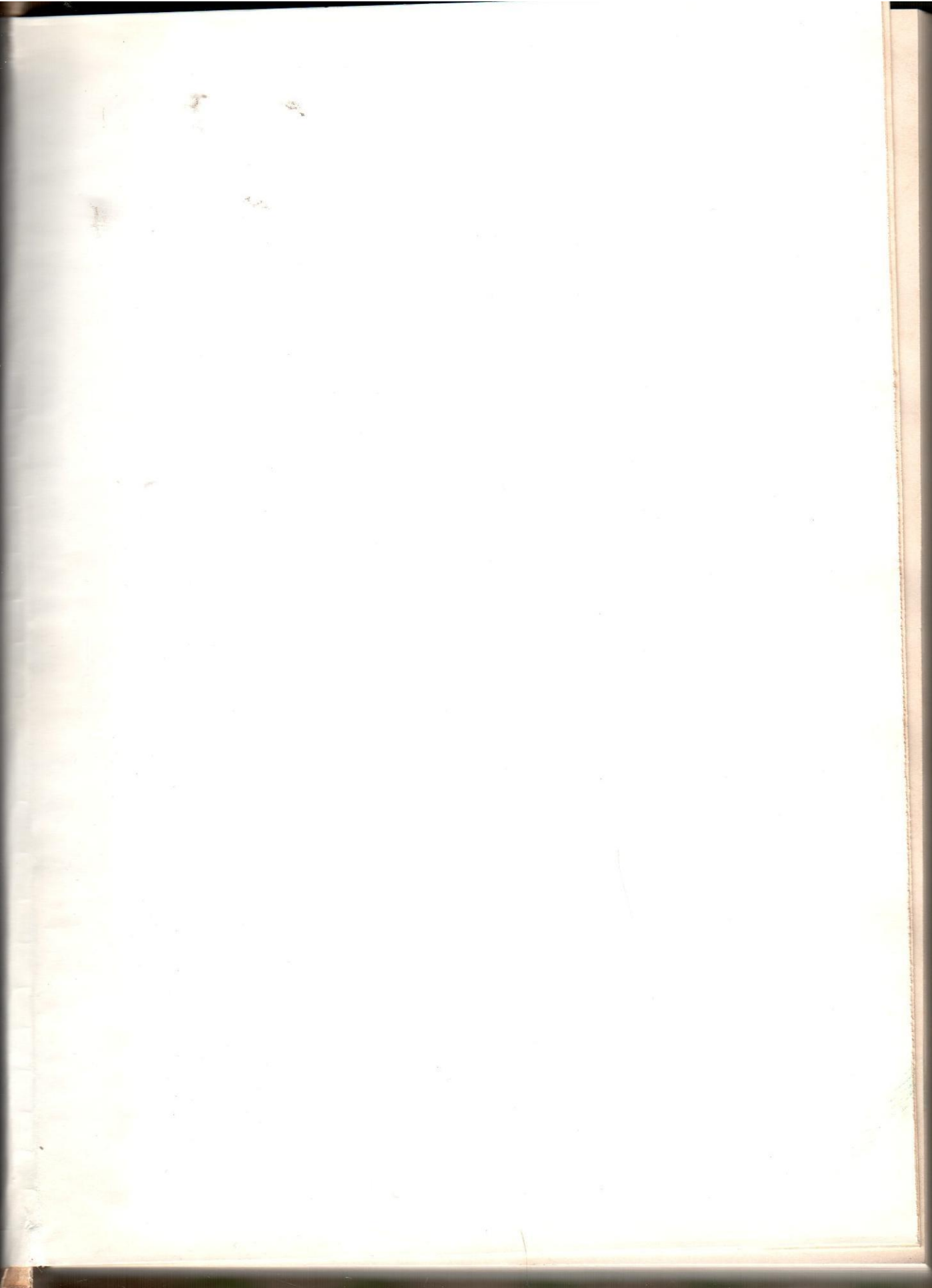


A MARCH OF PROGRESS



Collected Speeches Of
His Excellency
Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo

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Collated and Edited under the supervision of
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Federal Ministry of Information
LAGOS

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Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA
LAGOS

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Introduction

This book is a collection of speeches made by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo both as Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, and as Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, a post he held from February 13, 1976, soon after the assassination of Lt. General Murtala Ramat Muhammed in an attempted *coup-de-tat*.

As Chief of Staff and Head of State, General Obasanjo always acted in line with the philosophy of his Administration, which is to adopt a military posture in all its actions; to be close to the people, responding to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians; to run an open administration which would be ready to consider genuine and constructive criticisms and ideas, and to take actions resulting from extensive discussions and careful considerations.

On several occasions, such as the launching of the local government reforms, the inauguration ceremony of the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Constituent Assembly, as well as during his working visits to the 19 States of the Federation, General Obasanjo, through his speeches, has tried to keep the people informed of his Administration's efforts and decisive and progressive steps towards civilian rule, and of its eagerness to involve every Nigerian, especially those at the grass roots level, in taking decisions which affect their lives.

The launching of the Operation Feed the Nation Scheme during which he called on all Nigerians to grow their own food; the anti-inflation measures embarked upon by the Government; the efforts made to encourage industrial development such as the implementation of the indigenisation scheme; the development of ports and road networks all over the country; promotion of trade through the construction of the Trade Fair Complex and the staging of the Trade Fair; measures adopted to protect the country's foreign exchange reserve, are but a few of the pointers of his Government's concern about making Nigeria a virile, self-reliant and economically strong nation.

On the social sphere, General Obasanjo has, on several occasions, made pronouncements about efforts being made by his Administration to bring about the desired improvements in the everyday life of the people of this country. Such efforts include the provision of better housing, health and educational facilities.

During the numerous engagements in which he has been involved in and outside the country, and being guided by the principle of "open" and "consultative" administration, General Obasanjo, through his speeches, addresses and messages, strove to inform the people of Nigeria, Africa and the world at large of the various policies, plans and feelings of his Administration on problems and issues bordering on national and international affairs.

As shown through General Obasanjo's speeches and addresses, the primary concern of the Federal Military Government is to lead Nigeria on the road to rapid economic, social and political advancement. He urges various interest groups—traditional rulers, heads of institutions of learning, religious leaders, student bodies, heads of service and youth organisations—to join hands with the Government in its efforts to bring about a self-reliant, disciplined, humane and fair Nigerian society.

Nigeria's external policy, especially her uncompromising stand against oppression, racism and apartheid in southern Africa, and her stand in making Africa the centerpiece of her foreign policy, are constantly brought into focus in General Obasanjo's speeches.

General Obasanjo's leadership, his Administration's readiness and willingness to always keep the people informed of its plans and actions and to carry them along with it has been a welcome development and a real *March of Progress* in the life of this nation.

Our Philosophy

General Obasanjo made his first speech as the Chief of Staff on August 22, 1975. He was then a Brigadier and it was an address to the press. He tabulated the philosophy of the new administration on whose behalf he appealed for co-operation both from the press and Nigerians as a whole. He did not arrogate, to himself and to the administration, "oracular powers to do everything that has to be done in the country" but pledged to do the best that could be done with the support of the majority of the people.

This is the first time that either the Head of State or I have had personal contact with the press as a group. We have not been able to do so earlier than now because, as you all are quite aware, the Government has been busy on other pressing national issues. This is not saying that meeting the press is not a national issue, but judging from the activities of the Government so far, you will understand that some issues are more pressing than others. However, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this meeting which I hope will be the beginning of a very cordial and fruitful association between the Government and the press for the benefit of our great country.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

I wish to begin by telling you the philosophy of this military Administration.

It is our intention to adopt a military posture in all our actions. This Administration wishes to be close to the people. It will, therefore, be responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians. It will be an open Administration, quite ready to consider genuine and constructive criticisms as well as ideas from any quarters. This does not mean that the Government will be taking dictation from any quarters. Every action of the Government will be as a result of extensive discussion and very careful consideration.

This military Administration intends to carry out its programme of economic, social and political activities with maximum dispatch. In this gigantic task, the Government hopes to count on the co-operation of all well-meaning Nigerians. We cannot, and we do not intend to arrogate to ourselves, oracular powers to do everything that has to be done in this country now and in future. But we will do our best for the period that the military will have to run the affairs of this country.

As we will get advice from others, so do we intend to carry the majority of the people with us in all that we do. This is where the press comes in.

ROLE OF THE PRESS

I wish to repeat what other people have said many times before. This country belongs to all of us. Every Nigerian has a stake in the future of the country. Every organ of the society has it as a duty to contribute to the future progress and stability of the

country. It will, therefore, not be out of place if I say that the Nigerian Press has a role to play in the efforts of the Government to inform and enlighten, and to build a stable, contented and united country. This military Administration expects you to play this role in the best tradition of the profession of journalism. Sensationalism and cheap journalism may increase your sales, but they are *Not* the best and most sensible ways to help the Government of your country in the administration of your own people. If, therefore, any media organisation, be it Newspaper or Radio and Television, tries to make sensation out of any delicate national issue, that organisation is doing a dis-service to this country. We have a long way to go together. At the beginning of the journey, it is sensible that we should understand each other.

So far, this Administration has had no major complaint against the press. Things have been going on well, perhaps because it is still a period of honeymoon. But the Government is anxious that after the honeymoon is over, our relationship will remain good and cordial. We, on our part, are trying to make your job easy and I hope you will not make our task more difficult than it already is.

CHECK YOUR FACTS

There are always rumours and gossips in every country at a time like this. It is the duty of every responsible journalist who comes across such rumours to check his facts before publishing them. At the Federal level, the Ministry of Information is there to answer your queries. In addition, there is a Press Secretary to the Head of State who will also be of assistance to you in giving you accurate information about the Government and government activities. At the State level, the State Ministries of Information are there to serve you.

In addition to these institutions, it will be possible for you to meet members of this Government at different intervals either for confidential briefing or a general news conference. In all that you write or speak, I will expect you to be temperate and moderate in your language.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain that we are not running a government for the glorification of any individual. This Administration intends to adopt a low profile which we believe is in keeping with a military rule. It is also necessary to emphasize that we are not out to witch hunt or victimise anyone for his views or his position. Leaders at all levels, past and present, will be held accountable for their deeds. The ills of the past are too well known and these we intend to cure. I would like to appeal to you to devote your energy to building a great country not to muck-raking or denigration of the past leadership. Giving too much attention to them may divert our attention from the urgent tasks in hand.

Let all hands be on deck for the building of a great Nigeria.

Ninety Days and After

On October 26, 1975, ninety days after the new government came into power, General Obasanjo was a guest of the Nigerian Television in Lagos where he faced a panel of interviewers during an evening programme. He defended the action of his administration in reappointing former public office holders; he catalogued the achievements of his government in tackling national problems like port congestion and inflation, and disclosed plans that the government was making to achieve a phased demobilisation of the army; the reforms for the local authorities; settlement of abandoned properties and a smooth transition to civilian rule.

Saka Fagbo: Good evening and welcome to this special Press Conference. As you are all well aware, since July 29 of this year the change in the leadership of the Federal Military Government has led to wide-spread changes and reforms in the country.

We therefore have the pleasure and privilege to welcome the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo, as our guest in this special programme.

With me on the panel to interview Brigadier Obasanjo from my immediate left, Aliyu Hayatu of Radio/Television, Kaduna and Jerry Okoro of the *Daily Star*, incorporating the former *Renaissance*, from Enugu. Aliyu, will you fire the first shot please.

Aliyu Hayatu: I think before we fire the first question I would beg the indulgence of Brigadier Obasanjo for the benefit of our viewers farther away from Lagos, the moderator who hasn't introduced himself is Alhaji Saka Fagbo, the Controller of News, NBC/TV Lagos.

Now Brigadier, I think there has been within the past few days, some comment on the redeployment of some of the dismissed Commissioners by the State Governments. It has been said after the take-over by the present government that the Commissioners have been sacked because of their association with the misdeeds of the previous administration, and people have really said if this is so, why should you turn around and employ almost *en-masse* in certain states, these Commissioners who have been so tarnished?

I want to know whether there is any broad Federal Government policy regarding this re-employment and what your personal views are on the re-employment itself.

Brigadier Obasanjo: It will be a pity if there is a sort of general blanket to cover public office holders of the past and to prevent them from ever holding public office again unless, of course, they have been judged to have misused or abused their offices or they have committed other crimes which are punishable by law. In fact, whatever we do, I believe we should make it clear that whether people have held public offices in the past or not, those Nigerians of proven integrity and ability who are able to hold public offices no matter whether these have been held in the past by them or not, should always be made use of by this Administration and, indeed, I will expect by any administration, and unless we make this absolutely clear, we may in fact run the risk whereby people run away from public offices because it will be the only way by which they can defend their honour by refusing to accept public offices.

So I really don't see anything wrong in reappointing former public office holders provided it has been proved beyond any reasonable doubt that both in integrity, ability and in performance of their duties, they have shown themselves above board.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Jerry Okoro: Brigadier, how far would you say the government has succeeded in tackling some of the major problems facing this country; problems like port congestion and the soaring cost of living?

Obasanjo: It is probably too early to really start cataloguing the success of this Administration. This Administration has come into power less than three months, but if the impact which I believe can be judged by every man in the street is anything to go by, I will say that this Administration has succeeded to a great extent in the areas in which it has really focused its attention. You mentioned the port congestion. Unfortunately, it is not realised how much success has been achieved in that particular area because people go by the number of ships waiting to berth. But if one goes by another measure of judgement, the quantity of cargo discharged, cement alone, we have gone from less than 2,000 tons a day of cement being discharged some three months ago to well over 10,000 tons a day today. Obviously, that is a great measure of success.

Okoro: Under this discussion, can we look at the question of inflation?

Obasanjo: Well, yes, even inflation. Three months ago, if you got cement at all, you got it at a very highly inflated price all over the country. Today, my information is that not only do you get it anywhere you want it, you get it at a very reasonable price. One can take another commodity, milk. There was a time when you just could not lay hands on a tin of milk no matter how much you wanted to pay for it, and as a result, the price, of course, rocketed high. Today, you can get it as much as you want and in whatever quantity you want and at a reasonable price. There are probably other areas which require government attention and which will be tackled in due course.

You will remember we still have a Task Force which is looking into measures that can be taken by government in order to, in fact, be able to successfully tackle the problem of inflation and I hope that the panel appointed for this task will be able to submit their report on schedule and the government will be able to take prompt action on those measures recommended that will have immediate impact on inflation throughout the country.

UNIFORMITY OF PURPOSE

Hayatu: The successful implementation of almost all the measures of government depends to a large extent upon the understanding by people of such measures and the degree of their involvement. Now this brings us to the question of how we are able to get to the grass-roots and really get the people mobilized to appreciate the very objectives of the government. In this connection, I have in mind, Sir, the idea of the reforms which the Head of State recently spoke about with regards to the local authorities. Now there are vital links between the government and the people. I don't know whether you will speak to us in some measure of greater detail on the exact nature of the reforms you envisage for the local authorities.

Obasanjo: Well, except to say that we do not expect uniformity throughout the country in local government, but we expect uniformity of purpose. What I think has plagued the local government authorities in the past is the gradual erosion of their power, the gradual erosion of their finances and lack of staff. What we believe should

be the beginning of reform and reorganisation of local government throughout the country is to be able to give specific and definite functions to local governments to perform. And if they have definite and specific functions to perform, for them to have resources (finances) with which to perform these functions, and at the same time to be able to take on the necessary staff with the requisite ability, experience and qualification to perform the functions that will be allocated to them. That, basically, is what I would say is the reform taking place.

Hayatu: In other words, the Federal Military Government is contemplating pumping more and more money into the local authorities for this purpose.

Obasanjo: Well, in a way this will have to happen either through some form of institution which will have to be set up or through the State. The Federal Government must show more direct involvement in local government, as I said, through the State or through some form of institution by which the Federal Government can give money to the local government.

DEMOBILISATION

Okoro: Sir, the new leadership has promised a programme of demobilisation of the Armed Forces. How far has the Supreme Military Council gone with its plans? How does the Army intend to tackle the huge social and personal problems that will follow demobilisation?

reason why it is necessary for it to be planned. I think what has happened up to now is that there has not been an attempt to plan any demobilisation since the end of the war, and what we are embarking upon at the moment is, in fact, to study the problems and work out a way by which we can have phased demobilisation; not sending the soldiers or their officers or whoever has to be demobilized into the unemployment market, but in fact for the economy to be able to absorb them. And no soldier, let me say this, airman or sailor or an officer who is considered of the right type or calibre will be discharged into the unemployment market. Any demobilisation exercise that this Administration will have to embark upon will cater for the future of these people who have served their country in time of crisis.

Fagbo: When you are talking about the Army, can we look at the problem of the clean up measures in the public services and in the statutory corporations? What of the Armed Forces?

Obasanjo: The exercise that has been going on in the civil service and the corporations is going on in fact, in all areas of public service, the Armed Forces, and, I believe, the universities through their own institutions. The intention is that this exercise should go through the entire public life of our nation.

Okoro: Brigadier, would you not agree that making public the disciplinary measures taken against offending officers would improve things? For example, it would give complainants the impression that their cries are not being ignored.

Obasanjo: Normally, the Armed Forces have always had a means and a system of disciplining themselves. That system has always been there. What is happening now is that along with the exercise which is going on throughout the country, that system is being used more extensively, and I really don't know what purpose it would serve unless for the purpose of informing the public, if the public wants to know that 15 officers have been discharged or retired from the Air Force, or 14 officers have been retired or dismissed from the Navy, or 20 or 25 have been discharged or retired from

Obasanjo: If demobilisation is planned and phased, I don't think the problems which you envisage—the social and human problems—will arise in fact, that is the

the Army, because as far as these services are concerned, theirs have always been a continual and a continuing exercise and it will remain so.

Hayatu: Still think on the question of demobilisation, this is a subject which is exciting considerable debate among nationals for quite some time. There is the view of certain people that in view of the strong economic potentialities of Nigeria today, there is a need for us to maintain a considerable striking force and this they think could only be done if we maintain the present strength of our Armed Forces and in fact improve upon them. By demobilising, it would appear that the present Government does not share this particular view. I don't know if I am right.

Obasanjo: Well, you are not totally right because what makes a credible striking force is not the bodies you have alone. You must have the bodies, you must have the communication, and you must have the transport. All these go together to make a striking force or credible force and if you have a million troops and you cannot move a thousand of them from A to B when the need arises, you might as well not have them. So our concept of a credible force is to have the right type of force blended with the right type of weapon and adequate communication and transport.

Fagbo: Brigadier, can we go back again to this matter of clean up. In the first 100 days or so this Administration has been involved mainly in the exercise of dismissals, removals, retirements and so on.

Obasanjo: Have we stayed 100 days yet?

Fagbo: I am not too sure about that. The impression is gaining ground that these are the main national pre-occupations of the Administration. After this clean-up, what next?

Obasanjo: I will not agree with you that that is the pre-occupation of the Administration. What this Administration believes in is like building a house. Before you build a house you have to have a firm foundation. If you do not have a solid foundation the house may even collapse on you while you are building it.

You have to dig your foundation to come to rock bottom and when you come to rock bottom you then start building. And we are just about getting to the rock bottom and while we are doing that we mix the mortar with which the house would be built. It is being prepared this way.

Hayatu: A recent issue of national interest was raised by Col. Joe Garba, Commissioner for External Affairs when he was speaking a few days ago. This is in relation to Nigerians living in exile. I want to know really if there is any broad Federal Government policy on this subject.

Obasanjo: The broad Federal Government policy is what the Commissioner for External Affairs stated, which is that all Nigerians who have put themselves in self exile are free to come home and join hands in the task of developing the nation any time they wish to do so.

Hayatu: Now, I don't know if this is going to include quite a number of people in that sphere occupying the minds of Nigerians. I have in mind here particularly the former rebel leader Ojukwu. Some people have said why really under the present circumstances shouldn't the Federal Government declare that Ojukwu is free to return to Nigeria as a free citizen.

Obasanjo: This Administration has never said that Ojukwu is not free to return to Nigeria as a Nigerian.

Hayatu: In other words, sir, you are saying that Ojukwu is free to return to this country; free from any possibilities of prosecution by either a court of law or military court martial.

Obasanjo: The Inspector-General of Police will probably be able to say better whether he has committed any crime for which he (or any Nigerian for that matter) may have to be prosecuted in any court of law.

As far as this Administration is concerned, other than those who have committed crimes, and of course they will have to account for their crime, everybody is free to come home as a free citizen of Nigeria.

ABANDONED PROPERTY

Okoro: Brigadier, my question is on the issue of abandoned property. As you know in the last four or five years, citizens of this country have been deprived of their rights to their property especially in the Rivers State. I am aware of a panel set up by the Federal Military Government to look into the matter, but some of these people would appear disappointed that the Federal Military Government has not taken the decisive steps of reaffirming the rights of citizens of this country to own property in any part of the country. What is your standpoint on the issue?

Obasanjo: This Administration, if that needs to be affirmed, stands by that policy that all Nigerians are free to pursue their legitimate duty in any part of Nigeria and to legitimately acquire property anywhere in Nigeria. The case of the Rivers State, as you would understand, is a peculiar case and that is why it is being given the sort of attention that the Federal Government is giving it by appointing the panel. For instance, if you will remember, it wasn't only in the three Eastern States that abandoned property authorities were set up; they were set up elsewhere in the country. But because of the way things had been before the creation of states, and the way things moved after the creation of states, the case of the Rivers State in particular, needs special attention so that justice and fairplay can be done to the people of Rivers State and to those who own property in that place.

Fagbo: On assumption of office, the Head of State made a public statement that the census exercise has been cancelled and in his address to the Constitution Drafting Committee some days ago, has said efforts should be made to de-politicise the question of census. Apart from these statements, what is the present position of the census? Are we going to have another one or will we never have another one?

Obasanjo: Some day we will have another census, but it is not on the programme of this Administration.

Hayatu: Still on some of the issues raised by the Head of State some few days ago when he was addressing the nation on the programme of the Federal Military Government for a return to civilian administration and the transitional period of four years. Quite a number of people have commented on this and the impression one gets at least from quite a large number of these commentaries is that the four-year period, generally speaking, is too long; that the Federal Government could be in a position really to execute all that is required within the programme in fact in a shorter period of two years. I don't know whether in the light of this debate there is any thinking over the possibility of contracting the period or perhaps of at least introducing political activities earlier than October 1978.

TARGET DATE

Obasanjo: Not really. In which area can you contract? No matter what you do, you cannot hasten the settlement of the creation of states other than we have done in that programme. If all goes well, the Irikefe panel should submit its report by the end of the year. We reckon that within three months of the submission of that report, by April, we

should be able to take action on the report. If the experience of the past is anything to go by, the new states, if they have to be created, will need a minimum of one year to settle down before they can embark on any other aspect of the political programme, which is going down to the grass root to reorganise and reform the local government which will culminate in the election at that level. So, in fact, as far as the first part is concerned, there is really no way by which you can telescope the period unless, of course, Irikefe comes up with a recommendation that no State should be created. If that comes up and the Supreme Military Council accepts it, then we probably will be saving some time. Unless that is done, if we are thinking of creating states, and we are thinking of leaving those states in a reasonable condition of settlement before we embark and launch them into other aspects of the programme, we need that much time.

Hayatu: Is there, even if the government is proposing to work within the framework of the four year period, a possibility of introducing partisan political activities earlier than October, 1978?

Obasanjo: No, again unless, of course, the other aspects of the programme come earlier. The one that comes to mind is the exercise of the Constituent Assembly. They have been allocated one year for their exercise. If they are able to complete their exercise in one month, maybe the Supreme Military Council can come up and say well, since we have finished so far, there is no point in hanging on and waiting till October, 1978. But the point I want to make is this, that the dates that have been announced are the outside for every item in that programme. If things move smoothly and fast, there are probably areas where time can be reduced. But the date and time given are the outside beyond which each item of the programme will not be allowed to go.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Fagbo: Some people have expressed some fears and doubts about the Constituent Assembly being partly elected and partly nominated. Would you like to make some clarification on this.

Obasanjo: The thinking in the Supreme Military Council is that the exercise of building up from the grass root will throw up about 50 percent of the members of the Constituent Assembly through election. There will be others who will have to be elected, probably representing special interests. Again, it will have to be some form of election. There may still be other areas that may have to be catered for. These are areas of special interests or areas that should be included in the Constituent Assembly but which might not have been elected either at the local level or by the bodies or special interests that have elected others. The Supreme Military Council feels that, at that point, there may be need to appoint or to nominate people to join the Constituent Assembly. I know that fears have been expressed that this may be a way of government or this Administration bringing its own people into the Constituent Assembly. I can assure you that this Administration has no intention of bringing people of its own choice. Majority, and I mean large majority, of the Constituent Assembly will be elected and it will be free election, carried out by the people.

We have to bear in mind that at that stage, we are gradually getting to the stage of the Administration itself packing up. We are getting near 1979, and if we cannot trust the election of the Constituent Assembly to the people, I wonder how we can trust the election of the legislature which will follow to the people, and I wonder how we can then be expected to trust the running of the country to those who will be freely elected. So it is not the intention of the Administration to inject into the Constituent Assembly

people that will sort of become the torch bearers of the Administration, as it were.

Okoro: Brigadier, a number of state governments are now insisting on one man one plot. What do you think should be the national policy on property ownership in Nigeria?

Obasanjo: That question borders on ideology, and the Head of State has said that the process of evolving an ideology is a long one and has to be through the process of open political activity, and that process is not yet here.

Hayatu: But, sir, I think the main argument here is this; in the absence of a formalised political platform, perhaps the view is being expressed that the nomination by the Federal Military Government and the holding of elections for the Constituent Assembly in absence of political parties may generate the feeling that the members who ultimately emerge are persons who are having some sympathies for the Administration. In this way perhaps, the preconceived idea may emerge that already the Administration has made up its mind on a constitution, and once it gets this kind of people that whole idea is a foregone conclusion because they are hand-picked persons more or less, and in the broad sense they will go along and rubber-stamp whatever is brought up. Is there any way to allay these fears?

POLITICAL PLATFORM

Obasanjo: Well, I think we can only allay these fears by what we have said so far and by what we have done. I don't think we can do more than that. We haven't written a constitution. We have given a general guideline for the Constitution Drafting Committee and we have made it categorically clear what we want for this country, which we believe is in the best interest of the nation. Whatever constitution the Drafting Committee comes up with which satisfies in general terms what we regard as necessary to ensure the existence of this country as a strong, viable and happy country, such a constitution will be sent to the Constituent Assembly and it will be up to the Constituent Assembly to consider and accept it or amend it. If they like they can turn it completely down. I like to assure you and assure the nation that it is not the intention of this Administration to write a constitution and throw it down the throat of the nation.

Fagbo: Talking about this Constituent Assembly and the lifting of the ban on party politics, I want to tie this up with one of the guidelines or one of the points in the address of the Commander-in-Chief to the Constitution Drafting Committee. He said that a panel should consider whether Nigeria should run a system of government where there will be no political parties. Is this in tune with the situation in the country? This is very basic to whatever we consider. Can there be a system where there will be no political parties?

Obasanjo: We don't know. That is why we ask them to consider it and if they consider it a possibility, by all means they should feel free to make such a recommendation.

CONSTITUTIONS

Okoro: Sir, talking about constitution, someone made the point that what was wrong was not Nigeria's Constitution, but that the people who operated the Constitution were not the kind of people who should operate it; that what failed was the people who did it. Would you agree with this view point?

Obasanjo: No, I wouldn't, and I am sure the Supreme Military Council did not agree with that. That is why, first of all we set up a Constitution Drafting Committee

and not a Constitution review panel. We believe that a lot went wrong with our Constitution in the past. The Constitution that was given to us by the British was the best they would give because they knew no better. But even in Britain today, I don't believe that their Constitution is working well, I believe that a constitution whereby if you talk of democracy, for instance, where we talk of the voice of the majority being the voice of government, it should be seen to be so. Even the British had a peculiar example last year whereby the Conservative Party in a general election had 38 per cent of the popular vote, the Labour Party had 37 per cent of the popular vote and by the curious nature of their system the Labour Party had more seats in parliament than the Conservatives, and of course, the Labour Party ruled the country for six months before they had another election in October.

Obviously something basically is wrong with that system. Now, I believe that whatever system we should have should allow or bear in mind traditional and cultural past and heritage. After all, before the advent of Western civilisation, we had a system which allows consensus in one form or the other; we had a system in some part of the country where, in fact, whoever is the leader—the chief or the headman—can be told by his advisers that he had gone wrong and he must go, and he would go. He had no choice but to go. We had a system by which opposition is not silenced but is contained somehow within the system. I believe that the Constitution Drafting Committee and the nation as a whole, through the memoranda that are to be submitted to the Committee, can evolve a system that takes care of all the aspirations of our people, but without the ills of the last Constitution. And I think it was well spelled out in the Head of State's address to the Committee that the system that is based on tribal and ethnic sentiment, the system that is based on winner takes all, the system that allows institutionalised opposition is probably not the right system for us. In most Nigerian languages, there is really no word as such for loyal opposition as the British have it. The word for opposition is the same as the word enemy. And what do you do with your enemy; of course you crush him. And if you have to crush your enemy, you don't spare anything. The opposition too sees itself as being nothing but on war path and taking the position of being at war against the government. I think these are some of the ills of the past Constitution which we should try to remove.

ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH

Hayatu: The constitution issue is one, perhaps, which has generated, as we see, a lot of debate. But another sector which should also attract our attention and which we had touched a little bit earlier is the one relating to the disciplinary measures the government is proposing in regards to persons who have acquired wealth illegally in the country now. The general impression created presently is that the government will confiscate whatever is obtained illegally. Besides this confiscation, is government really contemplating any other disciplinary action against persons who will be so involved?

Obasanjo: I think in addition to confiscation which the Head of State had mentioned in his address to the nation on the 1st of October, there will probably be other measures that will have to be taken especially where there are cases which should be punished by law, and I wouldn't rule out the possibility of the law being allowed to take its normal process.

Fagbo: Coming back to the question of the constitution, one of the defects, to my mind, of the last Constitution was that it took no cognisance of the existence of the Armed Forces. After 1979, what would be the position of the Armed Forces not only in

relation to the Constitution but to the body politic of this country?

Obasanjo: I wish I knew. I will sincerely hope that the country will have, as has been hinted earlier, a very strong and well equipped, well armed Armed Forces—Armed Forces that can be the pride of the nation and that will be able to live up to its functions, that is defending the territorial integrity of the nation and preserving the nation as an entity. Other than that, I will be too presumptuous if I tell you what else I can see for the Armed Forces after 1979.

SMOOTH TRANSITION

Okoro: Brigadier, hopefully the transition of power from this Administration to civilian rule will be smooth and orderly. What if it is not as smooth and as orderly as it should be; does the Army see itself playing the role it played in the last few years?

Obasanjo: I don't understand exactly what you mean by that. I sincerely hope you are not insinuating that things will not be smooth. For the entire programme which this Administration has prepared, the intention and the aim is for things to be smooth and orderly. Of course, one does not rule out the normal things that will happen in the course of human interaction and human relationship. But apart from that we are not envisaging that there will be another crisis that will paralyse the nation. I sincerely hope that is not what you are talking about. We hope that things will be smooth and orderly. But if what you are thinking of is the possibility of another crisis of the magnitude that we had in 1967-70, I think the idea to me is unthinkable.

Hayatu: I know, during the period of the previous regime, one of the points that has drawn considerable public agitation and criticism is the existence or continued existence of the state of emergency. A lot of people have criticised the existence of the emergency and its handling of the detention of people without trial and its attendant consequences. In view of this unpopularity and the public popular criticism that has gone along with it, I don't know whether this new Administration is thinking of abrogating the state of emergency within the next few months, so to speak.

Obasanjo: Since it is already featured in the programme of this Administration, it will be given the attention it deserves when we get to it.

Hayatu: There will be no obligation at this time, sir.

PRIDE OF ALL

Obasanjo: That is not what I said, I said that it has been placed on the programme and it will be given the attention it deserves when the time comes.

Hayatu: Before we say good bye Sir, I think we may ask at this time particularly since our time is gradually coming to an end, whether there is any general broad message you would want to send us with to the nation generally.

Obasanjo: All I would like the nation to take in at this time is that the intention of this Administration is to build a nation which will be the pride of all Nigerians and, of course, to provide the best that the resources of this nation can provide for all Nigerians.

Three

New Challenges and Great Expectations

On November 24, 1975, General Obasanjo addressed Chief Executives of Commercial and Merchant Banks. He reiterated the intention of the government to collaborate with foreign investors in promoting joint ventures and in ensuring fair and equitable returns on investments.

General Obasanjo seized the opportunity to advise employers in the private sector not to regard the retired civil servants as unfit for employment, pointing out that appropriate ministries and corporations would co-operate to supply required personal references.

He concluded by asking banking and financial institutions to join hands with the government to develop the Nigerian economy.

Thank you for responding to my invitation for this meeting. This Administration believes in keeping in close touch, and exchanging views, with all the sections of the society. I have sought this opportunity to exchange views with you because of the important role you have to play in our efforts to develop the economy and improve the welfare of our people. As you know, we are in the early stages of implementing a Development Plan which we believe, if faithfully implemented, will lead to a significant improvement in the equality of life for us all in Nigeria.

As Bankers, you mobilize and direct capital and other factors of production. Thus, the efficiency of a production system such as ours, depends to a large extent on the degree of efficiency you attain in discharging your role in the system. It, therefore, follows that our development efforts pose a direct challenge to you. I like to assure you that in meeting this challenge, you can count on the warm disposition of this Administration towards private enterprise and endeavour. We have sought every opportunity to emphasize our intention to continue to collaborate with foreign investors in promoting joint ventures and in ensuring fair and equitable returns on investments. I like to assure you that investments, from external and internal sources, in the deserving areas of the Nigerian economy, have our guarantee of safety. You as Banking Executives, more than any other section of the business community, are in close touch with developments in the private sector. And not only that, the whole of the business sector depends on you for business advice and help. I hope that you will accept the assurances and re-assurances of our favourable disposition to private enterprise and initiative, and pass them on in all your business contacts.

Most of you are probably acquainted with members of the Government side that are present in this meeting. These are people with whom you should be in close contact in the course of business. I hope that these contacts will become more frequent as you work hand-in-hand in the effort to accelerate the pace of the implementation of the Development Plan.

The successful implementation of the private sector's programmes and even those of the public sector depends not only on the finances that you or the Government can provide, but also on your help in mobilising other inputs, material, and manpower. We have great expectations for the contributions of merchant banks to progress in this

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economy. Merchant banks, after all, pay particular attention to co-operative development and project financing in both the private and the public sector. They have expertise that makes them able to put together packages comprising money, men, and material so as to bring about the required increase in the productive capacity of an economy.

EMPHASIS ON THE FUTURE

This expertise is yet to be demonstrated in Nigeria. I realise that it could be argued that the entry of merchant banks into the Nigerian economy is a very recent event. Is that why these banks have not displayed the dynamism that we expect of them? Is it a deliberate effort to frustrate our endeavours and stagnate our economy? Or is it that they have found some relatively easy avenues for operating profitably? Be that as it may, and you will notice that I have only asked questions, I think we should not unduly concentrate on past behaviour. Our emphasis should be on the future. The role we have mutually agreed merchant banks have in this economy, given our own adherence to the principle of reward commensurate with effort, is one that will be profitable. And this role we expect them to play. A quick glance at the Development Plan will lay bare the very wide scope that exists for profitable contributions by merchant banks to the development of the Nigerian economy. There are basic industries like petrochemicals and allied industries to be developed. There are agro-industries, involving grain, root, as well as livestock production, not to speak of large projects in the manufacturing sector. I certainly hope that our merchant banks will, before long, be able to develop concrete project implementation schemes which they will put to the appropriate sectors and potential investments.

The history of commercial banking in Nigeria, unlike that of merchant banking, is a relatively long one; one can concede that commercial banks have contributed in no small measure to the development of the commercial life of the Nigerian economy. But it will be readily agreed that these banks face new challenges—the challenges of economic development. The time has now come for them to structure their loan portfolios towards medium and long-term loans. I believe the banks themselves will agree that the notion that commercial banks should only lend short-term is out-dated. We would in particular like to see increased commercial banking efforts in the agricultural sector.

NEED FOR DYNAMISM

The whole banking sector is very liquid. This liquidity we believe can be used to the advantage of this economy, especially if it is directed towards increasing the productive capacity of the economy. This cannot be successfully done if banks concentrate on short-term financing or if they sit and wait for customers. There is a clear need for some measure of dynamism in banking, not in the sense of speculative banking, but in the sense of helping prospective investors with advice relating to the equipment and manpower. No doubt, some of this is already being done but much more can easily be done and should be done.

There is one other aspect that I think I should mention briefly and that relates to the question of Nigerianisation of the so-called "expatriate banks." While there has been some sign of participation, at high levels, of Nigerians in the policy formulation, direction and control of these banks, we believe that progress made in this direction has not been fast enough. Of course, there is a problem of the availability of the

requisite high level manpower. The obvious and clear solution is for these banks to develop vigorous training programmes which will in the future make it possible for the Nigerians to fill more of the high level posts. The indigenous banks face very special problems and they too need management training. I do not intend to catalogue the management problems of these banks as they are well known. I believe that there is room for collaboration between "expatriate banks" and "indigenous banks" in the field of manpower development and management training. For our part, anything that we could do to contribute to the improvement of the operation of banks, generally, we would be more than ready to do. The benefits, after all, would be felt in the economy for our mutual advantage.

NO WITCH-HUNTING

I would like also to use this opportunity to advise employers in the private sector of the economy not to treat everybody retired as a result of the recent exercise in the public sector, as unfit for employment in the private sector. Where any employer requires a personal reference in respect of a retired officer, the appropriate Ministry, Corporation or Department will co-operate in the normal way. Government has no intention to witch-hunt those retired.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words to other banking and financial institutions represented here, other than the commercial and merchant banks. These institutions are set up by Government for specific purposes in our economic and social development efforts. The challenges which the commercial and merchant banks are facing are no less than those other institutions should face. And they are expected to justify the purpose of their establishment.

Well, Gentlemen, this has been a general expression of our expectations. I have sought to impress upon you the significant role that your banks have to perform in the implementation of the Development Plan. In a sense, I am throwing a challenge to you; I have no reason to doubt that you will meet the challenge. I expect that within the next few weeks you will be able to come up with concrete ideas concerning the issues I have raised.

We must all join hands together to develop the Nigerian economy with a lively private sector led by a dynamic public sector.

Justice and Fairplay

Following an extensive study of public complaints institutions all over the world, the Federal Military Government established a similar one in Nigeria to identify and deal with cases of administrative injustices and malpractices on the part of public officers.

On December 8, 1975, General Obasanjo addressed a seminar on Public Complaints and used it as a forum to further explain the functions of this institution.

The Federal Military Government recently established a Bureau for Public Complaints following an extensive study of the institution the world over. Its function, *inter alia*, is to identify and deal with cases of administrative injustices and malpractices on the part of public officers. The main reasons for creating the institution are:

- (1) the central concern of the democratic process is to ensure the protection and maximization of the citizen's rights and liberty;
- (2) the inadequacy of existing judicial control over administrative action;
- (3) the widespread but erroneous belief that the Civil Service is too powerful, remote and tardy, and therefore, needs some control and direction;
- (4) the need for a tonic effect on the Civil Service in order to increase efficiency and to stem the tide of corruption, and
- (5) the increasing incidence of delegated legislation and the lack of a mechanism to check whether the regulations made were in accordance with the spirit of the original enabling legislation.

Since the announcement of its establishment and from reports reaching us, it has become necessary to create a forum for further explaining the functions of this institution, as well as its intended relationship with existing agencies or organs of government such as the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. It is the purpose of this seminar to deliberate on the institution of the Ombudsman, and thus to allow varied opinions to be taken and examined with the aim of confirming or modifying our initial intentions, and subsequently to identify the Bureau of Public Complaints with the common aspirations of Nigerians as regards its functions, structure, organisations, and operations.

Presently, the Bureau of Public Complaints is responsible to the Supreme Military Council which appoints its Commissioners. It is felt that if the Commission is subject to Executive control, it cannot be independent enough to accept complaints, investigate such complaints, assess without bias the information received on cases of administrative malpractices. There is also the other point that if the scope of the

institution is unlimited and is allowed to spill into the entire Civil Service functions, it might paralyze the function of the Executive. This seminar would have contributed much to the success of this institution if it succeeds in establishing a boundary of control between its function *vis-a-vis* the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary.

It is probable that political activities would affect and influence the operation of the Public Complaints Commission. Whichever way one looks at it, either where the Commission is responsible to the Legislature or where it is responsible to the Executive it is still under the influence of politicians as both arms of Government are largely made up of politicians. The future and success of the Commission will, therefore, be determined by provisions of the Constitution which should necessarily guarantee its existence and mode of operation and sufficient independence from both arms to enable it to perform its duties satisfactorily. The Constitution should spell out the powers of the Commission, its membership and guarantee its tenure of office. Suggestions will be taken on necessary steps for insulating the Commission from partisan politics.

Since the Commission must keep out of the functions of policy formulation and law making which properly belong to parliament, and since Common Law originates from Courts, we need to discuss the legal status that should be attached to the findings of a Public Complaints Commissioner. Should these be taken as suggestions, recommendations, or should they have the finality of law? If they must have the finality of law, what should be the procedure for guaranteeing the rule of law as against arbitrary decisions? If his findings are mere recommendations, who sits in final judgement over these; the Legislature, the Judiciary, or the already over-powerful Executive?

The Ombudsman in some countries that have been studied by our team supervises all Civil and Military Government administrations including Ministers, Civil Servants, and all other persons acting in the service of State, for example, university professors and lecturers, but he has no power to supervise judicial administrations. The Ombudsman is obliged to keep himself constantly informed about the way all officials within his jurisdiction perform their duties, but he has no statutory power to change a decision he finds improper. He can comment on the quality of the administration but not directly overturn the results of poor administration. If he believes that misconduct in the Public Service has occurred he may order the Public Prosecutor to investigate further, or if he chooses, he may order disciplinary proceedings to be started by the appropriate authority. He may also state his views on the matter to any person concerned.

The Ombudsman in some of these countries, unlike a court of law, would not hesitate to express criticisms even when the outcome of a particular case is not at stake. He not only states what administrators are legally required to do but also what he thinks they will be well advised to do.

Experience in some of these countries has shown that in most cases his decisions will be no more than a record of discussions and agreements reached jointly by himself and the administrative organ he is investigating. In other words, his decisions in many respects will be negotiated settlements. Mutual agreement and persuasion may produce better conclusions acceptable to the officials and the Ombudsman alike though perhaps not to the taste of either. Some people have contended that such a bargaining process produces a false air of achievement. This is likely to be so in Nigeria where such an institution will be seen as the cure of all social ills, and many

disgruntled Nigerians would want to use it to attack the Government. This attitude is likely to be further underlined in this country at the moment, when there is no parliament and with a clogged up court system.

The Ombudsman might end up assuming the roles of all these institutions put together. But all this is not a strong argument against mutual discussion; such discussion can encourage co-operation and receptivity. The Public Complaints Commissioner, a man of tact, will find that persuasion is more effective than an edict. He will realise too that the Civil Service possesses a valuable store of experience which can fortify his own judgement.

Experience elsewhere has shown that initially the strongest opposition to the institution of Ombudsman comes from the Civil Service. The effect of having an Ombudsman to oversee an administration, it is argued, amounts to inviting harassment from cranks and malcontents. This might lower morale and destroy the security of the Service. In some countries, to appease the Civil Service, provision was made in the instruments establishing the Ombudsman for civil servants to elect, when under investigation, to have the case transferred to a Civil Service Investigating Committee. It is important to note that it was hardly ever used in many of those countries which have it.

The most unfortunate and strongest image of the Civil Service created in the mind of the public is one of irresponsible, inefficient, and yet powerful organisation. The Civil Service is seen as the government. But no matter how unjustified this image, the Civil Service is traditionally debarred from answering these allegations. This restraint and lack of an effective outlet causes frustration both on the part of the public and the aggrieved Civil Service. So it can be seen that the Public Complaints Commissioner might be called upon to protect the interest of both sides. It will be possible to investigate in order to vindicate the innocent as well as to punish the guilty. Things being what they are in a country like our own, the image of the government and its effectiveness is just as good as the Civil Service and the poor image of the Service needs good repair. There is the important need to separate very clearly in the minds of the public the difference between the Civil Service and the Government. The Public Complaints Commissioner should be able to do this.

It is a common feeling with us in Nigeria, and probably an increasing phenomenon throughout the world, that the judicial process lags behind in coping with cases pending before it. This is partly explained by the demands of the rule of evidence and partly by the increasing awareness of legal rights by individuals. While ignorance and poverty are constraints to seeking legal redress to the abuses of individual rights by civil servants, more fundamental obstacles are the remoteness of Civil Service power and process, the lack of sense of accountability by public servants, and the inadequacy of judicial control of administrative action. The Bureau of Public Complaints will, therefore, mediate in all incidents involving friction between the rights of the individual and "public rights" as well as obviate the present practice of individuals or government organs sitting in judgement over matters in which they are involved—a violation of one of the basic legal principles. The Public Complaints Bureau is not a substitute for the regular courts of law but would compliment these courts as an autonomous body to cover the deficiencies of regular courts in administrative adjudication. As the activities of members of the staff of our courts will sometimes be subject to public outcry and complaints, it would appear that the Bureau of Public Complaints needs to remain independent of the judiciary.

It is important to delimit the area of jurisdiction of a Public Complaints Commissioner. This will help to remove friction between the Courts, the Executive and the Commission. While I would prefer to leave this to participants to make their contributions, I would want to comment that there has always been legal redress for all wrongful administrative acts committed by one individual or groups against other individuals and groups. Thus the first criterion for delimiting between the functions of the Commission and the Courts in the choice of the complainant who may decide to go to court or refer to the Public Complaints Commission. It seems to me imperative that the Commission should be limited to civil actions or more specifically to complaints against the administrative or executive arm of government including wrongful acts relating to the person or persons of members of the judiciary. The Commission, however, shall have no power to interfere or investigate matters relating to the administration of justice.

It was the view of government, when this institution was established that each state would have an Ombudsman, appointed by the Supreme Military Council. While this is a convenient arrangement for achieving results as quickly as possible all over the entire Federation, Ombudsmen will be employees of the Federal Government. The Commission will be centrally administered as a national service agency, the staff of which could be deployed to any part of the Federation. Illiteracy should not constitute a constraint to the proper operation of the Public Complaints Bureau if proper organisational structures are designed for the institution. The Commission should be able to receive complaints directly from both citizens and foreigners. Such complaints need not be in writing as it could be recorded in the Commissioner's Office. One might observe here, however, that even with literate citizens, it requires careful digestion to distinguish between legitimate acts of public servants as against acts arising from individual discretion or illegal use of administrative power. It is hoped that with time and through adequate public education, the citizens will realise the role and functions of the Commission and take maximum advantage of its existence.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my speech has been aimed at provoking your thoughts on the various problems that might arise with the establishment of a Bureau for Public Complaints. It is for this seminar to discuss these problems and members are free to make feelings known either through the medium of a paper or contributions to discussions during the seminar. Whichever may be our methods of contribution, it is essential that our honest opinions are made known as this is one of the ways through which a feedback can be obtained on the intentions of the Commission. I wish you cordial and purposeful deliberations.

Tackling Our Social Problems

On December 18, 1975, General Obasanjo delivered a speech at a Conference of Commissioners responsible for Social Development in the country. He expressed his aspiration for an improvement in the quality of life of the people by gearing the nation's social services programmes towards such improvements.

It is a pleasure to be with you this morning to address the opening session of your two-day Conference. May I take this opportunity to welcome you all to Lagos and wish you a happy stay in spite of your crowded programme.

As Commissioners responsible for Social Development, Youth and Sports, you have no doubt by now come to appreciate the magnitude of the challenge you face, of providing social services to the community in order to improve the quality of the life of our people. Past efforts in this direction, at best, had been very modest and not much has been achieved. The traditional welfare services provided were *ad-hoc* and terminal, and tended only to provide temporary succour to an afflicted section of the community. This is the reason why some of our welfare services have made little or no social impact on the majority of our people.

I believe much can be achieved if our social services programmes are geared towards continuous improvement of the quality of life of our people, in order to justify their meaningful and continued participation in our concerted national effort towards progress.

I am aware that in the past, Ministers or Commissioners responsible for social welfare services have held meetings or conferences to deliberate on social welfare programmes in the Federation. These Ministers or Commissioners had other responsibilities under their portfolio as the provision of welfare services was only part of their overall responsibility. This conference, therefore, is unique in the sense that almost all the Commissioners present have full responsibility for social development in the states and are therefore expected to give priority attention to our social problems. I consider also the timing of our conference to be opportune. You are already aware of the intention of this administration to review the Third National Development Plan in order, if necessary, to reschedule its priorities. I am sure that your consideration of our various social problems will assist you to review various programmes in the light of what can be achieved within the Plan Period.

It is gratifying to note that one of the items on your agenda is the rehabilitation of the disabled, destitutes and beggars. It is the intention of this administration that this problem should be decisively tackled through gainful rehabilitation and eventual integration with the rest of the community. There are proposals at the Federal level for solving this problem on a permanent and continuing basis, and it is hoped that every

effort should be made to provide the much needed services to the unfortunate members of our society.

I am informed that quite apart from discussing the problem of juvenile delinquency in the country, you intend to address yourselves also to the problems and needs of our youth. The youth have an important role to play in the nation's development, and therefore need to be trained and guided to appreciate and accept certain values and standards without necessarily losing their identity. There is, therefore, an urgent need for you to evolve a youth policy that will provide the guidelines on programmes for the youth that will enable them to contribute their quota to the development effort, solve or ameliorate some of their problems, and meet their aspirations.

Honourable Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not intend to take up much of your time as I know you have a heavy schedule for the day. I can assure you that your recommendations will be given due consideration by the Government. I wish you fruitful deliverations.

Nigeria First

Lt. General Obasanjo touched on Nigeria's foreign policy when he addressed a Senior Army Officers' Training Seminar in Ibadan on January 17, 1976. He pointed out that Nigeria was not ready to continue to sit on the fence on important issues because of its policy of non-alignment. There would be, he said, "a clear delineation of national interest and a determined effort to pursue such interest."

I am delighted to be here to round off your session of lectures and discussions this week. I am sure you have taken in heavy doses of all subjects of your lectures and discussions. But this is an essential and an invaluable dimension to your training, not only as officers within the Army, but responsible leaders within the community. You need an overall understanding and a wide perspective regarding issues that affect both your responsibilities and your profession in order to discharge your duties more purposefully and effectively. The issues that have been selected for this training week are all of great contemporary importance.

The Angolan issue has, for example, brought so many issues into a sharper focus than ever before. I have no doubt that you must have had a stimulating lecture on the subject, and without having had the opportunity of listening to the lecture, I can only add that discussions on the subject were lively and thought-provoking. I, perhaps more than you here, need to listen to the lecture because of my peculiar responsibilities. I have been in close touch with some of these issues and I find that successful policies are those that interpret the general feelings of the people and I have to cultivate a good ear.

ESSENTIALS OF FOREIGN POLICY

I will, all the same, touch on the issues which have been discussed starting with our foreign policy. Understandably, because of Angola, the issue of foreign policy must be in the forefront of our discussions. A lot has been said about our foreign policy and such labels as non-alignment, etc., have been given prominence. This non-alignment, however, has often been criticised as an excuse for not doing anything. Nigeria has often appeared to be sitting on the fence on important issues, much to the detriment of our image and interest especially in Africa. This is more a reflection of a lack of purpose and an inability to identify what constitutes our national interest.

PERMANENT INTERESTS

May I make the point here that it is very uncharitable of those who through blackmail and vicious propaganda equate our stand on Angola to commitment and alignment with one side in the ideological "cold war" thereby insulting our intelligence. As they know very well and show in practice through their own policies of shifting alliances in

their national interest that in international affairs there are no permanent friends but permanent interests. And we have only acted to protect our national interest and the interest of Africa as we see it in Angola.

Foreign policy issues are, of course, not always as clear cut as this. Other issues arise daily which need careful weighing and decision and the ultimate guiding line is what serve our interests best. Such interests cannot be defined in vacuum unless we define and develop our sense of values as a nation. This comes from hard experience and reflection. The Commissioner for External Affairs, I see, is on the programme as one of the lecturers. He must have informed you already that our foreign policy is under review. This exercise is to bring out more clearly the directions along which we must pursue foreign policy, given the contemporary setting.

The Angola issue itself has taught us very important lessons. The division on the recognition of MPLA at the recent OAU Extraordinary Summit did not prove the importance of OAU or that we should discard such an organisation. If anything, it has shown us the vital need to get the OAU to function properly. The Angolan struggle has been turned into an issue of super-power confrontation by the Western press and propaganda as well as by the actions of the super-powers themselves. The outside view is that the summit was a failure because OAU "appears to have failed" to reach an agreement to recognise MPLA.

This is no doubt what the covert and overt moves of the big powers set out to achieve. But as the Head of State said, the meeting was far from being a failure. Once the OAU closes it ranks as first and foremost an African organisation, we can afford to disagree among ourselves. It is when these disagreements appear to have been engineered from outside or subordinated to the "cold war" that confidence in the OAU wavers.

The OAU cannot disintegrate because of Angola. There is no need for it to do and the importance of the organisation far outweighs small differences between countries. Whatever happens, after Angola the OAU will not be the same again. It will emerge from the experience much the wiser and therefore stronger.

I will only add here that the Federal Military Government's approach is to make its position as clear as possible and to pursue the nation's interests as vigorously as possible. The future of the OAU and its member countries are of critical importance to us and only through such an organisation can we hope to achieve some of our common political and economic objectives. This is perhaps the only lesson to be learned from studying the other international alignments such as NATO, SEATO and the WARSAW PACT. International co-operation is a must and the OAU when it matures will perhaps form the one single most important international alignment, covering as it does, the whole of the continent.

COMMON BASIC PROBLEMS

Nearly all African countries share the same basic political and economic problems. They are all under a common threat of exploitation. The starting point in our struggle against exploitation is economic co-operation. Given our fragmented colonial economies and the size of organised competition outside Africa, it is impossible for individual countries to cope with the power of the large international corporations and the governments of their countries of origin. Therefore, economic co-operation on regional lines must aim at achieving and competing with what the international corporations have done and subsequently at establishing institutions that can replace the international corporations within their borders.

The key to their success is not only their size, but that these corporations know no international barriers. Such barriers must be removed if any such economic unions are to succeed in Africa. The East African Economic Community has already proved that such sub-regional organisations can bring immense benefits. The West African counterpart, the ECOWAS, has even greater potential for development. The ECOWAS will include an estimated population of 125 million people. The market potential and the bargaining power of such an organisation will be considerable.

ECONOMIC INDIGESTION

The Nigerian economy has, on its own, fared well because of oil revenues, but such revenues have not caused any structural changes in the economy. Accumulation of such revenues has in fact got its problems. The capacity to absorb and utilise such wealth from within the country is limited and you will agree we have of recent experienced some economic indigestion in this country. Inflation, port congestion and petrol shortage, are all reflections of this limited capacity. But these are the immediate problems; the long term problem is one of investment of the oil revenue.

How do we allocate such revenues to the various competing sectors: agriculture, industry and the social services, which can also be considered as an investment area? We are taking a look at those areas again to see if we agree with the order of priority of the Third National Development Plan.

The international oil industry is, of course, the world's leading industry in size and significance. Oil has of recent been a central issue in international politics, and although Nigeria has not, except through OPEC, been directly involved in the Middle Eastern wrangle, sooner or later the country has to take into account the political importance of oil, which is tremendous.

ALMIGHTY MONOPOLY

Oil companies by themselves are so large and so well organised as to pose a threat. Their operations are worldwide and most of the exploration, petroleum industries and sales are in the hands of some ten or so such companies which are mostly owned by the United States of America. Nowhere else do we have such a complete and almighty monopoly. The OPEC is the logical but still inadequate answer to such a disturbing situation. The conflicting demands of producers and consumers can, I believe, be reconciled only through governments and political action. The oil companies are not the best guarantors of the interests of the oil-consuming countries. Their governments have to be more actively involved in negotiation with OPEC countries. Let us hope that this reconciliation of interests will come sooner rather than later.

With these few points on the oil industry, I think I have covered most of the issues you discussed. I hope you have gained something from your seminars, and have got preliminary ideas which are to be pursued and developed. You cannot afford to be ignorant of the pressing issues of the day—both national and international. We all face the challenge of international economic and political domination as well as the challenges of developing our country. I have no doubt you are equal to the task of facing these challenges.

Finally, gentlemen, I hope that various lectures and discussions during the week has clearly brought home to you all the facts that a vigorous and progressive foreign policy can only be based on a strong and firm economic and social foundation which also depends on political stability and unity within the nation. Herein lies the importance of this training week and your duties as officers, leaders of your men and leaders within the community.

Seven

Housing and Rent Control

In a determined effort by Government to provide housing for the people, the government sought to find a temporary solution pending the time it would be able to meet the challenge itself. This temporary relief was given by a public control of rents. On February 2, 1976, Lt. General Obasanjo addressed the inaugural meeting of the Rent Panel set up to, among other things, review the level and structure of rents, in relation to the housing situation in the country with particular reference to urban areas.

I would like first of all to welcome you here and to say from the beginning that I hardly need to explain to you the importance of the subject you have been called upon to investigate: the subject of housing and rent control. This is one of the most intractable problems that have faced many governments in this country and indeed many governments all over the world. Soaring rents are part of the complex of problems all related to urban growth. Urban population growth has become an important index of development but it brings with it many adverse effects that might very well threaten the overall development which it helped to bring about.

The recent task force on inflation has clearly shown that soaring rents are central to any policy aimed at controlling inflation. Rents consume such a large proportion of workers' earnings that it makes nonsense of any wage and salary reviews that exclude rent control. I appreciate that our current problems are related to the simple rule of supply and demand. For a number of reasons the demand for urban housing has far out-stripped the available supply. The building industry alone is facing a serious crisis in coping with the vast area of development unleashed by oil revenue.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The favoured position of the landlord is perhaps the most important visible reason and it is realised that in our set-up of mixed economy, only a determined effort by government in providing housing can ease the landlord's hold on the tenant. Permanent solutions in this direction are all in the long run but it is possible to achieve some results and give temporary relief by public control on rents.

The efforts of the government at rent control date back to 1946 when a Rent Restriction Act was passed to control and regulate the increase of rent and the recovery of possession of premises in certain parts of the country and particularly Lagos. An attempt was also made in 1966 with the promulgation of Decree No. 15 and its amendment Decree No. 48 of that year. These were efforts at providing temporary relief to the urban worker. Some state governments, especially Lagos, North Central, Benue-Plateau and the East Central States have also attempted to tackle the problem of recent but these have so far yielded poor results.

CAUSES OF FAILURE

The causes of failure of these attempts are usually viewed from both the landlord's and the tenant's point of view. The reasons given range from the general lack of systematic study of the problem before seeking solution; the lack of guidance on the most effective way of executing rent control laws and a seemingly deliberate creation of loop-holes in Rent Control Acts, Decrees or Edicts. It is the hope of this Administration that your panel, within your terms of reference, would give considered thought in greater detail to the previous efforts at rent control, trace their cause of failure and provide a long lasting solution.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Your terms of reference in performing this task are as follows:

- to review the level and structure of rents in relation to the housing situation in the country with particular reference to urban areas;
- to examine the effectiveness of existing legislative and administrative measures for rent control in the country;
- to examine the adequacy of housing programmes in the country with particular reference to Lagos and other urban centres; and
- to suggest appropriate remedial measures and make recommendations for solving the rent problems in the country with particular reference to the low and middle income groups.

May I restate that the Federal Military Government is aware that shelter represents one of the most basic human needs, with a profound impact on the health, welfare and productivity of the individual. It is also realised that rent responds to a number of factors including the general cost of living; tax rate on landed properties; cost of land and of building materials. The government now accepts it as its social responsibility to participate actively in the provision of housing for all income groups. The aim is to achieve a significant increase in supply and therefore bring permanent relief to the low income groups. But as I said earlier, these are long-term measures.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The short-term measure is to relieve the average city dweller of the heavy burden of rent he now bears and it is the work of your panel to investigate and recommend how this can be best achieved. May I remind you that while urban rent control is a global problem, it poses a unique threat to labour mobility in Nigeria as it is growing increasingly difficult to attract some categories of manpower to our cities, especially Lagos. The problem is generally on the cost of living and especially on rent conditions demanded by landlords. This is an unhealthy situation to the economic and political base of our country. I would like also to stress the point that rent control laws exist presently in the country. The ineffectiveness of such laws lies in the lack of adequate instruments or organs for their implementation. The powers of Rent Control Tribunals have hitherto been limited to mediating between landlords and tenants. The possibility should be explored of giving this tribunal powers not only to fix rents but also to prevent arbitrary increases in rents by the individual landlord.

Ladies and gentlemen, I consider your duty of fundamental importance not only to the average Nigerian worker but also to labour mobility in the country. Your recommendations must in the circumstances of our situation, be practical, easy to be successfully implemented and give relief to those who need it most. I can only wish you luck in this national assignment.

Eight

Education: Key to Development

On January 27, 1976, Lt. General Obasanjo formally welcomed the African Ministers of Education to the UNESCO Regional Conference on behalf of the Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed. In his speech, General Obasanjo described education as an investment in human resources and an instrument in nation-building. He announced the country's Universal Free Primary Education Scheme (UPE) for children of school-going age to be introduced in September and a simultaneous expansion programme for secondary, technical, and university education to meet the demand that the UPE scheme would give rise to.

I welcome you to Nigeria on behalf of His Excellency General Murtala Muhammed, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to the UNESCO Regional Conference of the African Ministers of Education. The Head of State has requested me to express regrets for his inability to be with you this morning.

I have been made to understand that this conference has been convened in pursuance of the Resolution of the General Conference held in Nairobi in 1968 to assess the progress made by member-countries and I have also learnt with great pleasure that the central theme of your deliberations is "Mass Education Linked to Development."

Since that conference, Nigeria has made significant strides in the field of education and no theme could be more in consonance with the spirit of our present development strategy. Our Third National Development Plan has been built on the philosophy that for development to be meaningful, it should involve the whole community, embracing all sections and groups alike and that the provision of wider opportunities for education is one valid way to bring this about. For us, education is an investment in human resources, is an instrument in nation-building and the aim is to nurture, through education, a cohesive society, an enlightened and responsive people, and an alert, efficient, motivated, and well-remunerated work-force.

It is on this premise that we have erected our educational programme for the next five years and have committed ample resources for the expansion of opportunities at all levels and in all areas of education. Comprehensive as this programme is, perhaps the most significant and far-reaching for the future is the scheme to provide free universal primary education on a nation-wide basis to all children of school-going age by the next academic year and to make primary education compulsory for this age-group by 1979. Preparations are being made in earnest for the launching of the scheme in September, 1976, and to provide the requirements for additional teachers, classrooms, and other facilities on which depends its success.

We have not failed to recognise the dramatic demand that this scheme will give rise to in the next few years for other forms and levels of education, and we are simultaneously expanding opportunities in secondary, technical, and university education, in non-formal education, adult literacy, correspondence education, and

vocational training. In committing itself to the transformation of our educational system and to greater and more responsibility for the education of our people at this point in time, the Federal Military Government is keenly aware that the task before it is not easy, but we are encouraged that with the determination of our people and your encouragement we shall succeed.

I am aware that many other African countries have introduced far-reaching innovations or embarked on equally ambitious schemes or are proposing to do so, and as your conference will, in the broad context of its central theme, take up matters concerning the trends of educational development, targets and achievements, problems and strategies, this is a singular opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas and, after a realistic appraisal, to make recommendations for the benefit of African education.

I should remind you that your success depends to a considerable extent on your consciousness of a common problem and the common purpose and destiny of the African people. This consciousness must be kept constantly in mind as the inspiration and guide for formulating programmes and strategies that are valid to our circumstances. The whole continent looks up to you and counts on your capability to carry out your assignment.

I should express the Federal Military Government's appreciation to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation for bestowing on us the honour of hosting this Conference. We duly appreciate the role being played by the Organisation in fostering international co-operation and the development and exchange of ideas.

Finally, I wish you all very useful deliberations, an enjoyable stay with us, and safe journey back home at the end of the conference.

The Director-General, Your Excellencies, Honourable Commissioners, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the greatest pleasure in formally declaring open the Conference of African Ministers of Education.

Nine

Liberation of Angola

The Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, represented Nigeria at the 15th anniversary of the launching of the Armed Struggle for Liberation of Angola in February, 1976, and addressed the parade and mass rally in Luanda.

MESSAGES OF GOODWILL AND SOLIDARITY

I bring you messages of goodwill and solidarity from the Government and people of Nigeria on the occasion of the 4th February, marking the 15th anniversary of your heroic Revolution and Liberation efforts. This is a symbolic date marking the beginning of the final struggle against colonialism, imperialism and racism in Africa. I pay tribute to those who have made the supreme sacrifice in laying down their lives for the struggle.

MPLA

This is indeed a fitting occasion to celebrate this important day. Things are looking up for you and your comrades in Africa and friends outside Africa. The majority of African countries within the Organisation of African Unity have now reposed full confidence in your Government and recognise it as the legitimate and lawful government of the people of Angola. We in Nigeria never had any doubts that the MPLA was indeed, the sole representative of the interest and aspirations of the masses in Angola. Your valiant and heroic struggle over the years testifies to your credentials as great patriots and fighters for the freedom of African peoples.

LONG AND DIFFICULT STRUGGLE

Let me congratulate you, Comrade President as well as all the members of your Government and all those who have sustained this long and difficult struggle, for having brought your struggle so far and brought yourselves within sight of victory. Your success is a sign of hope for African peoples because this marks the last stages of the eviction of colonial forces in Africa.

REAL ENEMY

The ultimate obstacle to complete emancipation has been and will continue to be for some time, the government of South Africa with its objectionable racist policies. It is clear now that South Africa cannot survive and thrive on the blood and toil of Africans whom it keeps perpetually under bondage. There cannot be any compromise with South Africa or the interests which it represents and I am happy to say today, there are growing signs that many brother African countries are beginning to sort out their

differences and to grapple with the real enemy, and this enemy is not only South Africa, but any other force which seeks to divide African interests and African nations to further imperialist aims.

GUARANTEE FOR SUCCESS

It is imperative for all of us, in the face of the Angolan struggle, to close all our ranks and remain firm and united as this is the only guarantee for success, for freedom and for attainment of human dignity for the black man on this continent and all over the world. We can only hope that Angolans who are genuine patriots on the other side of the struggle will cease to be misguided and see the sense in declaring solidarity with the MPLA as well as African nations that have identified their aspirations with the struggles of your Government.

CIVIL WAR

This is not an ideological war nor is it proxy war of the super powers but a tragic civil war between brothers. It is our hope, therefore, that the MPLA Government will not regard brother African States who are not on their side now as perpetual enemies but that in your hours of victory, you will show magnanimity, you will stretch out your warm hands of friendship and reconciliation to them. Nor should the People's Republic of Angola under the MPLA Government lose sight of the fact that all Angolans, whether now within the MPLA or outside it, have to be welded together for the great task of reconstruction and building a happy and prosperous nation. A task that demands all efforts and ability of all available hands in Angola and also the support and assistance of all friendly countries. You can always count on our brotherly support and assistance.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS

Comrade President, once again, I bring you and the people of this great country, fraternal greetings and congratulations from our Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed, the Government and people of Nigeria for the successes of your government and wish you and all the people of Angola, a speedy return to peace, concord and normalcy and happiness and prosperity for the future. Happy celebrations. Long live the People's Republic of Angola and Africa.

Call to Duty

*On February 13, 1976, the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed was assassinated in an abortive **coup de-tat**. Through a unanimous decision by the Supreme Military Council, General Obasanjo became the Head of the Government. In his first broadcast to the nation the following day, Lt. General Obasanjo paid tribute to the late Head of State and pledged to continue the government of the country in the spirit with which General Muhammed led the nation — that of complete dedication.*

Fellow Citizens;

We are once again passing through a critical period in the history of this country. For me personally, this has been one of the saddest moments of my life.

The Supreme Military Council has already announced the assassination of His Excellency General Murtala Muhammed. We all mourn the passing away of one of the greatest sons of Nigeria. I had the privilege of serving as the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters under him and I had no doubt in my mind that the late General Muhammed gave this country a unique sense of direction and purpose. We are all now obliged to continue with these policies laid down by the Supreme Military Council under the dynamic leadership of General Muhammed.

From the account of the tragic incident gathered so far, the late Head of State was shot yesterday on his way to the office. His A.D.C., Lt. A. Akinsehina, his orderly and driver who were with him in the car were also killed. The Governor of Kwara State, Colonel Ibrahim Taiwo who was abducted yesterday was shot dead and his body was found in a shallow grave outside Ilorin. Colonel Dumuje was shot and wounded in another location in Lagos on his way to the office. This dastardly act was committed by a few dissident troops organised by Lt. Col. B.S. Dimka of the Nigerian Army Physical Training Corps. Many arrests have already been made and the Supreme Military Council has set up a Military Board of Enquiry to carry out full scale investigations into the incident and the planning of the assassinations. I wish to assure the nation that the Supreme Military Council has taken a firm decision that all those found to be guilty will be summarily dealt with in a military way. I therefore appeal to all sections of Nigerians not to take the law into their hands but to be rest assured that the Federal Military Government will see to it that justice is done.

POLICIES CONTINUE

As you have heard in the statement by the Supreme Military Council, I have been called upon, against my personal wish and desire, to serve as the new Head of State. But I have accepted this honour in the interest of the nation and in memory of the late Head of State. I know that he would have wished that somebody should continue the task of nation building from where he left off. I have worked very closely with him and have shared his beliefs and commitment to Federal Military Government's policies

and actions. I believe and feel strongly committed to all we have been doing and I can pay him no better tribute than to continue in the spirit with which he led this country: that of complete dedication. All policies of the Federal Military Government continue as before and all Ministries should continue their usual duties. This tragic incident can only lead to greater dedication to the upliftment and progress of this nation.

CONTINUOUS VIGILANCE

This situation was brought so swiftly under control because of the loyalty and dedication of the Armed Forces and the Police. The Armed Forces and Police deserve all praise and appreciation from the Government and the people of this country. Reports have also reached me from all over the country of public support from various sections of the community. The Federal Military Government is very much gratified by this demonstration of loyalty and support.

At the end of the seven-day mourning period, which was announced earlier, Friday the 20th of February, 1976, is hereby declared a public holiday to enable all Nigerians to offer special prayers in all places of worship.

Finally, I would like to appeal to all of you for calm and to avoid any action that might cause a breach of the peace. This is a period that calls for continuous vigilance and it is the duty of one and all to maintain this vigilance in order to preserve the stability of the nation.

Eleven

Eid-El Malud Festival

General Obasanjo's message on the occasion of the Eid-el-Malud Festival, March 13, 1976.

Today we join millions of Moslems all over the world in celebrating the great feast of Eid-el Malud.

The feast of Eid-el Malud marks the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammed. It is a time when Moslems meditate on the exemplary life of Muhammed and rededicate themselves to Allah and the tenets of the Moslem religion established through the Holy Prophet.

May I therefore take this opportunity to remind you that Muhammed taught the practice of righteousness, acknowledgement of the brotherhood of man and unqualified submission to God. We should all at this time deliberate on the purity of life which Muhammed led and aspire to uphold ennobling qualities which mark out the Holy Prophet as a great spiritual leader whose way of life is emulated by millions of people the world over and whose teachings direct the minds of men towards peace, understanding and brotherhood.

To us Nigerians, the teachings of Muhammed should stir us to rededicate ourselves to serve our fatherland particularly at this time when our country is going through social and economic changes. This period in our history demands of us absolute devotion, loyalty and uprightness in the pursuit of those national goals designed to have far-reaching consequences for the future of this country.

Let us guard against unduly emphasizing those forces that elevate the selfish interest of the individual or of a section at the expense of the ennobling spiritual qualities that advance the overall interest of the nation. As good citizens and followers of Muhammed, we should all at this time strive to pursue only legitimate endeavours that could lead our country to the path of honour and true greatness.

Let our good deeds shine among men as a testimony to the wholesomeness of our lives for it is only our good works that can demonstrate the purity of our faith and commend us to our fellow men.

May Allah guide and direct us so that our thoughts and intention, our pronouncement and our actions will be in consonance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammed.

I wish you all a merry Eid-el-Malud celebrations.

Anti-Inflation Budget

In the 1976/77 Budget Speech of March 31, 1976, General Obasanjo briefed the nation on the state of the economy which he described as "not too encouraging". He said the previous fiscal year was characterised by a number of economic problems. As a result, he announced that the government had undertaken a comprehensive review of the Third Development Plan with a view to re-order the priorities in the plan.

The Supreme Military Council, the National Council of States and the Federal Executive Council have just approved the Federal Government Budget proposals for the 1976/77 fiscal year. We have taken the opportunity to review current and prospective developments in the economy and to formulate new policy guidelines for the new year.

THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The developments in the economy during the 1975/76 fiscal year have not been too encouraging and there have been early warning signs of the dangers ahead if the economy was allowed to remain over-heated.

The growth rate of the economy slowed sharply during the year due mainly to the decline in the output of crude oil. This fall in crude oil production would have led to a fall in total output but for the encouraging performances of the manufacturing, distribution and construction sectors.

Money supply has continued to increase at a high rate. This is attributable to the high rate of increase in Government expenditure and the rapid expansion of bank credit to the private sector. The resulting high liquidity in the economy coupled with supply bottlenecks such as the port congestion have led to a substantial increase in the domestic price level.

With respect to Federal Government finances, developments have not been as favourable as in the 1974/75 fiscal year. Actual figures for the first nine months of 1975/76 show that Federal Government revenue totalled ₦3.9 billion while recurrent and capital expenditures totalled ₦4.7 billion. Thus, a deficit of ₦0.8 billion was recorded in the first nine months of the fiscal year.

The balance of payment position also deteriorated. We not only spent all our foreign exchange receipts in fiscal 1975/76 but also dipped into accumulated reserves to meet current commitments. The favourable trade balance of ₦2.7 billion recorded in fiscal 1974/75 contrasts with a deficit of ₦125 million in fiscal 1975/76. The unfavourable performance shows an overall deficit of some ₦1.0 billion in the balance of payments in the fiscal year. This has reduced external reserves from ₦4.1 billion at the close of fiscal 1974/75 to about ₦3.1 billion at the end of fiscal 1975/76. This adverse movement is due, not only to the reduction in our crude oil exports, but also to the

sharp decline in the contribution of the agricultural export sector to foreign exchange earnings, and an unusually high level of imports of consumer goods.

Thus, the 1975/76 fiscal year was characterised by a number of economic problems which resulted in a slow-down in the rate of growth of the economy. The problems include a very high rate of inflation, serious supply bottlenecks including the port congestion, the emergence of deficit in Federal finances and a sharp deterioration in the external payments position.

