of their societies.

The founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity already stated their commitment to democracy in the Charter, and I quote: "Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for

the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples". End of quote.

They also reaffirmed their adherence to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

These principles remain the foundation of present generations and they are fully reflected in the African Union Constitutive Act. The African Union has gone further to explicitly state, and I quote: "Determined to promote and protect human and peoples' rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and to ensure good governance and the rule of law".

African countries have also adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and adhered to other related international instruments.

The African leadership has decided to take even more decisive steps towards consolidating democracy as a fundamental prerequisite for durable peace and sustainable development throughout the continent. They adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

NEPAD is a vision and a strategic framework aimed at enabling Africa to address the current challenges facing the African continent. It offers programmatic guidelines in the political, economic, social, scientific, technological and cultural spheres.

NEPAD's principles include good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political, and socio-economic development; African ownership and leadership; broad and deep participation by all sectors of society; anchoring development on Africa's own resources and people; strong partnership between and amongst African peoples; and forging an international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world to one of mutually beneficial outcomes, with respect and dignity.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

You might argue that these are only written or spoken words as may have been the case in

the past with no action behind them. I would respond by saying: Yes, you are right that they are written and spoken but you would be wrong about lack of action.

One distinguishing feature of NEPAD is that it is a vision and a programme of the African Union with an Implementation Committee composed of twenty Heads of State and Government who meet regularly, in short periods, to instruct and monitor progress on the implementation of their decisions and report to their colleagues in the Union. This committee is privileged to have as its Chairman none other than my brother, President Olusegun Obasanjo. I am sure I need not tell you how firm, committed and dedicated he is to the cause of democracy, peace and development of Africa. As a member of the NEPAD Implementation Committee I can attest to his leadership role that has allowed us to make substantial progress.

Another aspect that shows our determination to act is the operationalization of an important NEPAD mechanism, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

The APRM was established through the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government at their first summit in Durban, South Africa, in 2002. Last month, the Implementation Committee received the first report of the Panel of the Wise that has already been formed and is already in operation. It will start the review process in some countries this year. Many did not believe that we were serious about the APRM and that it would not operate so soon. We are proving them wrong.

It should be understood that the objective of the APRM is to ensure that African countries conform to mutually agreed codes and standards of democracy, political, economic and corporate governance. It is aimed at assisting countries in evaluating their level of performance, correcting mistakes and imperfections and sharing best practices. It is a positive instrument in the hands of Africans to consolidate democracy and good governance.

The AU Heads of State and Government have also taken a bold decision not to allow within



their organization any regime that comes to power through unconstitutional means. This means that all African countries will only be members of the Union if their governments are legitimately representative of their people and have been formed according to the Constitution of each country. In a continent where violent coup d'états were a regular feature this has been a landmark in the history of Africa and it has deterred some who may have thought of taking over power by unlawful means.

The African Union is also building its capacity to assist African countries in election processes and institution building.

However, the ultimate guarantors of peace, stability, democracy and development in each country in Africa are their respective peoples. They bear the primary responsibility to ensure that conditions are enabling democracy, accountability and good governance. Such conditions will allow progress in the areas of education, literacy, women's participation and in combating absolute poverty.

In conclusion, I would say that the challenges of building and consolidating democracy in Africa are daunting but they can be met. They require the involvement of all Africans. Together we shall succeed: United we stand!

I thank you for your attention!

BIOGRAPHY REVIEW

PROFESSOR ATTAHIRU M. JEGA



I am delighted with this privilege and opportunity for reviewing the book scheduled to be launched today, titled: **SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA**, with the sub-title of ***A Life Of Service***. In this review, as is normal with standard academic practice, I examine the structure of the book, briefly discuss its content and substantive assertions, and conclude with an assessment and a critique. The aim is to highlight issues of general interest that would serve as guide to the reader, as well as draw the attention of the publisher/author/editor to issues worthy of consideration, if and when a revised edition is contemplated in the future.

Structure, Content and Substantive Assertions

SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA: A Life of Service is a book of 332 pages of reader-friendly text and fine print. It is structured in 5 main parts, each part sub-divided into thematic chapters.

Part 1, titled "Childhood", is sub-divided into 4 chapters: "A Family of Significance", "School Days", "Coming of Age", and "The Army Calls". It is a fascinating account of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua's social background, his adolescence in the rural

backwaters of Katsina, his carefree attitude to schooling; his nascent albeit suppressed leadership traits in his days at the provincial college, and the circumstances which made him to join the Army and make a career of it. The account suggests that Yar'Adua had a normal, above average childhood, characterized by exuberance, sportsmanship, leadership traits and streaks of adolescent rebelliousness; and that what he became later in life had been remarkably influenced by his early experiences, especially by what he learned from his father's dignified handling of responsibilities as a traditional title-holder as well as an important political figure during the First Republic.

Part II, titled Soldier, is organized in 11 chapters, ranging from his entry into the Army, to his training at Sandhurst, his experiences before, during and after the civil war, and his role in the July 29, 1975 coup. It is an equally fascinating account of his character transformation and the development of those shining qualities for which he is fondly remembered by many of his friends, colleagues, contemporaries, disciples, and even his political "enemies". These are: hard work, courage, self-confidence, meticulous

planning, strategic thinking, tactical brilliance and humility. For example, on courage and self-confidence, the observation of one of his trainers at the Sandhurst Military Academy is striking: He said to Yar'Adua, "You are either going to be killed in battle or become a general at a very young age"! As it turned out, he did become a general at a relatively young age, indeed the youngest person in the history of Nigerian military to hold the rank of Major General at the age of 36; and although he survived battles during the civil war, he died as it were in the trenches, waging political battles to prevent the perpetuation of military rule and personal dictatorship in Nigeria.

Part III, titled Public Servant, has 10 chapters which cover his public service experiences, beginning with his first portfolio as minister of transport and his role in decongesting the seaports and building more modern ports, to his elevation to Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters after the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed and the roles he played in that position in the conception and execution of the then Obasanjo government's reform programmes, such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), local government reforms, Africa-centered foreign policy and an organized return to civil rule.

The exposition in this part of the book brings out Yar'Adua's other qualities, such as his patriotism, his loyalty to the government and the leadership he served, his dependability as an ally, his personal sacrifices to bring about unity and progress to his nation and his versatility and acumen in discharging official responsibilities. The comment of his superior on his public service record illustrates this. He said: "We worked very, very closely together. His flair, his understanding, and his astuteness on political issues were well above that of most of his colleagues. I could rely very much on his political judgment. It was very sound." He also stated that: "Shehu will tell you the truth. Rather than not tell you the truth, he will not talk. And when you have a man who will tell you the truth... you will be unwise if you don't take him seriously." That was the quintessential Yar'Adua, the public servant, from the horse's mouth, who is not ordinarily sparing with its praise!

Part IV, titled Politician, is in my view, the icing on the cake in terms of succulent and substantive details, which it contains, about the late general's political philosophy, strategies and tactics, contacts nationally and internationally and how he deployed these in "battles" in the political terrain, with intriguing and consequential results. It is divided into 10 chapters, commencing with his retirement in 1979 to his involvement in the politics of the second republic, against the NPN and in alliance with UPN, to his more active involvement with the Babangida regime's transition programmes, his attempts to break new ground in party formation and organization, and grassroots mobilization, and ending with an account of his roles in the events preceding General Babangida's "stepping aside" from power in August 1993, such as the crisis on June 12 presidential elections and the formation of the interim national government. There is also fascinating discussion on how he became the Tafidan Katsina and significantly, on how he strove hard to promote Islamic concerns, illustrated by his role in organizing the Islam in Africa Conference, in the formation of the Islam in Africa Organisation and his immense contribution in building the national Mosque.

This section brings out Yar'Adua's firm belief in and commitment to a united Nigeria, freed from the overwhelming constraints, which have blocked its prosperity and development. In particular, it highlights his exasperation with the prevailing modes of politics and ethno-regional and religious mobilization, his decision to help break old barriers in politics, and his confidence in his ability to create a grassroots pan-Nigerian political party, on the basis of which to become an elected president, and be in a position to solve Nigeria's myriad of problems and lead it to greater heights in terms of progress and development. This, no doubt, was grand patriotism, nurtured by extraordinary self-confidence, and matched with grand ambition. The result of his pursuit of these objectives was as intriguing and confounding as it was consequential both for him as a person and the country. In any case, in that pursuit Yar'Adua became an acknowledged political bridge-builder and a brilliant tactician, and his cool, calm disposition, as well as "ruthless" efficiency, became legendary. He

exhibited a tremendous capacity for planning, consultation and dialogue. Also, his humility was disarming, as illustrated by his self-effacing tendencies, such as a simple mode of dressing using kaftans and sandals, and his refusal to be chauffer driven while seating others in the “owners corner”, among other things. It is instructive that he took seriously an indictment by one of his college reports which said that: “He needs to learn a little humility towards those who want to help him;” and remarkably transformed himself into one of the most humble “big men” Nigeria has ever had.

Part V, titled Prisoner, has 7 chapters, which describe Yar’Adua’s deeper and more committed involvement, at great personal risk, in the struggles to end attempts to perpetuate military rule and personal dictatorship. It covers his role in the Constitutional Conference, the phantom coup trial and death sentence and his incarceration in prison, as well as the circumstances surrounding his death. This section of the book illustrates, more poignantly, his tactical brilliance in creating alliances and pricking sharp political thorns in the flesh of General Abacha’s self-succession agenda, and the vicious backlash which he attracted from the general. It gives insightful hints on the treachery and backstabbing which characterized political and inter-personal relations during that depressing period of our national history.

Indeed, the rendition in this section conveys the profound irony of how a person with a dignified social background, a member of the royalty with an accomplished public service career and celebrated riches, who could have wallowed in comfortable retirement oblivious of what was happening around him, chose instead to devote his energy, resources, and resourcefulness, to organizing, uniting and mobilizing people on a pan-Nigerian platform so that he could lead and make his country great; a grand ambition for which he had to endure the humiliation of trumped up charges of treason, imprisonment, and for which he died in prison, surrounded by common criminals.

In addition to the five main sections, the book also contains an Epilogue, an Afterword, a section on notes and references, a good Index and a nice selection of photographs, all of which have enriched its quality.

In summary, the book depicts the personality and character traits of Shehu Musa Yar’Adua as they evolved and influenced his thoughts and action in the military, in public service, in business, and in politics, and impacted on his nation and his people. By so doing, it gives a glimpse of the goings-on in the corridors of power; it reveals a lot about power, money, friendships, and even a lot more about intrigues, deception, betrayals and treachery in the political arena. It shows how an esteemed member of a military junta transformed decisively into a democrat, to the extent that he became a respectable arrow-head of resistance to the machinations of a clique of military rulers to desperately cling on to power. Also, the book provides ample evidence to support the assertion that few Nigerians have displayed the patriotic commitment and dogged determination of Yar’Adua to contribute to Nigeria’s actualization of its vast potential of becoming a great African country; and fewer still have accomplished as much as he did.

Assessment and Critique

This book, ***SHEHU MUSA YAR’ADUA: A Life of Service***, is no doubt an impressive book. It is rich in detail, lucid in presentation and perceptive in analysis. It has been enriched by the ability to access hitherto unaccessed official records. There is extensive use of source materials; interviews, newspapers and magazines and official records, including what may until now have been classified information, such as the minutes of crucial Federal Executive Council (FEC), Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), and Provincial Ruling Council (PRC) meetings. As is to be expected, as a commissioned publication of the Shehu Musa Yar’Adua Foundation, its focus and emphasis is on the man, his qualities, accomplishments, achievements and contributions. And the

marshalling of evidence in this regard makes one wonder: was he human? Human he was; and obviously not a saint, but clearly he was an extra-ordinary human being.

Although the book has raised and answered quite a number of interesting questions, there are yet a few, which it has not answered about the man and for which the gist-loving gossipy type would be disappointed for not finding straight-forward answers to. For example, it has for long been rumored that Shehu Musa Yar'Adua had the "Midas touch", which turned ashes into gold. How true is this? How rich was he? There is but comparatively scanty information on his life as a businessman, the extent of his wealth and his legendary reputation as a compassionate philanthropist doling out money to all sorts of worthy causes.

On the other hand, some have said that he was a gregarious and outgoing (not so much jolly-go-merry) type of a man, but a man who knew what he wanted in life and went for it. How true is this? And, how much did he really invest in his celebrated brand of grassroots political mobilization? On all these and a few more other questions, we may have to wait for another, perhaps unofficial, biography in the years to come.

History, Henry E. Carr says, and I agree, is essentially about the interpretation of evidence. As we know, evidence can be approached and interpreted from several angles, depending on the interpreters' biases and idiosyncrasies. Often in autobiographies as well as in biographies, facts are embellished or stretched beyond imagination, or distorted grotesquely and presented to achieve certain purposes and self-serving objectives. Although, because of my academic background and career I have an above-average sharpness of eye for detecting such things, in this biography, I am pleasantly surprised that I have seen little deliberate effort to do anything other than a perceptive, sincere presentation and interpretation of factual evidence, with a narrative that is engaging and results that are refreshing, informative and enlightening. This goes a long way to commend

the book to a vast range of readership from the curious, casual reader to the critical analytic academic.

Of course, those with an overly academic disposition and competence for looking at and judging published books would notice a few things amiss. For example, no author(s) or editor(s) is/are listed on the cover. This is a typical if not unconventional in important publications, such as this one. Usually, a biography, whether authorized or unauthorized, commissioned or un-commissioned, bears the name(s) of its author(s) or editor(s). Also, the book contains no International Serial Book Number (ISBN) and other pertinent cataloging information, which reduces its accessibility to researchers, if not its standard as an academic publication, because it cannot be searched by multiple methods internationally. The pressure of meeting a deadline for printing may have distracted attention from this minor but important matter of detail. In any case, it is something important that needs to be corrected any time a revised edition is contemplated.

The numbering of chapters is also a bit confusing. For example, there are four chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, and three chapters 5, 6 and 7 in the book. This is because of the way in which chapter numbering has been done in accordance with the division of the book into parts, rather than the more conventional way of numbering chapters sequentially regardless of the part into which they fall.

But all these are details for the trained academic to fuss over. In any case, all these notwithstanding, I see this biography as a definitive work on the life of the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. Indeed, as conventional Nigerian biographies go, this book is a shining star. It is a book about a person who is not just a subject worthy of a biography but a contemporary Nigerian public figure, whose activities and preoccupations have affected or influenced a vast array of socio-economic and political processes, which have in turn affected and influenced the lives and livelihoods of so many ordinary Nigerians.

If there were to be a contest for the title of “The Mother of All Books” on recent Nigerian history, this book would enter a keen contest, and probably win; because of some of the things it contains, which some may think it is not supposed to contain, and what it does not contain, which some may think it should have contained; and because of the publicity and accompanying controversy, which it promises to attract. In any case, it is a useful contribution to the documentation of our nation’s political history, and indeed, to the debate over what happened, why it happened and how it happened in the Nigerian political and governance processes, and what role key public figures have played in all these.

However, even as a documentation of the life and time of Shehu Musa Yar’Adua, it is by no means the last testament. It has covered quite a lot of ground, but there is still considerable scope for other potential writers to cover. For example, the book’s characterization of events; leading to the annulment of the June 12 presidential elections and the formation of the interim government has thrown fresh insight on Yar’Adua’s hitherto misunderstood role, as well as that of a few others, including late Chief Abiola himself. It has said quite a lot, but it has not said it all, and there is still a

lot more that needs to be said. Luckily, some of the lead actors in that tragicomic drama are still alive, and may have their autobiographies or biographies in the pipeline. Hopefully, what has been said in this book would prod some of them to react and throw light to help us gain a better perspective of the sordid events of the past, and also help us to exorcise these from our memories.

In conclusion, from the foregoing review I have come to the conclusion that this book, SHEHU MUSA YAR’ADUA: A Life of Service is a very refreshing account of the life of one of the most illustrious personalities of contemporary Nigeria. It presents lucidly, fascinating aspects of quintessential Yar’Adua: the man, the soldier, the businessman, the politician, the patriot and role model. It has shed some light on a number of grey areas on recent political developments in our country. It is, without doubt, a significant addition to the growing literature on Nigerian contemporary history and politics; a must reading for all categories of readers, especially stakeholders in the Nigerian project. I congratulate the Shehu Musa Yar’Adua Foundation for publishing it.


Thank you.





7th
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 17, 2005

- Welcome by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
 - Tribute by Honourable Aminu Bello Masari
 - Lecture by Professor Peter Lewis, American University
 - Lecture by Dr. Robert Pastor, American University
 - Address by Ambassador Princeton N. Lyman
 - Electoral Reform: Conference Report by Professor Attahiru Jega
 - Statement of Principles:
Building Confidence for Our Future
- 

WELCOME

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you all to the 7th Programme of Commemoration in honour of the late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.