The present Administration has, since coming into power, undertaken a comprehensive review of the Third National Development Plan. However, I would like to emphasize the fact that the aim has not been the re-writing of the Plan. Rather, the aim has been to re-order the priorities in the Plan so that it may closely reflect the realities and aspirations of the nation. We have, where possible, eliminated or reduced the scope of prestige projects. We do not intend to introduce any new prestige project.

In re-ordering the priorities in the Plan, greater emphasis has been given to such crucial areas as housing, health and agriculture. For example, with respect to housing, the scope of the housing programme of the Federal Government is to be sharply increased from 60,000 to 200,000 housing units for the Plan period. We will make more use of local materials. In the health sector, the Federal outlay is being increased from ₦314 million to about ₦1.7 billion for the Plan period. This reflects the belief of the Administration that efficient and ample health facilities must be brought to the entire population. Of the major projects in this sector, mention should be made of the expansion in the Basic Health Service scheme. The scope of this scheme is being increased from a coverage of 40% to 60% of the population through the establishment of 285 basic health units in the country.

Given its importance as a source of food and raw materials, there is no doubt that the agricultural sector merits special attention. In our fight against inflation, we have had to resort as a temporary measure, to augmenting food supplies from external sources. Our objective in agriculture is to move to self-sufficiency through self-reliance as soon as possible. The achievement of this objective requires the active co-operation of every Nigerian. To this end, the Federal Government intends to launch an "Operation Feed the Nation" in the coming year. The campaign will enable our schools, colleges, universities, military units, institutes and individuals to grow all types of food crops and vegetables both for the consumption of the institutions and individuals concerned and for disposal of the surpluses in the market. We will all be involved in the total mobilisation envisaged in the campaign to feed ourselves. There is no reason why Nigeria with so much arable land and manpower should continue to import food.

With respect to the dwindling volume of production of the major cash crops like cocoa, palm produce, cotton and groundnuts which has been a cause for concern, we commissioned a Cash Crops Rehabilitation Study whose recommendations will be implemented over the Plan period. The programme to rehabilitate our cash crops will include an examination of the present marketing board system so as to maximise the contribution of the crops to the economy as well as ensure adequate reward for the farmers affected.

We are aware that in order to achieve our plan targets, we need the co-operation of all well-meaning people. Our primary aim is to modernise the Nigerian economy. Modernise, not in the sense of copying the structure of the so called developed economies but in the sense of bringing to bear upon, and adapting the relevant experiences of other economies.

The modernisation of our economy will involve a substantial amount of transfer of

technology. A large proportion of this transfer will take place through mutual partnership with foreign, private and public enterprises. We welcome such contributions and will continue to provide adequate incentives in that regard.

In order to further encourage the establishment of private industries in Nigeria, a Business Advisory Committee has been set up to facilitate the granting of all the approvals necessary for such businesses. This arrangement will ensure that potential investors deal with only one central government agency rather than several as was hitherto the case.

I would like to point out, however, that much remains to be done in the area of indigenous manpower development in the private sector. I hope our foreign business partners will continue to expand for our people the opportunity to participate effectively at all levels of operations including senior management. The current programme of indigenisation will be continued so that the spirit of the indigenisation Decree and its objectives can be fully realised.

PUBLIC POLICY

In the field of public policy orientation, the Supreme Military Council has decided to establish a National Policy Development Centre or Think Tank to assist us in re-appraising existing policies and evolving new policy dimensions. We have also established a Prices, Incomes and Productivity Board to harmonise the policies on all incomes especially wages and dividends and the level of prices generally.

The Federal Government intends to introduce a Legal Aid scheme under which legal assistance will be given free of charge to the poor and needy.

FOREIGN POLICY

When the present Administration assumed office last year, we made it clear that we would put an end to the indecisive and halting policy that the country had followed in the conduct of foreign affairs. We decided to adopt a dynamic and purposeful line consistent with the nation's interest as demonstrated over Angola and other areas of Africa and the rest of the world. Faithful to this commitment to the total emancipation of the African Continent, the Federal Government will in the new financial year step up material, financial and other assistance to liberation movements in Africa. We will help those African countries whose independence and sovereignty are still threatened by racist and minority regimes.

THE BUDGET

I will now turn to the Budget. The attack on inflation will continue in the new fiscal year. The objective is to contain the adverse factors that are checking the broad growth and development of the economy and to improve the standard of living of all Nigerians. Thus, the Budget seeks to check inflationary pressures by reducing liquidity while at the same time increasing supply of goods and services. Measure will be introduced to moderate the rate of public and private spending as well as the expansion in bank credit.

Details of the various measures which are being introduced in the Budget will be provided by the Federal Commissioner for Finance in his Budget Press Statement. I will therefore mention a few significant changes only.

FISCAL MEASURES

Increases in the costs of food, housing and transportation have been identified as

the main factors responsible for the high rate of inflation being experienced in the economy. Significant measures have, therefore, been adopted in the 1976/77 Budget, aimed at increasing food production, encouraging the construction of more houses and reducing transportation costs.

The Federal and State Governments will give special assistance to individuals or organisations who are engaged in developing housing estates, provided that Government or Local Authority will be involved in the fixing of rents payable on the houses so built. The abolition of import duty on cement will be maintained while duties on other materials imported for building are being considerably reduced.

As a further assistance to local industries, duties on a wide range of raw materials imported for manufacture are being considerably reduced. The local car assemblies will continue to enjoy the protection of the range of cars assembled locally. But more medium-sized cars will be allowed to come in to avoid shortage of cars in the new financial year.

Although satisfactory progress has been achieved in decongesting the ports, it is still necessary to supplement our efforts in this regard with new fiscal measures especially in view of the expected increase in imports. Thus, the system of priority berthing based on the nature of commodity recently introduced will continue and public sector imports will be co-ordinated to minimise the number of ships bringing in government imports and facilitate berthing arrangements for such vessels.

The present policy of unrestricted imports has contributed to the congestion at the ports and has aggravated the current inflationary pressure in the economy. The policy has, therefore, been reviewed. As a temporary measure, the importation of a number of goods has been banned for six months after which the position will be reviewed. It is estimated that the quantities of most of the banned items in the ships waiting at the ports are sufficient to satisfy the demand of the country for the items for the period of the ban. It is our hope that local industries and distributors will not take advantage of the ban to inflate their prices. Where the prices of any banned items are found to be rising steeply, a review of the temporary ban will be undertaken. We expect local industries benefitting from the protective restrictions to rise to the challenge and produce more and better quality goods. The Federal Government will be taking appropriate steps to ensure that the Nigerian consumer gets value for his money following concessions in this Budget.

Under Decree No. 47 of 1972, companies could claim for the amount of losses which they have sustained in any trade or business during any preceding year of assessment in respect of income tax. There is no limit to the number of years this could be done. Henceforth, the period for the carry forward of unabsorbed losses will be limited to four years.

In order to prevent loss of revenue to the Federal Government when properties or other assets change hands, the Capital Gains Tax Decree will be amended to make it obligatory for the Commissioner of Stamp Duties to demand tax clearance certificates before the documents are accepted for stamping and registration.

The level of profit tax payable by companies was reduced from 45 percent to 40 percent in the 1975/76 Budget in order to minimise the impact of the increase in salaries and wages arising from the recommendations of the Public Service review Commission. The necessity for the temporary reduction is no longer there. Henceforth, profit in excess of ₦6,000 will be taxed at the former rate of 45 percent.

MONEY AND BANKING

In view of the very high level of liquidity in the economy, and the fact that the high rate of commercial bank credit is contributing to the growing adverse pressures on the economy, the need has arisen to put the expansion in the bank credit under greater surveillance. Thus, ceiling will be imposed on total and sectoral increases in commercial bank credit to the private sector except loans to agriculture and housing or real estate.

One of the major constraints that has been identified as having retarded the flow of credit to agriculture is the inability of the Nigerian farmer to provide collateral securities acceptable to the banks. As a solution to this problem, a credit guarantee scheme which will assist in minimising agricultural credit risks will be set up during the fiscal year.

In order to limit the potential for the high levels of liquidity being accumulated by the banks becoming a further threat to monetary stability, the Central Bank will issue Stabilisation Securities to banks as provided for in the Banking Decree.

In order to stimulate investment in the "productive" sectors of the economy and discourage the flow of credit to the "less productive" ones, the Federal Government has approved a new interest rate structure ranging from 6 to 10 per cent. Credit to the "productive" sectors will attract interest at not more than 8 per cent while loans for "less productive" purposes may attract interest rates up to a minimum of 10 percent.

Within the past two years, five private merchant banks have been granted banking license. They were to assist in channelling the liquidity in the economy into medium-and-long-term investments and also to perform other specialised services in the areas of equipment leasing, corporate financing, project preparations and other areas of specialisation which merchant banks are renowned. So far, their performance has not justified the expectations. They are reported to be operating as commercial banks. In order to induce the merchant banks to play their proper role, the Central Bank will now prescribe the composition of their loan portfolios in terms of maturity and types of projects.

Government has given some thought to the general performance of the financial system and its role in the development process over the years. I am satisfied that a review of the system's role in the economy is long over-due. We have therefore established a "Financial System Review Committee" to study the system, evaluate its role and performance, and make recommendations which will guide Government in formulating policies that would govern the system's operations in the future.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE MEASURES

With the return to normal international commercial practice since the beginning of the 1975/76 fiscal year, payment for imports against shipping documents has been the rule. Pre-payments on the basis of letters of credit have also been allowed while commercial banks were permitted to keep working balances overseas for prompt payments. These policies will continue in the new year with slight modifications. Payments for imports against shipping documents and pre-payments on the basis of letters of credit will no longer be allowed unless certificates of clearance have been obtained from the Nigerian Ports Authority or the Airport Authority as the case may be. Pre-payment on the basis of letters of credit will not also be allowed unless full payment has been made in local currency.

The active exchange rate policy for the Naira will be continued as the Naira has continued to grow stronger *vis-a-vis* the currencies of our major trading partners. The

diversification of our external reserve holdings will also continue. Recent experience has shown that a dynamic diversification policy is necessary to protect the real value of our foreign currency reserve holdings.

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR 1976/77

With respect to the recurrent and capital budget of the Federal Government for the 1976/77 fiscal year, the gross revenue of the Federal Government is estimated at ₦5.7 billion. Out of this amount it is expected that ₦1.4 billion will go to the States in the form of statutory appropriations while another ₦61.5 million will go to them as non-statutory allocation in 1976/77 which is ₦300 million higher than its level in the fiscal year now ending.

After the provisions for statutory and non-statutory allocations to States, it is expected that the Federal Government will have a retained revenue of ₦4.3 billion. This shows an increase of ₦459 million or 11 percent over the approved retained revenue estimate for 1975/76 fiscal year.

With respect to expenditures, we recognise that public spending has been contributing to the excessive increases in money supply. Since it is Government's intention to reduce the rate of inflation drastically during the 1976/77 fiscal year, the Federal Government has decided to limit the overall size of Federal expenditure during the 1976/77 fiscal year to about ₦5.5 billion on both current and capital account. We intend, as in the past, to meet this substantial commitment from our current earnings and past savings.

NOT YET A RICH NATION

There has been some publicity of recent about so-called wealth of Nigeria because of her oil resources. This has led to widespread and unfortunate attitude of mind that Nigeria is a rich nation and that finance is no problem in the execution of her Development Plan. I wish to stress that although this country has great potential, she is not yet a rich nation. With a population of about 72 million, and oil production of under 2 million barrels per day, our resources from oil are not enough to satisfy the yearnings, aspirations, and the genuine needs of our people for development and social services.

Our aim is to invest as much of our oil wealth in the restructuring of the economy so as to become self-sufficient and self-reliant in our national endeavours.

We note the concern of the population over the state of our security. The Supreme Military Council has taken cognisance of this widespread anxiety over security and necessary steps are being taken to ensure adequate security for the nation.

Fellow countrymen and women, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody for the co-operation you have extended to this Administration and, in particular, all those who have contributed in one form or the other to the evolution of policies during the past few months. Realising the state of relative under-development of the economy, this Administration is very anxious to see it develop quickly. We are a nation in a hurry and I am happy that this mood seems to be widely shared. We have no doubt that properly harnessed, our concerted efforts can, in the near future, lead to a virile, dynamic and prosperous Nigeria.

Back to Action

In another broadcast to the nation on May 15, 1976, Lt. General Obasanjo announced the execution of those involved in the abortive coup that claimed the life of General Muhammed. In strong terms, Lt. General Obasanjo reiterated his government's determination not to tolerate indiscipline or condone corruption. He appealed to the people to develop a sense of responsibility and vigilance so that Nigeria could become a great country.

The Supreme Military Council has been meeting to consider, among other things, the conclusions of the Military Tribunal appointed by the Federal Military Government to try those involved in the abortive coup of 13th February. The Council has confirmed the sentences passed by the Tribunal. Those condemned to death by firing squad have been executed today.

DIMKA, GOMWALK EXECUTED

These include Lt. Col. B.S. Dimka and Mr. J.D. Gomwalk, two of the principal actors of the abortive coup. With these executions and the other sentences confirmed we have now substantially disposed of the major issues arising from the coup attempt.

Let me assure the nation that throughout the investigations, scrupulous efforts were made to ensure that all those accused were fully heard and given a fair trial. Indeed, it was because of our desire to be meticulous in the pursuit of justice that it took this long to put the issues resulting from the abortive coup behind us.

GOWON DISMISSED

Regarding Yakubu Gowon, you are aware of the efforts being made to get him back to Nigeria to answer the serious allegations of his complicity in the abortive coup. He has continued to resolutely refuse to come despite guarantee for his safety and fair trial which the Federal Military Government has given him. In spite of this refusal, we have resisted the expediency of trying him in absentia because of our belief that he should be given a chance to be fully heard and fairly tried.

We have similarly assured the British Government of Yakubu Gowon's safety and justice. These assurances were personally conveyed by the Commissioner for External Affairs. Believing in the strength of the relationship that existed between our two countries and people, we had requested the British Government to facilitate Yakubu Gowon's return to Nigeria. The British Prime Minister, through a message brought by his Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, has now informed us of the decision of his Government not to grant this request. We have made it clear to the British Government that any country which harbours Yakubu Gowon, or for that matter, Dauda Usman or Clement Yildar, is committing an unfriendly act towards the Government and people of Nigeria.

In the meantime, the Supreme Military Council has decided to dismiss Yakubu Gowon from the Nigerian Army. He will from now on be treated as a wanted person to face the allegations against him any time he sets foot on Nigerian soil. Dauda Usman and Clement Yildar have also been dismissed from the Army.

February 13, 1976, was a tragic day for all of us. No one should be in doubt about the unmitigated disaster and unparalleled bloodshed which would have ensued had the coup of February succeeded. We mourned the death of our late dear Head of State, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, and those who were murdered with him, in as befitting a way as our energies and sorrows allowed. With the tragedy behind us, we should now pursue with determination and vigour, our declared policies and programme of action. We have all learnt valuable lessons from the sad experience which we must never forget.

NO INDISCIPLINE; NO CORRUPTION

Our purpose is to instill a new sense of public morality among all classes of Nigerians. Let me, therefore, here and now serve notice that we shall not tolerate indiscipline. We shall not condone corruption. We shall not allow inefficiency or improper conduct on the part of any public officer. This Administration will not be diverted from its chosen course. Ours is a responsive Administration. Those who have genuine grievances or complaints should use the established channels to secure redress. But any one who takes the law into his hands, will henceforth have himself to blame. The Federal Military Government will continue to ensure the smooth running of all our essential services. This is a time for sacrifice not intransigence. We shall not allow selfish elements or those who appear bent on breaching the solidarity between the Government and the people of this our great country to unleash industrial, student, economic and other forms of unrest.

Our experience so far has shown the need to heighten our sense of civic responsibility and vigilance. This is our nation; it belongs to all of us. If we allow it to be ruined each one of us will be ruined.

This Administration believes in the capacity of Nigerians to make ours a greater country where social and economic justice, political freedom and rule of law prevail. We are dedicated to the pursuit of this goal. I am therefore calling on every one of you to rise to the challenge.

We shall be severe in our dealing with foreign and Nigerian profiteers who try to stand in the way of our policy to free our economy and improve the lot of the ordinary and deprived citizenry of this country.

I expect every public officer, indeed, every Nigerian to measure up to a high degree of efficiency, integrity and moral rectitude. The purge of the public service of undesirable elements was undertaken to revitalise the service. This objective has not been fully achieved. Those that are diligent and honest in their work need not fear. Indeed they would be rewarded. But, those who continue to be indolent, inefficient or corrupt will be removed. These standards are set not only for public servants but for all Nigerians.

Let's Feed Ourselves

Nigeria, being an agricultural country, need not suffer from want of food. If everyone would grow food items in his compound, inflation would be partly arrested. This was the contention of General Olusegun Obasanjo at the formal launching of the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), on May 21, 1976.

You will recall that in the last Budget Speech I informed you that "Operation Feed the Nation" will be launched during the year. The aim, as I indicated then, is to make this nation self-sufficient in basic food needs during this cropping season. It is also hoped that the operation will impart to the whole country a new sense of purpose and bring home to everyone the need for self-reliance.

Since I made this announcement, a wide range of activities relating to this campaign has taken place throughout the country. At both the Federal and State levels, Councils, and Committees for "Operation Feed the Nation" have been established and publicity campaigns have been mounted to mobilise the entire population. In effect, the campaign has already begun and this address is intended to launch the scheme formally.

The Federal Military Government is convinced that this Operation is not only necessary but long overdue. In the last few years, the country has witnessed an alarming decline in agricultural production. Government has had to import increasing quantities of a variety of food items from abroad. Prices of foodstuffs have galloped. To make matters worse, young men and women have been drifting from rural areas into the cities in unprecedented numbers, leaving behind them old men and women who cannot be expected to meet the growing needs of the country for food.

SURPLUS FOR EXPORT

No responsible Government can stand-by and watch this kind of situation grow from bad to worse. A nation which cannot feed itself is at the mercy of others, and has a lot to lose. This country has abundant manpower, land and water resources which properly harnessed can feed the nation and generate surplus for exports. I would like to ask you all, therefore, to answer this campaign call. I urge institutions like the schools, colleges, universities, and the armed forces to endeavour to grow part if not all of their own foods. I appeal to traditional authorities, communities, and individuals who have farmlands that are not being cultivated by them to release such lands temporarily to institutions and organisations to grow food crops. Individuals who have access to farmlands should start farming; if all you have is a little backyard plot, grow vegetables or keep poultry. If you are a professional farmer, I would ask you to put that

extra hectare into cultivation. Use good quality seeds and more fertilizers to increase the quality and quantity of your production. Feed yourselves. Feed the Nation. "Operation Feed the Nation" is the most ambitious and critical programme of direct benefit to the farmer this nation has ever embarked upon. It will, for the first time guarantee that farmers who form the overwhelming proportion of our people, share directly in our prosperity.

INPUTS AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

We, of course, recognise that to make the greatest impact, the Operation has to be planned carefully. Agricultural inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides as well as proper marketing and storage arrangements have to be made. In this connection, I would like to inform you all of the steps taken so far by the Federal Military Government to provide these essential inputs and supporting services.

In addition to what State Governments have already ordered for this cropping season, the Federal Government will make available to all the State Governments 50,000 tons of fertilizers for distribution to farmers.

From now on, farmers will pay a uniform price for each type of fertilizer they buy irrespective of where they live. These prices are heavily subsidised by the Federal Military Government. Similarly, arrangements have been made to multiply large quantities of improved seeds so that in the next few years all farmers in this country can plant the most high-yielding seeds available from our research institutes. Fishing nets and simple implements such as hoes and cutlasses, produced from local foundaries will also be available, whilst large quantities of pesticides are kept in readiness to prevent pests from frustrating our efforts.

To protect the farmer from seasonal fluctuations in the price of his produce and ensure that he derives a reasonable share of the nation's wealth, the Federal Military Government will announce in due course a guaranteed minimum prize for maize, guinea corn, beans, rice, gari and yams. In determining this price, Government will take due cognisance of the farmer's cost of production and the interest of the consumer.

DIGNITY OF LABOUR

I wish to make it clear however, that "Operation Feed the Nation" is not a substitute for the major agricultural development effort already set out in the Third National Development Plan, and which is being vigorously prosecuted. "Operation Feed the Nation" is designed to inject a sense of urgency into our normal programmes and bring home to all of us the dignity of labour through mass participation. This Operation is in essence an emergency operation although it is meant to serve as a spring board for more permanent and sustained agricultural development.

This nation has valuable mineral resources. But these are wasting assets. Therefore, while they last, we must ensure that we harness the proceeds we derive from them to create a lasting source of wealth from the land. A few may attempt to sabotage our efforts by unfounded criticism and scepticism. I must however, say that I am encouraged by the reports of enthusiastic and willing co-operation which the "Operation Feed the Nation" task forces have so far received. This augurs well for the success of the scheme.

The Operation is not a government programme to be implemented by government departments alone. This is a programme whose success depends entirely on the involvement and participation of every able-bodied Nigerian. It is in our interest to do

so. What I have done today in my own backyard should therefore serve as a symbol of what all Nigerians from all walks of life should be doing at this time of the year; grow more food and make "Operation Feed the Nation" a successful operation.



Fig. 1 H.E. Lt. General Obasanjo working on his maize farm at Dodan Barracks, Lagos.



Fig. 2 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo reading the 1976/77 Budget Speech. (p. 33)



Fig. 3 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo planting a coconut tree after declaring the Ahiazu-Mbaise Local Government Secretariat open, in Imo State.

Fifteen

Our Forward March Continues

After the deliberations of the Supreme Military Council and the National Council of States on Anti-Inflation programmes, Lt. General Obasanjo, in an address to the nation, briefed the people on steps drawn up for this exercise. These include a reform of the Marketing Board System, a new approach to Agriculture, Housing programme, and a review of the indigenisation scheme. Lt. General Obasanjo also outlined the objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy, the centre piece of which is 'Africa'—a commitment to the total liberation of all oppressed black people in Africa and all over the world.

The Supreme Military Council and the National Council of States deliberated last week on some of the basic economic and social problems facing us. The Anti-inflation decisions we have taken are of fundamental importance to the economic and social well-being as well as the future political stability of this great country. I have therefore decided to address you on the main decisions taken.

These involved a new approach to Agriculture and the Marketing Boards System, Phase II of the Indigenisation Programme, the problem of High Rents, the setting up of a Land Reform Commission, an effective Incomes Policy to contain the dangers of inflation and lastly, the new orientation in our Foreign Policy. The official document setting out in detail Government views on the Reports of the Panels on Rent and Indigenisation will soon be published for general information.

MARKETING BOARD REFORM

An inter-Ministerial Committee was set up to study the operations of the Marketing Boards and Nigerian Produce Marketing Company and submit recommendations on ways and means of improving the marketing of our agricultural commodities. The reorganisation of the Marketing Boards has been a pressing necessity for some time now and the creation of more states has merely heightened the search for a solution. Firstly, in spite of the Federal Government's attempt to produce price stabilisation, the income accruing to farmers has steadily been eroded by the ever increasing expenses and administrative overheads of the Marketing Board. Secondly, Government believed it was undesirable to create a Marketing Board for each of the nineteen states because of the attendant expensive overheads, wastage, and duplication of efforts.

The Supreme Military Council has therefore, decided that a new Commodity Marketing System should be created which will be made up of a Price Fixing Authority and seven Commodity Boards which will operate on a nation-wide basis, and cut across state boundaries. They will thus assist in fostering national unity. The main objective of the new Commodity Boards is to encourage the production and organise the marketing of our major agricultural commodities for local consumption and local processing. Gone are the days when the main aim of Marketing Boards was to market raw materials for the world market. Today, the emphasis is on maximum benefit to the

farmers and on satisfying home demand including the need to process our raw materials before export.

The seven commodity Boards are:

- (1) **Cocoa Board**—which will also be responsible for coffee and tea;
- (2) **Groundnut Board**—which will also look after soyabeans, beanseed, shea-nut and ginger;
- (3) **Cotton Board**—which will in addition to cotton deal with kenaf and similar fibres;
- (4) **Palm Produce Board**—which will deal with palm kernel, palm oil and copra;
- (5) **Rubber Board**—which will handle rubber;
- (6) **Grains Board**—which will handle all food grains;
- (7) **Root Crops Board**—which will deal with tubers and root crops.

The new Marketing Board System will thus cover our key food crops as well as the traditional export crops.

The Headquarters of each commodity board will be located as near as possible to the area of greatest production of the major commodity.

Each of these boards will provide guaranteed minimum price at which farmers will sell to the boards. Farmers and plantation owners will, however, be free to sell to local processors or consumers direct without going through the relevant board.

The proposed reforms will have far-reaching implications and will therefore be implemented in such a manner as not to create undue hardship or disruption in the marketing of the commodities affected. It has therefore been decided that the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company and the existing State Marketing Boards will be phased out by the end of March 1977. The new Commodity Boards are expected to start functioning before then. The staff of the existing boards and the N.P.M.C. will, where found suitable, be re-deployed to the new Commodity Boards.

REPORT OF THE RENT PANEL

The Federal Military Government in January 1976, appointed a panel to look into the housing situation and suggest appropriate remedial measures for solving the rent problem in the country with particular reference to the low and middle income groups.

Government is fully aware that a lasting solution to the problem lies in the provision of increased housing. Government will therefore continue to participate in the provision of adequate housing for all income groups but more particularly, the lower income groups who are the hardest hit in the present situation. The common man must be housed cheaply and adequately. With these considerations in mind, the following measures will therefore be implemented immediately:

*Firstly, in addition to the already announced increase in the Federal Government programme during the Plan period from 60,000 to 200,000 units, all State Governments will be directed to increase their housing programmes.

*Secondly, a Land Reform Commission will be set up to examine the Land Tenure Systems in the country and recommend steps to streamline them and facilitate the acquisition of land for the construction of housing, especially by owner occupiers.

*Thirdly, access to finance for the purpose of housing construction will be made more liberal. Already, it has been agreed that the Mortgage Bank should have

branches all over the country and that States should increase their financial provisions in respect of their various housing authorities.

*Fourthly, the Federal Ministry of Finance will set out guidelines to all banks requiring them to devote a substantial percentage of their resources to medium-term housing finance of up to 10 years duration. Families living in sub-standard accommodation will be able to obtain loans for improvement and the upgrading of such houses.

*Fifthly, large companies will be substantially assisted by the Federal Government to enable them to provide housing for their workers. The State Governments are being directed to make land available for this purpose.

In considering the Report of the Anti-Inflation Task Force, Government accepted that Planning Authorities should aim at approving building plans within a period of 30 days. The Supreme Military Council has now directed that all residential building plans for approved layouts for which no approval has been communicated, or treated otherwise within 30 days, should be deemed to have been approved. However, such plans must have been drawn by qualified and registered architects and engineers and the necessary fees must have been paid.

One important measure identified by the Panel as contributing to the acute shortage of residential accommodation is their unauthorised conversion to other uses like office, hotels, and shops. It is hereby directed that all buildings so converted without appropriate authority should revert to their original purpose within two years. Stringent regulations will be set up to guide future conversion.

On the all important issue of the level and structure of rents, the Report made no definite recommendations, although it provided useful guidelines for the purpose. Applying these guidelines, the Supreme Military Council has decided that the highest rent per room in the best locations of high density areas in Lagos should not be more than ₦12 per month. In addition, whole houses in the low density areas of Lagos should attract rent to be pegged at 25% less than the present range observed by the Panel. These two levels will be used as benchmarks by all State Governments who will immediately proceed to zone their various centres and fix appropriate rents. Rent advances will henceforth be limited to three months for individual tenants and one year for companies and other corporate bodies.

Rent Tribunals in sufficient numbers and properly manned will be created in all localities. State Governments will be empowered to compulsorily acquire the houses of landlords who have twice contravened the Rent Edict in any State. The Federal Military Government will continue to take steps to reduce the prices of building materials.

These and other measures when fully implemented, will go a long way towards reducing the acute rent burden on the low income groups in the urban centres.

THE INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES PANEL

The Federal Military Government in November 1975, appointed an Industrial Enterprises Panel with the broad objectives of assessing the extent to which the aims and objectives of the indigenisation scheme had been achieved. The Panel was able to recommend amendments to the Decree with a view to expanding the scope of enterprises covered as well as increasing the level of indigenous participation. In its Report, the Panel found that out of a total of about 950 affected enterprises only 314 or

33% were confirmed as having fully complied with the provisions of the Decree by the 30th of June, 1975. In the face of this shocking performance, the Supreme Military Council has decided that all defaulting enterprises are to be sealed up and taken over with immediate effect and appropriate arrangement made to dispose of them speedily.

The main devices employed to circumvent the Decree included fronting, application for naturalisation, and exemptions on flimsy grounds. It is disappointing to observe that in almost all instances, these devices could not have succeeded without the active support and connivance of some misguided Nigerians. All cases of suspected fronting which include cases where no purchase consideration is evident or is ridiculously low are to be investigated. Enterprises found against will be confiscated, and those involved punished.

It is obvious therefore that a great deal still remains to be done to ensure that the first phase of our indigenisation effort is successfully concluded. The mopping up operation involved will be completed by 31st March, 1977. And by that time all locally manufactured goods and products will by law be distributed by Nigerians.

The present indigenisation exercise has created greater consciousness amongst Nigerians of the advantages of investments in stocks and shares. This is evidenced by the heavy over-subscription of publicly quoted securities. In embarking on indigenisation, Government has been influenced by the need to place control of Nigerian economy squarely in the hands of Nigerians and to ensure that Nigerians are the main beneficiaries of the resources of their country. The Supreme Military Council has therefore decided on the basis of the recommendations of the Enterprises Panel that a second phase of the indigenisation effort should be embarked upon.

INDIGENISATION: SECOND PHASE

■ Instead of two schedules as in the present Decree, there will be three Schedules of Enterprise. Schedule I will, as in the past be 100% owned by Nigerians. The new Schedule II will involve industries and activities which must have a minimum Nigerian equity participation 60%. Schedule III with 40% Nigerian participation, will be made up of all other enterprises not specifically listed in Schedules I and II. Schedules I and II now include all those enterprises in which Nigerians are sufficiently experienced to have controlling interest.

■ The implementation of Phase II of the indigenisation effort will begin as from the 1st of April, 1977. All affected enterprises are expected to have fully complied by the 31st of December 1978. A new decree designed to prevent the abuses of the past will be promulgated for this purpose.

■ Government has noted with dismay the high concentration of enterprises taken over in the Phase I exercise in a few hands. This is not in keeping with the egalitarian objectives of the present Military Administration. The Supreme Military Council has therefore decided that the implementation of the second phase of the indigenisation programme will ensure a wider and more equitable spread of enterprises ownership.

■ All banks will fall under Schedule II, implying 60% Nigerian ownership by 31st December, 1978. However, because of the critical nature of banking institutions to the success of the indigenisation effort and indeed the health of the Nigerian economy, the Supreme Military Council has directed that all banking

institutions in the country should have 60% indigenous equity participation by the 30th of September, 1976.

■The Nigerian Industrial Development Bank and the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry will be re-organised so that they can effectively participate in the new indigenisation effort. The Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Board will also be thoroughly overhauled. In addition, two new Stock Exchanges will be set up at locations outside Lagos.

In accepting the main recommendations of the Industrial Enterprises Panel, the Supreme Military Council has placed full confidence in the ability of the Nigerian private sector to meet the challenges posed. The Federal Military Government is in no illusion as to the problems which are likely to be confronted but considers that Nigerians will be up to the challenges and the tasks. This Administration will not tolerate, this time, any attempt to impede or frustrate the indigenisation effort by collusion between unpatriotic 'Nigerians' and foreigners.

PRODUCTIVITY, PRICES AND INCOME

The recently established Productivity, Prices, and Incomes Board has submitted its first report. The Board observed that in spite of the Udoji Awards, substantial increases in wages and salaries have been and are being granted in the private sector. This development is contributing to making Government efforts at reducing inflationary pressures futile. The current economic situation however, calls for restraint in the area of wages and salaries, dividends and prices.

The determination of the Federal Military Government is to break the backbone of inflation during the current financial year. The implication of this is that any development that will interfere with the attainment of this objective must be checked. As a result, the Federal Military Government has decided that no increases in pay (that is, wages, salaries, bonuses, and fringe benefits) should be granted in any establishment where the Udoji awards had been granted. In those establishments where increases have already been granted after the Udoji award, such increases shall be taken into account in any future increases. This temporary wage restraint is to be observed up to 31st March, 1977. The Commissioner for Labour will provide the necessary detailed guidelines to both employers and labour.

For the rest of this financial year, the distribution of dividends in excess of 30% before tax will be prohibited. Any profit in excess of this limit should be re-invested in the expansion of existing businesses or the financing of workers welfare facilities, or for reducing prices of the relevant company's products in its subsequent operations or for participation in the current Operation Feed the Nation. Discussions will immediately be entered into with the Nigerian Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture and manufacturers aimed at reducing the unit prices of their products by at least 10% for the rest of this financial year.

Let me sound a note of warning. Government is aware that because of the temporary restraint on the distribution of dividends and related measures some commercial and industrial enterprises will try to "load invoices" and embark on other measures to frustrate public policy. Such attempts will be stoutly resisted and those found guilty, severely penalised. Discipline, restraint and sacrifice are called for from all citizens and all sectors if we are to successfully wage war against inflation. The constraint caused by inadequate physical facilities are being removed.

FOREIGN POLICY

For the first time in our history since independence, a comprehensive review of Nigerian Foreign Policy has been undertaken. This was done by a high level Review Panel set up in September 1975. Our foreign policy objectives have been identified as follows:

- Firstly, the defense of our sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity;
- Secondly, the creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time fostering national self-reliance, and rapid economic development;
- Thirdly, the promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world;
- Fourthly, the promotion and defence of justice and respect for human dignity, especially the dignity of the Blackman; and
- Fifthly, the defence and promotion of world peace.

AFRICA: CENTRE-PIECE OF FOREIGN POLICY

These objectives are to be pursued with the realisation that the centre-piece of our foreign policy is Africa. We are committed to the total liberation of all oppressed black people in Africa and indeed any where else in the world. In this connection, we condemn unreservedly once again, the recent brutal and wanton massacre of unarmed women and school children by the racist regime of South Africa. The massacre has clearly shown the hypocrisy of the South African regime, and has also proved to the advocates of *detente and dialogue* the futility of such an action. Whether or not the racists and collaborators like it, Southern Africa must be free. Nigeria will contribute her full quota to the liberation struggle already won in Angola and Mozambique. A progressive society and dynamic foreign policy can only be built on the foundation of unity and stability. I therefore call on all Nigerians to refrain from acts and words which can undermine that foundation. We must all be vigilant and watch out for those who will like to destroy us or see us destroy ourselves.

Fellow countrymen and women, it is proper to re-affirm in conclusion, that in the economic measures taken by the Federal Military Government, the basic rationale has been to increase the number of Nigerians able to participate in the growing prosperity of the country. Our policy is not aimed at driving out genuine foreign investors; contrary, we welcome them as partners in progress. However, there is no place in Nigeria for any unscrupulous foreigner or Nigerian collaborators who regard this country as a field for economic piracy. We welcome all who will co-operate with us in the rapid transfer of technology irrespective of their political and other affiliations. Nothing in the indigenisation measure affects Africans resident in Nigeria, and in whose countries Nigerians enjoy reciprocal courtesies.

Finally, to my fellow Nigerians, I reiterate that this is a challenge for you to demonstrate your belief and sense of responsibility in the economic, social, and political progress of this country. However grand Government plans are, they will have little chance of success if they do not receive the active support and participation of all Nigerians. Failure in these plans and endeavours will not only spell disaster for us and our children, but for the whole of Africa. We will not fail.

Sixteen

Local Government

On July 7, 1976, traditional rulers met for the second time. The venue was Lagos. The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, in his opening address to them emphasised the necessity for and the benefits of local government reforms. The intention of the reform was NOT, however, to impose uniformity across the country as local government even by definition must be local.

I wish to say first of all, what great pleasure it gives me to welcome Your Highnesses to Lagos for this important meeting. Soon after its inception last year this administration announced its political programme for the return to democratic civilian rule by October 1979. The most important element in the programme is the reform of our system of Local Government. Local Government is considered important to the day to day well-being of our people that this administration has considered necessary, as a deliberate policy, to give it an effective role in our political and development programme. Local Government is fundamental to building a stable Government not just at the state level but also at the federal level. It was recognised early in the deliberations on the subject that to evolve an effective Local Government system throughout the country, the exercise has to be nationally co-ordinated so that Nigeria's Local Government system achieves standardisations in terms of objectives and financing.

MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS

The Federal Military Government accordingly set in motion formal and informal meetings and consultations between State Governments, the traditional rulers, administrators in the field, and all other shades of knowledgeable opinion intimately concerned with Government at Local level. Following these meetings and consultations, the basic document, "Suggested Framework for a National System of Local Government", was drafted. This document has since been considered by Commissioners responsible for Local Government and the general guidelines approved by the National Council of States. I have had several opportunities of consulting some of you both formally and informally. I have also had the benefit of the views of many of you through the emissaries sent to sound your opinions. In the process of doing so I have received valuable suggestions and insight into the problems of Local Government. I must say that I am convinced that the final guide-lines emerging will form a sound basis for reforming and streamlining our systems of Local Government.

REFORMS

The clear intention of the Federal Military Government is that these reforms should fundamentally and directly affect the lives of all citizens of this country, for the better, particularly our rural communities that have least benefitted from the country's social and economic development. This is why we sought for and valued your counsel and views, since you are the most directly connected, on a day to day basis, with the welfare and general affairs of our citizenry at the grass roots. We are now placing the results of these consultations before you for deliberations so that through your collective wisdom, the Federal Military Government might derive benefit and counsel. I have, indeed, been very encouraged that many of you recognised the importance of the proposed reforms and took the initiative to meet together and make preliminary suggestions which in the main enriched some of our original ideas. I have no doubt that you have been motivated, just as we in the Federal Military Government have been, by that common concern for how best we can enhance the lot of our people. This process of continuous consultation and constructive dialogue can only result in an improved frame-work for an effective system of Local Government.

DECENTRALISATION

In embarking on these reforms, we are essentially motivated by the necessity to stabilise and rationalise Government at the local level. This must, of necessity, entail the decentralisation of some significant functions of State Governments to Local levels in order to harness local resources for rapid development. The rationale of decentralising the functions of Government to twelve States and later nineteen states entails further decentralisation down to the local level to ensure grass-roots participation in our development process.

A SENSE OF NATIONAL DIRECTION

As Your Highnesses are aware, the various State Governments had carried out a number of well-meaning, but unco-ordinated Local Government reforms. Our present aim is to harmonise these reform efforts at the national level so that the State's initiatives are given a sense of national direction. In doing so, it is not the intention of the Federal Military Government to destroy the organic unity of the areas of traditional Local Authority. Indeed, it is desirable to maintain the common identity and purpose of the people at the local level as far as possible. However, whatever system or structure of Local Government emerges from the wide deliberations and consultations on the subject, the result must produce units that meet four basic criteria. The primary Local Government unit must have definite and precise functions. These functions must be such that will enhance the development of the unit. Secondly, the primary unit must have assured finance to enable it to plan its budget and carry out these functions. Thirdly, it must be adequately staffed with people of the right calibre. And finally, the conditions of service must be such as to attract the appropriate calibre of staff. In order to achieve its primary developmental function, the Local Government unit must fully utilise and motivate the people at the local level. Local and popular participation is an indispensable element in our understanding of the reforms.

FUNDS—FORMULA FOR APPROPRIATION

On the importance of funds for Local Governments, the Federal Military Government has already decided, as an interim measure, that for this Financial Year, ₦100 million will be appropriated for Local Governments. This amount will be

disbursed to the States on the formula of 25 per cent on the basis of equality and 75 per cent according to population. For subsequent years, a new formula for Local Government appropriation will be worked out.

AIM OF FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S GUIDELINES

At this point, I wish to categorically state what is NOT the intention of the Federal Military Government in embarking on this exercise. It is certainly not intended to impose uniformity across the country in our Local Government set-up since by definition, Local Government must be local. In other words, we aim to standardise the functions and financial resources of Local Governments and therefore their effectiveness for development at local levels. Secondly, the Federal Military Government's guidelines are not meant to be rigid and inflexible rules which must be implemented even where not appropriate. This is why in the proposals for new structure and patterns for Local Government as wide a variety as would adequately cater for the diverse needs of our various communities have been prescribed. It is up to State Governments, in consultation with the present Local Government Authorities, to adopt whichever structure or pattern is most suitable to their circumstances.

COLLECTIVE WISDOM

We are convinced that a reform of our Local Government system is both necessary and beneficial. The extent to which they will succeed will largely depend on how these reforms are clearly explained and properly interpreted to the people for whose benefit they are intended. As I had said at the beginning, these reforms reflect the collective wisdom of the Federal Military Government, State Governments, our traditional rulers, and Local Government Administrators.

ROLES

Your Highnesses, your roles as fathers, elders and advisers of your people in any local government form and system cannot and will not be surplanted. These roles will demand more of your time, and tax your wisdom, patience, and energies to the fullest in a new development-oriented Local Government system.

May God's blessing attend your deliberations.

Nigerian Youth Organisations

Nigerian Youth Organisations were called upon by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo to examine and identify what roles they could play in the present crusade to build a new nation. This call was contained in a goodwill message which he sent to the Fourth Session of the Nigerian Baptist Convention Youth Conference held in Benin from the 19th to the 21st of August, 1976.

It is my particular pleasure to send sincere greetings and best wishes to all of you gathered in Benin, Bendel State, on the occasion of the Fourth Session of the Nigerian Baptist Convention Youth Conference.

EXERCISE OF REDEDICATION

I would urge that, as you deliberate on the various issues affecting your organisation, that you should also examine and identify what role youths and youth organisations can and should play in the present crusade for building a new nation. Our country requires dedicated services of all citizens but more so those of the youths in whose hands the future lies. I am therefore inviting, indeed challenging, you and your colleagues all over the country to participate meaningfully in the present exercise of rededication. The task before you is more than ever demanding and the nation looks up to you for that freshness of spirit and outlook in the approach to the solution of our problems. You must also generate in your members the love of the nation, the spirit of fellowship and respect for one another. Be honest and steadfast in all your doings and adopt an exemplary attitude to work. You must resolve to lead a truly patriotic and brotherly life that will enhance our effort to build a truly unified and great country.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

It is my prayer and sincere wish that you will derive spiritual guidance from your deliberations and join hands in our present task of building an enviable nation for ourselves and posterity.

I wish you all God's blessing.

Eighteen

Religious Organisations

The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, sent a good-will message to the seventeenth Assembly of the Christian Council of Nigeria held in Jos, Plateau State from 21st to 25th August, 1976. In this message he called on religious organisations in the country to join hands in the present effort to make Nigeria a better place for ourselves and posterity.

I have great pleasure in sending my sincere greetings and best wishes to all of you gathered in Jos, Plateau State, on the occasion of the Seventeenth Assembly of the Christian Council of Nigeria.

TRULY NIGERIAN ORGANISATION

I have noted with particular interest the various educational, religious, and social activities in which you have interest. It is gratifying to learn that the Christian Council of Nigeria, founded in 1929 by a few missionaries, has now transformed itself into a truly Nigerian Organisation with its management in the hands of fellow Nigerians. The new structure should be better placed to examine and identify what role the Council should play in our present exercise of building a truly great and unified nation.

DEDICATED AND EXEMPLARY LIFE

I am now convinced, therefore, that the task before you is great and challenging. It requires the full co-operation and dedicated service of all of you. I urge you, then as religious leaders, to use your esteemed positions to generate in your members the love of our nation, self-discipline, the spirit of sacrifice, and respect for one another. Try to infuse in them sound moral principles to enable them to lead a truly dedicated and exemplary life.

CRUSADE

I take this opportunity to call on all religious Organisations in the country to join hands in our present effort to make this nation a better place for ourselves and posterity. It is also vital that every Nigerian irrespective of his religious beliefs and sympathies, should identify himself in a more meaningful manner with this crusade to build a great, prosperous, and truly united nation where brotherly love and patriotism abound.

I wish you successful deliberations and God's blessings.

Welcoming President Tolbert of Liberia

A call was made for increasing vigilance by all peace loving peoples everywhere in order to halt all acts of unprovoked naked aggression being perpetrated in Southern Africa. On September 2, 1976, speaking at a dinner party held in honour of the visiting Liberian Head of State, President William Tolbert, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo expressed Nigeria's determination to continue to render all possible assistance to her oppressed brothers and sisters in Southern Africa.

On behalf of the Federal Military Government, the entire people of Nigeria, and on my own personal behalf, I welcome you, Mr. President, to Nigeria with the greatest pleasure. We feel greatly honoured that, in spite of the tremendous pressures on your time, you have been able to visit us today, and we see this as a further testimony of the deep and abiding fraternal and cordial relations which have always existed between our two sister Republics. The visit is also significant, Your Excellency, as it affords you a first-hand opportunity to witness how much importance our people attach to the fraternal relations between Nigeria and your great country, and to see the dimensions and the complexity of the problems of development with which we, like all other developing nations, are obliged to contend. And for our part, Mr. President, I can assure you that we are extremely pleased with the opportunity which your visit has offered us to exchange views on matters of common interest to our two countries, which, we believe, is the most positive approach to a better understanding and appreciation of the problems that confront us, so that, together, we may be better equipped to devise appropriate methods and means to arrive at an acceptable solution, for the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples. I sincerely look forward, Mr. President, to a more frequent exchange of visits of this nature, as well as intensified contacts at other levels, to consolidate the strong ties that have traditionally bound our two countries and peoples.

HISTORIC ROLE

I should like to recall, with your permission, that the pioneer role of Liberia in its 129 years as an independent and sovereign African State, places her in a unique position that symbolizes the right of the black man everywhere to freedom, independence and dignity. We remain confident therefore that under Your Excellency's dynamism, wisdom, courage, and foresight as the standard bearer of the Republic of Liberia, your great country will continue to play this historic role which Providence has carved out for her in Africa, and in the world at large.

RAPID SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We have observed, with increasing admiration, the attainment of rapid social and

economic development of your great Republic, for the general upliftment and well-being of your people, and we pray that God may grant Your Excellency good health and wisdom to continue the good work you've begun.

SIMILAR ENDEAVOUR

As Your Excellency will, no doubt, have observed, we in Nigeria are actively engaged in a similar endeavour to construct a sound socio-economic infrastructure upon which a united, strong and virile nation can be built, and it is also our aim and determination to spread the benefits of economic progress and technological advancement to all Nigerians, regardless of where they live. And in order to achieve these objectives, we have found it necessary, indeed imperative, to ensure that Nigerians are given the full and unfettered control of the means to attain economic self-reliance, and to obtain equitable remuneration for their efforts.

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

But we firmly believe that the separate endeavours of our individual countries will, if pursued in isolation, not realise their optimum potential, unless we co-ordinate our efforts, pool our resources, and work in concert with other sister African states of our West African sub-region. Our historic struggles for political independence have succeeded on account of such co-operation, and we cannot, therefore, afford to fail in the equally laudable struggle for our economic emancipation through self-reliance within the sub-region. It is our dogged determination in the pursuance of this objective that explains our deep commitment to sub-regional economic groupings in Africa as a necessary prelude to a wider economic co-operation embracing the entire Continent. For this reason, Your Excellency, the Nigerian Government has been highly gratified by the degree of enthusiasm displayed by the sister Republic of Liberia for the success of ECOWAS, and looks forward to the full implementation of the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States, especially now that the various protocols are nearing completion.

BATTLE FOR LIBERATION

Your Excellency, my earlier reference to Liberia's glorious history as a pioneer in black Africa's struggles for self-determination was deliberate. For at a time when Southern Africa has become a land of oppression and racial bigotry, we need all hands on deck at this crucial stage of the final battle for the liberation of our oppressed brothers in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Azania, commonly known as South Africa.

The battle may be long and bitter, but with time and justice on our side, we have no doubt that, like the rest of Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa itself, will be liberated. We are, of course, fully aware, Mr. President, that the racist settlers in Southern Africa have intensified their acts of brutality and oppression in the recent months, in the hope that they can weaken the morale of nationalist Africans. We have even witnessed, as part of racists' strategy of weakening African morale, the reckless violation of the territories of the peace loving peoples of Zambia, Mozambique, and Botswana, and we have heard of empty threats that any sovereign African States south of the Equator are legitimate targets of the desperate racists in Southern Africa. The situation demands, therefore, more than ever, increasing vigilance on the part of freedom-loving peoples everywhere, if all acts of unprovoked naked aggression now being perpetrated in Southern Africa must be halted.

COMMITMENT

Our commitment to the cause of freedom and human dignity is complete and without equivocation. The so-called civilised world has shown little sympathy at the massacre in Mozambique and Azania of hundreds of unarmed and defenceless Africans. Yet that same world expressed sorrow at the legitimate execution of three mercenaries whose mission had been no more than to kill Africans for a fee. We, in Nigeria, salute the courage of the martyres in Mozambique and Azania; we pay tribute to them for their supreme sacrifice. We will not forget them. Their blood was spilled in the cause of freedom. They will only be avenged when Zimbabwe and Azania are truly free.

SUPPORT TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

The present wave of murders, torture, repression, and arrests there can only strengthen our resolve that all hope of a peaceful settlement in that part of Africa must now be abandoned. It seems painfully clear to us, Mr. President, that the only dialogue which the racists understand is that of force, and we are determined to continue, as hitherto, to render all possible assistance to our oppressed brothers and sisters in that unhappy land. I have no doubt in my mind that our sister States can, in addition to what we are already doing through the O.A.U., work together in that noble objective of giving all possible support to the liberation movements in Southern Africa, and sustain that support until all vestiges of imperialism and colonialism are removed from Africa. We firmly believe that free Africa must unite in this endeavour, and pursue the offensive for the liquidation of colonialism, racism, and oppression with all available means until we bring equality, freedom, justice, and dignity to all Africans still under the yoke of foreign domination.

FRATERNAL BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

Your Excellency, your visit, though a short one, is heartily welcome, and will further strengthen and consolidate the fraternal bonds of friendship between Liberia and Nigeria, now and in the years ahead. Your country is a second home to many Nigerians, and we feel honoured that many Liberians also live so harmoniously and happily with Nigerians here.

TRAGIC LOSS

We profoundly regret the tragic loss that caused the short postponement of your visit, but we do wish you an agreeable stay throughout your short visit.

OUR PLEDGE

Finally, Mr. President, please permit me to renew, on behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria, our pledge of sincere friendship and co-operation with the Government and people of Liberia, in our common objectives of working for a more equitable world order, where peace, equality, and freedom will form the basis of international co-operation and understanding.

TOAST

Your Excellencies, Gentlemen, may I please invite you to drink with me a toast to the health of His Excellency President William Tolbert Jr., to the happiness and continued prosperity of the Liberian people, to continued friendship and understanding between the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Liberia, to the Economic Community of West African States, and to the Organisation of African Unity.



Fig. 4 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and his host, President William Tolbert of Liberia signing the communique during General Obasanjo's State Visit to Liberia.



Fig. 5 Fastening a shirt button can be a puzzling business to a child. Here, Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo co-operates to solve the puzzle at the launching of the Universal Primary Education Scheme (UPE) in 1976.

Twenty

Dawn of a New Era

The Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) was formally launched on September 6, 1976. It was a revolutionary step towards producing a literate and educated society. While addressing people on the occasion of the formal launching, Lt. General Obasanjo urged both the young and old to develop a sense of patriotism and love for the country. He announced the introduction of a National Pledge of Loyalty to be recited by pupils at the beginning and end of every school day as well as at every major assembly or congregation.

The launching of the Universal Free Primary Education Scheme today marks the dawn of a new era in the history of educational development in this country; it also demonstrates the determination of the Federal Military Government to provide equal educational opportunities for all children of school age irrespective of the circumstances of their birth. Every Nigerian child should regard basic education as his natural heritage, a right and not a privilege. The U.P.E. is, therefore, the cornerstone in our determination to produce a literate and educated society which will accelerate the tempo of our socio-political, cultural, and economic development.

The implementation of a gigantic scheme of this nature and its sustenance involve the commitment of a large portion of our limited human and financial resources. The preparation for the launching of the programme has not been without problems. It has become necessary to train one hundred and sixty three thousand additional teachers for the 2.3 million pupils who have been enrolled for the scheme which is being launched today. And, in order to meet this manpower requirement, the Federal Military Government took over the financial responsibilities for 156 Teacher Training Colleges throughout the country and their facilities were expanded so as to double their intake, thereby increasing the student places from fifty thousand to at least one hundred thousand. Plans were also made to build 74 new Colleges with a student population of 1,000 each. When fully completed this will mean an additional seventy four thousand students apart from the over one hundred thousand in the existing Colleges. In spite of these measures, however, there are still shortfalls in the teacher requirements and I am aware that some of the teachers who will be in the classrooms all over the country today are under qualified.

This, however, is a passing phase. Those students who cannot get into the regular Teacher Training Colleges will have the opportunity of upgrading their qualifications through in-service courses and distant learning system being planned by the Nigeria Teachers Institute at Kaduna. The Federal Government intends that the institute will have centres in all the States of Nigeria. Another problem has been the need to make adequate provision for primary school buildings to accommodate the children. In this connection, it is gratifying to note that the Ministries of Education, Local Education Authorities, and School Boards rose to the occasion and have spared no efforts to

meet the accommodation target of the programme. In spite of initial apathy, substantial progress has today been made in solving the problem of classroom accommodation. However, these problems are not such as to deter us from making a start which we believe is in the right direction, and it should make no difference even if some of the children starting schooling today have temporarily to study in improvised and make-shift accommodation. This is normally the lot of pioneers in any venture. The development of primary education has been going on for many years and has in the past two years been accelerated with all the problems involved in such huge expansion. Although the U.P.E. is being launched today it will become compulsory only towards the end of the present Plan period. It is hoped and believed that by then the benefit and importance of education will be so appreciated by all Nigerians that making U.P.E. compulsory will be mere formality. Our main target this first year of the scheme is to provide a classroom and a teacher for as many children of school going age as will report at the opening of schools throughout the country.

I consider it necessary to invite the attention of the pupil, the teachers, and the parents to their responsibilities in this programme. It is the civic obligation of the children to attend classes regularly and punctually, to study diligently, to be obedient and law abiding, to become good and patriotic citizens who will serve their fatherland faithfully and loyally in whatever positions they find themselves in the years that lie ahead. You are particularly lucky and should rejoice at the benefit of a nation-wide free education in your life time. This country needs, more than ever before, men and women of impeccable integrity, dedication, and patriotism and it is the responsibility of the society and the Government to provide them through sound education and moral upbringing. One way of preparing the young for future responsibilities as citizens of this country is by inculcating in them early in their lives positive values of patriotism, loyalty, and selfless service to their fatherland. In this task of character-building the efforts of parents and guardians have to be supplemented by the efforts within the educational system. The school offers great possibilities for arousing the spirit of national consciousness in young people. Many Nigerians of the older generation will recall that during the colonial days as young school children they sang the British National Anthem and saluted the Union Jack at every opportunity and more so at celebrations such as the British Empire Day. With independence it is a matter for great concern that not many of our school children today can recite the words of our National Anthem and it is no exaggeration to say that many of them may not be able to recognise the design and colours of our National Flag. This may be due to the fact that no conscious effort has been made to educate our youths on the sense of patriotism and love for their country or even the symbolism of the National Flag and the National Anthem. Whatever may be the cause, fellow Nigerians, you will agree that the time has come for conscious efforts to develop in our people—young and old alike—attitudes of mind conducive to the realisation of a great, united, and prosperous country which they should be always proud of and whose symbols—the National Anthem and Flag—they should respect and honour. The Supreme Military Council and the National Council of States have, therefore, approved a National Pledge of loyalty whose wording is as follows:

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

With immediate effect, children in primary and secondary schools will make the pledge at the beginning and at the end of every school day and at every major assembly or congregation. Also, the nation (symbolised by the hoisted National Flag) should be saluted every morning by pupils in primary and secondary schools with the National Anthem sung. It has also been decided that the National Pledge should be translated into as many local languages as are the media of instruction in the schools.

The teachers have a crucial role to play in order to ensure the success of the U.P.E. scheme. They should be dedicated, and be prepared to teach wherever they are posted; they should equally be loyal and hardworking. It has been observed from examination results and general performance and ability of school children that there is apparent falling standard in education and invariably the low standard is attributed to poor teaching in the schools and lack of dedication and commitment on the part of teachers. It is, therefore, up to you, teachers, to re-assure the nation, by turning out knowledgeable, well-behaved, and useful pupils from your classrooms, that you are not contributing to the falling standard of education. Through your improved performance as teachers the products of the U.P.E. scheme should be better equipped as good and useful citizens to face the challenges of life.

Parents and guardians also have a part to play in the scheme by encouraging, directing, and assisting their children and wards in order to ensure that they derive maximum benefit from the programme.

The role of the Federal Government in the execution of the U.P.E. programme seems to have been misunderstood and I would like to seize this opportunity to correct this erroneous impression. The provision of primary education and the development of the facilities for this purpose are primarily the responsibilities of the State Governments, Local Government Authorities, and Local Communities. The Federal Military Government has provided both capital and recurrent expenditure to facilitate the implementation of the scheme and this does not in any way detract from the primary responsibility of the States in this regard. The U.P.E. scheme, therefore, involves co-operation effort between the Federal Government, State Government, Local Communities, and the general public. Every Nigerian should look upon the primary school in his locality not as a Government school as such, but as his own institution which he should nurture and care for just in the same way as he looks after his own children. Only by so doing can we ensure the success of the scheme. In order to ensure the smooth execution of the programme, the Federal Military Government will henceforth make U.P.E. Funds available direct to the states, thereby removing one of the causes of delays in the implementation process.

From the information at my disposal I know for a fact that the various State Governments, Local Authorities, traditional rulers, Parent-Teachers Associations, and various communities have worked hard enough for the realisation of this scheme. To all of them, I unreservedly express my appreciation and that of the entire country. The Federal Military Government believes that the U.P.E. is a catalyst which will necessarily lead to improvement at all levels of our educational system because by strengthening the base we are automatically strengthening the whole pyramid. The products of U.P.E. have no reason to be apprehensive of the future because the Federal Military Government is already examining the whole question of the National Policy on Education and adequate provision will be made to absorb the majority of the products of U.P.E. into post-primary institutions. The Government's decision on the new Policy would go a long way to improve the content of education and make it generally more functional and relevant to the needs of the society.

Fellow Nigerians, today, we are embarking on one of the most exciting and significant events this Continent has ever known. I believe that education should be for the purpose of advancing the progress and happiness of the community, and therefore, in making it available to all, it should be pervasive.

The ultimate objective of education should not be the advancement of the welfare of the individual; it should promote the realisation of national unity, stability and progress, as well as international peace and understanding.

Finally, I would like to congratulate and thank all officials at all levels who have worked so very hard and conscientiously to make this scheme a reality. And with this historic launching today, you can all look back in the future with pleasure and satisfaction to a noble contribution the success and the impact of which will make our country truly great. We have launched our country on the trail of educational revolution. May the Almighty God guide and protect us all.

Twenty-One

National Episcopal Conference

Nigerian priests have been urged to show religious tolerance and lead a truly decent and exemplary life. They were also called upon to offer disciplined, honest, dedicated, selfless, and patriotic leadership in their service. The appeal was contained in a message of goodwill sent by the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo to the Episcopal Conference of Catholic priests in Nigeria, which opened on Tuesday, September 14, 1976.

I have great pleasure in sending sincere greetings and best wishes to all of you, gathered in Kaduna, on the occasion of the National Episcopal Conference of Nigeria.

THE CATHOLIC PRIEST

I have noted, with interest, the theme of your Conference: *The Catholic Priest in Nigeria*. This topic is significant, especially now that the nation calls on all of us to re-examine our goals and re-dedicate ourselves to her service. If you succeed in defining the role of the Catholic Priest in a changing Nigeria, you will be placing the Catholic Priest in a better position to contribute his share in attaining the objectives set under the various programmes aimed at maintaining unity and stability within this country, raising the standard of living of the people, and improving the moral life of the nation.

The Church can play an important role in the social development of the nation if it produces the right calibre of priests who are disposed to offer disciplined, honest, dedicated, selfless, and patriotic leadership in their service. The Priests should, as religious leaders, show religious tolerance, and lead a truly decent and exemplary life which demonstrates commitment to God and the nation so that we will be able to build a truly great and unified nation. It is obviously against the teaching of Christian religion to fan the ember of tribal sentiment and hatred. You must also maintain brotherly love and encourage religious tolerance and understanding amongst Nigerian people wherever you live.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

I am convinced that it is by living according to the tenets of your faith that you as Church leaders can contribute meaningfully in making this nation a happier place for ourselves and posterity. It is my prayer and sincere wish that you derive spiritual guidance from your deliberations so that your endeavours reflect commitment to responsibility and dedication to service so that our nation is one of peace, stability, progress and prosperity.

I wish you God's blessing.

Nigerian Universities and University Colleges

The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo condemned the practice whereby Nigerian universities have maintained an aristocratic seclusion and remoteness from the society which they are meant to serve. He was speaking to Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Nigerian universities and university colleges, who met in Lagos on Saturday, September 18, 1976. Continuing, the Head of State regretted the unrealistic approach which had consequently created a situation whereby money which should have been spent on academic development and increased courses intake, had been used merely for development of campuses to serve only students and their lecturers. He also condemned the continued existence of educational disparity in Nigeria and emphasised the need for a progressive increase of intake students from ethnic groups other than where the universities were located to reflect true Nigerian Communities.

I want to seize the opportunity of your presence here this morning, to address you on a number of issues which affect institutions of higher learning in the country as well as issues that affect the nation as a whole. You are, no doubt, aware that it is not by accident that the Federal Military Government is expending a lot of money on university education; by virtue of the fact that the Universities should be the repository of the best brains in the nation, Government is anxious to see that they are well equipped to meet the expectation of the people of this country. Government, on its part, attaches great importance to the contribution of the universities outside pure development of manpower resources. The university should be a vehicle for the promotion of national consciousness, unity, understanding, and peace. In this regard, our universities are expected to reflect the true Nigerian character both in their intake, the content of the course offered, and their physical environment.

EDUCATIONAL DISPARITY

Education is a recognised factor of unity in a nation, but unfortunately we still have within our nation educational disparity which tends to undermine the desires and efforts to achieve true unity; because there can only be true unity where educational opportunities and resultant facilities, amenities, and benefits are evenly distributed. The Federal Military Government has therefore tried to identify areas of the country where such educational disparity occurs and has taken steps to remedy such disparity. Efforts so far made include provision of remedial schools of basic studies to create greater opportunity for university education in educationally backward States. You will, however, agree with me that no matter what the Government may do, its efforts must necessarily be complemented by positive efforts by university authorities in the same direction in order to achieve any appreciable measure of success. These schools of basic studies will have to be fostered by the older universities to which they will each be attached. The mother universities will ensure university admission for all successful graduates of the schools of basic studies. The new universities will also make provisions for remedial courses in their systems to cater for the national need.

University authorities should ensure that student population reflects the true Nigerian situation and character; in fact, I believe that with the efforts so far taken by

the Government, this should not be a problem to you. Therefore, I will expect, from now on, a progressive increase of intake of students from ethnic groups other than where the universities are located such that with effect from the 1977/78 academic session, sufficient numbers of students would come from areas other than where the university is located to make the university a true Nigerian community. But it must be appreciated that universities are so located all over the country today to make it easy for them to cater significantly for the human development of the area in which they are located.

IVORY—TOWERISM

By an act of commission or omission the premier university of this country, unfortunately, emphasised the concept of ivory-towerism from its inception. Both physically and otherwise, it maintained an aristocratic seclusion and remoteness from the society it was meant to serve. Nobody seemed to appreciate the danger involved in this but today we realise that it was a bad precedent. That fact has been a big constraint in the expansion programme of all our universities because all other universities tended to follow the example of the University of Ibadan. We, therefore, had to put up with a situation where the money that would have been used for the purpose of academic development and consequent increased courses and intake was used for the physical development of university campuses. This is an unrealistic approach and it should stop henceforth. University students and lecturers are products of this society and the university is meant to serve the society. The universities can render no greater disservice than to encourage ivory-towerism; the university should be a reflection of the society. I believe that universities can only influence the society which they are meant to serve if they completely identify themselves with that society and endeavour to improve the community in which they live by making conscious and determined efforts to develop harmonious relationships between themselves and the local population of the areas in which they are sited.

POLICY

With the fallacy of oil boom exposed and with the need to provide the necessary infrastructural base for our future economic and social progress at an ever-increasing cost, the Federal Military Government has embarked on a policy of inculcating a general sense of frugality and thereby reducing waste in all aspects of Government functions and services. The universities as significant consumers of our revenue should join in the crusade to streamline their administrative procedure and thereby reduce cost. With the right approach, I believe, substantial savings can be made without any loss of efficiency or productivity. The Federal Military Government is contemplating setting up a Committee to take a hard look at administrative procedure and system in all our universities with a view to reducing human and material waste within the system. Your building projects should also be more functional in concept and design than mere architectural extravaganza.

STUDENT UNREST

It is particularly disturbing that the perennial problem of student unrest has been approached as if it is an insoluble problem. It will be unfair and hypocritical to shift the responsibilities exclusively on students. There is ample evidence that university authorities sometimes contribute consciously or unconsciously to the unruly attitude of students. I will advise university authorities to look at this problem more objectively and identify areas of friction and work towards removing them. In this regard, you are to

give realistic consideration to the question of greater student participation in that aspect of university administration which deals directly with their welfare and discipline. It is rather disheartening that in spite of recent efforts of Government at cleaning the public services including the universities, there are whisperings and mumblings of maladministrations, nepotism, and abuse of office in various faculties and departments in universities throughout the country and these contribute to cases of indiscipline amongst staff and students in our institutions of higher learning. University authorities should deal ruthlessly with all proven cases of malpractices, maladministration, nepotism, abuse of office, and indolence.

CRITICAL PERIOD

We are passing through a critical period in the history of our great nation and at a time such as this, all hands should be on deck to steer the ship in order to realise the aims and efforts of the Government towards providing economic, political, and social bases that will ensure the unity, stability, peace, and orderly development of our country. The Federal Military Government believes that its plans and objectives cannot be achieved without the active support, co-operation, and understanding of the most elitist group of our society. This support is not restricted alone to the cross fertilisation of ideas now evidenced by the releasing of academicians into the Government; university authorities should make vital and positive contributions from within and outside their campuses to the promotion and maintenance of national security. Academicians should be disposed towards making constant appraisal of Government plans and policies and making useful recommendations devoid of selfish or sectional interests but bearing in mind the interest of the generality of the citizens of this nation. To me, this is the relevance of academic freedom which can only in reality be meaningful in the context of national aspirations and within the limit of national security and objectives.

PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION

Finally, I will want you to look into the problem of succession to the headship of the universities, and make recommendations which must be capable of removing the heat that the exercise of appointment and re-appointment of Vice-Chancellors have always generated. This has often led to rancour and has manifested itself as a divisive factor in the university with consequent threat to law and order and national security. It has created an ugly atmosphere of shame which is detrimental to the purpose for which the universities were established. The government has, however, decided to depoliticise university appointments at all levels in a way that will command respect and enhance the prestige of our universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of your deliberations, I hope you will be able to arrive at recommendations that would meet the aspirations and objectives of this administration and the needs of the nation.

Twenty-Three

The Nigerian National Arts Theatre— A Monumental Landmark

On the occasion of the formal opening of the National Theatre in Lagos on September 30, 1976, the Head of State reiterated the commitment of the government to the development of culture. He pointed out that genuine involvement in culture generates a moderating influence in the lives of the people. Continuing his speech, General Obasanjo stated that the theatre with its facilities and opportunities, would foster the spirit of fellowship and oneness among Nigerian Youths.

We assemble here this morning to witness a memorable event which is the opening of this gigantic and impressive edifice—the Nigerian National Arts Theatre. The Theatre is dedicated to the promotion of the arts and culture of our great nation, to the strengthening of African brotherhood and to fostering international co-operation and understanding.

The event of today is singularly important in that it marks the crystallization of decades of efforts to give clear and practical expression to the yearnings of our people for the revival, promotion, and preservation of our cultural and artistic heritage. I am deeply gratified at the realisation of this monumental landmark at this stage of our national development.

The Nigerian National Arts Theatre will, among other things, occupy a pivotal position in the forthcoming world-wide African Festival of Arts and Culture. When this regime came into power, one of the first steps it took was to cause the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, FECTAC, to be postponed. This action has been misconstrued in uninformed quarters as signifying this Administration's lack of commitment to the development of arts and culture. To succumb to this view would be a gross misrepresentation of facts. The Festival had to be postponed because fifty per cent of the infrastructural facilities for the Festival would not have been ready if the Festival had taken place as scheduled, and yet funds ten times higher than what will now be spent would have been wasted without appreciable results due to poor planning and recklessness. Thus the ideals of the Festival would not be realised, hard-earned money would have been wasted and the country put to shame. The host country in any festival would normally bargain for the goodwill of its guests. The opposite would have been the case if the Festival had been allowed to take place last December. Another reason why the decision was taken was to allow for the streamlining of the organisational structure of the Festival in such a way as to tailor its scale and scope to the dictates of other competing aspects of our national development because culture, important as it is, forms only one unit of several other demands on our limited national resources. It will, therefore, be seen that the postponement was not only in the overall interest of the nation but also of the Festival itself.

For the benefit of those who may still be in doubt as to what our policy really is on culture, I wish to say here and now that this Administration is fully committed to its orderly development because we believe that culture is a very healthy instrument for fostering national unity, inter-ethnic accord, and international understanding. While realising the fact that the primary motive of any good government is to create an atmosphere conducive to peace and orderly development and the availability of decent shelter, food and clothing for the governed, this Administration also believes that excessive pursuit of material wealth alone does not bring about happiness and contentment. We are aware of the moderating influence and the spiritual edification which genuine involvement in culture could generate. It is in realisation of the importance of culture that the present Administration is determined to spare no effort in promoting cultural development in the country.

I am happy to observe that in line with the ideal to which this unique structure is dedicated, some of our cultural troupes, drawn from all the cultural zones in the country, will be entertaining us today. This satisfies one of our major aims in culture. I have also been informed that one of the cultural troupes featuring on this occasion is *IPI Tombi*, an all Black performing group from Azania. Their presence on this occasion is most appropriate and in line with our policy on culture as an instrument of promoting international harmony and understanding. As a matter of fact the similarities in at least part of the forms and contents of the performances of both parties will further confirm our oneness with the people of that African sub-region and we are hopeful that as we are culturally united, we may also be partners in political freedom in the not too distant future. We must draw attention to the atrocities being perpetrated by Voster and his racist minority. From the display of *IPI Tombi* troupe which we will see later, we can draw encouragement and hope that with determination the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Azania will soon come to an end. We salute the courage of those who have laid down their lives for freedom and human dignity in Azania.

I cannot end this short address without expressing my personal gratitude and that of this country to all those who have contributed to the success of this project in one way or other. And we cannot but also remember those who lost their lives in the process of constructing this magnificent Theatre.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my hope and prayer that this Theatre with its facilities and opportunities will give encouragement to the growth of the creative arts amongst our youths and foster the spirit of fellowship and oneness amongst the people of our great country. It is also my hope that troupes of all nationalities will from time to time find their way to this Theatre to display the rich culture of their people so that international goodwill and understanding among all races, creeds, and peoples for which this country stands can be realised.

It is, therefore, my pleasure to declare this magnificent edifice, the Nigerian National Theatre, open. May God bless all the performing artists, spectators, and all who will use this Theatre from time to time.

Transition to Civil Rule

On October 1, 1976, in a broadcast to the nation on Nigeria's Sixteenth Independence Anniversary, Lt. General Obasanjo among other things tabulated steps mapped out by his government for a smooth return to civil rule in 1979.

Today, we celebrate the Sixteenth Anniversary of our Independence. This day has seen us through yet another eventful year; a year which was marred by the tragic assassination of the late Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed. The sentiments of condemnation and deep sense of loss expressed by Nigerians across the country over the events of February 13th were remarkable for their spontaneity. In that tragedy, we witnessed for once, as a people, the emergence of a truly Nigerian consciousness. In spite of our pains we emerged from that tragedy a more united nation. This augurs well for the future and for our major national objectives, including a smooth return to civil rule in 1979.

One of the most important steps of the planned transition to civil rule is the drafting of a new Constitution. Work on this vital document has been completed by the Constitution Drafting Committee well within the scheduled time. It is necessary to remind ourselves of the significance of the exercise and what we expect to achieve by the new constitution. The Constitution is clearly the starting point for what we believe will be a fresh, progressive and unifying political process. The Constitution by itself will not solve all our problems. Solutions to our problems will be found only through sacrifice, understanding, and mature consideration at all times of what is ultimately the best for the nation as we work on the Constitution. It has been made quite clear by my predecessor, late General Murtala Muhammed, in his National Day Speech last year that the new Constitution, while taking our past experience into account, should be a living document capable of influencing the evolution of the nation and the orderly development of the political life of our people. It is our earnest hope that the new Constitution will indeed influence free and better political interaction for the future. The draft document has been received by me and noted by the National Council of States and the Supreme Military Council and it will be launched on Thursday, 7th October, 1976. I urge that it be discussed in the spirit of a genuine desire to forge a viable and stable political future for Nigeria.

CONSTITUTION

The Draft Constitution with comments from the Nigerian public will be submitted to a Constituent Assembly to consider and adopt. Although, according to the Political

Programme already announced, the Constituent Assembly will not formally come into being until October 1977, certain fundamental issues have to be resolved well before that date. The Federal Military Government has carefully deliberated on such issues and has taken a number of decisions. On the issue of the size of the Assembly, the Federal Government has decided that the Assembly consist of about 200 elected members. It is felt that to have an Assembly much larger than this would prove unwise and its work might be unduly prolonged beyond the time limit within which it has to complete its assignment. Members of this Constituent Assembly are to be elected from their States on the basis of one half of equality, and the other half on 1963 Population Census figures. In addition, the Supreme Military Council will nominate not more than 10 per cent of the total elected membership of the Assembly. This nomination is considered desirable in order to bring into the Assembly a number of Nigerians who, by their very circumstances, cannot or do not necessarily need to express the interest of a particular group or constituency. Such an arrangement will, it is thought, also provide a useful bridge between various contending interests.

LINK

The Federal Government has also decided to appoint to the Constituent Assembly the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Chairman of its seven sub-Committees. This will ensure a useful link and continuity between the Constitution Drafting Committee and Constituent Assembly. These members will help in clarifying issues and the thinking behind the Constitution Drafting Committee recommendations. All the three categories of membership, that is, the elected, nominated, and Constitution Drafting Committee elements will be voting members of the Assembly.