For those of you who have not been with us for the preceding days of the Yar'Adua Memorial Forum, permit me to begin my remarks by once again welcoming our guests from the United States of America. They include the former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Princeton Lyman, Director of African Policy Studies at the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Robert Pastor is the Vice President of International Affairs and Professor of International Relations at American University. He is also the Founding Director of the Centre for Democracy and Electoral Management (CDEM) at that University. We look forward to his presentation this morning on transitional democracies and the imperative of electoral reform. Dr. Peter Lewis is Associate Professor at American University's School of International Service and Senior Fellow and Manager of CDEM's project on Election Reform in Nigeria. They have contributed immensely to the success of this Forum.

Allow me to most warmly welcome the Speaker of our nation's House of Representatives, Honourable Aminu Bello Masari. Speaker Masari will offer a heartfelt tribute to our late brother and mentor, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.

We once again welcome and express our appreciation to those who have served as Chairpersons of the session Roundtables: Dr. Ahmadu Kurfi, Maradin Katsina; Distinguished Senator Udoma Udo Udoma, the Chief Whip of the Senate; Ambassador Howard Jeter, immediate past U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria; Mr. Mike Okiro, Deputy Inspector General of Police; Professor Adele Jinadu and Honourable O.C.J. Okocha, former President of the Nigerian Bar Association.

Professor Attahiru Jega is an esteemed political scientist from Bayero University. He is also the former Director of the Centre for Democratic Research and Training. He will speak on behalf of the Coordinators to present an overview of the concluded Roundtable Discussions. I understand that the sessions have been lively and extremely productive. Once again, I thank the Coordinators who have contributed their time and talent in order to ensure the success of this Forum.

Finally, and most especially, I want to thank every participant as well as the citizens of Nigeria who are committed to evolving a more credible election process in order to build confidence for our future. Ultimately, it is citizens who make democracy possible through their vigilance, struggle, hardwork and patience.

Thank you and God bless.



TRIBUTE

HONOURABLE AMINU BELLO MASARI



Each time I have to speak of General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua as late, dead, not a living person, it strikes me how easy it is for some people to wield great influence in two different worlds. The late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, in my view, has managed to remain quite alive and active in our national life even as he keeps his place among the dead.

It is seven years now since General Yar'Adua passed on but here we are celebrating him. Besides, the late Yar'Adua remains a factor that is impossible to ignore when discussing the political direction of Nigeria, particularly in this democratic dispensation. He has become engrained as part of the frame that determines the form of our national politics.

Yet, General Yar'Adua was politically active for barely 10 years in the period between 1987 and 1997. It was actually much less than 10 years because politics was banned by the governments of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha for many of the years in between. So how did he achieve so much in such a short time?

The answer to that is to be found in how the late Yar'Adua approached life. He was open-minded, principled and easily one of the most detribalized Nigerians I have ever known.

I had known General Yar'Adua far back into his days in the military but my first political encounter with him was in 1993, shortly after the General Sani Abacha coup. Katsina State Forum was then in the process of organizing a seminar and the late General, as in many other issues concerning the state, was fully involved.

It was my first opportunity to observe General Yar'Adua at close quarters. I found in him a man whose passion for whatever he believed in was matched only by his willingness to apply himself physically and deploy his personal resources to ensure success. That was always what you saw first, that he wanted whatever he became involved in to succeed and gave everything he could.

However, that was not the reason why he was such a monumental success in life and an enigma even in death. The real magic of General Yar'Adua was that he believed



in people and seized every opportunity to demonstrate it. Very few today will understand why the political party he midwived, Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM) had to begin with the word “people”. General Yar’Adua had watched wearily as we labored over the choice of a name for the party. As a guide and an assistance, the General insisted that whatever name we arrived at must begin with “people”. He took that stand because as he noted then, the party we were forming belonged to the people and must exhibit that character even in its name.

Shehu Musa Yar’Adua was a consummate bridge builder whose search for friendship recognized no tribe or boundary. He was not afraid to break away from the old order of northern politics to seek friends and new political associates in all nooks and crannies of Nigeria. For as long as politics was permitted in those days, he traversed the length and breadth of Nigeria, building what is till date one of the best structured political systems in Nigeria. That effort formed a great part of the backbone of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the outstanding result recorded by the party in its short lifetime. It also accounts largely for the successful emergence of the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM) as a political party even with such a short gestation period as was allowed.

Note please, that I said that General Yar’Adua built a system in the political society or public. It was for him like constructing an efficient machine. The designer or builder did not have to be there for the machine to function. The political system he built has survived him and I dare say is still working perfectly till date. Because he never worked simply to ascend to power by the system he built. It has survived him and I dare to say, is still working perfectly because he never worked with the sole purpose of ascending to power by it.

That raises another attribute of General Yar’Adua. He was a selfless person. Not many Nigerians will deploy the amount of resources he did into building the political structures he left behind without designing it for personal political gain. That is also the reason why such systems disappear with those who built them. We celebrate General Yar’Adua today because he demonstrated his selfless nature in his politics and left his followers a great heritage.

The challenge before us is to learn from the life of the late General Shehu Musa Yar’Adua. We must begin to put other people first, to put our country first and to look towards the future for praise and commendation instead of immediate applause. That will be the only way to honour this great man who in fact gave his life for democracy.

TROUBLED ELECTION OUTCOMES AS A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

LECTURE

PROFESSOR PETER LEWIS
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

An Era of Democracy

Few recent changes around the world have been more significant than the global spread of democratic governance. It is remarkable to recall that in 1974, just 39 countries the world over were ruled by constitutional governments that held regular, competitive elections. Today, nearly 120 governments are electoral democracies. This large group accounts for 60 percent of the world's independent nations, containing more than 2/3 of the world's people. If we consider the 48 countries in Africa south of the Sahara, only fifteen years ago, 44 of them were ruled by military governments or single-party regimes; today there are at least 20 electoral democracies in the region, along with many others that have made significant gains in political freedom and pluralism.

The global spread of democratic government has created a tremendous sense of possibility in countries that were long dominated by autocrats and by closed, corrupt regimes. Democratic reforms have opened political space in which citizens can more easily speak their minds, express their concerns, organize for common interests, seek out information, join political associations and parties, and choose their leaders. The new freedoms and institutions that accompany democracy provide important tools for holding leaders to account and promoting the transparency of government. These encouraging changes have taken root in dozens of countries and regions with different historical legacies and cultures. They have transformed political life in societies that just a short time ago seemed to be in the grip of dictators and single party states.

Challenges of Democratic Development

However, we know that the advance of democracy is not inevitable. Countries that undertake political reform have no assurances that democratization will be long-lasting, or that a change of regime will produce desired improvements in the quality

of governance. Democratization is a risky process, and democratic development is not certain. We can cite many recent examples – including Ukraine, nearby Cote d'Ivoire, the Republic of Georgia, Madagascar, Russia, or Venezuela – to remind us that the road to democracy is often fraught with difficulty.

Many new democracies face immediate challenges of survival, as governments struggle to maintain constitutional rule and electoral processes that are threatened by conflict, military coups, or aspiring dictators waiting in the wings. Over the longer term, there is the important question of how to improve the quality and depth of democracy. All democracies confront the important tasks of broadening personal freedoms; encouraging genuine political competition; promoting the accountability of leaders; resolving conflict; advancing a general rule of law; and building efficient and effective public institutions.

Elections are a crucial factor in meeting these challenges. By creating regular channels for political competition, and furnishing opportunities for citizens to evaluate and change leaders, elections represent a cornerstone of democratic rule. Indeed, open, fair and competitive elections have become a litmus test for distinguishing democracies from other types of governments, many of which would like to claim the label of democracy without honoring its requirements. But "hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue", and without transparent elections it is impossible to speak of an effective democracy.

Certainly, there are other features of political change that are essential for a healthy, functioning democratic system. General civil liberties, effective and accountable governance, widespread political rights, and checks on the power of government, are all recognized as elements of a developing democracy. Many observers, including the Nobel laureate Jimmy Carter, have agreed that

'democracy is more than just elections, but it certainly can be no less than elections.' It is therefore appropriate for this important conference to focus on the decisive role that elections can play in developing democracy, and the reforms that can help Nigeria to realize the democratic aspirations of its people.

The Electoral Advantage

Indeed, elections are such a routine event, and so common around the globe, that it is easy to lose sight of their importance for democratic development. Elections furnish many advantages for democratic governance. First, the regular cycle of campaigns, voting, and the turnover of government can be a powerful affirmation of the "rule of the people," often regarded as the foundation of democracy. When Nigerians have been asked in opinion polls to define democracy in their own words, more than half answered, 'government by the people,' or 'political rights and elections.' Nigerians largely agree with Americans and citizens of other democracies that the people's voice is essential to democracy, and that elections are an important way to exercise that voice.

Competitive elections also provide citizens with political choice. The ability of voters to weigh parties, ideas, and candidates, and to select among them, is an integral part of the democratic process. A well-functioning electoral system offers citizens political alternatives, and permits them to make decisions that express their preferences. Competition and political choice require open access to information, another benefit that accompanies the electoral process. The free exchange of ideas and information through political campaigns, the media, and groups within civil society, offer voters numerous perspectives on public affairs. A vibrant flow of information increases political knowledge, sharpens public debate, and pushes candidates to account for their ideas and their personal record. An informed citizenry can make genuine political choices, and the availability of alternative sources of information gives life to political competition.

Elections provide essential validation for democracy by increasing the confidence of individual citizens in their ability to meaningfully

participate in public life. When people feel that their personal interest in politics, and their engagement in elections, makes a difference, they are much more likely to value the democratic system. Elections remind average citizens that they have a stake in politics, and their continued interest and participation is a vital part of national life. When citizens share feelings of personal political efficacy, this encourages a general sense of legitimacy for democratic rule. The public's view that their system of government meets their needs and aspirations is a basic ingredient of stable and effective governance. Elections are important rituals of democracy that can regularly confirm and reinforce the legitimacy of the system.

Even the "losers" in a contentious election may come away with a high regard for democracy if they feel the contest was honestly fought and judged. The process can be as important as the outcome. For instance, the highly contentious 2000 election in the United States shook the confidence of many Americans, who questioned if their votes were fairly counted. During the 2004 election, emotions were high on both sides. But the public's confidence in the electoral system was ultimately reinforced, through efforts to promote transparency in the administration of the polling, and by the clear outcome.

By allowing for a change of leaders, and encouraging broad acceptance of the political process, elections can compensate for disappointments in government performance. Most new democracies face a set of policy problems – including economic development, reducing poverty, controlling corruption, and managing conflict – that do not allow for rapid progress. Inevitably, the citizens of any country are discouraged by the slow progress of generating jobs, reducing corruption, improving public services, or guaranteeing personal security. However, citizens can be patient with these day to day problems when they have confidence in the legitimacy of their political system. Further, there is much evidence from around the world to show that citizens in democracies are sophisticated in distinguishing between the performance of government and the system of democracy. If there are regular opportunities to criticize or replace leaders, then the public is less likely

to blame their economic or social problems on the democratic system, and therefore less likely to have sympathy for non-democratic alternatives such as military or single-party rule.

Liabilities of Flawed Elections

When elections are significantly flawed, however, most of these benefits turn into deficits, or even threats to the survival of democracy. When the public faces repeated episodes of election rigging, political violence, and disorderly administration, their fundamental trust in the institutions and processes of electoral rule may rapidly dissipate. The most obvious liability of troubled elections is that political choices are foreclosed. As a consequence, many voters come to believe that their political will is being unjustly denied. The taint of misconduct in a controversial election can reduce confidence in the process and cast a shadow on the legitimacy of the ruling party or the winning candidate. Without genuine political competition, in which there is a realistic chance that power can change hands according to the will of the voters, the simplest premise of democracy is denied.

If elections are not fair and transparent, citizens lose personal confidence in their political influence. The sense of political efficacy among the citizenry of which we have spoken can quickly turn to frustration. Citizens are unlikely to invest their hopes and aspirations in the political process if they believe that outcomes are pre-ordained, and their voice does not matter. When the public becomes disillusioned by a flawed electoral process, they are likely to withdraw into apathy or cynicism, sometimes becoming aggravated and militant. These attitudes are unhealthy for the development of a democratic political culture, and can easily create opportunities for non-democratic elements to exercise influence.

Along with the general disaffection among the public, we should take special note of the grievances among minority communities. In every plural society, there are some groups who believe they are marginalized by the political establishment, neglected by government, and excluded from meaningful participation. When democratic governance offers regular channels

Even the “losers” in a contentious election may come away with a high regard for democracy if they feel the contest was honestly fought and judged. The process can be as important as the outcome.

for expression and choice, minorities – even if they are not able to attain their full aspirations – are still inclined to accept the political system as the best option for advancing their interests. In circumstances where electoral choice is compromised, however, their sense of exclusion increases, and aggrieved minorities may become more confrontational in their approaches to politics. Some groups may even turn their back on the political system or seek to part ways with the national community. In the most extreme situations, election flaws can ultimately challenge the integrity of the nation.

In fact there are many groups, and not just cultural minorities, who may be frustrated by a closed political process. Economic interest groups, religious communities, supporters of political parties, or members of particular communities may come to believe that their opportunities are thwarted by a political system that is not truly inclusive. In these circumstances, groups with differing interests may be less willing to take the path of negotiation, conciliation, and compromise afforded by a democratic process. Instead, the political climate is poisoned by growing antagonism and polarization among groups, which sometimes bursts into open conflict.

A flawed process of elections also tends to shed light on the shortcomings of government performance. As I have noted, democratic citizens around the world often separate the person from the system: they

If elections are not fair and transparent, citizens lose personal confidence in their political influence.

can make keen distinctions between the performance of leaders, and the possibilities of a democratic regime. When large segments of the public believe that they cannot hold leaders to account, or vote new personalities into government, they are likely to become increasingly discouraged by a poor economy, persistent corruption, crime, insecurity, or ineffective governance. Instead of seeing the possibilities for improving national problems with various leaders over the long term, citizens may come to view these problems as insurmountable. The democratic regime may lose legitimacy. The public may become indifferent to anti-democratic challenges, or they may come to accept non-democratic political alternatives.

Reflections from Recent Global Experience

Let us turn from these general points to consider some recent examples. Many of us recall last year's election drama in Ukraine. After two terms in office the strongman president, Leonid Kuchma, bowed to term limits and prepared to step down. However, the November elections were apparently rigged in favour of the ruling party's candidate, and supporters of opposition candidate Yuschenko vigorously protested the results. For weeks, opposition protesters filled the streets of the capital while supporters of the ruling party threatened secession or civil war if their candidate, Mr. Yanukovich, was not seated. Ultimately, the Supreme Court voided the election and new polls were held, giving Yuschenko, the opposition flag-bearer, a lopsided victory. Flawed elections threatened the stability and political equilibrium of the nation, but the successful effort to stage a fair election helped to restore confidence in the system, and was hailed as a positive turning point for this new democracy.

Similar events occurred in the Republic of Georgia a year earlier, when fraudulent elections for parliament led to mass demonstrations against Eduard Shevardnadze, another powerful executive whose previous elections were significantly flawed. The protests

compelled the president to resign, and the Supreme Court to order new national polls. The opposition candidate Mikhail Saakashvili won a landslide. Here too, the country emerged from an election crisis to a more hopeful future of political reform, with renewed popular legitimacy for the democratic regime.

These scenes have been played out in Africa as well. We can vividly recall the standoff in Madagascar after the December 2001 elections, when government officials awarded an electoral victory to President Ratsiraka, while the supporters of opposition candidate Ravalomanana took to the streets in protest, alleging election fraud. For months, the opposition claimed the streets of the capital city, while supporters of the president blockaded the major ports and roads of the country. Eventually, negotiations and popular action compelled Ratsiraka to concede, and the country regained political peace.

If the outcome in Madagascar was generally welcome, surely the course of events in nearby Cote d'Ivoire is a major cause for concern. In the controversial 2000 election, the incumbent Laurent Gbagbo sought to disqualify the major challenger, Alasanne Ouattara, through changes in citizenship laws. Violent gangs mobilized on both sides of the political divide. Although Gbagbo held power, the country was plunged into civil war in 2002 when segments of the army rebelled. One of West Africa's most stable and prosperous countries descended into conflict and collapse, instigated in large part by polarization over a flawed election.

Many political crises emerge from troubled election outcomes, but there are also cases of successful reform. Mexico, for instance, had a closed and corrupt electoral system for decades. Although regular multi-party elections were held, the ruling PRI party was assured of victory because of its control of the electoral process and government resources. This began to change in the 1990s. Chronic economic problems and rising social unrest reduced confidence in the status quo. The

public was jolted by the 1994 assassination of the PRI's presidential candidate. Senior leaders began to recognize the need for electoral reform. Mexico introduced a fully independent election commission and provided for increasingly fair and transparent elections for municipal, state, and legislative offices. In 2000, a candidate from an opposition party, Vicente Fox, won the presidency for the first time in several decades. Fox's presidency has not resolved Mexico's national challenges, but his election was generally seen as a major transition in Mexican politics.

In West Africa, we can also point to the very heartening developments in Senegal and Ghana, where long-serving presidents honoured term limits and created the conditions for fully competitive elections. These incumbent leaders handed office to winners from the political opposition, and set their countries on an encouraging democratic path. The citizens of Senegal and Ghana express high levels of confidence in the legitimacy of their political systems, and the trend of democratic development has been widely recognized by the international community. Both countries, for instance, have moved toward the final stages of HIPC debt cancellation, and both are eligible for assistance under the US Millennium Challenge Account.

Concluding Lessons

What lessons can we take from these experiences and reflections? Let me conclude with a few brief points:

- **Elections are central, not incidental, to the course of democratic development.** The example of regular, fair, and transparent elections is an essential component in building democratic habits and institutions.
- **Flawed elections create major obstacles to democratization.** Flawed elections are not merely an annoyance to be periodically tolerated and then overlooked. Improper election procedures can cumulatively weaken, and even ruin, the prospects for democratization.
- **Inadequate electoral systems can be improved through serious efforts at reform.** Improving election administration, strengthening independent election

agencies, promoting cooperation and empowering civil society, are important elements of electoral reform. Dysfunctional systems can become workable systems. The elements of successful reform are generally agreed, but political commitment is essential.

- **Political leaders and elites have a crucial role in electoral reform.** One major source of electoral misconduct is the mutual mistrust among politicians and parties. When everyone expects the other side to commit fraud, then they are likely to engage in "pre-emptive" misconduct. A key to reducing misconduct is to engage political elites in negotiation and dialogue over basic standards of conduct, the best practices for political competition, and the adherence to common standards. By publicizing agreement over principles, and maintaining clear dialogue, it can be possible to reduce mistrust and to encourage all players to respect the "rules of the game."
- **Civil society has a crucial role to play in electoral reform.** Civic organizations can fulfill many important roles, including election monitoring, legal reform, civic education, conflict resolution, and dialogue with politicians and parties over standards of conduct. Citizens' organizations have an important place as watchdogs, monitors, advisors, and collaborators in promoting electoral reform.

- The international community must sustain attention to electoral reform. It is important to sustain the commitment of resources and personal energies to the goals of election reform in new democracies, and to be as forward-looking as possible in supplying assistance early in the election cycle.

Elections are a critical component in democracy. Elections can always be better. We need to focus on the problem early, consistently, and seriously. Our presence here today demonstrates that interest. We hope the process of reform can guide Nigeria to a bright future.

Thank you.

TRANSITIONAL DEMOCRACIES: THE IMPERATIVE OF ELECTORAL REFORM

LECTURE

DR. ROBERT PASTOR
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY



On behalf of American University and its Center for Democracy and Election Management, which has been asked to co-sponsor this historic conference on Election Reform in Nigeria, let me thank the President and Vice President of your great country for encouraging and supporting this conference. And to Jamilah Farris and Peter Lewis, who organized this spectacular conference, let me say that all of us owe you a debt so large that we ought to apply immediately for forgiveness because we can never repay it.

The issue at the center of this conference – how to assure confidence in elections – has preoccupied me for three decades as a scholar, an election observer, and a political strategist. At the Carter Center, beginning in 1985, I developed their program of election-monitoring and the technique of election-mediation, and organized about one hundred international missions to monitor elections in more than 30 countries, including the U.S. where I am organizing a Commission on

U.S. Federal Election Reform. Every nation must remain engaged in helping improve its democracy. In my current position as Vice President of International Affairs at American University, I have a special reason to hope for the success of this conference. We are a partner to ABTI-American University of Nigeria in Yola. We expect it will partly depend on the success of consolidating democracy. Democracy, more than anything, will provide the long-term security needed for higher education and economic development.

Dan Quayle, the former Vice President of the United States, once said: “The trend in the world toward democracy is inevitable, but that could change.” After three days of listening to Nigerians discuss their concerns about the state of democracy in this country, I think that Quayle had a point. Nigerians want freedom and democracy, but that could change if the problems they described are not addressed urgently.

Let me begin by describing the dilemma that is at the heart of democracy and Nigeria's challenge. Nigeria is not the only country to face a critical transition. I will describe similar cases and the dangers they all faced. Second, I will describe what I have learned from this conference. I sense a consensus emerging around key principles. Finally, I will borrow from other experiences around the world to offer some ideas on how Nigeria could build on the principles to deepen and consolidate its democracy.

I. Collisions at the Intersection between Suspicion and Administrative Incapacity

Elections represent an excruciating contradiction. They are, at the same time, a struggle for power, and a popularity contest. Candidates often are ready to do whatever it takes to win, but constitutions require that they compete within rules. In our workshops, there was discussion of "competitive rigging" and "competitive violence" – these terms hint at a kind of arms race, a competition that obeys no rules, and threatens the very contest. In wanting to win without regard to the rules, Nigeria's politicians erode their own legitimacy and endanger the country, but they find themselves trapped. If they don't break the rules, their opponent will win.

Candidates in a consolidated democracy stay within the rules not because they are better leaders than Nigerians but because they know they will pay a heavy price for violating the rules, and they are likely to be caught. "Competitive rigging" is a classic problem of "collective action." Each candidate pursues his self-interest, but by doing so, he and everyone is worse off. There

are only two ways to solve a collective action problem – by cooperative agreement to obey the rules and by enforcement of the rules.

Nigeria's dilemma is not unique, but it is compounded by the interaction between political suspicion and administrative incapacity. The weakness of institutions – like INEC – may collide with political suspicion to become a tragic political accident.

I did a study of 387 elections in the developing world. Approximately 20% were flawed, meaning that the irregularities were on such a scale that the opposition boycotted or refused to accept the results. About 60% of the flawed elections were in Africa, and administrative problems and, in some cases, transparent fraud, were the cause. In a deeper analysis of 23 of 50 transitional elections that failed, only 3 had genuinely independent election commissions. If election commissions are weak or perceived as biased, the probability is higher that the election will be flawed, and this often leads to violence and sometimes to military intervention.

The trauma of the military dictatorship has given Nigeria some breathing room through two elections, but those who think that Nigeria is exempt from this syndrome are short-sighted. A close election, combined with the kind of irregularities reported in the previous elections, could erode and even destroy Nigeria's fragile democracy.

This may be springtime for democracy in Africa, but in 1958, a book called "The Twilight of Tyrants," was written by Tad Szulc, a New York Times correspondent. Six dictators had just fallen from power in Latin America, and Szulc predicted: "Democracy so late in coming and still taking its first shake and tentative steps forward, is here to stay in Latin America." Four years later, democracy left as abruptly as it had arrived.

II. Nigeria's Turning Point

In the roundtable discussions, I heard a consensus on several points:

- The last two elections in 1999 and 2003 were flawed, and while this represents a giant leap forward from the military dictatorships of the past, a good percentage of Nigerians are distressed with these irregularities.
- Nigerians hope that the next election will be a decided improvement, but they fear it could be as bad or worse.
- If there is serious fraud in the next election, some people think that the Nigerian

people will react with apathy; others, that they will respond with distress; and still others, think they will react with belligerence. The chances of the latter reaction increase if the election is close, and the loser's supporters feel he was robbed.

- INEC is not perceived as independent or effective, but it needs to be.
- The corruption that is endemic in Nigeria also threatens democratic legitimacy, and it needs to stop.
- The violence that has been terrible in several states in past elections could spill-over to other regions and states.

There is no single formula that will magically solve these problems, but the history of other democratic transitions offers some guidance. There are many issues to address, but for the sake of time, let me focus on just four: political will; election administration; campaign finance; and enforcement.

The first step requires a commitment among the political leadership to the terms of a free and fair election. The Statement of Principles that emerged from this Conference represents just such a pact, and although some might dismiss it as just "words," similar pacts in Venezuela in 1958, Spain in 1977, and Poland and Hungary in 1989 helped consolidate democracy. In each of these countries, the civilian politicians united behind rules, realizing that if some of them broke the rules or invited the military or the Communists to join them to take power, that they would doom their countries. Similarly, if Nigeria's leaders affirm this statement, it says to the people of Nigeria that they are ready to contest the next election by accepting the rules because if they fail to do so, they might win, but it would be a pyrrhic victory because the country would lose.

The second step is to strengthen INEC by securing its independence and widening and improving its capacity. The question is how.

Election Commissions must not only be impartial; they need to be perceived as such. The members should be distinguished, fair,

competent, and non-partisan. In Costa Rica, the entire electoral apparatus is a fourth branch of government and includes the administration of elections and the Electoral Courts. Several steps are required to secure the independence of INEC.

- a. **Appointment.** In Costa Rica, the Tribunal is composed of three Judges who are elected by a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Court. In other cases, the President appoints someone who is non-partisan and of real stature. To assure that the appointment will be viewed that way, two-thirds of the Senate should approve the appointment. In Canada, the Chief Elections Officer secured a unanimous vote of the Parliament.
- b. **Term.** To secure independence, the Commissioners should have a term that exceeds that of the president by at least a couple of years.
- c. **Funding.** INEC needs a secure source of funding. Again, Elections Canada presents its budget directly to the Parliament rather than to the Prime Minister. INEC should be able to do the same, and its funding should come from consolidated revenue and it could be determined by a formula that reflects the number of registered voters times the average cost of conducting an election per voter.
- d. **Professional Training.** INEC should develop a career professional service, equivalent to the career foreign service. Mexico made the transition from a weak electoral system to a highly trained and professional institution in less than a decade, and a key element in its success was training.

The third goal is to reduce the influence of money in politics. True democracy means one person one vote, but in the real world, the influence of a few is often magnified by campaign contributions. Politicians need money to campaign, and some seek office as

a way to acquire wealth. Both diminish the legitimacy of democracy and require constant vigilance by citizens. The best response includes new conflict of interest laws and strict limit on contributions and campaign revenues by parties and candidates. Also, full, complete, and immediate disclosure on the Web is essential. INEC also needs to regulate equitable access to the media. Some changes in the laws are needed, but the biggest problem is enforcement or rather a lack of it.

Some argue that Nigeria has a “culture” of corruption, and it is pervasive. If “culture” means that it can’t be changed, I say that is nonsense. Nigerians are no more corrupt than Americans. The only difference is that independent prosecuting attorneys in the United States “sting” politicians and others who violate the laws. They offer them bribes, and when politicians accept, they are brought to court and convicted. Politicians learn pretty quickly. Arrest some politicians for bribery in Nigeria, and you’ll begin to see a change in the so-called culture. Then, arrest people for electoral fraud, and the elections will look a lot better.

This brings us to the fourth challenge – enforcement and security. Nigeria’s 36 state attorneys-general are supposed to enforce the election laws, and yet despite the many reports of election fraud none of them have successfully prosecuted a single case. It should come as no surprise that this disease is spreading. How to end impunity? Remove the power to enforce the law from state attorneys-general and transfer it to independent prosecutors in a new INEC. Elections Canada has a special prosecutorial capacity with the statutory responsibility to enforce the entire electoral law. This could be a model for Nigeria.

At the conference, we heard some express concern about the army’s intimidation of voters, and also some asserted that the police are not trained to protect the polling stations. In Costa Rica, for one week prior to the vote, the Electoral Tribunal assumes supervisory authority over the police in order to dedicate

its full resources to protecting the legitimacy of the election. This idea is worth considering for Nigeria, although the police would need to get special training to achieve this goal.

III. Conclusion

What I found most exciting and encouraging about this conference is that everyone realized how important and yet how fragile democracy is in Nigeria. Everyone identified the many challenges and searched for answers. People representing different parties and walks of life said that the “system” was ultimately responsible for the problems. The system might be the problem, but the solution is with the citizens and leaders. Because of the conference and the candor and intelligence of the participants, the path is clearer:

- to overcome the political arms race, a pact or statement of principles is necessary but not sufficient;
- to overcome weak administrative capacity, steps to secure the independence of INEC and widen its mandate should be taken;
- to overcome the culture of corruption, precise campaign finance and conflict of interest statutes, and the laws must be enforced; and
- to overcome the culture of impunity and the possibility of intimidation, a special prosecutor and a new role for the police in elections is needed.

The elections are in 2007. That might seem like a long time from now, but for election officials, it is tomorrow. To gain the confidence of Nigerians, a timetable is needed now to describe when each of these steps should be taken.

I want to thank all of you for inviting me to listen and learn from your debates on election reform. All democracies need to reform themselves every so often. In the U.S., we are starting a Commission on Election Reform to renew our democracy just as we celebrate your willingness to invigorate yours.

ELECTORAL REFORM: THE NEXT MILESTONE IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY

LECTURE

AMBASSADOR PRINCETON N. LYMAN
U.S. COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS



It is a special honour for me to address this Memorial Forum in the presence of the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo. I had the privilege of representing my country as Ambassador to Nigeria in the mid-1980s, and at that time came to know the President, then a farmer but a rather special one, and in the years since as he worked on behalf of development and good governance across Africa, and as he has assumed Nigeria's highest office. Thank you Mr. President for your presence here tonight on this special occasion.

I want to express my appreciation to the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Memorial Forum for hosting this important conference on electoral reform. It is in the tradition of the Forum and the man in whose memory it operates that we have participated here at a conference on one of the most vital challenges of democracy: the electoral process. Whatever else is essential to make democracy effective and sustainable, elections are the lifeblood of the system, the constant affirmation of legitimacy for its leaders and the bond that links the leaders with their people.

I wish to thank also His Excellency the Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, who opened this conference and presided at the commemoration this morning.

The Importance of Nigeria

If it were only Nigeria's democracy at stake in the effectiveness of its electoral process, that would be serious enough. But the truth is that Nigeria's importance runs far beyond its borders. Nigeria is a leader in much of what is happening throughout the continent. It was President Obasanjo, along with South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, Senegal's President Wade, and Algerian President Bouteflika, that developed the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) that set out principles of good governance and economic management that is now a key policy framework of the Africa Union. NEPAD has also become the

foundation for the evolving new partnership between Africa and the industrialized countries of the world. Because of NEPAD, there now exists and Africa Action Plan that charts the future relationship between the G8 and Africa in terms of trade, aid and security.

Beyond just words and principles, Nigeria has become the key actor in pushing back efforts to undermine democratic progress in West Africa. In Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and most recently in Togo, Nigeria together with its allies in the Economic Commission for West Africa (ECOWAS) forced reversal of coups and the undermining of constitutional processes. Had these actions not been taken, NEPAD would have been only words on a page. Now these principles are a part of reality.

Finally, Nigeria has been playing a central role in resolving conflicts. Nigerians have paid a heavy price for peace, in the many lives lost in the peacekeeping operations of Sierra Leone and Liberia and in treasure. Nigerians have not flinched from this responsibility. In Burundi, in Congo, and most recently in the Darfur region of Sudan, Nigeria dedicates peacekeepers, money and time to end the terrible conflicts that have afflicted those countries. Today, it is Nigeria that is providing the leadership and the venue for the political talks that are critical to ending the tragedy in Darfur.

What this means for the subject we have been discussing these last three days is that the future of Nigeria's democracy has repercussions far beyond Nigeria. Nigeria is very much a bellweather for the progress of democracy in Africa. Moreover, should the worst happen, should problems in the elections in 2007 lead to unrest and instability in Nigeria, the impact would be even greater, unsettling the region and weakening one of the most important forces for peace and progress on the continent.

Nigeria thus carries a heavy responsibility, first and foremost for its people but also for the continent. This is not new for Nigeria. And I know that Nigeria will not shy from the responsibility just as it has not shied away from the responsibilities I have already mentioned.

A Watershed Moment

This is a critical moment for Nigeria and indeed one that is exciting. The first major step on the restoration of democracy occurred in 1999 with the end of military rule and the election of a civilian government. The second, in 2003, was the election carried out under a civilian government. Now, the third and very significant one, is the change in Administration in 2007 called for in the constitution as the present Administration completes its second and final term. If that is achieved successfully, with steady improvement in the electoral process, it will signify the institutionalizing of democracy in Nigeria and the underlying strength of the system.

That milestone would come along with the economic reforms that have been achieved under the current Administration and which are in the process of being institutionalized. We have had the pleasure just two weeks ago of hosting the Nigerian Finance Minister, Madame Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and members of her economic team. She outlined to audiences in New York and Washington the tremendous progress that has been made in establishing fiscal discipline, transparency in budget allocations, reforms of federal procurement and other steps to fight corruption, and a major commitment to a complete audit of the oil sector in accordance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, in which Nigeria has now taken a leading role. The New York Times wrote following her visit that it was time to take a new look at Nigeria, one which recognized the real progress being made and the appropriateness of giving Nigeria strong international support.

But economic and political developments are linked and this is very much in the minds of international watchers. Economic development cannot be sustained in a dysfunctional political system. While Nigeria has passed two major political milestones, and much has been accomplished, there is concern over the balance of the process of transition. How much will both economic and political reform be institutionalized

by 2007? The question is of course most of all important to Nigeria.