The issue of the appointment of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Assembly has also been specially considered. Any attempt to elect a Chairman of the Constituent Assembly from the members of the Assembly in our present circumstances, is likely to start the Assembly off on a note of unnecessary conflict. He is likely to be viewed as the future President and leader and will therefore generate prematurely such stress and tensions as might adversely affect the outcome of the Assembly's deliberations. The Federal Military Government has, therefore, decided that the best course of action is to appoint a non-voting Chairman and Deputy Chairman. This should be seen to be clearly non-partisan and without future political ambitions.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Supreme Military Council has appointed an Electoral Commission of twenty-four members under the Chairmanship of Mr. M.O. Ani. The Commission will be concerned solely with the organisation of the first elections into State and Federal Legislatures and other elective offices as prescribed by the Constitution. In addition, the Electoral Commission will be responsible for registering political parties as well as delimiting Constituency boundaries. There is clearly a need for the Electoral Commission to get down to work now if our determination for the country to have a democratically elected Civil Government by October 1979 are to be achieved. The process of collating and preparing a register of voters for the Federal and State elections takes time and the earlier this process is started, the better. An equally urgent task is the delimitation of the country into Constituencies. Given the time available, it was felt that there was no need to set up a separate Delimitation Committee. The

Electoral Commission was therefore charged with the additional function of delimiting Constituencies. After the elections for the first post-military Government the Commission will be dissolved so as to allow the incoming government to appoint a new one under the new Constitution.

All these plans for Federal and State elections will be preceded by the elections to Local Government Councils towards the end of the year. The Local Government areas will be regrouped where necessary to provide the Constituencies for the Constituent Assembly. Members from within or outside the elected Councils will be eligible for election into the Assembly. The details and modalities of the elections into the Assembly will be announced later.

NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM

The Federal Government has considered the appropriateness of our National Anthem to our national circumstances, mood, and aspirations for now and for the future. It came to the conclusion that Nigeria needs a new anthem with words and music composed by Nigerians. Accordingly, a competition for the words of a new National Anthem is to be launched. This will be followed by a competition for its music. The new anthem is to be ready by the time the New Constitution is adopted for the country. Only Nigerians will be eligible to take part in the two competitions.

ECONOMY

On the economic front, I am happy to say that the available data show clearly that the policies which the Federal Military Government has pursued have yielded positive results. The relatively poor performance of the economy last year was caused by a number of factors, the dominant one being the drastic fall in the contribution of the oil sector. Oil production, which has reached a daily average of 2.3 million barrels in October 1974, fell to 1.5 million barrels per day in May 1975. The decline in production was worsened by a slight fall in the price of oil. Today, however, the rate of production has increased to about 2 million barrels, and there has been an upward revision of the price of oil. This recovery is mainly due to the adoption of a more rational policy on petroleum production. The Government is determined to ensure and maintain a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship between it and the oil-producing companies. Adequate incentives to encourage greater exploration and production are being worked out.

Work on the two Liquefied Natural Gas Plants one on each side of the Bonny estuary, in partnership with some oil companies is progressing satisfactorily. So are the plans for the construction of a 100,000 barrels per day refinery at Kaduna. The contracts for an ambitious network of petroleum products and crude oil pipelines have been awarded to three foreign companies.

Work on the Ajaokuta Steel Mill is being prosecuted with greater vigour than hitherto and the contracts for the design and construction of the two direct reduction process steel plants have been awarded. Work on the first phase of the double track standard gauge railway line from Port-Harcourt to service the Ajaokuta steel mill is progressing satisfactorily.

On the agricultural front, the enthusiasm which has attended the "Operation Feed the Nation" programme has been encouraging. However, our effort has to be continued and sustained and not just sporadic bursts of energy and exertion. Decisions have been taken to ensure that prices of certain agricultural products do not fall below a certain level. This is to make the price of these products such as would justify their cultivation by the farmer.

PORT IMPROVEMENT

The ports situation has considerably improved. In October 1975, there were some 400 ships that had been waiting for months for berthing at our ports. Today the turn about time at the ports has been drastically reduced and less than 100 ships are now waiting to berth at the ports. A number of administrative and physical measures had to be adopted to increase the port facilities and further reduce the waiting time. The implementation of the Apapa Third Wharf extension has been accelerated. In addition, contract has been awarded for a ten berth harbour at the Tin Can Island which will be completed next year. Work is also progressing on Calabar harbour development.

INFLATION

Regarding inflation, a number of monetary, fiscal, and administrative measures have been adopted to arrest rising prices. It is too early to fully appraise the long term impact of these measures, but it is gratifying to note that the data for the first half of 1976 indicates a declining trend in the rate of inflation. What is clear is that if drastic measures such as the decongestion of ports had not been taken, inflation would by now have wrecked our economy and made it impossible to achieve the economic and social goals of the Federal Military Government. As promised in my Budget Speech in April, some of the measures adopted then to relieve port congestion have been reviewed and part of the restrictions on imports have been lifted.

FOREIGN POLICY

The past year has witnessed some eventful developments in Nigeria's objectives in the field of foreign policy. In my address to the nation last June, I had informed you of the decisions we had taken on the Report on Nigeria's Foreign Policy. These decisions are being pursued with vigor.

We are following closely the rapid development in Zimbabwe. Here, as in the liberation struggle in Namibia, Nigeria's posture will be in consonance with the wishes of the nationalist movements concerned. Naturally, we believe that independent Africa has the duty to be concerned with and assist in every way possible the total liberation of the Continent. We believe that there can be no externally imposed solutions to the problems of Southern Africa which do not enjoy the support of the genuine nationalists who represent the majority of the people of those countries still under minority domination. We are gratified that the cause of the liberation struggle which has been gathering momentum for years has been significantly advanced during the past year.

ECOWAS

Turning nearer home to the West African sub-region, I am glad to say that arrangements have been completed for the final facts to formally establish the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) firmly on the ground. The Council of Ministers are due to meet soon, preparatory to the final Summit meeting of Heads of State. Nigeria is fully committed to the objectives of the ECOWAS. For, we believe that only through such regional co-operative endeavours aimed at economic independence can we consolidate our political freedom.

In retrospect, the past year has had its bitter moments, moments of national tragedy. We are determined in spite of our loss to evolve a stronger and more united nation as the best tribute we can ever pay the memory of our revered dead leader. The year has seen significant advances in the steps towards the return of the Administration to democratically elected civilian leadership. While we had been subjected to the

worldwide pressures in our national economy, we had performed better than some had expected and the prospects for the next year already look bright. We have pursued our international interests with vigour and independence of action. And Africa remains the centre-piece of our foreign policy. The Federal Military Government greatly appreciates the support and encouragement from all of you. We shall continue to value your support as we march forward towards the consolidation of peace, justice, and prosperity in Nigeria. We must not fail.

Welcoming President Ngouabi of the Congo Republic

Nigeria's political independence would be incomplete until all Africa is truly free. This was the contention of the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo. He made this known in his speech at a dinner party held in honour of visiting President Marien Ngouabi of the People's Republic of the Congo on 10th October, 1976.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome Your Excellency to Nigeria, on behalf of the Government and the entire people of Nigeria, and on my own behalf. My dear brother, Commandant Marien Ngouabi, we heartily welcome you as President of the People's Republic of the Congo, a patriot of your country, an African nationalist and statesman in your own right, a noble and illustrious son of Africa, and a leader of a friendly country that is regarded with greatest warmth of affection here in Nigeria.

TESTIMONY

We all feel greatly honoured that, in spite of the tremendous pressures on your time, you have been able to visit us at this time. This, no doubt, is a further testimony of the deep and abiding fraternal and cordial relations which have always existed between our two sister Republics.

GREAT ESTEEM

In the rather short time that you have spent with us, Mr. President, it is our hope that you would have noticed something of the joy and enthusiasm with which our people have manifested their great esteem for your Excellency and the brotherly people of the Congo Republic, and their abiding interest in the friendship and the historical ties that bind our two peoples.

AFRICAN FREEDOM

As you are already fully aware, Mr. President, the Nigerian Government and people are, like our brothers and sisters in your great country, deeply committed to the cause of freedom and human dignity in Southern Africa, not only because we regard freedom in all plenitude as an inalienable right of all peoples, but also because we are convinced that African freedom is an indivisible whole, and that our own political independence would therefore be incomplete until all Africa is truly free. We condemn without equivocation, therefore, all imperialist manoeuvres to reinforce the shackles of oppression and servitude on our suffering brothers and sisters in Southern Africa. We shall, side by side with the sister Republic of the Congo and all the freedom-loving people of Africa, intensify our efforts to liberate every inch of Africa from colonial oppression, racial bigotry and domination. In this endeavour, we are greatly

encouraged by the tenacity and determination of the brotherly States of Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique and Botswana, and their total unyielding dedication to the cause of liberation in the Southern African Sub-region.

HEROIC EFFORTS

Similarly, Mr. President, the Nigerian Government and people are glad for this occasion to recall the heroic efforts of yourself and of the people of the Republic of Congo at the height of the crisis in Angola, and the extremely positive and crucial role which you played in that struggle to bring about the complete liberation of the Angolan Republic from imperialist plots to re-colonise the country and to re-subjugate, oppress and exploit the freedom-loving people of Angola. It was due, in no small measure, to the foresight, determination and wisdom of Your Excellency with that of like-minded African brothers that Angola and Africa triumphed over the forces of foreign oppression.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

As regards the purely bilateral relations between Nigeria and the sister Republic of the Congo, Mr. President, we are highly gratified that a spirit of complete cordiality prevails and that our relations could hardly be more harmonious, characterised as they are by mutual respect and affection.

I should, nevertheless, wish to assure you, Mr. President, that it is the great desire of the Government and people of Nigeria to strengthen and further consolidate these relations, for the mutual benefit of our two sister nations. And we are happy to note too, that the determination on the part of the friendly Congolese people to reinforce these traditional bonds of friendship is equally strong and immutable. We are convinced, Mr. President, that your present visit to Nigeria at this momentous stage in the evolution of African freedom will contribute very substantially, not only to the strengthening of the ties of friendship between Nigeria and your great country, but also, to the consolidation of our joint efforts in the search for peace, justice, and economic prosperity for our African fatherland.

MADAM CELINE NGOUABI

Please permit me, Mr. President, to express our deep appreciation and our sense of gratitude to Her Excellency Madam CELINE NGOUABI, whose tender devotion and graceful presence at your side during this visit have aroused in us feelings of great respect and admiration.

OUR PLEDGE

Finally, Mr. President, I should like to seize this opportunity to renew, on behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria, our pledge of sincere friendship and co-operation with the Government and people of the Congo Republic, in our common objectives of working for a more equitable world order, where peace, equality and freedom will form the basis of international co-operation and understanding.

TOAST

Honourable Ministers, Commissioners, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, may I request you to rise and drink to a toast to the health and happiness of His Excellency Commandant Marien Ngouabi, to the continued success and prosperity of the Government and the friendly people of the People's Republic of the Congo, and to

lasting friendship between the people of the sister Republics of Nigeria and Congo.

Long live the People's Republic of the Congo!
Long live Congolese-Nigerian Friendship!
Long live African Unity



Fig. 6 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressing the students at Army Command and Staff College, Jaji, Kaduna. (p. 185)



Fig. 7 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo receiving President Pereira of Cape Verde Island at Dodan Barracks during his official visit to Nigeria.

Welcoming President Pereira of Cape Verde

The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo has declared that the establishment of ECOWAS is part of a continental effort to rid Africa of economic domination. Speaking at a State banquet at Dodan Barracks on October 31, 1976, arranged in honour of President Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde, the Head of State noted with regret that the gap between the rich and the poor countries had continued to widen in spite of pious pronouncements at the various international forums. He, therefore, urged the affluent nations to respond positively to the legitimate demands of the less industrialised nations for a fair deal for their raw products, an end to unjust economic practices, and for a more even spread of the benefits of the world's economic resources. General Obasanjo, whilst congratulating President Pereira for his purposeful leadership, said he looked forward to the appropriate time when Cape Verde Republic would be welcomed as a member of ECOWAS.

It gives me profound pleasure, Mr. President, to welcome you to Nigeria on behalf of the Federal Military Government, the entire people of Nigeria, and on my own behalf. We feel greatly honoured that you have been able to visit us at this crucial time, in spite of heavy demands of the work of socio-economic re-construction on your time. This is a testimony of the excellent relations that exist between our two sister countries. This visit has also offered Your Excellency the opportunity of seeing how the people of Nigeria cherish our relations. We warmly welcome you.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE P.A.I.G.C.

Your Excellency, please permit me, once again to congratulate you and the heroic people of your great country on the recent 20th Anniversary of the founding of your Party, the P.A.I.G.C., which brought independence to the two great Republics of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. The Anniversary, no doubt, brought great joy and pleasure not only to the brotherly people of Cape Verde, but also to all freedom-loving peoples of the world. I am, therefore, gratified that Nigeria was able to express its continued solidarity with the brotherly people of Cape Verde by attending the memorable celebrations.

PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

It is with great admiration, Mr. President, that I recall and extol the vision, courage, and purposeful leadership with which you led your heroic people to victory, as the Secretary-General of the P.A.I.G.C., in spite of concerted pressures on Portugal not to grant Cape Verde Independence. I am confident, therefore, that the dynamism, wisdom, and dedication by which you have achieved the great goal of Independence for your country, will continue to sustain you in your efforts to build a united, strong, and prosperous nation.

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

Mr. President, our two countries are committed to the building of a sound socio-economic sub-structure, and making full use of technological advancement for the benefit of our people, and the improvement of their standards of living. In this country,

all hands are on deck in pursuit of the goal of economic self-reliance, and to spread the fruits of economic progress equitably to all Nigerians. It becomes imperative, therefore, that our two countries should get together for closer co-operation to achieve our common aspirations, aims, and objectives. In this connection, our nascent regional grouping, the Economic Community of West African States, should offer all the countries of the region the opportunities of multi-lateral co-operation for the economic benefits of all our peoples. I am happy to say that developments in this connections have reached an advanced stage, and with the Protocols to be signed shortly, the Community should be firmly established at no distant date. We look forward, Mr. President, to welcoming your great country, at an appropriate time, to the Community.

This regional endeavour is within the context of our Continental effort to rid Africa of foreign economic domination. In our efforts towards this goal, we are up against the entrenched interests of colonial and neo-colonial powers, which see Africa, and indeed, all the less industrialised countries of the world, as game for economic exploitation. What we see, therefore, is that in spite of pious pronouncements at the various international forums, the gap between the rich and poor countries of the world continues to widen. I believe that affluent nations owe it to humanity, and indeed to their own interests, to respond positively to the legitimate demands of the less industrialised nations for a fair deal for their raw products, an end to unjust economic practices, and for a more even spread of the benefits of the world's economic resources.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

As you are aware, Mr. President, our Continent is going through momentous times. I refer to the mounting struggle in Southern Africa to rid our Continent of the last vestiges of colonialism, imperialism, and racism. Recent developments in this area are as urgent as they are significant. In Azania, we have observed the intensified acts of man's inhumanity to man by the racist settlers in their brutal determination to kill the fighting spirit of African nationalists in Southern Africa. We have witnessed all the acts of unprovoked aggression being perpetrated by the racist regimes in Southern Africa against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the peace-loving peoples and legitimate Governments of the front-line States like Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana. We have followed the clever designs of the South African apartheid regime to create glorified ghettos for the indigenous African peoples in their own land, in the name "independent homelands". We call on all peace-loving people of the world not only to refuse to recognize Vorster's Bantustan but to condemn unequivocally such design of division and oppression which also deprives the black man citizenship rights. At the United Nations, we continue to witness the misuse of the veto in the Security Council to obstruct the imposition of sanctions on South Africa, which, in defiance of the sustained demands of the international community, maintains its illegal administration of Namibia. In Zimbabwe, African nationalists have been offered independence proposals that lack the basic ingredient of democracy.

The proposals offered for independence of Zimbabwe are panic measures being adopted by those who see their interests best served by the perpetuation of the exploitation of the black majority. Those developments, Mr. President, underline the urgent need for African countries to redouble their efforts in the struggle for political independence, and for economic emancipation for our brothers in Southern Africa. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the front-line and we appeal to the nationalist

leaders, particularly in Zimbabwe, to close their ranks in the pursuit of their common goal of freedom and human dignity. On our side, we remain committed to the limits of our capacities to the noble task of Africa's liberation.

CORDIAL RELATIONS

Mr. President, I am pleased that this visit has afforded you the opportunity to see a little of our country, and the efforts we are making to build a better future for the present generation and generations yet unborn. The visit has also afforded us a welcome opportunity of reviewing matters of mutual interest to our two countries. I am hopeful that the wide degree of understanding which we have reached in our discussions will further strengthen the cordial relations that so happily exist between our two peoples, in our common objectives of working for the economic and social upliftment of our respective peoples, and for the equality and freedom of mankind everywhere in the world.

TOAST

Finally, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, may I invite you to join me in drinking a toast to the health of His Excellency President Aristides Pereira, to the well-being and progress of the Cape Verdian people, to the continued friendship and understanding between the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Cape Verde, to the Economic Community of West African States, and to the Organisation of African Unity.

Federal Electoral Commission

Another important step towards a smooth and orderly transition of Nigeria's administration to civilian democracy was taken on 15th November 1976, when an inaugural meeting of the Federal Electoral Commission was held.

We are gathered this morning to witness yet another significant step in the implementation of our political programme. An Electoral Commission is an essential element in the working of the democratic process, which this Administration is committed to introduce in this country by 1979. Politics has often been described as a game and like all games, it is subject to rules and regulations. Indeed, whether the political game is a clean or dirty one would largely depend on the proper determination and application of the rules governing its conduct. An Electoral Commission is, in many ways, like the referee of a game whose manner of handling the game inspires confidence in players and spectators alike.

However, in our circumstances in Nigeria, our Electoral Commission is more than a referee of a game. It is on the Electoral Commission's approach to their task that to a considerable extent, the stability of the political system that would emerge in 1979 depends. Some of the events which led to the ascendancy of the military in the Government and politics of this nation have not gone too far behind us. We had Electoral Commissions in which the public lost confidence and which lacked credibility. The Commissions became pawns in the politics of the day with the result that the masses lost faith in the constitutional democratic process of electing a Government. There was, therefore, a sudden disappearance of civilized modes of thinking and handling of public affairs. Law and order was replaced in parts of the country by lawlessness and criminal propensities which were manifested in acts of thuggery vandalism and arson.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

The chequered and often unhappy political experience of this country in the past, therefore, had been due partly to the manner in which the Electoral Commission functioned. This, in retrospect, was not surprising, given the partisan political background which determined the selection of the members of the Commission and the atmosphere in which they were obliged to operate.

PRESENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

In establishing the members of the present Electoral Commission, the Federal Military Government had endeavoured to ensure that only men and women of proven

integrity and maturity are selected. This selection, while reflecting the Federal character of our country, was done purely on the personal merit of the individuals concerned. I heartily congratulate you all on the special opportunity which you have to serve the nation as members of the Electoral Commission at this momentous time in our march towards electoral democratic civilian form of administration. The Federal Military Government has every confidence that the Chairman of the Commission, Chief Michael Ani, and his colleagues are aware of the onerous responsibility placed on their shoulders. The service you are called upon to render is a service to the nation, our fatherland and not to any individual or any group and you cannot afford the mistakes of the past. You must bring pleasure and satisfaction into the electoral system by evolving a system that will make election free, fair, and devoid of any type of malpractices. There is need to win back the confidence of the people in the electoral system in order to bring into fruition all the efforts of this administration to return the nation to normal democratic civilian administration.

POST—MILITARY POLITICS

Post-military politics should be characterised by healthy competition aimed at preserving the peace of this country and hastening its progress. There should be no room again for barbarous acts of thuggery and election rigging. There is no doubt that yours is not an easy task but I am sure that with determination and total commitment you will succeed. The assignment of your Commission includes the following tasks:

- (1) preparation and collation of a Register or Registers of electors;
- (2) delimitation of the country into constituencies for the purposes of State, national and senatorial elections;
- (3) organisation and conduct of elections to the office of the President and State Governors;
- (4) organisation of elections to the State and national Legislatures; and
- (5) registration of Political Parties.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION DECREE

To ensure that the Electoral Commission is completely unfettered in discharging its duties, the Federal Military Government has given it a free hand to establish itself, with the requirement that it observes the relevant provisions of the 1963 Constitution. The Commission shall not be subject to the direction and control of any authority in the exercise of their functions. Already steps are being taken to promulgate an Electoral Commission Decree which will give your activities a legal basis. Subsequently, another Decree will be prepared in the form of a principal Electoral Law to replace the existing Electoral Acts of pre-1966.

SECURITY OF TENURE

The members of the Commission themselves have given a written undertaking renouncing any interest in participating in partisan politics even after political parties are allowed to be organised in 1978. The Federal Military Government has decided that the appointment of members of the Commission will be on permanent and full-time

basis. However, the successor-government after 1979 will have the right to reconstitute a fresh Electoral Commission if it is so desired. But until then they will have full security of tenure subject to the provisions of the law. They can only be removed from office on the same grounds as those on which a judge of the High Court or a member of the Public Complaints Commission could be removed.

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN DEMOCRACY

As you are aware, the Constitution Drafting Committee has produced a Draft Constitution which sets out the guidelines for the conduct of future politics in this country. With the establishment of the Electoral Commission, we have taken the next important step towards a smooth and orderly transition of our country's administration to civilian democracy. I assure the Commission of the Federal Military Government's full co-operation and readiness to provide all necessary facility and assistance for its work.

ENVIABLE STANDARD

I am sure members of the Commission have the goodwill of the nation and that the general public will trust and develop greater confidence according to the manner in which the Commission conducts itself. Your task is very important, also, from the stand-point of history. You are to lay an enviable standard which will be the target of future Electoral Commissions in addition to guiding and directing the electoral process to Civil Rule. Mr. Chairman and member of the Electoral Commission, I wish you success and God's guidance.

Twenty-Eight

Convocation Ceremonies of the University of Ibadan

And if we must maintain our self-respect and indeed, our very survival as a people in the competitive and fast moving world which demands the greatest will and best attribute in mankind to make it safe, secure, and happy, all hands must be on deck for national unity, political stability, social justice, and economic progress.

—Obasanjo

It gives me great pleasure to address this gathering on the occasion of yet another Convocation Ceremony on the Founder's Day of this nation's premier institution of higher learning.

DILIGENCE AND HUMILITY

Let me first seize the opportunity to congratulate and rejoice with the graduates who after a worthy period of hard work and conscientious study have been awarded their various degrees and diplomas. There is satisfaction in achieving this lofty goal but it is not the end. Your academic discipline and achievements will only serve the purpose of preparing you, for a greater tomorrow, for facing the realities of life and above all, for making you better citizens of this great country. And may I also take this opportunity to appeal to students in all our institutions of higher learning to continue to apply themselves diligently and responsibly to their academic work and brace themselves up for the great task of nation building ahead. From those of you who have been privileged to have the benefit of University education at a great cost to the nation, much more is expected in the service of the nation. It will be unfortunate, and amount to miseducation, if you should assume that the possession of a University degree or diploma only confers on you special privileges within the society. The possession of a degree merely disciplines your mind and prepares you for service. It bestows on you the ability to secure an employment as well as opportunities for advancement, through further training.

The best way to use this great opportunity which your University training has given you is to apply yourself with diligence and humility in your work, and to learn to obey your superiors from whose rich experience you are bound to benefit. It is only in this way that you will one day rise and possibly be in a position to teach others and to earn their respect and gratitude. There is no substitute for experience and University education should not pretend to endow one with automatic experience, but it should train one to utilise other people's experience to the best advantage.

HONORARY DEGREE

I also rejoice with our distinguished and illustrious Guest of Honour, His Excellency, Dr. Julius Nyerere, the President of the Republic of Tanzania who is being awarded the

honorary degree of this University. Your being honoured here today, Mr. President, is in recognition of your positive and selfless contributions to the peace of mankind, the emancipation of the black race, more especially in terms of liberation struggles in Southern Africa and the advancement of knowledge in various spheres of life. It is an occasion for all who love truth and abhor injustice to rejoice. This, more than anything else, points to the fact that intellectualism, in essence, transcends the narrow confines of theoretical classroom analysis and spreads to all facets of life in a nation and indeed within a race; it becomes more meaningful if directed properly towards achieving individual awareness, ultimately leading to national cohesion and unity, and international peace and concord.

In addition to the contribution of the black race to world civilisation and the recent discovery and acceptance of Africa as the cradle of mankind, historians over the ages have recognised that the most important single human virtue of decency has found its greatest expression among Africans. It is this quality that has imbued generations of Africans from the distant past to the present, with the sense of selflessness and accommodation. Unfortunately, this human gesture has not always been reciprocated by others who by deceit, indecency, and pillage abused our hospitality, enslaved our people, and in any instances sought to exterminate whole communities. Although the cruelties of the past now only prevail in isolated areas, yet it will be a tragic mistake to assume that the global clever design on Africa is a thing of the past: subversion, the twin sister of neocolonialism, has now taken the place of crude and naked forms of hostilities, and Africa is more than ever before faced with serious threats. These threats are inspired by outsiders and backed by foreign interests whose main aim is the re-subjugation and exploitation of our nations. Their evil intention is to turn back the hand of the clock. Hence, our liberty and sovereignty must not be taken for granted and we must for ever be vigilant.

EDUCATION

Education has been defined as systematic training and instruction, and also as 'knowledge and abilities, development of character, and mental powers resulting from such training'. Education broadens the outlook and should take the individual beyond the confines of sectionalism and above petty parochialism. It exposes him to certain experiences and happenings which are outside his own immediate environment; a situation which prompts analytic and synthetic appreciation, and encourages the formation of practical goals and ideals. It is, therefore, right that we should repose confidence in intellectuals and regard them as beacons and light with which others can see all around them.

Education, therefore, is the tool with which modern nations are made and a poor handling of the tool will result in an imperfect product. It was inexpertly handled in the pre-independence period of our history and the result is problems of imbalance in development, social inequalities, and consequent threat to national unity and social peace. The situation is not helped by periodic dramatisation of the problems in sentimental and inflammatory terms. In the life of this nation, therefore, education occupies a unique position and we are determined and dedicated to the use of it for the building of a strong, united and great nation.

NEW EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The new National Policy on Education which has been adopted by the Supreme Military Council and which will be made public in due course is designed to make

education more relevant to our national needs and objectives. From 1960 Nigeria has progressively moved from positions of shaky foundation to becoming a virile nation-state, dynamic and fully conscious of its destiny. But there are still obstacles to be surmounted before Nigeria can mature into full nationhood. When educational disparity is eliminated, we would have gone a long way towards removing the lingering and smouldering ember of tribalism and ethnicity in our midst. This situation had been selfishly exploited in the past by some ill-motivated men. And our foreign detractors will like to continue to exploit the situation to their advantage and to our national detriment. Such people who are to be found both within and outside our country are working viciously and covertly to continue to fan the ember of tribalism and ethnic sentiment by giving tribal or ethnic slant or connotation to all events in Nigeria.

We have survived an inglorious attempt to break up this country and have all come to realise that we have everything to gain in unity and stability. Therefore, education, which is the all-important factor in this concept of unity, stability and progress, must be pursued with untiring effort until we get to a stage where ignorance or illiteracy shall have no place in any section of our society. A predominantly literate society will improve the chances for the development of individual ideas, easier communication, and the realisation of a recognisable common goal which shall be the rallying point of national unity and cohesion.

EDUCATIONAL GAP

The immediate hurdle to be jumped is to take quick steps to bridge the educational gap between different parts of the country. The U.P.E. which has just been launched will obviously provide equal and greater educational opportunity for all our children at the lowest level. Non-technical secondary education is heavily subsidised throughout the country for the time being. After the first full year of operation of the U.P.E., a study will be carried out to determine the process of making non-technical secondary education free and available to all who can benefit from it. The Supreme Military Council has in the meantime decided that Technical Secondary education and post-secondary education will be tuition-free and boarding-free from the 1977/78 academic session. University education will also be tuition-free from the next session. And to harmonise and standardise the admission process into our universities, a University Central Admission Board will come into effect as from 1977/78 session. Efforts are being directed in many ways towards the active development of technical and technological education in every aspect. Schemes have been worked out to augment the rather inadequate domestic facilities for education at this level by finding additional training places for students in institutions abroad. A large number of those qualified to pursue higher education courses are often denied the opportunity to do so, not through indigence, but because of the inability to secure placement in any institution. There are even those to whom Government scholarships or bursaries have been awarded who fail to take up the offer on account of inadequacy of training places.

In a conscious effort to bridge the gap of educational disparity, the Federal Military Government has provided for, and in fact, has assisted State Governments to open eleven Schools of Basic Studies in various states found to be educationally backward. Both the capital and recurrent expenditure of these schools are being borne by the Federal Government. These schools will prepare for admission into our universities and polytechnics, candidates whose School Certificate grades cannot otherwise earn them admission. With the increased number of universities and polytechnics in the country and the expansion of the existing ones, we hope that more Nigerians will

continue to have the benefit of higher education until a stage is reached where no section of this country will find itself on the defensive in the quest of and the attainment of knowledge. A wide and even spread of education at all levels throughout the country is bound to lead to greater participation and involvement from all corners of the country in all aspects of our national life. This will banish the malignant fear of domination. The new university system will be expanded to cater for all Nigerians who can benefit from university education without sacrificing standard.

In the same way, as more and more people receive education, the sense of civic responsibility and political consciousness of the individual should improve to the overall advantage of the nation. A situation will therefore arise where the individual will see his ultimate interest in the unflinching loyalty to the nation.

N.Y.S.C.

The National Youth Service Corps which was evolved three years ago provides another process and level of education aimed at giving practical knowledge of the sociological set-up of the nation. Most past Corps Members have expressed great satisfaction at having been called upon to serve in states other than their own states of origin. The experience so far has been very rewarding and it should go a long way in bringing closer people of different ethnic groups and social backgrounds. And we hope to see more of the inter-marriages that have been contracted through this scheme. Furthermore, the interaction occasioned by this scheme has exposed Corps Members to the fact that Nigerians are all one with identical cultural origin. It has also dispelled the frightening rumours that tend to sow the seed of disunity among our people—rumours spread out of ignorance and ill-will.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

In spite of these general stances, there is still a lot which the university can use its privileged position of knowledge to do in the direction of national unity. The merit of academic discipline has always been objectivity. Intellectualism without objectivity is both fraudulent and fraught with danger. Academic freedom should not imply a tendency to confuse and mislead the uninformed or distort facts; this would be intellectual dishonesty. Rather, it means an honest and single-minded pursuit of knowledge, the nature of which will promote the interest of our society in particular and the human society in general. Academic freedom is valid only within the framework of national objectives and national interests. The University world exists for the purpose of cross-pollination and fertilisation of ideas. The University community should therefore be the best informed about its people, and in a country like ours, such knowledge would be directed towards achieving national unity. For it is in unity and stability that we can have the right atmosphere to play our role effectively both at home and abroad.

No matter its location a Nigerian university must be an embodiment of our cultural, social, and ecological diversity. This way our universities will contribute more meaningfully to cementing our national cohesion. The task of nation building is one which all Nigerians in all walks of life must dutifully perform. There is no other way to greatness as a nation. And if we must maintain our self-respect, and indeed, our very survival as a people in a competitive and fast moving world which demands the greatest will and best attributes in mankind to make it safe, secure and happy, all hands must be on deck for national unity, political stability, social justice, and economic progress.

Twenty-Nine

Jaji Graduates

In a message to the first graduands of the Army Command and Staff College, Jaji on November 19, 1976, General Obasanjo told the graduands that the course they had completed compared favourably with similar courses undertaken in comparable army institutions all over the world. He expressed the hope that the graduands would put into practice the knowledge and experience acquired during the course in discharging the responsibilities that would devolve upon them by their respective appointments.

It is with utmost pleasure that I send this message to you through the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General T.Y. Danjuma, on the occasion of your passing out as the first Graduates of the Army Command and Staff College Jaji. I would have liked to be with you to participate in this august and historic ceremony but for other important state commitments.

You are all aware of the reasons for establishing the College, and I do not intend to reiterate them here. However, I have followed with keen interest all your activities at the College since the inception of the Course. From all the information at my disposal, I can say without any prevarication that the course you have just completed compares favourably in terms of content and standard with, if not superior to, similar courses undertaken in comparable army institution all over the world.

One relative advantage which all of you have over those of us who had attended similar courses in overseas military institutions is based on the fact that the contents of your courses have been designed under a Nigerian environment to cater for all the peculiar needs of the Nigerian Army. I have no doubt in my mind, therefore, that the experiences gained during the course would make you more proficient in the discharge of any duty that would be assigned to you. In this connection, I have to state that, from henceforth, the performances of officers on this course and in other similar courses would be an important factor to be taken into consideration in determining officers' future career and deployment in the Nigerian Army.

I wish to seize this opportunity to say 'well done' to the Commandant and all the members of staff of the College, particularly the Members of the British Training Team, who have contributed immensely to the successful completion of the first

But for the energy, devotion, hard work, and effort put in by all the members of staff of the College, not only at the preliminary stage, but also in organising and running the course, the important event we are all witnessing today would not have been achieved.

Once more, accept my congratulations as the first Graduates of the Army Command and Staff College, Jaji. It is my fervent hope that you will put into practice the knowledge and experience acquired during the course in discharging the responsibilities that would devolve upon you by your respective appointments, thereby uplifting the prestige and image of the Nigerian Army and maintaining the unity and territorial integrity of our great country.

Welcoming President Nyerere of Tanzania

His Excellency, President Nyerere of Tanzania paid a six-day State Visit to Nigeria from Sunday, November 16 to 20 1976, at the invitation of the Head of State Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo. During the visit, the two leaders held extensive talks on matters of mutual interest. They also discussed world and African problems, especially those of Southern Africa. In a speech made by General Obasanjo during an official Banquet given in Honour of the visiting President, he expressed Nigeria's appreciation for the heroic role which President Nyerere was playing in his support for the liberation movements in Zimbabwe and Namibia. He reaffirmed the total commitment of the Nigerian Government and people to the struggle, and further called for economic war and other collective action in the struggle against apartheid and oppression.

It is with the greatest pleasure, and a feeling of personal satisfaction, that I welcome to Nigeria, and on my own behalf, His Excellency, President Julius Nyerere of the Republic of Tanzania, a renowned elder statesman, a nationalist of un-equalled devotion, and an illustrious son of Africa. Mr. President, we welcome you, with all our heart, to a sister African nation, where your reputation as a front-line fighter for African freedom has not only endeared you to all its citizens, but has indeed made your very name a household word on the lips of old and young alike.

Mr. President and Dear Brother, the bonds of true friendship between the two sister Republics of Tanzania and Nigeria, as independent nations, are fairly recent, since they date back to barely a decade and a half, not taking account of the decades of our common tutelage to an alien power. I refrain from recounting our common experiences of those colonial years before the dawn of the current era of African emancipation, because the sooner we forget those days of colonial servitude, the better for our mental health and spiritual sanity.

HEROIC CONTRIBUTION

On the contrary, however, I should like to recall, with great pride and admiration, your Excellency's laudable role and heroic contributions to the birth of Pan-Africanism, and the growth of African nationalism in those glorious days of our nationalist struggles in a foreign land that bring to mind other illustrious Africans, whose names must, for posterity, be enshrined in letters of gold when the battle for African liberation is finally won, and when the chequered history of African emancipation is written by Africa's own sons.

PROFOUND APPRECIATION

Suffice it to say, for the meantime, therefore, Mr. President and Dear Brother, that the Government and the entire people of Nigeria are profoundly appreciative of your continuing efforts in the march towards the total liberation of Africa from foreign rule, colonial oppression, exploitation and the heretical bigotry of white minority supremacy on our African soil.

USE OF POTENTIALS

In our common struggle for the attainment of those objectives, there can be no doubt at all, Your Excellency, that we will have to make the maximum use of our mutually complementary potentials. These are, on the one hand, the geographical contiguity of Tanzania to the scene of action, the inexhaustible energy and assiduity of its President, combined with the well-known dedication of the Tanzanian people; and on the other hand, the sheer weight of moral support and solidarity which you can count upon always from Nigeria, as well as the total and irreversible commitment of the Federal Military Government to the cause of African Freedom.

LIBERATION

As you very well remember, of course, Mr. President, the history of colonial freedom teaches us that it has never been easy for a people, once deprived of its liberty by alien colonising forces, to liberate itself. One needs only recall in this regard, for illustration, the bitter and prolonged struggles for freedom in Algeria, in Kenya, and in the former Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome an Principe, Mozambique, and Angola, as well as the raging wars in Zimbabwe and Namibia. We cannot hope, therefore, that Zimbabwe and Namibia will be easily surrendered by the colonialists without fighting a last-ditch battle with the forces of liberation.

PERPLEXITY

In Zimbabwe, Your Excellency, we in Nigeria have watched with considerable perplexity, the strange phenomenon, unprecedented even in colonial history, whereby the colonising power has virtually abdicated all power and responsibility to an illegal regime that seized power by revolt. And the confusion there has been further confounded by what appeared as a carefully orchestrated plot to install a puppet regime in Zimbabwe, to halt an imaginary advance of communist influence, and in a vain attempt to stem the tide of freedom with the enthronement of the principle of majority rule in its irresistible roll towards the Cape.

Here once again, Your Excellency, I should like to place on record our appreciation of your untiring efforts to ensure that the imperialists' plot are foiled. Like our Tanzanian brothers, we in Nigeria categorically reject all attempts to impose any externally conceived institutions on Zimbabweans without prior consultation and agreement with them. And like our Tanzanian brothers, we stand solidly behind Zimbabwean nationalists in their present talks in Geneva, from which we hope the necessary modalities will be devised to hand over full political power to the authentic representatives of the Zimbabwean people. We are confident that with dogged determination and realism, our complementary and joint efforts in this direction would yield fruitful result. We condemn in the strongest term possible, the aggression mounted by the minority regime in Zimbabwe, against the independent Republic of Mozambique.

STRONG CONDEMNATION

Similarly, the Nigerian Government and people strongly condemn the intransigent refusal of the South African regime to withdraw from its illegal occupation of Namibia, in defiance of various resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, based on the expert opinion of the international Court of Justice, calling for a termination of its occupation of Namibia. As in Zimbabwe, the Nigerian Government and people stand firm with the suffering people of Namibia, and we call

on SWAPO to intensify the armed struggle until Namibia is completely freed from illegal occupation.

TOTAL REJECTION

The war against apartheid in South Africa may be protracted and bitter, as the white settlers will no doubt fight to the last drop of their blood with the support of their imperialist backers. Nevertheless, we shall not be daunted, and we reject all the recent farce about the granting of a so-called independence of Transkei Bantustan, or to any other Apartheid Bantustan for that matter. We totally reject the doctrine of Apartheid, and we reject, therefore, all social, political and economic arrangements that are based on it. We stand for equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal dignity and respect for all the races in South Africa.

ENORMOUS SACRIFICE

As I have said a short while ago, it would be futile to hope that Zimbabwe and Namibia can be freed without enormous sacrifices in men and materials. The price of freedom will be heavy, as it has been shown to be, notably in Algeria, in Kenya, in the former Congo now Zaire, and in the former Portuguese territories. But it is the firm belief of the Nigerian Government and people that, whatever the nature or magnitude of the sacrifice involved, we cannot now look back, because Africa must be free.

ECONOMIC FRONT

On the economic front, Your Excellency, it seems to us that the task of decolonisation is proving even more formidable. The external and internal forces militating against genuine aspirations and interests of young nations are varied and well entrenched. Greater determination, commitment and skill will therefore be required to liberate the young nations from economic colonisation and exploitation that was required to win political independence. The gap between the rich and poor nations has continued to widen at a most alarming rate, and most of us in Africa, Asia and Latin America have become saddled with such a crushing burden of foreign debt that there is now a very real risk of collapsing totally under its weight. Meanwhile, we have achieved nothing to show for all our efforts at such venues as UNCTAD and the so-called North/South dialogue. In these circumstances, we in Nigeria are convinced that our collective salvation lies in a joint action to harmonise our economic efforts, and to pool our resources, in such a way that we do not perpetually remain drawers of water and hevers of wood to feed the factories of foreign exploiters.

In this regard, Mr. President, your visit to us has come at a time when our West African Sub-region, in the footsteps of its East African counterpart, has just launched an Economic Community of West African States.

SOLID BASE

Your visit has afforded you an opportunity, Mr. President, to see a bit of our country and the assiduous efforts we are making to put the commanding heights of our economy in the hands of Nigerians. The main objective of the Federal Military Government is to use our relatively improved economy to build a firm and solid infra-structural and industrial base while improving the social condition of every one of our citizens. We believe that our future well-being as a nation depends on our investment in renewable resources and human development today.

INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHY

Mr. President and Dear Brother, I could not possibly end these brief remarks without referring to your own pioneering efforts to devise for your people an authentic and truly indigenous philosophy of life, firmly based on, and deeply rooted in, the people's own experience. I refer in this regard to the Tanzanian experiment of Ujamaa, a concept which, in its own right, represents an original contribution to the quest for African Socialism, and which will leave an indelible mark of Your Excellency's thoughts on the pages of contemporary Tanzanian history. It is Nigeria's honour, therefore, Mr. President and Dear Brother, to welcome here today a true African nationalist, a political pragmatist and philosopher, and above all, the President of a friendly nation.

Finally, may I invite you, Your Excellencies, Honoured Guests, Gentlemen, to rise, and drink with me, a toast to the good health of His Excellency, President Julius Nyerere, to the peace, happiness and continued prosperity of the friendly people of Tanzania, to the enhancement of friendship and fraternity between Nigeria and Tanzania, and to the Organisation of African Unity.

Long Live Tanzanian-Nigerian Friendship!

Long Live the Organisation of African Unity!

Eid-El-Kabir Message

In his message of goodwill to Nigerians during the Eid-El-Kabir on December 2, 1976, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo said that the lesson of sacrifice and obedience which the festival of Eid-El-Kabir emphasised was very necessary for the building of a disciplined, loyal and progressive nation.

It is with great pleasure that I send warm and sincere greetings on this occasion of Eid-El-Kabir to all Nigerians.

SACRIFICE AND OBEDIENCE

For the Moslems in particular, Eid-El-Kabir is an important festival which emphasises sacrifice and obedience to Allah's will, a lesson which also applies to all Nigerians, irrespective of their religious adherence. Not only should we practice the lessons of this festive period as individuals, but as a nation, we have a lot to learn to ensure and maintain national discipline, loyalty, obedience and progress.

It is obedience to God's will and sacrifice that can rid our nation of greed, corruption, indolence, selfishness, and other ills which could inhibit our progress.

Our determination to build a unified and great nation requires a joint effort which demands tolerance, understanding and sacrifice.

For those performing the Hajji, I wish them all a very pleasant and successful pilgrimage, and that they may return home safely to live a more meaningful life so that we all can build a better society for us and for our children. I implore all Nigerians that we should let the lessons of sacrifice and obedience to God's will on this festive period be our watch-word in our lives, so that we could give service to our country and mankind at large.

Thirty-Two

Christmas Message

Jesus Christ lived and died for mankind as a whole, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo reminded Nigerians in his December 1976 Christmas message to the nation. He therefore urged Nigerians to be selfless like Christ, in order to make our society and the world a better place for ourselves and future generations.

On the occasion of Christmas, I send sincere greetings and good wishes to the entire people of Nigeria.

The message of Christmas is "Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all Men". This is a period not only for joy and merriment, but also for sober reflection on the spiritual significance of Christmas—that is, the birth of Jesus Christ for the purpose of making the world a better place for mankind.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

This is quite relevant within the context of our society and it is worthwhile to reiterate this Christmas message with all its spiritual significance in order to remind ourselves of our continuing duty to endeavour to make peace and unity reign supreme in our land and to make the society and the world a better place for ourselves and for future generations.

PEACE AND STABILITY

One cardinal aim and objective of the Federal Military Government is to ensure peace and stability in Nigeria. We shall continue along this path because it is the only way to a greater spiritual rebirth, political stability, economic development, and social progress. Let us all make a thorough examination of ourselves and our roles within the society and for the development of our people in order to attain our objectives.

TEACHINGS

In this endeavour, we must be selfless. Christ did not live to satisfy and gratify himself or his immediate family; he lived and died for mankind as a whole. Let this remind all of us that no sacrifice is too great if only to maintain peace, progress, unity, and stability in our country. Let us also always remember the teachings of love and good neighbourliness which should serve us and guide against all forces of division and disintegration in order to build a truly unified and great country.

MERRY AND JOYOUS CHRISTMAS

I wish you all a very Merry and Joyous Christmas and, above all, the guidance and blessings of God.

Local Government Elections

The Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, on the eve of the Local Government elections appealed to the nation to ensure the success of the elections due to be held the following day, December 28, 1976, throughout the country.

On the eve of the Local Government elections, I wish to appeal to all Nigerians to rise to the occasion with all sense of duty and civic responsibility. These elections are an important milestone in the history of our great country. It is, therefore, the duty of all of us to ensure the success of these elections—which are the culmination of months of constant effort and hard work on the part of all concerned in introducing reformed governmental structure at the local level. How every one of us cast our votes tomorrow will determine the composition and calibre of representation in the local Government Councils. These Local Government elections are about the stimulation, development and enhancement of the welfare, peace, and happiness of our peoples at the local level. We need, and it is possible, to have responsible government at that level. All voters have the responsibility to participate in this process by casting their votes honestly and without fear or favour for the candidates they feel best qualified to undertake the responsibilities of local government. We must refrain from unpatriotic electoral malpractices and abuses which in the past plagued our elections at all levels.

Tomorrow, let us all exercise our right to vote and let us vote responsibly according to our judgements.

Thirty-Four

1977 New Year's Message

In his New Year's Message, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo in a broadcast to the nation on January 1, 1977, stressed the need for Nigerians to show deep sense of pride and commitment to their country not by being destructively critical, but by making constructive, loyal and selfless contributions to the common effort of building a new and better country.

I wish you all and our great country a happy and prosperous New Year. Occasions like this are too often given to specific review of the past year. In addition to activities of Government being open, and speaking for themselves, each Commissioner will from now on brief the nation on his Ministry. I shall therefore, deviate from the normal pattern and dwell more on general issues affecting this great nation. I am doing this out of the conviction that unless, and until we have the right conceptual framework for ordering and guiding the nation, our vision, sense of mission, and achievements will remain limited.

Our major pre-occupation is the stability of the country and the mechanics of raising and improving the standard of living of everyone who lives within our borders. To this end, I am convinced that if we concentrate on thoughtful application of mechanisation and adaptive technology to the production and distribution of goods and services within the national framework, and in the spirit of love, understanding and unity, Nigeria's objectives will be realised sooner and more effectively than we currently think is possible.

At this stage of our development as a nation, what must appeal to us is a mode of thought and organisation that enhances the welfare of our people and brings about the improvement of the majority of Nigerians. There is still a lot to be done in improving and developing our economy. We remain cut off in terms of physical communications and commercial interaction from our African brothers, and indeed, from ourselves within Nigeria. We must, therefore, adopt strategies and tactics which will enable us to conquer these obstacles to development within the shortest period of time.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Of all developing countries in the world, few, if any, can rival Nigeria and Nigerians in total involvement at every level of economic activity. The enterprise and enthusiasm of our citizens for participating in economic activity are boundless. This should be a source of pride to all of us. These few but critical observations buttress my conviction that we possess the will, the desire, and the enthusiasm. We are also fortunate to possess a wide and varied resource base which makes economic development in modern terms a possibility. With such a favourable combination of human and

material resources, what we need in addition to purposefulness and direction given by Government, is discipline, dedication and the spirit which enables people to raise public interest and general welfare above selfish ends.

SENSE OF PRIDE AND COMMITMENT

Nigerians must show deep sense of pride and commitment to their country not by being destructively critical but by making constructive, loyal and selfless contribution to the common effort of building a new and better country. We must be guided by realism, understanding and conscious awareness of our responsibilities and duties as Nigerians. Our national and individual New Year resolution should be our determination to perform our duties and shoulder our responsibilities as Nigerians, better than we have ever done. Individual and collective efforts are complementarily required for the tasks ahead of us.

The organisational and technological complexity of modern economy calls for conscious public intervention in all spheres.

We cannot afford to build a nation in which a handful of people exclusively own and control the means of production and distribution to the perpetual detriment of the majority. That will be creating conflicts which will sooner or later disrupt economic and social progress.

In days gone by in most of our traditional societies, the ruling group accepted responsibility for the economic and social welfare of the people. We therefore have no cause today, under any guise, to forsake the even-handed treatment and welfare of the majority of our people. We must all rededicate ourselves anew to the task of reducing the mental and material hardship brought on fellow Nigerians by artificial scarcity, poor means of distribution, greed, selfishness and minority control of resources belonging rightly to all Nigerians.

WAR AGAINST INFLATION

The past year has witnessed determined efforts against inflation and agents of inflation in our midst. Efforts in this direction will not be relented in the New Year. But may I also call on well-meaning and patriotic Nigerians to join in waging war against inflation and hoarders by consuming less of non-essential items and reporting hoarders of essential items to price control authorities. Stiff penalties await hoarders who must be regarded as enemies of the society.

PROBLEMS

There are three major problem areas to which we must continue to concentrate. These are:

The problem of our attitude, especially the attitude of elites to the society in a world dominated by the search for facts, knowledge and acquisition of technology;

another is the problem of transforming our physical environments and society which are largely based on manual and traditional methods into technological modern society; and thirdly,

the problem of bringing about the necessary changes in organisational structure and the desired attitude of the people to accept and function within these changes.

In all three areas, success depends to a large extent on how much we depend less on others and more on ourselves. We must reduce our consumption of imported non-essential or luxury items. We must encourage investment in all productive activities at home. Our educated men and elites must consciously contribute to the tasks in hand by ridding themselves of prejudice, ignorance of their own country, self and sectional interests. Only through these efforts can the potential of our people be fully developed.

FOUNDATION

The Federal Military Government's political programme provides a solid foundation upon which the desired social and economic structure can be built. This Administration's commitment to the transfer of political power to elected representatives remains unshaken. The preliminary reports so far received on the conduct of the recent Local Government elections all over the country are satisfactory and encouraging. Throughout the implementation of our political programme, we shall be guided by genuine Nigerian needs and conditions. The view of Nigerians across the nation would continue to be sought. This approach of consultation and responsiveness will continue to guide all our endeavors, and with God and all Nigerians on our side, we shall not fail.

VIGILANCE

There are enemies of society within and outside our gates who will do anything to halt our political, social, and economic progress. They appear in different guises. We must watch out for them. We must be vigilant.

In a few days, we have, as a nation, an important engagement in hosting FESTAC. I have confidence in our traditional hospitality and I am sure that our guests will find their stay in Nigeria a memorable one. I appeal to all Nigerians to ensure that they play their part as good hosts to make the Festival a great success and a pride to the black race.

I will, finally, advise all road users, if and when they must be on the road, to give a thought to others, and respect human life. There can be no greater obstacle to development than a wanton and thoughtless waste of human lives. We cannot afford this.

I wish you all, once again, a very meaningful, productive, and prosperous New Year.

Welcoming President Kaunda of Zambia

At the invitation of the Federal Military Government, President Kenneth Kaunda paid an official visit to Nigeria from January 11 to 16, 1977. In a speech made by his Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo at an official Banquet given in honour of the President, General Obasanjo reiterated the total commitment of the Nigerian Government and people, to the cause of freedom and respect for human dignity in Southern Africa. He said both Nigerians and Zambians were convinced that freedom from oppression was "the sacred right of all human beings."

It is for me a privilege and great honour to welcome personally to Nigeria, on behalf of the Federal Military Government and the entire people of Nigeria, an eminent African statesman and a renowned humanist, in the person of His Excellency Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, President of the Republic of Zambia. In so doing, I should like to add that we fully appreciate the great sacrifice your visit at this juncture involves. Mr. President, at a time when the desperate acts of aggression from the racist regime in Zimbabwe constitute a continuous threat to peace and security in your region of our African Continent, we regard your visit in these circumstances as a clear testimony of the cordial relations which have so happily existed between our two sister Republics in the past, and which continue to grow stronger from day to day.

As I am sure you would have observed since your arrival among us, our people have been most anxious to reciprocate your wonderful gesture by coming out to welcome a leader who has given a uniquely African meaning to the concept of freedom. In the same spirit, those of our people who are gathered here this evening highly appreciate the honour and privilege of welcoming the Head of a friendly African State which has for long remained in the vanguard of the heroic struggle to free Southern Africa from colonial and racist rule.

COMMON AFFINITIES

Mr. President, the Republic of Zambia, for whose independence you once toiled so assiduously and with such rare devotion, and whose progress thereafter you have guided with such distinction, shares numerous historical, geographical, and socio-economic affinities with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is, therefore, with great pleasure and a deep sense of satisfaction that we render due homage tonight to a worthy African leader and an elder statesman who has done so much to bring peace, progress, unity and stability to his country, and also to a Continent in which Zambia stands astride the frontiers between free Africa and the lands of servitude and human bondage. It is our hope, Mr. President, that in the rather short time covered by your visit, you and your entourage have seen in those parts of our country which you have visited, examples of the efforts which the Federal and State Governments of Nigeria are making to promote the well-being of our people. Above all, we sincerely hope that you have been able to observe some of the many problems of development which we

share in common with Zambia, as well as the practical demonstration of the affection, admiration and respect which Nigerians from all walks of life have for you and your great country.

ACHIEVEMENTS

For our part, Mr. President, I can assure you that our people have followed with keen interest the impressive achievements of the Zambian Republic in the political, economic, social and cultural fields under Your Excellency's distinguished and able leadership. Your great efforts to redress the neglect of the colonial past, and to usher in a truly African socio-economic system that will ensure justice and a decent standard of living for all are admired.

Similarly, Your Excellency, we have watched with keen interest the adoption and practice of the Social Philosophy of Humanism, and the efforts of your Government to infuse this principle into the process of national development.

SACRED RIGHT

Like you Mr. President, and the fraternal people of the Zambian Republic, the Nigerian government and people are of course totally committed to the cause of freedom and respect for human dignity in Southern Africa, and simply not for its own sake, but because we are convinced that freedom from oppression is the sacred right of all human beings. In the pursuit of this objective, we shall not consider any sacrifice too great, to hasten the end of all oppression and injustice in Southern Africa, and to ensure the total liquidation of Apartheid, foreign domination, and economic exploitation. We are irrevocably committed with all freedom loving peoples everywhere to the enthronement of justice, human dignity and equal opportunity to all racial groups in Southern Africa.

TRIBUTE

I should like at this juncture, Mr. President, to express sincere tributes to the determination of the front-line States in the Southern Africa struggle, of which your great country is an important Member, for their selflessness and exemplary dedication to the cause of freedom in Africa. We hail their courage, and are proud of the dogged resistance of the heroic people of Zambia against constant provocation and acts of unprovoked aggression by the racist regime in Zimbabwe. We recognise, with admiration, that to stand up proudly, with heads bloodied but unbowed, against the forces of oppression and evil from the illegal regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa, is a singular demonstration of dedication to the cause of freedom.

We recognise, further, that the people of Zambia have had to bear the brunt of the war on behalf of Africa, at considerable human and material cost so that others may be free. We salute the courage, dedication, determination and sacrifice of our Zambian brothers and sisters in bringing about the liberation of Angola and Mozambique. I should like to reassure you, Mr. President, that tales of your personal efforts and the sacrifices of the gallant people of Zambia, will continue to be heard when the enemy is finally defeated and when the history of Africa comes to be written afresh. We note with pride, and congratulate Your Excellency, that a son of Africa, Your Honourable self, has become the first recipient of the peace prize established in memory of the founder of the Republic of Pakistan.

CORDIAL RELATIONS

Your Excellency, the Nigerian Government and people are highly gratified that a spirit of complete cordiality based on the ideals of mutual respect and affection prevails over the bilateral relations between our two sister Republics. It is our hope, Mr. President, that these relations will, indeed, be strengthened and further consolidated for the mutual benefit of our two peoples.

We consider Your Excellency's visit at this time as very opportune indeed. As we prepare for the final stages of the struggle in Southern Africa, we are fully convinced that your visit has provided a valuable opportunity, for reinforcing our joint efforts in the search for peace, justice and progress on our Continent.

Mr. President, I should like to add that this occasion has afforded me personally, and the Government and people of Nigeria, a good opportunity to renew our bonds of friendship and co-operation with the Government and people of the Republic of Zambia, and to demonstrate our abiding faith in our historical ties and our common destiny. Mr. President, we hope that your stay with us has been pleasant and fruitful. We now wish you and your entourage, a safe journey back to the Republic of Zambia.

In conclusion, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I invite you to rise and drink with me, a toast to the health and happiness of His Excellency Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to the continuing happiness, peace, and prosperity of the friendly people of the Republic of Zambia.

Long Live the Republic of Zambia,
Long Live the Friendship and co-operation between Zambia and Nigeria,
Long Live African Unity!

Thirty-Four

Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture: Opening Ceremony

On January 15, 1977 His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the Opening Ceremony of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture which took place in Lagos from January 15 to February 12, 1977.

May I, on behalf of the people and Government of Nigeria, welcome you to Lagos. We also extend fraternal greetings to Black and African peoples wherever they may be on the occasion of the official opening of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture. This afternoon, we are rekindling the torch lit fifteen years ago in Dakar. We should like to record our appreciations to the people and Government of the Republic of Senegal for hosting the First Festival of Negro Arts, and thereby initiating the process of cultural renewal, and communion of Black and African People from all over the world.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Ordinarily, the term 'diaspora' refers to a movement and dispersion away from a centre. I would like to suggest that a movement towards the source, is also diasporic. In the first sense, those of us Black and African people still living on our great Continent of Africa, normally direct our attention on events and developments in the cities of Europe and North America. In the second sense, to most Black and African people who live away from our great Continent, Africa is still more than a historical connection. This gathering we are witnessing now is diasporic in both senses in that we are attempting to recapture the origins and authenticity of the African heritage.

Throughout the period of this Festival, Africa will be the focus of attention not only of Black and African people, but of all the peoples of the world to whom we are linked in our common humanity. For some, the Lagos Festival is a feast of masks and dances.

Others see it as a setting for restoring harmony to the individual psyche. Yet for some others, it is a quest for the base metal. This is in the nature of things. However, above and beyond these individual and subjective levels of approach to the Festival, there is a dimension that encompasses the inner and deeper reality, the urging, and the inspiration of the whole race of Black and African people. It is this communal and objective dimension that provides the spirit to which this Festival is dedicated. We are, indeed, the children of diaspora. Nigeria, therefore, welcomes you all to one of your homelands here on the African soil.

CULTURAL RESTORATION

On this occasion, it is appropriate that we consider our place on the world scene. Culture, after all, is the material and physical expression of the interaction between man and his universe. For a long time, our place in the world was mapped, analysed and interpreted by others. The Black and African peoples of the world, while yet living were, through this process, reduced to inert if not inanimate objects of Western speculation. The journey towards political awakening began with a cultural restoration of our denigrated past. We greet again the pioneers, living and dead, of this restoration. They have individually and collectively cleared the ground, and the field has been passed to us for consolidation, preservation and transfer to posterity.

NEW APPRAISAL

Whatever is our various and individual callings, we should resolve to dedicate the Lagos Festival to the sowing of a seed which, nurtured by renewed awareness and dedication, will bloom anew. We invite you to look around you and appraise for yourselves what the future holds for us; what promise this cultural re-awakening holds for us. I make bold to say that the star of our peoples is on the ascendancy and we shall, without doubt in my mind, realise the essential and ultimate freedom of thought and action which all of us are striving for.

ART FORMS

To succeed we must restore the link between culture, creativity and mastery of modern technology and industrialism. The timelessness of our art forms has made this great Continent the point of reference for defining both ancient and modern art. The terra cotta head of Ife challenges the claim of Greco-Latin pre-eminence. The creativity of Dogon and Bambarra pre-dates the originality of modernists from Gauguin to Picasso and Moore. The power of African creativity is often described as past, ancient, and only of archeological interest, as if a people could ever lose that universal inner motivation wherein creativity emanates. The Benin art that so engages the interests of the art connoisseur, still remains a living force and continues to enrich the artistic heritage of not only this nation, but of all lovers of African art. Much of this creative power and genius will be apparent here in Lagos during the next four weeks.

CONTRIBUTION

It has now been established that man started his journey from our great Continent. It has also been accepted that the earliest tools, which were the beginning of modern technology, were fashioned here. The pyramids of Egypt, the ruins of Zimbabwe, the subtle and complex designs of African traditional architecture, and the achievements and scholarship of the University of Timbuktu, all attest to the fact that there is a rich and distinguished past, for which all African peoples can proudly claim world distinction. Human civilisation was a corporate experience of the human race and our contribution has not been inconsiderable.

This great Continent had great civilisations before and after the awakening of the northern hemisphere. It seems, these days, necessary to make these excursions into the past, but I believe we have come of age and no longer need reassurance from ourselves or from someone else that we had a past—a past equally inspiring and worthy of the greatest recognition we can afford our enviable past. What is of paramount importance is to recognise and give modern technology which is the base of Western dominance, its due place. Modern technology is indispensable to our march forward

past is what makes us and will determine whether, indeed, technology adds any ethical, spiritual and other talent to our people. Technology has to fit into our culture and our conception of the word and not *vice-versa*.

MENTAL EMANCIPATION

The answer lies in our mental emancipation, a break with the ideas that technology is currently a Western preserve, means emasculating our culture and identifying with a so-called Technological Culture! The Lagos Festival should be seen as a communion of thought and action, and of deep reflection. The ethnocentric bias that we have lived with for so long, the false dichotomy which classed the human race into masters and servants, one half with a part and one without, is one of the great historical frauds of our time. We can only refute and reject this dichotomy by our actions and not rhetoric. We must do all we can to erase the foundations of this division which has led to the subjugation and inhuman treatment of some of our brothers right here in Africa. Superiority lies in our strength and an invariable spirit that rejects enslavement in all its forms, mental and otherwise.

We must dedicate this Festival to ensure that Black and African peoples all over the world become aware of what it takes to change the lot of our peoples, and industrialisation and technological advance are our essential imperative. Just as our ancestors have made a timeless impact in the development of aesthetic cultural artifacts, we too have the task of bringing this inherent creative power to bear on the mastery of industrial progress.

PAST HEROES

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to announce to our guests that today is Nigeria's National Remembrance Day, a day normally reserved for quiet reflection and meditation. It is principally a time for paying tribute to the sacrifice of our countrymen who lived and died in the interest of our nation and the service of humanity at large. The importance of the Festival to us and the involvement of all Black and African peoples from all over the world have turned a normally subdued occasion into one of exhilaration and fanfare. In our happy mood and on this auspicious occasion, let us all spare a thought to our past heroes all over the world who have in their various endeavours enriched our heritage.

To all those who have come from distant lands, we say a special welcome, and we hope we can count on your understanding if we cannot provide the optimum comforts of a press button society. We hope that our hospitality will match our deep appreciation and gratitude to all of you. It is our great hope that this Festival will spark the drive and urge in all Black and African peoples such that the humanity and calm which our ancestors brought to bear on art and aesthetics may be reflected in our adaptation of science and technology, in the better service of mankind. May this Festival enable each and everyone of us to re-open the channel of creativity which makes us so proud of our past and prepare us for a greater and better tomorrow.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of Black and African peoples of the world, I declare open the Second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture for the glory and advancement of our people and for the enrichment of human knowledge, thoughts and ideas.

FESTAC COLLOQUIUM

On January 17, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the opening of the Colloquium, one of the most important activities which took place during the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture. Speaking on the importance of the Colloquium, he said, "This Festival will not be complete without a colloquium. While the events and exhibitions provide visual displays of our art and artifacts, the Colloquium should impose living and dynamic ratio on the relatively static combination of mind and motion which is dance, song, painting and sculpture. Your deliberations are therefore at the nerve centre of our quest for mental and material liberation from our status as trading posts for the industrial states of the world."

It is a unique privilege for me to address this assembly of Black and African Scholars from all over the world.

A man lived amongst us recently, a man died amongst us recently. He was respected for his Africanness, his deep humility and his painstaking and patient pursuit of originality. These three attributes—Africanness, humility and originality—are of great significance in understanding the importance of the colloquium in the Festival. If we simply and naively think that a rediscovery or exhumation of the contribution of our ancestors is an end in itself, Professor Zirimu and all of us would have failed not only ourselves, but all Black and African people throughout the world. For most people who assert the Africanness of themselves or of things, there is a standing tragedy. The psycho-physiology of knowledge would confirm a built-in handicap for any human group who cannot work in their indigenous language form. The standing tragedy of all Blacks and Africans wherever they may be is that their tongues have been pulled out and they must speak in strange tongues. To overcome this standing tragedy, we need deep humility, unruffled patience and painstaking dedication. It is my hope that all these attributes would go into our quest for knowledge about ourselves and our contribution to human knowledge and civilisation.

TRADING POST

When we made our first contact with the merchant adventurers from Western Europe, most of our shores became trading posts where primary products were exchanged for processed goods. I would like to suggest that the modification and complications of modern economic organisation and exchange apart, our uneven relationship with Europe, and now including Northern America, remains basically unchanged. We continue to be trading posts which supply primary products in exchange for processed goods. The existence of import substitution industries does not detract from this fact. These trading posts are run and maintained by our citizens. These agents can be grouped into four:

- (a) Intellectual trading post agents
- (b) Commercial trading post agents

(c) Bureaucratic trading post agents

(d) Technical trading post agents

The activities of these agents constitute impediments to Black African development. Today, our attention is focused on the intellectual trading post agents, who, to my mind, have two common characteristics, that is, they possess abundant imitative capacity

I have taken the trouble to develop this analytic framework to enable us to relate the spotlight on the past to our present conditions and aspirations. Only such a link can put the Colloquium in its right perspective. Are we reviewing the past for self-glorification; are we establishing the contribution of Black and African Scholars in the past; exhibiting our achievements to give the present-day Black and African a surer footing to make him a better agent of those who control the products of science and technology? I would suggest that the answer to these questions is emphatically 'No.'

In fact, the Colloquium should be seen not as an exercise in revalorisation, but entirely as a means of achieving mental liberation. I say this because of the purveyor of intellect and the stock of intellectual property are key variables in the development of our minds and in enabling us to come to terms with our environment. This is not to suggest that technical, bureaucratic and commercial trading post agents do not count in this process. Much, however, turns on the application of intellect to our activities. To the extent that we can achieve originality in our thoughts the developmental gap which today consumes all our energy as a people will be wiped out and we would join the ranks of the leaders in technological creativity in the hope of raising the standard of living of our people.

I am deliberately steering clear of pure scholasticism because the socio-economic condition of Black and African people throughout the world is a constant reminder that whatever inquiry does not positively lead in the direction of tangible results is not the business of the Black and African scholar today. Our ancestors' contribution on the aesthetic plain, I have had cause to say, defies time. We must match this food for the spirit, this contribution of the soul, with a similar contribution in man's relationship with matter.

MENTAL REBIRTH

You are gathered here to consider at a comprehensive level, the contribution of Black and African peoples to civilisation and education. Your deliberations could be taken up with the Semantics of the matter. Philology and philosophy could have a field day, and at the end, all Black and African people would have very little to show for your efforts. A few of us would, of course, derive enormous intellectual pleasure and may even praise you for presenting papers whose rigour and logic, whose clarity and depth are of the highest standards, but whose standards? Let this Colloquium be the point when the process of liberating us from mental bondage to Western intellectual tradition will commence, and Black and African intellectual flower blossom. Let it be an occasion for rejecting the role of a trading post agent whose claim to fame is excellence in imitation. The excursion into the past as I said should not be given to self-glorification and self-justification. Every course of inquiry, every intellectual riposte, must move away from telling the world and ourselves that we constructed systems of thought and action, that we built roads and empires. Now is the time to build a

bridgehead for assaulting today and the future, for preparing ourselves for regaining control over our destiny.

NEED FOR CREATIVITY

I invite you to look around you and estimate the portion of the technology you depend on here which is Black or African. When you have answered the question to yourself, the direction and purpose of your examination of Black and African past and contribution should be clearer. Your inquiry must be made in the context that points in the direction of freeing your people from mental and material poverty and bondage. So, Blacks and Africans may have in the past run a flourishing research centre in Timbuktu at a time when most of Europe was unlettered. However, unless and until this fact of your past enables you to regain communion with creativity, helps you to abandon unproductive imitation, assists you in establishing what factors made Timbuktu an intellectually productive institution, you will remain intellectual trading post agents, serving the cause of alien forces for a pittance.

It is my hope that your inquiries will identify the mental and material obstacles in the way of a change of course in the direction of self sustainable and original productivity. You must give attention to the question of the medium in which your thought process is encapsulated. Have we lost our tongues for ever? Must we think and work in the languages of Europe for ever? Must the choice of fashionable, acceptable or admissible research topics and areas be dictated to us by another culturally dominant group? Must we measure the quality of our performance by standards that are foreign? How much do we delude ourselves in the pursuit of acceptability? How can the questions raised by Aime Cesaire and Frantz Fanon help us to chart another direction? How can the methodology of Ibn Khaldun and DuBois, the scholarship and activism of Dan Fodio, Ismail Toure, Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah inspire us to greater heights?

NEED FOR ORIGINALITY

As you pursue your inquiries into our contribution and heritage in the arts, languages and literature, philosophy and religion, history and government, science and technology, you must be concerned less with self glorification and self justification. Reaffirm and confirm to yourselves and to us that your work in the varying universities and research centres today bear a stamp of your blackness and Africanness. This stamp will, however, be unworthy unless such work contributes positively not to making you an efficient agent of foreign causes and interests, but a tool for increasing the share of the Black and African people in the mental and material abundance and affluence which science and technology, and the social sciences make possible in today's world.

Such a feat would earn for us the dignity we crave for, the recognition we seek and the liberation we are struggling to achieve. This Festival will not be complete without a Colloquium. While the events and exhibitions provide visual displays of our art and artifacts, the Colloquium should impose living and dynamic ratio on the relatively static combination of mind and motion which is dance, song, painting and sculpture. Your deliberations are therefore at the nerve centre of our quest for mental and material liberation from our status as trading posts for the industrial states of the world. I leave you with a call to find ways and means of opening the creative impulses which will enable black individuals, black nations and aggregates of such nations to regain control of their destinies. Only thus, can our people contribute anew their quota

to human progress, and only thus, can they obtain their fair share of the world's resources.

On this note, I leave you in the hope that sterile scholasticism which often stifles creativity will be held in good check, and positive effort made to relate your inquiry to our socio-political and economic conditions.

Such a relationship should open the way for solutions brewed and distilled in the milieu of the human condition of Black and African people, taking maximum advantage of available stock of knowledge. I formally declare the Colloquium open and I wish you all a meaningful and fruitful deliberative session and a memorable cultural feast.

FESTAC Regatta

Speech by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo at the Formal Opening of the Traditional Regatta on January 25, 1977, another high-light of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture which took place in Lagos in 1977.

It is my greatest pleasure to be called upon to perform the Opening Ceremony of the Traditional Regatta, which is one of the special events organised by the Federal Military Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in honour of all participants and visitors to FESTAC '77.

This Regatta is significant because it is the first time a Traditional Regatta of this magnitude, drawn from the Regatta wealth of all the riverine States of Nigeria, is being organised in the country. What we shall be seeing in the next few minutes can, therefore, be appropriately tagged, "A NIGERIAN NATIONAL REGATTA." And this goes to explain why the Federal Military Government and the people of Nigeria have decided to offer it as a special souvenir to our brothers and sisters from all over the black world and our visiting friends from all over the world, at FESTAC '77.

Regatta is a most picturesque and colourful entertainment among the people of the Niger Delta and the riverine areas of Nigeria. It is very popular in eight of the nineteen States of the Federation. Originally, it was employed for both offensive and defensive purposes against invaders and also for fishing expeditions. It has now become an annual festival, indeed a kind of sports, where all participating teams display their resourcefulness and expertise in the art of rowing. Though, our world today is a world of speed boats and sophisticated fishing boats, this, like many other aspects of our cultural heritage, attests to the fact that we had our own way of doing things and that our existence did not start with the advent of other races on our Continent.

It is with this pride, Distinguished Guests, that I declare open this Traditional Regatta.



Fig. 8 Left to right: H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, President M. Kerekou of Benin and President Eyadema of Togo at Murtala Muhammed Airport when they arrived for the FESTAC 77



Fig. 9 The opening of FESTAC 77 was a memorable event. H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo is seen here leading some African Heads of State, President Houphouët Boigny of Ivory Coast, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, and Sir David Jawara of The Gambia to the V.I.P. Box at the National Theatre



Fig. 10 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressing the traditional rulers at the opening of their meeting held at the Institute of International Affairs, Lagos



Fig. 11 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo at the National Exhibit held at the National Museum, Lagos, during FESTAC 77. The Exhibition shows 5,000 years of Nigerian art including this iron foundry used by our ancestors



Fig. 12 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo tries his hands on the "Ayo" game during his visit to the National Museum at the occasion of the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC).



Fig. 13 Some Heads of States and other important personalities at the opening ceremony of the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), which took place in Lagos.



Fig. 14 The Head of State, H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo performing the lighting of the 1st ECOWAS Games torch at Dodan Barracks, Lagos



Fig. 15 The Head of State, H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo welcoming President William Tolbert of Liberia who was in Nigeria to attend the ECOWAS Summit. (p. 163)

Thirty-Nine

FESTAC Durbar

In his address at the Durbar on February 8, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo described the event as "unique," because it presents many features of the country's traditional power structure in the Northern part of the country, especially the Emirate system as it was long before the British came to Nigeria.

For the past three weeks, we have been exposed to a variety of drama, music, and art which altogether boldly describe the richness of Black and African Culture. Our scholars have also critically examined through the Colloquium, the contribution of Black people to human civilisation and education. The programme so far has been a particularly intensive period for re-examining both the content and form of our culture. The period has provided the opportunity not only to witness the complexity of our cultural inheritance, but also the chance to evaluate this inheritance along with other cultures. We have been reassured during the past three weeks that despite the great variety in form and content, there is an underlying common core which symbolises the political awareness and unity of African and Black peoples the world over. We have seen over this short period the cross cultural influences in Africa which make it impossible to draw sharp and distinct cultural lines on the Continent, and indeed, on the map of the Black World. The impact and meaning of this, socially and politically, I am glad to say, have not been lost on us. For those who have come from afar, it has been a refreshing discovery that our basic cultures have remained unruffled in spite of desperate unwarranted influences.

Music, drama, and art is not all that there is to Black Culture. Such an interpretation would be too simple. FESTAC, to my mind, is more than the totality of form and content to our music, drama, and art. It is also more than a simple rediscovery of our unity. We should look beyond the similarities of garb, appearances and dances and beyond symbolic presentations. We should look towards a systematic understanding of the relationship that should guide the conduct and control of our affairs. It is by understanding and codifying such principles that we can truly assert our influence as Black and African peoples.

TRADITIONAL POWER STRUCTURE

This morning, in a different setting and away from Lagos, we are witnessing the great Durbar which is yet another unique aspect of our heritage. This, I believe, is peculiarly Nigerian, although many of our neighbours will easily recognise and identify with many features of this presentation. It is unique because to a very large extent, it presents many features of our traditional power structure in this part of the

country, the Emirate system as it was even before the advent of the British. Many of its essential features are still intact, and I believe, this is one of the few countries in which the colonialists have found it necessary to leave the traditional power structure more or less intact.

This system met by the British, had its rules, its own laws, and its own bureaucracy. The British, no doubt, found the Emirate system so effective that they had no choice but to adapt it to suit their imperial objectives. Since independence, the modifications that have been found necessary had made use of the strength of the system.

EMIRATE SYSTEM

The Emirate system of administration is part of the old caliphate system established in this part of the country by a great African Reformer: Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. The Emir was controlled by the mores and practices of the caliphate. Of greater importance is the fact that the opinion of the governed counted a great deal in influencing the conduct of the policies as well as in deciding the popularity or otherwise, of an Emir. The point then is quite simple: the effectiveness of the Government depended to a large extent on the cooperation and opinions of the governed. Furthermore, the effectiveness and popularity of his rule could be gauged from the response which the governed gave at occasions as the Durbar. Thus, to my mind, the Durbar is a device whereby the Emir can judge the popularity of his rule, as well as an indication of the loyalty of the governed to his rule. This loyalty, this indication of acceptance, is graphically presented in the Durbar.

THE DURBAR

Let me say that the Durbar has always been limited to the geographical domain of an Emir. The different colours, regalia and apparels, simply represent the various divisions of the Emirate, as well as the numerous political functions of each unit. In other words the Durbar is one of those singular occasions in which a Black civilisation has been able to present in different colourful guises and format, the political and administrative division of a given territory. By that simple control device, and despite the ethnic diversity of the territory, a collection of peoples are able to truly present their basic unity.

It is this sense of togetherness, of unity and of geography that changed the Durbar to what it is today. One would recall that the first occasion when something of this kind was done in this part of Nigeria in modern time was in 1956, to mark the visit of the British Monarch. The occasion of internal self-government for the then Northern Nigeria in 1959 also presented another opportunity for a Durbar. Since 1959, a number of Durbars have been staged. The pomp and pageantry on these occasions demonstrated in one single event, the complex social organisation and respect for authority in our system of traditional government. They also reveal the beauty of our artistic creativity and our horsemanship.

Today, in witnessing the Durbar and savouring its splendid spectacle, we are symbolically paying our respects to a civilisation that existed here in this country as well as in many other parts of Africa at various times in our Continental history before the advent of Imperialists from Europe.

Your Excellencies, I hope that this Durbar will serve to widen the horizon for all that FESTAC is trying to achieve. A Durbar is more than a palace show. It is an occasion in which a collection of peoples, with pomp, pageantry and enthusiasm, loudly and graphically present their sense of unity. In short, the Durbar represents the idea that

culture is more than simply an ornament of one's existence, it is also a necessary condition for it. In a sense the whole of FESTAC is one grand durbar in which African peoples with their kith and kin are in one event trying to recapture their common identity and pride which is the beginning of a new independent collective future. We must derive pride and inspiration from each and every contribution no matter from what country and which part of the Black world. I do hope Your Excellencies will carry away lasting impressions of this Durbar and all other contributions made to this Festival, and keep the spirit and the purpose of the Festival alive for the good of our peoples.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Emirs, Chiefs, Officials, and others who have spared no effort to make this occasion possible. This, I am sure, is a contribution we are all happy to make to FESTAC. I thank most sincerely, Your Excellencies, and all our distinguished visitors from within our Continent and outside it who have found time to attend this occasion.

Launching of the ₦20 Currency

On Friday, February 11, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo launched the ₦20 currency note bearing the portrait of the late Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed as a permanent and lasting tribute for his selfless dedication to the service of his fatherland.

This occasion is one specially set aside not only for the launching of the ₦20 currency note, but also for the remembrance of the life and death of our late leader, General Murtala Muhammed, whose sad and cruel death, this country was made to suffer one year ago next Sunday.

The nation has paid fitting tribute to him in many ways but I am sure that Nigerians and many people outside Nigeria who shared our sorrow and grief will not consider more honours too great or superfluous to be bestowed on the late General. For the first time in the history of this great country, we are having a currency note that bears the portrait of an illustrious Nigerian, late General Murtala Muhammed, as a permanent and lasting tribute for his selfless dedication to the service of his fatherland. Let this signify a new era for the unity of our country, and a more determined individual and collective effort, to bring stability and progress to our country and improve the lot of our people. The Federal Military Government will continue to devise and follow programmes that will achieve these objectives.

The Central Bank should be congratulated not only for producing this high quality currency note for release to the public to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of the late General Muhammed, but also for their keeping pace in response to the phenomenal increase in our money supply and the tempo of our economic activities.

It is with great pride and sense of duty that I hereby launch the ₦20 Bank Note bearing the portrait of our most distinguished leader, late General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, a man, who by his indomitable courage and total dedication to the service of this country, has left behind bold footprints on the sands of time.

With this permanent and lasting tribute, the Federal Military Government has decided that it is no longer necessary to display the late General's photograph in public buildings and offices.

Finally, the greatest tribute we can pay to this great African leader is to re-dedicate ourselves to a co-operative effort to build a better and happier nation than we inherited.

Forty-One

Closing Ceremony of FESTAC

When the four week long Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture ended in Lagos, on February 12, 1977, Lt. General Obasanjo made a formal address during the Closing Ceremony. He observed that the Festival had established the cultural influences which underlie the unity of the African peoples born on the Continent and in the diaspora, and that the re-establishment of confidence in the culture of the Black people and the breakthrough in modern technology by the African and Black people, were very essential for breaking away from mental enslavement and cultural subjugation.

It is with a very profound sense of satisfaction that I rise to address you at these ceremonies marking the close of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture. Today's ceremonies mark the culmination of four weeks of intense Black and African Cultural and Artistic activities and spectacles, the kind of which have never been seen before. The various presentations of the visual arts, dances, music, and drama have clearly demonstrated the originality, vitality, and authenticity of the common culture of the African and every Black man wherever he may be. The FESTAC events of the past four weeks have spotlighted Africa's culture in its highest and widest concept. Our artists, performers and intellectuals have done the African proud and they deserve our warmest congratulations and deep gratitude.

To my mind, FESTAC was much more than a revivalist rejuvenation of our common cultural heritage. More importantly, it has clearly brought out and established the cross cultural influences which underlie the unity of the peoples of the African Continent, and of African descent everywhere in the world. The content and form of all the presentations have established that neither the great Desert nor the Oceans which physically separate our peoples, have constituted a barrier to the symbiotic cultural influences of the Black man.

I personally have never felt the need to demonstrate to people of other cultures that the Black man has a rich culture and a proud past. I do hope that after the experience of the past four weeks, no African or Black man feels the need to do so. Anybody who does not now recognise that the African has a cultural heritage just as resilient and as rich as, or even richer than any other, is a bigot who will not be convinced. If there is a case for a third and subsequent Festivals of World Black and African Arts and Culture, it is not to convert any cultural bigots. The case rests on the fact that, as we have now demonstrated, these Festivals stimulate and bring out the best in us artistically, musically, and intellectually. There is every justification for cultural Olympics without the competitiveness of the sports olympiad.

CULTURAL VALUES

During the past four weeks, we have discovered that our cultural values have remained intact and unadulterated despite a heavy onslaught by colonial and imperial ideas and pressure. That attack had sought to condemn and undermine our values and

alter the course of the evolution of our civilisation, such that in the process we lose our identity as a people. FESTAC has made it possible for us to see ourselves through our own eyes, and for all of us to know that our solidarity and unity as a people is on a sound foundation. More importantly, in the process of examining our own cultural heritage, we have discovered the vitality and organic unity of that culture. We have also been sensitised to the need to propagate this culture far and wide. It is one singular event which has emphasised the need to refurbish our solidarity through a renewed cultural awareness. This must enable us in part to consolidate and strengthen our peoples' political, economic, and social progress.

OUR LIVING CULTURE

The 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture is in part a cultural revival for us. A revival is more than a simple re-discovery since one does not re-discover what one has not lost. Our culture is a living culture—we possess it, we feel it and we live it. African peoples the world over have that sub-conscious, in-born capacity for mutual identification wherever and whenever they meet. What FESTAC has demonstrated is the will and capacity on our part to translate and codify this identity into a conscious cultural process.

RE-ORIENTATION OF ELITES

However much some people might have felt the necessity to assert the existence of a rich Black and African culture, such an assertion or the lack of it would not, in itself, alter the substance and vitality of that culture. The need for reassurance is in fact nothing more than a crisis of confidence felt mainly by our elite. Whereas we have, as a race, almost achieved total political emancipation, we are yet to take a bold and positive step towards economic liberation. Our efforts in the direction of economic liberation cannot achieve their desired objectives as long as we live under the most crippling form of imperialism, which is cultural and mental enslavement. The break from mental colonialism must begin with the re-orientation of our elites who are after all, the main point of contact with Western civilisation. The attack on mental bondage must start at our universities and other institutions of learning. These institutions must design studies and courses aimed at rehabilitating aspects of our history and ideas based on first hand interpretation, by African people themselves, of their own history and civilisation.

BASIS FOR DOMINATION

The basis of economic and ideological dominance of the world by the Western powers today is technological superiority. As in pre-imperial times, the African with his brothers in the rest of the world must make his mark in the development of modern technology. To prepare for this task, as experience of other races has shown, we must have recourse to our own authentic and appropriate cultural base.

The dilemma of contemporary Black and African Scholars is that they have of necessity, devoted considerable effort and energy re-acting to Western views and prejudices on African history on the negative and positive side and being themselves excellent scholars of Western history and ideas. They have indeed made great contributions to our understanding of other peoples' cultures and to the solution of other societies' problems. They have not devoted proportionate time and attention to the progress and problems of African peoples and their societies. The proceedings of the Colloquium have indicated that there is an awareness of this dilemma by Black

scholars themselves. This augurs well for the future, since the recognition of the problem is the essential beginning of its solution. They must now concentrate on the dawn of this indigenous momentum to study and promote the interest of the Black and African World. Resolutions and proposals by themselves are meaningless to people unless they are translated into positive and objective actions.

BLACK ARTS MUSEUM

In recognition of the contributions made by every participant during this Festival, and in recognition of the need to preserve for posterity, creative work of value, the Nigerian Federal Government has decided to establish a Museum of Black and African Arts and Civilisation. This, it is recognised, is only a first step in giving continental root to what this Festival is trying to achieve; but it is, I believe, an appropriate and essential kind of beginning. This Museum will develop into one of the vital centres for the study and propagation of African Cultural Arts and Ideas. The Nigerian Federal Government pledges further its willingness to subscribe to any such efforts based in institutions of higher learning or outside, in the belief that a proliferation of Centres of African Studies all over the world, is one of the firm guarantees that a break-through will be made in giving a sound basis for what we are trying to achieve in FESTAC '77.

NEED TO KEEP FLAME BURNING

The Federal Government of Nigeria will, as soon as possible, embark on a close study of what actions and what level of encouragement it needs to give to maintain the momentum started by FESTAC '77. This will be done where necessary, in consultation with other sister Governments or other Institutions devoted to this great cause.

As a final remark, I would like to thank on behalf of the Federal Military Government and other representatives and Participants, who have either attended this Festival or expressed in any form, their moral support to this impressive gathering. We on our part, are proud and happy to host this Festival, and in spite of any shortcomings which may attend this scale and type of organisation, I believe the Festival has been indeed inspired by genuine feeling of brotherhood and solidarity. It has been one great festive occasion attended by many unforgettable moments of joy. This is a definite contribution towards progress, understanding, and peaceful co-existence, not only among ourselves but with other peoples of the world. Let a new kind of humanity emerge from the spirit of this Festival. Let humanity be led to a new platform of self-realisation where human dignity and respect for human personality will become our common watch-word.

For our brothers and sisters who came from afar, I wish you well and safe journey home, and pledge that our doors are open at all times. For those of you nearer home, I have no doubt that this Festival can only serve to reduce a rigidity of our borders and I am sure there will be increased movement, especially between scholars, and for you too, also, I wish you safe journey home, and let us all keep the flame of the Festival burning and let the burning spirit of Festival ever continue to warm your hearts as you depart from this arena.

I formally declare the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture closed.

Inauguration of the Federal Court of Appeal

Address by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo at the inauguration of the Federal Court of Appeal in Lagos on Monday, February 21, 1977.

I have, for some time now, been drawing attention to the need for self-reliance as the major key to development. I do this in the belief that only by identifying problems in our own way, can we find original and lasting solutions. I am equally convinced that only original solutions can lead us to a sound path for development and a brighter future. I suggest that this general theme applies to all aspects, both social and economic, in our society. The Judiciary is one of the cornerstones of our system and it is essential that we turn the searchlight and quest for original solutions from within the judiciary. I hope that some of the questions I will raise with you will lead to an examination of our attitudes as administrators and subjects of the law.

Firstly, I believe that the problems raised by the current observable increase in crime reflect the morality of society, especially of the deplorable influence of materialism and the erosion of our time-honoured traditional values. Unfortunately, to combat each wave of crime, we are too easily led to resort to conventional solutions, such as increasing the facilities of the administration of justice and imposition of sterner penalties which are of course necessary deterrents. But the question is whether looking in this direction alone is enough, and this leads me to a second point. I would like to put to this learned audience the suggestion that perhaps we have not related, meaningfully and sufficiently, the acquired British legal system (with its Roman and common law roots) to an understanding of our own legal system, which some of us rather disdainfully describe as native or customary.

Have our legal luminaries given adequate consideration to the idea of justice in our society? Do we understand the effects and influence of the British legal system on this so-called customary law? Could there be a conflict in the idea of justice as understood by those of us who make and administer the laws, on the one hand, and those subject to them, meaning all of us, on the other? Is it feasible to construct a new framework which would make the substance and procedure of law less intimidating and more meaningful to those subject to them? Can we find ways of remoulding the idea and dispensation of justice in the direction of assisting our efforts at creating a just and efficiently managed society?

RE-DEFINITION

These questions are further complicated by the problems we face of a rapidly

changing society. Coping with such changes is a great challenge in itself. This, I think, only underlines the need for us to identify the reference points, the under pinnings of social life which make it possible for the common man to relate, evaluate, and comprehend the changes which occur in the society. If there is any area which requires a re-definition and exploration in our quest for stability in the face of rapid change, it is our legal system. We must deliberate and apply ourselves more and more on these issues.

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT

Before I leave you, I would like to reiterate the continuing commitment of the present Administration to the improvement of the machinery of justice. Within the limitations imposed on us by time and available resources, arrangements have been made to improve the quality and capacity for the administration of justice. These measures have gone hand-in-hand with structural changes in the appellate system in the country. The logical elimination of a foreign court left our Supreme Court with final appellate jurisdiction without creating a new judicial institution to play the role the Supreme Court played before 1964. To ease congestion in the system and complete the appellate chain, a new Federal Court of Appeal has now been created and will have divisions, as you have been told, in Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu, Ibadan, Benin, and later Jos.

FOREIGN MACE WITHDRAWN

I have been made to understand that within a few weeks of the President of this Court taking his Oath of Office, the Lagos Division will be ready to take off. It is now ready to take off. This accords with the nation's desire for speedy fulfilment of its objectives. I expect administrators of Justice at every level to apply themselves more diligently to remove the disturbing congestion in our Courts. I notice with great satisfaction that the foreign mace has yielded place to a symbol created out of our own cultural context. It is a welcome and symbolic move in the direction of finding original solutions to the question of self-reliance. I expect more of such innovations, not only from the honourable legal profession, but also from other professions. I am convinced that in time, we will succeed at the level of ideas in clarifying for ourselves, and in terms that are ours, the concepts which give order to our legal processes and our social development. This, taken together with the structural improvements which we will continue to make, should, in the long run, help us to create systems which do not contradict our values, and which do not alienate us.

May I take this opportunity to assure the nation that the Federal Military Government will ensure the security of lives and property. I appeal to all to co-operate with the law enforcement agents to rid our society of crime and undesirable elements.

President of the Federal Court of Appeals, Honourable Chief Justice, the Distinguished Members of the Bench and the Bar, Ladies and Gentlemen, I declare open for service to our people in the pursuit of justice, the Federal Court of Appeal.

Traditional Rulers

Address by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo to traditional rulers representing the entire Federation in Lagos, on February 28, 1977.

In July last year, I had the first opportunity of addressing the meeting of traditional rulers representing the whole of the Federation of Nigeria. On that occasion, I laid particular emphasis on the then proposed Local Government Reforms in the successful implementation of which you, as the traditional guardians of our peoples' interests and welfare, had rightly shown great interest. I am happy to say that with the conclusion of the elections into Local Government Councils, most of which have now been inaugurated, the major foundation for these reforms has been laid. All those who have contributed to the success of the implementation so far, and no less than traditional rulers, should be thanked.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels and relax our efforts, lest we lose the momentum we have so assiduously built up. Our people must feel the impact of the new Reforms in terms of increased and improved development around them. You will all recall that at the formative stages of the proposals for the new Local Government systems, reservations were expressed. One of these reservations concerned the fear of some people that these Reforms would have the effect of dispensing with the institution of traditional rulership. By now, it should be clear to all that nothing can be farther from the truth. Indeed, the Local Government Edicts contain provisions which institutionalise and preserve the functions and powers which our traditional rulers customarily exercise in their respective communities.

As I told you in my address last year, the Local Government Reforms have two principal aims. Firstly, they are aimed at stimulating the social, economic, and political development of the Local Government Council areas. They are to do with the enhancement of the welfare, peace, and happiness of the people, particularly those living in the rural areas. Secondly, the Reforms are part of this Administration's political programme of return to civil rule. The Reforms are meant to usher in participatory democracy at the local level. Naturally, with reforms such as these which have fundamental and far-reaching effects, there are bound to be problems and difficulties initially. Some more problems will become apparent as the new system begins to work. Solutions for them will demand the best in us all. But it is the duty of all of us to draw the attention of the State Governments concerned to any such problems, since the implementation of these Reforms is primarily the responsibility of the State

Governments. It is only in this way that we can assist in strengthening the new system for the general benefit of all.

OPERATION FEED THE NATION

Two of the various socio-economic programmes of the Federal Military Government which are of direct impact and relevance to our citizens, especially our rural communities, are 'Operation Feed the Nation' and our programmes for stimulating and developing co-operatives. We have now had about ten months' experience of OFN. I believe that the public enthusiasm which attended its launching has been justified by the positive results and prospects which we have detected at the end of what could be termed the experimental stage of the Programme. 'Operation Feed the Nation' will continue to be pursued with vigour, as part of our total agricultural programme and any defects detected in its implementation so far will be removed.

A parallel programme is now being evolved by the Ministry of Co-operatives and Supply in order to complement the objectives of OFN. Adequate provisions have been made for the construction of dry and cold storages throughout the country in order to minimise wastage. Efforts are also being made to establish and rationalise various Co-operative Societies to ensure that our farmers, as well as other producers of goods and services, obtain maximum returns for their labour, while consumers obtain value for money. The successful implementation of these programmes should have the effect of considerably slowing down the rate of inflation in addition to improving the standard of living of our people. I believe that Your Highnesses have very vital roles to play in all these programmes.

Your good offices have always been effective vehicles for mass mobilisation. I, therefore, suggest that you sustain the efforts you have so far put into mobilising our people for the OFN programme, and, at the appropriate time, to similarly enlighten the people of the various co-operative programmes. There are several ways in which Your Highnesses can assist our people in this regard. There may be need to re-examine our system of land-use so that our farmers can be encouraged to increase their output. The formation of Co-operative Unions and Associations among farmers and other rural occupational groups would bring about, through the economy of scale, greater returns. These people can be organised into Agricultural Co-operatives, Arts and Crafts Societies, Credit and Thrift Societies and Consumer Societies. Distribution of agricultural inputs, consumer goods and marketing of farm products including semi-processing can be effectively and profitably carried out by these societies and associations.

Finally, Your Highnesses may wish to consider the suggestion for more frequent consultations with such co-operative groups as a means of obtaining factual information on the problems facing our people. Through such joint consultations, problems are more readily identified and solutions to them quickly found. I believe that these steps would go some way towards the realisation of national self-sufficiency which is the key to a better future for us all.

Your Highnesses will recall that following the success of your meeting last year, you had expressed the wish to hold similar meetings regularly about twice a year.

I should now wish to put before you the suggestion that not only should you meet as frequently as possible, but that these meetings should be held at suitable venues throughout the country. This way, the spirit of national unity which these meetings should engender can be felt as widely as possible. Finally, I pray that God's blessing and wisdom may attend your deliberations.

Welcoming President Ceausescu of the Socialist Republic of Rumania

The Head of State of the Socialist Republic of Rumania, President Nicolae Ceausescu, accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Elena Ceausescu, paid a four-day State visit to Nigeria from March 2 to 5, 1977. It was the first by a Rumanian President. In a speech made at the Banquet given in honour of the visitors, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo remarked that the new economic order which was contemplated must be based on a scale and balance to ensure equitable prices both of raw materials and of industrial goods, adding that it should be so restructured that those countries now producing raw materials should receive not only fair prices for their products, but also valid access to the right tools for their economic, technological and social advancement.

I should like to begin these brief remarks by expressing my personal appreciation to President Nicolae Ceausescu for the honour he has done us by accepting our invitation to visit Nigeria at this time. It is a great pleasure for me, the Government, and the entire people of Nigeria to welcome you, Mr. President, on this occasion of your first visit to our country. In the same breath, we are greatly honoured to welcome wholeheartedly your distinguished consort—Madam Elena Ceausescu—whose presence among us, we all regard as a further testimony of the friendship and the goodwill which happily exist between our two countries.

The Socialist Republic of Rumania is a country blessed with men of great talent and courage, men whose passionate love for freedom and human dignity had earned them a resounding victory over the forces of reaction and fascism. We wish every success for the Rumanian people in their ever-growing desire for happiness, contentment, and peace in their great country.

Your present visit to this country, the first by a Rumanian President, has afforded us a unique opportunity to know one another and also re-assess our common stand on major international issues. It is not, therefore, surprising that our two countries should share identical views on most of those problems that have featured in our dialogue. This is only natural, since our respective policies are motivated by the same humanitarian considerations of peace, mutual co-operation, and respect for all nations that bear goodwill towards us, irrespective of their social or political system, their size and creed, race, or colour.

SYMBOLIC VISIT

Mr. President, we feel greatly honoured today that in spite of your numerous duties which obviously make great demands on you back at home, you have spared the time to visit our country. This occasion of your visit to Nigeria is symbolic, and it is a good testimony of the spirit of understanding and co-operation which has prevailed between our two countries. Those present here tonight should also feel particularly proud and honoured to dine with a leader who shares the yearnings and aspirations of the African people for peace and freedom, and who has identified with our just struggles against the forces of apartheid, colonialism, and imperialism.

RATIONAL CONCEPT

Mr. President, we view with admiration your bold and honourable stand in favour of disarmament and the abolition of military blocs. Your country's membership of the Warsaw Pact notwithstanding, we are firmly convinced in our common belief that the achievement of this objective would result in directing much needed resources towards the more desirable sectors of development for this world. Our two countries, therefore, look forward to such a time when the theory behind those huge budgets which continue to be wasted on arms-race should be reconciled with the more rational concept of improving the economic well-being of the poor nations, thereby making this world a better and happier place for all mankind.

We are certainly in favour of reviewing this situation and many other human problems associated with the present world economic status quo, if only to ensure that there will be equitable distribution of resources and a more liberal exchange of knowledge and technology among nations. You are, in this regard, a Champion and Apostle of the new international order, and it would not be wrong to count on the continued co-operation of Rumania for the advancement of this proposal.

Your Excellency, it is only natural that we should see the present arrangement by which the rich countries become richer at the expense of the poor nations as untenable, and must, therefore, call for an immediate review that would give a fairer opportunity to the so-called under-developed countries, so that they may also be able to improve their own standards of living. All that we are asking for is an early realignment of the present medium of exchange which, to say the least, is totally antiquated and no better than a remnant of the long years of colonialist and imperialist domination and exploitation.

ECONOMIC ORDER

The new economic order we contemplate must be based on a scale and balance to ensure equitable prices both of raw materials and of industrial goods, and be so restructured, that those countries now producing raw materials should receive not only fair prices for these products, but also valid assurances of an access to the right tools for their economic, technological and social advancement.

SOLIDARITY

We feel highly gratified, Mr. President, that your Government stands among those peace-loving nations of the world that have been giving both material and moral support to our oppressed brothers in other parts of this Continent, who continue to make supreme sacrifices in their pursuit of national freedom and dignity for all black people. We appreciate your solidarity with us in our struggle for the just cause and hope that this alliance will be maintained and intensified until final victory is achieved.

SACRIFICE

We in Nigeria do not consider any sacrifice too great, and will never compromise in our conviction that the struggle for liberation is a sacred duty that must be performed until the southern parts of our continent is completely emancipated from the present state of oppression and the evils of apartheid. The minority and racist regimes in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, and their supporters in Europe and America, must be prepared to pay the price for abusing Africa's hospitality, insulting our intelligence and usurping our sacred lands.

COLLABORATION

Mr. President, you and your entourage have had the opportunity to see some parts of our country and acquaint yourselves with some of our efforts, our aspirations and, of course, some of our problems. We are now in a better position to appreciate more closely what useful experiences we can learn from each other, on the traditional basis of mutual co-operation, and in the interest of our two nations. Ours is a developing nation that is understandably in a hurry to improve the standard of living of its citizens through self-reliance and co-operative efforts of friendly countries. Yours is a relatively more industrialised country with relevant and rich experience in modern technology. In these circumstances, there are ample opportunities for collaboration between our two nations. Nigeria looks forward to Rumania and all friendly nations who are prepared to help towards the attainment of our objective of self-sufficiency.

Once again, Mr. President, we are happy to receive and welcome you and Madam Ceausescu here, and the distinguished delegation which you are leading, and wish you all a very pleasant and safe journey home. In doing so, I would like to ask you to also convey to your own Government and the friendly people of Rumania, the very warm affections of the Government and people of this country.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with the greatest delight that I invite you to rise and join me in drinking a toast: to the health and happiness of His Excellency, President Nicolae Ceausescu; and to the continuous progress and prosperity of the Socialist Republic of Rumania.

Goodwill Message to FESTAC Staff

His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the Grand Patron of FESTAC, sent a goodwill message to the staff reception organised at the International Secretariat of FESTAC after the end of the Festival in Lagos, on March 4, 1977.

As you all know, I have had several opportunities to express the appreciation of the Federal Military Government and people of Nigeria to most of those involved in the preparation and staging of FESTAC. However, I consider it still appropriate to do so at this stage of the winding up process to the International Secretariat of FESTAC. As the Grand Patron of FESTAC, I wish to express to you my sincere appreciation for the tireless and selfless work you put into the preparations and servicing of the Festival. I am sure that without the zeal, dedication and total commitment of all of you here at the Secretariat, the Festival would not have been the success it was.

I also wish to seize this opportunity to convey to you the appreciation of the Federal Military Government and people of Nigeria, who as hosts to the Festival, had a special interest in its successful conclusion. Those of you from other countries have lived and worked among us for these several months. In the process, you have all contributed immensely to our better understanding of your countries and your peoples. I do hope that as you return to your various homes, you will also take with you pleasant memories of your brief sojourn in Nigeria and of the many friendships, I am sure, you have made.

Ladies, and Gentlemen, let me assure you that we have every reason to be satisfied that all the effort, time and money invested by each and everyone of us in FESTAC has been well worth it. When even generations yet unborn of Black and African peoples look back to it, I am sure, they will consider the Second Festival of Black and African Arts and Culture a unique watershed in the cultural and political re-awakening of the Black man. Then as now, it will be remembered that it was the effort of men and women such as you, which made FESTAC the unique event that it was. You deserve to be proud of your achievements on this account alone.

National Honours Award

It is the Government's policy to encourage Nigerians who have given inspiring service in their various callings to the nation by conferring on them the honour and recognition they deserve. One such occasion took place on Monday, March 14, 1977, when nineteen Nigerians received the National Honours Awards from Lt. General Obasanjo. The nineteen distinguished citizens, in the Head of State's description, symbolised "the new ethos we wished to see implanted in the country—that of self-reliance."

I perform this morning, the ceremony of the conferment of the Nigerian National Honours on these distinguished and deserving citizens of this country with great satisfaction. You may recall that last year, while performing a similar ceremony to honour four distinguished Nigerian citizens, I promised that the Federal Military Government would widen the scope and intensify the search for more deserving citizens and confer on them the honour and recognition that they deserve.

This year's list comprises of nineteen Nigerians, all of whom I am glad to say, have given inspiring service in their various callings to this nation. They all deserve the nation's recognition, and I believe this takes us a considerable step towards entrenching desirable goals and values which we would wish to see in our public life. This group of distinguished men and women would serve as an inspiration to coming generations.

SELF-RELIANCE

As you go through the career patterns of these great and respected Nigerians, you will notice that despite the various disciplines and backgrounds, they are all essentially self-made people. They succeeded through unremitting hard work and devotion to their calling. They symbolise, all of them, the new ethos we wish to see implanted in the country—that of self-reliance. They have all perfected and excelled in their chosen profession and have sought their reward from the satisfaction that comes from a job well-done. This indeed, is the formula for success in any endeavour, but few of us ever achieve this kind of distinction. The ladies and gentlemen we are honouring today have arrived at this enviable position. What we are doing today is a symbol of the nation's recognition of their loyal and selfless services to our fatherland. I have no doubt that no other reward can match such a recognition, at least not to this group, to whom value is clearly not reckoned in material terms.

You would also note that the nineteen distinguished citizens being honoured today represent a cross section of the Nigerian society. Their backgrounds, their education, their varied pursuits in life are representative of the Nigerian society. Talent and capacity are neither restricted by educational opportunity, social status, nor geography. The average Nigerian, whatever his status, is capable of achieving great heights in whatever he sets himself to do, so long as he places such values as

hardwork, honesty and integrity uppermost in his mind.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

I congratulate all of you for the honour bestowed upon you. It is an honour that brings with it a greater kind of responsibility. You will now play a leadership role, not only maintaining the standards you have set but giving constant inspiration to those coming behind you. Nigerian youth, especially in these changing times, needs guidance and inspiration and a set of values and yardsticks of achievement to make them strive hard to make Nigeria truly a great country.

I charge you to continue to be a source of inspiration to all around you through your loyal and selfless service to our country.

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The Special Committee Against Apartheid met on March 22, 1977, to mark the Sharpeville massacres and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In a statement made by the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, he called on members of the Committee to re-dedicate themselves anew to the struggle against the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, especially in South Africa.

RE-DEDICATION

As we remember the heroes who laid down their lives in Sharpeville while peacefully demonstrating against the inhuman policy of apartheid, let us re-dedicate ourselves anew to the struggle against the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and particularly, apartheid in South Africa. As we mark this solemn occasion, let us take stock of events that have occurred during the past 12 months. Fresh in our minds is Soweto, a name which elicits one of the most horrifying events in the history of mankind. In Sharpeville, peaceful workers were massacred. In Soweto, young, innocent and peaceful children were mowed down with machine guns. In Sharpeville, 69 unarmed workers were killed, and in Soweto, hundreds of children were murdered in cold blood.

REPRESSIVE MACHINERY

Since Sharpeville, the racist regime in South Africa has intensified its repressive machinery to the most savage proportion. Tens of thousands of the oppressed people of South Africa are scattered as refugees across the continent of Africa and beyond. Thousands of the oppressed people of South Africa are being placed in detention. We read daily reports of brutal torture and of deaths in detention. We witnessed recently, the birth of the brain child of apartheid, when millions of the oppressed people of South Africa were herded into the so-called independent Transkei. This is apartheid at its heights.

Nowhere in the history of mankind has a privileged minority brutalized, oppressed, and degraded the majority, on account of race, colour, or creed. Nowhere in the history of mankind has racial discrimination been so entrenched and institutionalized as in South Africa. It is obvious that the oppressed majority who were already down, need fear no fall. They have had their backs pushed to the wall and will definitely react. Therefore, we will always have Sharpeville, and we will always have Soweto, as long as the brutal, inhuman and repressive policies of apartheid continue.

Let men of conscience and members of the world community search their minds. Let us examine what actions we have taken during the past 12 months in support of the struggle to eliminate racial discrimination and apartheid. Let us examine also where

we have failed. Some of us condemn racial discrimination and apartheid but actively sustain the very machinery that perpetuates these evils. Some of us consciously prevent international action against this crime against humanity. We in Nigeria remain unshaken in our belief that we will fight until racism, racial discrimination, and in particular, apartheid are eradicated from the face of our continent and from the world.

We in Nigeria adhere selflessly to the principles of justice, freedom, and equality for all mankind, irrespective of race, colour, or creed. On this International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination, we re-dedicate ourselves anew to the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed people in Southern Africa. The struggle goes on. We must march on until total victory.

The 1977/78 Budget Speech

As a routine, the Head of State makes his Budget Broadcast on the last day of March, every year to mark the end of the financial year and the beginning of a new one. During the 1977/78 Budget Broadcast on March 31, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, reviewed the performance of the national economy during the last financial year and also outlined the projects planned to be executed within the new financial year. The progress recorded in certain areas of the economy notwithstanding, the Budget showed that the country was in an adverse position with regards to its balance of trade and payments, and inflation was still posing a big threat to our economy. As a result, the Government directed a number of measures which should be adopted in the new financial year in order to change these negative trends. Such measures included, the priority placed on Agriculture and Industry; the protection and incentives given to our local manufacturing industries; the banning of certain imported commodities and the placing of high taxes on imported luxury goods, and lastly the re-direction of our priorities and sense of values.

It is time once again to take stock of the results of our management of the country's economy during the 1976/77 financial year which has come to an end, and to announce the 1977/78 budgetary measures as approved by the Supreme Military Council, the National Council of States, and the Federal Executive Council.

I will concern myself, in the main, with the general state of the economy, the highlights of the Budget proposals as well as other major changes in policy directions and objectives.

The 1976/77 Budget was launched against the background of rapidly accelerating price inflation, economically crippling congestion of our ports, wide-spread shortages of essential commodities, a deficit in Federal Government's finances and some deterioration in our balance of payments position. The 1976/77 Budget, therefore, aimed at stimulating sustainable economic growth, whilst drastically reducing the rate of inflation. This was to be achieved through a re-ordering of Government spending priorities and the elimination of identified bottlenecks in the economy. Although much work still has to be done, I am pleased to report that developments in the economy in 1976/77 indicate that impressive progress was made in our national fight against the high rate of inflation which declined from 35 percent in 1975/76 to about 20 per cent in 1976/77. An encouraging aspect of the prices development is that virtually all the major components of the consumer price index recorded slower rates of growth in the outgoing financial year.

GROWTH RATE

In real terms, the national economy grew by 10 per cent in 1976/77, compared with a growth rate of only 2.8 per cent in 1975. As in the past five years, this impressive growth rate was determined, to a great extent, by the performance of the oil sector which increased by about 14.8 per cent as against the decline of 20.7 per cent recorded for the preceding year. Major incentives to encourage the exploration and development of new oil fields are being worked out and will be announced shortly.

AGRICULTURE

One great source of satisfaction is that agriculture contributed significantly to growth in 1976/77. Compared with an increase of only one per cent in 1975/76, our farmers increased their production by some three per cent in the past year. No greater tribute can be paid to the 'Operation Feed the Nation' effort. The programme will be pursued with even more vigour in the coming year.

RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION

In the past year, investment in machinery and transport equipment continued to grow relatively faster than investments in buildings and construction, and land improvements. Machinery and transport equipment jointly grew by about 50 per cent, while building and construction and land improvements together, increased by about 32.8 per cent. This pattern of our fixed capital formation is consistent with reasoned expectation that during periods of rapid industrialisation, the growth of machinery and transport equipment should exceed that of other types of capital formation. In short, the nation is entering a period of rapid industrialisation.

The increase in money supply continued but at a slower rate in 1976/77 than in 1975/76. This very limited success was due largely to the restrictive monetary and credit policies implemented by Government in 1976. The moderation in the growth of our money supply helped reduce the rate of growth of prices in 1976/77.

BALANCE OF PAYMENT

With respect to our balance of trade and payments situation, in 1976/77, we recorded a merchandise trade surplus of 1,600 million. In spite of this, our balance of payments position continued to be adverse. Total exports increased from ₦ 4,900 million in 1975 to ₦ 6,700 million in 1976—an increase of 36 per cent. Total imports on the other hand, rose by 38 per cent, from ₦ 3,700 million in 1975 to ₦ 5,100 million in 1976. The balance of goods and services for 1976 showed a deficit of ₦ 130.5 million, in contrast surplus of ₦ 249.4 million in 1975. When account is taken of unrequited transfers of ₦ 89.4 million, the deficit on our total current account for 1976 rises to ₦ 219.9 million. This adverse balance regrettably reverses the favourable trend that was recorded for each of the preceding three years. Overall, the nation's balance of payments showed a deficit of ₦ 242.6 million. As a result of this deficit, our external assets declined marginally from ₦ 3,696.43 million in 1975 to ₦ 3,453 million in 1976.

PROJECTS

Many major projects like the Warri refinery have reached advanced stages of construction. The contract for the design and construction of the Kaduna refinery has been awarded to Chiyoda Engineering and Construction Company. Its completion time will be 36 months. And in addition to the Ajaokuta blast furnace steel mill, contracts for the construction of the two integrated direct reduction steel plants each with a capacity of one million tonnes have also been awarded. These iron and steel projects, which are basic to our industrial take-off, will come onstream in 1980. Major strides have been made in the area of ports, transportation and communications, and later in the financial year, the nation will begin to reap the fruits of investments now being made.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In spite of various constraints in the areas of manpower, land acquisition and other supply bottlenecks, progress in the implementation of the projects in the Third National Development Plan was satisfactory in 1976. Although a greater part of the

year was spent on the choice of technical partners and project sites as well as studies, designs and the placement of orders for machinery and equipment, a number of concrete achievements were also recorded. We are satisfied that a sound basis has now been established for the quick take-off of the projects in the coming years.

BETTER PERFORMANCE

In terms of overall performance, the national economy fared better in 1976/77 than in 1975/76, thus reflecting the success of the Government's policies to solve the major economic problems with which we were confronted in 1975. But much still remains to be done. Therefore, most of the remedial measures introduced last year will have to continue in force, and where necessary, new measures are being introduced. It is against this background that the fiscal and monetary measures in the Budget have been formulated.

POLICY

In the sphere of public policy, the Government will in the coming year, take necessary steps to ensure industrial peace and stability, more rapid economic growth, and continue its effort to ensure a more equitable distribution of income and wealth. The battle against inflation will continue to be waged vigorously, with a view to achieving and maintaining a more acceptable rate of inflation that will be consistent with the demands of a dynamic and fast growing economy.

SERIOUS CONSTRAINT

It is now obvious that the most serious constraint to the rapid expansion of housing is the difficulty of acquiring land. In order to facilitate the utilisation of housing loans for the purpose for which they are intended, State Governments will acquire large tracts of land, lay them out and make them available to individuals and institutions, including Governments for allocation to their staff for building owner-occupied houses. Since housing loans are being made more liberal than ever before, the public should utilise the expanded borrowing opportunities now available more intensively.

LAND USE PANEL

In addition, as a way of removing one of the bottlenecks hindering development, the Supreme Military Council has decided to set up a Land Use Panel to undertake an indepth study of the existing land tenure systems, use and conservation practices in the country, and make appropriate recommendations. The Panel is to be headed by Mr. Justice Chike Idigbe of the Supreme Court.

REVENUE ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

A Revenue Allocation Review Committee of experts will be established as recommended by the Constitution Drafting Committee to examine and determine the adequacy of the current revenue allocation formula, and make recommendations, as necessary for revenue allocation between the Federal, States and Local Governments, and among the States and Local Governments. The proposals of the Revenue Allocation Review Committee will be available for placing before the Constituent assembly for consideration and subsequent enactment.

INCOMES POLICY

In the field of incomes policy, the Federal Military Government has decided that there is no justification for a general increase in salaries and wages in the new year. The existing Guidelines on wages and salaries will therefore continue in a slightly modified form. The Government recognises the need for providing some relief to those workers earning not more than 3,000 per annum. This proposed relief is based primarily on the general level of productivity in the economy. Accordingly, a maximum

increase of seven per cent will be granted in both the public and private sectors in respect to wages and salaries below ₦3,000 per annum. In the public sector, only those in salary GL 07 and below will benefit from this award, graduated in such a way that those in the lowest rank of the salary ladder will get the highest increase, while those in salary GL 07 will receive an increase of about one per cent.

This marginal increase in salaries and wages below ₦3,000 per annum should not be used as an excuse for a general upward increase in prices. The increases will take effect not before the 1st of June, 1977. All agreements reached between Workers' Unions and private employers must be subject to the seven per cent limitation, and will only take effect after approval by the Commissioner for Labour who will announce details of the guidelines of how this will operate in the private sector.

DIVIDEND RATE

The existing dividend rate of 30 per cent gross will remain through the 1977/78 Financial Year. For the purpose of calculating this rate, scrip issues or bonus shares issued from 1st October, 1976 shall be excluded. Furthermore, no scrips based on a revaluation of assets may henceforth be issued. It is my hope, indeed my expectation, that all companies will use part of their retained earnings to promote the welfare of their workers. A good example in provision of housing for all level of their workers at controlled rent has been embarked upon by some financial institutions and manufacturing industries.

AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

In the coming year, the Government will continue to give prime attention to the fight against inflation. Whilst 1976/77 can be considered as the year of infrastructure, 1977/78 will be the year of agriculture and industry. To this end, measures are being taken to hasten modernisation of Agriculture; and further incentives aimed at accelerating the pace of industrial growth will be introduced.

PROTECTION AND INCENTIVES

As substantial increases in our domestic production would exert effective downward pressure on the rate of inflation in the long-run and contribute to overall economic development, Government has once more approved additional protection and incentives for our local manufacturing industries. Thus, rates of duty for several imported goods that compete with domestic production have been increased. These include outer garments, shirts, blouses, suits and textile fabrics. In addition, duties have been slashed or eliminated on a wide range of raw materials including carbon black refractory goods, synthetic rubber latex, barley and hops, artificial raisins, raw materials for animal feeds, etc. I hope domestic manufacturers will reflect these concessions in vastly expanded production and in lower prices.

BANNED ITEMS

In view of the state of our balance of payments, and the need to conserve scarce foreign exchange for capital formation and development, the Federal Military Government has banned a number of items including: beer bottles, galvanised buckets, spa water carbon papers, lace and all cars over 2,500 cc engine capacity. cars over 2,000 but less than 2,500 cc will attract an increased duty of 150% and are placed under licence along with cars under 2,000 cc engine capacity. Canned beer, soft drinks, furniture, carpets, common salt, watches, typewriter ribbons have been placed

under licence. Brandy, whisky, schnapps, gin and wines have their duty increased by 50 per cent. Heavy penalties await smugglers.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is my sincere hope that our domestic manufacturing community will take the opportunity to demonstrate their social responsibility and show that they deserve the protection and indirect subsidies which have been provided them, by ensuring that the growth of their output in terms of quality and quantity, at least, matches the growth of domestic requirements. Their performance will be very closely watched.

TAX POLICY

With respect to tax policy, the existing rates of capital allowance are adequate for now in respect of the purpose they are supposed to achieve. However, it has been observed that most firms in the building and construction industry, which is currently enjoying a boom, pay little or no taxes. To correct the situation, Government will, as an alternative to profit tax, impose a turn-over tax of 2½ per cent in the construction and building industry.

PERSONAL ALLOWANCE

Personal allowance now fixed at ₦ 600 is extended to one-tenth of earned incomes as an option, and whilst dependent relative allowance shall remain at the maximum of ₦ 400, it would now be granted to any person who has an income in his or her own right. In view of these concessions, and in pursuance of Government's social objectives, the present rate of tax on chargeable incomes over ₦ 10,000 has been increased.

ALLOCATIONS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Following the local Governments reforms and the success of the recent elections, the Supreme Military Council has been favourably impressed by the enthusiasm of the average Nigerian for the success of the new Local Government system. In order to ensure that this level of Government has the resources to provide the services expected of it, the Federal Military Government has decided that five per cent of all Federally retained revenues, and 10 per cent of total state revenue be made available to Local Governments in the 1977/78 financial year. Federal allocation to Local Government in the new financial year will thus be in the region of ₦ 250 million. These resources will be maintained by the States in a special account, and be disbursed to the Local Governments on criteria which have already been worked out.

GOALS

Last year, the goals of monetary policy included the reduction of excess liquidity and inflationary pressures in the economy. The policy measures introduced then have been effective only to a limited extent and would therefore be continued in full force in the new year.

With the advent of the second phase of our Indigenisation Programme, commercial and merchant banks are being allowed to exceed the 40 per cent ceiling on the rate of increase in loans and advances made in furtherance of our Indigenisation objectives. In addition, commercial and merchant banks would be required to provide at least five per cent of their total loans and advances to the residential building construction sub-sector, and up to six per cent to agriculture which in 1976/77 received only 2.6 per cent.

SHORTFALLS

Shortfalls between loans and advances made by the banks to agriculture, housing and small scale industry and the levels prescribed by the Central Bank, will henceforth be deposited with the Central Bank. In the case of state financing, a new important departure is that State Governments now have the choice to use the capital market to float their own loan stocks. This is one of the major recommendations in the report of the Financial System Review Committee. The Government White Paper on the report will be published shortly.

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Now for the Budget Estimates. The total gross revenue of the Federal Government for the 1977/78 fiscal year is estimated at ₦7,650 million, that is, 25.3 per cent over the revised figure for 1976/77. Out of this, a sum of ₦1,795 million is to be allocated to the states as statutory revenue, leaving a balance of ₦5,855 million as Federal Government retained revenue. Since Government spending has been contributing substantially to domestic inflation, Government's total expenditure in 1977/78 on both recurrent and capital accounts is being held down to about ₦8,600 million. This has meant drastic and often painful cuts.

TIGHT SITUATION

In fact, our present tight financial situation dictates stricter re-ordering of our priorities. After taking care of the estimated Recurrent Expenditure of ₦3,097 million in 1977/78 only about ₦2,700 million is available for transfer to the Development Fund Account. If we are to be able to finance the estimated capital budget of ₦5,500 million we will have to depend largely on internal and external loans. This, therefore, has had to be a strict budget, both in terms of Government having to cut down its programmes and also in terms of the sacrifices which are being demanded from all Nigerians.

REDEDICATION

Fellow countrymen and women, when this Administration came into existence in July 1975, it pledged itself to the creation of a just, disciplined and fair society with equal opportunity for all, and a free and democratic society. I want to take this opportunity to inform the nation that the Supreme Military Council has rededicated itself to the achievement of these objectives and to ensuring that the average Nigerian citizen has access to his basic needs. It needs no gainsaying the fact that in this effort, we need the support of every well-meaning Nigerian. In our circumstances, these objectives and freedom which we cherish can only be guaranteed within the context of a disciplined society, and this administration intends to ensure that discipline which is the hallmark of maturity and order, is instilled at all levels and in all aspects of the life of this nation. The rampant indiscipline and tardiness cannot be allowed to continue in our society.

FALSE VALUES

I have noted with some sadness, that we have tended to live and display consumptions which are grossly out of tune with our level of development and national aspirations. Our public and individual life-styles give a sense of false values to our youths, and are contributing, in no small measure, to the social ills which are again becoming prevalent in the society today. In an effort, therefore, to restore a more rational sense of values into our body politic, the Federal Military Government will, beginning with this Budget, and in the course of the new financial year, take all necessary measures to ensure that the weak is protected from oppression and exploitation by the strong.

APPRECIATION

I wish to conclude this Budget statement by extending the warm appreciation of the Federal Military Government to all the people of this great nation who, in the course of the past year, have toiled and made sacrifices, and have generally supported the Administration in the challenging task of building a prosperous, happy, and progressive society. We have a lot to be proud of in our achievements so far, but a great deal more remains to be done. I, therefore, urge you all to join the Administration in the re-dedication to the great task of nation-building in a spirit of total commitment, discipline and service.

Thank you and Good Night.

Forty-Nine

Changes in the Functions of the Civil Service

The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo met with all the Permanent Secretaries in the Public Service on April 5, 1977. In his address to them at the meeting, General Obasanjo pointed out that certain changes have occurred in the functions of the Civil Service since after the civil war. He analysed some of the problems affecting the efficiency of the Service, and suggested the lines of action required "to remove all the pin-pricks that upset the Civil Service as a national instrument for service, stability and development."

You are gathered here this morning so that I may impress upon you as those entrusted with the responsibility of running the Civil Service and of ensuring that the highest possible degree of efficiency is maintained, the confidence of this Administration in your ability to give of your best in serving the nation loyally, efficiently and faithfully. I have found it necessary to lay this stress as it is becoming increasingly apparent that the functions of the Civil Service and its role in evolving policies, implementing Government decisions, and in creating the atmosphere for order and good government generally, do not seem to command public respect or to receive due recognition. There can be no effective government without the Civil Service which is the machinery for ensuring implementation of Government policies and safe-guarding public welfare.

I do not believe I am saying anything new in drawing attention to the turbulent course through which the Civil Service, and for that matter, the Public Services as a whole, had passed in the last decade or so. Like other aspects of our national life, they suffered some harm in the process. The measures we have been able to take, both at the Federal and State Levels, since the inception of this Administration in July 1975, have to a large extent removed some of the ills afflicting the Public Services. Of necessity, some of the remedies applied have been somewhat tough. It had to be a rough and ready justice to attempt to clean up the Services, and to remove abuses that had crept into them, especially as the ills that had to be dealt with were of long-standing and had eaten deep into the body of the Public Services. Indeed, many of the abuses had their origin in the disorders and chaos that preceded the civil war. These ills and abuses extended through and beyond the period of the civil war unchecked. It is thus clear that the short-comings of the Service were numerous and long-standing which consequently deserved sharp and indecisive remedy.

INSUFFICIENT RESPONSE

It is now over a year since the major problems of the Public Services were tackled. And I had had occasions to speak to the nation indicating that the worst was over and asking all public officers to settle down diligently to their work. It was my hope then that once normalcy was restored the Public Services, and especially the Civil Service,

would settle down to its roles and functions of serving the interest of the nation effectively and efficiently in all areas. Unfortunately, it seems that the Civil Service has not responded sufficiently to my call, and there are indications that it has lost much confidence in itself. This situation if ignored can lead to peril and national calamity since there is no substitute for an effective Civil Service machinery if Government measures are to be implemented for rapid development and progress in every aspect of our national life.

NORMAL FUNCTIONS

I believe various factors are responsible for this unfortunate state of affairs. There is in the public mind, for instance, the confusion of the normal roles and functions of the Civil Service with the roles and functions which some public officers had to play, especially just before and during the civil war. It became necessary after the first Military Government came into being in 1966 for public officers to carry out certain duties that were not normally the responsibilities of civil servants and which brought them directly in the limelight, and exposed them to public approval, derision or anger as occasion demanded.

INEFFICIENCY

Perhaps, some of them exercised less discretion than they should have in assuming the role of members of Government as Ministers or Commissioners. But such manifestations, however defective they might have been, should be seen in the context of the circumstances in which they occurred. There was a sudden vacuum created in the machinery of Government by the removal of the constituted Government of the day and all its apparatus. There was also the belief and feeling in certain quarters, that inefficiency abounded at all levels of the Service and that civil servants, as a rule, contributed less than their counterparts in the private sector—even where the nature of their work and function was ill-understood. Some even believed that all those who opted for a career in the public service and remained there, were people of low ability and competence or those unlikely to make their mark elsewhere in other sectors of our national life.

LACK OF APPRECIATION

This general misconception was popular for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the apparent lack of appreciation of Civil Service procedure with its varied interests. The Civil Service traditionally maintains a low profile. It normally follows the path of rectitude and legitimacy in the public interest, rather than the display of glamour. It is probably true that many people in various stations of life give little thought to the functions of the Civil Service in promoting the social and economic development of the nation, but also in protecting it from chaos and disorder. This indeed, was the experience of this country during the years of our crisis leading to the civil war.

I think we can safely put aside, for the moment, the role of the Civil Service, the attitude of the public towards it and the misconception in the minds of many about it. Instead, let us look forward to the future, and examine what steps need necessarily be taken to restore to the Service its image and to assure everyone of the determination of this Administration, both at the Federal and State levels, to make the Civil Service a truly great national instrument. But may I also state at the same time that this

Administration will spare no efforts in working to reduce the level of corruption and inefficiency in the Public Service as a whole.

REPORT OF STUDY GROUP PANEL

I am aware that you have had a Study Group appointed to look into the problems confronting the Civil Service, and that you have considered the report of the Panel and made your recommendations on it. Having gone through the Report, my initial reaction is that most of the measures proposed are, of necessity, of a long-term nature and are intended to apply in a mechanical fashion remedies to a system that calls for fundamental changes in attitude and philosophy, rather than in form and material pursuits alone. I do not believe that solution lies only in creating more posts, or providing more facilities to raise the morale of the Service, or only in effecting some improvement in the standards or well-being of those who operate the system; as the real problem will still remain, unless we adopt a new attitude and at the same time endeavour to relate the service we render the nation as public officers to the national priorities and needs, both immediately and in the future. And in this, it will be fatal if we thought of nothing as we often do, but of our immediate surroundings and problems, forgetting our real problems as a large, complex and poor country. But a new attitude and a new approach to work would only be effective under an equally new environment. Any proposals that you may submit in this regard will be considered.

I am aware, for instance, of the complaints that many have made with regard to the almost contemptuous manner in which civil servants are held by all and sundry. All organs of Government have appropriate instructions and guidelines on dealing with officials who are an integral and indisputable part of the machinery of our Government. And the success or failure of any Government can be said to a great extent to lie in the type of Civil Service it has at its disposal.

It is needless to stress that where scant regard is shown to a group, it is futile to expect that group to give of its best or even to show confidence in its own ability to perform.

DESIRABLE CHANGES

It is agreed that the Public Service is the product and a reflection of the society of which it is a part. But if the Public Service is intended to lead and bring about desirable changes and improvement within the society, it cannot afford to be complacent under the excuse of just being a part of the society. It will be suicidal for the nation if the Public Service abandons its leadership role in bringing about desirable changes and needed improvement in the society. It will also be a great disaster for the nation, if, because of the contempt, disregard and disrespect in which public officers are held and treated within the society, men and women of ability, merit and integrity are disinterested in public office.

I appeal to members of the public to desist from unwarranted attacks of, and insults on public officers at all levels, borne out of ignorance or prejudice which cannot continue without serious consequence on the quality and efficiency of the Public Services. Instead of collective condemnation of public officers, I will urge members of the public to make use of existing avenues and institutions to report erring public officers or seek redress for any wrong done to them by any public servant.

RE-EXAMINATION

On your part, therefore, you will have to sit up and re-examine yourselves in a frank and open manner in order to remedy your own short-comings, which no doubt, are

many. I do not have to tell you all the defects that exist in the system you operate, but unless you are able to identify and expose them, the problems you seek to resolve will continue to elude you. It is better at this stage to concentrate our energy on productive pursuits.

I can say from my own experience in the short time I have worked closely with some of you, that our nation is blessed in having people like some of you as Chief Executives and official Heads of your Ministries. It is a great pity that the Civil Service has acquired an unfavourable image, but I am sure that the result of our effort—of yours—in putting your house in order and coming out with a strong motivation for service, including getting rid of bad eggs without prompting, and of the present Administration in giving you the fullest support, will bring about a new image for the Service. We will also endeavour to remove all the pin-pricks that upset the Civil Service as a national instrument for service, stability and development. An end result would be a strong Civil Service that will be self-reliant, efficient, and dedicated to serving the nation and the present Administration to the best of its ability.

1st All Africa Scout Jamboree: Closing Ceremony

The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the closing ceremony of the 1st All Africa Scout Jamboree at Shere Hills in Jos, Nigeria on Friday, April 8, 1977.

When I declared this Jamboree open a week ago, I expressed the hope that this occasion will be used to demonstrate the spirit of co-operation, brotherhood and solidarity. It is with great pride and satisfaction that I now declare that our expectations in this regard for this Jamboree have been fully realised. This commendable achievement has been possible because everybody involved in this memorable event has been alive to his responsibilities. Those who have been given special responsibilities have demonstrated the outstanding qualities of leadership and organisation required of them; and the participating scouts, both from Nigeria and other countries, have demonstrated those qualities of cheerfulness and resourcefulness expected of all true scouts under all conditions. This type of admirable teamwork is a credit to the spirit and principles of the Scouting Movement, and we in this country are truly proud that Nigeria has been given the opportunity of playing host to such a remarkable event.

There is no doubt that we have all learned very valuable lessons from the various events of the past week. I have reason to believe that all the participants did enter fully and effectively into the spirit of the Jamboree, and have even succeeded in laying the basis for lasting associations with their counterparts from various parts of the continent. The most effective way of propagating and preserving the Jamboree message of friendship and understanding is through the personal and individual contacts thus established; because such contacts will continue to flourish long after the Jamboree is over. This particular Jamboree may now be coming to an end, but its valuable lessons of tolerance, understanding, co-operation and unity should not end.

They should be handed down from troop to troop, and one country to another, so that the message of fraternity and solidarity from this camp at Shere Hills will reverberate throughout Africa.

COMMITMENT TO STRUGGLE

As our brother scouts depart, it is my sincere hope that they will carry the Jamboree message of fellowship and brotherhood not only to the other scouts in their various countries and communities, but also to all our African brothers and sisters. We hope they will carry with them the assurances for our total commitment to the common struggle for greater unity and understanding in order to secure for the black man his

rightful place in the world. It is our belief that this greater understanding and co-operation can only be achieved if we recognise and accept the fact that this is a struggle that has to be waged on many fronts and by various means. In this struggle, as we see it, even a Jamboree like this has a useful part to play. We appreciate the support we have received from our sister countries on this occasion, and we take this opportunity to reaffirm our willingness to continue to encourage and support all meaningful and realistic initiatives designed to secure full freedom and greater dignity for the black man wherever he may be.

We are grateful to Almighty God for his guidance and protection throughout this Jamboree. We are also grateful to all those who have contributed, in whatever manner, towards the orderly conduct and successful outcome of this occasion. Everybody who has been associated in any way with this historic event has every cause for pride and satisfaction. It is a notable achievement for the scouting movement, for the Nigerian people and for the whole of black Africa.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the closing lines of the Jamboree Anthem to guide and inspire us as we disperse:

“Let friendship be our guiding light, let’s keep
Africa clean and bright, and make the world a better
place, fit abode for every race . . .”

It has been a profitable and memorable week for all of us. And now it is my pleasure to declare the 1st All Africa Scout Jamboree closed.

1977 Easter Message

On the occasion of Good Friday, April 8, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the nation. He wished the entire nation a "Happy Easter," and called on all Nigerians to emulate the example of self-sacrifice set by the death of Jesus Christ, and rededicate themselves to the principle of self-sacrifice and selflessness.

At this time of the Easter Celebrations, I extend sincere greetings to everybody, and wish you all the blessings and guidance of God.

We can learn several lessons from the experience of Easter which Christians all over the world are celebrating at this time of the year. First, this period signifies the death of Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life in order to redeem mankind. He thus set a shining example of selfless service and sacrifice for mankind to emulate. Similarly, let this lesson of Easter also inculcate in us that no sacrifice should be too great for us to make in our effort to build a strong, economically viable, and politically stable and unified nation. It is only through self-sacrifice that we can build a peaceful and just society.

Secondly, Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead was a triumph of good over evil, thereby fulfilling God's will. Similarly, for us Nigerians, our present economic status and political programmes are also indicative of our triumph over forces that have tried to frustrate our efforts to build a strong, viable and unified nation, and a peaceful and just society.

HARD WORK

Let me emphasize that our degree of success will depend largely on how much we are willing to sacrifice. Therefore, I strongly request all Nigerians, Christians and non-Christians alike, that we should all use this Easter period to re-dedicate ourselves to the principle of hard work, self-sacrifice and selflessness, to commitment, responsibility and duty, and to tolerance, understanding and love for one another. Let us all embody these principles in our daily lives so that we can build a politically stable and unified nation, and an economically viable society which can provide for the security and welfare of the individual.

I wish you all a Happy Easter.

Citizenship and Leadership

Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo is the National Patron of the Boys Scout Movement of Nigeria. On April 12, 1977, he sent an address to the 3rd Africa Scout Conference which opened that morning in Lagos. The address was read on his behalf by the Military Governor of Lagos State, Commodore Adekunle Lawal.

When it was announced that Nigeria will play host to the 3rd Africa Scout Conference, all the members of the Boy Scouts of Nigeria and their numerous supporters throughout the country were delighted. The general enthusiasm and the support for your great movement is understandable. The Boy Scouts of Nigeria is one of the leading and oldest youth organisations in this country. Since its formation in 1913, six years after Lord Baden-Powell started the scout movement, scouting has taken tremendous strides in this country. Many of Nigeria's leaders and statesmen have, at one time or the other, been associated with your movement. Indeed, many of them are still actively involved in the activities of the Association.

The objective of scouting, which is to prepare boys for citizenship and leadership, makes it very relevant to Nigeria. As you are aware, Nigeria is a rapidly developing country, and in the course of her development, she will require a lot from all her citizens and leaders. Any organisation that is of assistance in the furtherance of this object cannot but have the sympathy of a very wide cross-section of the community. Mr. Chairman and Scout Leaders, yours is a very great responsibility. Africa looks forward to you to discharge this responsibility creditably. Judging by your past performances, I am confident that you will do it. A Scout always does his best. Do your very best to make Africa truly great.

PLAN

I understand that at this Conference, in addition to reviewing the activities of the Africa Scout Region within the last two years, you will also be planning for the next two years.

I hope that your deliberations will be successful and that the outcome will enhance the usefulness of the Boy Scouts Movement not only to Africa but to mankind.

Having gone through the programme, I see that you have a very busy time ahead of you, especially today. I shall, therefore, make this address as brief as possible. As you are aware, I shall have the pleasure, on behalf of the people of Lagos State, to entertain you this evening. This will give me the opportunity of having informal discussions with you.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that you and your other colleagues from abroad will enjoy your stay in Lagos.

Mr. Chairman, your Excellencies, my Lords, distinguished Delegates and Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen, it now gives me pleasure to declare open the 3rd African Scout Conference.

Problems of the Haji

In an effort to find solutions to some of the problems which Muslims encounter during their Haji operations, Muslim Leaders held a meeting at Dodan Barracks on Tuesday May 10, 1977. His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the Muslims at the opening of the meeting.

You are welcome to this gathering of eminent Muslims from all parts of the country. You are gathered here today in order to deliberate upon various issues which are connected with the welfare of Nigerian Muslims, especially those Nigerian Muslims that perform the annual pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The matters that you will be deliberating upon this morning are so important to a large section of the Nigerian community, hence the Government's considerable concern. This anxiety stems from reports of the sufferings of our brothers and sisters who perform the Haji due to ill-preparation and lack of adequate education before undertaking this vital part of their religious obligation. The belief of this Administration is that an essential duty of any responsible Government is to protect and ensure the legitimate pursuance of economic, religious and other interests of its citizens. But our interest also stems from our belief in the freedom of religion and worship, as long as such freedom does not interfere with the greater interests of the nation.

NIGERIA—A NATION OF ZEALOTS

We are a nation of judicious and devoted zealots. Indeed, as individuals, we even exhibit such an enthusiastic and insatiable appetite for religious obligations almost at the expense of our personal health.

It is not quite long ago that we had among us those Nigerian Muslims who travelled to Mecca and Medina on foot and caravan. We also have, even now, many communities raising contributions in order to send one of their sons on a pilgrimage. In some cases, many families expend a life-time savings on the Holy Pilgrimage. All these activities were necessary because going to Haji is a fulfilment of a life-time dream. Unfortunately, efforts to fulfil this obligation have caused a number of personal and family problems. There are now many thousands of Nigerian Muslims scattered across the routes to Mecca. Some have sojourned in a foreign land because of financial and physical hardships. Many have been forced to take up gainful occupations, in anticipation of coming back to their fatherland. Others have become a social burden to the host Governments.

In the interest of our people and in the interest of cordial relations between our country and the host country, we should not over-tax the resources of the host Government to the breaking point, where stringent and unpalatable measures may

have to be taken against our pilgrims. We know on a government-to-government level that those resources are now being overstretched. Even among those who have performed the Haji and successfully returned home, some have turned what was supposed to be a fruitful and rewarding spiritual and personal experience into a social evil.

NIGERIAN PILGRIMS ABROAD

The Government is of course aware that going on a pilgrimage is an important and integral part of Islam. I am also aware that it is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is in recognition of these facts that this Administration has continued to help, in every manner possible, to ease the hardships being suffered by intending Nigerian pilgrims. I am sure that you are all aware that this Government has taken over the administration of pilgrim affairs from private agencies. This was done to ensure that Muslims do not suffer a lot of personal hardships in the hands of these agencies in their attempt to fulfill a religious obligation. The establishment of the Nigerian Pilgrims Board was intended to streamline and co-ordinate at national level all matters relating to the annual Pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. Our experience in the administration of pilgrim affairs has therefore enabled us to ascertain a number of problems which both Government and Muslim leaders should endeavour to solve in order to ease the burden encountered by Nigerian pilgrims.

CONDITIONS

Before I delve into these problems, let me draw your attention to some of the conditions which have been laid down for performing Haji. I have no doubt that you are quite familiar with them. However, it is necessary to remind ourselves in order to relate these conditions to our own society and problems ensuing from them.

I understand that an intending pilgrim must have the ability to perform the rites of pilgrimage. In this context, we would take it that being able refers to good and sound health, a physically fit physique and a sound personal finance. These attributes are essential towards a successful Hajj.

One other factor which must be taken into consideration is that of personal convenience. We are fortunate that Islam is one that stresses self-convenience in the performance of religious obligations, especially those that are not mandatory principles.

ABUSE

I believe that pilgrimage to the Holy Land is one of those religious principles that one only performs when other conditions have been and are being fulfilled. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, such personal judgments are often clouded by the zealous adherence to religious practices. The thought that I would like to leave with you is that the religious and spiritual context of performing the Holy Pilgrimage is being abused by some members of our community. This is due to the inability of these devotees to separate religious from personal obligations. In the interest of the religion and the society, the problem must not be left unattended to. The solution to this problem depends on effective religious education which, I believe, should be a concern of all those who are involved with the welfare of our people. It is the duty of all eminent Muslims and leaders of the religion to educate their fellow brothers in this regard. I would like to mention to you some areas of concern to me.

AREAS OF CONCERN

It is a common practice among Muslims in this country to send and encourage fellow brothers to perform the Hajj when it is clear that these brothers are not, by religious injunction, deemed fit. This category of Muslims includes the aged, the sick, young and pregnant women. This group shares in common precisely those limitations which are frowned upon. It is clear, for example, that it is not enjoined on young children to perform pilgrimage. Neither do the aged and pregnant women need undertake the Hajj since they cannot face the physical exhaustion and strain which the rites entail, without endangering their lives.

Another area to which you may like to address yourselves relates to the practice whereby Muslims perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina frequently. I believe that Islamic prescriptions and injunctions only make it compulsory for a Muslim to perform a pilgrimage only once in a life-time, and that too assumes that all other conditions are fulfilled. In this country, however, it has become a social practice and a symbol of a new status to perform the Hajj as frequently as possible. I believe, there are other ways and manners in the religion of proving one's financial strength and wealth.

I also believe that this practice has been necessitated by other reasons, particularly the pursuit of gainful economic transactions. The latter has been carried out in a number of ways including illegal trafficking in drugs and currencies; and the subsequent growth of a black market in foreign currencies.

These negative devices have had a few repercussions for both the Government and the Muslim community. It has openly abused the generosity of Government measures and created much inconvenience for returning pilgrims. But above everything else, these practices have tarnished our image and misrepresented the good intentions of Government in the eyes of many.

By these practices, some Nigerian Muslims have shown further lack of personal judgement, sacrifice and discretion, which are the very virtues of Islamic religion. Many well-to-do Muslims sponsor their less fortunate brothers under the pretext of religion to Mecca on pilgrimage. But because of the primacy they give to economic returns, they often leave those less fortunate brothers with far less money than is necessary for minimal stay in the Holy Land. Hence, the increase in the number of Nigerian destitute pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

These are but a few examples of the social problems to which I am calling on you to address yourselves. If we are to regain the proper religious and spiritual context of Islam, then these social problems deserve your better attention. At this point, you may like to inform yourselves about the methods applied in other countries, as well as the experience so far gained by the Nigerian Pilgrims Board.

Seriously, you may have to consider the capabilities of this Board to conduct to our satisfaction, the administration of pilgrims' affairs. Part of that consideration may have to relate to the increasing number of pilgrims who perform the Hajj yearly. In addition, you may wish to consider the capabilities of the host country to continue to cater satisfactorily for the needs and welfare of our pilgrims.

I have been informed that some countries practise a quota system of attendance. I do not think that we have arrived at that point yet. In any case, I have faith in our people and Muslim leaders to arrive at a more authentic Nigerian solution, one that marries meaningfully the insatiable appetite for religious obligations with minimal suffering for attending pilgrims. I believe that such an august gathering would have appropriate

solutions.

I take this opportunity to thank you for sharing these few thoughts with me and I wish you a happy deliberation.

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

Addressing the inaugural meeting of the Board of Directors of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in Lagos on July 1, 1977, the Head of State remarked, "the staff of the Corporation will have to live up to expectation and those who cannot keep pace with the speed with which I expect the Corporation to work will just have to be removed. . . . We intend to make the Corporation a success."

It gives me great pleasure to address you on this occasion of the inaugural meeting of the Board of Directors of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

You have been appointed as Directors of a Corporation whose activities are of crucial and strategic importance to the economic life of our country.

Oil which is the responsibility of your Corporation contributes over 85 per cent of Federal Government's annual revenue and earns about 90 per cent of Nigeria's foreign exchange. Government has had, therefore, to give the most careful consideration to the choice of those who are to direct the affairs of the newly-set-up Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. In the last four years, Government became more and more involved in all the phases of the oil industry, and is today the majority partner in all the oil producing companies. It has become clear that Government participation can best be achieved if there is a body Corporate charged with the responsibility for all the public sector activities in the industry.

NEED FOR INTEGRATION

Some six years ago, Government took the initiative to establish the Nigerian National Oil Corporation. Its activities were confined to exploration and marketing of Nigerian crude oil, while the regulatory and supervisory activities of the industry continued to be the responsibility of the then Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources. Experience has shown that this dichotomy in the distribution of authorities between two bodies in so vital and topical an industry did not make for a well co-ordinated dynamic public sector effort. The trend the world over is towards the integration of the public effort of the oil industry. We cannot remain an exception to this trend, and hope to achieve for our people the great potentials of the industry.

For efficiency and for the maximum utilisation of human and material resources, the multi-national oil companies have found that integration from exploration to production, refining, transporting and marketing is a necessity. Today, the more successful national oil corporations, both in the industrialised countries, as well as in the OPEC member-countries, have been organised on an integrated pattern. To survive in an industry where giants operate, you obviously have to be bold and big.

GREAT RESPONSIBILITIES

Your appointment confers great responsibilities on you. This new organisation is not one that we can allow anyone to toy with, or allow pettiness and narrow mindedness to harm-string. It must take off and perform effectively. This is why, in establishing the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, we have sought to achieve a clean break with the past, even though we have had to create a new body by pooling what resources we had available in the two public sector organisations, i.e. the former Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the former Nigerian National Oil Corporation. We have a full-time Chairman of cabinet rank at the apex of this organisation in order to bring its activities under closer Government control. Considerable latitude has, however, been given to the Corporation to enable it to run in a business-like way without the usual bureaucratic fetters. It will be your responsibility to ensure that the trust reposed in the Corporation is not abused.

The staff of the Corporation will have to live up to expectation and those who cannot keep pace with the speed with which I expect the Corporation to work will just have to be removed. Those who do not believe in the philosophy behind the re-organisation of the public sector of the industry, or the new body set up, should withdraw their services honourably. We intend to make this Corporation a success.

The industry has peculiarities and attracts certain premium the world over which only the idle can pretend to ignore here in Nigeria.

Account has there been taken of the peculiarities of the industry to give some special enhancement to the salaries of staff that your Corporation will be employing. Although this does not bring them even near their colleagues in the private sector of the industry, I expect that the level of responsibility and job satisfaction will be motivating factors in our young Nigerians to wish to work for the Corporation on the new enhanced pay.

Finally, Gentlemen, I wish to appeal to you to observe very diligently, the written and unwritten codes of conduct for people on whom so much responsibility has been placed. As oil is dominant in our economy, all eyes will be on you to develop the industry and make Government's involvement in it more effective. I sincerely wish all of you fruitful deliberations and a successful tenure of office.

Libreville O.A.U. Summit

*Address by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo at the 14th Summit Conference of O.A.U. Heads of State and Government, in Libreville, capital of Gabon on July 3, 1977. Nigeria's foreign policy is dominated by its concern for Africa and the liberation of all Africans from colonialism and slavery. In his speech, Lt. General Obasanjo reiterated Nigeria's concern and determination. "We have come determined," he said, "to ensure that Africa will emerge from Libreville stronger, more united, and more purposeful."
Africa will emerge from Libreville stronger, more united, and more purposeful."*

I should like to begin my address by conveying to His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon, hearty congratulations on his unanimous election as the Chairman of this 14th Summit of our great Organisation. From all that we have seen since our arrival in this city of Libreville, there is ample evidence of the hard work that the Government and people of Gabon have put into the preparation of this Conference and in assuring our total comfort. I am encouraged to believe that under the wise and able guidance of our Chairman, and the full co-operation of all concerned, our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman, I should like at the outset, to recall your appeal that this Summit should be a Summit of rediscovery and renewal of the unity of our continent and a Summit of action. My delegation and I have come to Libreville in this spirit. We have come with the determination that at this Summit, Africa will consolidate the tremendous efforts and gains so assiduously built up over the past fourteen years. We have come determined to ensure that Africa will emerge from Libreville stronger, more united, and more purposeful. This is our resolve. For these ideals my delegation will work.

MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Chairman, Africa has come a long way over the past decade and a half, and we should acknowledge the great role played by our Organisation in this process. At its inception, there were 32 Members of the O.A.U.. Today, there are 49 Members, the latest addition being the Republic of Djibouti, which has taken its rightful place amongst us here for the first time. We warmly congratulate the Government and people of Djibouti on their independence. It is a great achievement in which all of Africa rejoices with them. We hope that in accordance with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the people of Djibouti will now be enabled, in peace and tranquility, to set about the development of their country.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the economic and social fields too, Africa has recorded notable achievements. At independence, we were faced with the enormous problems of insufficient financial resources, manpower shortages, foreign domination of the commanding heights of

our economy, the crushing burden of external loans and debt servicing, the adverse forces of nature such as drought and floods, and others too numerous to mention. But notwithstanding these heavy odds which till today we continue to face, we have succeeded in assuring our people far higher standards of living, and much better quality of life than were possible under foreign domination. Most of us can point to ten-fold increases or more in our gross national product. We can point to better health care, better and more housing, greater educational facilities and enhanced social welfare and security for our people. More can be done. Indeed, we are doing more to justify our demand for the control of our destiny and to demonstrate our greater capacity to fulfill the wishes and aspirations of our people.

Despite all our political achievements so far in extending the frontiers of freedom in Africa, and despite our sustained economic progress, Africa is still faced with a number of unresolved problems of the past, as well as complex new problems which are thrust upon us by the inequities that exist in the international system.

PROBLEMS

Mr. Chairman, it is thus clear to all of us that we are now meeting at a time when our continent is faced with extraordinarily urgent problems. We are still grappling with the problems of liberation and apartheid in Southern Africa. We continue to watch, with great grief and sadness, the development of increasing tension and conflict between member-states. These fratricidal conflicts arise not essentially out of considerations of fundamental African interests which set unity above all else, but as a result of the machinations of our so-called friends from outside. The third broad area of urgent problems that have to engage our attention, Mr. Chairman, is the area of economic and social development and intra-African co-operation. In this regard, it is abundantly evident to us all that even towards the close of the second decade of African Independence, our experiments in regional and continental co-operation have been disappointing.

MEASURES AGAINST APARTHEID

Since the world was rudely awakened to the brutality and horrors of apartheid in the wake of the Sharpsville massacres, there has been unanimous and repeated condemnation of this evil system. Not only are the annals of the Organisation of African Unity, the Non-aligned Movement and numerous other international organisations replete with resolutions calling on South Africa to abandon this evil system, but the United Nations has pronounced sanction after sanction on the Government of South Africa, all to no avail. It is a sad reflection on the United Nations as a body that one of the most potent tools available to it has been made totally ineffective by some of its member-states. Under the circumstances, recourse to violence by the oppressed not only becomes inevitable, but also justifiable.

The O.A.U., forming as it does a substantial membership of the United Nations must exert all its weight on the more influential Western powers to bring about a drastic change by vigorously pursuing the sanctions passed by the United Nations. It is my belief that if these nations respected and implemented the sanctions, the South African Apartheid regime would have been brought round to changing its evil system.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SOWETO

On our part there are two principal reasons for our failure in South Africa so far. First of all, we know that our black brothers and sisters have been so repressed by the

crushing weight of apartheid that they have not been able to rise sufficiently to challenge their oppressors. That was until Soweto. The significance of Soweto lies in its demonstration of the fact, despite all the brutal machinery sustaining apartheid, that the black people of South Africa have had enough and they cannot suffer in silence any more. The fact that it was the youth, working independently and unarmed, who were at the vanguard of the Soweto uprising gives us hope and encouragement for the outcome of the unfolding struggle in South Africa. We hope that their courage, resolve, and commitment would stir their elders into action and resistance.

The second reason why apartheid continues to subsist is that free Africa was slow to appreciate the possibility of forceful overthrow of the evil system. Moreover, we were not united in our judgement of the best possible means of bringing about change in South Africa. Mr. Chairman, I believe that we are now all united in the view that, as with the rest of Southern Africa, force is regrettably necessary as the only means of bringing about the desired change.

We respect the good faith of those who believe that side by side with the armed struggle, negotiation with the Vorster regime is still possible. However, after Soweto, we consider it morally indefensible on our part to stand by helplessly while children and women in South Africa continue to be massacred. Africa is not so weak or so incapable of demonstrating concrete solidarity with our oppressed brothers in South Africa.

VULNERABLE POSITION

We recognise the vulnerable position that sister countries in Southern Africa occupy by virtue of their geography and the economic lineages that have been dictated by history. They, therefore, face the greatest difficulties of choice, and we hope that they will continue to provide safe havens for all those who are fleeing from oppression, as well as those who actively oppose oppression. They need to continue to make great sacrifices, because no sacrifice should be considered too great for the cause of wiping out the biggest blot on our continent and the system that dehumanises on the basis of race.

SUPPORT

Mr. Chairman, while we continue to call on our brothers in Southern Africa to make all necessary sacrifices, we who are physically removed from South Africa have no excuse for not making our contribution to the effort of stamping out apartheid and racism on our continent. It is not enough to shout slogans and dream that the louder we proclaim our opposition to apartheid, the more likely that it would disappear. The sad reality is quite to the contrary. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all of us to face this reality and redouble our efforts to continue to support the victims of apartheid diplomatically, financially and militarily. A sound beginning in this direction is a decisive action by all member countries to ensure, even before we leave Libreville, that we discharge our financial obligations to the O.A.U. and its Liberation Committee. Let us ensure that at least in this regard our actions conform with our slogans.

We are aware that not everybody is wholly satisfied with the effectiveness of the O.A.U. Liberation Committee. However, we cannot claim any moral right to complain of the Committee's ineffectiveness, while they are denied the necessary means to discharge their duties. I understand that outstanding contributions to the Liberation Fund amount to over \$13 million. This is a considerable obligation.

Over and above whatever assistance the O.A.U. as an Organisation extends to the

struggle in South Africa, it is incumbent upon us all to augment these efforts through bilateral financial and military support. There is an incredible stockpile of arms and ammunition on Africa. The cause of Liberation will be dramatically advanced if only a fraction of this stockpile is made available to our freedom fighters rather than using them in fratricidal wars against one another. For our part, the Nigerian Government and people are solidly and concretely behind the oppressed people of South Africa giving what we can to support their just struggle. Our solidarity with them arises from belief that they are not only fighting their cause, but our cause also, and because we believe that in their freedom lies our own dignity and security.

ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA

The fight against apartheid and racism is one facet of the liberation struggle in Africa. Another facet, the one whose successful conclusion is relatively nearer at hand, is the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe and Namibia. The history of attempts at negotiated settlement of the Zimbabwe question indicates to us that negotiation alone cannot solve the problems. Eleven years after the illegal Unilateral Declaration of Independence from the British by Ian Smith, it will be illusory and unrealistic to talk of dialogue, negotiation and appeal alone to bring about self determination for the Africans in Zimbabwe.

Indeed, Ian Smith pretends to show indication and preference for negotiation only when the gallant fighting cadres of the Zimbabwe Nationalists put up the military pressure. The more the freedom fighters put pressure on Smith, the more he resorts to desperate measures. The latest act of desperation by Smith is the wanton and naked aggression on Mozambique by the forces of his illegal regime. The whole international community, including the United Nations Security Council, have unreservedly condemned this flagrant violation of a sister country's territorial integrity.

DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY

To demonstrate our concrete solidarity with the struggling people of Zimbabwe, and with our brothers in Mozambique, in Zambia and in Botswana who are victims of aggression by the rebel Rhodesian forces, let us step up our bilateral and multilateral assistance to them. The front line States need our assistance to withstand the disruptive effects of aggression, as well as to equip them to such an extent as to deter further aggression. As to the Liberation Movements, they already outmatch the enemy person to person. Let us, through financial assistance, arms deliveries and through training, also enable them to match the enemy in fire power and effectiveness. As they make the final push to Salisbury, the Liberation Movements need all the assistance we can give. In this context, I should say that over and above our bilateral efforts, Nigeria is ready to contribute its quota in money and arms to any scheme of assistance that the O.A.U. can devise for the aid of the Front Line States and the Liberation Movements in Zimbabwe.

RACIAL HARMONY

In return, we ask our brothers in Zimbabwe to show unity of purpose and action, and show total commitment to the major challenge of the liberation of their fatherland. Nobody in Africa is seeking to impose any political arrangement of leadership on an independent Zimbabwe. Africa's goal is the freedom of the people of Zimbabwe to determine their own future. In this endeavour, we should clearly state that Africa welcomes any initiative from any quarter which will minimise bloodshed and create

the conditions for racial harmony in a free Zimbabwe. We hope that the latest Anglo-American initiative to bring about a speedy and acceptable settlement in Zimbabwe will succeed. But Africa should not be expected to relent on the armed struggle, while Smith decides whether to listen to the voice of reason and relinquish his usurped power to the African majority in Zimbabwe. Let us hope that such reason and sanity will prevail to prevent a bitter and bloody 'fight to finish' in Zimbabwe.

EXTERNAL ENEMIES

Mr. Chairman, dear Colleagues, the struggle for the liberation of Namibia is no less urgent and no less important than the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe and South Africa. For it is there in Namibia that the external enemies of Africa's interests are joining hands with the racists in South Africa to make a last ditch stand to frustrate Africa's will to freedom. Nigeria stands solidly behind the heroic peoples of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO. I call upon you all, dear Colleagues, to extend to SWAPO and the people of Namibia the same diplomatic, financial and military support that I have suggested for the Nationalists of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Let us also not only condemn, but consider appropriate retaliatory action against the outside supporters of apartheid, racism and colonialism in Africa. We know that neither Smith nor Vorster can ignore international opinion with such impunity without the support and collaboration of powerful governments, institutions, and multinational corporations. These governments and institutions are only exploiting our disunity and the wranglings of the Liberation Movements.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, free Africa is in a position to demonstrate to the supporters of Vorster and Smith that they have more at stake, and more to gain by co-operating with us than our enemies. We should be able to credibly impress it upon them that their long-term interests in free Africa and in the territories yet to be liberated are much more secure if they do not allow short-term economic and strategic considerations to dictate their policy towards Southern Africa. We hope that they will reconsider their attitude towards those fighting for freedom, for equality and for justice. It is in their interest for such a change of attitude to come about before the angry youths of Soweto, and the angry young men of Zimbabwe and Namibia, conclude that their enemies in war will remain their enemies in victory and peace.

The recent effort of the five Western countries on Namibia to bring South Africa to reason will amount to little unless the final outcome ensures a free and fair election in which SWAPO can take part under a United Nations Administrator supported by police or troops.

MIDDLE EAST

While we demand freedom, justice and equality for our brothers in Southern Africa, Mr. Chairman, let us not also forget the just struggle of the Palestinian people for a homeland and self-determination. Africa has consistently supported the heroic Palestinian people, and the Government and people of the Arab Republic of Egypt, a sister O.A.U. State, whose land continues to be occupied by Israel, despite repeated calls by the international community for withdrawal from these occupied lands. Nigeria will continue with this support and looks forward to the day when the Palestinians will have a homeland of their own and to the day when Egypt will have all her territory back. Any conference or solution that does not take full cognisance of the realities of the situation will not lead to a permanent peace in the Middle East.

PAN-AFRICANISM

On the broader political front as well, it is the considered view of my delegation that there is a crying need for an orderly and harmonious evolution of Africa towards the lofty and ultimate goal of Pan-Africanism. This noble objective of eventual continental unity was the motive force which inspired the founding Fathers of this Organisation when in the preamble to the Charter, they declared their:

"Common determination to promote understanding among our peoples and co-operation among our States in response to the aspirations of our peoples for brotherhood and solidarity in a larger unity transcending ethnic and national differences."

DISPUTES

Mr. Chairman, this continental yearning for a larger unity appears to have been overlooked, or to have been forgotten as more and more African States resort to the use of methods unrecognised by our Charter for the settlement of intra-African disputes. You will all agree with me, dear Colleagues and distinguished Delegates, that the frequency and sheer number of intra-African quarrels now constitute such an ominous and undesirable development that there is at present a real threat to peace and harmony in our Continent. There is no need for me to recount here the numerous specific instances of these feuds and fratricidal conflicts in the various sub-regions of Africa. suffice it to say that the seriousness of the situation can be grasped when we consider that there are volatile situations in every sub-region of our continent.

Such desperate situations call for desperate solutions. An urgent cure must be found for these intra-African quarrels for otherwise, all our hard-won achievements of the past decade and a half will be destroyed by our own hands.

This is a matter of great concern to my delegation. Our concern is even greater, Mr. Chairman, when we consider that these conflicts are often the result of the machinations of forces that are foreign to our continent. It is regrettable that at a time when we should be concentrating our energies on maximising our resources in enhancing the standard of living of the vast majority of our people, we are instead wasting time on the stale and irrelevant rhetoric of foreign ideas and ideologies.

It is sad that instead of continuing with the necessary provision of adequate educational, social and economic opportunities for our suffering masses, we are diverting our scarce resources to the purchase of armaments for mutual self-destruction. It is senseless that instead of devoting ourselves to the total liquidation of the remnants of colonialism and racism in Southern Africa, we are threatening our own brothers, and thereby providing our enemies with ammunition with which to further divide us in order to continue to plunder our continent. It is the view of my delegation that urgent and positive steps must now be taken to devise a more effective machinery for resolving intra-African conflicts. I am aware of the existence of an O.A.U. Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration whose mandate is up for renewal during this session.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON MEDIATION

It appears to us that this is the opportune moment to reconsider the limitations of the statute of the present Commission and its record of past inactions in the face of the

explosive situation which arose between some of the member-states of our great Organisation. It seems to us absolutely necessary that we should create immediately and effectively, a body with the necessary powers to respond promptly and effectively to intra-African crisis situations. I have in mind, Mr. Chairman, the creation of a Standing Committee of no more than five or seven member-states who could meet at the shortest possible notice to help diffuse and neutralise situations which could bring countries to the brink of armed conflict.

SUMMIT OF ACTION

The current Chairman and the Secretary-General of our Organisation will have to play a very active role in this Standing Committee. Now is the time for action. We must not delay. We must not, indeed, we dare not fail our people. Let this Summit in Libreville be a Summit of Action, of renovation of re-dedication to the strengthening of the Organisation of African Unity.

Mr. Chairman, it is time for all of us African countries to take a hard look at our membership in extra-African Organisations which tend to perpetuate adverse foreign political and economic influence in our continent. If we strengthen the various institutions and agencies of the O.A.U. and make them more responsible and relevant to our political and economic needs, if we can advance the pace of African regional and sub-regional economic co-operation and integration, if we reduce the level of intra-African disputes and concentrate on the things that unite us, then the need for dependence on extra-African Organisations would be greatly reduced. We must begin to concentrate on the development of our resources. Self-reliance is the only guarantee that the O.A.U. and the spirit of solidarity which the Organisation represents can survive external forces inimical to this unity and freedom on this continent.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Colleagues and Delegates, we Africans can no longer ignore the constant threats to the collective security of our continent. It is my strong conviction that the precarious security situation now existing throughout this continent should be regarded as a matter of great concern to all of us. The invasion of the Republic of Guinea in 1970, the violation of Uganda's territorial integrity in June, 1976, the unprovoked aggression against the sister Republic of Benin in January, 1977, are but a few examples of this standing external threat to our collective security. We, and we alone, can guarantee the security of our borders. The nature of the current threat facing many of our member-States calls for collective action. Only our firm and determined stand is good enough to ward off the enemy.

ECONOMIC WARFARE

These aggressions against Africa have greater and longer term ramifications. They distract our attention from the very vital business of harnessing and building stable economies after centuries of dependence. Africa cannot face a sustained onslaught from her external enemies without a stable economic base. Our enemies know this and wage economic warfare whose effect on us is as telling and malignant as that of armed force. It is necessary for us, therefore, to similarly mobilise all our resources and fight back. Individually and collectively, we all have the means to exert pressure on all external economic interests operating on our soil, but which do not live up to our aspirations and expectations. An example made of such unfriendly organisations will go a long way in advancing our interests.

My delegation believes that our Organisation should now begin to lay as much emphasis on the problems of rapid economic development, as we do on divisive political issues. It is our belief that the Extraordinary Session of the O.A.U. Council of Ministers which met in Kinshasa, Zaire in December, 1976, was a step in the right direction.

INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE

After nearly two decades of political independence, intra-African trade is virtually non-existent. Economic co-operation at both regional and sub-regional levels is still in its infancy. Communications and transportation between African States are still at a very rudimentary level of development. All these are problems of basic infra-structure which require immediate attention. Adequate solutions can only be found if we bear in mind that in all our endeavours to attain the economic emancipation of Africa, the principle of economic self-reliance must remain our foundation stone. Foreign ideas on rapid economic development or socio-political organisation must not blind us to the necessity to tackle the urgent needs of the vast majority of our people in the light of our own indigenous circumstances and experiences.

Economic and technical assistance from whatever source and under whatever ideological label are not in themselves adequate solutions to our socio-economic problems. Foreign assistance can only supplement our own efforts designed to maximise the effective use of our limited but valuable resources.

The developing countries have for far too long, put their hopes on the generosity of the industrialised countries. These hopes have almost evaporated with the recent collapse of the so-called North-South Dialogue in Paris. It is now clear that if we are going to obtain a new international economic system based on justice and equity, the developing countries must unite during the next negotiations on Commodities in Geneva. We should also attempt to work out an acceptable solution to the problem of debts which constitute a burden on many developing countries.

DESIRED OBJECTIVES

Accordingly, we should begin to consult with one another on how best to achieve the desired objective of African Economic Independence. The Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, have already decided to meet this challenge. This is the reason why we deeply regret the current difficulties that beset the East African Community. This was a pioneer experiment in African economic co-operation which inspired and encouraged our peoples in the West African sub-region to found ECOWAS. We sincerely hope and believe that the present difficulties of the East African Community are only temporary set-backs, and that the spirit of this pioneer Community will once again triumph over the forces of disintegration. I appeal to the Heads of State and Government of other sub-regions of Africa to bury their differences and join together in our continental struggle to control the exploitation and development of our rich natural resources and to ensure that the economic destiny of Africa remains in the hands of Africans.

May I conclude, Mr. Chairman, by paying tribute to your predecessor, Sir Sewoosagor Ramgollam, whose mature guidance directed the activities of our continental organisation during the last difficult year. I also express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary General and all the secretariat staff for their hard work, tolerance, understanding and perseverance, qualities which they will continue to need to sustain them in their unenviable but satisfying tasks.

Discipline in School

The present military administration, like other well-meaning organisations and people in this country, has been uneasy about cases of indiscipline among our youths. To determine the causes of these unwelcome situations, and possibly find a lasting solution to them, a Workshop on Discipline in Schools was organised on July 12, 1977, at the University of Lagos by the Principals of Secondary Schools, Teacher Training Colleges and Federal Schools of Arts and Sciences. Addressing the Principals at the opening of the Workshop, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, said that the issue of indiscipline among our youths should be regarded as a national emergency. He assured the Principals of the Government's support if they could make concrete proposals which would lead to the solution of this problem, adding that all Nigerians—mothers, fathers, and all interest-groups, with genuine concern with education, should mobilize themselves with a view to facing the problems collectively as a nation.

You are meeting today on the subject that has agitated my mind considerably over the last few months, and I am sure my concern is shared by teachers, parents and all other interests connected with education. Concern for deterioration in discipline and standards has become too obvious now to leave any doubt of the necessity of taking a major step in order to alter the course of events.

Not a day passes without some media report of either examination leakages, student unrest, cases of indiscipline and drug abuse, and other issues reflecting the unsatisfactory state of our institutions. This has now become an all-pervading national issue. I would go as far as calling it a national emergency, and I would wish that those of you gathered here today treat this with all the seriousness it deserves. You as heads of institutions are the people more directly connected with this problem and it is proper that you as the experts should first and foremost be given the opportunity to address your minds collectively to this serious situation. I am perfectly aware that it is a problem, the solution to which does not lie in our hands alone.

CUSTODIANS OF PROSPERITY

Education is the business of one and all. Each one of us in society has got some stake in our educational system in or outside an institution. Our institutions, and by this I mean all institutions, including the family, are the custodians of the stability and prosperity of the present, as well as of the future of the nation. Therefore, the subject you will be discussing over the next few days, and the solutions you might arrive at must enlist the aid of the generality of Nigerians. I wish to say right away that we are prepared to give all the backing that is necessary to bring about a change in direction from the current unsatisfactory situation. I am aware that any changes and solutions affecting a system like education are normally slow and gradual, but I am sure that there are some solutions that could be put into effect almost immediately. I would, therefore, want you to address your minds to the problems, and to both the immediate and the long-term solutions.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

It is easy to ascribe some of the faults of the school system and the deterioration of discipline to the current massive expansion which we have embarked upon over the

last few years. Indeed, I believe this is a critical factor. A measure of lowering of standards would necessarily attend any rapid expansion, but what we are witnessing today cannot be accounted for merely by rapid expansion. I believe it is rooted in something much deeper and has its historical roots reaching out probably as far back as the advent of western education in this country.

Examination leakages, frauds and the unscrupulousness with which both students and some teachers have perverted the whole aim of examinations, are symptoms of extreme materialism which is definitely alien to traditional society in this country. I admit that the school as an institution has always been at some variance with family values and traditional values in the African traditional home, but for a long time, it has been possible to reach an accommodation between what the school teaches and what our homes teach. Some of us here today have been fortunate in coming through the system while it was still possible to pick your values from home and pick your vocation from the school without much damage to ourselves. But over the years, this balance has tilted regrettably against the home. My observation is that the average school child today has for various reasons a lesser opportunity to obtain his values and get a proper grounding from home.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Rather, the school environment has tended to dominate, and it is this school environment that is now the centre of the crisis. Not only has it by and large failed to inculcate the right values, it has hardly been and indeed cannot be a substitute for the home. Thus, we cannot divorce the ills in our schools from the social environment as a whole nor ignore the influences, which I admit at the moment, are in a state of flux in our schools. One can easily recognise some of these outside influences within schools, but my charge to you is that we are capable of taking care of both aspects.

CONCRETE PROPOSALS

If indeed the state of our schools worries parents and the generality of the Nigerian public, it is first and foremost our duty to heighten their awareness about the nature of the problems in order to mobilise their opinion and energies towards appropriate solutions. Principals and professionals have got a unique role in this, by making a concerted effort not only to identify these problems, but to bring them to the fore, and to the attention of both Government and the public. In this regard, I suggest to you to put forward some concrete proposals for institutionalising your meetings and making sure you have a lasting machinery for reviewing, up-dating and coping with critical problems of school administration.

APPEAL

On this occasion, I would also like to make an appeal to all Nigerian mothers, fathers, and all interest groups with genuine concern on education, to mobilize themselves with a view to facing up collectively as a nation, to the problems of our schools. The Government is determined and pledges all its support to any measures from within and outside the school environment that will guarantee a healthy educational system at this crucial time in our history. It is quite misleading to suppose that some of the apparent bad influences either from Western media or this excessive pre-occupation with certificates and their material rewards, represent the value of the majority of the people of this country. The majority are still ruled by basic traditions that have remained unchanged for centuries. No one would wish to jettison some of

these social and religious values that are the basis of a coherent society. Formal education does inevitably affect some of these values. However, it never obliterates them and it is not contradictory for us to desire to expand and increase education while preserving our traditional values.

Translating these ideas into realities of school administration is an onerous task, but I believe you are capable of giving the lead and the Government would give its guarantee and cover in implementing necessary changes. A good school is like a good family, and should reflect the essentials of the nation's values. It should have its image of the ideal Nigerian, and the ideal Nigerian is one with the capacity as well as the will to serve this nation above all other interests.

ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

There is no doubt that rapid expansion embarked upon by the nation does put a strain on everyone, but it is an expansion that incorporates the will of the Nigerian masses. Whilst you must strive hard to maintain the integrity of the individual school in the face of over-whelming odds, I want you to see yourselves also as managers in the real sense of the word, of our most important resource. We must aim for a product of excellence which will meet our national aspirations and objectives. May I also remind you that other resource inputs for the achievement of these standards are not unlimited, and what is available must be judiciously utilised.

Rarely do we think of the principal as a manager of resources, but he is indeed, a most essential manager of resources, not the least of which are financial resources. As heads of institutions, this concept must remain with you at all times and I hope that when you institutionalize your meetings, you will address yourselves to the twin problems of how to improve the products from your schools, as well as how to use the resources available to the nation to the maximum benefit and to the best of your ability. The Government and the people will do all they can to control the environment, but I think I can rightly place the duty and responsibility of the management of our schools on you, and on our part, we will give you the guarantee that we will do all we can to support your work.

Finally, may I appeal to you all to endeavour to contribute positively to 'Operation Feed the Nation' through direct involvement of your institutions in farming, and by encouraging farming within the communities in which your institutions are located. You will thereby be assisting in giving farming a pride of place in our national life.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

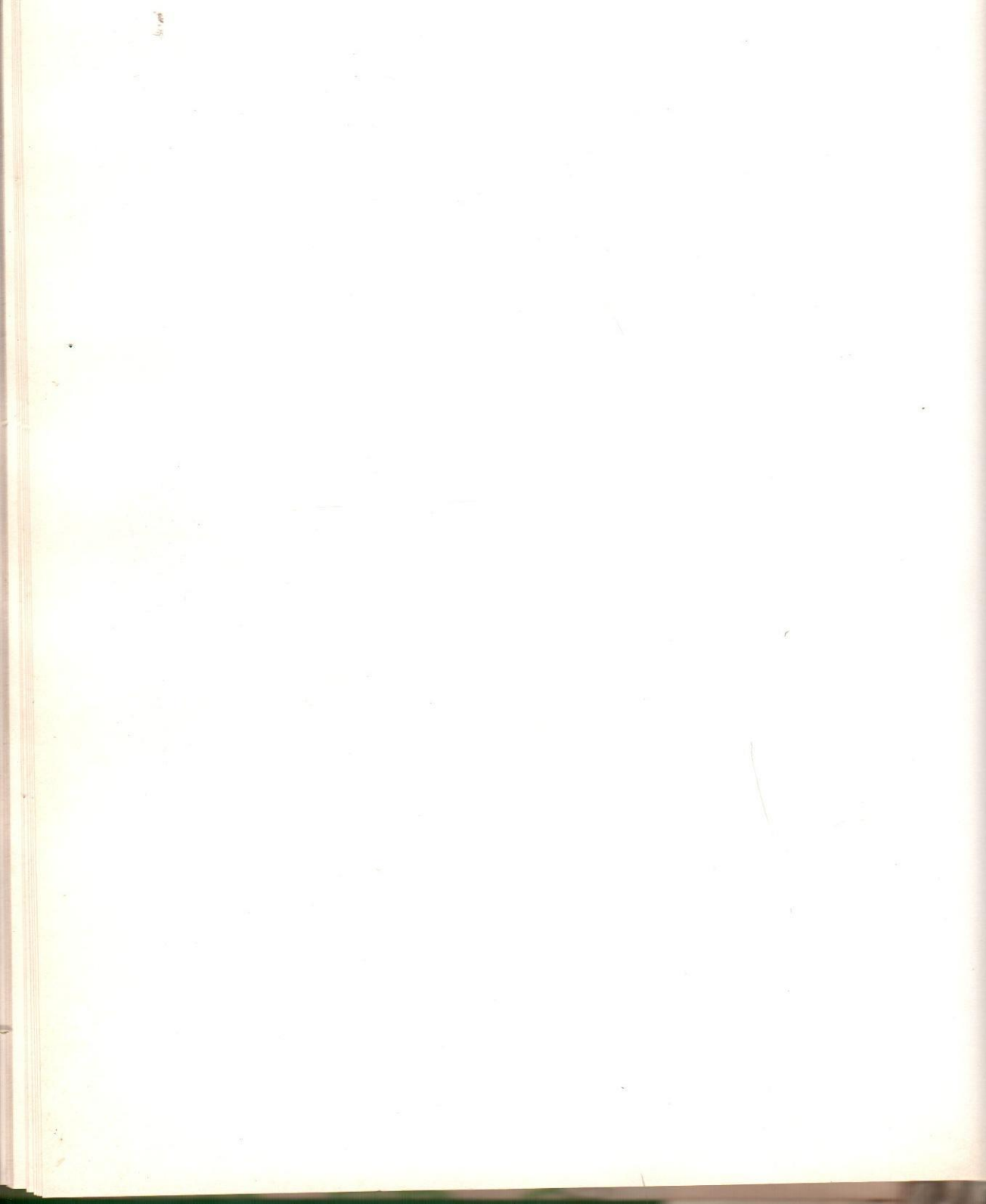




Fig. 16 The Head of State, H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and President Senni Kounche of Niger.

State Visit to the Republic of Niger

The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo paid a two-day official visit to the Republic of Niger from July 17 to 18, 1977. In his speech during the visit, General Obasanjo reiterated his belief that the economic strength of the West African Countries lies in their unity, adding that the establishment of ECOWAS was a momentous step that would further enable the countries of the sub-region to free their economy from foreign domination and to harness their meagre resources to the best advantage.

For many Nigerians, a visit to Niger Republic is a visit to a second home. This explains my profound feeling of satisfaction on this occasion of my first official visit to the sister neighbouring Republic of Niger. I would have undertaken this visit a bit earlier, but I am sure that you will understand that the slight delay has been the result of heavy commitments at home in our efforts to carry through the programmes of the Federal Military Government for returning Nigeria to civilian rule.

Mr. President, I would like to convey my most sincere gratitude to you, your Government and indeed, to the entire people of the Republic of Niger, for the warm and spontaneous reception accorded me and my entourage on arrival here in your capital city of Niamey. The heavy turn out of men, women and children, in colourful and joyous mood all along the route as we drove from the airport through the town, is heart-warming and indicative of our common identity. We are profoundly touched and impressed by this gesture which is certainly an eloquent testimony of our common aspirations and the common heritage of the people of Nigeria and Niger.

CLOSE LINK

Besides, our two countries and peoples are closely linked by the facts of history and geography which have from time immemorial, been characterised by a free flow of persons and goods across the borders between our two sister countries. Consequently, the peoples who live on both sides of our common frontiers are indeed, the same people, separated by artificially created colonial boundaries, which they see only as a nuisance and an impediment to their daily movements when they come up against police or customs posts. The fact of our people's ethnic affinities, therefore, Mr. President, and of our common cultural heritage, need no elaborate words. But these same facts have occasionally engendered unavoidable family quarrels, which fortunately, we have always resolved amicably like members of the same family and in the best African tradition. We rejoice at this happy state of affairs and fervently hope that our traditional ties will grow stronger as the years go by.

PROBLEMS

But we do recognise at the same time, that these family quarrels have occasionally generated more heat than we all desire, and we should like to pay tribute to the good

sense and the maturity of all those who on such occasions, have speedily restored the traditional harmony among our peoples on both sides of our common frontier. We are also gratified to note the rapidity with which such problems have always been resolved, sometimes locally by our peoples themselves, and occasionally at joint meetings between the agents of our two Governments. This is as it should be, Mr. President, and it is our view that this trend if maintained, augurs very well for the future of our two neighbouring sister States.

I should not, however, omit to mention the recent case of personal quarrels among our citizens near our common border, which resulted in the death of a citizen of Niger. I have on that occasion, taken immediate steps to convey to Your Excellency the deep regrets of the Nigerian Government and people, and I take this opportunity to convey the same to the family of the bereaved. Like here in your great country, the rule of law is held in great esteem among us in Nigeria, and we trust that occasions will no longer arise when our peoples will take the law into their own hands whatever the provocations.

BILATERAL CO-OPERATION

On the purely bilateral level, Your Excellency, we are equally gratified that the relations between our two sister Republics have developed in a most encouraging manner, especially over the years since the attainment of sovereignty by Niger and Nigeria. Areas of concrete and fruitful bilateral co-operation have also expanded very substantially, thus reflecting our common desire to join efforts and pool our resources to ensure better living standards for our peoples. I wish here to reassure you, dear Brother, of Nigeria's unflinching commitment to the high level of bilateral co-operation between our two countries for the mutual benefit of our peoples. We will spare no efforts in sustaining our commitments and in enhancing all opportunities for co-operation.

We are firmly convinced, Mr. President, that the welfare and prosperity of Niger are closely bound up with the welfare of Nigeria, and we shall always work together in every possible way with your Government in the task of improving the welfare of its people. The tempo of economic co-operation between our two neighbouring States is growing daily at an accelerated pace. Such growth and development should be encouraged to further concretise the already strong bonds of friendship that now so happily exist between our two peoples.

ORGANISATION

We believe that in unity lies the economic strength of the countries of our sub-region. We warmly recommend, therefore, the vital role played by Your Excellency in bringing about the birth of our sub-regional Organisation—the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The establishment of ECOWAS was, we believe, a momentous step that will further enable the countries of the sub-region to wrest their economy from foreign domination and to harness their meagre resources to the best advantage. We believe, too, that it represents a concerted effort to break down the artificial barriers imposed on us by our colonial past, thus enhancing the chances of inter-African co-operation to which we are all so totally committed.

But the extent of fruitful co-operation between Nigeria and Niger goes deeper even than the framework of ECOWAS, as testified by our common interests in the Tchad Basin Development Authority, the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission and the Niger Basin Commission.

The areas of mutually beneficial co-operation between our two neighbouring countries are therefore practically limitless.

ALIEN RULE

These brief remarks will not be complete, Mr. President, if I do not mention the plight of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa who are still living under the yoke of colonialism and the inhuman regime of apartheid. We in Nigeria are firmly convinced that no African nation can claim to be truly free as long as a jot of the continent remains under an alien rule, and for as long as the black man, wherever he may be, cannot be master of his own destiny. We are highly gratified, Mr. President, that we hold identical views with our brothers and sisters in Niger on this all-important question of African freedom, security and dignity for ourselves.

Once more, may I thank you, Mr. President, and the entire people of the Republic of Niger most sincerely, for having made it possible for me to visit your beautiful country at this time. I and my entourage have been most impressed by the tremendous efforts to make us feel at home. We thank all our brothers and sisters of this great Republic for your warm reception and hospitality, and we look forward to receiving you again soon in Nigeria.

Long Live Niger-Nigeria Relations!

Long Live ECOWAS!!

Long Live the Organisation of African Unity.

ECOWAS Council of Ministers, Lagos Meetings

On behalf of General Olusegun Obasanjo, Brigadier Shehu Yar' Adua addressed the Second Session of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which opened in Lagos on July 18, 1977. He stated that the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo observed that the industrialised countries lacked the political will to commit themselves to the implementation of the measures recommended for the attainment of the objectives of the new International Economic Order. He added that the achievements of rapid economic development of the developing countries lies in their own hands.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Lagos on behalf of the Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, and the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on the occasion of the Second Session of the Council of Ministers of our historic community.

When the Heads of State and Governments of the sub-region met in May 1975, to sign the Treaty establishing the ECOWAS, our revered brother and friend, His Excellency, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, admonished the governments of West African states to prove to the world that they could come to grips with the most taxing challenge of the moment, and that they were taking the difficult and necessary steps towards a new economic order of self-reliance. He warned that the time of fanatical nationalism and of verbal wars was no more. This was the time, he said, for community building, the fruit of generous and lucid visions, and of the desire of Africa to free itself from economic domination.

This advice was no more valid in May 1975, than it is today in July 1977. In the same vein, our brother Head of State, His Excellency, President William Tolbert Jr. , of the Republic of Liberia, re-affirmed his Government's view that a realistic and meaningful co-operation must be based on the reciprocal benefits of trade, the closest possible collaboration of our institutions of development, and the beneficial exploitation of our economic resources and potential. It is in the light of these expressions that I wish to say again, that the benefits of economic co-operation take some time to mature, and that patience, confidence in one another, and recognition of the inter-independence of our economic activities, are the cardinal principles that should make for the realization of the objectives of the Community.

LESSON OF PARIS CONFERENCE

As you are all aware, it is increasingly dawning on us in the developing countries that the achievement of rapid economic development lies in our hands. This point was again emphasized in June of this year, when representative of the industrialized and the Third World countries concluded their joint efforts in Paris, which aimed at achieving the establishment of the New International Economic Order as enunciated at the 6th and 7th Special Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. But are

we any nearer to the realization of the ideals of the Order? The answer is *No*. The achievements at the Paris Conference have been variously assessed. From the maze of assessments, one could only deduce a common ingredient—the lack of the political will on the part of the industrialised countries to commit themselves to the implementation of the measures recommended for the attainment of the objectives of the New International Economic Order. We, in this sub-region, have a lesson to learn from the failure of the Paris Conference. That is, that the big powers of this world are more interested in preserving their numerous economic and socio-political advantages over the Third World countries. A saving grace can only come from our determination and commitment to internal and collective economic self-reliance. We will now learn to place less premium on, and whenever possible, reject the sympathy and charity of the rich industrialized countries who founded the basis of their wealth on our natural resources.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not necessary to remind you of the role the Council of Ministers should play in the affairs of the Community. The Council is next to the Authority of Heads of States and Governments which meets just once a year. This presupposes that a lot of the job to be performed within the context of the ECOWAS should be disposed of at your level. Your responsibility as provided in Article 6(2) of the Treaty is, and I quote:

“to keep under review the functioning and development of the Community in accordance with this Treaty;

to make recommendations to the Authority on matters of policy aimed at the efficient and harmonious functioning and development of the Community;

to give directions to all subordinate institutions of the Community; and

to exercise such other powers conferred on just a realization but a speedy one, of the ideals of the Community.”

We will be prepared to make sacrifices in the overall interest of all the people of this sub-region. I wish to emphasize that I do not foresee an easy way of achieving our objectives, nor can I predict that we will not meet with some counter forces internal or extraneous to the Community. What is important is that we should recognize that these all test our collective will to succeed. We should take measures to ensure our triumph in the ultimate. This is the only way of silencing our detractors and of coming to grips with the economic challenges and realities of our time. We may not within the Community have technology and skilled expertise in abundance, but given the available human and material resources, there is much we can together achieve on our own and by ourselves.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; we are all very deeply committed to the success of ECOWAS. On behalf of myself, and the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I wish you a resounding success in your deliberations. May I reiterate my Government's preparedness at all times, to make whatever contributions or sacrifice within our capabilities may be necessary to ensure the success of the Economic Community of West African States. I wish you, in addition, a very pleasant stay in Nigeria. It is with great pleasure that I now declare open the Second Session of the Council of Ministers of ECOWAS. Long live ECOWAS.

Third National Sports Festival

His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the opening ceremony of the 3rd National Sports Festival which was held at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium in Kaduna on July 22, 1977. In his address, General Obasanjo reminded participants that sports in all forms had not only become an important instrument of national unity, personal pride and excellence, but also served as a substantial instrument in international politics. He explained that sports promoted both understanding and co-operation among nations and also served as a means of arousing the conscience of the world to burning political issues.

The decision to hold this Festival in Kaduna is a welcome departure from the past. Apart from reflecting the desire of this Administration to ensure that national sporting events are staged in different corners of the country, the decision also reflects the conscious attempt of the Government to decentralise sporting facilities and activities.

In addition to the obvious advantage of diversifying our national sporting facilities, the holding of such national events outside the Federal Capital also engenders a new sense of awareness. For those of you who are visiting this part of the country for the first time, you will be able to have an on-the-spot assessment based on personal experiences which are good ingredients for deepening your national awareness and heightening your understanding. Such experiences serve to widen, in more practical terms, your perspectives about your country, its aspirations and limitations.

The impression that sports, of all sorts, are activities for self-recreation and physical development alone is no longer tenable. This view tends to dull the keenness and spirit of competition which should rightly belong to sporting events, and more importantly, it tends to lead to lack of devotion and thoroughness in our sporting activities. In the end, one is led to see winning and success as incidental to participation. Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that sports have gone beyond the simple notion of keeping the body fit and healthy. Sports in all forms have become an important instrument of personal pride and excellence, and at the national level, an important vehicle of national unity, honour and national self-identity. More importantly, sports competition has become a substantial instrument in international politics as it not only promotes understanding and co-operation among nations, but also serves as an effective vehicle for arousing the conscience of the world and drawing the world attention to burning political issues.

We should endeavour to bring out the great potentials of this country in this important field of activity. We must move away from deriving satisfaction only in taking part in international sports. It is important to make it clear that anyone in this country who is taking part in sports or in any activity involving the honour and good name of our country should aim at winning. There is neither romance nor pride in failure.

GREAT HEIGHTS

The Federal Military Government and State Governments have put a substantial part

of their resources on development of sports and sporting facilities in the belief that Nigeria can reach great heights in sports internationally. Our hope, now and in the future, for such capital outlay on sports, is that we have in this country the potential for making of sportsmen and women of world rating. Perhaps no further proof of that is needed than the first-class performance of the Christ the King College students who recently brought home a world 'junior' soccer trophy for best performance in and out of the field of play. Again, there is current top-rate performance of our football clubs and boxers. If anything, these achievements go to show that we have the men and women, and the resources, and what is needed is the sustained discipline, the dedication and the patriotism to back them up. The Federal Military Government will continue to do its best to provide reasonable facilities within our limited resources to encourage sports at all levels.

FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING

The recent performance of Nigerian sporting clubs in the international scene should not make us rest on our oars. In fact, such performances should sharpen our will to compete and further excel. The success of this Festival will not be measured only in old records broken and new records set, but also in friendship, amity and understanding generated among all participants and officials during the Festival, and maintained thereafter. The proof of your ability to excel as Nigerians will be demonstrated in the forthcoming West African Games to be held in Lagos next month. Such avenues are, therefore, not only occasions for winning glories, they are also important venues for proof of discipline and self-sacrifice and for making friends.

I congratulate the Government and people of Kaduna State for hosting this national event, and I thank the Governor, his Commissioners, officials and all the people of Kaduna State who have contributed to making this Festival a success. I also thank officials of National Sports Commission and the various States Sports Commissions for both their efforts and sacrifice in preparing for this gathering. I would also like to thank all Nigerians and friends of Nigeria who have made generous contributions in cash or in kind to the success of this Festival.

May I end these remarks by invoking the spirit of sportsmanship in all of you who will be taking part in the forthcoming events. I value the spirit of sportsmanship with a combination of understanding, comradeship and discipline, as much as I value your determination to win.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to declare open the 3rd National Sports Festival.

Towards Compulsory Primary Education in Nigeria

The World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession met in Lagos, Nigeria, from August 3 to 10, 1977. In an address to the delegates attending the Conference the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo outlined Nigeria's educational system, and the new Education Policy—its objectives, achievements, and problems. He also expressed the country's interest in the deliberations and recommendations of the Conference on the social expectations of compulsory education. This address was read on behalf of General Obasanjo by the Honourable Federal Commissioner for Education, Col. A.A. Ali.

From the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo, I bring you greetings. He has asked me to welcome you with open arms to Nigeria and to assure you of our hospitality.

I understand that you will be discussing various aspects of compulsory education and particularly the social expectations of compulsory education. Addressing a world assembly of scholars like this on a topic as popular as compulsory education, calls for caution. As I am aware, many of you here have made significant contributions to the study of educational administration and the philosophy of education. And with such a well-informed audience before me, I do not wish to pre-empt any controversies. My address to you, therefore, will be specific, highlighting what we are doing in this country in the area of compulsory primary education; what problems we envisage; how we hope to tackle these problems; and the promises that are anticipated.

UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

In January 1974, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria decided to provide free primary education for all Nigerian children beginning in September 1976, and to make the scheme compulsory by September 1979. To us, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) is our first step towards compulsory primary education. The Government's decision to launch the Universal Primary Education (UPE) was a tribute to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted on the 10th of December, 1948, and which recognized that education shall be free, compulsory and made easily accessible to every child.

EDUCATIONAL IMBALANCE

In addition, this country has had to contend with some other factors, including the need to correct serious educational imbalances between various parts of the country, and the pressing need to indigenize mass skilled and semi-skilled labour required for the gigantic development projects that face the country. Roughly 35 per cent of our primary school age children were in school in 1970, but the percentage varied widely from State to State, ranging from about seven per cent in the old North-Western State, to about 95 per cent in Lagos State. Enrollment in the old six Northern States was generally low, ranging from 7 per cent to 26 per cent, a situation that did not compare

favourably with that in the old southern states where enrollment ranged from 62 per cent to 95 per cent respectively.

AWARENESS

Of course, our people, even in the remotest parts of the country, are quite aware of the benefits of education. They know, not only the prestige that the educated elite enjoys, but also the material satisfaction that accompanies a regular income usually guaranteed by a good diploma. The radio, the television and the newspapers have brought home to a reasonably large number of our people that their children, and this is true with the adult illiterates, must be provided with sound education, the type that they had no opportunity to receive. Little wonder then that the generality of our people received the news of free education with unparalleled enthusiasm in the hope and the belief that the scheme would indeed mean the dawn of a new era for the country as a whole.

SOLID PLANS

In anticipation of such enthusiastic reception of the UPE, the Government went all-out to make solid plans for the formulation and execution of those policies under which the UPE scheme would operate. The project's feasibility study had revealed that about 2,200 teacher-educators would be required in 1974 when the Government took the decision to embark on the scheme. Realizing that it was impossible to find that number of teachers in the country, it was decided to recruit about 300 teachers from abroad, and about 200 experienced educationists, including retired people within the country, and also to employ roughly 1,700 National Youth Service Corps members as classroom teachers after an intensive ten-week induction course.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

There are at present, 1,340 Federal teacher-educators working in the Teacher Training Colleges to supplement about 3,000 teacher-educators employed by the States for their own Teacher Training Colleges. In spite of all these, the shortage of teacher-educators in all our Teacher Training Colleges today stands at about 3,800. A UPE Task Force which was set up by the Federal Ministry of Education, commissioned a curriculum-review committee under the auspices of the Nigerian Educational Research Council, to review the existing syllabus for the Teachers' Grade II Certificate Course. The Committee, which was centred at the Ahmadu Bello University, eventually prepared a new syllabus which has since been introduced in the teacher training colleges. Undoubtedly, the curriculum-review exercise was an important step towards the implementation of the UPE scheme.

ADDITIONAL TEACHERS

For the scheme to take off by September 1976, it was estimated that some 163,000 additional teachers must be trained for the estimated 2.3 million pupils who would be enrolled for the scheme at that time. Of course, by the time the scheme was launched, the actual enrollment was a little over 3 million pupils, bringing the over-all enrollment in the primary school system to over 8 million pupils. The Federal Government, therefore, promptly took over the financial responsibilities for a total of 156 Teacher Training Colleges throughout the Federation towards rapid expansion of their facilities so as to double their in-takes, thereby increasing the student places from 50,000 to at least 100,000.

Additional seventy-four new Teacher Training Colleges were approved with an intake of 1,000 trainees each. Altogether, there are now 230 Teacher Training Colleges throughout the country being fathered by the Federal Military Government for the training of Grade II teachers for the UPE scheme. The current shortfall of teachers for our primary schools has been appreciably reduced with the recent graduation of 27,270 final year students, (according to the latest returns from 15 of our 19 States). In order to further reduce the problem of staff shortage for the scheme, about 2,400 teachers have been offered appointment and many of them have reported at their posts.

It should be observed at this point that the problem of providing teaching personnel for the UPE scheme was compounded by the fact that at the time the Government approved the scheme in 1974, 53 per cent of the 130,000 primary school teachers in Nigeria were untrained and 80 per cent of them were unqualified. By the time the scheme becomes compulsory in 1979, additional 235,000 teachers would be required, a figure which is expected to rise to 290,000 by 1982.

The huge enrollment figures in our primary schools have had significant implications for the provision of physical facilities and equipment, especially in the educationally disadvantaged states of the Federation where the anticipated overall percentage of six-year-olds, who would normally be in school, rose from 15 per cent to over 40 per cent. By the time the scheme was launched in September 1976, some 37,000 additional classrooms had been completed in the various states.

JOINT IMPLEMENTATION

The UPE scheme is being implemented jointly by the Federal and State Governments, with the active involvement of the Local Governments and the communities. However, broad policy guidelines for the scheme are laid down by the Federal Government which also makes funds available for both capital and recurrent expenditures for implementing the scheme.

UPE EXPENDITURE

The Field Implementation Unit of the Federal Ministry of Education carries out regular inspection and supervision of the scheme. From 1974 to 1977, the Federal Military Government had spent ₦ 270.7 million as recurrent expenditure on the UPE scheme, while capital expenditure during same period amounted to ₦196.2 million. The recurrent expenditure on Teacher Education during the same period in respect of the UPE scheme was ₦271.7 million, as against capital expenditure of ₦264.5 million. On the whole, therefore, the Federal Government has spent more than one billion naira on the UPE scheme between 1974 and 1977. Education is always a worthwhile investment for any country because it yields good dividends.

There are justifiable fears at the moment that when compulsory primary education is ushered in in 1979, it may lead to an enrollment explosion in our primary schools, since the 100 per cent enrollment figure anticipated by 1980 could have significant implications for other social services which are not directly under the Federal authorities, such as:

- (a) the implications of UPE for library services;
- (b) medical implications of the UPE;
- (c) compulsory birth registration which is a *sine qua non* for the UPE—(efforts are already geared towards achieving this);

- (d) school transport system, especially in the urban areas;
- (e) expansion of the school meals system (beyond its present coverage); and
- (f) absorption of UPE products into the labour force, etc.

If national financial resources were to be concentrated on the UPE scheme to the exclusion of other vital developmental projects, such as the provision of transportation networks, and various agricultural projects; the iron and steel complex; the oil refinery projects; housing; local governments; etc., then the UPE scheme itself will suffer, as its ultimate success is obviously dependent upon a strong and dynamic economy. This is to say that the Government and the people must begin to grapple with the simple truth that our financial resources are not only limited, but that the resources cannot sensibly be used exclusively for the UPE scheme.

This Government has always had the highest regard for education as evidenced by the annual resource allocations, as compared with other competing sectors. Since 1970, when the Second National Development Plan was launched, education has consistently ranked second in terms of the magnitude of resource allocations. Thus, while education will continue to receive the priority attention it rightly deserves, as perhaps the real force that can truly make our nation free and great, we must continue to endeavour to attach importance to our other priorities without necessarily disrupting the smooth operation of the UPE scheme, although it is unrealistic to expect the rate of funding to be able to keep pace with the continually rising cost of education as we are already witnessing. This is where the active involvement of the communities will become very crucial for the scheme's success in the years ahead. We hope we will continue to maintain the momentum generated by the enthusiastic support of all communities in Nigeria for the UPE scheme.

NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

I wish to call attention to another area of concern—that of the UPE graduates. At the moment, there are problems about some of our young children aged about 12, who have passed out of our primary schools but who are insufficiently qualified and apparently too young to be gainfully employed in the modern sectors of the economy. The result is a large number of unemployable school leavers who roam our urban streets and have deserted their villages in search of white collar jobs in the cities. This class of youths represent a waste of human resources, a situation that causes serious national concern.

To combat such employment problems within our educational system, a new National Policy on Education was adopted last year. Among the aims of the Policy are the following five national objectives embodied in the Second National Development Plan (1970-75):

- (1) a free and democratic society;
- (2) a just and egalitarian society;
- (3) a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- (4) a great and dynamic economy; and
- (5) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The new educational philosophy seeks to develop the individual Nigerian child into a sound and effective citizen, and aims at democratizing education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The philosophy is directed towards self-realization and

self-articulation, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness and unity; and economic, political, scientific, and technological progress.

CENTRAL FEATURE OF POLICY

The Central feature of the programme is the introduction of a 6-3-3-4 integrated educational system which provides for a six-year primary education, a three-year junior secondary education with a bias for vocational education, a three-year senior secondary education, and a four-year university education. The implementation of this education policy took off with the introduction of the UPE last year. The second stage, that is the junior secondary, will take off when the first set of the UPE pupils complete their six-year course in June 1982. The successful UPE graduates of that year are expected to attend the junior secondary schools where they will be exposed to one or more vocational skills. It is hoped that the junior secondary school graduates who will be about 15 years of age, will be old enough to accept gainful employment and be sufficiently skilled to contribute to the over-all development of the country. The third stage, that is senior secondary school, will be available to graduates of the junior secondary schools who are sufficiently motivated academically and otherwise to undergo the course. The final stage, that is university, will be open to senior secondary school graduates who will be selected on the basis of performance in their secondary school final examinations. The *sixth form* as presently constituted, will be phased out.

A National Implementation Task Force, assisted by State Implementation Committees, will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the various programmes of the new National Policy on Education, and provide a continuous review and assessment of the aims, objectives and targets of the Policy with a view to ensuring its adequacy and continued relevance to our national needs and aspirations.

TEACHING MATERIALS

Furthermore, curriculum development and the production of cheap but good textbooks are being tackled through the Nigerian Educational Research Centre, which was set up in August 1972, and the National Book Development Council, respectively. Language study and development is being undertaken by the Language Centre which was established in 1971, while a decision has been taken to establish a Science Equipment Manufacturing Centre, specifically to promote the production of high quality, inexpensive science teaching materials and facilitate their distribution throughout the country. An Education Technology Centre which handles schools broadcasts and visual aids development is located in Kaduna. This centre develops and produces instructional aids based on existing school curricula and the use of local resources and talents. The centre also produces and transmits educational programmes on radio and television, and operates a national information unit on applied educational technology.

HOPES

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our hopes for a better tomorrow lie, to a large extent, on the successful execution of the Universal Primary Education scheme. No doubt, all Nigerians view this scheme as a necessary condition for the building of a truly democratic and just society. This country does not doubt the capacity of the Government to provide the right type of education for the masses, and the Federal Military Government, with the support of the people, will endeavour to

seek solutions to the many problems that would arise in the determination to execute the programme.

The result of your deliberations, and particularly, your recommendations on the social expectations of compulsory education which is the theme of your conference, will certainly be of high interest to Nigeria at this crucial time. I can assure you, therefore, that we are eagerly awaiting your professional consensus of opinion on such a vitally important topic.

I sincerely wish you every success in your deliberations, and God's guidance; Amen.

State Visit to the Republic of Cameroun

Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo paid an official visit to the Republic of Cameroun from August 7 to 9, 1977. In his speech during the visit, General Obasanjo stressed the need for a constant review of areas of co-operation between Cameroun and Nigeria. He expressed concern over the tense situation on the African continent, and appealed to African countries to eschew force in the settlement of disputes.

During this year I have had the honour and privilege in meeting His Excellency, Alhaji Ahmadou Ahidjo, President of the United Republic of Cameroun in Nigeria and elsewhere, during which meetings I was able to draw from his huge reservoir of wisdom and experience in statemanship. The kind invitation that has rendered our presence in your midst today possible has, therefore, not come a moment too soon. It is also a proof, if further proof was needed, of the full realisation of how inextricably bound together our two countries and peoples are, and the important role that visits of this nature could and do play in the solution of those problems that are bound from time to time to confront us in our untiring quest for the lofty objectives of closer friendship and fruitful co-operation between our two countries.

Before going any further, please permit me to mention, Mr. President, with a deep sense of gratitude and sincere appreciation, the warm and fraternal welcome accorded to me and my entourage by the friendly people of this historic town of Garoua. We are greatly touched by the wonderful show of affection by those who have turned out yesterday and today in such large numbers to cheer and welcome us. Our gratitude also goes to the Governor of Garoua, and to all your party members who have worked so hard to make our visit so memorable and enjoyable.

Mr. President, it is my sincere desire to make this short visit another important landmark in the relationship between our two countries and peoples. It will be unrealistic to pretend that certain problems that have for quite some time eluded complete solution between us have disappeared. But problems are, unfortunately, an unavoidable aspect of human existence which in a way, serve to strengthen our faith in ourselves and in our common destiny. This is why we must avoid purposeless emotions in tackling our problems, but rather adopt calm, dispassionate, and realistic approaches to finding permanent solutions to them.

I am referring to the problem of misunderstandings amongst our citizens living on either side of our borders. It is my belief, and the belief of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, that the time has now come to reduce, if not completely eliminate, misunderstandings and conflicts among our citizens along the border to the barest minimum in the short run. I am confident that the goodwill to achieve this noble and desirable objective exists on both sides.

In this exercise, we must not allow ignorance and emotions to mislead us. And that is why I should like to seize this opportunity to appeal to all Nigerians living in this country, and particularly, those residing in the villages and settlements close to the border, to appreciate that they are duty bound to respect the laws of this sister Republic. I am specifically referring here to my country men and women who live in the villages and settlements close to our common borders where problems have occurred rather frequently of late. Let me remind them that while they have everything in common with their brothers and sisters on either side of the border, an artificial boundary exists and the laws within each country must be obeyed.

In return, it will be the bounding duty and obligation of each of our two countries to guarantee safety of life and property and legitimate pursuit of the means of livelihood by all law-abiding citizens of both countries within our borders. We must endeavour to make provisions for a constant review of co-operation between our two sister countries to ensure that our joint energies are fully harnessed in the right areas to increase understanding amongst our peoples and to raise the standards of living and improve the well-being of our citizens.

Nigeria is prepared to engage in a useful exchange of information and technical know-how in areas of interest to both of us and for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

FRATRICIDAL CONFLICTS

Mr. President, the year 1977, we must confess, has so far been a rather difficult year for intra-African relations. Apart from long-standing problems that have been a source of concern to this Continent, unfortunately, new ones are rearing their heads and sapping our energies and scarce resources. I hope and pray, Mr. President, that this sad state of affairs is no more than a passing phase in the aches and pains that must perforce attend nation-building and African unity.

Your Excellency, I should like to seize this opportunity once again, to appeal to all fellow Africans to eschew force in the settlement of disputes that do from time to time arise. By resorting to force, we consciously or unwittingly allow our detractors who eagerly supply the arms, to further impoverish us and exploit our God-given resources for a pittance. Africa needs an atmosphere of peace and tranquility to provide food for our peoples and to improve their economic and social well-being. True friends of Africa will assist Africa in this direction rather than promote fratricidal conflicts and self-destruction based on ideology.

Nigeria, and I am sure the Cameroun Republic also, stands ready at all times to abide by the provisions of the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity on the peaceful settlement of disputes; we believe also in peaceful co-existence and fruitful cooperation, and are determined to do all within our means to ensure that these disputes will not consume Africa and threaten the very existence of the Organisation of African Unity which, in spite of its weaknesses, is Africa's only salvation today.

IDENTICAL VIEWS

Nigeria and Cameroun share identical views on the situation in Southern Africa and on the obnoxious policy of apartheid. Our own independence will be meaningless for as long as there remain of this continent pockets of colonialism and white minority racist domination.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I once again, reiterate our grateful thanks to you for your warm reception and generous hospitality. Since visits of this kind are a potent instrument in the effective conduct of affairs between countries, I should like to seize this opportunity to ask you, Mr. President, to visit Nigeria again as soon as it is convenient for you.

Long Live Nigeria-Cameroun Relations!
Long Live the Organisation of African Unity!

World Conference for Action Against Apartheid

The World Conference for Action Against Apartheid, organised by the United Nations Organisation in collaboration with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was hosted by Nigeria from August 22 to 26, 1977. Addressing the delegates at the opening of the conference in Lagos, the Head of State Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo called on the whole world to rise to 'positive action' in its total and final war against apartheid.

On behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria, in the name of the Black and African people throughout the world, in the interest of all who are hindered and handicapped in the area of basic right and freedom, and on behalf of our World Organisation, I welcome you to Nigeria and to the deliberations of all the world at this World Conference For Action Against Apartheid.

It gives me particular pleasure to welcome Dr. Kurt Waldheim once again to Nigeria. We have noted over the years the able manner in which he has guided the affairs of our Organisation. Mr. Secretary-General, your firm and unbiased stand on issues of import, especially on the problems of Southern Africa, have been encouraging. It is our hope that during your current term as Secretary-General, progress will be made within the United Nations system towards the attainment of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially on issues of freedom, justice and human dignity in Southern Africa, and indeed everywhere in the world where man's inhumanity to his fellow man prevails.

I also specially welcome President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, who has consistently demonstrated in words and action, total and unflinching commitment to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. His presence at this World Conference For Action Against Apartheid is a further testimony of this commitment. I feel certain that his keynote address to this Conference will be an inspiration to its deliberations.

That this World Conference is taking place in Lagos is, to us in Nigeria, very significant. We in Nigeria do not regard this Conference as just another United Nations meeting taking place in Lagos. For us, this is a gathering of men and women of conscience from all the corners of the globe who have come to Lagos to harmonise views and work out a programme of *Action* for all nations and peoples of the world to effect complete liberation of Southern Africa without delay and without undue suffering, and to bring about the eradication of the inhuman policy of apartheid in South Africa.

POSSIBILITIES AND COURSE OF ACTION

There are three broad possibilities open to me today. I could infest this hall with a spirited enthusiasm and indulge in a feast of words which relate the progress we have made in removing and reducing suffering from the inter-relations of mankind under

the auspices of the United Nations. Secondly, I could rail and inveigle, bombard and incite the rest of the world against those who have installed in our midst, continue to maintain and appear dedicated to sustaining, a system of oppression against those who have a better claim to governance than the oppressors. Thirdly, I could re-analyse the situation in South Africa and establish a course of action, and set up alternatives which are open to Africa and the world to find a solution to the questions raised by *Apartheid* for all human beings, but in particular for all Black and African people throughout the world.

I cannot follow the first course because African and most peoples of the Southern hemisphere, having survived physical violence imposed by fellow human beings, are now primarily the victims of mental violence in the form of words which are meant to, and definitely divert attention from their problems. In the sphere of socio-economic problems, we have witnessed the verbal gymnastics which transformed our situation from one of backwardness to under-developed to developing, through being least developed to being most affected nations. Yet, there is not much discernible change in the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of our social and economic conditions over thirty years after the world was dragged into, and recovered from, the most wasteful form of solution to human differences. In the sphere of political problems, we are told we have been saved from communism and totalitarianism, saved for democracy, decolonised and made sovereign. Yet in most of our countries, rulers and ruled are not free from the fear of dangers to their rights to political self-determination. In this sphere also, we continue to manufacture and synthesise words which give the impression of progress, hence apartheid has become a war crime.

I decided to discard the second course and not to resort to anger and emotional outbursts because as an African and as the Head of Government of an African nation, I owe a duty and have a responsibility not to raise false hopes or indulge in meaningless excitement. I have chosen, therefore, the last possibility which is most suited to the occasion, and will least encourage the engineers of apartheid and their friends in the thought that time and other resources will continue to be consumed by verbalisations which limit the opportunity for *Action*.

MENTAL LIBERATION

I am on record as suggesting that most of the nations that attained political independence since 1945 are sponsored states. The implication of this is that their sponsors continued to dictate directly and indirectly, teleguide openly and subliminally, the pace, tone, direction, and quality of the lives of the citizens of the sponsored states. The great strength of the sponsor states is that they have successfully blurred the awareness of the leaders of the sponsored states to the true situation, and continue to encourage them in their expectation that the achievement of social, political and economic development is round the corner. This is the basis of our call for a process of mental liberation on the continent of Africa and in most of the southern hemisphere. This also is the basis and justification for self-reliance in all our endeavours. The processes of mental liberation and self-reliance impose upon us new strategies in fulfilling our interests.

In this regard, it is worth noting that when the "wind of change" cyclone started, it was not expected to blow through the whole of Africa. It was assumed that those territories in Africa with sizeable colonies of settlers from the northern hemisphere will retain their built-in injustices, at best assimilating deserving natives. This assumption provided the foundation for the establishment of the Lisbon-Pretoria-Salisbury axis. That we succeeded in detaching and destroying one leg of the tripod has largely been

due to our own efforts and material support of our friends, and peculiar solutions that are still not understood or welcomed by those who would like to be counted among our friends. If we have threatened Salisbury, it has been largely through the blood and sweat of our liberation fighters. In all these efforts, we are also grateful for the 'sympathy' of some other friends. We are even appreciative of the efforts of such friends in seeking peaceful solutions to these problems. While we shall continue to be open to these sympathisers and responsive to initiatives for a peaceful solution, we are resolved to throw into the struggle all our resources to remove Ian Smith and his fellow conspirators.

CHAKA THE ZULU

Behind and beyond Zimbabwe and Namibia where the attempts to establish the system of racial segregation are failing, is the citadel of apartheid. Too easily, we mistake the moral and political aspects of the system for the root cause and sustainer of the system. On his death bed, the illustrious African Soldier, Chaka the Zulu, is reported to have warned against land grabbing by white settlers. This vision has been fulfilled beyond all expectations. Apartheid is about keeping 80 per cent of the resources of South Africa for less than 20 per cent of the population chosen on the basis of race. Apartheid is about destroying and distorting the quality of life of 18 million citizens of South Africa so that four million other citizens of South Africa can have the good life. Apartheid is about sustaining the myth of white supremacy in South Africa. Apartheid is equally about the mutual support which the OECD and South African economies render each other. In all these, apartheid is about restrictions and limitations to the fulfillment of every Black and African person as a full human being. For as long the system of apartheid remains intact in Pretoria, so long will our aspirations for economic development and our fair share of the world's resources be unattainable.

MORAL QUESTIONS

If the foundation and roots of apartheid are too remote, if we are too blinded by economic and ideological interests to acknowledge these facts as injustice, if our store of foresight is too limited to perceive the gathering storm, we cannot let the world ignore the purely moral questions raised by apartheid. We will not let these questions be covered by a foam of words and helplessness. We will not stand by and be satisfied with resolutions and prayers, or with acts of charity by men and women of goodwill who partake of the advantages of the system while pretending to sympathise with us. It will no longer help for our so called friends to adopt pious postures and preach non-violence when our enemies are busy inflicting mental and physical violence on us. We shall no longer just watch the racists of Pretoria devise improvements to their machinery of terror and repression. We should no longer just be outraged, *WE MUST ACT* to discourage the enemies of Africa and humanity, *WE MUST ACT* to destroy the system of apartheid and remove it from our midst.

During and throughout this Conference, delegates, and indeed the whole world will be treated to a movie of horror. Horrendous tales of carnage will be told. Stories of amputated bodies and truncated minds will be heard. Passing of pious resolutions will no longer do for us. Others owe us what we imagine they will give us, but we owe ourselves what we must give ourselves. We can forgive others their debts to us but the debts to the self *must* be paid. In the words of my worthy predecessor; "we cannot pretend that we are unaware of the machinations and conspiracy against our

continent by not just the racists of South Africa, but even by those who pretend to be the friends of this continent but whose sole interest is in what they can get out of us." In this regard, we will continue our moral and material support for the Liberation Movements in Southern Africa.

DIRECT INVOLVEMENT

With every passing day, the Black people of the world are drawing nearer the stage of direct involvement in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. We as a nation will acquit ourselves creditably when that stage is reached. We wish to salute the courage of our brothers and sisters who are in the frontline of the struggle in Southern Africa. We wish to recall and pay homage to the heroes of Soweto and others involved in the June 16th, 1976, challenge to apartheid. We are aware of their continuing struggle and sacrifice, and the heroic stand of the youths and students of South Africa. We take cognizance of their potential. The undaunted youths of Soweto are the new additional weapons which the system of apartheid has designed. In time, this new weapon will be harnessed with others to destroy apartheid.

MULTI-NATIONALS

As I suggested earlier, however, it is in the economic aspects that apartheid is most criminal and most dangerous. It is in that aspect too that it is most vulnerable. It is therefore here that it must be attacked most ferociously. Multi-nationals have contributed in no small measure to the evil machinery of apartheid. We welcome the present efforts being made within the United Nations system to regulate the activities of multi-nationals by means of legally binding international instruments. We also note the attempts of some governments to draw up guidelines for their multi-nationals operating in Southern Africa. While these efforts seek to respond to the genuine concerns of the international community, the practical utility and effectiveness of the final instruments depend largely on the political decisions in the home countries of these corporations to adjust themselves to evolving patterns of international economic relations. The fundamental issue in South Africa for instance, is not equal pay for equal work, or abolition of job reservation or insurance for workers. The core of the problem is the very system within which multi-nationals operate. How can anyone build or sustain a "non-apartheid" establishment in an atmosphere that is polluted with the stench of apartheid?

NO COMPROMISE

For our part, we are convinced that there can be no compromise on the apartheid problems of South Africa. We find it difficult to fraternise with enterprises and organisations that are party to the system that holds our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa in bondage and regards us on account of our colour as sub-human. We cannot continue to co-operate with those that benefit from us, while at the same time, reap large profits from the sweat and blood of our brothers and sisters held in slavery. It is our sovereign duty to review our relationship with them and take appropriate actions.

In this regard, we are compiling information on all those governments who pretend to be Africa's friends but allow themselves to be used as weapons laundry for South Africa—all for limited economic advantages. We are mounting a surveillance on all those enterprises who depend on our raw materials and markets, but continue to help our enemies. Such enterprises must decide now to choose between us and our

enemies and all that goes with their choice. We have a festering sore on which these flies have landed and are feeding in full glare of the world. And when we move to destroy these flies, no one should complain.

Foreign contractors who are known to have links or connections with South Africa are already barred from taking part in any tenders of any kind or nature, for any transactions or construction works in Nigeria. An economic intelligence unit has been set up to ensure successful implementation of this policy directive.

RELIEF FUND

The people of Nigeria have demonstrated the depth of their commitment by the establishment of a Southern African Relief Fund. They have shown by their generous contribution to this Fund that no sacrifice is too little and no effort too big to demonstrate our concern about, and solidarity with the majority of the people of Southern Africa. We are committing this Fund to the struggle and welfare of the oppressed peoples in the Southern part of Africa.

POSITIVE ACTION

It is our sincere hope that at the conclusion of the deliberations of this World Conference, a declaration will emerge, a declaration which will not only reaffirm our support and solidarity for the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa and the Liberation Movements, but demonstrate the commitment of all governments and peoples of the world to take *ACTIONS* to put an end to apartheid. We hope to see positive *ACTION*, in the direction of the cessation of new investments in South Africa, and the progressive dismantling of existing ones, the cessation of the supply of arms, spare parts and components, and the cancellation of existing licences for their manufacture. The Conference should also call for cessation of all nuclear collaborations with South Africa. This much we must all do for humanity. Let this Conference be a Conference of *CONSCIENCE* and *ACTION*.

HISTORY

Finally, we are cheered by the history of man's struggle against evil. The ascent of man has always been threatened by man himself. However, at each stage and during such threats, *MAN* himself has always succeeded in calling up enough indignation and courage to defeat and destroy the germ of self-destruction which, from time to time, rears its head to delay or frustrate man's progress. Apartheid is the latest in the line of such threats to human progress. I am calling on the world, regardless of material and other short-term advantages, to join forces with us against apartheid and all which that evil philosophy represents. I must, however, state that in addition to response to our call which will be valuable, we are resolved and ready to fulfil our destiny. If apartheid is not dismantled, it may yet be the cause of the greatest human conflict and tragedy in the world. It is my greatest hope that the world will be spared the great tragedy which can only be the consequence of failure to remove the system of apartheid in South Africa.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.



Fig. 17 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo.

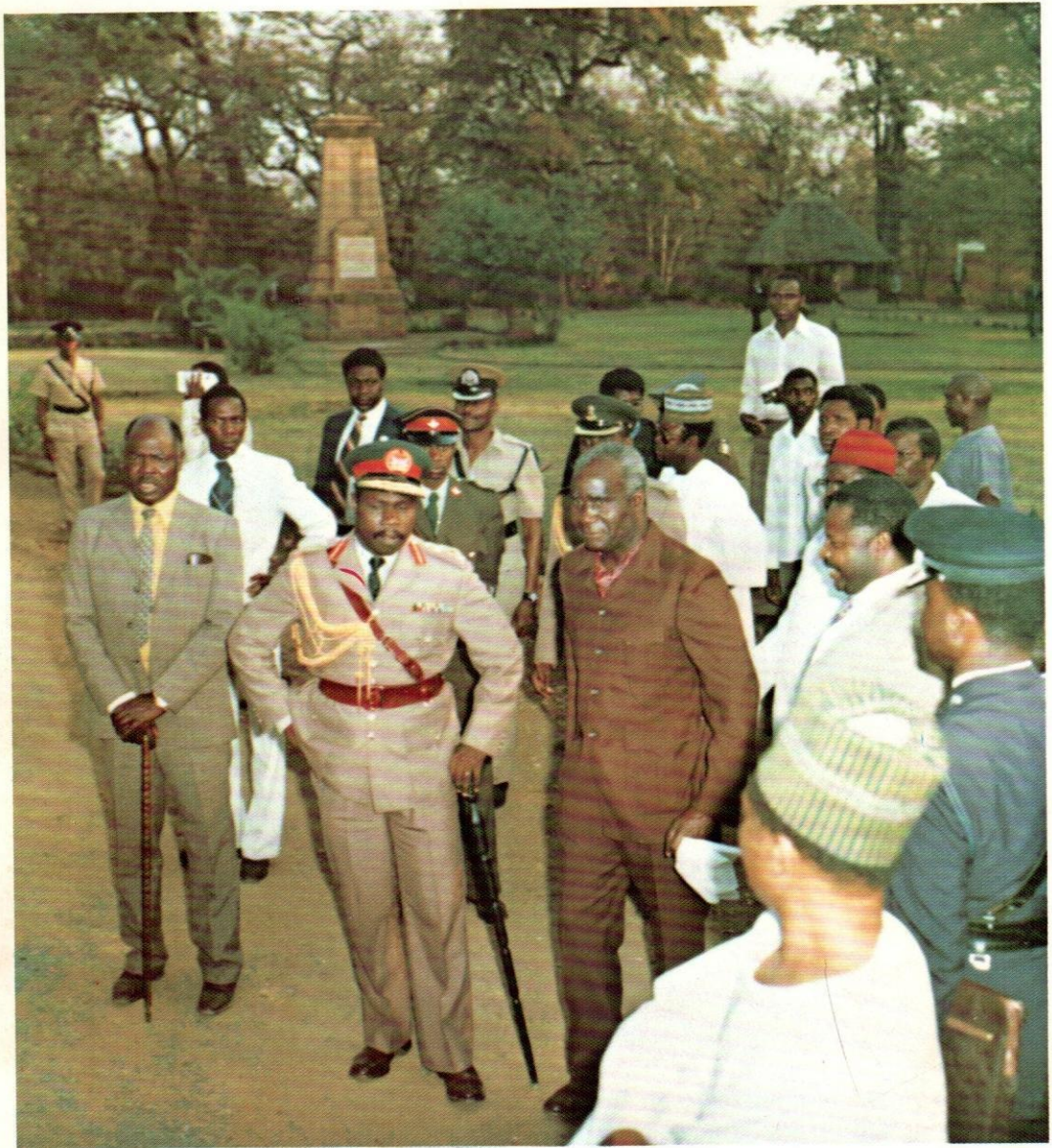


Fig. 18 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia.



Fig.19 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's Head of State and President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire holding talks



Fig. 20 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo welcoming Chancellor Schmidt to Nigeria.



Fig. 21 Mrs. Helmut Schmidt.