The Sources of Concern

In this conference participants have focused in particular on electoral reform. The causes of concern are clear. In spite of the historic milestones of the last two elections, the 2003 elections were marred by controversy, irregularities and charges of fraud. Both Nigerian and international election observers documented violations of electoral law and other problems. In parts of the country there is deep bitterness over the process. This feeling places a greater premium on reform to be carried out by the government and parties. Putting it starkly, any candidate who wins in 2007 will have difficulty if the election results are not credible to the vast majority of Nigerians. Potential difficulties could range from growing apathy and lack of confidence in government to unrest.

Nigeria would also lose prestige in the eyes of the international community. Democracy has now become a dominant theme in international discourse. For my country, the President has made this objective the cornerstone of his international policies. The trend is however worldwide, with dramatic movements toward democracy in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Nigeria does not want to nor should it be on the margins of this trend. Rather, for its own sake, and for its whole agenda with the international community, it should be a leader as it was in 1999.

In this conference the basic areas of electoral reform have emerged quite clearly. It is for others to define the specifics for addressing these needs, but the priorities are these:

- Enhancing the independence and strengthening the capacity of INEC. INEC must be seen as independent of partisan bias or control, even of the incumbent administration. That relates to the selection of its members, the autonomy of its budget, and the authority it exerts to enforce the election laws and regulations. These reforms must extend down through the state and local government level.
- The system for counting and aggregation of votes must be made more transparent and verifiable.

- There must be evidence of prosecution of violators. A climate of impunity will undo the best rules or regulations.

In carrying forward the reform agenda, many entities must be involved. Government has to take a leading role, making reform a priority and initiating the steps toward enhancing INEC's independence and budget autonomy, the training of security services and other official actions. But political party leadership is also critical. Party leaders, and the leading potential candidates for President and other positions, must come together and agree that they all have a stake in improving the system. Only by all pledging to work toward reform will the parties have the incentive to give up the reputed advantages of rigging. We had a workshop in the conference titled "competitive rigging." What is needed is cooperative reform. The incentive for that should be clear. No winning candidate will have the leeway to rule effectively if the 2007 election is not credible.

Civil society has a crucial role, and it should be welcomed by both government and the parties. Monitoring, training, assistance, and voter education are all roles civil society can and must play. Without that watchdog role, democracy does not function, not in my country nor any other.

The need for action on all these fronts is urgent. There are only two years to the next election. The reforms that are required to make that election a success will take time and a great deal of effort. It is a time for leadership.

A Time for Leadership

In the past few days, even as we heard of the issues and the possible solutions, a current of pessimism, indeed cynicism ran through the conference. Many participants, more often in private conversations than in open discussion, confided that they felt the obstacles to reform were in fact too deeply ingrained to be overcome – ingrained in the culture, in the winner take all attitude of the parties, in the drive for wealth that comes so much in Nigeria from public office, in the apathy of voters, in the corruption of the system, in the weakness of the security services and the judiciary. So many obstacles, so difficult a challenge. It was almost too easy to give up.

But one wise participant, who indeed had articulated these difficulties most convincingly, then said there was a way to break through. How, we asked? By great leadership, he said. Truly great leaders, those who could see beyond the shorter term gains from the present system, those who could see to the future and the needs of the state and the Nigerian people in the years ahead – such leaders could break through. They could initiate the process of reform, they could mobilize supporters, they could make progress.

We have seen such leaders elsewhere. Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Ernesto Zedillo in Mexico, Vaclav Havel in the Czech Republic. Indeed we have seen them in Nigeria's past – the magnanimous policy of reconciliation after the civil war, the passage to elected rule in 1979, the agreement to end military rule in 1999. These were historic steps by which Nigerian leaders moved the country away from crisis and internal bitterness to unity and democracy.

I have no doubt that such leadership exists in Nigeria today. We have already seen it in courageous economic reforms, a potential legacy of far reaching significance. We have seen it among politicians and civic leaders who have broken with the patterns of the past, and have spoken out for reform. President Obasanjo has put the issue of electoral reform along with many others before the recently convened National Political Reform Conference.

What a legacy for the future lies ahead for this generation of leaders! A legacy of both political and economic restructuring that places Nigeria on an unerring path toward greater stability, greater democracy and desperately needed economic development. A legacy that will be recognized around the world for the courage, the principles, and the contribution of those who have made it possible. With such a legacy, Nigeria will continue to be a leader. And the continent and the world will be safer and better for it.

Electoral reform may sound pretty small within such a grand vision. But electoral reform is the key, the opening up the political system, the means for restoring hope and confidence to the Nigerian people. I salute Nigeria and its leaders for their recognition of this fact and their readiness to undertake it.

ELECTORAL REFORM: CONFERENCE REPORT

PROFESSOR ATTAHIRU M. JEGA



Introduction

As part of the activities for the 7th National Programme of Commemoration of the Yar'Adua Memorial Forum, a wide range of stakeholders gathered at the Yar'Adua Centre on Thursday and Friday, March 17 and 18, 2005, and participated in the conference on the theme: **ELECTORAL REFORM: Building Confidence for Our Future**. The conference kicked off with a well attended and impressive ceremony on March 17, 2005, during which Vice President Atiku Abubakar delivered an Opening Address and participants listened to an insightful lecture by Dr. Peter Lewis of the American University Washington D.C. titled, "Global Overview: Troubled Election Outcomes as Threat to Democracy."

The conference proper, which commenced right after the Opening Session, was structured in six Roundtable Discussions, on the following sub-themes:

1. Electoral Participation/Competitive Rigging
2. Integrity of the Party System
3. Political Violence
4. Electoral Law/Campaign Finance
5. Election Administration: Organizing the 2007 Election
6. Election Monitoring

Each Roundtable discussion involved a carefully selected team of eminently qualified persons to do justice to the sub-theme, which consisted of a Coordinator, a distinguished Chairperson, three to four competent lead discussants, and other equally competent participants ranging between 30 and 40 persons. Participants were drawn from a critical mass of stakeholders in the development of Nigerian democracy, in particular, from academia, the legislature, civil society groups, youth organizations, INEC and SEICs, trade union movement and international development partners.

The deliberations were focused, intense, thought provoking, insightful and generally enlightening. They were conducted within the framework established by the organizers, the concept of which was to have an "open conference by stakeholders in the development of Nigerian democracy to develop a roadmap and plan of action that will guarantee free, fair and violence free elections in 2007."

It is my great pleasure to have this opportunity to provide an overview of the conference proceedings for the benefit of many of you here today who were not opportune to participate fully in the conference.

Overview

In general, conference participants agreed that elections are among the most important pillars of democracy and that free and fair elections are essential requirements of sustainability and consolidation of democracy. They expressed concerns that Nigeria has had a long history of electoral fraud and competitive rigging, which have contributed significantly to the obstruction of our aspirations for democracy. They expressed concern that although these persistent problems are well documented in many studies and reports, not much has been concretely done to address them. Given our more recent experiences with the 2003 national elections, and the

2004 local government elections in some states, and given our overarching desire for stable national democratic development, participants in the conference have perceived the necessity of urgent, fundamental electoral reforms well before 2007, so as to set a solid foundation for stable democratic development in Nigeria.

More specifically, each roundtable discussion discussed exhaustively the sub-theme assigned to it, called attention to substantive

issues of reform and made wide ranging recommendations which can be summarized as follows:

1. Electoral Participation / Competitive Rigging

The Roundtable discussion on Electoral Participation/Competitive Rigging was chaired by Alhaji (Dr.) Ahmadu Kurfi, Maradin Katsina, and Secretary of FEDECO during the 1979 elections. Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim who also made a lead presentation coordinated the Roundtable discussion. Other lead discussants were Mrs. Nkoyo Toyo (Executive Director of GADA) and Dr. Kabiru Mato (University of Abuja). In reviewing the history of electoral participation and competitive rigging in Nigeria, the following key points were made:

- There are many stakeholders involved in the organization of elections and unless they work together in concert to fight rigging of elections, nothing much can be achieved.
- For INEC as an umpire to do its job well, it requires the other stakeholders.
- Elections under incumbent rulers are usually less free and fair, and unless they leave office six months to elections, not much progress can be made.
- Although rigging has been prevalent in successive elections in Nigeria, what happened in 2003 and especially 2004 local elections in some states surpassed them all and defies characterization.
- Given the extent and magnitude of competitive election rigging, Nigeria is faced with a systemic and structural problem in which the culture and values of fair electoral completion has totally collapsed, leaving citizens with no choice in electoral competition.
- The pervasive culture of impunity and executive lawlessness in national governance has nourished and intensified the phenomenon of competitive rigging with dire consequences in the Nigerian polity.

- Efforts need to be made to decisively deal with electoral apathy and ensure that citizens have a voice in parties and in elections.
- The nation's electoral infrastructure needs to be re-bumped to tackle the problem of election irregularities and fraudulent conduct.
- In forging ahead with reforms with a view to improve things in 2007, however, it is necessary to recognize that the problems are deep-seated and it is better to have a longer term perspective of reforms and building of a desirable democratic culture in the long run, rather than being too preoccupied with short term goals.

Following the exhaustive deliberations, the following recommendations were made as a panacea for competitive rigging and other forms of electoral fraud:

- Given the striving culture of impunity, effective punitive measures must be applied to electoral fraudsters to discourage perpetrators.
- Given the emerging consensus that INEC is not truly independent, it is imperative that measures to secure its autonomy be put in place. In particular, the present procedure for the appointment of the Chairman and Commissioners of INEC should be changed. Also, funding of INEC should be taken away from the control and overbearing influence of the executive branch of government; INEC's budget should be directly submitted to and approved by the National Assembly, and its funds drawn directly from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- Pertinent stakeholders must take steps to bring about the development of a political culture that is more supportive of democratic norms and practices; communities must be made to appreciate the importance of their right to vote and strive to defend the integrity of their mandate.

- The winner take all attitude of the political class needs to be combated; they must accept the need for the existence of a robust and vibrant opposition as one of the requirements for deepening our democracy.
- Civil society organizations should be empowered through financial, regulatory and logistical support by state and international partners to enhance their watchdog and civic education roles.
- The army should be kept out of the administration of elections; and the police should be trained to be non-partisan in the discharge of their responsibilities and protect the rights of all registered voters to exercise their right to vote without harassment or intimidation.
- Collation of results should be done in the presence of party agents and election monitors; and results should be signed by party agents and released immediately at each stage of the counting and collation process.
- The plurality of the mass media, especially radio and television must be encouraged; existing laws that prohibit monopoly of air time by incumbent governments should be strictly applied.
- Nigerians, with the assistance of their international friends and partners should embark on an immediate study to determine the best possible voting mechanism for the 2007 elections, exploring all options and making a rational choice to suit our circumstances. The principal consideration of the choice of a voting mechanism should be the protection of the integrity of the choice of the citizens.
- Given the fact that many of the recommendations would require constitutional review and improvement on the electoral act, steps should be taken to do these in good time; and a detailed roadmap for the revision of the legal regime should be drawn up and implemented immediately.



2. Integrity of the Party System

The Roundtable on the Integrity of the Party System was coordinated by Dr. Hamid Bobboyi and Chaired by Senator Udoma Udo Udoma. The lead discussants were Her Excellency, Olusola Obada (Deputy Governor of Osun State), Professor Abdulhamid Ujo (University of Abuja), Senator Tokumbo Afikuyomi (Senate Deputy Chief Whip), Chief Donald Etiebet (National Chairman, ANPP) and Dr. Usman Bugaje (Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives).

The following pertinent issues were raised in the course of the discussion:

- The failure of political parties in Nigeria is attributable to certain unique features in the evolution of political parties in Nigeria, such as: military intervention in politics, discontinuity, lack of internal democracy, lack of ideology, lack of respect for and compliance to the party constitution and operation of parties under extreme poverty.
- The definition of a political party in the 1999 Constitution is extremely narrow. Instead of viewing parties merely as instruments for seeking elective office, they should be made to function as agents of social change.
- Contemporary Nigerian political parties do not seem to truly belong to the people; there is need for the constitution to re-define political parties as platforms for bettering the lives of the people.

- The role of 'money-bags' and 'god-fathers', has impacted negatively in the development and functioning of political parties in Nigeria; the determining factor in the conduct of the election should be the credibility of the individual contestant and not money.
- Corruption and lack of transparency in the party nomination process hinders the emergence of credible candidates.
- The relationship between the parties and their elected officials has been characterized by indiscipline and conflict; there is absence of due process and arbitrariness in the operation of virtually all the parties; elected executive officials refuse to subject themselves to party leadership.
- Public funding of political parties is inadequate, making them susceptible prey to the influence of money-bags; there is also lack of transparency and accountability in the management of the funds of the political parties.

Some of the key recommendations arising from the discussion of these issues are as follows:

- Civil society organizations should actively engage political parties and their officials to ensure that they establish appropriate structures and procedures which will enhance the integrity of the party system; this can be done through capacity-building workshops.
- Stakeholders should strive to make political parties ideologically oriented and issue-based, characterized by discipline and internal democracy in the conduct of its affairs.
- Legislation should be introduced to appropriately sanction the overbearing influence of money-bags and god-fathers in political parties and in national politics as a whole; there should be a limit as well as disclosures of individual and group contributions to political parties.
- Government subventions to parties should be institutionalized and regularized; and there must be campaign financing reforms

to regulate fund raising and expenditure associated with elections.

- Political parties should be mass-based rather than elite based to truly belong to the people.
- Politicians and other stakeholders should strive to nurture internal democracy and respect for due process in the affairs of political parties.

3. Political Violence

The Roundtable discussion on Political Violence was coordinated by Dr. Judith Asuni and chaired by Senator Evangel Diffa. The lead discussants were DPC Aniefiok (representing the IGP), Mr. Innocent Chukwuma (CLEEN Foundation), and five representatives of youth groups, who provided insights into the phenomenon of the use of armed youth gangs by politicians to advance selfish interests in the election process.

The following issues were raised and discussed:

- Violence related to elections is a serious problem in Nigeria requiring urgent attention; it has been aggravated by the unwillingness of politicians to play by the rules of the game; also by the failure of winners to be magnanimous in victory and the refusal of losers to accept defeat.
- To sustain and consolidate the on-going transition to democracy, strategies must be put in place to curb the phenomenon of the use of violence in politics.
- Youth from poor, uneducated families and background are used by politicians to intimidate, terrorize and even maim or kill opponents and their supporters; the rising spate of youth unemployment and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have increased this phenomenon; political conflicts and violence are generalized when these armed youth gangs become restless in the post election period and turn their guns on their mentors/sponsors, or on rival groups.
- Elected government officials are as

guilty as members of the opposition when it comes to use of violent gangs in electioneering.

- Violence related to elections has contributed significantly to undermining the credibility and integrity of the electoral system, as well as that of the entire democratic process.
- Law enforcement agents are ill-trained and ill-equipped to handle outbreaks of political violence; they lack communication gadgets and are poorly deployed to polling stations; more often than not, they contribute to the problem rather than help find a solution to it.

Some of the key recommendations that emerged at the end of the deliberation are as follows:

- There should be a comprehensive employment policy that should cater for the needs and aspirations of Nigerian youth, so as to remove them from the evil grip of idleness and re-channel their energies into productive undertakings in the Nigerian political economy.
- The police should be adequately trained, equipped and funded to enable them to discharge their responsibilities of ensuring law and order and protecting lives and property; they should indeed be made to be knowledgeable about electoral laws and guidelines through training programmes; generally efforts should be made to change the regimental attitude that prevails among security personnel, so that they more and more see their duties

as civic responsibilities in the context of national development.

- Civil society organizations must intensify efforts in sensitizing communities about the need for conflict resolution, peace-building and the prevention of violence related to elections.

4. Electoral Law/Campaign Finance

The fourth Roundtable discussion focused on Electoral Law and Campaign Finance. It was coordinated by Hon. Nimi Walson-Jack and chaired by Hon. O.C.J. Okocha, MFR, SAN. The lead discussants were A.B. Mahmud, SAN, Hon. Hamisu Shira, Prof. Musa Yakubu and M.A. Abubakar of INEC.

The following issues were raised and discussed:

- Flaws were identified in the Electoral Law, which need to be addressed to secure the integrity and credibility of the electoral process and ensure free and fair elections in 2007 and beyond.
- It was established that the Electoral Act 2002 is not comprehensive on the issue of campaign finance.
- Concern was also raised about how corruption and the unregulated use of money for electioneering is threatening Nigerian transition to democracy.
- The need for ensuring strict compliance to existing laws/regulations of campaign finance was discussed.



- The need to enact new comprehensive legislation on campaign finance was articulated in order to decisively address corruption in the electoral process; such as candidates receiving resources from god-fathers; corporate organizations, etc., in return for favors when elected, misuse or abuse of state resources by those in power for campaign or other private purposes; and bribing of voters and election officials.
- Concern was expressed about the unwholesome delay in the determination of petition cases at the Electoral Petitions Tribunals.