Fig. 22 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of Western Germany



Fig. 23 Nigeria's Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and President Jimmy Carter of the United States of America sign a communique in Lagos



Fig. 24 Mrs. Rosalynn Carter and her daughter Amy visiting the National Museum in Lagos during their visit



Fig. 25 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and his guest President Jimmy Carter of the United States of America at a banquet in Lagos

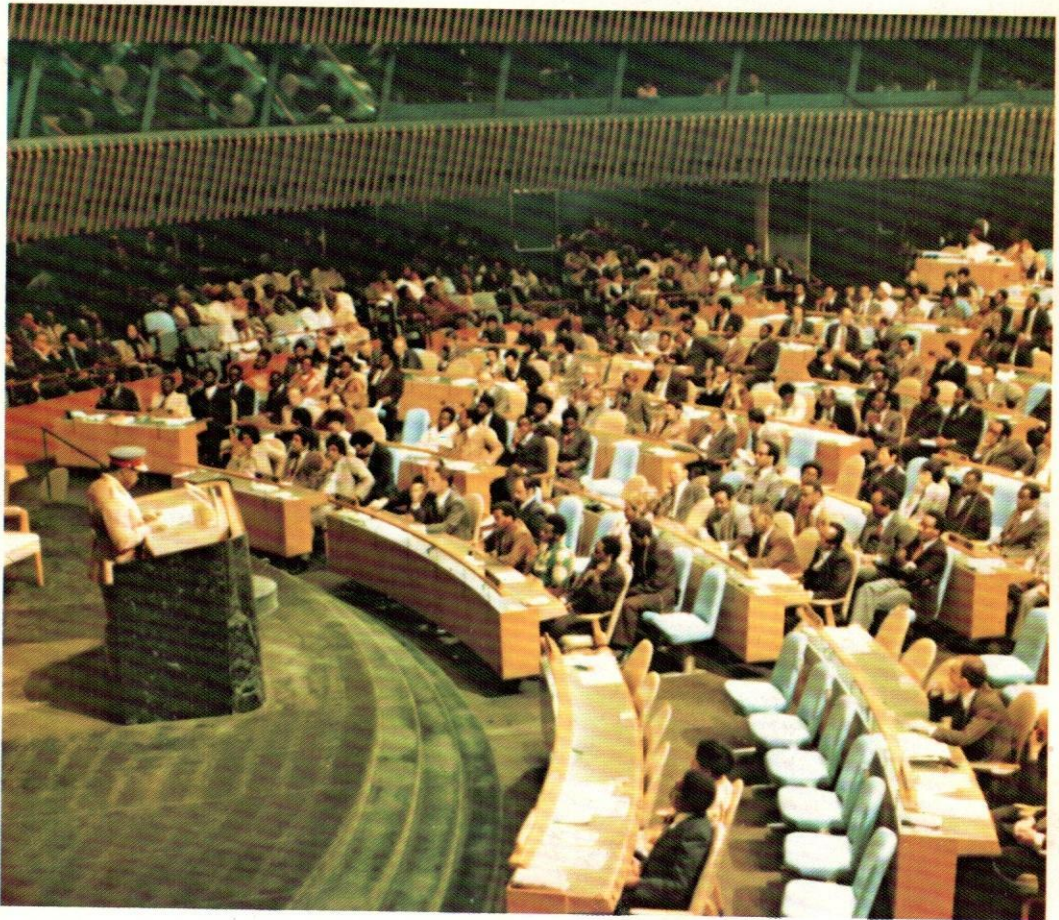


Fig. 26 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's Head of State addressed the United Nations in New York

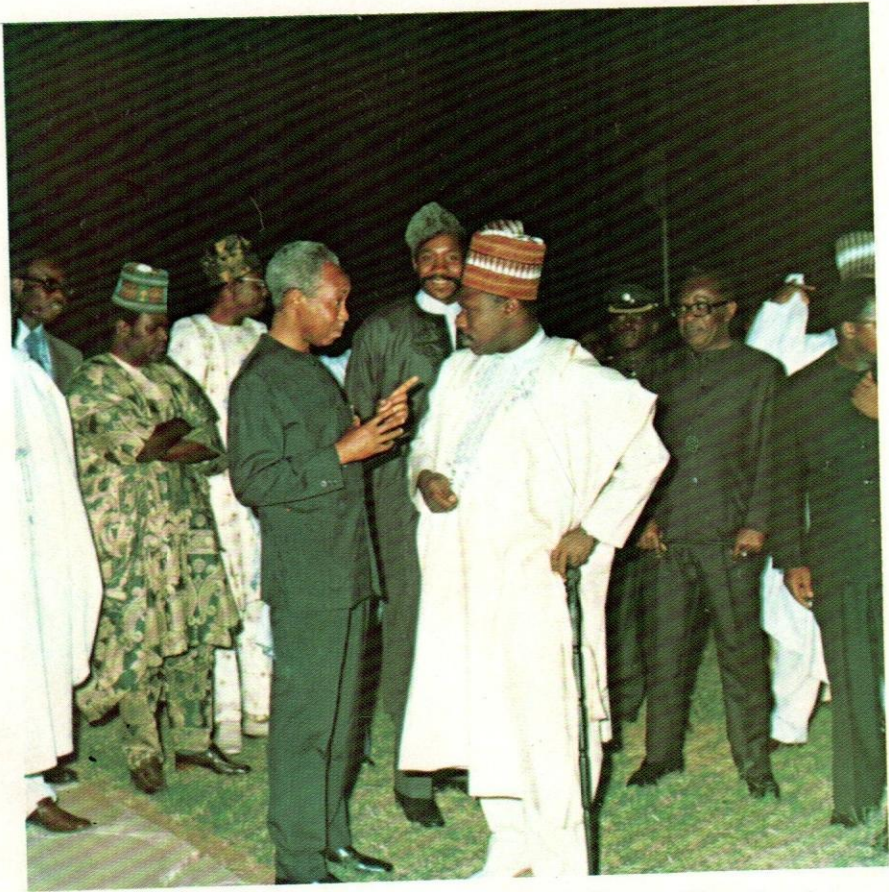


Fig. 27 Nigeria's Head of State, H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania



Fig. 28 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia at the exhibition centre during the World Conference for Action Against Apartheid which took place in Lagos in 1977.



Fig. 29 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo discussing a point of interest with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Kurt Waldheim at Dodan Barracks, Lagos.



Fig. 30 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and other guests listen attentively to an address given by President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire at a State banquet given in honour of General Obasanjo during his State Visit to Zaire.



Fig. 31 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo exchanging views with Lord Fulton of Great Britain when Lord Fulton paid a courtesy call on him at Dodan Barracks, Lagos.

First West African Games

During the opening ceremony of the First West African Games which were held in Lagos, Nigeria, on August 27, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo declared that maximum co-operation, not only in economic and political fields, but also in the social, scientific, cultural and the field of Sports was one of the ways the West African countries could give practical demonstration to the desire for unity amongst their people.

Today marks another milestone in our collective endeavours to promote and foster greater understanding and co-operation in the West African sub-region. While a few countries have for various reasons been unable to participate fully in these Games, their spirit and well wishes are undoubtedly with us on this auspicious occasion of the introduction, for the first time, of these sub-Regional Games.

I understand that the various Ministers responsible for sports in West Africa have at a recent meeting recommended that the title of the present Games should be changed to the ECOWAS Games. This is indeed a commendable recommendation. The countries which are involved in the West Africa Games are all members of ECOWAS, and the ECOWAS Treaty provides for co-operation between member-countries in order to break down the artificial barriers which the accident of history has created for us, and which our detractors have always been quick to exploit to the detriment of the legitimate interest of all Africans.

CO-OPERATION

It is appropriate to say that if we are to succeed in our legitimate and common aspirations towards greater understanding and unity amongst our people despite the artificial barriers created by colonialism, we must have maximum co-operation, not only in the economic and political fields, but in the social, scientific and cultural spheres as well. Co-operation in the field of sports is one of the ways in which we can give practical demonstration to the desire for unity amongst our people. As you are all no doubt aware, we already have a sub-regional Games Festival in the form of the West African Universities Games, the sixth in the series of which was held at the University of Ife in March of this Year. But these Games which are about to commence here today are the first and only ones of their kind which are open to all the peoples of the West African sub-region, irrespective of what they do, and from where they come. Indeed, I believe that the recommendation of the Ministers to change the Games to ECOWAS Games will make for clearer distinction from the West African Universities Games, as well as for better perspective in the context of ECOWAS ideals.

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

By whatever names they are called, the essence of sports remains the same. It is the pursuit of excellence through a combination and co-ordination of mental and physical faculties. This process of pursuing higher and higher standards and levels of performance in Sports is as exciting to the spectator as it is challenging to the participant. My charge to all of you sportsmen and women gathered here today therefore, is to request you to exhibit all that is best in sportsmanship, both on and off the tracks. In addition to aspiring to win any event in which you may participate, you must collectively count on the joy, friendship and understanding which sports festivals of this nature engender.

Every sporting event has its tradition. The tradition for future West Africa Games will be laid down here during these first games. A special responsibility therefore devolves on all you participants present here today, to set the tone for the future Games along the lines of comradeship, healthy competition, athletic prowess and the pursuit of excellence and higher standards. Let these qualities characterize the Games. It is only by stripping them of pomp, pageantry and fanfare that the events of the Games can be pursued in purer forms and for their intrinsic qualities.

WELCOME DEVELOPMENT

I have learnt with pleasure that the Second West Africa Games will be hosted by the Government of the People's Republic of Benin. This is indeed a welcome development, as it is essential for us to ensure that the Games do not become the exclusive preserve of any particular language block of the West African sub-region, in view of the multilingual nature of our Community.

TRIBUTE

At this juncture, I should pay tribute to the wisdom and vision of the initiators of these Games. I have no doubt at all that the Games will live up to the expectations of all the peoples of West Africa in particular, and all Africans in general.

Finally, I wish the participants a very successful competition and a pleasant and memorable stay in Lagos. I trust that Nigerians, in their usual manner, will extend to our visiting brothers and sisters their proverbial hospitality and kindness.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Sportsmen and Women, Ladies and Gentlemen, for greater understanding amongst all peoples of this sub-region and for the glory of Africa, I have great pleasure to declare open the First West Africa Games.

Constituent Assembly Elections

Election into the Constituent Assembly was another step in bringing Nigerians nearer the attainment of civilian rule. On August 31, 1977, on which day the elections were held, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the nation. Lt. General Obasanjo warned that since the Constituent Assembly election would be the "first national activity geared to a single national institution," electors should discharge their duty loyally and honestly.

Today, the elections into the Constituent Assembly will take place and this exercise will see us through yet another important step in prosecuting our political programme towards civilian rule in 1979. The limited scope of today's election hardly detracts from its great importance to the making of a viable Constitution for this country. As expected, I am heartened to see that it has excited considerable interest and debate. There have been areas where I believe the attitude has been one of consensus rather than lack of competition, and in such areas, a number of candidates have been returned unopposed. For the purpose of this Constitution, I do believe that such consensus is a welcome sign. What matters most, however, is how much dedication, application and interest of the nation is brought to bear by all members of the Assembly to the debate.

Similarly, wherever there has been active competition for these Constituent Assembly places, I feel confident that this is another form of expression of the commitment and concern people feel towards the issue of the Constitution. Looking at the list of contestants, there is no doubt that the Constitution has excited the interest of a good cross-section of Nigerians. The calibre of contestants, their various backgrounds, as well as the atmosphere surrounding the elections shown so far are, quite encouraging.

On this important occasion, I appeal to all Nigerians to remind themselves of the noble, if rather difficult objective which we are all striving for—that of forging viable political institutions which do credit to this nation. Today's election is indeed going to be a limited election in terms of votes, but let us not forget that every Nigerian has a stake in who comes out of this election. Although no direct votes are cast by the majority of Nigerians, there is an implicit commitment and trust to the actual voters in the various Councils who have been duly elected and charged with the onerous duty of selecting those that will represent them and their people in determining the nature of the new Constitution and hence the future of Nigeria.

I am sure that I am speaking on behalf of the rest of the Nigerian population when I ask the electors to discharge their duty today loyally, honestly and in the interest of the nation above everything else. Let no elector mortgage his conscience for any material gain or promise. I need hardly remind you that the Electoral Commission and the Police will be vigilant.

NATIONAL ACTIVITY

The way the election is conducted today, the approach, the atmosphere and the honesty of the election, will set the tone for subsequent activities which from now will take a national form. Local Government elections, although nationally held on the same day, were in their nature, local; but the Constituent Assembly election will be the first national activity geared to a single national institution. It has, therefore, got a great symbolic importance which the electors must keep at the back of their minds when they cast their ballots today.

With the election taking place in the right atmosphere and setting, I hope the winners and losers will have the courage and the mind to accept the verdict of the electors and thence work for the good of the country. May the right man win.

The Jaji Address

On September 12, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressed the formal opening of the Command and Staff College at Jaji, where he outlined the objectives of the Federal Military Government and critically analyzed the political, economic and social life of the entire Nigerian society. He spelt out and condemned all forms of indiscipline and other ills frustrating the efforts of the Government to restructure the country into a just society. The Head of State appealed to all Nigerians to wage war against indiscipline, and search for ways of evolving a disciplined, fair, just and humane African society.

No one with responsibility for Government, at this time in this country, can fail to see the need to think out the longer time objectives for our society. Today, I will be talking to you as citizens of Nigeria, but more so as leaders of the Armed Forces, about the mechanics of the process of change, the obstacles to change and making suggestions on the options open to us.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

When one looks at the world today in political terms, there seems to be a standstill in politics with the ascendancy of the West and the East with their respective ideological characteristics of capitalism and socialism. Perhaps as a result of the economic and technological advancement of the two sections of the world symbolising these ideologies, and because of a convergence of political styles, other nations of the world have tried to avoid breaking new grounds in political theory and are tempted to lean on either of these two blocs. Because socialism is a younger doctrine and a reaction to capitalism, it has proved more attractive to all who seek change and has been described as 'progressive,' while the word 'conservative' has been associated with capitalism.

I do not intend to go into the semantics of the terms 'conservative' and 'progressive,' but I would like to say unequivocally that rather than clarify, they tend to confuse issues. They are value laden, and therefore, capable only of leading us into a logical and actual impasse from which we can never, by purer reason or scientific method be extricated. Given that improvement to living standards and the wealth of nations are more of a journey and less of a destination, I am convinced beyond all doubts that the decision to choose between capitalism or socialism and energy expended in making this choice become diversionary and wasted. The alternative to this mirage is to achieve, through efficient management, our capacity for qualitative and quantitative improvements to the political, economic and social lives of all within our boundary, and thereby be better able to contribute to the well-being of the world. For me, the quality of life of the average Nigerian, and he is not in this room, is poor. It therefore becomes possible and essential for us to set a course and identify the sort of values which need to guide governance and development at this stage and in the future.

IDEALS AND POLITICAL CHOICE

Within our cultural and traditional society there are lots of things which we can pick, improve and develop into our own political concept. What, for example, is wrong with our traditional society which respects age, experience and authority; or the norm that everybody is his brother's keeper which makes ethical standard universal; or the practice of stigmatising and ostracising evil doers and the indolent; or the extolling of virtues and values not necessarily based on materialism but on the service to the community and the encouragement of excellence? These are ideals which have remained with us over the ages and which we must never allow the new wave of individualism, egotism, materialism and so-called sophistication to sweep away.

Having been in this job for upwards of eighteen months, I have been able to see these ideologies as proclaimed by many people as mythical instruments of political oppression, the practical application of which in many cases opens the door of political and economic morass. The slow, unsteady and rather tortuous so-called ideological path of transforming a nation into the theoretical and utopian society is clearly not the most expedient application to our expectations and aspirations.

THE NEW NIGERIA

After prolonged thought and appreciation of our efforts, I have come to be able to describe a Nigeria we are aspiring to build—A *DISCIPLINED, FAIR, JUST AND HUMANE AFRICAN SOCIETY*. And this is the crux of my address.

The Nigerian society as of now, in spite of our efforts since July 1975, is not sufficiently disciplined, fair, just, or humane. I would, therefore, like to go on record as indicating my idea of the kind of changes I want for Nigeria.

DISCIPLINE

Let us take discipline. Unfortunately, I cannot discuss this subject exhaustively in all its ramifications without my speech becoming too long. But I hope to raise sufficient questions to give you food for thought and subjects for discussion amongst yourselves throughout your course. As officers of the Armed Forces, you will understand the import of discipline. To me, discipline implies restraint and self-control in individuals for the good and happiness of all. It is the axial principle on which my idea of society rests.

It is a matter for regret that most public servants tend to subdue their political discipline in the face of personal aggrandisement. For example, we all know that the traditional role of the Civil Service is to initiate policies and to offer professional and technical advice to the Government when required to do so. When the advice is tendered, it becomes the responsibility of the Government to accept or reject in the light of all the facts available to it, in which case the Government will have its own reasons for rejecting or accepting a professional advice on any issue. This, in my opinion, has nothing to do with the competence, intelligence, or stature of the officer concerned, and once the final decision is taken, he is normally duty-bound to implement it faithfully and honestly without creating elements of contradiction or frustration.

LEADERSHIP ROLE

It is not enough to get the machinery of implementation efficiently laid out, he must see himself as part of the body that made the decision and so, by his own personal ways of life, officially and privately, give effect to the decision and ensure that as many

people as he can influence, directly or otherwise, do likewise. That is how the leadership role which the public servant has to play in the society can be manifested. What greater mockery can there be of official policy than government functionaries, including officials, entertaining their private guests with champagne when that drink has been banned in the country? The Government has, for upwards of one year, launched the OFN, but only a negligible proportion of members of Government, including officials, have thought it fit to have small farms at the back of their houses.

POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS

In my view, a politically disciplined society knows its political obligations, and these obligations and duties are rendered without Government invoking sanctions. Discipline in politics does not necessarily imply a one-party state, but it implies that there is concurrence as to what the rules of the game should be, and once laid down, they are respected and scrupulously observed by all concerned.

The two principal characters in politics are the Government and the governed, and success is a direct function of the co-operation of the two. Members of Government include not only the Head of Government and his Cabinet Ministers or Commissioners; anybody at all who has anything to do with the formulation and implementation of Government policy is a member of Government, and therefore, a leader in that sense. The spectrum of leadership, therefore, spreads to public servants.

Political discipline must not end with officials and members of Government, it has to permeate down through local government councils to all citizens. It is a manifestation of political indiscipline for any citizen to refuse to exercise his political right, say of voting, because by refusing to vote, he is not showing enough regard and concern for his society. And if the reins of Government pass into what he regards as wrong hands, he cannot and should not complain. A politically disciplined community will take election of candidates into any level of Government seriously and will shun unscrupulous pressure and corrupt influence in the choice of candidates. It will look for candidates that can lead and serve without regard to the material gains of the office—candidates who once elected, will lead their people to achieve great heights in physical development and moral rectitude.

ECONOMIC DISCIPLINE

Another aspect of our body politic where indiscipline is rife, is in our economic life. Ours is still a place where people are prepared to destroy anything or cover up any crime, if doing so promotes their economic interest and might. I believe that a man pursuing happiness exclusively may never find it, and he may die frustrated; but a man who is concerned with the happiness of the society in which he lives has greater chances of finding happiness because it will be contradictory and absurd to be unhappy in a happy society. We can find considerable happiness, if we bring considerable discipline into our economic life. *There is no reason why any taxable adult should evade tax.* The tax paid is for the good and improvement of the society that has made it possible for the individual to carry out his economic activities under a favourable and congenial atmosphere.

In an economically disciplined society there will be no profiteering and hoarding, and where there is, effective sanctions will be applied and the society would not hesitate to exercise its right of boycotting such an individual and his articles of trade. It is gross and destructive indiscipline on the part of any society to accommodate cheating by any member of that society. It is alien to our African traditional society. Most

Nigerians, especially in urban centres, prefer to take pain to circumvent the law rather than exercise restraint, self-discipline and necessary sacrifice to obey the law for the benefit of the society at large. It is selfishness which degenerates into indiscipline, lawlessness and disorder as evidenced by indiscriminate and senseless loss of lives on our roads, as well as traffic confusion in most of our cities.

We have become a consumer nation specialising in exotic foreign goods, hence the mad rush for quick and easy money. Most of our citizens thereby engage in trading and acting as commission agents instead of venturing into more meaningful and productive enterprises. Modern development entails production which requires heavy investment. As a nation, we must moderate our consumption, make sacrifice and save resources for investment. Discipline dictates to us individually and collectively, to exercise restraint and prudence in our consumption and use of resources. Within our society, there are marked inequalities which are not supposed to be found in a fair and just society. But worse still, it is unethical and immoral on the part of any individual to brandish his riches in conspicuous consumption and ostentatious living, to make less fortunate citizens feel impoverished and cheated to the point of being bitter against the society. A disciplined and fair society will provide equal opportunities for its citizens to develop their innate abilities to maximum capacity. A society which encourages indolence cannot be regarded as disciplined.

SOCIAL DISCIPLINE

There must also be evidence of discipline in our social relations. In some of our cities, people organise parties which are themselves manifestations of economic indiscipline, on main roads, and so obstruct public highways without regard for other road users. And when these utilities are spoilt, nobody ever thinks that he is duty bound to initiate or even contribute to the repairs, everybody finds it more convenient to blame the Government for his own laxity. The social indiscipline is so much that people have no sense of guilt when main roads are blocked by mounds of refuse or when somebody in a vehicle throws waste papers and litters on the street without regard for the elementary principles of public hygiene and sanitation. Even in the individual homes, there are incidents of people wishing to express their happiness without regard for the corresponding unhappiness they may cause. Our use of public utilities is mostly disgusting; crash barriers, electric poles, and telecommunication poles are damaged deliberately without any thought of the good use they are serving for other citizens. These are traits of indiscipline which must be removed from the society we are aspiring to build.

PATRIOTISM

There is need to respect the rights of others. Those whose duty it is to implement and protect the laws of the nation need the co-operation of all if they are to be effective. It is unpatriotic to conceal crime, in fact, every citizen owes the duty of being vigilant and inquisitive, and reporting any unusual happenings around him. Concealment of crimes and offenses within any society can be self-destructive. The maintenance of law and order in a disciplined and fair society is not the task of law-enforcement agents alone but the responsibility of all citizens; though the law enforcement agents must win the confidence of all through their example of impartiality, probity and responsiveness.

FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

Now let us consider fairness and justice within our society. If discipline is about orderliness, justice and fairness are about equality. Nigeria is still a country where

people employ all foul means and devices, including connection at high places to obtain what may not be due to them. Merit should be the decisive criterion in a fair and just society. In such a society positive contribution is appreciated and rewarded while negative behaviour is discouraged. All citizens who make positive contributions within a society may not necessarily be rich, they may not rise to the top of their department or establishment, but for their honest and conscientious work they deserve the nation's regard and appreciation.

The Nigeria we are trying to build is a Nigeria where hard work and sweat in the service of the community will be commended and encouraged. A nation where the indolent, the dishonest and the inefficient can get to the top or become excessively wealthy is a nation fit for destruction. It will, in fact, sooner than later bring destruction on itself. A just society metes out punishment to all offenders without favour or special dispensation. Justice implies equality before the law. No particular individual or group, no matter how highly placed or connected, must be allowed to escape punishment for offences and crimes against the society.

HUMANE SOCIETY

And finally, there is need for a society to be humane. A humane society does not exploit the inadequacies of any section or any individual within it; rather, it tries to rectify those inadequacies as much as its resources permit. Social turbulence in most human societies can be traced to the absence of justice and humaneness in the distribution of returns from economic activity and the social esteem which flows therefrom. By virtue of our colonial history and tradition, ours is a nation of inequalities, but a lot must be done in the form of mutual assistance, encouragement and material support in a humane society to improve this national phenomenon, such that the inequalities that exist will be minimal. All the attributes of discipline, fairness and justice must be rooted in a high degree of humaneness and humanism in order to serve any useful purpose.

In imposing discipline and justice on the society, one will consider the human aspect which, if tampered with, can make life stale and uninspiring. A humane society will encourage positive initiative and the channelling of such initiative towards the overall benefit of the society. Within a humane society, punishment commensurate with offences. And no hard-hearted and deliberate criminal goes without heavy punishment. The society which makes the welfare and the well-being of one the concern of all is a humane society, and no one demands more than the society can afford, and no one receives or takes from the society more than he deserves. An inhumane society cannot, like the unjust society, escape self-destruction.

All these aspects of humaneness can continue to be amplified and applied to all facets of human endeavour in our national life and intercourse. What is immediately expedient is to excogitate how we in Nigeria can evolve the type of society we want.

PRESENT SITUATION IS UNACCEPTABLE

So far, I have tried to state the position of discipline, justice, fairness and humaneness in the country as at today. I can sum up the present situation by saying it is "unsatisfactory and unacceptable." This Administration has tried to re-shape and redirect the society since its inception in July 1975. Although we have achieved a halt from the drift of the past, it was not a clean break. We started with mass retirements from our public service in the hope that new lessons would be learnt and new attitudes cultivated. The popular acclamation which the exercise received from the public accentuated our hopes, but after a short time, the hopes receded.

In their utterances, most Nigerians displayed shocking callousness and sadism; and in their actions, gross indiscipline and selfishness. I came to realize later that what really interested many Nigerians in the retirement exercise was not the positive lessons of it, but the misfortune it brought to some families. Immediately the exercise was halted, all the enthusiasm hitherto displayed disappeared, and the people relaxed into their careless old way of indiscipline, inefficiency and slackness, while the Government, in spite of its efforts, turned out to be the victim of their gullible criticisms of these same ills which they have refused to abandon. A society that measures the effectiveness of any Government by the number of forced retirement and dismissal of public officers, and takes delight in the misfortune and downfall of others, must be a sick and inhumane society.

CONFLICT OF CULTURE

We have come up with political and economic programmes, many decrees, edicts, and regulations aimed at improving our living standards, consolidating our national resources, enduring justice, discipline, equity and better standard in our national life. The observable results are so far encouraging, and we will not relent efforts in all directions. The major cause of most of the ills of the society which I have so far referred to, is the sandy and shaky substratum on which we have tried to build the society through the colonial days by discarding the good part of our traditional society. We then got caught up in the conflict of culture, of trying to graft the so-called sophistication of European society to our African society. The result so far has been abysmal failure. We are betwixt and between.

NEED TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY

Having now determined the type of society we want, we should look within our culture and traditional way of life and refurbish it to meet the modern age. Two major points have emerged from our discussion so far. The structures of Nigerian society need to be transformed. Secondly, current values and the attitude they generate are not the most suited for rapid transformation of the structures of our society. I hope all Nigerians in all walks of life will take up the challenge of fashioning out a new and distinct way of life that can lead us to greatness, contentment and happiness.

Nigeria has the potential to be a great modern Black nation, given the will and the orientation. And I do not believe that economic and technological advancement are incompatible with traditional African values and virtues. Special responsibility devolves on all leaders within the society to bring a new society about. Gentlemen, I wish to remind you once again that the society we are aspiring to build in this country is a *Disciplined, Fair, Just and Humane African* society. You and I have additional responsibility by virtue of the opportunity of our training and profession to give extra thought and attention to providing the atmosphere and example for the new society to evolve. I am optimistic and confident that with sustained effort and the co-operation of everybody, this society will emerge.

I wish you a lively, instructive and successful year in Jaji.

Seventeenth Independence Anniversary Celebrations

Nigeria celebrated her seventeenth independence anniversary on October 1, 1977. Addressing the nation during the anniversary, the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo assured the nation of the present military Administration's endeavour to instill discipline into the society as well as encourage and honour deserving Nigerians for their positive contribution to the progress and development of the Nation. General Obasanjo spoke about the numerous ills in the Nigerian society, outlining the different measures taken by the Government to correct the ills. He appealed to Nigerians to desist from their negative attitudes and join hands with the Government in its effort to evolve a new and wholesome society.

Another year has rolled by in the life and times of our great nation. We should be grateful for a year without undesirable and unpleasant social or political upheavals. We can also be thankful that our efforts at creating a new political framework for the achievement of our social and economic objectives continue uninterrupted. We have cause to be reasonably satisfied that our experiments in this sphere have given indication that there is no substitute for originality and creativity in our endeavours.

In finding solutions to our political problems, we have examined the experiences of others, and we have had to place greater reliance on our native intelligence. To my mind, the great lesson of the past year is that we can effectively rely on our own resources in finding solutions to our problems. In fact, we can say that it is proven that the best interest of this nation can only be served by greater reliance on our own resources.

By now we have reached agreement on the objectives of our national pursuit. We have stated in many forms and on many occasions that for Nigeria, we aspire to establish a society and an economy virile enough to ensure to its members an ever-increasing standard of living. It has been the task of this Administration to lay the foundation for ordering this kind of society and virile economy. I shall use this occasion to attempt a critical assessment of our efforts in this direction. I do this in the hope that it will help to enhance the re-direction of our orientation. We should also strip the results so far achieved of illusion without necessarily dampening our enthusiasm for greater effort. I shall give attention to the broad divisions of our community—the cultural, political, economic and the social spheres of life in our society.

CULTURAL REVIVAL

This has been a year of cultural revival. The rhythm and flow of dances from far and near, the chants of black and African songs, the great display of visual arts and the deep and rigorous exchange of ideas, all made FESTAC '77 memorable and a feather in our cap. We all pulled together and did Nigeria, Africa and the black man proud.

SPORTS

In the field of sports, our performances on the continent of Africa have been most

encouraging. I seize this opportunity to congratulate our sportsmen and women and all those involved in the organisation of sports in the country. Our participants who are still in the thick of the battle for continental and world honours must keep the standard high. Sporting activities are an effective cement of international relations. Our players and their supporters must continue to show maturity and display the spirit of sportsmanship in and out of the field of play. This can only deepen respect for Nigeria.

EXTERNAL POLICY

In the area of external policy, we have every cause to be proud of our role in developments in our region, on our continent, and indeed, in the community of world nations. The Economic Community of West African States continues to make progress. On the continent of Africa, we have been playing an active role in rejecting and combating colonialism and apartheid.

Here, Nigerians have risen *en masse* in contributing to the support of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa. When Zimbabwe and Namibia become free, when apartheid ceases to exist in South Africa, all Nigerians can hold their heads high and feel at one with their brothers and sisters in Southern Africa. We must be prepared for greater sacrifice for this just cause, because until all of Africa is free, we remain unfree. Nigeria will continue to support the liberation movements in Southern Africa until success is achieved, or a fair and just negotiated solution is possible.

I wish to add that any political process based on partial or total exclusion of large sections of the adult population, whatever the rationale, cannot stand the test of time and must crumble.

NATIONAL HONOURS, ANTHEM

The experiences of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa should enable us better to appreciate the value of political self-determination. To mark the occasion of this Seventeenth Anniversary of our political independence, in appreciation of their positive contribution to the progress and development of our society and to encourage others, the Supreme Military Council has decided to honour 41 Nigerians in this year's National Day Awards. It is my hope and prayer that these men and women will continue to justify this national honour, while the rest of us endeavour to emulate them.

Five out of over one thousand four hundred entries for the new National Anthem have been selected and short-listed for further examination before final presentation to the Supreme Military Council.

POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

I remarked earlier that we have carried out some experiments in political creativity in an endeavour to establish a political framework which takes account of Nigerian realities. At the centre of our efforts has been the desire to ensure stability through the establishment of a rule of the game which guarantees to all sections of our community a say in determining the shape and operation of the political process. To this end, the Constitution Drafting Committee prepared a draft Constitution which was thrown open to debate for one year now.

A third tier of government was created to involve the grassroots directly in the political process. In fact, the Constituent Assembly which will deliberate on the draft Constitution was elected largely by the actors in this third tier of government. It will be unfair not to give credit to all those who have contributed to ensure the continuing fulfilment of this aspect of our political programme.

Because we are Nigerians and because we all hold certain political values dearly, there have been queries. If such queries had not been raised, I would have had cause for concern over the future and fate of the new political process. I am happy to say that so far there has been no fundamental division over the basic issues and the charted course.

Our strength, as we march forward in our political programme, will lie in our ability to vehemently and firmly discourage impolitic attitudes, practices, and behaviour which may breed chaos in the society. It is the duty of us all to instill a sense of fairplay into the political process. Only thus can we achieve the political maturity which will guarantee stability and make possible other things we desire.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It is only when we have political stability that we can rationally pursue our socio-economic objectives. In the sphere of economic development, Nigeria's potential is a well-known song. We must ask ourselves how successful are our efforts at actualising this potential. With our wide resource base, economic good fortune and an enterprising and ingenious population, it is not surprising that most conventional economic indicators signal that all is well with the Nigerian Economy.

GROWTH

Our economic experts advise that a growth rate of 10 per cent is likely to be recorded in our gross domestic product. Sectoral figures show equally significant increases. We must not forget that these figures do not necessarily indicate any qualitative improvement in our socio-economic structures. They do not imply that we are now capable of providing a decent level of basic needs for the bulk of our population without excessive dependence on the product of other economies. The resource endowments of most of these economies are not in the same league as ours.

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE

We cannot, therefore, afford to fritter away our needed resources for development on non-essentials. The Federal Military Government has decided in the face of serious erosion of our foreign reserves to reduce personal travelling allowance to ₦500.00 per annum for adults, and ₦250.00 per child under 16 years of age with effect from today. Similar restraint is being imposed on business trips.

BROADER EXCHANGE RATE POLICY

A number of additional measures are also being taken to combat foreign exchange malpractices. These include the strengthening of organs of Government and the other bodies responsible for foreign exchange control, re-introduction of certificate of value on imports, review of related economic legislations and the strengthening of the Price Intelligence outfits of Government as a check on overloading and inflation of invoices.

In view of our growing trade with the rest of the world outside the Dollar and Sterling areas, and the diversification of our reserves into other major convertible currencies, it is now necessary that the basis of our Exchange Rate policy should be broadened to accommodate other currencies in addition to the Pound Sterling and the U.S. Dollar.

In this connection, more strenuous efforts will be made to diversify our external currency reserves, so that as much as possible importers should be given the appropriate currency of their source of imports to settle their import bills, and all payments for the country's exports will be received in convertible currency of client

countries. Our import basket is being re-examined with a view to adopting policies to discriminate in favour of Capital goods and against non-essential goods. The completion of Tin Can Island port facilities should remove demurrage and reduce mid-sea discharging which is very expensive.

ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURES

I must restate our determination to let the anti-inflationary measures currently in force remain intact. Labour must accept that what matters is not the size of the take-home-pay packet, but what a unit of money can buy in the market. We will continue to take measures to protect and enhance the real wages of all Nigerian workers, especially in the area of non-monetary incomes. To the extent that profit margins in our economy are relatively comfortable, we expect employers to provide concrete benefits in kind to their employees.

I note with satisfaction that some employers recently initiated housing programmes for their workers. The Federal Military Government will continue to support and encourage policies of this kind, and it is my hope that more employers will follow this commendable example.

In the public sector, the excessive dependence on revenues from primary export products has turned most other sources of revenue into stagnant pools. Yet most of us know that one sure source of inflationary pressure on the economy is the high volume of money in circulation. If we must combat inflation more effectively, public sector services must be made more subject to the yard-stick of commercial viability.

I note here that tariffs and charges for goods and services offered by the public sector have remained at their present levels for more than ten years. Yet, consumers clamour for improved services which can only be provided by increasing capital investments at a time when the cost of equipment and machinery is doubling about every other year. These are some of the problems which favourable economic indices tend to hide and to which we must address our minds soon.

COURSE OF ACTION

On the occasion of the Seventeenth Anniversary of our political independence, we must attempt to impose a regime of creativity on the management of our socio-economic structures. In an attempt to tune the social structure, we have reviewed and restyled our educational policy, setting new goals for education in line with our national aspirations. We have attacked and we will continue to attack anti-social behaviour which negate our efforts at matching our political independence with economic self-reliance. We have spelt out a catalogue of social ills which can only weaken our capacity and render the efficient management of our resources almost impossible.

I wish to say on this solemn occasion that this Administration will not go down in history as having diagnosed the ills of our society but lacking the courage and determination to provide a course.

In consultation with principals of schools, special study has been made of causes of indiscipline in schools. Measures are being taken to strengthen the hands of headmasters and principals of schools in the maintenance of discipline in, and running of their schools.

Deficiencies in the strength and equipment of law-enforcement agents are being made up, while measures are being taken to remove delay and congestion in the law courts.

The National Youth Service Corps programme will be reviewed and modified to harness and direct the traditional idealism, innocence and energy of our youths to the building of a better society. Studies to devise measures to improve discipline in other areas of our national life are being carried out.

We are convinced that unless the values which buttress our actions and reactions in social and economic intercourse give preference and consideration to the community over self-interest, we would continue to take one step forward and two backward. *This Administration rededicates* itself anew to the encouragement of positive values and heavy penalisation of negative ones. We will continue to wage war against hoarding, profiteering, official corruption, abuse of office and general indiscipline within our national life. We must however add that the connivance and co-operation of members of the public for individual and short-term advantages provide adequate cover for the continuing exploitation of society by the callous and heartless in our midst.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Let all Nigerians resolve on this occasion to forsake a little individual advantage, a little short-term gain to discourage the bad citizens. On a day-to-day basis, the achievements and new programmes launched by Government are fed to you by the news media. I have therefore decided that it is better today to highlight the destructive influences which constitute obstacles to the political will of the people of this country and to the realisation of our socio-economic objectives. Set today aside for self-examination, and ponder on these influences.

ABANDON NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

The day you decided to buy a second car to circumvent the traffic control edict, your decision as a landlord or tenant to sabotage the rent edicts, the decision you took to buy your bottle of beer at 70k, your preference for a foreign item of good against one made in Nigeria, your decision to buy stolen or smuggled article because it is cheap, your response to the temptation to leak examination papers or take advantage of same, your so-called cleverness in evading and avoiding taxation, your lack of care for life on the roads, your indiscriminate dumping of refuse and blocking of drains within your environment, your wilful destruction or stealing of public property, your lateness to and indolence in the office, your action to pervert the cause of justice through intimidation and threats to law-enforcement agents and functionaries—all these and similar behaviour detract from the progress of this country. Let us all, as individuals and family units make a National Day resolution to abandon our negative and selfish attitudes and behaviours which militate against the building of a decent and just African society. Let today be a day of conscience and solemn resolve for every Nigerian to join in the crusade for evolving a new wholesome society.

Sixty-Seven

Inauguration of the Constituent Assembly

The inauguration of the Constituent Assembly on October 6, 1977, marked another step forward in the successful implementation of the present military Administration's political programme for return to a democratically elected Government. Addressing members of the Assembly during the inaugural ceremony, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo reminded them of the chaos and disorder which threatened the existence of this country not long ago. He asked them to substitute those elements in our national life which failed us with fresh ideas and approach, adding that they should serve the national interest in undiluted and unequivocal term. He also charged the members with the responsibility of discussing frankly, the Draft Constitution, and recommending collectively, the type, shape and mode of operation of the future Government.

It is my pleasure to welcome you, Mr. Chairman, and all members of the Constituent Assembly. This distinguished and august Body, composed of men and women which the common will of the nation has been fit to elect, and the Supreme Military Council to select in the proportions given in the Decree establishing the Constituent Assembly, is probably the most important gathering that has been convened in over a decade. It is definitely the most historic gathering in terms of Constitution-making in the country.

We have come a long way from the days of the First Republic with its anxious moments, self-inflicted wounds and the chaos and disorder which brought about its demise. These unfortunate characteristics also spilled over into the second Republic, and later came to assume even more sinister forms which threatened the very existence of the nation. The hope many of us cherished of a country which was to remain virile, indivisible and sovereign was all but dashed to pieces. It was indeed the will of God, for which the nation must remain eternally grateful, that gave the hope and courage for men of goodwill, foresight, vision and unadulterated patriotism to come together to fight greed, selfishness and dissension, and thereby save the nation from destruction. Even now, as I speak, we are still piecing together the near wreck we all but witnessed. As events have repeatedly shown, we are not yet totally out of the woods and every measure must continue to be taken to lay down a firm foundation for the unity and greatness of this nation.

REALISM

But let me put an end to any speculation that might have given rise to my remarks so far.

Let me also hasten to state that I am neither a pessimist nor what we popularly like to term these days a 'prophet of doom.' In my few years of public service, the little experience derived from holding the few posts it has been my privilege and lot to serve in, coupled with the knowledge and assessment of events common to all of us, has made me a realist. And there is probably no greater area or field of public endeavour which can only endure and operate with a fair chance of success in an atmosphere of hard-headed realism as in the area, and on issues of political nature.

I have just reminded you about the past and the collapse of the First Republic precisely because those elements in our national life which failed us and led to near

dissolution of this great nation are once more only a stone-throw away and must be tamed, and fresh ideas and approach substituted in their place for the good of all, to serve the national interest in undiluted and unequivocal terms. This is our only guarantee from a slip back to the ways of the past—ways of rancour, blind obedience to sectional doctrine and the complete absence of application of indigenous values in preference for foreign ideology and ideas.

SOCIAL ORDER

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Constituent Assembly, you as those in whom the nation has shown its faith and confidence and with the implicit support of the Supreme Military Council, do now have a unique and golden opportunity to lay the foundation for the nation's future. Foremost among the ingredients which should constitute this mould is the rendition of an equitable social order with the overall intent of governing the life of our community and its activities. Inter-social, departmental, or on the human level, even personal relationships are some of the elements of details which are encompassed in this overall social order.

In my view, this overall social order is what Constitution is all about. It is the frame within which every nation seeks to operate and conduct her affairs—social affairs, economic affairs, judicial and legislative affairs, and so on. Some may just refer to the whole gamut and range of activities as politics.

CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Thus, Constitutions by their very nature can never be permanent. At best, they serve as guidelines for human societies to use to shape their ways of life. They must be firm and unambiguous for all to see and know how they fit in, and where and what limited rights, duties and responsibilities are enjoined on them in consonance with the good of all. Constitutions must thus be versatile and yet carry clear-cut provisions which are adequate and commonly understood, but sufficiently flexible to accommodate and not hinder genuine national interests.

A country needs a good and workable constitution, a constitution that the aspiration of the generality of its people and their divergent differences can accommodate and be made effective. In countries like our own where rapid changes are taking place all the time, the temptation for an equally rapid turnover or changes in the provisions of the Constitution occurring must be recognised and checked. The corollary to this is to avoid undue resistance to admitting changes where they are due and desirable in the public interest.

ALLOWANCE FOR FRAILTY

At best, however, Constitutions, like all man-made artifacts, are by nature transitory. Like all doctrines and philosophies, they best fulfil the role for which they are intended only when viewed and applied in human terms, with adequate allowance being made for our frailties. Legal minds and authorities on constitution-making might not agree with this down-to-earth approach and analysis, but it is difficult to question its validity in as far as it relates to creating and maintaining sound human relations in a community as diverse as our own. And also when one bears in mind the different traditional background, not to talk of the wide divergence in the rate and degree of absorbing what makes for progress in modern life and its essential ingredients; in short, the attributes which constitute those values forming a universal or world-wide culture.

The advent of this Administration signalled the process of a return to normal administration from the aberration of military rule with its fast, and at times, unconventional means of achieving results in the quickest way. Nigerians have discussed, debated, and written about our political programme. It is not my intention to reiterate this in any details here. I believe the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Public Services, as well as the entire nation can claim a modest degree of success in the achievement we have so far made in implementing the Programme the Supreme Military Council designed for a return to an electoral democratic form of Government. Your gathering here today is another stage in this process.

MEMBERSHIP

For the most part, you are here to represent various parts of this great country, having been chosen in the democratic tradition by your constituencies. Understandably, there are also among you men and women of calibre who have been selected, on grounds of personal merit, to join the Assembly as full Members as given under the Decree establishing the Assembly. Some of those Members are citizens who have distinguished themselves in one aspect or other of our national life and have served this nation well in various capacities. Others who have also risen to position of authority in excellence within their respective interest groups are here to represent such interests.

TASK

The Supreme Military Council is particularly concerned that due regard should be given to cover every aspect of the national life, and that all shades of opinion should be brought to bear on your deliberations.

Your task, which is clearly established and defined, is to assist in giving the country a new Constitution by deliberating on the draft Constitution before you, and passing it to the Supreme Military Council for promulgation into a law. You will also be required to consider the recommendations of the Technical Committee on Revenue Allocation which will be placed before you as soon as the Committee completes its task.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Constituent Assembly, you have up to the 6th of October 1978, to accomplish this task and heavy responsibility for the nation. It must, however, be emphasised that further progress on our political programme depends on the speed and despatch with which this Assembly performs its duties.

ISSUES AT STAKE

The issues at stake—the type, shape and mode of operation of the future Government that will administer the country and guide the national life that is, the respective ways we will individually seek to comport ourselves and conduct our affairs—are all set out in the draft before you. There is nothing hidden or secret. Some of your fellow citizens, in all walks of life, have expressed views on the draft Constitution, and most of these as communicated to the Assembly Secretariat are being laid before you here. There are, of course, millions and millions of our countrymen and women who will never express an opinion on these matters. Many are not inclined to comment on such issues as a rule, while many more are permanently engaged in the desperate effort of making ends meet.

We have millions of our countrymen and women who face a harsh situation almost fated, as it were, to continue to labour under very primitive conditions of making a livelihood with little modern aids, in thick forest zones as in swampy regions and the

Sahel. The interests of such people and their future happiness must also be taken into account when we compare the views of those who write in the press or talk on the radio and television.

CONSENSUS DECISION

You have your own personal and individual ideas about sections of the draft. Those who have made it possible for you to be here today also have their own ideas. You will obviously adopt after discussions the procedure and modalities of work best suited to your circumstances. Strong views, moderate opinion or harsh and uncompromising tirade may be expressed on these floors in common with simple and popular views on different aspects of the draft Constitution.

All views must, of course, be heard and expressed unhindered. But in the end, Mr. Chairman, the Assembly must formally arrive at some conclusion, a reasonable decision which sums up its consensus. The result will then be that it is the totality of the Members of the Assembly who have decided on the issue and not the view of the individual member, his group, interest, or constituency that triumphs in the end.

Our march to political transformation must proceed unhindered, and to date we are abreast of schedule. Any time gained now, should the Assembly be in a position to complete its assignment before its life expires, should be put to good use. For the next step in the march forward could be quite tricky: old habits only die slowly, and new ideas are not always welcome. The formation of a democratic government presupposes virile political parties which take time and effort to form and function well.

ADHERENCE TO TERM OF REFERENCE

I believe also that valuable time will be saved by sticking to your 'Term of Reference' as closely as possible. May I emphasise that the purpose of your being here is to discuss the Draft Constitution already produced by the Constitution Drafting Committee and to come out with your recommendations. These will then be taken to the Supreme Military Council. Thereafter, a Decree on the subject of Constitution for the Federal Republic of Nigeria will be considered and promulgated to usher in the new Constitution.

Your time here is therefore precious and should be devoted to this all important subject. All diversion from it, or the consideration of extraneous matters which are not the subject for discussion by the Constituent Assembly should be avoided. The Electoral Regulations Decree which will govern the conduct of the first elections before the departure of the Military Administration will be promulgated by the Supreme Military Council, and will be placed before the Constituent Assembly for consideration as a schedule to the Constitution for use in post-Military Administration elections.

NEED FOR TOLERANCE

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Constituent Assembly, may I implore you never to deviate from applying the test of common sense to any problem you may come across in the course of your deliberations. Together with this I will advocate that you should always be guided by humility and the willingness to compromise—the twin attributes all true Africans seem to share. In our zeal and endeavour to advance and catch up with countries in other climes, we must not overlook the contributions our unique character as a people and the values our

tradition and culture hold dear, and the impact they are bound to make on the outcome of these deliberations. The African genius is a child of moderation and restraint, not given to unnecessary and excessive intellectual inflexibility. It is tolerant; and is impatient of assuming extreme positions—good or bad; rich or poor; guilty or not guilty. It prefers to arrive at consensus through compromise and conciliation, sharing good and bad; affluence and scarcity; guilt and innocence. The African mind accepts that only God alone is perfect and that human beings can only give of their best and no further.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Constituent Assembly, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have great pleasure in declaring open today the 6th day of October, 1977, the session of the Constituent Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

I wish you fruitful deliberations and God's guidance and blessings.

State Visit to the United States of America

On the invitation of the Government of the United States of America, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo paid a state visit to America from October 10 to 15, 1977. During the visit, General Obasanjo held talks with his American counterpart, President Jimmy Carter, and the Secretary of State, Mr. Cyrus Vance. Among other functions which General Obasanjo was engaged with during the visit was the ceremony of the presentation of the Key of the City of Washington, D.C. Washington of Washington, D.C.; visit and address to Howard University; and luncheon given by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during which he spoke about the different aspects of the U.S./Africa relations, calling for their review and improvement. He also addressed the 32nd Session of the United Nations Assembly.

I am delighted to be in this great country and to have the opportunity of personally conveying to you Mr. President, the Government and the people of the United States, greetings and good wishes from the Government and people of Nigeria.

My present visit to the United States marks a new and favourable turn in the efforts to foster co-operation and amity between our two countries.

Mr. President, Nigeria and the United States share many common experiences. Our two countries have behind them a history of colonial rule and political struggles for independence. Both have progressive, dynamic and resourceful peoples, deeply committed to freedom, equality, social justice and the pursuit of international peace and security. Of equal importance is the ethnic affinity between our two countries. I have no doubt that this visit will afford both our Governments the opportunity to build upon these and the many other bonds that unite us.

We also look forward to elaborating upon the initiatives and dialogue we have started regarding the many matters of crucial importance to Africa and the world. Indeed, it is only recently that the Western Powers as a whole have come to realise that the quest for global peace and security also involves ensuring the stability and rapid development of Africa. We in Nigeria particularly welcome such a realisation on the part of the United States Government and people. We hope that our discussions will contribute towards the progress of the African continent, a process in which your Government and people can make a significant and welcome contribution.

In this respect, Mr. President, I am sure that we shall pay appropriate attention to the specific issue of the highly volatile and potentially dangerous situation in Southern Africa—a situation which threatens international peace and security. Human degradation, oppression and deprivation as rationalised and perpetrated in Southern Africa by the racist regimes there is a crime against which not only Africa, but all mankind as a whole must fight.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Needless to say we also attach great importance to other elements of our bilateral relations, particularly in the economic and technical spheres. We in Nigeria have embarked upon a programme of economic and industrial development for the period

1975 to 1980. We are happy to note that the major industrialised countries are already actually participating in this programme. It is our hope that the United States, with its enormous economic and technological capabilities will find ample opportunities in the programme for fuller participation.

Mr. President, may I express the immense appreciation of myself and my delegation to you and the Government and people of the United States for inviting us to visit you. We look forward to a happy stay in your country.

Accepting Key to the City of Washington, D.C.

Remarks by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obsanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at the presentation of the key of the city by Mayor Walter Washington of Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, 11th October, 1977.

I am happy for the honour done me this evening at this ceremony. It is indeed with great pleasure and appreciation that I on behalf of the entire people of Nigeria accept the key to the City of Washington in the District of Columbia.

I have noted with keen interest and admiration the continuing efforts of successive city administrations to maintain the special identity and character of the District of Columbia and to improve the welfare of its inhabitants.

Distinguished Mayor, we in Nigeria have carried out a fundamental reform of our Local Government system. To us, the purpose of Local Government is to ensure even development, local autonomy, and widespread political participation at the local level. Many of our new Local Government units are municipalities which, like your great city face the problems associated with urban growth. While recognising the distinctive features of the typical African city, I do hope that the experience of Washington will be of value to our city planners and administrators. Indeed, our own experience may also be of some interest to those who are charged with shaping the future of splendid cities like your own. It is in the expectation of such mutual enrichment that I hope a flow of exchanges between your beautiful city in particular and many similar cities in my country will develop. In this regard, our proposed new Federal Capital readily comes to mind. Indeed, the officials of the new Federal Capital Territory have already visited Washington and it is appropriate for me here to express the appreciation of my Government for the co-operation you and your officials extended to them during their rewarding visit.

I understand that a great many Nigerians live in peace and harmony amongst your people. We have enjoined all our nationals abroad to abide by the laws of their host countries and I am sure that the Nigerians in Washington and elsewhere in the United States will continue to do so.

Finally, I wish to express my immense gratitude to you personally, and through you, to all the good people of Washington, D.C. for the hospitality accorded me and my entourage since our arrival. We are most impressed.

Seventy

White House Dinner

Remarks by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, at the White House Dinner on Tuesday, 11th October, 1977.

I wish to thank you sincerely, Mr. President, for the excellent Dinner we have just had, and for the warm and friendly reception which you and your Government have so graciously accorded me and members of my delegation. I also thank you for the kind and generous terms in which you spoke about my country and myself.

BRIDGE OF COMMUNICATION

We have seen demonstrated in this short period of our visit a new awareness of the need to establish a bridge of communication between our two countries and our two peoples. But, I believe, Mr. President, that a close affinity already exists between our two countries. History and shared ancestry bind us to a large section of your population. This affinity further derives from our common attachment to freedom and independence in all their ramifications. You attained your independence two hundred years ago. We have been independent for only 17 years. For us in Nigeria, independence is indivisible and total, and we regard our independence as incomplete so long as parts of the African Continent remain under the yoke of "colonialism."

CONCERN FOR AFRICA

Our perception of the policies of successive United States Administrations was that concern for Africa and its problems played an insignificant role in the formulation of these policies. It appeared to us that Africa had become a mere pawn in a global chess game which had no serious relevance to your concern and interests. Even if such a policy served the interests of the United States at that time, the effect of its implementation was to alienate the vast majority of the people of Africa whose history and even aspirations cut them out to be staunch friends and allies of the American people.

CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP

At our independence all the indications to us were that it was almost natural that the United States and Nigeria would enjoy cordial and close relationship. Events subsequently showed that the genuine desire of Nigeria to work in close collaboration with the United States to promote freedom and understanding could not be reciprocated. There are those who hold the view that such setbacks are natural in the history of relations between Nation States. Some maintain that both the United States and Nigeria did not utilise the opportunity which their common belief and historical ties offered them. Even at the time when relations between our two Governments were

at their lowest ebb, there were individuals in both countries whose determination and foresight resisted the temptation to give up all attempt at fostering friendly relationship and kept open the lines of communication and dialogue between our two peoples.

We are again in a position to indicate our readiness to work together for the cause of freedom and understanding, and to foster co-operation in areas of mutual benefit. While we seek to forge closer relations between our two countries, let us, Mr. President, remember that the commitment of our peoples to freedom is total, and that we can only carry our peoples along with us if we continue to uphold and nurture those principles which motivate their action and which they hold dear.

As far as we are concerned, we are happy to note that, for the first time, a United States Administration is showing signs of recognising the necessity of placing Africa in its proper position as a major focal point in the quest for international peace and stability. Nowhere in the world is there a greater assault on human rights than in Africa. Nowhere is the continued exportation of weapons of war and the technology of destruction likely to have graver consequences than in Southern Africa. And so long as Africa remains unstable for whatever geopolitical reasons, so long will developments there continue to pose a threat to world peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS

That is why, Mr. President, we welcome the pride of place which you and your Administration have given to human rights. This has rekindled a new awareness of freedom and its overall importance in the context of relations between nation states. If this policy is consistently pursued, the peoples of Africa will have no difficulty in accepting that your stand and commitment to freedom and justice are more than mere rhetoric. The basic rights of all human beings which your Administration upholds remind us all that one of the primary responsibilities of all Governments is to jealously protect and assure the fundamental rights of their peoples. We in Nigeria share this belief with you, Mr. President. There is hardly any need for me to recount here the steps we are taking in Nigeria to restore the Government of our country to a democratically elected body by 1979. While our own traditions of Government and historical experience will inevitably influence the form and content of our Constitution and the style of Government in our country, we cannot ignore the lessons and experiences of older Republics.

SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Mr. President, since our arrival here, you and I have discussed at length the situation in Southern Africa. If we have devoted so much time to the subject, it is largely because we share the view that nowhere else in the world are the ideas of freedom, justice and human rights so wantonly and systematically trampled upon than in that unhappy part of our Continent. While I do not wish to go over the issues again here, I would like to stress that they are of paramount importance in the relations between our two countries and peoples. I am sure therefore, that we shall continue to monitor events in the three problem areas of Southern Africa.

ARMED LIBERATION STRUGGLE MUST SUCCEED

This is why we believe that an armed liberation struggle by the oppressed is justifiable and bound to succeed. This is a commitment which we in Africa have a duty to support. While we acknowledge that some countries outside Africa may not feel able to subscribe to this position, we think they can assist in this effort by discontinuing their current involvement with the racist system in terms of their massive investment, and their deliveries of arms, and in particularly, the technology of

armaments. If, as almost the whole world seems to be agreed, apartheid is a uniquely evil system, then no one should hesitate to feel we have a moral duty to humanity to take these minimum steps.

NOT A RICH NATION

Mr. President, other aspects which touch directly on the bilateral relations between our two countries flow from the premise of our mutual commitment to common ideals. In spite of the undue and often misleading publicity given to Nigeria's petroleum resources, ours is a developing country. Eighty per cent of Nigeria's working population is in the agricultural sector. Our per capita income is less than \$350 per annum. Thus, we cannot be considered as a rich nation.

It is our hope therefore, that we will continue to enjoy the co-operation of the United States in the execution of programmes designed to improve the quality of life of our people. Our resources and available technology cannot yet support self sustained improvement in the standard of living of the bulk of our population. As with other technologically and industrially advanced countries, we shall seek to consult more closely with the United States in exploring further ways of strengthening co-operation in our endeavour to develop a strong technological base for the mechanisation of production and the resultant improvement to the material well-being of our people.

NEW WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER

Mr. President, as you are aware, the dialogue between the industrialised countries and the developing nations on the structure of a new world economic order ended inconclusively, and there was no agreement as to what system should replace the existing one. We are encouraged to note that the United States is committed to work towards the creation of a more just world economic system, because we also desire the elimination of a situation in which nations of the world are categorised as "industrialised" and "developing" states, "haves" and "have-nots." Mr. President, I am happy that we are both committed to the creation of a new world order which will take due cognizance of the inter-dependence between states, a world in which Nation States will relate to one another on the basis of equality, understanding and mutual respect.

GRATITUDE

May I, once again, express my sincere gratitude and that of my delegation for your generous hospitality. I also seize this opportunity to assure you that we welcome your impending visit to Nigeria. It certainly will add a new dimension and impetus to the efforts of all who desire to forge meaningful and mutually beneficial relations between the peoples and Governments of our two countries.

Honourable Members of Congress, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, may I invite you to rise and drink with me a hearty toast to the continued good health and happiness of President and Mrs. Carter, and to the well-being of the people of the United States of America.



Fig. 32 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo waits while the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Andrew Young signs the Visitors' Book when he paid a courtesy call on General Obasanjo at Dodan Barracks, Lagos.

Howard University

Remarks by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at Howard University, Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, 12th October, 1977.

I am particularly delighted to be here with you this afternoon.

This meeting is primarily an act of reunion and homage. I say this because more than any other black educational institution in the United States of America, Howard University has for over a century been among the traditional black colleges and universities which continue to perform a significant role in the overall educational, economic and social development of black Americans and Africans. These institutions championed the cause of equal opportunity to those who were denied it or could not afford it.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

I wish to acknowledge the goodwill of Howard University Board of Trustees and faculty towards foreign and African students in general, and Nigerian students in particular. In spite of the great demand of places by black American students and the great need to give these places to them, this University has adapted an open door policy towards blacks from all over the world.

From the 1930's Howard University has provided succor to hundreds of Nigerians, quenched their thirst for knowledge and provided jobs at all levels for many among them who needed it and were qualified. To the greater glory of this institution, it can name among its alumni, a past President of Nigeria, a former Ambassador of Nigeria to the United States of America and innumerable highly placed persons in all walks of life in my country. No doubt, this great University has contributed its quota to the number of highly placed black Americans who were given the advantage of higher education by traditional black colleges and universities. Among them is the current United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Andrew Young.

I wish to place on record, our gratitude to Dr. J. Check, President of Howard University and his Board of Trustees, for their understanding and encouragement of Africans studying in this University. Although we are investing heavily on higher education in Nigeria, it remains impossible for us to provide enough places for all Nigerians who want to have and are qualified for higher education. We therefore rely heavily on supplementing our own efforts with places made available to our students in universities all over the world. The gap that places given at Howard University fill is numerically significant and stimulating both psychologically and academically.

MENTAL LIBERATION

The theme of my speech before you today is *BLACK AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROCESS OF MENTAL LIBERATION.*" During my opening address to the colloquium of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos earlier this year, I offered an argument that all Black and African peoples, where they may be, cannot work or think in languages indigenous to them. I also suggested that, to overcome this handicap, they needed unruffled patience and painstaking dedication. I also implored all participants to de-emphasize self-glorification and self-justification, but rather to turn the light of inquiry on finding a direction for freeing our people from mental and material poverty and bondage. There is no doubt about our contribution to human civilisation in the past. The University of Timbuktu ran a flourishing research centre well ahead of Europe. But I lamented the fact that the long history of our achievement and contribution to human civilization has been completely suppressed and obliterated by colonial domination.

All black intellectuals must construct a new bridge-head to assault this misrepresentation of history. This is an absolute pre-requisite for preparing ourselves to regain control over our destiny. Our intellectuals and schools must ensure that their work in the various universities and research centres today set the course of this new sense of values which will do justice to the roots of the African and Black peoples and set the culture aright for the new generations to come. The task precedes any search for technological and material presence we might seek to carve out in the world.

OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE

Technological and material abundance is our main objective. But we cannot be motivated by a psychology of dependence and an imposed belief of being second rate. No nation or peoples draw inspiration and made any impact on history by a state of mind that is dominated by doubt about its capacity and pride in its history. For many blacks in this part of the world there are two bridges to cross. The first concerns their relationship to the society in which they must live, and the second is the question of their relationship with their origins. The two are interwoven and interconnected, but still capable of separate treatment in regard to the first. I wish to acknowledge that without the active collaboration of some of our ancestors, some of your ancestors would not have been brought here.

In any case both of us descend from this same stock. History however, is not a backward looking exercise. For us it emphasizes the need to be one with you, to make today and tomorrow much better than yesterday. In this effort to improve the lot of the blacks in American society, we acknowledge the long line of fighters, from Booker T. Washington through to the hall of fame of the NAACP, Malcolm X, Dr. M. Luther King and the younger generation of fighters for the improvement of blacks in the United States of America. You will note that I have not mentioned the likes of Dr. W.E.B. DuBois. They are the bridge builders between you and us. Mr. Alex Haley is the latest in line in this category.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

As I said earlier on, this great institution has contributed its quota to the development of the capacity of the black American for active participation in this society. There is an input output ratio to every human undertaking. Everything possible must continue to be done to increase and improve this capacity on either side. There are two broad vehicles for achieving this objective. The one is political, and the other intellectual. Some progress has been made on the former front. The

foundation for regaining and ensuring equal political opportunity for blacks has been laid. The price has been paid and we are now approaching the end of the tunnel. The prospects are now bright and the end is definitely in view.

In regard to the intellectual equipment for increasing black input and output, we are luckier here, but we must keep up the pressure. Let all blacks in this society develop a thirst for knowledge. You are living in a knowledge society and any individual or group within such a society who is short on knowledge power will have itself to blame.

I implore you, therefore, to take the call and challenge to your churches and mosques, to the pool rooms and dance halls. The time has come for all blacks, through universities and colleges, through on the job training, through community and individual efforts, to close ranks and increase the input of Black Americans to the knowledge of society. Happily, the returns are high and the effort worth making.

POLITICAL SELF-DETERMINATION

Some of you may wonder what is in this for us on the continent of Africa. I should start by saying that since the ship left shore we too have been through subjugation only slightly less humiliating than yours. We are just beginning to emerge from this period having recovered our right to political self-determination. However a lot of damage has been done to the structures of our society. We are busy buckling down to the hard work of putting the damage right. In this exercise, we have had to rely heavily on external help. I am glad to say that in Nigeria for example, black Americans with high technical skills are working shoulder to shoulder with their brothers and sisters.

Considering the size and scope of problems facing a nation such as ours there is infinite opportunity for co-operation and your experience and know-how are both welcome in helping us in our very considerable task of building a nation. We in Nigeria, for example have embarked on a 60 billion dollar programme of economic development between now and 1980.

One of the major constraints to this effort is the shortage of technical know-how and manpower. To combat this shortage, we have mounted a special drive to bring home all our qualified manpower from abroad and have a crash programme to train more. In the short term, help in this direction is welcome from all quarters. Every qualified American who has taken advantage of the educational and research facilities in this great country can make his services available to us to the material and psychological satisfaction of both parties. On a second but very important platform, is the fact that Africa and the United States of America need greater collaboration on the political plane.

FOREIGN POLICY

Your great country is a world power and its position and posture on many issues can be, and most often is, critical to the nature and speed of solution in world affairs. Your political process is oiled by an efficient system of lobbies. The greatest weakness in the foreign policy of African countries is that although the USA has one of the largest concentration of blacks in the world, this political power has not before now been used to influence its African policy. Increasingly, there is an awareness of this possibility, but all black intellectuals, scholars and researchers must take account of this factor in the course of their work.

The politicians of the black caucus have become a greater force to reckon with, the black vote too has become a decisive factor. These new points must facilitate the achievement of the objectives of black and African peoples wherever they may be. There is no greater area of action for this lobby than the explosive situation in southern Africa.

In Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa, millions of blacks and Africans are suffering under colonialism and the most perverted form of racism—apartheid. The present United States Administration has moved closer to us in finding solutions to these problems and deserves to be congratulated. There is still a long way to go though, and we cannot yet rest on our oars.

MAJORITY RULE AND MENTAL LIBERATION

Every black American must use his influence in the political processes to ensure that the government of the United States of America fights on our side to bring majority rule to southern Africa and an end to apartheid. In this regard, we must alert all black American scholars of the danger of being used for the wrong kind of public relations work, for and on behalf of the South African Government.

We in Nigeria believe that so long as one inch of African territory remains in bondage, and that wherever any black or African is oppressed, we share the indignity. This is the way it should be. To return to the general theme of our overall development, we must sharpen our tools through a process of mental liberation. In this regard, I wish to recall that Dr. Alfred F. Hoyte of your Department of Electrical Engineering once wrote that all groups of people must learn to produce for themselves the things that will make life more comfortable. Without this our embarrassing dependence on the fruits of other people's labour, our readiness to imitate, our easy satisfaction with crumbs, will constitute greater obstacles than any external factors which hitherto hindered our development.

I conclude here with a call to action based on valid hope and assurance of solidarity on both sides of the Atlantic for a greater tomorrow for all Black and African peoples throughout the world.

Thank you.

Seventy-Two

Joint Luncheon with Congressional Committees

Remarks by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces—at the luncheon given by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee on Wednesday, 12th October, 1977.

I wish to express my profound gratitude for the honour you have done me this afternoon by offering such a sumptuous luncheon. This is yet another expression of the warm hospitality which we have enjoyed since our arrival in the United States. Since my delegation and I arrived here, we have been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of the American people.

TIME FOR RE-ORIENTATION

I am fully aware of the importance of the role and responsibilities of both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee in the formulation and development of the foreign policy of the United States of America. It is in full cognisance of this importance that I crave your indulgence to express concern over the most fundamental aspect of the relations between our continent, Africa and United States of America. My concern is that in spite of all the apparatus of information gathering and analysis that is available to this great Republic there is insufficient appreciation of Africa, its past, its present status and its future aspirations.

There is no doubt in my mind that the United States is the most advanced industrial society today. If any society could be said to be moving in the direction of post industrialisation, then yours is certainly the farthest ahead in the field. The main characteristic of this imminent post industrial society is that it will be based on what the futurologists term "knowledge."

It is a pity that although we both wish to establish a relationship of constant consultation and co-operation in finding solutions to the problems of nations and peoples of the world, this aspiration has not been based on a sound knowledge of each other and thorough understanding of each other's situation. I sincerely believe that unless we make a more conscious effort to know and understand each other, our relationship will remain superficial and exploitative because it will be based on stereotypes constructed from received ideas and unverified information.

In the light of what I have just said, I will appeal to this distinguished gathering that a conscious effort be made from now to improve our stock of knowledge of each other. For my part, I believe that America needs to know more about Africa. Our knowledge of each other must go beyond the trauma of discovering one's roots and must transcend Victorian paternalism, passed on from our colonial relationship with

Western Europe. For the government and people of the United States of America, the time has come for a re-orientation which will put an end to the conception of the continent of Africa solely as an economic market, Western Europe's political sphere of influence, a fertile ground for anthropological inquiry and the collection of curios and artifacts or the locus of the charitable instinct and urge in every affluent people.

The history of the contact and relationship between colonial Africa and Western Europe is reasonably well documented. While a small circle of professional Africanists have moved away from the Eurocentric bias of earlier studies of this period, this new light does not appear to have filtered through sufficiently to the decision makers. Even among the academicians here, little account if any, is taken of what existed in pre-contact Africa in their appreciation of our continent today. That period in the history of our continent should not be treated as irrelevant because it is the totality of a people's experience including its oral tradition which can properly advise an understanding of the problems and aspirations of such people.

In the case of the peoples of the continent of Africa, South of the Sahara, there is evidence of political and economic development comparable to the situation in Western Europe prior to and up to the fifteenth century. The negative effect of contact with Western Europe was that initially a process of destruction of existing social, political and economic structures was set in motion. The values which had sustained the peoples of Africa for centuries before the arrival of the Europeans were denigrated and destroyed. The city-states, kingdoms and empires which they evolved succumbed before the superior firepower and violence of the West Europeans. They lost control of their destinies and their right to self-determination. In their place emerged hybrid geo-political entities. It was out of such conglomerate that the nation states which emerged on the African continent, beginning with Ghana in 1957, were fashioned.

GREATER UNDERSTANDING

While I do not ignore the mutual positive effects of contact between Africa and Europe, the fact remains that the oldest experiment in building a modern nation state in Black Africa is barely twenty years old. In my country, Nigeria, for example, it can be said that our efforts in this respect did not begin until 1960; thus we have had only seventeen years of determined course and direction of our development and the management of our resources without the dictation of some superior external authority. We are now attempting to telescope into twenty years what you achieved in over two centuries. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that there are gaps in the achievement and performance between our countries in Africa and your great Republic. Yet, it does not appear that the assessment and critique of our performance in the spheres of social, political and economic development take enough account of this newness of the experiment. It is in the light of this that we ask for greater understanding from you.

This understanding must include a willingness on your part to accept that our values, and life styles are necessarily different from yours, and may not change as our societies in their quest for self-reliance to achieve levels of industrialisation similar to yours.

Modern communications can play an important role in fostering this understanding. Unfortunately, the fact is that your powerful media organisations do not take advantage of their unique opportunities. While I would not say that they have completely neglected Africa, it seems to us that for the most part they succeed in only encouraging mistrust between us through misinformation, distorted facts and a lack of sensitivity and finesse in presenting African issues and problems.

SPHERE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the sphere of international relations, the two broad areas of operation which are capable of shaping intercourse between two nations are economic and political. In the field of economic activity, we are concerned that the nature and character of the international economic system hamper both our productive capacity and the pattern of the allocation of resources. I believe that as long as our inputs into the international trade remain subject to violent fluctuations, and as long as the bulk of our share of that trade is in primary products, our chances of breaking through the development barrier will remain limited. Yet it is in the best interest of all mankind that the gap between the standard of living in the northern hemispheric countries and their southern counterparts, be drastically reduced. The equitable distribution of the wealth of the world is now of primary importance not only because we all belong to the same global economy, but also because it will ensure world peace and stability.

On the continent of Africa today, we still have virtual slave labour in South African mines, and excessive dependence on the human brawn and the concentration of economic activity in the extractive industries and agriculture. The not so favourable activities and multi-national companies however tend to limit the chances of fulfilling economic programmes designed by our countries to lift our peoples above the poverty lines. It is my sincere hope that the government of the United States of America will use its powerful international economic and financial position to reduce the adverse impact of multi-nationals and redress the injustices in the sharing of world resources.

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

In addition, this great Republic is a world leader in the development of technology. We believe that the mechanisation of production is a proven key to the increase in the level of economic activity and the resultant improvement of the standard of living of peoples. In this regard, the United States government and people ought to make a special effort to facilitate the acquisition and transfer of technology to our countries. I seize this opportunity to thank your government for its immediate and favourable response to our request for places in your institutions for training technical manpower. We welcome this gesture and can only hope that this is the beginning of a new era of co-operation between our two countries, we aspire to self-reliance so that we can better contribute to a more efficient use of the world's resources. You will recall that the initial assistance to mechanisation and automation in today's industrialised nations was because of the fear of the replacement of men by machines which would lead to massive unemployment and suffering. Instead, mechanisation led to increased wealth of nations and increased welfare of citizens.

We are sure that the acquisition of technology by the countries of the third world can only lead to an overall improvement in the wealth of the world. There is no cause to think that industrialisation in the countries of Africa will necessarily entail a diminution of returns to the industrialised nations or their citizens.

ASPIRATION FOR ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE

There are also many countries in Africa whose resource bases are so narrow as to make planning difficult. Such countries provide a splendid opportunity for regional programmes which will enable them to take advantage of economics of scale. This is yet another area where your foreign policy can make positive contribution to the continent of Africa.

The overall import of my comments in the economic field is that the United States of America can lead action through both bilateral and multilateral arrangements to cause a review and re-orientation of the position of all industrialised nations to remove slave

labour, economic discrimination, corporate selfishness and other obstacles to our aspiration for economic self-reliance. On this note I appeal to the Senate and House Committees here gathered that the old battle cries of capitalism, the arguments for isolationism and the erroneous belief that economic development in Africa is about aid agencies are all obstacles in the way of the aspirations of 200 million Africans for economic self-reliance, and of increases of volume of world trade and the consequential improvement to world welfare.

FIGHT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

On the political sphere, honourable members, the last two centuries have been a period during which Africa lost its right to self-determination and was the victim of political subjugation. Halfway through this century we fought and recovered our political independence and the right to manage our affairs. In the following twenty years or so, the continent of Africa has waged a war on two fronts.

Firstly, our countries have had to ensure that national boundaries are held intact, national cohesion nurtured and the apparatus for achieving the rising expectation of our peoples established. In this regard I wish to recall the tragedy of my country's civil war. We are thankful to God that our efforts to wipe away memories of that harrowing and traumatic experience have been successful. It has been for us an exercise in human courage and magnanimity. These two principles among others continue to guide and advise the cause of our domestic policy. The most positive indication of the fact that we have put that unhappy episode behind us, and which also underscores the lesson in human tragedy of our civil war is that the principal architect of this national calamity has gone on record as being ready "to contribute to Nigeria's development and to serve her best interest."

Secondly, we have had to combat colonialism and racism in many parts of Africa especially in southern Africa. In both cases, we have insisted that the right of African people to self-determination is not negotiable and expressed deep abhorrence against any philosophy which preaches the inequality of men and dedicate ourselves to the elimination of any political system based on racial discrimination. All who value the right of all men and women to political self-determination, and all who accept the equality of men have been and remain our friends. I am happy to note that in this regard the present United States Administration has moved the government and people of your great Republic closer to us. I must nonetheless make some additional comments on the role and impact of the foreign policy of the United States of America on the two areas of our efforts mentioned above.