Some of the key recommendations that emerged at the end of the deliberations are as follows:

- There is need to circulate the draft Electoral Act 2004 to the public especially civil society groups for their input.
- There is need to excise the Electoral provisions from the 1999 Constitution and make all electoral matters subject to an Act of the National Assembly. This could be replaced with a clause in the constitution, which simply provides that "The National Assembly shall make laws in respect of elections in the country." Doing this would make amendments to the Electoral Act and composition of electoral authorities relatively easier than what obtains presently.
- The composition and independence of INEC needs to be reconsidered; for example, the powers of the president to appoint the chairman, commissioners and members need to be amended to provide for a more objective and consultative process; the independence of INEC has a lot to do with the quality of appointees, the mode of appointment and the nature of funding.
- Short comings of the present Electoral Act with respect to campaign financing could be addressed by either a more comprehensive amendment or the enactment of separate legislation on the issue.
- Campaign finance legislation should regulate funding of political parties; ban use of state resources for political, personal or campaign purposes; regulate and strictly enforce the provision of free airtime and media space to all political parties and candidates.
- There is need for strict compliance with and enforcement of all legislation and regulations pertaining to campaign finance.
- Drawing from the experience of other nations would help in many respects; we need not reinvent the wheel but could study and adopt best practices on campaign finance legislation, regulation and enforcement from around the world.
- There is need to place a time limit on the determination of election petitions by tribunals, such that all petitions are heard and disposed of before swearing-in of elected officials.

5. Election Administration: Organizing the 2007 Election

The fifth Roundtable discussion was on Election Administration: Organizing for the 2007 Elections. It was coordinated by Prof. A.M. Jega and chaired by Prof. Adele Jinadu, (Executive Director of Centre for Advanced Social Sciences and President of the Nigerian Political Science Association). The lead discussants were: Alhaji M.A. Abubakar (INEC National Commissioner), Professor Abdulhamid Ujo (University of Abuja), Alhaji Isa Mohammed (former NEC Resident Electoral Commission, Lagos State) and Prof. Rufus B. Fatyi (SIEC Commissioner Ondo State and Deputy President of the Association of SIECs).

The following issues were raised and discussed:

- Effective and efficient Election Administration is critical to the success of elections in terms of being free, fair and violence free; however, election administration is a complex issue because of varying socio-economic and political factors.

- For the successful conduct of 2007 elections, INEC would need to commence preparation in the areas of: voter education, reform in the electoral law and overhaul of its administrative structures. It was observed that other key areas which need to be overhauled if INEC was to conduct hitch-free elections in 2007 include: inter-agency relations, training of election officials and monitors, and the role of research in enhancing the efficiency of election administration.
- INEC seems to have been making efforts at improvements in the electoral process since the conclusion of the 2003 elections, such as: introduction of electronic voter's register and machinery for continuous registration of prospective voters, introduction of the Geographic Information System, intensification of training of trainers programmes for permanent election officials.
- However, the activities of INEC are still hampered by inadequacy of funding and questions of independence and autonomy.
- The functions statutorily assigned to INEC are too all-encompassing to allow for efficiency in election administration; and the nature of the appointment of INEC's executive cannot guarantee freedom of action.
- The registration of voters by INEC has always been unsystematic, uncoordinated and full of flaws.
- The office of the secretary to INEC has been too politicized and the short tenure of key functionaries such as the secretary creates undesirable discontinuity in the system.

Emanating from the deliberations are the following recommendations, among others:

- There should be total independence for INEC in terms of its funding and the methods of appointment of its officials, especially chairman and national commissioners.

- INEC should be restructured and administratively reorganized so as to reduce the wide ranging functions it performs, and to make it more effective and efficient.
- The 2002 Electoral Act needs to be reviewed to remove clauses that make the system prone to electoral malpractice and political crises associated with these.
- The process of the review and amendment of the 2002 Electoral Act should be accelerated to enable it to come into effect well in advance and serve as the legal framework to guide preparations for the 2007 elections.
- There should be improved capacity building for electoral administrators at both federal and state levels, through workshops and seminars.
- INEC should evolve and institutionalize a transparent process that fairly treats political parties and candidates.
- There should be strict compliance with the laws on electoral offences, and stiff penalties should be meted out on proven cases of offences by electoral officials.
- In seeking to strengthen the administrative and financial independence of INEC we can learn from the transparent processes of selection and appointment of top election officials used by other developing democracies, such as South Africa, and adapt them to our circumstances.

6. Election Monitoring

The Roundtable on Election Monitoring was coordinated by Mr. Festus Okoye, chair of the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) and chaired by Ambassador Princeton N. Lyman, Director of Africa Policy Studies at the United States Council on Foreign Relations. Lead discussants were representatives of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), Institute of Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), International Republican Institute (IRI) and IFES.

Issues that were raised and discussed include the following:

- The need to look at election monitoring as not just an election day event, but on-going process; and to commence preparation now for the 2007 elections.
- The need to recognize the importance of domestic monitoring of elections to democratic development and to proper understanding of the electoral process.
- The need to critically review the role of civil society groups in election monitoring with a view to reposition election observer groups for the challenges of the future.
- The need to fashion out an acceptable framework and criteria for determination of election outcomes; because the use of international standards to judge and measure the success of elections in Africa seem inappropriate; there is need for development of African Regional Standards on Election Observers.
- Strengthening the capacity of Nigerian and African Domestic Election Observers to enable them to play more appropriate roles effectively.
- The need to engender the electoral process and bring more women into the process.
- Late releases of guidelines by INEC, lack of adequate funding and late preparations hampered monitoring exercise.
- Inadequacy of capacity of domestic observers needs to be addressed.

Some of the key recommendations which have emerged from the Roundtable discussion on Election Monitoring are as follows:

- Computerized Identity Cards should be introduced and used for the 2007 elections and subsequent elections.
- The new Electoral Act should make a specific provision recognizing the role and responsibilities of domestic and international election observers.

- Domestic observer groups should agree on a common checklist for elections, central command position for receipt of checklists and incident reports, and on issuing joint reports on the outcome of the elections which will prevent duplication of effort and promote harmony and cooperation.
- Civil society organizations, NOA and political parties should carry out voter education on a continuous basis.
- Election Monitoring groups should scale up their engagement with election bodies and political parties in order to build synergies and fashion out a common approach that will guarantee transparency of the electoral process; in furtherance of this goal, INEC should resuscitate the civil society/INEC consultative forum, which was established in the run-up to the 2003 election, and make it permanent.

Conclusion

This has been a very good conference. Believe me when I say that it is one of the best conferences I have ever attended in terms of focus, business-like manner of proceedings, generation of thought provoking ideas and general intellectual nourishment. Not surprisingly, it has come up with wide ranging positive recommendations for addressing some of the most persistent problems affecting our electoral process and national politics. From the range of issues discussed and recommendations made, it can be said that a framework has emerged for fundamental political and especially electoral reforms needed before the 2007 elections. Indeed, the conference has also sketched out the fundamental elements of an action plan for achieving the goal of free, fair, violent-free elections in 2007 and beyond. We can only hope that there will be the political will to bring these reforms into being.

Let me conclude by thanking the organizers of this conference, on behalf of the coordinators, chairpersons, lead discussants and participants, for giving us the opportunity for being involved in this interactive forum and thereby expanding our intellectual horizon, and also in the process making a contribution to the reform process of an important aspect of Nigerian democratic development.

Thank you.

ELECTORAL REFORM: BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR OUR FUTURE

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES | MARCH 19, 2005

Preamble:

Since the 1999 transition from military to the civilian Fourth Republic, Nigeria's quest for effective democratic governance has confronted many challenges. The integrity of the electoral system is a major issue facing Nigeria's new democracy. We know from past history that turbulent elections have been a source of political crisis in Nigeria. Controversies surrounding elections have serious potential to undermine the legitimacy and stability of democracy.

The many questions and criticisms surrounding the conduct of recent elections raise urgent concerns about the legitimacy of the political process and the consolidation of Nigerian democracy. There could be the most serious consequences for democratic development if political leaders are unable to reach consensus on rules of political conduct, and if the Nigerian public therefore becomes alienated from the electoral process. Nigerians would universally suffer from further political crises or an interruption of democratic rule.

We therefore resolve:

- We reject all unconstitutional means of contesting or obtaining power in Nigeria.
 - We recognize that public legitimacy is the bedrock for a successful and stable democracy.
 - We further recognize that a fair and transparent electoral process is an important basis of citizens' legitimacy in a democracy, and we commit ourselves to ensuring free, fair and honest elections in Nigeria.
- We affirm the following commitments:
- We will take every measure, on our own behalf and in cooperation with others, to promote the goals of a fair, competitive and transparent election system in Nigeria. We condemn and renounce all forms of rigging, fraud and election misconduct. Nigeria's electoral process must attain the highest standards of integrity, efficiency and legitimacy.
 - We support strong, capable and fully Independent Electoral Commissions at the federal and state levels. Accordingly, government must provide all necessary resources and facilities to allow INEC and the SIECs to operate with autonomy and to promote their best performance. Those institutions must
- Democracy is the sole political choice for Nigeria, and the best system for managing the nation's current challenges, fostering better governance, and ensuring popular welfare.

also take necessary steps to strengthen their capacities and to ensure full independence in the nation's election administration.

- We condemn and renounce all forms of political violence. We commit ourselves to exercising discipline and restraint over all political forces under our authority, to resist provocation by rivals, and to appeal to legal procedures for resisting and containing electoral violence. We further renounce any forms of intimidation or coercion that would limit the participation of any candidate, voter, election official, agent or observer.
- We expect and encourage all political party organizations to follow democratic rules and procedure in their internal affairs, and in political competition. Party leaders must effectively regulate all their members, whether incumbents, candidates or supporters in meeting the highest standards of fair and transparent competition. Party organizations must reject any efforts to intimidate or disenfranchise political opponents. They must also agree to refrain from any undue influence over election officials.
- We commit ourselves to a regular consultative process to ensure the integrity of elections. This includes (but is not limited to) regular meetings among party leaders and campaign organizations; among political parties, INEC and the SIECs; among INEC and government; among civil society monitors and INEC. These meetings should encourage regular dialogue over best practices and the exchange of any available information over infractions of fair electoral procedures.
- We endorse the goal of a simplified and fully transparent electoral counting process. We accept a role for independent observers to witness all stages of the counting process. We encourage INEC to post election returns down to the level of the constituency/polling station to ensure transparency.
- We endorse the fullest possible role for election observers. Domestic civil society organizations should have access to all polling places without intimidation or unreasonable restriction, and they should be welcome to send qualified representatives to witness the counting process. International observers should also be welcome to observe any polling place, and all stages of collation or counting.
- We encourage an independent, efficient and public system of election tribunals. The tribunals should be enabled to process election complaints in the speediest possible fashion, and full transparency should be maintained.
- We support an increase in public funding for political parties as a means of balancing the undue influence of private funds. We commit to the goal of full transparency in political party finances. We also endorse unrestricted access for all candidates to all forms of media.
- We support and encourage efforts by government and civil society to promote civic education, public information and other measures to ensure the fullest electoral participation. We advocate a fully inclusive electoral process that incorporates Nigerians of every gender, ethnic, group, religion and walks of life.



8th
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 4, 2006

- Welcome by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
- Welcome by Hajia Binta Yar'Adua
- Address by H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf
- Remarks by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo



WELCOME

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



It is once again my pleasure to welcome you all to the 8th National Programme of Commemoration in honour of Shehu Yar'Adua.

Permit me to begin my remarks by thanking our Special Guest of Honour, Her Excellency, Dr. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, for being with us in Nigeria today. It is indeed a privilege that she has come less than two months after her January 16th swearing in as the 24th President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Liberia.

President Johnson-Sirleaf has stood in the forefront of Liberia's struggle for peace and development. She has consistently demonstrated her determination to reverse the devastation of her country's economy resulting from a debilitating civil war. We applaud her for her untiring commitment to restore the dignity and well being of Liberia's people by regaining their integrity as a nation.

We also warmly welcome Mr. Gary Samore, Vice President, Global Security and Sustainability, of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For the past decade, the MacArthur Foundation has maintained an office in Nigeria and invested substantial resources to strengthen universities, non-governmental organizations and individuals working to improve the country. We sincerely thank Mr. Samore and the MacArthur Foundation for the expansion of the Olusegun Obasanjo Research Library collection.

In keeping with the Foundation's policy of transparency, the Board of Trustees has elected to publish the Foundation's Annual Report and Financial Statements, which is being made available today. As indicated in the Auditor's Report, the Foundation continues to benefit from sound management and financial stability. The Yar'Adua Merit Scholars programme, funded by the Foundation's endowment, is

providing children an opportunity for learning they might not otherwise have had. While our financial future appears secure in the near term, we are mindful of the need to guarantee continuity of leadership for the Foundation and its mission.

Late Tafida was a remarkable man. Many of you are aware of the letter he wrote to President Jimmy Carter from Abakaliki Prison shortly before his death. He thanked President Carter for efforts made on behalf of himself and President Obasanjo. But he also said that what really mattered to him was the satisfaction that people of Carter's stature continued to have interest in the well-being of Nigeria and Africa. Saying that he would forever cherish Carter's Africa policy which laid the foundation for the demise of apartheid, he also wrote, "Your recent endorsement of Liberia's election, will, I am sure, go a long way to bring peace to that country." Even from prison, he was concerned more about the injustice, inhumanity and oppression facing our nation and the continent than he was for himself.

Late Tafida's life was marked by conflict and confrontation with those who stood in the way of things he believed in. He was prepared to go to prison in his struggle to see the military leave government because he sincerely believed that military rule dishonoured and discredited an institution that he was proud to have served for half of his adult life.

This Annual Programme of Commemoration in honour of Shehu Yar'Adua affords us the opportunity to be reminded of the work that remains undone and the need to stand firm, united and determined to realize late Tafida's vision for the nation. It is our duty as leaders to continue to consolidate the democratic structures that he fought and died for.

Thank you and God bless.

WELCOME

HAJIA BINTA YAR'ADUA



Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of Board of Trustees and the Yar'Adua family, I wish to welcome Her Excellency, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and her entourage.

We especially thank you for finding the time to be with us today to honour the memory of my late husband.

It is an opportunity to offer our heartiest congratulations for successfully winning your country's election to become the first elected woman president in Africa. We are proud of you as this will motivate our women to seek high political office.

I am sure being a woman and an economist will give you motherly sensitivity to the difficult task of re-building your war ravaged country.

We wish you God's guidance in the task ahead of you and a very safe journey back home.

Thank you.

ADDRESS

H.E. ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



I am most pleased to be a part of this very important occasion of honouring a true hero of Nigeria – and a noble Pan-Africanist. And I thank you my Brother, His Excellency, President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, for his kind invitation to me to participate in this solemn but festive celebration of a life well spent and dedicated to nation and people.

When one contemplates the part which General Yar'Adua played in returning Nigeria to civil rule in 1979, it becomes difficult not to identify him as a staunch apostle of democracy.

From everything I know about him, I consider Shehu a man whose sense of commitment to a nation should be a model for Nigerians, for Africans, and even for the world.

General Yar'Adua was a soldier, and in that sense, a warrior whenever he was on the

battlefield. But the real warrior he belonged in a realm of life where battles are not fought with artillery but with moral principles.

The General was a courageous fighter for social justice. He strove to teach his fellow Nigerians by the example of his own life to claim the power that belonged to them and to assert their identity in the world.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua made a choice which, I suspect, the average Nigerian with his family background would not have made. That is, the choice of becoming a soldier instead of a flourishing entrepreneur or businessman.

There must have been a personality archetype of warrior in him prodding him toward the military. As a business tycoon, going by examples of the ones Nigeria and Africa produced in his time and continues to produce

today, he would have been too busy competing for fat multi-million naira contracts, rather than fighting for social justice and democracy. His preoccupation would most likely have been not about moral virtues but about how to promote and benefit from the absence of moral virtues.

General Yar'Adua was certainly not a perfect man as none of us are. But I believe that in the tug-of-war in every man's life, between forces which degrade and those which elevate, General Yar'Adua had the latter in his favour.

His opposition to military rule, to the extent of sacrificing his freedom – and his very life, is a legacy of the courage to fight for what is not acceptable. It is a legacy of opposition to those things that sap and deplete the human spirit, by speaking the truth about them, and refusing to have events dictate the conduct of our lives.

This archetype of this kind of warrior I would consider as a hero – and my Hero. The General was unquestionably among Nigerian heroes worthy of the honour being accorded his memory today.

I am informed that in a conversation with a prison mate at Kirikiri where he was incarcerated, the General, ever the gallant soldier, described his commitment to Nigeria as “unquestionable”. Men like this never really die – and like all old soldiers, they just fade away.

General Yar'Adua demonstrated remarkable ability in building political bridges across the different cleavages that are a daunting reality of Nigeria. His politics rose above ethnic barriers and religious sentiments. His infectious leadership motivated a sense of responsibility. He was thus able to touch a vast spectrum of Nigerian life.

If this man had not cared enough about democracy to speak up and fight for it, he would probably still be alive today as his untimely death was the direct consequence of his unjust imprisonment for opposing the continuation of military rule. He believed firmly that had patience been exercised with civilian governments, democratic institutions would have taken root.

Permit me, my dear Brother President Obasanjo, distinguished guests, and Nigerians across this beautiful nation, to say that patriotism at its highest level in today's global village goes beyond territorial boundaries. Nigeria's heroes are Liberia's heroes. As you pay honour to one so humble yet so firm in his conviction of the workings of democracy, we in Liberia fully share your sentiments as guests on this occasion.

Today, we build on the blood, toil and sweat of the General and those scores of gallant men who helped to restore peace to our beloved country. Thanks to the years of sacrifice of our Nigerian and other brothers and sisters from the sub-region, and other parts of the world, including your sons and daughters who continue to form part of the UNIMIL Mission in Liberia today, the people of Liberia have spoken at the recently concluded elections, reposing confidence in our leadership potential.

Brother Nigerians,

Permit me therefore to salute your great country, your young and gallant soldiers, and the people of this great Federation for standing by our country in our hours of tragedy and need. My dear Brother, President Chief Obasanjo, the world looked then to your country for leadership. And the Federal Republic of Nigeria answered the summons, and Liberia today has been given the opportunity for a rebirth. My countrymen and I thank you and your people.

Your invitation and my participation in this program is one indication of your confidence in our leadership. Let us in closing remember the memory of one equally endowed, one who easily earns the meaning of the saying, “Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime and, departing, leave behind footprints on the sands of time.”

Once again, dear brothers and sisters, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this memorable occasion.

Thank you.

REMARKS

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO



The first thing I want to do is to thank my sister, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, first of all for what you have done for Liberia, for Africa and indeed for the world. She has tried to give us a glimpse into her life. Looking into Ellen's life is an inspiration to women folk of our continent and to all of us who believe in the fact that what other races can do, an African should be able to do.

I want to thank of course, the V.P. who with my assistance, is my assistant on the Board of Trustees, and all the other members of the Board of Trustees who have actually done the job and make me, as the Chairman, take the praise for the job that they do. I want to thank all of you for coming. And I want to thank you for annually supporting this Commemoration and celebration. I will only say that everything that has been said or written about Shehu, I concur. Because if there has been any man with whom I have worked very closely and I have enjoyed both his confidence, his trust, his loyalty and his industry, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was one.

I want to particularly thank the MacArthur Foundation and I want you, Sir, to take to Jonathan Fanton our appreciation of the support that he has consistently given to us in this country. We appreciate your contribution and we hope that you will continue to give us your support. Now, when the Minister of FCT came up, and he acknowledged his first sister, acknowledged his second sister, I turned to V.P. I said, "You and I are sisterless." So you can then imagine my joy, my satisfaction, when Ellen came out and referred to me as 'my brother'. So V.P., this means that since I am not a woman, you have a brother here.

Now, Africa is passing through a very interesting and exciting period. And I believe that God has deigned that this period will in fact be Africa's. So I like to say God is a Nigerian. And when you see what has happened and what is happening in Liberia, you will probably agree that if God is a Nigerian, He frequently visits Liberia. But sister, I think He is partly a Nigerian and partly a Liberian.

We are talking about God. I have never shared this story with my sister. There was a story of an American submarine showing up very close to --- on the coast of Liberia. And nothing like that had ever happened before. So when people saw it, they were worried. And you know the submarine came up and went down; came up and went down. I was told that this was in the days of President Tubman. I believe it is his story. And then, those who first sighted the submarine ran to the Executive Mansion and alerted President Tubman. And President Tubman then decided they should go to church to pray for this was something new. They had never seen it before. And the Pastor who was asked to lead the prayer got up and said, "God, what is happening is new. We have never seen anything like this before. We are worried. We are concerned. We are afraid. This is so serious that it is not a task that you will delegate to your Son. So God, you have to come yourself to the help of Liberia. Don't send your Son and don't send the Holy Spirit. It is a task that you have to perform yourself."

God is performing a wonderful work in Africa today. We thank God for that. Evidence of it is our sister here. And what is happening in Liberia, if anybody will tell us or tell me three years ago that the situation in Liberia would be what it is today, I would say, I don't believe you. It is the work of God and we must thank God for that.

I thank you my dear sister because one of the things that Nigerians often say, particularly in the process of our foreign policy, is that you don't even get appreciation. Well, here is one occasion when you get acknowledged, you get appreciated. You get praised, you get commended and you get thanked for what you have done for another sister country. Ellen, I thank you most sincerely.

But let me say this, as I have often said to my compatriot Nigerians. God is not a God that makes mistakes. He has a purpose for putting a quarter of the population of Africa in a piece of land that is probably about 1/58th of the land area of Africa. He has not made any mistake. He did that because He wants us to have responsibility for ourselves and to be in the vanguard of the development of this continent. And of course, also to have responsibility for our brothers and sisters on the continent. We cannot afford to shirk that responsibility. It is also the reason why we cannot afford to fail. Because if we fail, we have not only disappointed ourselves, we have also disappointed our brothers and sisters on the continent of Africa. I want to assure you that we are determined to continue to be in the vanguard of what is noble, what is right, what is elevating, what is best for Africa. And once again, we congratulate you and congratulate

all our brothers and sisters in Liberia for where you are and for where we are praying that you will be very soon.

You have a giant task. As I said to you this morning at breakfast, it is not easy. You have experience; I think, formidable experience to be able to pull through. But, I repeat, when you look by your side, you will find us supporting you.

I have sent a team led by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and comprising high officials of our government at the request of the President of Liberia to see which areas we can work together for continued peace in Liberia, for security, for stability and for progress. And we will continue to work for the progress of Liberia, as we work for the progress of other countries in West Africa and indeed in all of Africa.

My sister, thank you very much for coming. You have boosted all of us up and if you had actually worked and lived with Shehu Yar'Adua as some of us have done, you would not have been able to describe him, his ideals, better than you have. We appreciate you and we wish you a very happy journey back home.


Thank you.





9th
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 15, 2008

- Welcome by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo
 - Tribute by H.E. Atiku Abubakar
 - Address by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda
 - Remarks by H.E. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua
 - Vote of Thanks by Buhari Yar'Adua
- 

WELCOME

H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO



Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome all of you to the 9th National Programme of Commemoration in honour of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and the 10th Year of Remembrance of his painful and untimely death. This annual occasion provides a unique opportunity to honour a bosom friend and indeed a brother and a colleague.

Permit me to begin my remarks by especially thanking President Paul Kagame. His uncompromising stand identifies him with Shehu whose life was cut short because of his stand against the oppressive rule of Abacha. Shehu lived, fought and died for what he believed in – democracy. We can pay no greater tribute to him than to strive to keep alive the ideas for which he lived and died for.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the members of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank all of you for coming and especially those who have always supported us in this endeavour.

Thank you and God bless you all.

TRIBUTE

H.E. ATIKU ABUBAKAR



I would like to especially thank our Special Guest of Honour, President Paul Kagame for honouring us with his presence today at this important commemorative event. We commend your leadership and applaud the efforts being made by your government to rebuild Rwanda. We are honoured that you are here to pay tribute to my political leader and mentor, General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua on the occasion of the 10th Year Remembrance of his death.

For those of us who love him and treasure the positive impact he made on our lives we still cannot come to terms with the fact that Tafida is no longer physically with us. It seems like only yesterday that the devastating news of his death was broken to us and we slowly began to grapple with the question of what our lives would be without him. Fortunately, we discovered that the void he left is compensated in part by the inspiration his life provides.

We are therefore here to celebrate the triumph of honour and courage of a visionary leader who fought for the unity of this nation during the civil war; the values he stood for: good governance, popular democracy, rule of law, credible elections, and the use of power not to intimidate or terrorize people but to improve peoples lives and society at large, which remain as relevant as ever in our quest

for national greatness. You may not realize it, but we have been witnessing what I call 'The Yar'Adua Political Dynasty' since May 1999 no matter how imperfect it may be.

The late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was an extra ordinary man with an extra ordinary capacity for generosity, selflessness, hardwork, tolerance and patience. He appealed to the goodness and decency in people in order to inspire them to do more or to do better. He sought to build bridges across the country's various regional, religious and social divides by establishing platforms for dialogue to discuss ways and means of furthering peace, unity and progress in the country. The Tafida's greatest gift was his capacity to get things done by bringing people together from diverse backgrounds and ideological persuasions. He was never intimidated or overwhelmed by challenges. He was a fantastic listener and a strong believer in dialogue. He never embarked on any project without a well thought out programme of action. As I observed, he was always ahead of his peers and was able to accomplish so much in so short a time.

It is our duty to continue to consolidate in democratic structures what the late Tafida fought and died for. May God bless him.

Thank you and God bless you all.



ADDRESS

H.E. PAUL KAGAME
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



I begin by thanking you Mr. President for the kind invitation to join you here in Abuja and participate in the 9th Annual Commemoration of the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.

I am particularly honoured to address this distinguished audience on the 'Challenges of Nation-Building in Africa'-endeavours for which Shehu, as his compatriots and their African brothers and sisters fondly call him, paid with his life. His insightful words on this subject remain as relevant today for the African continent as when he pronounced them at his presidential campaign declaration in 1992.

As he fittingly stated then, and I quote, 'Every nation has a responsibility to ensure that there is a consensus on basic developmental issues; what goals and hopes to achieve, and what methods would be employed to translate these into concrete and desirable results. It is the sum total of all these considerations that ultimately constitute a national purpose.'

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me suggest that a national purpose emerges from efforts and processes fostered by visionary leadership. By 'visionary leadership' I mean a broad-based community of people that are focused on the future – a collective of individuals that spend their decision-making energies on deploying political capital for transforming society towards a healthier, educated, skilled, economically engaged, and well governed population.

In this context, politics is not about self-aggrandizement or exclusion on any grounds – it is a national exercise that embraces all diversity within the society, so that all citizens may not only see themselves in national governance, but are able to pursue and realize their own potential and dignity.

Reforming public institutions for provision of first-rate services is at the centre stage of this form of politics. Visionary leadership is, furthermore, about challenging and supporting different sectors of society including the business community to increase productivity,

competitiveness and innovation to generate greater wealth; this is the environment that also empowers civil society to responsibly and purposefully serve their constituencies.

Ascribing the term “entrepreneurial spirit” to the visionary leadership that spearheads these processes would not be an exaggeration; like their counterparts in the world of business, these leaders ceaselessly execute creative and innovative pathways to national prosperity and improved lives.

As the term “entrepreneurial spirit” implies, this leadership comprises risk-takers, balancing the need to take chances and staying the course for accelerated economic growth and development. Above all, this leadership is composed of effective communicators who appreciate the importance of mobilizing all segments of society from central to grassroots level – towards the national shared purpose.

Finally, successful leaders are reformers and institution-builders, an imperative that ensures future sustainability beyond their own tenure in office. But would such a domestic agenda led by a visionary leadership suffice for nation-building in contemporary Africa?

My sense is that nation-building on our continent is a multi-layered and complex process which, besides the domestic terrain, involves at least three additional sets of influence, each exerting considerable weight to shape the outcome – namely, regional, continental and international contexts.

Any analysis of these challenges has to begin with the reality that most African economies are either small or poorly integrated with their neighbours – factors that effectively limit their prosperity – a defining feature for successful nations. We present-day African leaders, and indeed our predecessors, have on many occasions adopted resolutions for confronting these economic bottlenecks.

The 1980 Lagos Plan of Action and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, NEPAD, provided comprehensive strategies for building regional infrastructure as well as targeted reforms for freeing Africa from colonial and self-inflicted harm that comes from continental trade barriers.

NEPAD as ‘a strategic framework for Africa’s renewal’ is based on the correct belief that creation of wealth within individual countries and between them is the real foundation for successful nation-building. Yet it is questionable how far Africa has internalized these recommendations. Intra-Africa trade remains a mere eleven percent of our continent’s external trade – itself a dismal two percent of global trade.

An unbiased observer would rightly wonder if African leaders have amply pursued NEPAD ideals – which puts into question whether its programmes are paying real dividends to its African stakeholders.

The good news is that individually, most African economies have been performing well, averaging six percent annual growth for the past several years.

However, this performance could enable Africa to do even better collectively by a more concerted drive for integration – supplemented by an apparent mind-shift among our development partners, who now concede that only collaboration and partnership with Africa, as opposed to the imposition of ‘policy blueprints’, can lead to better development outcomes.

In this respect, there can be no shortcut to the proven paths in nation-building; this task has to hinge on regional infrastructure and intra-Africa market development – both of which will improve our prospects for achieving a larger niche in global markets. This is about, for example, freeing Nigerian business people to spread their talent and acumen to their sub-region and beyond, on world-class road networks, rail, and internet superhighways.

It is about Rwandan goods being processed in transit countries to seaports on a twenty-four hour basis, in a more conducive environment free from legal or illegal checkpoints that increase the cost of doing business.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me to address our particular efforts at nation-building in Rwanda over the past fourteen years. Before as well as after the defeat of the government responsible for genocide in 1994,

we understood the importance of pursuing a different type of politics based on a common purpose in Rwanda. Two important national exercises illustrate this process.

In the case of Rwanda Vision 2020, our roadmap for striving and achieving a middle income status by the year 2020, Rwandan leaders from government, business, academia and civil society discussed and debated our past, present and future between 1997 to 2000.

These discussions ranged from what had led to the disunity and how we could overcome that legacy, to how we could build a new, democratic, united and prosperous nation.

The framework within which our Vision 2020 was drafted is as important as the strategy itself – Rwandans had to consult among themselves and conceive a future built on their own vision and determination to achieve it.

Based on the realization that Rwandans themselves constitute our country's real assets, Vision 2020 sees human resource development, ICT and knowledge economy, agricultural modernization, services industry, as well as regional integration, as powerful platforms for transforming our country.

Similarly, the making of the Rwandan Constitution involved Rwandans from all walks of life through nation-wide consultative dialogue from 2001 to 2003 when it was adopted through a national referendum.

It was in these discussions that we Rwandans reflected on how to engender new, inclusive and power-sharing principles for ending the decades-old divide and rule politics that had led to recurrent upheavals, untold suffering and ultimately, the genocide.

The “winner takes all” approach to politics that historically ill-served our country had to give way to a fundamentally different political culture and practice. Today, for example, the winning party at presidential elections may not provide the speaker in parliament; and the council of ministers has to include members of other political parties.

The constitutional requirement that no national institution should have less than thirty percent female representation has seen women's participation rise to nearly fifty percent in the lower chamber of parliament, forty five percent in the Supreme Court, and thirty six percent in the Council of Ministers. Decision-making powers continue to be transferred to local government and communities to improve governance.

These innovations are designed to ensure that no political community is excluded from participation in local and national political, social and economic life as had been previously the case.

Rwanda still faces considerable challenges on the domestic front, however. For example, our human capital resource and skill base remain narrow – a factor that constrains the pace of achieving our vision as well as the effectiveness of our public, private and civil society institutions. Our tertiary education sector is not yet able to meet the demand of our labour market.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the government and people of Nigeria for supporting our human resource development efforts, including the training of our armed forces, and provision of volunteers to the Rwandan education and health sectors – currently numbering forty-eight people.



With regard to our regional contexts, the perception of the Great Lakes Region as a theatre of war and conflict is steadily giving way to that of a conducive environment for investment. Last year, Rwanda and Burundi joined Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda as members of the East Africa Community. This expanded market and combined regional effort should permit us to realize our vision of a dynamic economic and trading bloc.

And we are most certainly conscious of the fact that being landlocked does not translate into being locked completely – hence Rwanda’s determination to implement high-value production and ICT-based development solutions.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The imperative for Africa to own and execute its development policies – very clearly, the basis for nation-building – is well recognized since the days of structural adjustment programmes in the 1970s and 1980s. I would venture that for resource-scarce nations such as Rwanda, these challenges are probably tougher and more protracted than with the richer countries like Nigeria.

Our development partners have nevertheless been generally supportive of our reconstruction and development efforts over the last fourteen years.

Donors support has had its fair share of difficulties, particularly due to the fact that Rwanda had to address some unique challenges that required non-conventional solutions. In this respect, I am always amused by visiting development partners that want to know why, for example, our Constitution demands power-sharing and consensus-building, which, in their view is less democratic.

On one such occasion, I asked the individual in question, if Rwanda should adopt the governance model and practices of the Germans, those of Italians or Norwegians, all of which inevitably have been shaped by their respective historical and cultural circumstances.