MAJOR OBSTACLES

African countries are confronted by two major obstacles. One of these is the question of choosing between the two dominant ideologies for ordering their societies. Secondly, they must cope with the effect of the achievements and values of the industrialised states on their efforts. As I have earlier described, the impact of modern communications is that they introduce to our societies disruptive foreign life styles and values. Exposure to the values of industrialised societies make it more difficult to restore and retain those values which we hold dear and which I believe could improve the quality of life of even the industrialised states.

As I said earlier on, colonial authorities put together within the same boundaries, diverse ethnic groups and such boundaries sometimes cut through ethnic groups, leaving the same people in two different countries. This creates centrifugal forces in domestic political activities in most African countries.

Added to this is the subjection of the political elite to the pressure of competition between the two dominant political ideologies. This pressure is sometime self-induced as the acquisition of formal western education informs most politically-conscious Africans of the pros and cons of the two major approaches to social and political development. Often of course this pressure is also induced by the flag bearers of the two ideologies who compete for power and influence in our territories often without any regard to the methods used to achieve their ends. We are of the opinion that our problem is not that of choosing between capitalism or socialism. To us those are two sides of a coin, the contribution of the European mind to man's political development. To the extent that no man or woman prefers bondage to freedom, dictation to self-determination, the whole question of a choice between the one ideological position or the other ceases to be relevant. We hold the view that a political system need not be identified with either of the two major systems to guarantee freedom or participation in the political process to its citizens, assure them of their individual freedom, or improve their quality of life.

BASIC AFRICAN CONCERN

In this regard the basic African concern for humaneness, justice and fairness should constitute the pillars of our and, for that matter, any political system. It is the duty of all our friends to leave us in peace to order our societies according to these cardinal principles. The form and practices familiar to you as typifying good government may not necessarily be suited to our ways. We however share in common with you the love of freedom and justice to all men. This is why we believe that the spirit of your new Administration with regard to ideological struggles is ethically superior to the interventionism of the past and should continue to advise the policy and posture of the United States of America in dealing with other governments.

In the area of our struggle to free our continent from the clutches of colonialism and racism, we have stepped on a few toes here and there. We are however convinced of the inalienable right of all peoples whatever their colour or creed to political self-determination. This is the principle which provides the drive for our commitment to the course of justice in southern Africa.

OUR AFRICAN POLICY

Our African policy is the result of a thorough analysis of the issues at stake and realisation of the fact that our own independence is meaningless so long as any part of Africa is not free. We cannot shirk our responsibilities no matter what sacrifices we may be called upon to make to achieve majority rule in southern Africa. We have accepted the challenge foisted on us by the intransigent minority regimes in southern Africa and have co-ordinated our action and support for the liberation movements with other African countries, particularly the frontline countries. There again we welcome and appreciate the many gestures of President Carter's Administration with the full support of the United States Congress. This adjustment of direction has gone a long way in rectifying the widely held view that the United States is more concerned with what is imagined to be its permanent policy. In this regard, I wish to publicly acknowledge how much we believe in the good intentions and sincerity of the present United States Administration and their current efforts aimed at averting racial war on our continent and the consequential disturbance of world peace.

The United States of America has a responsibility to the world through its political leadership. This responsibility must not be dodged because of moral blindness, political ignorance or sentimental attachment. We hope that we can expect the understanding, the support of the United States Congress as our governments and the government of the United States of America co-operate in this human endeavour.

STRATEGIC INTERESTS

Finally, there are a number of issues in our relations with you which while being peculiar to either side are nevertheless interconnected. These are our pre-occupation with spheres of influence and strategic interests. These pre-occupations are understandable, but I would like to suggest to you that your pursuit of strategic interests appears to us as a combination of the insecurity of being affluent in the midst of want and a carry over of the ideological confrontation of the post-second world war era. You have, we recognise, your legitimate interests to pursue but when these pursuits directly and adversely impinge on our own interests, frictions emerge and threats to world peace arise. I wish to appeal to you strongly that the less resources that are allocated to armaments and the defence of strategic interests against more imagined than real dangers, the more will be available to further improve the equality of life for your own people. It may even be that you will thus positively contribute toward narrowing the gap between the world of affluence which is yours and the world of scarcity and insecurity which is currently ours.

Honourable Senators, Congressmen, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, may I invite you to rise and drink with me the hearty toast to the good health of President Carter, the well being of the American people and the friendship and prosperity of our two peoples.

Seventy-Three

United Nations General Assembly Address

Statement delivered by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-In-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at the Thirty-Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday 13th October, 1977.

Mr. President,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to be here today to address this assembly of world nations. As numerous delegates and other well wishers have already done before me, I wish in the name of the Nigerian Government and people to convey our hearty congratulations to you on your election to the Presidency of the current 32nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. Considering the length of agenda items as well as the complexity of the issues before us at this session, we have no doubt that you will have to draw generously upon all those qualities of statesmanship which have marked you out for this unique recognition. But considering also the universally acknowledged position of Yugoslavia as a bastion of the non-aligned concept and your personal calibre as a statesman, we are confident that you will acquit yourself most creditably in the discharge of your onerous duties.

NOBLE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates, I should like to convey the greetings of the Nigerian government and people to this august assembly and in particular, their best wishes for a successful session. This is not simply one more routine annual session of the United Nations General Assembly, but indeed one that must rededicate itself anew to those noble principles and objectives enshrined in the charter and in particular those that express the hope to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among the states on the basis of equality of sovereignty, and to devise a way to solve existing disputes by peaceful means. It is, Mr. Chairman, against this background and in this spirit, that we ardently hope that the current session will pursue its task over the next two months. We pledge the full co-operation of the Nigerian delegation in the fulfilment of these objectives in the overall interest of world peace, justice and security.

VIOLENCE AND TRAGEDY

Mr. Chairman, it might perhaps be pertinent to recall here that the world of 1977 is a far cry from those eventful days of immediate post war of 1945, when the world freshly emerged from the nightmares of a carnage unprecedented in human history, ardently desired and sought after a way and means to prevent a recurrence of global war. On two occasions within this century, mankind indulged in a colossal and barbaric

destruction of human life and property only to discover at the end that the inter-relations of peoples must be based on justice and that any other approach to the interaction of men and nations will sooner or later result in violence and tragedy for mankind. A substantial part of what has now come to be known as the Third World was then most directly unconcerned with the ideological issues or the historical events that led to the two wars.

In the process of the evolution of colonial history after 1945, a different type of struggle on a global scale did ensue. During that period, only a minority of the nations now represented here today were considered capable of exercising the sovereign attributes that determined the course of human history over the next decade and a half until the irrepressible cause of human freedom eventually triumphed in the early 1960's and the erstwhile colonial peoples took their rightful place within this august assembly of nations. The entire continent of Africa was represented at the historic conference of San Francisco by three independent states and this accounted for the total African participation at the signing ceremony of the original UN Charter by the founding nations out of a total number of 51 member states.

MORE EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION

But the world has changed since then and Africa now holds a membership ratio of nearly one third of this prestigious organisation. Besides, if one considers the inherent imperfection of all human institutions and the self-evident fact that all man made institutions are subject to change, it seems quite clear that the newly independent nations of the Third World in general, and Africa in particular, are now grossly under represented in practically all the major organs of the UN. Our struggles for a review of the relevant provisions of the charter leading to a more equitable representation of nations on the basis of present day realities will continue unabated, and we are confident that given the necessary political will on all sides this objective can be achieved.

But Africa's struggles, Mr. Chairman, and the struggles of the entire Third World go far beyond the cause of equitable representation within UN organs. They transcend the limited objectives of the UN Charter touching as they do on the very foundations of justice and human freedom. Since its inception, the idea of the UN and its system have been continuously subjected to intellectual and physical attack from all quarters and shades of opinion in spite of the self-evident nature of the superiority of justice over injustice, peace over violence and freedom over bondage.

DECOLONISATION AND ERADICATION OF RACISM

Mr. Chairman, at this point I will like to refer to the cause of decolonisation and the eradication of racism from those parts of Africa that are still labouring under the oppressive rule of colonialism and intransigent minority regimes.

In Zimbabwe alone, we have witnessed with dismay the strange phenomenon unprecedented in recent colonial history of a minority white regime in rebellion against the colonising power and getting away with it for twelve years. This is in spite of all efforts to persuade the administering authority to acknowledge and discharge its obligations to the six million indigenous people who continue to be denied their basic human rights in defiance of the charter of our organisation.

All our appeals have been met with half-hearted measures inventing superficial economic sanctions that are full of loopholes. Today therefore, the racist regime in rebellion could still boast of a more viable economy and higher standard of living for the white minority. But they have to contend with the unwavering dedication, patriotism and grim determination of the nationalist liberation movements.

The nationalists and freedom fighters will continue to stand ready to pay the supreme sacrifice rather than live ignominiously in perpetual bondage. Their cause is just, Mr. Chairman, and their struggles sacred. Their sacrifices shall not be in vain because time is on their side and Africa stands by them and they also enjoy the full solidarity with all freedom loving peoples throughout the world. In this regard, it is necessary to emphasise once again that the Nigerian government and people are totally committed to the cause of freedom and justice in that part of our continent. This we consider as a duty that must be performed and we are determined to restore the honour and dignity that belong to that continent and all its inhabitants at whatever cost.

I must also place on record here once again the appreciation of the Nigerian government and people for the laudable role which the United Nations has played in the past and has continued to play so that even in Southern Africa, the right of man to freedom may be quickly restored.

The United Nations archives are rich and overflowing with resolutions about ending the illegal regime in Rhodesia so that a free Zimbabwe may be born. The good intentions behind most of these resolutions have never been in doubt, and we would probably have by now achieved a positive result but for the combination of open support to the illegal regime by their fellow racists of South Africa and the clandestine democracy at home, and sabotage by those who profess to believe in democracy at home but prefer to espouse the course of fascism in Africa.

ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS

It is equally important that we mention in this regard the current proposals jointly made by Britain and the United States of America for a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia otherwise known as the Anglo-American proposals and recently made public in broad outline form. We have, Mr. Chairman, given very careful and exhaustive consideration to these proposals and our view is that in spite of obvious defects and weaknesses mostly of an ambiguous nature, the proposals may well deserve to be given a chance. In working out the detailed implementation of these proposals, these defects and weaknesses must be removed. For this among other reasons, Mr. Chairman, we have supported the steps taken by the Security Council to authorise the Secretary-General to appoint a representative in Rhodesia as required in these proposals. We note with satisfaction the expeditious steps taken so far.

Having said this however, I consider it imperative to sound a note of warning that Nigeria will never be party to any solution in Zimbabwe that could be remotely interpreted as a sell-out of the six million people of that land. Our objective is the unequivocal surrender of power by the minority to the majority of the population. We have therefore naturally condemned all manoeuvres such as the frantic search by the rebel regime for a so-called internal settlement as totally unacceptable.

CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE

And finally on this point, Mr. Chairman, we should like to record warm tributes to the constructive role that the independent states adjacent to Rhodesia otherwise known as the frontline states have continued to play in the search for a solution there, by peaceful negotiations if possible, and through the barrel of the gun if necessary.■

The former League of Nations Trust Territory of South West Africa, now Namibia, under United Nation administration but still illegally occupied by the Vorster regime of South Africa, is one other area of our continent with which we are, Mr. Chairman, profoundly pre-occupied. We believe too that the United Nations Organisation is equally pre-occupied with events within the territory on account of the special

responsibility imposed on us for the suffering people of Namibia by the termination of South Africa's mandate over the territory which had been so grossly abused. We are greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm which the Secretary-General has shown in his efforts to re-assert the United Nations control over the territory and we can only hope that these efforts, in combination with the current dialogue by some member states with the Vorster regime, will persuade the racists of South Africa about the utter futility of trying to stem the tide of freedom in Southern Africa. We salute SWAPO leaders and pay warm tributes to the devotion and determination of that organisation to free Namibia from illegal occupation and wish to assure this august assembly that we in Nigeria will not relent in our efforts to see Namibia free. We look forward therefore to welcoming Namibia here next year among the comity of sovereign and independent nations.

Mr. Chairman, African liberation efforts would of course never be complete until the eighteen million non-white people inside South Africa itself are freed from the clutches of a minority racist regime. This case of man's inhumanity to man that continues to be perpetrated in South Africa is unparalleled within any other civilised society of modern times. In the context of apartheid, the blackman is sub-human and has been subjected to all forms of indignity in his own land paradoxically as we are told, in defence of Christendom and western civilisation. While the events in Sharpeville remain fresh in our minds, we are living witnesses to indescribable horrors perpetrated against innocent and defenceless youths and students in Soweto and other segregated areas of black concentration in South Africa. But the youths of Soweto have proved beyond any doubt if anyone ever doubted, that a people's yearnings for freedom and human dignity cannot be suppressed by force of arms or by sheer intimidation. We have seen Hitler fail and the history books are replete with the fall of similar dictators. We are firmly determined therefore that the case of Vorster's totalitarian regime in South Africa will not prove an exception.

The South African regime of course has been turned into a military power in Africa by those whose conscience would rather secure the economic and so called strategic advantages of the Cape, than consider the more legitimate yearnings of an oppressed people for justice and human dignity. We have at the recent anti-apartheid conference which Nigeria had the honour and privilege to arrange in collaboration with the United Nations, served notice to all such double dealers and in particular the multi-national companies that they would have to decide to choose between our hospitality and their adventurism by which they prop up the oppressive regime in South Africa. This, Mr. Chairman, is a solemn undertaking of the Nigerian Government and I should like to repeat here that we have established an economic intelligence unit which will provide necessary information, recommend action against such collaborators with the racist regimes who at the same time avail themselves of the hospitality.

PRESSING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

If I have dealt at such length in my statement, Mr. Chairman, on the question of freedom and human dignity in Southern Africa, it is because this issue occupies a central and unique position in the Nigerian government's policies. But this is not to say that we are unconcerned with such other pressing international issues as disarmament, the strategic arms limitation talks, the creation of a new and more equitable economic order, the so-called North/South dialogue and the interplay of great power rivalries in Africa and the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, we have noted with satisfaction that steps are being taken to convene, some time in the coming year, a special session of this Organisation on the

vexed and seemingly intractable problem of disarmament, a solution to which although urgent has proved so elusive for us all these past many years. I note with particular satisfaction in this regard that Nigeria will have the honour of participating in the preparatory work and we look forward anxiously to a positive outcome at both the special session and at the world conference that might eventually follow.

The reasons for our anxiety over the question of disarmament and our serious concern in this regard, derive of course from the recognition that if the pace of unbridled race for the production of weapons of mass destruction and mutual annihilation between the super powers were to continue at the present rate, we would be faced with the near certainty of a third world war with all the attendant tragedy and human sufferings that it would imply. In such an eventuality of a nuclear holocaust, there would probably be no victors and the human race as a whole will be the loser since the generalised destruction that would result would obviously recognise no political barriers. We do hope therefore, that the gravity of the threat posed to world peace and security is equally well recognised by the super powers, and that the time will soon come when the valuable resources at present devoted to such a dangerous pursuit will be more fruitfully deployed for the greatest good of the greatest section of mankind.

The same remarks are equally applicable to the noble intentions that inspired the signatories to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. It is also essential to add here a note of caution that while we of the Third World fully appreciate the wise objectives behind this treaty, we shall not sit down as helpless on-lookers while the means of nuclear technology are being tacitly transferred to delinquent and racist enemies in South Africa. We condemn such collaboration with the apartheid regime from whatever quarters as strongly as we are determined that the rest of Africa shall not be found as sitting ducks for racist aggression if, and when such an eventuality should ever arise.

It is our ardent hope and desire that Africa shall remain a nuclear free zone provided of course that this hope is not rendered naive by the merchants of horror and the enemies of humanity.

I believe it is hardly necessary to repeat here again, Mr. Chairman, that the vast majority of our nations in the third world have chosen the path of non-alignment as a philosophy in the conduct of our foreign policy, which means in essence, that we welcome the friendship and co-operation of all the nations on the basis of mutual respect and complete sovereign equality. We therefore have the greatest pleasure to welcome the assumption by the heroic Republic of Vietnam of her rightful place in this assembly of nations.

Distinguished delegates, I commenced this address by reference to the objective of our Organisation as enshrined in the charter to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In our view, this must be interpreted to include also the urgent need for peace, human rights and human dignity all of which are inextricably tied up to the restoration of economic justice and the establishment of a more equitable world economic order.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

Here again, Mr. Chairman, it is our view that the fortunes of all nations in the modern world are totally interdependent that, were the present economic inequalities between the rich and poor nations to continue unchecked, we would be facing a bleak future that ultimate prospects under these conditions could hardly be less menacing than those of a nuclear war. It is for this reason that we welcome the apparent commitment of the North/South dialogue to find a more equitable order that would end once and for

all our present division into "haves" and "have-nots." We should all hope and pray that the United Nations will continue its present admirable role in this regard particularly to raise the living standards of those millions of people in the under-developed nations of the world who are still living precariously below the subsistence level.

FOREIGN INTERVENTION

We in Africa are profoundly concerned about the tussle for areas of political and military influence by the great powers on our continent which have tended to deny us the right and ability to settle purely internal African problems in the African way. Examples of foreign intervention at present exist in large numbers in that easily destabilised continent, and I need not mention any specific cases here.

I do wish to mention however, the case of the equally uncertain prospects for peace in the Middle East, where the state of Israel has doggedly held on to Arab lands conquered by force of arms. Nigeria is, Mr. Chairman, unequivocally opposed to an expansionist policy by any one state against the territory of another, and we have therefore given full support to the deprived Arabs in their effort to recover their territorial integrity. This, we shall continue to do until Israel vacates every inch of the territory acquired by force of arms and until the Arabs have land of their own in exercise of their right of self-determination.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, may I say once again how greatly I value and appreciate this unique opportunity to participate in the work of the current 32nd session of the General Assembly of our great Organisation and to share with you our thoughts on some of the various burning issues on your agenda.

Thank you all.

Seventy-Four

New York Business Community Dinner

Remarks by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at a dinner hosted by the business community in New York on Friday, 14th October, 1977.

TREMENDOUS ACHIEVEMENT

My visit to the United States has created several indelible impressions on me and members of my delegation. Apart from the warmth and friendliness with which we were received everywhere we went, one strong and noticeable impression we have had is the tremendous achievement made in the fields of technology, infrastructural development and industrialisation. This country is probably the closest approximation of man in total control of his environment. No doubt these achievements are, to a large extent, the result of past sacrifices, hard work and know-how which the American people possess.

APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

We desire to bring to bear on our efforts at economic development the power of science and technology. We have chosen this course because we are convinced that only through the application of science and technology to the management of our resources can the bulk of our people enjoy the quality of life and have access to the material comfort which is taken for granted in many industrialised States. I, therefore, hope that your great country and your very active business community would let us take advantage of your experience. You probably are wondering why we should involve you in the problems of a country on a Continent on the other side of the world. You are very right to wonder. Your own Continent and the old world from which most of your ancestors left to seek new opportunities and open new frontiers should be a market large enough for your entrepreneurial adventures.

BROAD REASONS

Yet there are three broad reasons why you must show interest in what is happening in Africa and other distant lands. The first of these reasons is the economic interdependence of all nations today. In spite of the generous resource endowment of your great Republic it has been proved beyond doubt that your consumption pattern and level and the needs of modern science tie you inextricably to the economies of distant lands. The most obvious example of this pattern is the fact of your dependence on distant lands for a sizeable proportion of your energy needs.

ECONOMY MOVES

Secondly as your economy moves into the post-industrial stage the form, nature and character of business firms in your country is moving outside your national

boundaries across other people's borders. American corporate names are household words in my country and in many parts of the African Continent. The United States of America dominates the league of transnational corporations who no longer respect national boundaries in their resource mix and profit maximisation drive. In fact it has been said that they are the new sovereign States.

PROFIT MARGINS

Thirdly, I am told that wherever a nice little nest of profit could be made the American investor and the American entrepreneur would try. Profit has always been an essential additive to the spirit of the new frontier. Profit margins at home are getting slimmer everyday as competition gets tighter and governmental action squeezes on profit levels. In most of the distant lands we come from, profit margins are still comfortable, incentives abound and competition is not yet too stiff for old hands in the business.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

The combination of these factors make for increasing economic interdependence and create the basis for the encouragement of an outward bound attitude. Your great Republic needed a period of isolation to lay the foundations of affluence. Now the world is its market as the US Dollar is used in financing yearly 60 per cent of international transactions and the products of American economic ingenuity are sought in all the corners of the world. This being the case, we are convinced that your counterparts who already operate in Nigeria have struck a healthy vein.

CO-OPERATION

We are equally convinced that there is a lot of scope for both Nigeria and the United States of America at governmental and corporate levels to co-operate for the mutual benefit of our two countries. I do hope that your desire for what we have and ours for what you have, in other words, the basis of trade and economic co-operation between our two countries will not only yield mutual benefits to us, but also improve the volume and value of world trade to the benefit of all mankind.

THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

Having made this case for advantageous economic interdependence, I will proceed to describe the Nigerian economy, chart out basic needs, the direction we wish to see it proceed and the role you all can play and indicating some essentials of the rules of the game. Members of the Business Communities in both Nigeria and the U.S.A. as I said are already responding to the challenges posed by the new opportunities now available for expanding trade and economic relations between our two countries. To many of you therefore I will be covering familiar grounds. I am nonetheless speaking for the advantage of the converted and seeking new converts. I will not belabour you with the kind of information which the Trade Section of our Missions to the United States can make available to you. The content and general objectives of our 60 billion dollar economic development programme for the period 1975-1980, the essence of our indigenisation laws and regulations, our foreign exchange regulations, our dividend repatriation procedures and laws have all been reduced to writing and are available in many pamphlets and documents which are usually free on demand. Having said this much I will now proceed to talk to you about the Nigerian economy. Its needs, direction and the role American corporate experience and technology can play in achieving our objectives.

TRADING POST

I have always described the Nigerian economy as basically a trading post economy. By this I mean that it is peripheral to the main industrialised economies of the world. Its

main characteristic is its growing dependence on the products of other economies whose structures and products are always getting more sophisticated. Its own products on the other hand and its structures remain largely unchanged. We are therefore a post where the rest of the world bring finished products for raw materials varying from timber to petroleum products.

OUR PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

The disadvantages of our position are obvious. Our productive capacity is dormant. We have enough hides and skin to shoe the 200 million people on our Continent but export these hides and skin and import finished shoes and our domestic production does not account for up to 20% of our needs. This is the pattern over a wide range of economic activities in the country and describes the fate of the developing nations of the world. There is of course the question of easy access to imported products and its effect on our plans to increase domestic production. This situation is the direct product of colonialism from which your Republic was freed two hundred years ago. If you had not declared independence in 1776 you probably would still be specialised in the production of raw tobacco, tea and other raw products importing finished products from the factories of the colonial masters. Having freed yourselves from the colonial yoke you proceeded and have successfully changed the structure of your economy from that of a trading post and peripheral entity to a full-fledged economy and a giant at that.

If I have made myself clear by using the example of your own experience, I will be understood when I declare that since we became independent in 1960 we have been pursuing policies aimed at making our economy less dependent on the finished products of the industrialised world. As of now we are a very attractive market for these finished manufactured goods and attractive source of raw materials. In both cases our economy operates to the tune of other economies and cannot on its own increase its share of world trade or initiate improvements in the affluence of our people. While we will continue for some time to be a good market and a source of raw materials, the capacity of our economy for producing more of our needs and exporting some of our finished goods to the rest of the world must be improved. This is the purpose, objective and end of economic development for us. We, however have seen the effect of your process of mechanised production and the impact of technology on production and are convinced that science and technology can expedite the attainment of our objectives.

IMPORT SUBSTITUTION

As a first step in this direction, we initiated a programme of import substitution. Through joint ventures and other forms of partnerships with owners of patents, licences and processes we began local production of consumer products. We supported these with attractive tax holidays, industrial infrastructure and we have achieved reasonable success. No economy however thrives on consumer products based on other people's licences and patents. We have been quite successful as assemblers of minor equipment and automobiles and bottlers of Coca-Cola and other drinks. The major weaknesses here are three. One the licences, patents and processes and the manner of acquiring them tend to be restrictive and do not allow us to further develop them or even acquire the capability for doing so. Secondly, the producer goods, machines and tools which are necessary for these products are imported completely and lead to high cost production. Thirdly, a mental dependence on foreign products emerges.

OIL WEALTH

We have been quite unfortunate in striking oil and sharing in the huge flow of oil wealth. I say unfortunate because Nigeria is now labelled and described as a rich country. I dare say we had to pinch ourselves else we would have got carried away. You will agree with me that any wealth that is based on a wasting asset must be sown in a more lasting area if it is not to vanish. We are happy to be able to shop freely for our needs. We are delighted that we can order our priorities free from the constraints a borrower must be subject to.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

We have therefore embarked on a programme which will enable us to create an economy with a strong technological base capable not only of meeting a sizeable portion of domestic needs but contributing processed products into international trade. To this end we are building a nation-wide network of air, water and road transport. We are improving other forms of communications and increasing our inputs to education and health to be assured of adequate and efficient manpower. We are also embarking on the establishment of iron and steel product complexes and intend to develop our petro-chemical industry. All these should create an economy viable enough to contribute not only to the welfare of our own people but to world trade at large. With so much to do in so short a time we are heavily dependent on external assistance. We want to increase our dependence now so that we may reduce our dependence later. Most industrialised nations are participating in this effort, including firms and businessmen from the United States of America.

ROLE EXPECTED

What kind of role do we expect that American corporations, professionals, scientists and technicians to play in our industrialisation process. Here again, I will use the experience of your great country. At the turn of the century, beginning from the middle of the 19th century, Europe or the old world as it is described here, made available investible funds and technical know-how to the U.S.A. It is doubtful if the railroads which opened up the vast territories in the U.S.A. and led to the growth and economic development here would have been possible without the transfer of men, money and material from the old world, including Africa. The critical factors for industrialisation have not changed dramatically. You still require these three Ms to transform any economic structure. While we will appreciate investment capital flowing from the U.S.A. into Nigeria, the difficulties here are relatively manageable.

SUCCESSFUL MECHANISATION

The major constraint on our ability to achieve our objectives is the dearth of technological know-how. Nigeria is actively participating in international discussions on the acquisition and transfer of intellectual property. The U.S.A. without doubt possesses the largest stock and variety of technology. The sophistication of your technology is obvious in the advances made by your economy in continuously relieving man from dependence on his muscle in the process of production. The strides you have taken in computer, electronics and space technology all attest to your leading position and the beginning of the emergence of a post-industrial society in which theoretical knowledge predominates and the bulk of the work force is engaged in the tertiary and quaternary sectors. Your economy is therefore the living proof of the critical nature and contribution of science and technology to the successful mechanisation of production and the resultant abundance of material goods.

POOL OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In this regard we look forward to being able to take advantage of your pool of

intellectual property in the form of patents and licences, qualified manpower, processes, etc. We are fully aware of your adherence to the right to property and all the implications of that past position. We therefore ask that the owners of these intellectual property should allow us to acquire them on favourable terms and that your firms should assist with placing our men in your industries for the acquisition of technical skills which are necessary for fulfilling our development programmes.

RESISTANCE TO MECHANISATION

Here I must refer to the resistance to mechanisation earlier on in the 18th and 19th centuries and much later to automation. With the advantage of hindsight, we now know that increasing mechanisation and automation have not resulted in absolute decreases in the level of economic activity or massive unemployment as was feared. In a number of cases they created structural gaps which were filled by retraining. The lesson of this experience is that the fears often experienced that the industrialisation of countries like Nigeria will wipe out profitable markets are comparable to the doubts cast on automation.

RAPID INDUSTRIALISATION

On the contrary the industrialisation of countries like Japan has enriched the welfare of the world and increased the volume and value of world trade. We can therefore expect that rapid industrialisation on our Continent will bring positive advantages to business communities all over the world. We hope that our requests for the acquisition of intellectual property will henceforth be considered more favourably and that at the end of the day the history of industrialisation in Nigeria will be incomplete without an American chapter.

FEAR OF EXPROPRIATION

I probably ought to say that confidence is the critical factor in international business transactions. I have heard of requests for investment codes, guarantees and the like. Overseas Investment Guarantee Agreement exists between the U.S. Government and the Nigerian Government and this should allay the fears of any investor. I believe however that it is the spirit of the undertaking that is more important. If you on your part have fear of expropriation, we can tell you how much we have lost to fraudulent financial handlers, machine peddlers and so-called industrialists who parade themselves as genuine businessmen and take advantage of our eagerness to achieve results in record time. We are learning to cope with these problems but believe that where there is a genuine desire to do business Nigeria can hardly be bettered as a proposition.

EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES

Whether you are in it strictly for the profit or the satisfaction of helping a new nation up, Nigeria offers excellent opportunities. We are confident that with our potential we can make it. If you join us it will be easier and it won't be without adequate and fair compensation either.

PROBLEMS OF COLONIALISM AND RACISM

When all is said and done, there is a temporary caveat which covers all that I have said so far. I say temporary because we are committed to a change in the situation warranting the caveat in the shortest time possible. I am referring here to the twin problems of colonialism and racism in Southern Africa. The intransigence of the minority regimes there has created a situation whereby we have to use every weapon in our armoury to bring about majority rule in Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa. We are compelled in this circumstance to insist that those whose economic activities in these territories help to keep the minority regimes afloat cannot be our friends and

should not expect to be able to profitably do business with us.

I am advised that a comparison of the volume and value of U.S. trade and investment in these countries with the minority regime territories shows a trend in our favour. We are quite happy with this trend. We are however screening all foreign contractors and business firms with a view to discriminating against all those who have business relations with Rhodesia and South Africa. The action of President Carter's Administration in regard to U.N. imposed sanctions on Rhodesian chrome and the Byrd Amendment is welcome. Such business firms are however free to discontinue this relationship or at the least do nothing to expand it, if they feel that their bread is better buttered on our side. Investors and businessmen are hard-headed calculators and I will leave you to decide and choose between doing business with us or with the racist regimes in Southern Africa.

It is an unfortunate situation but let me assure you that everything possible is being done to remove the need for you to choose. Whenever and as soon as South Africa reverts to the democratic principles of one man one vote in its political system you will have the advantage of doing business in Lagos and Pretoria unhindered.

ASSURANCE

Finally, you will agree with me that in a world growing increasingly less certain about everything, it is assuring to note that we in Nigeria are doing all we can to assure foreign investors and owners of the technology we need that in Nigeria, we are doing everything possible to respect the principles of responsible international transactions.

HOPE

We however expect equal treatment in our dealings with foreign corporate units and businessmen. On this note I wish to conclude by expressing the hope that Nigeria can continue to count on your trust and support.

Thank you.

Seventy-Five

Welcoming Chairman Jablonski of Poland

Speech by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo during a State Banquet given in honour of His Excellency, Professor Henry Jablonski, Chairman of the People's Republic of Poland and his wife Mrs. Jablonski who paid a state visit to Nigeria from October 20 to 25, 1977, at invitation of the Federal Military Government.

It is, for me, an honour and a privilege as I seize this opportunity to express my profound delight, on behalf of the people of Nigeria, the Government and on my own behalf, at the presence among us here tonight of His Excellency, the Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of Poland, and Madam Jablonski. Your visit to Nigeria, the first by a Polish Head of State, is a symbolic landmark in the history of the development of friendship between our two countries.

Nigeria appreciates and welcomes the commendable achievements of Poland under the leadership of our august visitor, a scholar, and a distinguished soldier, a man who has fought well in defence of the honour and integrity of his country and a leader totally committed to the cause of political, economic and social aspirations and advancement of his people. I am, therefore, pleased to extend to Your Excellency, and the distinguished delegation which you are leading the very warm welcome of the Government and people of Nigeria.

Poland is a country endowed with vast natural and human resources. By virtue of sheer determination and good management of your agriculture, mining, technology and man-power, your country enjoys the double distinction of being one of the major food producers in the world with an equally sophisticated industrial base. In the field of agriculture, Poland is blessed with livestock and a variety of grains. Your mines are rich with copper, coal, sulphur and natural gas. In the sphere of industry, you are now the tenth largest ship builder in the world. All these achievements are the more remarkable, coming so soon after the shattering defeat of fascism by your indomitable people. We wish you and your people continued progress and prosperity in these and other fields of your social and economic endeavours.

Your Excellency, I am glad to observe that relations between our two countries have progressed to the mutual benefits of our two peoples, who also share in common the basic ideal of strict non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. Only one year after Nigeria's Independence, when the declining colonial empires were still haunted by the fear of communism among the newly emergent nations, which constituted the bulwark of their market for raw materials, our two countries negotiated and signed the first trade agreement. This was a beginning in the development of effective and meaningful relations between our two countries and peoples. Today, we both enjoy the fruits of that bold adventure, not only in the vastly increased volume of

our bi-lateral trade but also through mutual co-operation in other fields.

My country is particularly proud of the contribution that some four hundred of your nationals, now in Nigeria, are making towards our national development efforts. This is not to mention the number of Nigerians still gaining various techniques and skills in your institutions of higher learning. Nigeria, like any other developing nation, is understandably in a hurry. We are in a hurry to promote both the mental and physical well-being of our people. One of Nigeria's major pre-occupations in this regard, is the transfer of technology, an area in which we believe your country is well equipped to co-operate with us. We seek a co-operation based on the principle of mutual respect, understanding and equality.

Your Excellency, Nigeria cannot afford to forget the sympathy and understanding which your Government and people showed for Nigerian unity during the civil war in this country. Your moral support apart, Poland was represented on the international team of Military Observers assigned to witness and monitor the conduct of war and the behaviour of our troops. It is only natural, therefore, that we should feel free to exchange views with you on matters that concern the welfare and progress of the Nigerian people. This is why we regard as highly significant your visit to Nigeria at this crucial stage of our national development. And we sincerely hope that your visit to some of the States in the Federation would have given you a better impression of our aspirations, our achievements and, of course, our problems.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

On the African scene, we are all witnesses to the sad situation and development in Southern Africa, where the black man is shamelessly denied basic human rights and he is brutalised and de-humanised because of the colour of his skin. These atrocities are committed, with the tacit approval and active collaboration and support of some outside powers who prop up the minority regimes and their obnoxious policies through investments while claiming to be our friends. Nigeria condemns and rejects the credentials of these false friends. We, in Nigeria, salute and welcome friends to Africa who are prepared to share with us the burden of our commitment to the cause of freedom and justice; friends who care for the human being irrespective of race, creed, or colour; friends who respect the worth of a man only on his ability, merit and his attainment no matter the colour of his skin or where he lives. In this connection, we note with satisfaction, your country's dedication and commitment to the noble cause of liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

IDENTICAL VIEWS

Your Excellency, on our part, we in Nigeria believe that a policy of non-alignment with military power blocs should not lead to abstinence from or negative reaction to events in our Continent or elsewhere in the world; rather it should be positive, progressive and dynamic attitude of making the world a better place for all mankind. And we are prepared to co-operate with all men of goodwill on the basis of mutual understanding and respect in bringing about peace, harmony and security in the world.

We are happy to note that Poland and Nigeria share identity of views on many international issues. We both share the belief that relations among nations should be based on strict observance of the principles of national independence and sovereignty, equal rights and opportunities and non-interference in internal affairs of one another. Particularly, we both believe that no permanent peace can be achieved in the Middle East without Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab Territories. The legitimate rights and security of the Palestinian people must, in accordance with the

United Nations resolutions, be fully respected and restored. Our two countries are also dedicated to the cause of International Peace and Security, and hold the strong conviction that all countries, regardless of differences in their political, economic and social system, can and should live together in peace and harmony.

DISARMAMENT

We are opposed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and feel that more serious and concrete measures should be taken on disarmament in the interest of mankind. Our areas of agreement and collaboration also cover the very important subject of the need for a new International Economic Order to be established, with immediate effect, in the hope that the gap will be reduced between development and developing nations. Finally, we are both supporters and defenders of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and we believe that the capacity of the Organisation must be strengthened for solving major issues confronting the world. I believe, Mr. President, that your visit to Nigeria has afforded us the much needed opportunity to exchange views on matters that are of fundamental concern to our two countries, in particular to Africa, and to the world in general.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I ask you to raise your glasses and join me in drinking a toast:

to the health and happiness of His Excellency the Head of State of Poland,
Professor Jablonski and Madam Jablonski;

to the prosperity of the people of Poland and the friendship and continued co-operation between Nigeria and Poland.



H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo welcoming the Polish Head of State, Professor Henryk Jablonski to Nigeria at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Ikeja when he paid a State Visit to Nigeria.

Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa

Message from his Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo to the Association of the Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) which took place at Ibadan from November 16 to 17, 1977.

It is my pleasure, on this occasion of the Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) holding at Ibadan, Oyo State, to send you most sincere and brotherly greetings.

This address is primarily intended to remind you not only to be relentless in your efforts of offering prayers for the continued progress and stability of your respective countries and Africa as a whole, but also to use the church and your organisation as an effective instrument for effective and meaningful political and social change. I say this, because as it is now a patent fact that progress in both the economic and political fields is dawning gradually on Africa, our enemies are working day and night to jeopardise our achievements so far. Your fervent prayers, in this respect for our various peoples and leaders in this sub-region, to have the spiritual uprightness with which to operate their daily lives, will go a long way to withstand any external pressures prejudicial to our national interests.

UNIFICATION AND INDIGENISATION

It is therefore imperative that your Conference should think more of the unification and consequent indigenisation of the Church in order to be able to tackle more local problems affecting not only your followers but your nationals at large. The fight of our administration against all forms of menace to every human endeavour is probably not new to some of you; I hope that during the course of your meeting, you will examine them carefully and arrive at meaningful conclusions. For example, the Church should strive to divorce true worship of God from devotion to secret societies, the influence of which thwarts the path of progress, justice and fair play, in almost every meaningful and righteous human institution.

I wish you successful deliberations and God's guidance.

1977 Eid-El-Kabir Message

Message from the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo at the occasion of Eid-El-Kabir on November 19, 1977.

It is with great pleasure that I join other Nigerians in sending warm and happy greetings to our fellow Moslems on this occasion of Eid-El-Kabir.

Eid-El-Kabir emphasizes sacrifice and obedience to Allah's will, attributes which we as a people need to build a unified and great nation that can provide for the security of the individual. But this is possible only when we accept and practise the tenet of discipline. It is only the disciplined mind that can truly understand and appreciate the will of Allah and contribute to the development of our nation.

Therefore, as we join our fellow Moslems in celebrating the festive occasion, let us remember and practise sacrifice, obedience, tolerance, and discipline so that we will succeed in building a politically stable and economically self-reliant nation, and a socially just society that can cater for the interest of all its citizens.

I also wish those performing Hajo, a successful pilgrimage and I enjoin them to pray for continued peace and progress of our nation.

I wish every Nigerian Allah's guidance and blessing.

Barka de Sallah.

Seventy-Eight

Lagos International Trade Fair

The First Lagos International Trade Fair was organised at the multi-million naira Trade Fair Complex at Badagry Road in Lagos from November 27 to December 11, 1977. The Fair attracted many industrialists, exhibitors and businessmen from all over the world. The opening ceremony of the Trade Fair was performed by the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, on November 27, 1977. In his address at the occasion, General Obasanjo outlined the problems of the structure of economic activities in Nigeria, which he described as a "trading post economy." He promised that the present administration would continue to do everything possible to lay the foundation of a new economic structure which would enable the country to participate in a more lucrative aspect of the international trade, as against her present position as "dependent units."

On behalf of the people and the Government of Nigeria, I want to welcome the exhibitors and all other participants to the First Lagos International Trade Fair. I also would like to express our appreciation to the planners of the Fair and all who contributed to its successful take off. Undoubtedly, a lot of work went into making it possible for all of us to be here today. To all those who provided technical expertise from the drawing board to the final completion of the physical structures, to all who provided and are still providing organisational expertise, to all who have come to the Fair as exhibitors, buyers, visitors, each a key and indispensable part of the whole, I say thank you. To the extent that all their effort is marshalled for the fulfillment of Nigeria's economic development objectives, we can only be grateful.

I have been advised that the Lagos Fair complex into which we are breathing life today is the largest of its kind in all Africa. So it should be. At least one out of every four Africans today is a Nigerian. Nigeria's gross domestic product ranks high in the league of economic activity in African States. Superlatives are psychologically satisfying but unless we now lay the foundation for self sustained development we would have great difficulty for keeping and maintaining the lead. It is the desire, to ensure that realities are not lost to soft centred euphoria, that should be the dominant and guiding spirit at today's ceremony.

ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHIES

I will want us to consider the role of a permanent Trade Fair complex of this size in our development strategy. Before addressing myself to this question of fulfillment of our development aspiration, I ought to reiterate my position on the character of the Nigerian economy and the objectives of economic development in this country.

As with political development, the economic fate of most countries of Africa has been determined by ideas, models, strategies and philosophies rooted and produced in alien socio-cultural environment. Just as we have indicated in the past that our political development strategy cannot be limited to a choice between the two political philosophies dominant in today's world, so we are convinced that the economic principles and philosophies emanating from the political standpoints of capitalism and socialism do not take adequate account of our historical and cultural

development.

TRADING POST ECONOMY

I have had cause to say that the structure of economic activity in Nigeria today leaves one in no doubt that we are in what I have described as a "trading post economy." This economic type is characterised by:

- (a) its importance as a source of supply for unprocessed industrial inputs;
- (b) its importance as a market for industrial inputs, especially consumer goods which it cannot produce by itself;
- (c) the non-existent or limited capacity for technological creativity;
- (d) the existence of trading post agents who in turn maintain the structure of the trading post economy for a fee from a technologically superior economy; and
- (e) the absence of indigenous capital and innovative/technological ability.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of economic development in Nigeria must be the qualitative transformation of the structure of our economy in a way that will create the capacity for:

- (a) the emergence of indigenous capital and innovative ability; and
- (b) the resultant material abundance that tends to accompany the application of this to economic activity and organisation.

DEPENDENT UNITS

It can be said without fear of contradiction that when the Portuguese first made contact with our ancestors, they gave mirrors and other artifacts of early industrial establishments in Europe, in exchange for spices, gold and other unprocessed goods. Today in exchange for our crude oil, cocoa and other primary products, we receive television sets, stereo equipment, luxury cars and other finished products, including machinery. The continuity of our disadvantage is obvious. We feed the countries of the world with unprocessed goods whose prices, and thereby our returns are not determined by the logic of market forces. As a consequence our share of world resources and the quality of life of our citizens remain low, relative to those enjoyed by economies which have an industrial sector propelled by indigenous capital and innovative ability. We partake of international trade as dependent units unable to initiate changes which will affect the volume and/or quality of world trade. We remain the recipients of surpluses and crumbs when the needs of the centre of industrial activity has been satisfied.

CORRECTIVE PROCESS

Since the attainment of political independence, we have tried to escape the tyranny

of material uncertainty and poverty by adopting policies recommended by experts from all over the world. We have tried such models of development strategies as were recommended, but there appears to be no significant change in the capacity of our economy to produce those things we need. Instead our yearning for those things we don't create continues to grow. The present Administration, taking full account of this pathetic state of affairs has taken a series of actions to initiate a corrective process in our economic structure.

The Federal Military Government is convinced that we must produce what we need, and we must curtail our appetite for what we do not produce. To ensure this we have directed all efforts at laying the basis for the emergence of indigenous capital and innovative ability. We have embarked on the training of technical manpower on a scale hitherto considered impossible, and we continue to push for the early realisation of projects in the heavy industrial sectors. The programme of import substitution which constituted the spearhead of industrialisation has so far not yielded satisfactory results. Although we bottle soft drinks, assemble trucks and other vehicles, the technology processes, and licenses essential for these products do not belong to us and are controlled by others. We have joined forces with other countries in similar situation with us to seek ways of facilitating the acquisition and transfer of intellectual property. While these efforts will continue, we are convinced that we must encourage the development of indigenous talent and technology.

To the extent that this complex and this First Lagos International Trade Fair contributes to improving our capacity to produce our needs, it will be a worthwhile venture. To the extent that it will provide at our own cost a showroom for manufacturers from all over the world to make bigger sales which do not in any way free us from total dependence on the industrialised economies, it would be of doubtful value to us. A Trade Fair is a market organised to promote trade where buyers and sellers gather to transact business. At International Fairs all over the world, and at other vertical exhibitions, the manufacturers of the nations concerned make bigger sales than any other participant. I am sure that at the end of this exercise the Nigerian economy would have, on balance, given out more than it takes in sales and orders. It could be argued that this is how it must be for now. Yet, unless the content of this exchange enables the Nigerian economy to free itself from total external dependence, unless the Nigerian economy begins to develop a capacity for self-sustained development there will be other Fairs, but the value and share of our sales and orders taken, will be restricted to low value unprocessed goods.

LUCRATIVE PARTICIPATION

This we are dedicated to avoid I am not advocating a diminution of international trade and exchange. But Nigeria wants to, and ought to participate in the more lucrative aspect of this international trade. Nigeria wants to increase the volume and value of her world trade. Nigeria wants to reduce its area of dependence on the factories of the industrialised economies. Nigeria wishes to bring its manufactured products to the world market. True enough, it is an interdependent world, but we in Nigeria today are over-dependent on other economies for non-vital and non-essential goods which does not help our development. This is an unsatisfactory situation, and the present Administration will continue to do everything possible to lay the foundation of a new economic structure. Given our wide and variegated resources base, it is physically possible. We have the awareness and political will, but we need

the goodwill and assistance of our friends who control the bulk of the world's technological know-how.

MUTUAL ADVANTAGE

To the exhibitors from industrialised countries, I will say, your countries must continue to make places available to us in your institutions and factories for on-the-job training. There should be no fear that our markets will be closed to you. In fact, if experience is anything to go by, Nigeria's development can only enhance and increase the volume and value of world trade to our mutual advantage.

The Federal Military Government has decided that all available space in the Fair complex when not in use for exhibitions will be temporarily converted to recreational and other facilities to achieve maximum utilisation all the year round of this magnificent complex.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I now declare the First Lagos International Trade Fair open.

Seventy-Nine

Lake Chad Basin Commission Summit

A three-day summit meeting of the Heads of State of member countries of Lake Chad Basin Commission was held in Enugu, capital of Anambra State in Nigeria from December 1 to 3, 1977. The Summit was attended by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Alhaji Amadu Ahidjo of Cameroun, Fox Maloum and Lt. Col. Seyni Kountche of Chad and Niger Republics, respectively. In a closing remark at the end of the Summit, General Obasanjo noted that the success achieved at that meeting showed that the Organisation had reached a take-off point, but added that continued political will and determination from the member countries were still necessary in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the Organisation.

We have now finally come to the end of the Third Summit, thus closing another chapter, but opening a new page in the history of our Organisation, the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The meeting has shown all the indications of a family reunion in the true African tradition. It has indeed been a meeting of frank discussions, resplendent in confidence, realism and hopes for the future of our sub-region.

Thirteen years in the life of our Organisation has been a period for the laying of essential infrastructures. The success of this meeting is also an indication that we have reached the take-off point, which by no means makes our task ahead less difficult, but I am convinced that with continuing political will and determination, the attainment of our goals and objectives would not be intractable.

Our Organisation is on the threshold of adulthood and must be encouraged to show proof of adolescence at the next Summit.

As we now return to our capitals, it is my sincere hope and conviction that the spirit of brotherhood, the commitment to the lofty ideals and goals of our Organisation, and the inspiration that flows from our deliberations will remain uninterrupted.

And when we do meet again, it would be a Summit of success stories of tasks and projects set and achieved for the sub-region. We will be able to point to more physical achievements that would improve the living standards of our peoples in consonance with our aspirations and expectations for them.

TRIBUTE

Altogether, the meeting of the Commission and the Summit have lasted about two weeks. There is no doubt that much work and energy have gone into every detail of it. In this regard, the contributions of the Executive Secretariat, its vision and planning ability are worthy of note.

The ease with which we went through the Summit meeting, almost in record time, and without any unresolved issue is a tribute to our officials and Commissioners who, for the past two weeks, have worked extremely hard to prepare the ground for us. The Secretariat, the Commissioner, Officials and other staff, particularly the interpreters and translators, all deserve our gratitude for excellent work done.

The Government of Anambra State deserves praise for the provision of essential

infrastructures and the beautiful setting of uninterrupted serenity throughout the Summit. I therefore wish to thank the Government and people of Anambra State for their service to the meeting and their hospitality.

I cannot conclude this short remark without drawing attention to the full attendance at this meeting which is a demonstration of our faith and confidence in our Organisation. I wish to thank Your Excellencies for finding time to come and stay to the end of this Summit and the atmosphere of brotherhood, understanding and co-operation that pervaded our deliberation.

I wish you safe journey and return to your countries.

State Visit to Mauritania

On December 5, 1977, the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo was in the Republic of Mauritania on an official visit. General Obasanjo and the Mauritanian Leader, President Moktar Ould Daddah seized the opportunity to review some bilateral and multi-lateral matters. In an address during the visit, General Obasanjo praised the contribution made by the pioneers of Islamic history and culture. He expressed his admiration for the socio-economic progress being made by the people of Mauritania under the able leadership of President Ould Daddah, and assured them of Nigeria's willingness to explore areas of joint economic ventures with their country.

On this occasion of my second visit to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I would like to express my profound gratitude, and that of my government and the entire people of Nigeria, to His Excellency, President Moktar Ould Daddah, the government and the people of Mauritania, for this opportunity to reciprocate the several visits of my brother President to Nigeria, and for the very warm reception which we have received everywhere in this historic Republic. We have been truly overwhelmed by the genuine show of affection and good will which you have so amply demonstrated toward us, far beyond all our expectations.

Your Excellency, you will I am sure, agree with me that it would be futile, within the brevity of an after-dinner toast, to attempt to do full justice to the unique position that the Islamic Republic of Mauritania occupies. In the history of the evolution of Islamic Culture and civilisation in this part of our continent, dating back well before the conquest of colonial intruders from beyond the seas. But I consider that it might suffice here to record simply, Mr. President and Distinguished Guests, the great debt of gratitude that we all owe to the pioneers of Islamic History and culture who, having established in these regions of our continent an indelible reputation for profound learning, went further to spread the lasting heritage far beyond the utmost parts of the great Sahara Desert. Islam has therefore, Mr. President, thanks to untiring efforts of those intrepid pioneers, assumed the proportions of a common heritage to both our peoples, with all the virtues of brotherhood, devotion and religious dedication that it inculcates.

MODERN SOCIETY

Mr. President, we have furthermore been greatly impressed by the truly stupendous and almost super-human efforts of yourself and your government to construct a modern society from the exiguous relics of a historical past, in total defiance of the challenges of an inhospitable terrain. Equally, we are deeply touched by the enormous success that has attended your efforts, as clearly demonstrated by the beauty of your nation's capitol, and the generous provision of the amenities of modern life for the comfort of your people. This is indeed, by any standards a no mean achievement, for which you can be justly proud, considering how difficult and elusive it has been even in

some African countries with greater natural endowments and less formidable odds to face.

We have also noted with great admiration, Your Excellency, the phenomenal socio-economic progress that has been made in Mauritania since it became independent. After decades of pillage and utter neglect by colonial rule, Mauritania, under your wise and able leadership, has successfully taken its rightful place among the community of modern states.

ECONOMIC VENTURES

We are, for these and other reasons, happy to be associated with the sister Republic of Mauritania in ECOWAS, and we are ready and willing at all times to strengthen our political and economic links with your great country. In this regard, we have already discussed at length on the need for our two countries to further explore areas of joint economic ventures that could be of mutual benefit to our two countries.

May I ask you to rise with me therefore, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and join me in drinking a toast to the good health of His Excellency, President Moktar Ould Daddah, and to the well-being and prosperity of the good people of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, as well as to the continued friendship of our two peoples.

Long live the Islamic Republic of Mauritania!

Long live Nigerian-Mauritanian friendship!

Long live the Organisation of African Unity!

Eighty-One

Welcome President Samora Machel of Mozambique

At the invitation of His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, His Excellency Mr. Samora Machel, President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, paid a friendly State Visit to Nigeria from Tuesday, December 8 to 12, 1977. The two Heads of State seized the opportunity afforded them by the visit to review matters of international and African interest with particular attention to matters relating to development of co-operation between their two countries. General Olusegun Obasanjo made a speech during an official Banquet which he gave in honour of the visiting President.

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria, welcome you to our country. We are happy to have with us tonight a great friend of Nigeria, a dogged fighter for the freedom and dignity of the blackman, especially in Southern Africa.

Your visit, Mr. President, symbolises the desire of our two peoples to strengthen the ties of friendship between us. The strong bonds linking us together have grown out of the awareness that we share the same aspirations and hopes for our fellow African brothers. This is the more reason why it is extremely desirable for us to continue to exchange views on a regular basis at various levels on bilateral issues, as well as on our common goals and objectives for freedom and stability in Africa.

I recall, Mr. President, the spontaneous warm welcome afforded me and my entourage during our visit to your country last September. The happy experiences of your beautiful country is still fresh in our memory. During that visit, we had fruitful discussions on ways and means of improving relations between our two countries and also on the general situation in Southern Africa. Our discussions in the past and today show that we have always had common views on African and international problems, and the need to explore more avenues for the development of bonds of friendship and co-operation between our two peoples and Governments.

SACRIFICES

We in Nigeria are aware of the great human and material sacrifices which you and your countrymen have been making towards the elimination of the oppressive racist regimes in Southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe. Since your youth, Mr. President, you have always fought against colonialism and oppression like your great grandparents and grandfathers, who were banished for their active resistance against the fascist colonial regime.

On our part, Nigeria's commitment in the just struggle of our brothers in Southern Africa remains unshaken. We shall continue to give moral and material support to end racism and apartheid in the region, and to restore the dignity of our Continent. But we must admit that there are serious and daunting challenges on the way to achieving our goal. We should therefore, bestir ourselves to face them courageously, so that the sacrifices of all African patriots will manifest themselves in a sound victory over the

enemies of progress and freedom of our Continent. In this struggle, we are conscious that our failure to redeem the prestige and dignity of the blackman shall not only be a shame on us now, but more so on our future generations.

We condemn in strongest terms the recent unprovoked attacks on your country and the cold-blooded murders of defenceless civilians and refugees by the blood thirsty rebel army of Ian Smith. This is a flagrant violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mozambique. We also equally condemn the actions of Vorster and his agents, who only some weeks ago clamped down on black leaders and most black organisations in South Africa. Their only crime was their legitimate demand for justice, inalienable rights to self-determination and decent living, free from obnoxious race laws and torture.

Only recently, the Black Consciousness leader, Mr. Steve Biko, who had been striving with fortitude and determination to bring about peaceful change in South Africa, was murdered in cold-blood while in detention. What language do the racists understand? Certainly not peace! The fires are burning in Southern Africa, and there should be no sitting on the fence for all patriots of Africa. The fight must continue until Zimbabwe and Namibia become independent, and there is change of policy in South Africa.

NEED FOR REGULAR CONSULTATION

Mr. President, the exchange of visits at the highest level and continued consultations between our officials on matters of mutual interest would not only help to improve relations between our peoples and Governments, but would also lead to lasting understanding and co-operation among ourselves. It is by so doing that we can consolidate our gains and re-appraise our strategies in areas where we are wanting. In fact, our two countries have been maintaining close consultations and contacts in our determined efforts to eradicate racism, apartheid, oppression and colonialism in our Continent. Naturally, there is the mutual desire by our two peoples to consolidate these friendly ties by extending our co-operation in the areas of social and economic activities.

We are therefore, particularly pleased that after series of detailed discussions and negotiations at both Maputo and Lagos, significant progress has been made in this regard, and we hope this would usher in an era of fruitful economic and social interaction between our two countries for the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Your Excellency, we are watching with keen interest the bold measures being taken by you to raise the standard of living of fellow Mozambicans, from a position of abject neglect caused by one of the longest periods of colonialism in history. I am delighted to learn of the profound achievements you have made in your relentless efforts to eliminate hunger by intensive cultivation, and disease by the socialisation of your health services. Moreover, your concern for the education of the masses, and especially for the education of the youths, as the basis of stability and rapid development underlines your patriotic endeavours to meet the aspirations of your people from Rovuma to Maputo within the shortest possible time.

The recent elections, ending with the election of your National Assembly on the 4th of December, 1977, represents a concrete step to bring the masses to participate actively in the decision-making processes of your able Government. You have, so to speak, brought the Government to the door steps of the people, whose interests you symbolise. The massive response generated by these elections since 25th of September, 1977, at local, city, district, provincial and national levels, no doubt

demonstrates the solid confidence your citizens repose in you, in the vanguard party, FRELIMO and your Government. Please accept the hearty congratulation of myself and the Government and people of Nigeria on the smooth and successful conduct of these elections.

Finally, Mr. President, your visit is a moment of joy to us for the message of solidarity which it conveys to us, and for our mutual belief that it will further consolidate and deepen our relations.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to invite all those present to drink a toast to:

- the victory of the liberation struggles;
- the victory of African unity;
- the strengthening of Mozambique-Nigeria friendship and co-operation;
- to the prosperity of the People's Republic of Mozambique; and
- to your personal well-being and happiness.

Ahmadu Bello University Convocation

President Samora Machel of the People's Republic of Mozambique was conferred with an Honorary Degree during the Convocation Ceremony at the Fifteenth Anniversary of Ahmadu Bello University on December 10, 1977. In an address on the occasion, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo touched on a number of issues affecting developments in the university system in the country. These included, financial problems, the setting up of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the re-examination of the university curricula. General Obasanjo also expressed his opinion on the problem of leadership, its qualities and attributes. He said, "The leader must be a man of vision, whose clear discernment of issues will never be blurred by personal considerations and parochial interests. The vision of the leader is always sharply focussed on lofty long-term objectives, regardless of temptations and distractions."

We are gathered here today to celebrate the Anniversary of the foundation of Ahmadu Bello University, now fifteen years old and to confer academic degrees on students, who have proved themselves worthy of such conferment, and to confer honorary degree on an illustrious son of Africa, whose contribution to Liberation struggles against political and economic oppression in Southern Africa, has marked him out as one of the greatest African leaders of our time. I congratulate all the graduates for their noble achievements and may I point out to those of you on whom academic degrees are being conferred, not to consider your degrees and diplomas as mere meal tickets but as tool for greater understanding and efficient service throughout life.

I take special pleasure in congratulating the Guest of Honour, President Samora Machel, of the People's Republic of Mozambique, our brother in the struggle for the dignity of the black man and the greatness of Africa. He personifies the liberation struggle against colonialism and the obnoxious doctrine of racialism, practised in Southern Africa. This leader is held in the highest esteem by the Government and people of Nigeria. This is a man, nurtured in the very struggle in which we believe and to which we are firmly committed until the inevitable victory against all forces of oppression and exploitation on this Continent is achieved. President Machel richly deserves all the honour that the Ahmadu Bello University will confer on him this morning.

FINANCIAL RESTRICTIONS

In the course of the last academic session, the Federal Military Government has noted a number of developments in our university system. The universities have been affected by the general financial restrictions in the entire public sector of our economy. They have not been singled out for punishment. There is no reason for doing so. On the contrary, the Federal Military Government is firmly committed to the academic and physical development of our universities, both old and new. There is demand for quality university education among our people and Government will foster the growth of our universities to meet this demand.

But it is hardly necessary to emphasise that universities are expensive to establish and run. Those who take delight in reminding Government of this should also remind themselves of this fact. This country is spending a considerable proportion of its

national income on Education. The demand for funds will continue to escalate, as the entire Education sector expands. But our resources are not unlimited. And there are other equally essential sectors of our national life making demands on our limited resources. To be able to afford the expansion necessary in Education there, we must all cut our academic gowns according to our size.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

It is essential for our universities to be resolute in the efficient and prudent management of their financial resources. Every university must learn to live within its means and should use what must be an enormous in-house reservoir of initiative and ingenuity, in finding alternative options in the face of the challenges of financial stringency. Moderation in architectural designs and inspired planning are essential, if funds are to be conserved in capital development. Government will give serious consideration to any recommendations from the National Universities Commission, arising from whatever report is submitted by their Committee, looking into the financial policies and practices in the universities.

PERSONAL SACRIFICE

In all these, it is important to appreciate that there must be readiness to make personal sacrifices on the part of university staff and students. By virtue of the harmonisation of the conditions of service in the public sector, university staff have been affected by recent Government measures to reduce its spending on furnishings and similar provisions for all public officers. But academics should, according to tradition, lead in setting examples of hardwork, dedication, humility and simplicity of life-style, both, to their students and to the rest of the society. They cannot play that leadership role by adopting the posture of "if you cannot beat them, join them," or by persistently pleading that they are living in crushing penury, compared to civil servants and business executives. This attitude will change if we all give serious consideration to the plight of millions of our people in the villages and urban ghettos, whose standard of living is pitiable.

STUDENT UNREST

This country has always given special consideration to students, especially university students. They have been supported by scholarships and bursaries from the various Governments. In spite of recent agitations, the average Nigerian student is fed and housed far above the level of the majority of his fellow countrymen. There is no regret for that, but there is need for our students to take part in the general sacrifice, and the return to realities, expected of everyone in this country at the moment. We find no justification for the all too frequent incidents of students unrest and ill-motivated acts. These are considered an unnecessary waste of valuable time and resources.

UNIVERSITIES FINANCIAL POLICY

Our experience with the present policy of university student financing, shows that the policy must be reviewed. There are, already, a number of financial and social problems experienced by the universities as a result of these policies. As far back as last July, a delegation from the National Universities Commission, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and some Pro-Chancellors of the University, appraised Government of the anticipated financial and other problems, which the policy will occasion for the universities.

FEES PEGGING ORDER

Accordingly, the Federal Military Government has decided that the order pegging, the boarding and lodging fees in the universities be lifted. The University Council should jointly agree with the National Universities Commission on the appropriate levels of boarding and lodging charges to be made to the university students and their sponsors. They should also agree on the level of scholarships and bursaries, which States should provide for their needy students. The State scholarship and bursary awards will therefore continue. Government will continue to subsidise student feeding in the universities, but only to a reasonable extent.

REVISED FEES

The revised fees will be chargeable to all students as from the 1978/79 session. Since the present session has already advanced, private students will not be required to pay more than the present pegged rates for the 1977/78 session. All other students will however get their sponsors to pay the difference between the pegged rates and any revised fees. Tuition will continue to be free in the universities.

It is hoped that this revision will further improve the finances of the universities and will restore a greater feeling of social responsibility in the institutions.

JOINT ADMISSIONS AND MATRICULATION BOARD

On a happier note, I am pleased to observe that the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board has taken off on schedule. We must all work to ensure that university admission ceases to generate annual acrimony and to remove wastage, currently inherent in the system. It is my hope that, with all the measures taken so far by the Federal Military Government, the question of education imbalance will cease to be an emotive issue in our national life very soon.

NATIONAL UNITY

University education must not be allowed to pose a threat to our national unity. Rather, our universities must remain the centres for the promotion of national unity, understanding and peace, in addition to making contribution to our economic and technological advancement. The universities must also take the lead in redefining the objectives of our entire educational process, in order to combat the indiscipline, laxity, materialism and other social evils that plague our nation. Every one of us has his or her share of responsibility, but our institutions of higher learning must be prepared to give the lead in prescribing remedies.

UNIVERSITY CURRICULA

In this connection, I would like our universities to re-examine their curricula and give greater emphasis in all disciplines leading to the teaching of ethics, civics, and other normative sciences. This should be done so that graduates, in whatever field, will appreciate their individual responsibility to the society that brought them up, educated them and into which they will have to fit. The universities should also take interest in their surrounding lower level institutions, so that even the younger students will benefit from this experience. Finally, I want to see our universities take greater strides in the areas of public service. University staff and students are products of this society; the university is meant to serve the society, and should be its reflection. Our universities must identify themselves completely with their surrounding communities if they are to improve them. They must develop harmonious relationship between

themselves and the local population.

The responsibility of the university to our youth, and therefore to our future is truly great. This responsibility would not have been discharged if all that we produce is a long list of graduates, who are elitist, self-opinionated and materialistic, and who, thus set themselves apart from the very people who brought them up when they were helpless.

I want our universities, together with the National Universities Commission, to look seriously into this aspect of redefining their objectives and sense of direction and report, very soon, as to what steps they are proposing to take.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Discussion of the contributions which our universities must make to our national orientation and development, brings me to the important issue of our political development. As we steadily pursue the political programme of this Government for returning Nigeria to the electoral democratic process, I wish to touch briefly on one crucial subject, and that is, the question of leadership. I do this because of my firm conviction that, no matter what Constitution this country adopts in the next civilian administration, the people who operate that Constitution and who run the affairs of the country, that is, the leadership that will emerge, will be a more important factor to reckon with. The leadership that will take over from the Military will undoubtedly be one of the major pillars for our continued unity, stability and progress.

HANDING—OVER

May I hasten to re-assure all Nigerians, once more, that this Military Administration is irrevocably committed to handing over the reins of Government to a democratically elected leadership in 1979. We are determined to do that. As an Administration, we have neither the intention nor the desire to participate in any form whatsoever, in any administration that succeeds our own. We do not believe in handpicking nor in imposing any individual or group of individuals on the nation. Rather, we have set in motion a process, which, through the active and total participation of all of our people, and through consensus, should bring forth a civilian Government to succeed the present Military Administration.

ATTRIBUTES OF A LEADER

A leader of men must have acquired the basic elements of good citizenship. He must then develop in himself, additional qualities which will distinguish him from his compatriots. He must be knowledgeable and have ideas and the strength of character to be able to inspire and to lead others and for them to follow him. The leader must be a man of vision, whose clear discernment of issues, will never be blurred by personal considerations and parochial interest. The vision of the leader is always sharply focussed on lofty long-term objectives, regardless of temptations and distractions.

This means that the leader must also have a sense of mission. Those imbued with a sense of mission, aim to achieve for their people, all that nations would wish for—among which are faith, happiness, peace, progress and greatness. Leaders with a sense of mission, relentlessly pursue their goals with the spirit of indomitable personal courage and confidence, needing only divine guidance, constitutional provisions, the rule of law and the will of the people they lead.

These are indispensable qualities of any real leader of the people. But nations and peoples, are not led by individuals, who come out of the blue, no matter how great

these individuals are. Individual leaders of nations and peoples, emerge from an accepted certain leadership group within them. The group, developed over a long time, according to social structure and norm, moulds the society. The future of any society is a function of the calibre of its leadership group. This group plays its role in all aspects of the national life. I therefore use the word 'leadership' in its widest sense, and not in its narrow political context.

LEADERSHIP GROUP

The essential attributes of a leader, must be believed in, and possessed or aspired to, by every member of the leadership group. People who hope to lead our country, must therefore, cherish and demonstrate these qualities.

In addition to all that, and in deep consideration for the peculiarities of our great country, we need leaders who possess an acute awareness of the realities of Nigeria, its diversity and the root causes of some of the sad events of our recent history. It is difficult to completely absolve our previous leadership from responsibility for those tragic occurrences, out of which, we are now building a united and virile nation.

NATIONAL DIVERSITY

One glaring, long-standing shortcomings, which all aspiring leaders must correct, is one of ignorance of their own country. Those who wish to lead this country must know it. They must, in all they say and do, demonstrate that they appreciate our diversity—our differences in fundamental beliefs, culture, tradition and social background. We must learn to judge the other man on the basis of his background and his sense of values and not on ours only. Our leaders must appreciate that, as an emergent nation, our size and diversity, which are great assets, must be handled with insight and perception, because they are also our weakness.

Our future leaders must really reflect on the important contributions, which our size and diversity, have made to our economic development and to giving us a place, as a nation among nations. The contributions are truly magnificent. That is why we must give due regard to the factors which unite us, containing our diversity within a strong nation of people, who love, respect and accommodate one another.

BROAD-MINDEDNESS

There is need for broad-mindedness in the leadership. It has to be so, if that leadership is to enjoy the confidence of all the interest groups in the country and if it is to succeed in moulding the people together. There must be no room in the mind of leaders for anything short of what is good for the whole country. Actions must be based on decent thoughts, reliable information, conviction and foresight. Good leaders, of whatever extraction, do not seek to satisfy only particular interest groups nor do they plan for short-term political or electoral objectives. Added to broad-mindedness, must be exemplary public policies and personal conduct, which the people would be inspired and enthused to follow.

NIGERIAN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Broad-mindedness in the leadership, includes the dimensions of their ideas of the role of Nigeria in the international community. Just as every citizen must be seen to meet fully his responsibility to the country, so must Nigeria continue to play its full role with dedication and commitment but with maturity, in international affairs and matters affecting the interest of Africa and the black world.

Those who wish to lead must learn the lessons of leadership, the sweet and the bitter. Leaders who are aware of the great potential of this country, and of its problems, will ensure that they do nothing to frustrate the hopes and betray the trust of the people, by taking those paths which previously led our country and our people to conflict. In such conflicts, it is always the poor, innocent people who suffer. The leadership, the elite usually escapes unscathed.

Those events are sufficiently recent for us not to forget them and allow ourselves to be lured into a false sense of security. I am not despondent, rather, there is cause so far for optimism, but I have to say, once again, that we have no grounds for taking anything for granted. Not now and not in the next civilian administration. It is the task of the leadership to ensure that we never divert from the path of greatness to one of grief. In this context, every word and every action of the leadership must be thoughtful, because it does matter.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Finally, our future leaders must have faith. They must have faith in each other and accept collective responsibility. They must have faith in their followers, and in the country. They must resist unquestioning imitation of any dictation from those outside our hemisphere, whose real interest is economic exploitation and subjugation of our country. They must believe that this country, Nigeria, is a nation united by certain ideals and by hope for the future and which intends to survive as a nation. They must believe that the black race will rise above the present oppression and indignity that it now suffers in various parts of the world, especially in the African motherland.

True leadership means hard work for individuals and for groups. It elicits sacrifice, far more than it confers privileges. It is an opportunity for service which must be constantly justified.

That is why good leadership is a priceless gift to any nation or people. It is that kind of leadership spirit that we must all look for and pray for, in Nigeria.

1977 Id-El-Fitri Message

Muslims successfully completed the month-long Ramadan period. This period of fasting, is one which requires a tremendous amount of self-discipline to carry out to the end. Whilst congratulating them at the end of the Ramadan period on the occasion of the Id-El-Fitri, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, called on "all Nigerians to draw upon the lessons of the Ramadan and apply them to the activities of their calling" in order that we may realise our goal of "a united, just and prosperous society."

I have great pleasure in joining fellow Nigerians to congratulate our Muslim brothers and sisters at the successful end of the month-long Ramadan period.

The Ramadan fasting is a period of great trial, and calls for some of the best qualities any people can display. It is a time of self-denial, of perseverance, of prayers and of sober reflections. All of this requires a tremendous amount of self-discipline to carry out to a successful end.

The need for discipline is more than ever pressing in our society today, and we cannot continue to ignore it without incurring serious consequences to our nation. We need discipline in our offices and industries; discipline in our families, in our schools—in virtually all our daily lives.

LESSONS OF THE RAMADAN

Unless our society accepts the tenets of discipline, it will be difficult for us to realise our most cherished goals of a united, just and prosperous society. Therefore, while congratulating our Muslim brothers and sisters at the successful end of the month-long fasting and joining them in the celebrations and festivities, I enjoin all Nigerians to draw upon the lessons of the Ramadan and apply them to the activities of their calling.

May Allah help us all.

Eighty-Four

1978 New Year's Message

The New Year's day, Sunday, January 1, 1978, was heralded by a traditional message from the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo. In his dawn message to the nation, General Obasanjo wished Nigerians a happy new year and urged that the economic slogan for the year should be: "BUY NIGERIAN" products. He reiterated that the military Government had no intention of letting up in its efforts to ensure that Nigeria lived up to her domestic commitments and external responsibilities to Africa and the Black World. General Obasanjo ended his message with an appeal to road users to be more cautious whilst driving in the new year.

In my new year message to you twelve months ago, I gave the direction for the infrastructure of new social and economic structures which will enable us to achieve our declared objective of creating a virile economy and a society with equal opportunities for all Nigerians, wherever they may be. In the course of the year, we were compelled to take social and economic measures aimed at removing the accretion of impediments in the way of our efforts. During the same period, I went out of my way to express my unhappiness with the state of our society. The content of my speech at Jaji has, however, become a reference point and a yardstick for judging only actions and reactions in the public sector. Let me say, however, that while governmental measures in themselves directly impinge on the public sector, all public officials put together constitute only a fraction of our population. The impact of this fraction on the development of our social and economic structures can, therefore, only be marginal except where public action is directed at the general public. The private sector and all private citizens must equally accept these measures as deserving observation.

SIGNS OF CHANGE

In this regard, I am happy to note that here and there we are beginning to see signs of change in the right direction. Given that old habits die hard, I can only say that, we on our part have no intention of letting up on our efforts to ensure that this society and this nation lives up to its domestic and external responsibility to Africa and the Black world. If we do not show a higher level of discipline and dedication we cannot provide the social, moral and economic leadership which we must provide by virtue of our position and physical attributes. In this regard, it is essential that the role of educational institutions in developing good citizenship and building a wholesome society must be understood and exploited. A National Advisory Council on Education for Citizenship will be inaugurated this month. There will be committees and sub-committees at State and Local Government levels. The National Body which will advise on re-orientation and re-direction of education at all levels for the intrinsic good of the society will be composed of eminent Nigerians with exemplary and distinguished service to the society in religion, education, the professions, voluntary agencies, science and technology and traditional life.

LOW PROFILE

This has been a year in which we have all identified and agreed that there exists in our society an unacceptably high level of social malaise. We have for our part taken up the challenge of this diagnosis by imposing on ourselves a dosage which has come to be popularly known as the "low profile." We have not thought it necessary, at least not for now, to take revolutionary action to cure the society at large of indiscipline and all the excesses it breeds in all areas of our lives. Rather we have taken moderate actions and our hope has been that our examples and measures taken so far will be enough to bring about desirable change in our lives and life styles.

ACCOUNT OF MISSION

Last year, I indicated that each Commissioner in the Federal Executive Council will give an account of his mission during the year to the nation. This exercise has been effective and should continue. There are however a number of areas which are of crucial importance and deserving of attention as we move to a new year. I wish to begin by stating again that this Administration continues to be guided by the political programme established at its inception. In this regard, we note with satisfaction that we have moved closer to our 1979 deadline and God being with us, we shall hand over to an elected government as planned.

It is worth noting that in addition to the introduction of the new local government reforms and the elections that went with that, the elected councillors themselves proceeded in the course of the year to elect a Constituent Assembly.

EFFORTS TOWARDS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Our economy continues to perform well subject to the structures and fundamental weaknesses which all third world economies are shackled with. This Administration's dedication to breaking through the barrier of under-development remains unshaken. Recently, I had cause to say that a people who cannot produce that which they need to make life comfortable for themselves are slaves to those who produce what they need. Most of our economic measures and plans and programmes are therefore geared towards freeing us from total dependence, in terms of our productive capacity and our tastes, on the industrialised economies. While it is the duty of the Government to ensure that our productive capacity is qualitatively and quantitatively improved, the citizens of this country must retrieve their taste buds from those things we don't produce. Let our economic slogan for 1978 be BUY NIGERIAN wherever possible. If we don't use, and have pride in using products of our factory, our efforts in the regional context of ECOWAS and in the International trade organisations become limited and again our ability to live up to our own expectations and other people's expectation of us will accordingly be reduced.