I let it be known that political governance should not be reduced to generic prescriptions that have no relevance to national needs – and that rich people and nations do not have exclusive wisdom or the right to determine how others live. What we share globally are universal values of democracy and governance. But the shape these take are matters best understood, handled and indeed designed by people that live these circumstances.

The visitor was visibly taken aback at the boldness and audacity of this frank talk, which probably risked the loss of her country’s financial support to Rwanda.

Another example of the struggle for policy ownership may be illustrated by the case of higher education.

We have had difficulty with our development partners in terms of financing higher education – because for them, this sector is a luxury that poor countries can ill-afford.

In their view, we ought to concentrate on provision of primary school education – which we indeed have, as presently ninety-six percent of school age pupils in this category are attending class free of tuition. We extended tuition-free education to the first three years of secondary school last year.

But as we always ask: how can we stop our educational and training efforts at primary school and hope to build strong and vibrant economies on our continent?

I never tire of giving examples of the obvious importance of higher education in the social and economic development of present-day developed countries.

Take for example the case of the City of Boston in the United States. Known as the “Athens of America”, the Greater Boston Area has more than one hundred teaching and research colleges and universities, with more than two hundred and fifty thousand students.

The City is home to eight first-rate research universities, four medical schools and sixteen teaching hospitals.

Further, Greater Boston is said to receive the highest amount of annual funding from all levels of government for health-related research.

These knowledge institutions are not only major employers, but also attract high-tech industries to the city and surrounding region, especially computer hardware and software companies as well as biotechnology companies.

Let us not forget that these institutions attract considerable talent from all corners of the world thereby rendering this region a global knowledge hub – an achievement most major cities seek to replicate.

And so I ask: why the hypocrisy with regard to Africa's higher education institutions since the heart and soul of development everywhere is knowledge?

These double standards are all the more demeaning when you take into account the enormous loss of African brainpower to overseas markets – something I am certain Nigerians know only too well.

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

Let me end as I began – by thanking you President Yar'Adua for inviting me to participate in the 9th Commemoration of Shehu's legacy.

Shehu's leadership and commitment to a better Nigeria should continue to inspire us, Africans, as we work to build national, regional and continental institutions in order to improve lives across Africa.

Nation-building, as I have attempted to demonstrate, is a multi-faceted, challenging but rewarding enterprise based on what Shehu rightly highlighted – a national purpose.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to pay tribute to this visionary son of Africa.

Nigeria, this great country on our continent, has many heroes to celebrate, and by commemorating Shehu's remarkable leadership legacies, you are inspiring Africa's future generations to take our continent to greater heights.

I thank you for your kind attention.



REMARKS

H.E. UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA



I would like to begin by congratulating my brother and colleague, President Paul Kagame on a brilliant, in-depth interrogation of a very topical theme for our continent, that is, the 'Challenges of Nation-Building'.

Most of the nations of Africa are today confronted with a number of daunting challenges: poor infrastructure and weak governance institutions and structures resulting from economic and political mis-governance, mindless corruption, ethnicity, self-serving politics of intolerance, and a lack of commitment to national ideals.

We may be tempted to blame this situation on our colonial antecedents and the unstructured partitioning from which emerged a number of poor and fragile states. However, there is no escaping the fact that much of Africa's woes have been either self-inflicted or self-perpetuated. The Continent's transformation must be championed by Africans themselves. No one from outside the continent is coming to face up to our developmental challenges on our behalf.

Africa must evolve a crop of focused, committed, service-oriented, and God-fearing leaders imbued with the requisite courage, focus, dedication, clear vision, and patriotism to drive the Continent's transformation.

The challenges of nation building are surmountable if we subscribe to the fundamental principles of democracy, good governance, free enterprise, and the rule of law. Given the reality of the phenomenon of globalization, we necessarily need the support and productive partnership of the developed world to help us reposition Africa as a peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous continent.

Our administration has outlined our roadmap to Nigeria's transformation in our Seven-Point Agenda which encapsulates our covenant with the people. The Agenda represents our short to medium term response to the challenges inherent in Nigeria's desire to belong to the club of the world's twenty biggest economies by the year 2020.

We recognize that we can best achieve our objective if our quest is rooted in absolute respect for the rule of law, and the entrenchment of transparency and accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

Your Excellency,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have an abiding duty to check the vicious cycle that has perpetuated underdevelopment, endemic poverty, and instability on our continent. I take great comfort in the knowledge that the continent is blessed with visionary, courageous and committed leaders like my brother, President Paul Kagame, who can drive Africa's transformation.

Once again, I salute President Kagame for honouring us with his presence at this annual tribute to the memory of a true son of Africa who lived and died in the defence of the time-honoured ideals of service, honesty, courage, integrity, industry, loyalty, dedication and faith in God and country.

May God bless Africa. May God bless Rwanda.
May God bless Nigeria.

Thank you very much.

VOTE OF THANKS

BUHARI YAR'ADUA



On behalf of the Yar'Adua family, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your support of the 9th National Programme of Commemoration and 10th Year Remembrance of my late father.

Permit me to begin my remarks by thanking our Special Guest of Honour, His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda for being with us in Nigeria. It is indeed a privilege that a man of his distinction has honoured us with his presence. We wish him God's guidance as he seeks to fulfil the hope and promise of his country.

We would like to take this opportunity to once more thank former President Olusegun Obasanjo and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar for their untiring support of the Yar'Adua Foundation and the Yar'Adua family.

My father wrote to me from Abakaliki, "You see my son, I am today in prison not because I want political power or to be President as most people think. I do what I do because I love you.

Because I don't want my children to grow up in a country that has no future; a country that you cannot be proud of."

The turn out here today bears eloquent testimony to the fact that my father's death has not become an end but the beginning of a legacy of hope for this nation. One might say he had a short life but his achievements and the impact his thoughts and deeds created in the history of our nation attest to the fondness and high regard in which he is still held.

Our hearts go out to our brothers and sisters in Rwanda. May God continue to ease their pain and strengthen them for the task ahead.

As we forge ahead in this new age of democracy, may God continue to bless Nigeria and her people.


Ladies and Gentlemen, we wish you all a safe journey back to your destinations. May God continue to guide us.





10th
PROGRAMME
OF COMMEMORATION

MARCH 7, 2009

- Address by H.E. Benjamin Mkapa
Former President of Tanzania
 - Address by Jonathan Fanton
President, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
 - Address by H.E. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua
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ADDRESS

H.E. BENJAMIN WILLIAM MKAPA
FORMER TANZANIAN PRESIDENT



I appear before you as a stand-in for the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete who should have been the Special Guest of Honour. He had readily and warmly accepted the invitation to attend this event because of the very strong and fraternal relations between our two countries, but especially because he valued the opportunity to pay tribute to the life of service of one of the most illustrious sons of Nigeria. Pressing engagements at home have prevented him from coming and he has given me the honour of trying to fill in his shoes. Meanwhile he has asked me to convey to you Mr. President his warm personal regards and his best wishes for prosperity of the Nigerian people.

Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was a great defender of democracy and demonstrated

excellent leadership qualities. He was a man of extra ordinary military and political courage; a man who put his life at risks for the sake of defending democracy rights of the people. His election to the Presidency was hastily and capriciously annulled. Yet without bitterness or hatred, he continued to play the role of an advisor, a mentor and a counselor for the other elections that followed. These are rare qualities and sacrifices, which should be widely emulated and commended on our continent.

I feel deeply privileged also to participate in this tenth year of remembrance of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, distinguished soldier, successful businessman and dynamic, principled politician. I was fortunately placed to know him briefly. Towards the end of 1976. I was posted as my country's high commissioner to the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I presented my letters of

credence to the Head of the Federal Military Government, General Olusegun Obasanjo. The No. 2 person in that administration was Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua.

My tenure in Lagos was all too short, three months to be exact, and I had very few encounters with him. But I recollect to this day a man at that time of soldiery bearing, sharp and exact mind, straight talk and an intensely caring attitude.

Because of the shortness of my stint in Lagos, and perhaps because of it, I have since then always followed very closely, the fortunes and destiny of this great nation and its leading figures. I therefore followed how actively he participated in organizing the transition to elected democratic civilian rule; how he left military service; how he applied his skills to business, and finally how he entered the arena of multi-party politics.

Our two countries share a common history of freedom struggle and also a shared desire for the prosperity of the African continent. Tanzania and Nigeria have worked very closely together right from the days of the struggle for independence. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere the father of the Tanzanian nation and the late Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Chief Obafemi Awolowo the founding fathers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, worked closely together in the struggle for independence and for the struggle for the liberation of the southern African countries. Nigeria also played a key role in supporting the liberation struggle in southern Africa. In this connection, though far from the theatre of struggle Nigeria was a member of the Frontline states in support of the liberation struggle in southern Africa. Its crucial alliance with the frontline states in kind and deed, was upgraded during the administration of the federal government led by General Obasanjo and Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. Tanzania commends Nigeria for its role and hopes that it will continue to cooperate with Tanzania, now in pursuit of the objective of Africa's economic liberation.

The letter of invitation to my President describes the ideals of late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua as national unity, good governance and the building of a just and democratic society for all

Nigerians. These ideas portray a National Vision and a Purpose of Life. Undoubtedly, this is the legacy by which his fellow Nigerians remember him. But I like to think that it is a legacy which belongs to the whole African continent.

For the vision of national unity, good governance and the purpose of building a just and democratic society continue to constitute the challenge facing African countries in the early 21st century. His political message has national as well as Pan African relevance.

Independence was hailed by all and sundry nationally and internationally. It had to be, as it marked the end of external political domination and the realization of national self-dignity. But too often we mistook the raising of the national flag as also marking the conclusion of the task of nation building. During the independence the independence struggle we worked hard to bring people of different ethnicities, race, colour and creed under the umbrella of the new nation a list movement. During the independence struggle, we worked hard to exercise the ghost of ethnic nationalism, and rushed to believe that with independence the seed of the spirit of national unity had not only grown but also borne fruit.

In fact the work of nation building was only beginning. Where this reality was not acknowledged by the leadership, fires of ethnic nationalism were fanned, separatist movements erupted and instability ensued. Unfortunately these trends persist to this day. How else can one explain the bloodletting that visited Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and these days Darfur, Guinea Bissau and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

But history and social location dictated that we build unity in diversity. An ethnic identity does not subsume a national identity. In the interest of stability and the cooperation that brings forth development, it is necessary to put nation first. But doing so does not and should not erase ethnic or tribal identity. Such diversity does not threaten national cohesion. Rather if diligently and respectfully pursued it can become a firm foundation of nationhood. The value and role of diversity in the challenge of building a shared society must not be underrated.

This proposition is not easy to accept, so we set our minds on uniformity as the bedrock of nation building. But change, we must. We can change that mindset, bearing in mind the Hausa saying that “the hard part of grinding is the first grinding; when that is done the rest is easy.”

Such national unity stands on a commitment to build a nation and a world safe for difference and diversity, when we proactively search for the richness inherent in difference and diversity. Such national unity can be strengthened when we vigorously seek to reduce identity based tensions, inter-communal divisions, inequality and injustice. Such national unity can be fostered if we earnestly try to learn, as a colleague put it to me recently, to understand the unfamiliar in others, and to engage with others. I strongly believe that this was the message which Major General Shehu Musa Yar’Adua in his last years was imparting to his beloved country men and women and through them to the people of Africa.

However, unity is also a condition of good governance. And good governance is, in turn, nurtured by unity. They are both sides of the coin of stability and development. To situate them steadfastly requires the building and adoption of country specific, capable and sustainable institutions and protocols. These are the institutions that embrace hopes and expectations, root goals, chart the path of growth and secure development. It begins with the national constitution. A conscious effort must be undertaken to weld together the multiple ethnic groups, cultures, languages and even races within the nation. Most independence constitutions did not take adequate account of these factors. To hold them sacrosanct is to court national disaster. Political ownership must start with a review or deliberate reaffirmation of the constitution.

Today in multi-party Africa it is habitual to hear cries for constitutional review, usually by parties that have lost an election. This is not the kind of review that I recommend. For such cries stem from the misrepresentation that a constitution is good only if a given political party wins an election. Sometimes the cry is caused by blatant election fraud. But constitutions should be held sacred and only indented in the promulgation of national unity. The case for re-election or fresh elections should not be confused with

the case of constitutional reform. The workings of other protocols and institutions of political, judicial, legislative and economic management should be subject to periodic review. Today’s era of competitive multiparty competition tends to spawn divisive tendencies. There is a corresponding need to re-examine, reform, and indeed establish new governance institutions and systems so that they may be effectively monitored, managed and accounted for.

The nation’s unity is promoted if its people have at their heart the spirit of tolerance and inclusion. It is often said that the colonial history of Africa was one of “divide and rule” by the colonialists who set one tribe against another and one clan against another. But in truth we must also acknowledge that post-independence civil wars and cross border conflicts have been a product of own policies of bigotry, intolerance and exclusion.

Is it far-fetched to think that we can design, from our history and culture, an African form of democracy? Take for example the concept of extended family. There are people who ridicule the African extended family. There is no doubt that some aspects of it are anachronistic and unhelpful. But the African extended family is an expression of belonging, of inclusion, of participation and of commitment. Yet when we embraced western forms of democracy we fell into the trap of making political parties not as mechanisms for tolerance and inclusion but of intolerance and exclusion – hence the unbridled phenomenon of “winner takes all.”



In the era of political pluralism, political parties should never be based on such divisive things as religion, tribe or race. Some religions are minorities, some tribes are minorities, and some races will always be a minority. No political system should institutionalize the disadvantages generated by such minority status. How entirely admirable and exemplary therefore that when Shehu Musa Yar'Adua set out to form or be associated with political organizations or parties he rigorously shunned ethnic bias, religious or regional sentiments, thus breaking what he described as the "siege mentality".

Another strong pillar of national unity and good governance is the principle of people participation. I treat this separately from inclusion. Inclusion is one thing, active participation is another.

An African proverb was made famous by now US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton following her tour of African countries. It says: "It takes a whole village to raise a child." This is the kind of participation I should like to see emerging in new African democracy, with African characteristics. The relationship between government and people should not be about "us" and "them"; only about us – one team, one destiny. It is common these days to hear the mantra of ownership of socio – economic development. But ownership is pointless without actual participation; include the full participation of women.

One way to address the need of inclusion and participation is decentralization of government – of resources and responsibilities. But it has to go far, embodying and illustrating more trust and more confidence in the people. Former colonial rulers were inclined to underestimate the capacities of Africans, which was to lead to the reprehensible embedment of aid dependence in the attitude of many leaders. Today African governments should strive to work themselves out of this syndrome speedily.

Governments in independent Africa must not repeat the same prejudices and mistakes. They must not underestimate our people's capability and capacity to plan, to priorities and do things for themselves, with government support. In traditional African societies people used to sit under a tree or around a fire and discuss issues thoroughly until solutions with buy-in from all people, were found. This may be considered inefficient in today's fast-paced life, but ways can always be found to incorporate these positive elements in a new government and development paradigm.

Finally, there is his quest and drive to build a just and democratic society for all Nigerians. This vision and purpose should motivate us all, the leadership and citizenry. Democratic government, to use the old age truism is government of the people, by the people and for the people. If it is that there will be no unjust laws, no oppressive



laws, no discriminatory political culture, and no avowed groups. Equality before the law will obtain, equal opportunity emerge development will be people centred, government will empower the people, hope will prevail, stability may endure and peace have a change.

The key to the realization of such a society and such future is a visionary non-self-aggrandizing leadership. Such a leader Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was. I was deeply moved when I accessed his letter of September 12, 1996 to his son Buhari Yar'Adua in which he wrote:

"You see, Buhari, I am today in prison not because I want Political power or to be President as most people think. I do what I do because I love you; because I didn't want my children to grow up in a country that has no future – a country that you cannot be proud of.

You see, my son, I believe a person is nothing if he has no pride in himself. I am sure you understand I am not talking about the pride of the ignorant. I am talking about the kind of pride that comes as a result of achievement and inner strength, the kind that makes its possessor humble."

But I must ask for your indulgence as I presume to make two alerts as we seek to build those united, well governed, just and democratic societies.

The first is to resist to set our goals and development measurable by the standards and achievements of the so called first world, industrialized developed world. We may be urged to catch up but we must remember that they took centuries and with a resource base and a human development philosophy different from us. We should be wary of such achievements as 40% of the citizens having no insurance/assurance for health care, or 40% of mothers being single mothers.

The second which Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua often advised is to have patience. The process of political, economic and social transformation will take time. Even revolutions have had their term time of gestation. Orderly peaceful change takes times, involves making present sacrifice for future gains. We must work together and in harmony cognizant in the words of our Swahili saying, "A boat cannot go forward if each rows his own way."

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua made a special point of stressing this imperative for patient engagement. In a radio interview on Katsina Radio in December 1994, asked when he thought Nigerians would see democracy he replied:

"People should bear in mind that no matter how long it takes, Nigerians must return to democracy. But democracy is something that requires patience. Because, no matter how you want to correct the ills of society for progress, that cannot be done in a day. No matter how much you desire democracy, it has its pitfalls. The most admired democratic country in the world today did not achieve that in a day. It took years of learning and perseverance for them to reach where they are today.

So no matter how bad things are in Nigeria, there will come a time for democracy and in spite of democracy's pitfalls, there is no better system of government like it. We must be patient and tolerant. We must acknowledge that those in governance are human beings and not saints and therefore they are subject to commit mistakes. The beauty of democracy is that if you are dissatisfied with somebody in government, you await election day and vote in somebody else. Nobody can remain in office for eternity.

Therefore, I want to appeal to Nigerians to be patient as I know Nigerians as people who want things done in a hurry. However, many of the things we desire cannot be accompanied in a hurry. We must be thoughtful about certain things. All of us are going to die and leave the country; so our thinking must transcend our immediate desire."

What good judgment! What courage! What will power! What integrity! What common sense! What revolution!

For the first time in your country the torch of democratic governance has passed from one civilian elected President to another. We congratulate the Nigerian people for this historic achievement. I believe that this is an experience which Shehu Musa Yar'Adua would have dearly cherished. Let us pray that, in his death, it serves as a beacon, which shines on the waves in front of us.

Thank you for your attention.

FULL AND FREE DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

LECTURE

JONATHAN F. FANTON
PRESIDENT, MACARTHUR FOUNDATION



I am honoured to deliver the 10th lecture in memory of General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, whose legacy continues to grow in importance for Nigeria and its young democracy.

His personal example, the sacrifices he made, and his electoral theme, "Neither North nor South, West or East but the common good," still inspires as Nigeria moves forward, forging a nation that transcends regional and ethnic differences and finds common cause as a single people.

Throughout his career, Shehu Yar'Adua was dedicated to justice, democracy, and public service, values that resonate profoundly with the MacArthur Foundation.

Twenty years ago, when MacArthur began in Nigeria, the country still suffered under the burden of military rule. It was not easy for Nigerians to survive or for us to work. But we

persisted because of our belief in this country's importance and because of our admiration for Nigeria's people. In 1994, we opened an office, now located here in Abuja. When democracy returned, we were quick to expand our program. To date, we have made 350 grants worth almost \$100 million. Of the sixty nations in which MacArthur operates, Nigeria ranks second in the amount of resources invested.

Our approach is to work in partnership with government, civil society and universities and to focus on three issues: improving reproductive health, strengthening the rule of law and building higher education. Examples include: a review aimed at harmonizing laws with the Constitution; support for community policing; a large scale demonstration project aimed at reducing maternal deaths from postpartum hemorrhage; and a public school curriculum that teaches young people about their reproductive rights and responsibilities.

Two years ago, the MacArthur Board met in Nigeria – the first meeting outside of North America – and came away believing our money was being used wisely and well.

So I am pleased to confirm that the Foundation's commitment to Nigeria is enduring. So is my own. This is my tenth visit to your country; I have traveled widely and follow events here on a daily basis. I understand the challenges of building a stable democracy, fostering economic growth, reducing poverty, improving health, education, and more.

It is true that there have been some frustrations and disappointments along the way, but like you, I have seen significant progress under the courageous and effective leadership of President Obasanjo, progress that continues as President Yar'Adua charts an ambitious course for your country.

Nigeria does not always get a fair hearing in the Western press, which often dwells on strife in the Delta, examples of corruption, and imperfections in the electoral process.

But I tell a different story when I speak about Nigeria to American audiences.

I challenge them to consider these facts:

First, Nigeria is growing. Foreign reserves are up; debts have been cancelled; GDP is rising; and the country is more fiscally sound than it has been in decades.

Second, Nigeria is developing. Infrastructure is improving, telephone coverage has expanded as has primary school enrollment, and the number of universities has tripled over the past decade. Key health indicators, such as the rate of HIV/AIDS, are moving in the right direction.

Third, Nigeria is strengthening the rule of law. Through aggressive enforcement, the National Food and Drug Control Agency has restored the credibility of Nigerian-manufactured drugs. MacArthur is working with the CLEEN Foundation, the Network for Police Reform, and Access to Justice to improve police performance. And there has been concerted action against corruption through determined leadership, stronger laws and help from the private sector.

Finally, Nigeria is playing the role of international leader. Last decade, your government helped bring an end to the bloody civil war in Sierra Leone and peace to Liberia. More recently, your diplomats worked to resolve crises in Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sao Tome. Nigeria continues to lead UN and AU peace operations.

Nigeria has also stood up for accountability. At Liberia's request, you government transferred Charles Taylor to the war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone. This brave action was a milestone in the quest for an effective system of global justice. Taylor was everything a person entrusted with power should not be: an international criminal, an exploiter of children, and a ruthless enemy of human rights.

Looking ahead, MacArthur's Abuja office is designing an initiative to help strengthen the new African Court of Human and People's Rights. We very much hope that Nigeria will be a leading supporter, so that human rights issues that arise in Africa can be settled in Africa.

I am an historian by training, so I naturally ask, "Where is a country in the arc of its history?" It seems to me that Nigeria has reached a point of extraordinary promise. The signs are encouraging: back-to-back elected civilian leaders, prospective educational reforms, an increasingly independent judiciary, economic gains.

There is much that engenders hope, but we all know that critical choices lie ahead. I would like to reflect with you about the future in one area of particular importance – higher education.

I think Shehu Yar'Adua would agree with this choice. I take you back to February 1992 and to Lagos City Hall where he announced his presidential campaign.

Hear his words: "A country which cannot guarantee the full and free development of its people, cannot aspire to greatness... because the people contribute the driving force with which meaningful development can take place."

By this logic, national greatness depends on the ability of people to reach their potential, which means that greatness depends on education.

The reasons are plain:

For individuals, education is the ladder of opportunity;

For communities, it is the base of common values that holds diverse people together;

For nations, it is the engine of economic growth.

And for all who believe in freedom, education provides the moral foundation for democracy guided by respect for individual dignity and law.

Last year, in Addis Ababa, the African Union emphasized the connection between development and technology. The people of Africa are determined, it declared, "to banish poverty, combat diseases, improve public health, increase agricultural production, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals... [all this] depends on...an increased and sustained investment in science, technology, and innovation."

It is clear from this statement that high aspirations can only be met through the acquisition of skills that depend, in turn, on the contributions of vibrant universities. That is why it is essential to do what it takes to establish and maintain such institutions, because strong nations grow from great universities, and Nigeria belongs among the leading nations of the world.

But why is higher education so central to development? Consider the following:

Compared to their peers, university graduates tend to earn more money, enjoy better working conditions, have better health and live longer. They are more able to reason and communicate, their interests are broader, their ambitions greater, and their talents make the work force more versatile and productive. Their children are likely to achieve more in school and later to attend universities themselves, thus extending and multiplying the benefits of higher education.

Societies also benefit from the research that universities undertake.

I recall the challenge posed by President Yar'Adua to the University of Ibadan, at its diamond jubilee last November. He said: "Government is always mindful of the special role of the universities in the upliftment of the socio-economic life of our

country and this is why – we shall continue to give the necessary support to enable them to achieve the objectives for which they have been established. However, to whom much is given, much is also expected. The universities, on their part, [must strive]...at all times to be relevant as agents of development."

As this summons suggests, Nigerian universities are called to excellence, to produce graduates who can compete globally, and to fulfill the promise of a rising generation. MacArthur's mission has been to help make that lofty vision a reality.

To this end, the Foundation supports faculty research, new computer centers, and more modern libraries and laboratories at Ibadan, ABU, Bayero, and Port Harcourt universities. Our purpose is to demonstrate that significant investment will lead to technological advances in industry, communications, agriculture, and other areas. And we are pleased to see research from these universities contributing directly to Nigeria's well-being.

For example, the University of Ibadan is embarked on a multi-year effort with Northwestern University to study the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention services in rural communities. The University's Institute of Medical Research and Training has earned worldwide praise for its study of parasitic diseases, and its Department of Virology is finding new ways to use Nigeria's biodiversity for drug development, agro-forestry, and insecticides.

At Ahmadu Bello University, the National Animal Production Research Institute has bred poultry to resist disease and lay more eggs. New varieties of basic crops are also being produced, while the Institute of Agricultural Research is investigating seed-oil as an alternative source of fuel.

Bayero University's new Faculty of Agriculture is working to increase rice yields and produce more feed crops for livestock. The university's chemistry department recently discovered a new anti-malarial compound that may lead to locally-produced treatments. It is also studying the anti-retroviral properties of indigenous plants.

HIV medications produced from local materials might create an export market; they will certainly reduce costs and save lives.

That is not all. In the heart of Nigeria's oil region, the University of Port Harcourt is researching new ways to harness Nigeria's wealth of natural gas and recover the crude oil in contaminated soils. Its biochemists are studying the sickle cells that cause anemia, and the College of Health Sciences is evaluating local herbal remedies for malaria.

Given these accomplishments, it should come as no surprise that studies show a direct link between improvements in higher education and a rise in national prosperity. Such gains are essential to help this country harness its most valuable asset; knowledge, a source of energy found not in Nigeria's soil, but in its people.

So higher education is good for development. But what about democracy? How vital a role do universities play in building and sustaining a democratic society? This is a fundamental and sometimes controversial question.

There is, after all, nothing inevitable about democracy. Democratic habits must be learned, which means they must be taught. Bigotry, intolerance, and violence must also be learned. No one is born hating anyone else. We acquire this habit when the educational process is perverted and we are taught not how to think, but what to think – not to seek knowledge but to accept degrading stereotypes in place of truth.

The wrong kind of education creates a prison for the mind; the right kind empowers students to think independently.

That is why the best universities cultivate in young people a capacity for critical thinking, a comfort with complexity, and a commitment to civility. These qualities are essential to the democratic process and a bulwark against closed ideologies of all kinds.

As Shehu Yar'Adua said when announcing his presidential campaign, "Our vision is for a new Nigeria, with a common sense of purpose and a common destiny... dedicated to a common good for all."

He understood the critical role of universities as a unifying force; as a platform for preparing students to lead in government, business,

and civil society – and to do so with a shared determination to bring down the walls that divide people and hold countries back.

All this provides good reason for countries to support their universities – even governments confronted by other pressing social needs. But this does not mean that governments should be the sole source of funds.

Although the public sector has a profound responsibility to public universities, so do private corporations. Businesses look to universities for the ideas, research, and MacArthur and other major foundations also have an interest in higher education. This is because academic institutions generate research and provide leadership in fields to which we are committed, such as the environment, community development, health, and human rights.

Yet another group has a stake: private individuals, including graduates. Behind every great university there are generous alumni who nurture and protect it. To encourage this, MacArthur has created the Nigeria Higher Education Foundation which in just three years has helped Nigerians living abroad to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in the universities that gave them a start.

In the days of dictatorship, higher education was neglected in Nigeria; that is no longer the case. President Obasanjo recognized the challenge and mobilized the country for change. And when I met with President Yar'Adua in August 2007, he declared his intention to increase significantly the federal allocation to universities.

Such leadership is making a difference. Since 1999, the number of students at federal universities has risen by more than forty percent, while the amount of federal investment, adjusted for inflation, has increased by two hundred and eighty percent. This is the right path, for it is how Nigeria's base of knowledge and skill will expand, how the level of achievement will rise, how democracy will be strengthened, and national progress ensured.

So Nigeria's universities are making steady gains. But as they do, and as the thirst for higher

education grows, there are certain principles that should be kept in mind.

One is the value of diversity. Not every institution of higher learning can be a research university; it simply costs too much. If, as a former college president, I might offer some advice, it would be to seek differentiation. The ideal system of higher education should include some universities that primarily serve undergraduates; some that are more comprehensive, offering graduate courses in certain fields; and some that are full-fledged research institutions. As a centerpiece, a National Science Foundation would be valuable, helping to nurture advanced research through competitive grant making.

A second principle is to set achievable goals. The desire to excel in every discipline is praiseworthy, but impractical. Each university should consider carefully where its comparative advantages lie and where additional investments will do the most good. Universities that are recognized as centers of excellence in particular fields will more easily secure top-notch staff, attract private sector support, and further improve their flagship programs.

A third principle is to understand that quality teaching is indispensable to quality education. All learning depends on it. And the alarming truth is that, in Nigeria and across Africa, there are too few professors of the highest rank. Of these, far too many are approaching the age of mandatory retirement. Effective strategies are needed to recruit and retain a new generation of academics. However, these policies will only succeed if the environment for teaching improves; this requires a reasonable teaching load, time and support for research, modern facilities, and the chance for sabbaticals abroad.

A fourth principle is to understand that universities cannot thrive in isolation from the surrounding society. Great universities recognize and respect a creative tension between the purely intellectual and the practical, between what the faculty may want and what the country requires. A university should be in constant conversation with local and national leaders and with the private sector; it should foster both a spirit of civic mindedness and a set of entrepreneurial skills so that graduates will not only find jobs, but also know how to create jobs after leaving the campus.

Finally, international partnerships can help universities rise to world class standards. MacArthur is offering such an opportunity. With Columbia University, we are creating a network of universities to pioneer a new master's degree that will train the next generation of specialists in development. The new degree will involve intensive internships while adding science and technology to the traditional social science curriculum. We hope one or more Nigerian universities will participate.

You can tell that I am passionate about higher education and Nigeria. I also hope that I have not been presumptuous in offering suggestions. MacArthur approaches its work in this country as a partner, always eager to listen to new ideas, to learn and do better. Our commitment to progress is unshakeable.

Years ago, Shehu Yar'Adua wrote a letter from prison to his son, Buhari. In it, he said: "I want to leave for you something you can be proud of – a legacy of public service and sacrifice which will influence our country for good."

The MacArthur Foundation can imagine no higher goal than to build on the legacy of this great man. We join in his vision for a Nigeria that guarantees freedom and opportunity, that serves as a leader and example to Africa, and that takes its rightful place among the democratic beacons of the world.

On a personal note, my term as President of MacArthur ends in September. I have made many friends here from whom I have learned much about your country and about life itself.

I want to express my appreciation to you all for deepening my view of humanity, raising my sense of the possible, and firing my hopes for a world more just, peaceful and humane than it has ever been.

Looking ahead, you can count on MacArthur to stay the course as Nigeria fulfils its destiny, and you rely on me to be your advocate and friend. This is my last official visit to your country, but you may be sure that I shall return.

REMARKS

H.E. UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA



I must begin by acknowledging the critical pertinence of this year's lecture topic to Africa's quest for survival and relevance within the context of the complex realities of today's global community.

Today's Guest Speaker, Dr. Jonathan Fanton, whose MacArthur Foundation has been a worthy partner in educational development in Nigeria and across the African continent, has lucidly articulated the essence and significance of a well grounded and focused higher education system in the development of requisite high quality human capacity to meet Africa's development challenges.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, you have heard from a true and committed friend of Africa.

I salute my Colleague and Brother, President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania who is represented here by his Predecessor-in-Office, His Excellency, Benjamin Mkapa. Tanzania has consistently been at the forefront of the quest for Africa's regeneration, a worthy tradition which the administrations of both President Mkapa and President Kikwete have carried on with renewed vigour and steadfast devotion.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the stark realities of globalization and the unfolding global economic crisis facing the world today call for clear-headed, courageous, visionary, and disciplined leadership. This is the essence of the challenge to the political leadership on our continent today. We cannot run away from the centrality of good governance to the realization of our vision of a stable, secure, and prosperous Africa.

To the extent that current economic engagements are technology and knowledge-driven, the degree of Africa's competitiveness in the global market place will be determined in the long run by the quality of human capital which the continent can mobilize.

Our administration's prioritization of human capital development as one of the major pillars of our development agenda for Nigeria, stems from our recognition of the fact that our human capital – fully harnessed, effectively nurtured, and maximally utilized – affords us the requisite competitive advantage in facing up to the new opportunities and challenges presented by the global economy.

While acknowledging the fact that the manifestation of the global economic downturn has altered the variables, I dare aver that rather than spawn isolationist tendencies, the times call for even more robust productive partnership between Africa and our development partners. At the same time, we also must look inwards and evolve ways and means of effectively unleashing the creative and productive energies of our peoples towards the positive transformation of the African continent.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as we ponder the many challenges that our world is faced with today, we should draw inspiration from the ideals for which the late Shehu Musa Yar'Adua lived and died: courage, loyalty, love, diligence and abiding faith in God and country.

May God bless Nigeria. May God bless Africa. May God bless our world. Thank you.

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Tribute...

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un.
From Allah We Come and to Him We Shall Return.



We mourn the passing of our beloved Member of the
Board of Trustees, H.E. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

The Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation was established by the friends, family and associates of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua to continue the enduring legacy of one of Nigeria's most worthy leaders.

Through its facilities and programmes the Foundation endeavors to further the ideals of Shehu Yar'Adua; his commitment to national unity, good governance and to building a just and democratic society for all Nigerians.





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