Our expensive taste and uncontrolled consumption, together with unusual love for grandeur have cost the nation valuable resources which could have been put to good use in development in more relevant fields. Henceforth, prestigious but sterile undertakings which put millions of naira into projects of poor social and economic values at this stage of our development must give way to down-to-earth requirement of our people for the essentials of life.

In our thoughts and utterances most of us have so far behaved like the foreigners who judge us by their own standards which they took hundreds of years to achieve through colonial exploitation and slave labour. To them and all those who harass us

with the standards that took centuries to attain in other countries, I can only say this country is only seventeen years old. It has been seriously threatened for four of these years and is just beginning to regain its balance. A little more tolerance, a little more understanding, a little more thought and a little more trust in one another, and we will continue to make progress in stability and improvement on our facilities.

We must constantly bear in mind that there are enemies without, who do not wish us well and who will use us to weaken and destroy ourselves for their own advantage. We must always be vigilant and be on our guards.

SPORTS

This has been a year of varied involvement in the field of sports. We have learned to contain the excitement of victory and the agony of defeat. In each situation our maturity as a nation has shone through. I wish to congratulate our sportsmen and women and all organisers of sports and spectators for a reasonable good year. I hope that the experience of this year will enable us to keep our position of leadership in the coming year.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

This has also been an active year in the sphere of external relations. On the international plane we hosted the U.N. World Conference for Action Against Apartheid; we won a seat at the U.N. Security Council. On the continent of Africa, we continue to join forces with all who champion the course of liberation. This has brought us closer through exchange visits with our brothers in Western, Eastern, Central and Southern Africa as well as North America. These visits have made the desired impact and we will continue to struggle to free Africa politically and to strengthen our ability to fight and win the war against material poverty and the low quality of life that attends it.

While wishing every Nigerian a happy new year, I must let it be known that this Administration will not relent in its efforts to bring our life styles in line with the capacity of our economy. On a final note, I wish to emphasize the need for all of us as road users to note that the destruction of life on our roads does not do justice to the improvements being made to the road network in this country. Contrary to expectation, the number of fatal accidents is increasing as the quality of roads improves. It would appear that although we have a great fear of death, yet we have very little regard for life. A little more care for the road user and we will live longer and contribute our quota to the task of development. This is the task of the century and we need every hand possible. A happy, peaceful and bountiful year for you all and for our great country.

National Development Plans

A national workshop on planning of strategies for the 1980's was held at the University of Ibadan on Monday, January 9, 1978. The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo in his opening address, (delivered on his behalf by the Military Governor of Oyo State, Brigadier David Jemibewon) called for new planning strategies for the country. This was desirable, he said, in view of the fact that after almost two decades of independence and three Development plans, the country is still far from attaining its national goals and objectives.

It gives me great pleasure to be here today, to deliver this Opening Address at this important Workshop, on behalf of His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

As you are all aware, two comprehensive National Development Plans have already been prepared and executed by the various Governments of this country since we became independent in 1960. We are now just over half way through the Third National Development Plan period, and our thoughts have naturally begun to turn towards the Fourth Plan which will run from 1980 to 1985.

REAL GROWTH

The Nigerian economy has admittedly experienced considerable real growth and structural transformation since the First National Development Plan was launched in 1962. The Gross Domestic Product, for instance, has increased from about ₦2 billion in 1960 to ₦16.3 billion in 1976, an eight-fold increase in less than fifteen years. In statistical terms, this is an enviable performance by any standard. The growth in the economy has been reflected in practically all sectors. It is fair to say that there has been a noticeable improvement in the standard of living of most Nigerians.

FEELING OF DOUBT

But in spite of these seemingly impressive achievements, I have an uncomfortable feeling of doubt as to whether the pattern of growth we have been experiencing, especially during the last decade, will lead to an early realisation of the principal objective of our development efforts. Our objective is of course, to transform our country from a poor and technologically backward society into a prosperous and self-reliant, modern nation.

REASONS FOR DOUBT

The reasons for my doubt are not far to seek. First, the present relative prosperity appears to be based rather precariously on the performance of a single, volatile sector dominated by petroleum production and export. Agriculture, which constituted the main engine of growth of our economy up to the early 1960's, is now virtually stagnant, if not declining. The agricultural surpluses of the 1950's and early 1960's, have all but

disappeared, and we are having to import food to feed ourselves. The rural scene is visibly depressed.

Secondly, despite the relatively high growth rate experienced by our manufacturing sector since independence, progress in that sector is not as satisfactory as one would have wished. Apart from the fact that manufacturing still constitutes a relatively small proportion of our total national output; the nature of production is heavily placed in favour of consumer goods characterised by low technology. Intermediate and heavy engineering industries involving more advanced technology have been rather slow in coming. The rate at which technology is being developed is far from being encouraging. It is quite obvious that unless we seriously gear up our efforts in this area, Nigeria would for a long time remain a dumping ground, a sellers' paradise, for the products of the technologically advanced countries of the world.

Thirdly, despite the efforts of Government in recent years to promote indigenous participation in the development of our economy, Nigerian business initiative is still largely concentrated in commerce, transport and services. Nigerian businessmen have been slow to enter into manufacturing. It is easier and more profitable to serve as a local agent or distributor to some foreign manufacturing concern. We are fast becoming a nation of agents and middlemen with the attendant easy money and corruption! The result is that many simple industrial products which can, and should, be produced domestically are still being imported. The corollary is not only a gross under-utilization of both our human and material resources, but also a perpetuation of our dependency on the more industrialized nations—a situation which the commission agents would like to maintain to our national detriment.

This leads to my fourth observation. By and large, we are not quite in control of our own economy. Our economy is still too much outward-oriented for healthy, genuine development. Is it any surprising that the economy is bedevilled by inflation? It is time we planned to take the economic destiny of this nation into our hands more vigorously than ever.

IDEAS ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, without prejudice to whatever recommendations your Workshop would come up with, permit me to put across a few ideas about the economic development of our nation. As a starting point, I think your Workshop should evolve new strategies for development. The fact that after almost two decades of Independence and three Development Plans, we are still so far from attaining our national goals and objectives seems to indicate to me the need for a serious search for new directions and new planning strategies.

AGRICULTURE: CO-OPERATIVIZATION

Take agriculture, for instance. I believe that large-scale programme of co-operativization holds the key to the rapid development of this vital sector of our economy. The spirit of co-operation is known to our traditional economy, and it can be broadened and modified to serve modern needs. It would not only take the boredom out of agriculture, it would also facilitate the introduction of new techniques and labour saving devices and boost the development of our rural areas. It will halt the decay of the rural centres and the drift to the urban areas.

INDUSTRIES

In the same way, a well planned programme of small-scale industries would go a

long way to direct the attention of our people from commerce and trade to manufacturing. Manufacturing nurtures an atmosphere of creativity, an essential factor in the greatness of any nation.

STRUCTURE OF PLANNING

I think you should cast a hard look at the structure of Planning itself. In certain areas, we need to do more co-ordination than at present. We know from the experience of some other developing countries that even without slogans or borrowed ideologies, without revolutionary upheavals, meaningful co-ordination at the centre can provide purposeful direction to the development of the economy. With that kind of co-ordination must, of course, go the discipline which it requires.

DECENTRALIZATION AND POPULAR INVOLVEMENT

Yet there are areas calling for decentralization and popular involvement. A fair criticism of our present Planning Strategy is that it is planning from above, and to that extent unrealistic. Over the years the authorities in this country seemed to have divined from time to time the needs of our people, and have planned accordingly, without getting them involved in the process of development. This Planning Strategy has left its baneful effect on our nation. We now have a situation where the Government is expected, not merely to provide leadership and necessary socio-economic infrastructure, but also to shoulder the whole burden of development itself. This is mainly because the people at the grassroots are detached and uninvolved in their developmental programme and execution.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

It is in this connection that I would want your Workshop, in devising new strategies for our development, to think of how the new Local Governments can be involved in devising and executing the next Development Plan. For too long Local Governments have been mere administrative units, for the most part, unstable and sterile. I am convinced that with purposeful planning, they can be turned into units of economic production and economic activities. They can be part of our strategy for mobilising and deploying our human and material resources more effectively than we have ever succeeded in doing.

REALISTIC APPRAISAL

Your discussions must also be characterised by understanding and realistic appraisal of our position and situation. Nigeria with a population of some 80 million people and a vast undeveloped land area and much less than 2 million barrels of oil production a day, when the 1975/80 Plan projected some 3 million barrels a day for this Period, is definitely NOT enjoying oil boom compared with countries with 2 or 3 million population producing the same amount of oil. And our economy stands the danger of being doomed if this realisation is not brought vividly home to all Nigerians. With the increased production of oil in the industrialised northern hemisphere of Alaska, the North Sea and Mexico, Nigeria along with other OPEC countries will have to continue to reduce crude oil production to be able to maintain the current OPEC unit price level. This situation, which will continue for some years to come, must affect our current Development Plan and our way of life, and condition our next Plan. We must be prepared for greater self-restraint and sacrifice. We must tighten our belt and cut our coat according to our cloth. We must now embark upon an economic policy of self-reliance for self-sufficiency.

KIND OF SOCIETY

One last note. I think your Workshop should raise the question—what kind of society are we evolving or should evolve over the next two decades? Is it the kind typified by many a so-called advanced country which, though technologically advanced, is already showing painful indications of social decline—crimes of violence, moral decay, atomization of the family, extreme individualism, and the like? Should we not, in our own interest, and in the interest of humanity, hack back to our own traditions of esprit de corps and communalism—and build an economy and a society that emanates from our own genius? I believe the choice is clear. But the task of building a society that would be undergirded by our own traditions and culture will surely challenge your collective intellect.

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

I cannot over-emphasise the importance which the Federal Military Government attaches to this Workshop. This form should offer a unique and timely opportunity for a critical reappraisal of our development effort in all its ramifications, including projects, programmes, policies and organisational structure. No aspect should be regarded too sacred for examination. For we cannot afford to repeat the errors of the past. It is my hope that you will make full use of this valuable opportunity to exert a positive influence on the character of the next Plan and any prospective Plan that would eventually emerge, thus helping to launch the nation on a new and more dynamic path to development. The Government is looking forward anxiously to your recommendations, and I hope you will endeavour to be bold, innovative and original in your deliberations.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you a fruitful and successful Workshop.
Thank you.

Registration of Voters

When the present administration came into power in 1975, it mapped out a programme for a peaceful transition to civil rule by a democratically elected government in 1979. In accordance with this programme, the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, on January 14, 1978, called on all Nigerians aged 18 years and above to register their names in the register of voters for the 1979 General elections.

From today and for the next six weeks all Nigerians of 18 years and over will be called upon to discharge a vital civic duty. I have no doubt, whatsoever, that as patriotic citizens they will do it with enthusiasm and make the nationwide registration of voters which commences today a huge success. All of us should by now be looking forward to the general elections in 1979, the results of which will be free and fair, but the important thing is that every Nigerian of voting age has a duty to cast his or her vote in order to ensure that the Government that will assume power has the mandate of a solid majority of our citizens. The need, therefore, for all Nigerians of 18 years and over to have their names in the nation's register of voters can hardly be overstressed because only those who register will be entitled to vote. All of us should therefore gladly welcome and co-operate with the registration of officials when they visit our homes to carry out the exercise during the period of January 14th to February 28th, 1978.

WARNING

It is important, however, to warn at this stage against any attempt to rig the registration operation. For example, no one should attempt to have himself registered more than once at a different place other than his place of ordinary residence. Nothing will be gained by engaging in this type of malpractice because the electoral procedures have been tightened so as to prevent any person from voting more than once at any election. On the other hand, anybody engaged in such an act will be taking a great risk as the electoral law stipulates severe punishment for anyone who behaves in such a manner.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

I also wish to appeal to employers both in the public and private sectors to co-operate by releasing those of their employees who are selected to assist in the registration exercise. These employees should not suffer loss of pay for the six weeks period they are engaged on registration duties.

Accordingly, they should be regarded as being on special assignment. I make this request in the full hope that the employers concerned will co-operate.

Welcoming President Neto of Angola

At the invitation of the Federal Military Government, President Agostinho Neto of the People's Republic of Angola paid an official visit to Nigeria from January 15 to 19, 1978. In his speech at a State Banquet given in honour of President Neto on January 18, 1978, His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo re-emphasised that Nigeria's single-minded support to defeat reactionary and imperialist plots against Angola was based entirely on the principles that regulate the relations between states which are enshrined in the Charters of the OAU, of the United Nations and of the Non-Aligned Movement to which both Nigeria and Angola belong.

Our gathering here tonight is a historic occasion. It is an occasion to render homage to the name of a great African statesman of very rare versatility. It is a pleasure for us to welcome, on behalf of the Government and all the people of Nigeria, His Excellency Dr. Agostinho Neto, President of the Angolan Labour Party, and of the People's Republic of Angola, and Mrs. Neto.

Your great country, Mr. President, attained the status of independence and national sovereignty just a little over two years ago. This is no doubt a short time in the life of a nation, but long enough, in this case, to have witnessed the phenomenal evolution of a formerly exploited colonial people into a full-grown, independent, and proud ally in Africa's march towards its total emancipation. We in Nigeria are proud to have been associated with the heroic Angolan people in this process, and we take the opportunity now offered by your long-awaited visit to renew the pledge of lasting affection and fraternity between our two peoples.

DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP

For us here in Nigeria, Mr. President, the unusually difficult circumstances in which Angola attained her independence are still fresh enough in our minds to evoke profound emotions that are bound to stand the test of time. We recall, first, the self-evident truth that a people's yearnings and aspirations for freedom cannot be suppressed forever, whatever the enemy's arsenals, and however formidable his military might. Secondly, Your Excellency, we are reminded that, with faith and unyielding determination, and no matter the odds, the greatest heights of human ambition can be achieved. Thirdly and finally, Mr. President, Angola's history of the past two years has decisively reinforced our belief that, with dynamic and dedicated leadership, the sky is the limit to what a nation can attain. In short, dear colleagues, Your Excellencies, and Distinguished Guests, the historic struggle of the Angolan people for true nationhood, under the dynamic leadership of the MPLA and His Excellency Dr. Agostinho Neto, epitomises the yearnings and aspirations of all the oppressed and freedom-loving peoples for justice, liberty, and the equality of man, regardless of race, colour or creed.

SPRING-BOARD

Your Excellency, we salute the far-sighted vision of the founders of Angolan nationalism; equally, we render homage to the memory of the martyrs of the nationalist struggle, who died that others might live, and so that generations yet unborn might not bear the burden of alien yoke imposed from beyond the seas.

I must, at this juncture, however, assure Your Excellency that Nigerians' vision of what Angola stands for is not a merely romantic one, nor is it entirely bound up with the past, for we also see in that sister Republic a potential spring-board for the total liberation of Namibia, and for the total liquidation of all remaining traces of racism, imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism from the African Continent. It is, we believe, a historic role imposed by Angola's geo-political location, and I must therefore warmly congratulate Your Excellency for already playing his role so remarkably well, as an active member of the group of the Frontline States Presidents.

Like all other African States, Angola has her own internal problems, but has, nevertheless, offered sanctuary and thrown her doors open to SWAPO and other nationalist liberation movements, often at great inconvenience to herself, to promote the offensive and the armed struggle that is bound to wrest the controls of power from alien hands in the areas yet to be liberated. You are, of course, already aware of the Nigerian Government's full commitment to this same cause, Your Excellency, and I need hardly remind you that, in the struggle to gain Africa's freedom from foreign rule, you will continue to find in us a worthy and devoted ally.

DEDICATION

As I have said a little while ago, the birth of the People's Republic of Angola as a sovereign nation was accompanied by all the natural and painful labours of childbirth. It was an epoch when all the reactionary forces, not only in Angola, but also within and outside Africa, were unleashed with unprecedented savagery to stop the emergence of a truly independent State under the nationalist regime of the MPLA. Thanks to the uncompromising dedication of Your Excellency. The forces of darkness and reaction were subdued in the end, but it was a nightmare that left an indelible mark in the minds of us all. Mr. President, Nigeria knew that imperialist manoeuvres at that crucial juncture could only be defeated at colossal costs in sweat and blood of the flower of Angolan youth, and we felt proud and greatly privileged to have contributed in our own way to the happy end, at all essential levels.

In those tumultuous days of the battle for Angolan Independence, that great sister Republic was lucky enough to have at the helm of affairs, an uncompromising nationalist of the calibre of His Excellency Dr. Agostinho Neto, a redoubted fighter who won a crucial war, and a man of peace at the same time who has also won the Lenin Prize for peace amid his country's National Heroic Award.

SUPPORT

I think I should re-emphasise here, however, that Nigeria's single-minded support to defeat reactionary and imperialist plots against the People's Republic of Angola was based entirely on those time-honoured principles that regulate the relations between States, as enshrined in the Charters of the OAU, of the United Nations, and of the Non-Aligned Movement to which our two sister nations both belong. It was based, furthermore, on the fundamental right, consecrated by natural justice, of a people to

determine their own leaders, their own Government, and their own destiny. These principles are, Your Excellency, some of the cornerstones on which Nigeria's Foreign Policy was founded, and they will, therefore, continue to guide our attitudes and actions, whether in or outside our Continent, wherever the rights of a people are in danger of being trampled upon.

Happily, Mr. President, the relations and the bonds of friendship that bind our two peoples have remained cordial. For our part, it shall be our constant objective to keep them so, and even to improve and further consolidate them, especially in recognition that areas of further co-operation between our two sister States are practically unlimited.

Finally, Your Excellency, I welcome you once again to Nigeria, and I salute you as a worthy son of African Liberation, and a hero of the Angolan revolution.

May I invite you, Excellencies and Distinguished Guests, to raise your glasses, and to drink with me a toast to the health of His Excellency Dr. Agostinho Neto and Mrs. Neto; to the continued peace and prosperity of the friendly people of the Angolan Republic; and to lasting friendship between the People's Republic of Angola and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Long Live the Organisation of African Unity!

Long Live the People's Republic of Angola!

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!



Fig. 34 H.E. Lt. General Obasanjo and President A. Neto of Angola at Murtala Muhammed Airport, Ikeja.

Presentation of Warrant of Office to National Chief Scout

Address by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo on the occasion of the Presentation of Warrant of Office to Alhaji Ibrahim J. Waziri as the National Chief Scout of Nigeria, in Lagos on January 21, 1978.

I have pleasure to perform the presentation ceremony of the Warrant of Office to the new National Chief Scout. The qualification spelt out by the Constitution of the Boy Scouts of Nigeria for this distinguished post include, among other qualities, the demonstration of exceptional service and leadership within the movement and I consider Alhaji Ibrahim Jalo Waziri, a most fitting and appropriate choice. He has, over the years, devoted his life to the service of this country in various capacities and has, throughout, demonstrated those qualities identified with the best of scouting movements throughout the world. I am therefore confident that Alhaji Jalo Waziri will continue to work tirelessly for the promotion of the status of the Boy Scouts of Nigeria.

The aims and objectives of the Boy Scouts of Nigeria, include the development of good citizenship among boys by moulding their character, training them in habits of observation, obedience and self-reliance. The movement also aims at inculcating loyalty, patriotism, courage, self-sacrifice, and total dedication to public good. These qualities, you will all agree, are the very qualities that this country needs to make us a great nation and we have, since the inception of this Administration, seized every opportunity to emphasise the need for their development. The Boy Scouts of Nigeria, dealing with mostly boys as it does, is in a unique position to contribute to this worthy task of nation-building. I can confidently say that the organisation and the Government share identity of views and interests, and that this Administration would continue to render every assistance towards the attainment of these worthy goals.

I would seize this opportunity to thank the retired National Chief Scout, Sir Kassim Ibrahim, whose tenure of office though it lasted only two years has witnessed significant developments in the scout movement of this country. It was during his tenure of office that most of the arrangements for the 1st All Africa Scout Jamboree was laid out. I would also wish to seize this opportunity to express appreciation to the Executive Committee of the National Boy Scouts of Nigeria for the leadership and maturity with which the affairs of the movements have been conducted. I am happy that some of the initial problems that faced the organisation and necessitated the shifting of the date for the holding of the 1st All Africa Scout Jamboree from September 1976 to April 1977, were happily resolved and a very successful Jamboree was subsequently held at Shere Hills in Plateau State. I am sure the memories of the meeting of minds and cultures, the memories of this country, and the

friendship among the African youths, would linger for a long time in the minds of the participants.

Finally, by way of advice, I would urge the Boy Scouts of Nigeria to engage in vigorous campaign to swell its membership in order to offer a more worthy alternative to the pursuit of frivolity and foreign cultures that have been alluring our boys and girls. I can assure you that the whole nation will be eternally grateful to the Scout movement for any success you will record in this regard.

In conclusion, I wish Boy Scouts of Nigeria every success and happy scouting.

National Advisory Council on Education for Citizenship

Address by His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces at the occasion of the inaugural meeting of the newly set-up National Advisory Council on Education for Citizenship in Lagos on Monday, January 23, 1978.

I have great pleasure in addressing you on this occasion of the inauguration of the National Advisory Council on Education for Citizenship.

Many Nigerians in all walks of life have expressed concern at the indiscipline, excessive materialism, laxity and lack of compassion that are so rampant at all levels of our society. I have, in the last few months, had cause to refer on a number of occasions to the damaging effects of these social evils in the country. I will, once more, recount a few of them just to highlight the need to establish this Council.

Indiscipline manifests itself in different forms; dishonesty, lack of respect and consideration for elders and for those in authority, rudeness, absenteeism and lateness to work, selfishness, avarice, indolence, disloyalty and other unpatriotic acts, lack of public-spiritedness and consideration for others, drunkenness and disregard for life on our roads, to name but a few. These character defects are rapidly becoming the norms of our society while honesty now cuts a poor figure compared to the transitory fruits of anti-social activities like corruption, fraud, profiteering, cheating, misappropriation of funds, tax-evasion and smuggling.

This deep malaise cuts through our entire society, sparing no section—young and old, male or female, educated or illiterate, rich or poor—and sparing no profession or walk of life. "Education" is now equated to wisdom, and engenders in children disregard for their not-so-literate parents. The parent is treated with condescension, if not contempt. Compassion is seriously lacking as is evident by the all too frequent reluctance to discharge the elementary human duty of rendering assistance to helpless victims of accidents on the highways. Absence of the simplest codes of conduct leads people to break the railing on bridges and dual carriage ways, and to pilfer electric and telephone cables with no thought whatsoever of the effect of these actions on the rest of the society. There is little instinct for service in both the young and the old. Not many people regard service to others as the highest of distinction worth achieving. From the lowliest urban worker to the successful executive or professional there is undue pre-occupation with self-centred acquisitive instincts. Even the occasional acts of seeming altruism are often no more than a thin veil for cheap publicity and ostentation.

CAUSES

What could be the causes of this serious moral and societal drift in the country?

There is no doubting the fact that Nigeria is living in a world of the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. We, therefore, cannot escape from the problems that are rampant elsewhere. But we do have our own peculiar problems as a Third World country, and as Nigeria, which require a brief examination, as this may guide us to solutions.

The advent of colonisation brought in its trail "education," which did not only consist of literacy and numeracy, but the adoption of an alien culture with different sets of values as substitutes for our own traditional ones. Our educated people rejected their cultural backgrounds and wholly imbibed Western and foreign cultures and ways of life, regardless of the factor of relevance. All that is foreign is made virtuous. Besides this, "education" led to thirst for material development. People abandoned their rural dwellings and traditional family ties to go and live in the cities, where they would be nearer to modern amenities such as electricity, water supply, schools and hospitals and prefer to secure white collar jobs in order to make a living. In this way, the pursuit of material development disrupted our original social structure.

The search for economic advancement, in the highly competitive urban existence, disrupted even the single family unit. Both husband and wife now often have to work to pursue their individual professions, to make ends meet, to achieve certain perceived standard of living or simply to satisfy their material acquisitiveness. Responsibility for their children is consequently left in the hands of school teachers, hired nannies, or more often, to no one in particular. A child deprived of parental care at this tender age would not have been given the necessary upbringing for decent citizenship.

To cap it all, there is a vicious circle. The educated people and those who are supposed to know better and to give a good example, are just as culpable in these glaring moral lapses. Examples by the leadership group is vital, and where it is lacking, the society is imperiled.

Among the causes for our continuing social ills must be mentioned—the educational system itself. We are yet to sufficiently appreciate that one of the most fundamental duties of every person is dedication to developing into a decent human being and a decent citizen, and that society, has the responsibility to help the individual to achieve these. Proper education is the most important aid the rest of society can give to an individual, and it must always be imparted with a clear understanding of the reciprocity of responsibility between the society and the individual. This is a necessary partnership, the spirit of which must never stand relegated at any level of education, if the purpose of the latter is not to be misplaced. Education for livelihood must not be separated from education to fulfil social responsibility, namely the art of nurturing the young to manhood, in whatever capacity or calling the individual concerned finds himself.

Our educational system should certainly lay greater emphasis on moral, spiritual and citizenship training. There is undue emphasis on success at examinations and the acquisition of paper qualification. This often leads to cheating, and other forms of violation at examinations, in the compulsive urge to pass without hard work. All that students are made to look forward to are lucrative jobs and the opportunities to advance themselves in a rat-race world. The defective orientation at school and college, and the vain sense of social and intellectual superiority fed into their products, appear to be largely responsible for the lack of dedication to selfish service that is so often seen.

These social ills that plague our bubbling society are certainly a source of grave concern. They cannot be ignored in the rationalisation that they are the inevitable

concomitants to development and the stress of modern living, because they are not. Neither can we hope that things will somehow right themselves eventually, because they will not. Complacency on our part will only lead to increase dearth of patriotism on the part of our fellow countrymen and to increased social disorder. Under such threats, the very social structure could suddenly collapse, resulting in the widespread lawlessness, disorder and physical insecurity that are now being experienced in some other countries. This might culminate in total self-destruction of the society.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the duty of every citizen to prove himself a worthy member of our society. It is the duty of every parent to train his or her child so that it is brought up with the right kind of orientation to life. It is the duty of every teacher to give proper education and to set good personal examples to his pupils and students. It is also the duty of every community to organise itself so that the right mores and social norms are observed and promoted within its fold. The indolent, the passive and the cynical are great obstacles to the observance of these respective duties.

We are aware of the responsibility of Government in finding remedies to these social ills, and are therefore setting in motion an enduring machinery for doing so. Government is the dominant organisation in any society, and commands the attention, the resources, and hopefully, the respect of that society. In other words, a considerable portion of that responsibility for paper education and orientation, which every society owes to each individual, devolves upon his Government. The Federal Military Government will not shirk its responsibilities. Besides, an orderly society is easier and much more economical and rewarding to govern. It is blissful to live in. It is a society with a future.

CITIZEN ORIENTATION

In attempting to give proper orientation to our people at all levels, I am not unaware of the factors of diversity, of the notion of indoctrination, and of the enormity of the task ahead, especially since the results are slow and cannot be easily quantified through statistics of achievement. But I am not worried by diversity, because I do know that the basic concept of good and evil is universal, and that our differences should not be unduly exaggerated to the detriment of our common good. On the question of indoctrination, it should be appreciated that lack of proper education is itself a form of indoctrination, albeit a negative one. I see nothing wrong in inculcating the values that will give us an orderly society in our citizens. We have a responsibility to try to reform our present and future society by training our citizens and more especially our youth to be responsible citizens and good human beings.

Already, this Administration has addressed itself to the problem from several angles. By appropriate legislation and executive action, we have tried to introduce discretion in public life, to promote simplicity in life-style and to discourage vulgar ostentation. These are some of the reasons behind the order banning the importation of luxury cars, lace fabrics and champagne. We are steadily pursuing corruption, abuse of

office, tax-evasion, racketeering, smuggling and other crimes and anti-social sharp practices. We appreciate the importance of the spoken and written word in the mass media. Consequently, the 'National Pledge,' 'Thought for Today' and 'Moment for thought' are regularly and repeatedly broadcast over Radio and Television networks. To encourage community service, the scope of the National Youth Service Corps is being considerably broadened. To combat juvenile indiscipline, corporal punishment has been reintroduced in the primary schools, and military personnel will be posted to the post-primary schools to assist school principals in the maintenance of discipline, in physical training and in any other way that the principals may deem fit.

The steps so far taken are going to be pursued with vigour, but some are only short-term solutions. The comprehensive long-term solutions can only be found by the re-orientation of the society as a whole. The creation of States in the country to serve as centres of development and the establishment of Local Government Areas should assist in this task.

We have to start at the home and enjoin all parents and guardians to rededicate themselves to their well-known responsibilities to their offsprings and wards.

EDUCATION

Correct orientation can be most conveniently and effectively achieved through appropriate devices in the course of formal education. The strategy to be adopted would be to incorporate moral and spiritual instruction and the teaching of civics, ethics and related disciplines, into the curriculum at different levels of education as compulsory subjects for all students. We should also distill from those elements of our ethnic values and culture those that are accepted as good, and work them into the system. Suitable texts will have to be written, for the different levels of national awareness, on the philosophy of good citizenship, the realisation of the community's well-being and on national greatness and advancement in a competitive world. Literature in Nigerian languages will have to be made prolific and updated so that every one will be able to easily study one Nigerian Language in addition to his own mother tongue.

The implementation of the new National Policy on Education will include proposals that will enable each child to study one of the three major Nigerian languages in addition to his own mother tongue.

This effort at re-orientation should be extended to involve every citizen beyond the pale of formal education. For such citizens, the same elements could be incorporated as part of adult or extra-mural education system and through the mass media. This is very important as the effect of the home cannot be under-estimated in the process of education. The parents must have the right orientation to be able to impart the same to their offsprings.

But major effort will still have to be concentrated in the educational system proper, especially the primary and the secondary school.

The school builds upon what has been started at home. In the times we live in, nothing positive should be assumed to have been learned at home by way of the correct orientation of life. In many instances out of a hundred, this assumption will be correct. In the pre-primary and primary schools, there must be sound lessons in religious and moral education and also in nationalism, in addition to imparting literacy, numeracy, the creative arts and the acquisition of minimum skills. Facilities for worship and devotional services and adequate literature, must be provided. It

should be realised that, for some time to come, the Primary School will remain the limit of the educational opportunities of most of those who enter it. The syllabus and environment of the School must therefore be so fashioned as to impart the necessary minimum of mores and character training for the individual to grasp his responsibility to society even—if this formal education stops at this level.

The Secondary School is a critical period for the psychological and attitudinal development of the youth, and the correct lessons must not be missed here.

Any training obtained in the Primary School must be enhanced in the Secondary School, and the additions of the physical education, games and sports—should be made compulsory for the development of team spirit and the spirit of sportsmanship. Extra-curricular activities, like Scouting and outward bound exercises are healthy and encourage selfless service and leadership qualities.

Discussions and debates as part of the curriculum start in the Secondary School. These must be inspiring so that the youth is made to opt for the lofty ideals relevant to our situation and background rather than lowly, selfish, materialistic or alien ones. This theme should also be evident in their reading, recreation and extra-curricular activities. Censorship alone encourages curiosity for the evil. The youth must be so piloted that they take pride in what is good and hold in contempt what is evil. These are citizens who will enrich the society whether their formal educational careers end at the Secondary School, or they proceed to institutions of higher learning.

GUIDANCE

The general attitude of the teacher probably has its greatest impact on the student in the secondary school. An urgent task, therefore, is to cultivate the correct attitude and the right orientation amongst teachers. They must act truly in *loco parentis*, giving the young guidance and counselling for career selection and for solving personal problems. But the teachers will require the right curricula and the assistance of leaders and volunteers from the surrounding communities and the neighbouring institutions of higher learning.

The relevance of the subject matter taught assumes great significance as from the Secondary level of formal education. Subjects should not be taught in isolation or away from the angle of concomitant societal responsibilities. If this simple fact is ignored, the subjects taught, instead of becoming tools for service, assume the character of profound knowledge, to be discussed only among the “educated,” the elite class which the student joins as he progressively becomes alienated from his home base. Relevance is, therefore, an important phenomenon, and to achieve it requires boldness, innovation and imagination in the preparation of the syllabus. This means, among other things, avoidance of repetitive time tables, stereotyped experiments and age-old handouts ritually issued year-in-year-out to succeeding generations of students.

At the tertiary level of Education, universities and other institutions of higher learning must continue to correct character training of their students acquired at the lower level. The pressures on the student are quite severe in the university with more work, greater exposure to information and ideas, and the general tendency to allow the student to find things out for himself. Several times have we in recent months requested of our universities to modify their curricula and academic activities so as to emphasize character training and orientation, so that these institutions will take even greater strides in public service and towards identification with our society. The

universities which train our leadership group and the staff of these institutions need to demonstrate that they are aware of this fact.

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The document of the National Policy on Education spells out the philosophy and orientation of our educational system very well. An implementation Committee has been set up in the Federal Ministry of Education to pursue the administrative, financial and technical aspects of the policy. But the definition of the philosophy and objectives of education is a complex matter that goes far beyond routine official reaches. There are important social, cultural and, of course, religious questions to be asked and answered.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The production of a viable programme of redefining the philosophy and objectives of our educational system, the translation of these into a concrete syllabus for the use of our educational institutions, and the general application of this method to the orientation of our people, require that we cast our consultation nets wider. The leaders of the various important societal areas of interest must not only be actively involved in the formulation of the guiding policies, they need also to participate fully in the implementation.

This is the main reason behind the decision of the Federal Military Government to set up the National Advisory Council of Education for Citizenship. The Council will be responsible for working out the details of the proposals already referred to in this address, with the aim of bringing about the necessary medium and long-term reforms in our educational system and in our society. The Council will formulate policies and after consultation with appropriate bodies, advise the Federal Military Government on ways of achieving the objectives of the educational re-orientation and the general re-direction of the society discussed here.

To cater for the factor of diversity, and to decentralise operations for greater efficiency, each State of the Federation will set up a Committee to be responsible for the syllabus and organisational aspects of the programme. The State Committees will interpret the sanctioned policies of the National Council and execute them. Since training in school should integrate with that at home, the surrounding community must be involved. Local Government Area Sub-Committees will therefore be set up as direct operational units.

The National Council will co-ordinate the activities of the State Committees and pass on Federal Government directive to the States.

This then, is briefly, the scope of your assignment, Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the National Advisory Council on Education for Citizenship. You have been appointed because you are all very distinguished in your particular walks of life. You are all eminent Nigerians, each with exemplary character and record of service to the society. In addition, you have been so selected as to be widely representative of our geographical areas, as well as our fundamental and societal interest groups. But the Federal Military Government has no doubt that you will always deliberate and make recommendations as patriotic Nigerians for the achievement of the objectives of setting you up as a Council. We also have full confidence in your ability to carry out your truly onerous assignment. By virtue of your backgrounds and your individual personal attainments, you will no doubt be fully aware of and concerned about the evils that plague our society, and must be thinking of how to find remedies for them.

You will surely see this task of ensuring that the custodians of our future society are properly trained and that the society is redirected on the path of humanity and sanity as one of your important civic and leadership duties.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

As I have already stated, we are aware that the work involved in this programme of national re-orientation is very difficult and painstaking. The results will be slow to achieve and may not be quantifiable nor waved about. It takes a sustained effort and a long period of time to peacefully reform any society. But the rewards will, in the end, fully justify that effort and that time expended.

The Federal Military Government will give you full moral, official and financial support. We shall always take your recommendations seriously. We shall see that all assistance and facilities are made available to you so that you can carry out your assignment and achieve our common objectives for the good of our society and our country. Your Council will be serviced by the Cabinet Office.

Chairman, Professor S. A. Babalola, it is now my great pleasure to formally inaugurate the National Advisory Council on Education for Citizenship and to wish it every success.

Traditional Rulers

A meeting of traditional rulers in Nigeria was held in Kaduna on Monday, February 6, 1978. In His speech at the opening ceremony, His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo reiterated the Federal Military Government's determination to execute its political programme.

Your Highnesses,

Once again I have the pleasure to address this meeting which has been called to deliberate on current issues of importance to all of us. The principle of consultation with traditional rulers established, during the reforms of Local Government has been seen as very important by both the Government and you, the traditional rulers. Indeed, we have come to believe that such consultations are essential if public issues are to be well understood. This Administration has continuously stressed the need to consult with traditional rulers, as a group and as individuals, in order to bring about the necessary understanding of our actions, policies and their desired objectives. In the past we have found such consultations with you useful and I am sure that your deliberations this morning will prove equally useful.

BASIC ISSUES

I have chosen to address you on three basic issues that affect our society today. They are issues that need your understanding, as well as your co-operation in order to realise our goals. The issues share a number of factors in common: they are issues which touch on the welfare of our people; and they touch on the essence of stability and survival of our nation. I have in mind the Local Government Reforms, the Operation Feed the Nation scheme and the general discipline in our society. In fact, these issues have received a good deal of our attention and I also commend them to your attention.

EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

On so many occasions, I have reiterated that Local Government Reform forms the foundation of our political programme. The main thrust of these reforms is to establish a sound and lasting administrative and political framework which will ensure a more effective participation of the majority of our people in the business of running the Government of the country. This is one of the reasons why we have always conceived the Local Government level as a third tier of Government. Indeed, with the approach of mass politics, there is no surer guarantee for stability. However, like all new structures and innovations a great deal of understanding and education is required and only experience in working the system, can throw up some of its weaknesses. So far, I have been encouraged by the general enthusiasm which I have seen around the country for the reforms, but consolidating the new system requires a great deal more enthusiasm.

It requires your kind of experience in how such a system works and how it affects people on the ground.

I do receive considerable feed-back on how the system is faring in various parts of the country. This explains the reason for a common approach and corporate effort in the solution of any problems that arise. From your vantage point too, you must have seen the new system at work and I welcome any suggestion which you as a group may offer to improve the system without destroying its fundamental objectives.

O.F.N. SCHEME

Again, at your last meeting, I reminded you of the importance of the O.F.N. scheme. Essentially, the scheme is an attempt by this Administration to ensure a continuous increase in food production for our people so that we can cater for our food needs. The programme, you will recall, was given the utmost priority and the belief then as now, is that it is quite possible to take a number of measures and adopt the appropriate short and medium term policies to boost production in agriculture to a point where feeding the nation should not at this stage of our development be a problem. It was not expected to solve all your agricultural and food problems overnight or to halve within one year the cost of house-keeping for every urban dweller, rather, the programme was designed to have a profound effect on our approach to the solution of our problems of agriculture. In many respects, our objectives have been achieved in focusing attention on agriculture. We have been able to identify the sources of failure, as well as those areas where the prospects of improvement are to be found. We must not be unduly worried by having discovered the shortcomings of the agricultural development programme in this country. This, to my mind, is one of the supreme merits of the O.F.N. programme.

In the short run, the impact of O.F.N. on food production is only one aspect of the scheme, and once the nation is awakened to the problems facing agricultural development, then the criticism and the deep concern shown by most people on O.F.N. must be seen as a good sign. These criticisms help to further highlight the problems and help to set the discussions on a national platform for the first time. The solutions to some of the problems are thus made much easier by their identification and exposure to a national forum. In your consideration of the problem of agricultural development and production of food, I would want you to keep these points in mind as the leaders directly connected with farmers to continue to observe these results at first hand. I expect a comprehensive appraisal by you and your observations which will help to bring rapid improvement in the field of agriculture. O.F.N. is a scheme that needs constant appraisal, as well as close touch with the farmers.

As to the impact of the programme on production all over the country, I have no doubt. The programmes contribution has been positive, albeit, greater success in production has been achieved in some parts of the country than others. I am not however, unaware of the heightened expectations which such a programme has generated and nothing short of a sudden and dramatic change would probably have satisfied the average urbanised Nigerian's expectation. But we should not forget that the O.F.N. is a scheme which was launched less than two years ago and with the best blessing of God in terms of rainfall and any known input, our expectations cannot be met overnight. However, these rising expectations are themselves a good guarantee for pushing the programme forward. New lessons are being learnt in the process of the implementation of the scheme and any fresh and useful ideas to improve the performance so far achieved will be welcomed.

EFFECTS OF INDISCIPLINE

I have on many occasions referred to the adverse effects of indiscipline in our society. As elders of our society, you are aware of the many facets of the problem. On this occasion, I would like to underline the role of various leadership groups that have tended to aid and abet indiscipline. These are the groups which are supposed to know better and to set good examples, but invariably, I find them just as culpable as the youths of the society. Let me reiterate that indiscipline in our society is more than the simple matter of school children disobeying orders. It also manifests itself in the lack of decorum and self-criticism, as well as in the wanton taste for materialism and all that goes with it. Indeed, its underlying basis has to do with those alien customs and values which various leadership groups attempt to impose on our society.

FACETS

So far we have undertaken a comprehensive study of the various facets of indiscipline and recommendations thereof are being implemented. For example, the National Advisory Council for Education on Citizenship has been set up to give a sense of direction and orientation to our educational system and in part to our national life. Again, we have tried to introduce discretion and public accountability in our public life. And to combat juvenile indiscipline, we have reinstated corporal punishment in the primary schools. I would therefore like to commend to you the necessity to understand these and similar measures in their true perspectives. Your knowledge and understanding of them is one way to ensure that our people will equally understand them and comply with them. Traditional leaders have always set the standard of moral values, discipline, propriety and decency in our society. Your examples of moderation and self-restraint are bound to add substantially to our national efforts in this direction.

Finally, you are no doubt aware of the Federal Military Government's determination to execute its political programme. To this end, the Constituent Assembly has already embarked in the task of fashioning out a new Constitution for the country. Concurrently a nation-wide house-to-house registration of voters for elections in 1979 is now going on. The Federal Military Government will continue to appreciate the roles of traditional rulers in educating their people towards understanding the political programme and in bringing about its successful implementation.

I wish you a successful deliberation.

Thank you.

13th Independence Anniversary of the Gambia

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), given the necessary instruments, authority and the political will of its member States, could easily perform a more effective role in the solution of problems facing the Continent. This assertion was made by the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo while responding to a toast by His Excellency Sir Dauda Jawara at a State Banquet given in his honour in Banjul, The Gambia, on Saturday, February 18, 1978, on the occasion of the 13th Independence Anniversary of The Gambia. He lamented the situation on the Continent as a result of external interference and pressures from outside Africa, whereby "our brothers find themselves obliged to divert their attention and energy to the search for weapons of destruction rather than concentrating such attention and energy to fight a common enemy—racial bigotry and intolerance as practised by the illegal minority regime in Zimbabwe and the South African clique." He said that the existence of those regimes made it obligatory for Africans to rededicate themselves to liquidate indignities to which our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa have been subjected. General Obasanjo commended the Gambian leader for his personal courage and wisdom as well as for his customary stand in matters dealing with human rights and on the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. He gave an assurance that Nigerians like the Gambians would not relent until the whole of Southern Africa was liberated.

I consider it a profound honour and privilege to have been invited by the Government and brotherly people of The Gambia as the Guest of Honour on this momentous occasion of the 13th Anniversary of the Independence of your great country; and also to respond to the toast so ably proposed by my Brother and Colleague, His Excellency Sir Dauda Jawara.

Your kind invitation is indicative of the goodwill and friendly disposition of your country to the Government and the entire people of Nigeria. This goodwill has also been richly demonstrated by the spectacular warmth of affection which has been so generously accorded me and members of my entourage, since our arrival in this historic and beautiful city of Banjul. It is, therefore, needless to assure you, Mr. President, that we feel at home here.

We feel at home because we have seen, since our arrival, the similarities between our ways of life in Nigeria and those of the Republic of The Gambia. Your people, their dances, their songs and musical instruments are all visible reminders of those historical and cultural bonds that hold us together. This common heritage has always manifested itself in our interactions with one another. In this connection, we recall your numerous visits to Nigeria and the opportunity which these visits had afforded us to discuss matters of mutual concern to our two countries. Similarly, our membership of the Organisation of African Unity has enabled us to share the same aims and objectives, as well as the aspirations of the African peoples for the enhancement and progress of our Continent.

In addition to these inseparable ancestral and personal ties, both The Gambia and Nigeria, as inheritors of depleted economies after independence, and presently confronted by the adverse intervention of mother nature in the form of the Sahelian Drought, are involved in the common struggle of combating hunger, poverty, and misery in our societies. We in Nigeria share your aspirations as enshrined in your First Five Year Development Plan and are inspired by the success that has attended its execution so far. Our fondest wish is to be able to co-operate with your country in joint economic ventures either bilaterally or within the framework of our sub-Regional Organisations.

IMPORTANCE OF ECOWAS

Mr. President, our common efforts at uplifting the standard of living of our people by our own bootstraps have already culminated in the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I need not over-emphasize the importance which we in Nigeria attach to this institution as the last bastion of hope for the economic development of our sub-region. The aims and aspirations of ECOWAS are indeed consistent with our two Sister Nations' belief in creative and meaningful partnership through fruitful economic and social contact among our people. This partnership is indeed essential for both the political stability and the internal economic order of the West African sub-region. It is in this context that we are most gratified, Mr. President, by the unswerving support and enthusiasm that you personally, your Government and the people of The Gambia have demonstrated towards the achievement of our economic goals in this sub-region. Your support and enthusiasm also manifest themselves in our common struggle to forge a new world economic order. In this desire, we are merely calling the attention of the Industrialised Nations to the inter-dependency of the world economies and to the dangers inherent in a system in which a greater part of the world are hewers of wood and drawers of water whilst a negligible minority remains the purveyors of the essentials of life. In the interest of peace and stability and to avoid the chaos of world inflation and recession, it is not too much to ask that the present system be reviewed to ensure stable prices for our primary products and an adequate transfer of technology to the less developed economies.

MISGUIDED EFFORT

Mr. President, the problems that beset us in Africa today are innumerable. We are both witnesses to the unfortunate situation whereby, as a result of external interference and pressures from outside Africa, our brothers on the Continent find themselves obliged to divert their attention and energy to the search for weapons of destruction rather than concentrating such attention and energy on a common strategy to fight a common enemy—racial bigotry and intolerance as practised by the illegal minority regime in Zimbabwe and the South African clique. The existence of these regimes makes it obligatory for us to re-dedicate ourselves to the total liquidation of the indignities and human degradation to which our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa have hitherto been subjected, thus ensuring the complete eradication of all forms of racism and colonialism from our Continent.

It is my belief that the O.A.U., given the necessary instruments, authority and the political will of its member-States, could easily perform a more effective role in the solution of our Continental problems. A ray of hope has happily appeared in the skies with the successful and amicable settlement of the dispute between Ethiopia and the Sudan under the auspices of the O.A.U. Reconciliation Committee which recently met

in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Mr. President, I wish to salute you for your personal courage and wisdom, as well as your customary stand in matters touching on human rights and on the struggle to liberate our brothers in Southern Africa from bondage. We note with particular admiration, your recent statement on the death of South Africa's Black Consciousness Leader—Mr. Steve Biko. I assure you that like the people of The Gambia, we in Nigeria will not rest until the whole of Southern Africa is liberated. Our commitment in this direction, like yours, is absolute. Like the Republic of The Gambia, Nigeria also believes in the maintenance of international peace and security through the United Nations Organisation and its organs, and in the use of peaceful means to settle disputes, except where those means prove elusive. In this divided and tumultuous world, Nigeria, like The Gambia, has pitched her camp in the Non-aligned Movement. We uphold solemnly the noble principles of this Movement, as well as those of the Organisation of African Unity. We believe in the sovereign equality of all States, large or small, and respect their territorial integrity. We are therefore determined to join efforts with peace-loving nations in the search for a world where no man is oppressed.

It is, therefore, my sincere hope that we, as Africans will remain unrelenting in proclaiming to the outside World that the forces that unite our Continent are intrinsic and far greater than the super-imposed influences that tend to keep us apart. It is these forces that we now need to enlist and cement for the sake of the trusting millions of our people who look up to us to take them out of the poverty, ignorance and disorder left by colonialism, into an ordered society in which freedom and unity can flourish amidst plenty. There is indeed a battle to be fought and obstacles to overcome; but there is a titanic struggle for human dignity to be won.

Divided we are weak and vulnerable; but united we, as a Continent, would undoubtedly become one of the greatest forces for good in the world.

Finally, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you, your Government, your people, and especially those school children whose parade this morning was such a joyful thing to watch, on the 13th Anniversary of your National Day.

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, may I request you to please join me in drinking a toast to the President of the Republic of The Gambia, His Excellency Sir Dauda Jawara, for his continued good health, the success of his Government's endeavours and for the well-being and prosperity of the good people of The Gambia.

Long Live the Republic of The Gambia!

Long Live Nigeria/Gambia Relations!

Long Live African Unity!



Fig. 35 His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo and President Dauda Jawara of The Gambia, sign the communique during General Obasanjo's State visit to The Gambia.



Fig. 36 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo performing the decoration ceremony of the 1978 National Awards on one of the recipients—a popular Comedian.

1978 National Honours Awards

The idea behind the establishment of National Honours is to identify and encourage merit as well as to pay due recognition to individual contributions to the progress of the nation. It is also the highest reward for community and national service. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo made this assertion whilst conferring National Honours on 41 distinguished Nigerians at the National Theatre, Iganmu on Tuesday, February 28, 1978.

I announced in my Broadcast last October on the Nation's 17th Independence Anniversary, that in appreciation of their positive contribution to the progress and development of our society, and to encourage others, the Supreme Military Council had decided to honour 41 Nigerians in the 1977 National Day Awards. We are gathered here this morning to formally confer the honours and awards on these worthy Nigerians.

NATIONAL HONOURS AND AWARDS

The idea behind the establishment of the National Honours and Awards in 1963, when we became a Republic, was to identify and encourage merit and pay due recognition to individual contributions to the progress of the nation. Awards were made in 1964 and 1965 after which the matter was suspended until 1975 when the present Administration decided to reactivate it after identifying the national honour as one of the useful ingredients of reawakening civic and community consciousness and service in this country. I would seize this opportunity to point out that a system of honouring distinguished members of the community is far from a foreign innovation. Indeed all our various communities have at one time or the other evolved an elaborate system for paying honour to their deserving members and in almost all cases the common criterion has been the performance of distinct and distinguished service to the community. It is a further credit to this African system of honour that it does not recognize social barriers and the hero could be a prince who proved his mettle in battle, the farmer with the highest crop production, the young man who saved the weak from tragedy, and the herbalist who successfully discovers the herbs to cure epidemics and so on. The Federal Military Government considers this system of honour not only time tested but still more relevant to our social goals and aspirations as a nation. We have therefore since 1975 cast our net far and wide throughout this country in search of men and women deserving of national honour. Our success included a labourer with 50 years service in that capacity, a blacksmith with 56 years service whose sterling character made him a household name in the community but who could not for 50 years qualify for permanent appointment by the establishment criteria and a public Auditor who against ostracization, threats, abuses and all forms of difficulties still managed to hold on his own until eventually it was time to retire from

public service. It is in the light of these impressive findings that the search for merit was intensified and widened so that today some 41 distinguished Nigerian citizens are being honoured.

CRITERION FOR NATIONAL AWARD: SELF-DISCIPLINE

As you go through the list you would discover that it includes distinguished traditional rulers, conscientious and dedicated public servants, drivers, messengers, cleaners, stewards, artists, dramatists, farmers, teachers, indeed men and women in all walks of life. However one common factor which applies to all the recipients is the element of discipline that each and everyone of them applies to their various pursuits. It requires some self-discipline for a traditional ruler to devote himself to community development projects and inspire his people to follow him in that regard. Only disciplined public servants would resist the opportunity to misuse the public office to enrich themselves or further their personal interests. Disciplined messengers do not fill pool coupon in the office. It takes disciplined drivers to save so many lives and so much property in the face of so much chaos and destruction on our roads. Discipline is not of course the only criterion for national award but I can confidently assert that self-discipline is the one factor without which any other attribute cannot be successfully harnessed to the realisation of its fullest scope.

41 DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS

I would state here that the 41 distinguished citizens gathered today are neither the only Nigerians deserving honour nor necessarily the most qualified for it throughout the nation. They are however the prototype of the citizens and the qualities we are after for such award and they represent the number identified at this time in the light of our effort so far. I am also glad to note that the Military Governors of the various States have been honouring citizens of the States who rendered distinguished service to the community. Such effort is in the right direction and should be intensified along with the Federal Government's effort.

NATIONAL SERVICE

The Federal Military Government regards national honour as the highest reward for community and national service. A measure of the role of honour in any society can be assessed by considering the amount of transaction that is done on the basis of honour to everybody. It would be safe to assert that these exceed the legal transactions. Persons of honour do not lie, they do not cheat nor are they irresponsible or incompetent. Men and women of honour do not maliciously tarnish the honour, integrity and good name of others within the community. They show the greatest regard and respect for their country. Persons of honour work most conscientiously and bring about the application of integrity to protect their honour. Honourable persons are the component parts of honourable communities and honourable communities make great nations.

May I at this point call on all our citizens who see nothing good in their country and their compatriots to tarry awhile and think positively on the lives and contributions of these great and honoured Nigerians. With men and women of such sterling qualities around, we will not lose hope in the ability of Nigerians to bring about the type of society best for this country.

EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

Therefore while once more congratulating you, the 41 distinguished persons on whom the nation confers honour today, I would seize this opportunity to draw your attention to the heavy responsibilities now placed on you. In your work, in your

behaviour and conduct, other people's expectation of you will be high and you should give nothing short of exemplary. In all that you do or say, you are expected to demonstrate the highest because you are citizens of honour! The nation salutes you all for your meritorious service and conduct. Well done!

Thank you.

Welcoming President Kountche of Niger

Lt. Colonel Seyni Kountche, the Head of State of the Niger Republic paid a four-day State visit to Nigeria during which talks on bilateral matters were held. A State banquet was held in his honour to mark the occasion of his visit. In a speech at the banquet, Nigeria's Head of State and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo described the Niger Republic as Nigeria's most dependable ally and trusted friend since the two countries' attainment of national independence. He commended the unfailing co-operation of Colonel Kountche in the promotion of the social and economic well-being of the people of the West African sub-region. General Obasanjo added: "Your widely acknowledged wisdom, tact and unobtrusive efficacy in the promotion of peace and tranquility are a source of constant inspiration to us and they instill in us the confidence that, with the necessary perseverance, we cannot but succeed in the attainment of our objectives."

May I begin by saying how particularly delighted we are for the honour of receiving in Nigerian soil, once again, a distinguished African Statesman who is no longer a stranger among us, and who, indeed, has by now just as much claim as any of us to Nigerian citizenship, not simply because he is from the Republic of Niger, but in fact because the well-known blood affinities between the peoples of our two neighbouring States do confer such a right. You are welcome back to your second home, Mr. President, and to this renewal of friendship with the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

For our part, You Excellency, it is, most certainly a welcome occasion to render homage and demonstrate our fraternal affection to a deserving neighbour, whose proverbial wisdom and rare personal charisma have never ceased to command our universal admiration.

SISTER REPUBLIC

The sister Republic of Niger, Mr. President, bears almost the same name as our own country, Nigeria, not, I believe, by sheer coincidence, but rather because, by the deliberate design of nature, our two nations and our peoples are destined to live together for all time, and therefore to share together each other's fortunes or vicissitudes. It is an association for which we in Nigeria are particularly proud, and to which we attach the greatest importance, because we have found in you always, Mr. President, particularly since our independent existence as sovereign political entities, a most dependable ally and a trusted friend. And I do sincerely hope, Your Excellency, that we in Nigeria are living up to these same ideals as good neighbours, kinsmen and friends.

INSEPARABLE DESTINY

Mr. President, it was less than a year ago that I too visited the Republic of Niger, as it were in exercise of my rights as an honorary citizen of that neighbouring State. The

memories of that visit are, therefore, naturally still fresh in my mind. Regrettably, it was a much shorter visit than I would have wished, on account of numerous other pressing engagements. All the same, however, your Excellency, I should like to seize this opportunity to say, once again, as I did say at the time, that every such visit from one side to the other across our common frontiers, at whatever level, can only serve to reaffirm our common heritage and the inseparable destiny of our two peoples.

GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

For these and similar other reasons, therefore, Mr. President, the Government and people of Nigeria are extremely delighted that your great country has continued to demonstrate her faith in the policy of good neighbourliness, and her dedication to the promotion of bilateral relations with the sister Republic of Nigeria at all possible levels, for the mutual benefit of our two peoples. The Nigerian Government is convinced that this is the most practical way to enhance the socio-economic well-being of our peoples, and the prosperity of the West African sub-region to which we both belong. We whole-heartedly reciprocate your friendly gestures, therefore, and we assure you of our continued goodwill.

PRACTICAL CO-OPERATION

Besides, your visit, on this occasion, has afforded us the golden opportunity to reaffirm our faith in the principles that we passionately share in common, and to review together what progress has been made in the areas of practical co-operation which we have endeavoured to map out for ourselves over the past two decades.

Here, Your Excellency, I am referring of course to our common interests in such Organisations as the Niger-Nigeria joint Commission, the Niger and Chad Basin Commissions, and the Economic Community of West African States which transcends our common borders in its scope. With your permission, Mr. President, I wish here to reiterate our own total commitment to the success of these organs of bilateral and multi-lateral co-operation, because we believe that neither the security nor the prosperity of Nigeria could be considered in isolation from the fortunes of the vicissitudes of our neighbouring States.

I should like, in this regard, to pay glowing tributes to your Excellency's dedication and widely acknowledged role in the promotion of the objectives of sub-regional harmony at the political level, and to the enhancement of sub-regional socio-economic well-being. Your unflinching co-operation in the promotion of the social and economic well being of the peoples of our sub-region, no less than your widely acknowledged wisdom, tact and unobtrusive efficacy in the promotion of peace and tranquility, are a source of constant inspiration to us all, and they instill in us the confidence that, with the necessary perseverance, we cannot but succeed in the attainment of our objectives.

POCKETS OF COLONIALISM

Your Excellency, and Distinguished Guests, we are living through an epoch of momentous events in Africa. It is a time when the remaining pockets of colonialism are fighting a last-ditch battle for survival, and when the task of consolidating our hard-won independence is accompanied by pains, upheavals, and turmoil in many African States. Nigeria and Niger have not been the exception in this regard. Fortunately, however, the periods of tribulation have only left us stronger, and more determined than ever before to join hands with all those, especially in the Southern part of our Continent, who are still fighting for the attainment of human dignity and the most basic human rights in their own God-given land. It is our belief, Mr. President, that peace and

harmony here in our sub-region will substantially reinforce our ability to aid our oppressed brothers and sisters in that unhappy region, until total victory is won over the forces of imperialism, and until all Africa is free.

BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

It is also our hope, Your Excellency, that your short stay with us on this occasion has been a happy one, and that this exchange of visits will further strengthen and enhance the bonds of friendship that now so happily exist between our two neighbouring sister States.

Finally, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, may I invite you to rise, and drink with me a toast to the good health of His Excellency President Kountche, and to the peace and prosperity of the friendly people of Niger.

Long Live the Republic of Niger!

Long Live Niger-Nigerian Friendship!

Long Live ECOWAS!

Long Live the Organisation of African Unity!

Thank you.

Attorneys-General's Conference

The Federal Military Government's paramount consideration in enacting all laws "is and has always been what is best in the public interest." This was emphasised by the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo in a message of goodwill to the conference of Attorneys-General, in the Federation held in Kaduna from 13th to 14th March, 1978, whilst referring to criticisms in certain quarters of some legislations enacted by the Federal Military Government.

It gives me great pleasure to send you this short message on the occasion of the Meeting of the Attorneys-General in the Federation, taking place in Kaduna. I understand that the Meeting is one of a series of regular consultations you hold among yourselves on topics of national importance and that the last one was held in Benin in June 1976.

I believe it is true to say that in every Government in the world, there is established as one of the key departments of Government, a department entrusted with the duty of advising the Government on legal matters and charged with responsibility for the administration of justice generally. Naturally, at the apex of such Department, there is a person learned in the law. In a large number of systems, that person is called the Attorney-General. Yours, therefore, is an office universal in its incidence and, by the very nature of its pre-occupations, one of immediate concern to all citizens. It is, furthermore, one invested with some esoteric quality owing, no doubt, to the public estimation of the manner in which lawyers carry out their calling.

MAJOR ITEMS

It would, therefore, be a hazardous venture for a non-lawyer to seek to comment on intricate technical aspects of your profession. All the same, I cannot pretend not to have some views on the subject of law. In the context of nation building and development of a wholesome society, *law is much too serious a business to be left only in the hands of lawyers*. It is not my intention to pontificate on purely legal issues. Rather my concern is with aspects of law that should be of interest to any one at the helm of affairs of Government. Some of the major items for your deliberation and consideration, I am told, are the issues relative to the administration of justice and I must add that these issues have been engaging the attention of the Federal Military Government. These include the question of delays in the administration of justice, the inadequacy of the number of our courts and the personnel to preside over them, the difficulty of recruiting personnel for the various Ministries of Justice, measures to minimize the financial burden falling on citizens having to resolve to the courts, the reform of areas of our laws, both substantive and procedural, in order to make them more consonant with our present-day needs and our national aspirations.

VARIOUS MEASURES INTRODUCED BY FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT

On the part of the Federal Military Government, various measures all of which are known to you have been introduced or are being contemplated in the areas I have mentioned. The Federal Court of Appeal created in 1976 was intended to relieve the highest court of the land, the Supreme Court, of some of the burden of the cases the court was previously faced with so that appeals could be heard and determined more speedily. One of the considerations that gave rise to the establishment of special tribunals was the *felt* need to have criminal cases determined expeditiously. The deterrent effect of retribution for criminal and anti-social acts might lose its significance if apprehended offenders were not seen to be punished swiftly. Some palliative measures have also been taken to relieve congestion in the courts (particularly the lower ones) and in the prisons. In deserving cases, convicted offenders have been granted remissions in relation to their sentences and a law has been enacted providing for the release from custody of persons who may have been held longer than they would have served had they been convicted for the offences for which they were apprehended. Recently, Interim Judicial Committees were established in every State and vested with power to deal with the appointment, discipline and career advancement of Magistrates. This was intended to enable these matters to be attended to more expeditiously than had been the case in the past. To help relieve the acute shortage of personnel to man the Magistrate Courts, appointments of non-lawyers as Magistrates Grade III are now being made all over the Federation in exercise of powers vested in the Chief Judge of each State. I should also mention the Legal Aid Scheme which I am informed has got off the ground and its impact is being felt in several parts of the country. The Legal Aid Council, within the limits of its finances, is soon to set up branches in the States. Also area courts and customary courts have been reformed, and customary courts are being revived in States that abolished them. Efforts are being made to speed up the processes of adjudication, especially in criminal matters. In this respect the Evidence Act has been amended. One particular issue you will be discussing is the question of the creation of a permanent body for the detailed study of areas of our laws requiring to be progressively reviewed and reformed.

CRITICISMS ON LEGISLATIONS

On a general note, the Federal Military Government cannot be unaware of criticisms in certain quarters of some of the legislations that have been enacted by it. Although some of the criticisms have sought the aid of what they described as ideas of justice of world-wide acceptance in castigating these laws, close examination has invariably shown that what is often opposed is the removal of the gaps and technicalities in the law that might have been used in protecting selfish interests or the interests of small but privileged sections of the community, or the sudden removal of a social malady or economic malpractice from which a few may have been drawing rich dividends. The response of the Federal Military Government has always been that in the struggle to achieve social and economic changes the role of law cannot be a passive one. The law must serve as an instrument of change. It must be one of the tools, albeit a pre-eminent one that must be used in the building of a just, fair and humane society. I have said before on another occasion that this Administration will not be known to posterity as one able to see the ills of society but lacking the will and courage to correct the ills. In spite of its pre-occupation to oversee a peaceful and orderly transition to civilian rule, this Administration will not ignore its legitimate obligation to the vast majority of the citizens of this country, the obligation to remove glaring social injustices and thus help

in the building of a wholesome society deserving the allegiance and loyalty of its peoples. Our paramount consideration in enacting all laws is and has always been what is best in the public interest. And I hope that Nigerians will learn to sacrifice personal interest for overall public interest.

Some of the criticisms to which I have referred have devoted attention almost exclusively to the issue of fundamental rights in relation to the individual. This Administration has repeatedly committed itself to the principles popularly associated with fundamental human rights. Nevertheless, measures which are necessary for the common good must be introduced. Whatever has been done or may hereafter be done during the incumbency of this Administration has been and will be what is considered absolutely necessary to maintain a proper balance between the rights of the individual and the larger ones of the society in which the individual finds his sustenance. Measures will always be introduced which are designed to bring to the fore the duties that must necessarily be complimentary to the rights claimed and the recognition of which are the very basis of a just and fair society.

We are constantly striving to balance, law which will be tyranny without some degree of human liberty, with absolute liberty, which will lead to anarchy without protective and regulatory laws. In our type of society and system and at this stage of our development, this is not an easy exercise. If our laws must be judged, they must be judged in the context of all this background.

APPRECIATION

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation of the manner in which you all have answered the call of the Nation and have been serving the various Governments in the Federation. It is my fervent hope that you will continue to give dedicated and honest service to the Nation.

Ninety-Five

1978/79 Budget Speech

March 31, of every year marks the end of a financial year. Usually, the Head of the Federal Military Government presents the budget for the new financial year. In the budget speech, a review of economic, social and financial fortunes of the country for the year just ended is made and in broad outline, the budgetary and other proposals of the Federal Military Government for the new year is presented to the Nation. The 31st of March 1978 was no exception.

It is the end of another financial year and time for me to address you on the economic, social and political fortunes of the nation during the year just ended and to put before you in broad outline, the budgetary and other proposals of the Federal Military Government for the year that is about to begin. As in the past, the Federal Commissioner for Finance, in his usual briefing, will render detailed information on the Budget itself. My address will concentrate on a general review of the economy, the main highlights of the Budget proposals and other major policy changes of a social or political character.

Despite the various difficulties encountered during the 1977/78 financial year, the Gross Domestic Product grew appreciably even though at a lower rate than in the previous year. Petroleum still remains the greatest contributor to the economy, although its share in the national income declined slightly. Similarly, although the share of Agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product declined during the year, the rate of growth of agricultural production was much higher in 1977/78 than in the preceding year. It is noteworthy that the relative declines in the contributions of agriculture and petroleum were more than offset by increases in the contribution of Industry and a number of other sectors.

PRICE CHANGES

The composite consumer price index which has been used hitherto to calculate the rate of inflation for the whole country, has many weaknesses which make it an unreliable indicator of changes in rural and urban prices. There is no doubt that inflation is still very much with us. It has therefore been decided that the Federal Offices of Statistics should work out a more representative index which will take into account, price changes in both urban and rural areas of the country. However, in the year ahead, efforts will continue to be made to increase food production and improve its storage and distribution as a means of bringing inflation under greater control. Similarly, housing construction will continue, and private sector employers will be required to establish housing estates for their employees and introduce staff housing loan schemes as part of their contribution to the fight against inflation. Public transport especially in our urban centres will be given increased attention.

EXTERNAL TRADE

During the year 1977, Nigeria's exports increased to around ₦8 billion. During the

same period, by comparison, the total value of merchandise imports into Nigeria has been put at about ₦6.7 billion. Taken together, these figures suggest a surplus of some ₦1.3 billion in merchandising trade. However, when payments for personal home remittances, dividend repatriation and services such as shipping and insurance are taken into account, an over-all balance of payments deficit of about ₦600 million is indicated. As a result of these unfavorable developments in our over-all balance of payments position, our foreign reserves which had stood at about ₦3.7 billion at the end of 1975 declined to about ₦3 billion at the end of December, 1977. I have decided to give you these figures so as to enable you to appreciate clearly the need for those budgetary measures designed to conserve our foreign exchange reserves. No doubt some of them will be uncomfortable or even result in hardship, but it is absolutely necessary that they are introduced if the economic and financial health of the nation as well as the welfare of the people at large are to be guarded and maintained.

THE THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Despite the difficulties caused by the scarcity of resources during 1977, substantial achievements were made in the implementation of several major projects under the Third National Development Plan. Among the most notable is the Tin Can Island Port Complex, a project that was boldly conceived and similarly executed in record time. A magnificent achievement by all standards, this project has increased the Lagos ports capacity by ten additional berths. Among many of the immediate benefits yielded by Tin Can Port is the decongestion of our Ports and the substantial reduction in the expensive mid-stream discharge of imported cargo and the elimination of demurrage. There is also the third wharf extension project at Apapa which has made significant progress during the year. Phase one of this project will soon be completed. Work on other ports continue to make satisfactory progress and it is expected that some of the new facilities at Warri and Calabar will be ready for use in the coming year.

In the area of power supply, work is in hand on both the Shiroro and Jebba Hydro-electric power projects which will, on completion, bring about appreciable improvement in the power supply situation. Pending the execution and commissioning of these projects, however, a number of emergency power supply schemes have already been started in order to deal urgently with the problem experienced by short-fall in supply which, in itself, is the direct result of the unprecedented demand for power. This way, it is anticipated that some 520 megawatts will be yielded by the emergency measures in the next few months.

These measures, which are purely of emergency nature, should improve the existing power situation by 50 per cent and should go a long way in arresting the loss now being experienced by industries in intermittent load shedding.

In the industrial sector, significant achievements were made especially in the areas of cement and sugar production. The Shagamu Cement Factory, with an installed capacity of up to 900,000 tonnes per annum, is already in production. Similarly, the Ashaka Cement Mill, with an ultimate rated capacity of 1.2 million tonnes a year, is nearing completion and should be commissioned during the year. There is no doubt also that a measure of success will accompany the development and expansion of other cement projects at Yandev, Ukpilla, Calabar and Sokoto before the end of the year. In the area of sugar manufacture the Savannah Sugar project is nearing completion with prospects of an early commissioning. When fully developed, this estate should produce about 100,000 tonnes of sugar per year.

Our unsatisfactory telephone system calls for some comments. At the beginning of the current Plan period the nation could only boast of some 52,000 telephone lines.

Among the major objectives of the communications sector programme in the Third Plan is the provision of about 700,000 additional lines to the system as a means of making telephone and telex services available in different parts of the country. It is probably over-ambitious to plan for such stupendous increase in view of our present financial situation. The programme, designed in phases, is intended to increase telephone lines by 190,000 in Phase 1, and this is almost completed. Indeed, telephone facilities installed in a number of locations are now ready and are being tested for workability and acceptance. Work is nearing completion in several other centres. There is every indication that the 190,000 telephone lines designed for Phase 1, and spread in about 45 locations in the country, will be ready by the end of the year. Of course, existing lines continue to be maintained and it is envisaged that staff training will be stepped up to provide the necessary back-up technical staff to man adequately the new telecommunication system being installed.

HOUSING

Government recognises the crucial importance of housing especially in the urban area. Although the Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Environment was merged in the course of the year with other Ministries, the high priority attached to the provision of housing by Government remains. But programme execution is henceforth a matter for State and Local Government to pursue vigorously. We shall therefore continue to allocate within our limited resources, funds and other resources for housing development in conjunction with the efforts of the State Governments and private employers. With regard to the latter, it will now be a requirement that every firm or organisation with at least 500 employees should introduce a Housing Scheme or/and a Housing Loan Scheme for its employees. For its part as a major employer, the Federal Military Government has decided to sell the 1,000 housing units in the Satellite Town to public officers on an owner-occupier basis. Efforts will be made to have houses to be similarly distributed annually. This is additional to the efforts of Federal Housing Authority and State Housing Corporations as builders of houses for the general public.

ROAD ACCIDENTS

The reckless and wasteful loss of lives on our roads require extra measures to stem the tide. In addition to such measures like mobile courts, increase in traffic police, highway patrols and special road corps being taken by States, the Police has been authorised to regulate long night travelling by heavy duty trucks and trailers on our roads as a first step.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

In recognition of the critical role of agriculture, especially food production in the nation's economy, this Administration has given the highest priority to agriculture by making direct investments in food and livestock production. Our efforts are beginning to bear fruit especially in the South Chad and Sokoto Rima Basins where over 50,000 hectares of irrigated land will be brought under cultivation for the production of rice, wheat and other food crops within the next year. In addition, Government had offered in the last few years, several incentives for the production of food and cash crops. Apart from the Operation Feed the Nation Programme to which resources have been devoted, Government approved during the last two years the following incentives to boost agricultural production:

- (i) five-year tax holiday for those willing to invest in combined agricultural production and processing;
- (ii) the introduction of an Agricultural Credit Scheme to be operated by the Commercial banks and guaranteed by Government through the Central Bank;
- (iii) the abolition of import duties on tractors and other machinery and equipment used for agricultural production;
- (iv) the removal of import duties on raw materials for the manufacture of livestock feeds;
- (v) the supply of fertilizer to farmers in substantial quantities with a 75% subsidy; and
- (vi) the establishment of subsidized tractor-hiring services throughout the country.

Government is of course aware that the high and quick returns on investments especially in transportation and distributive trade have been partly responsible for lack of adequate response to agricultural incentives. However, the situation in the field of domestic food production calls for new incentives by Government and a major and sustained campaign for making this nation self-sufficient at least in food production. The Government has therefore decided, in addition to the existing incentives, to introduce the following concessions for purposes of increasing agricultural investment and production:

- (i) Integrated agricultural production and processing will now be transferred from Schedule II to Schedule III of the Enterprises Promotion Decree as a means of encouraging Nigerian and foreign investors to collaborate in investing substantial sums in agricultural production.
- (ii) Agricultural production will continue to be regarded as a favoured sector under the credit guidelines while the processing and marketing of agricultural produce will continue to be treated as a preferred sector.
- (iii) All capital expenditures on plant and equipment incurred in agricultural production by individuals or companies will, apart from attracting existing capital allowances, enjoy an additional investment allowance of 10%.
- (iv) Where losses are suffered by a company engaged in agriculture, such losses can now be carried forward indefinitely until they can be written off against future profits.
- (v) Where loans are granted to aid investment in agriculture, the interests payable on such loans will now enjoy special exemption from taxation.
- (vi) Those who lease out agricultural equipment will now be given capital allowances for tax purposes, and

- (vii) As a means of ensuring adequate supply of food within Nigeria, the re-exportation of imported food items has been prohibited.

Admittedly, most of these measures are generally designed for medium and large production farmers. In the coming financial year, more attention will be paid to land clearing and preparation especially in the more thickly forested areas of the country. Efforts in the area of improved seeds and breeds, supply of fertilizers and portable machinery and implements for small-scale farmers along with encouragement of farming co-operatives will be intensified. Distribution and marketing of food which having been left un-organised for a long time will be given attention through co-operatives.

It is my hope and that of the Supreme Military Council that these various measures and incentives will boost agricultural investment and production in a substantial manner and ensure that Nigeria is once again able to feed herself as in the past.

HIGHER EDUCATION

I will want to reiterate the Federal Military Government policy on students loan in our Institutions of Higher Learning. In recognition of the fact that there are genuine indigent students, State Governments have been asked to take on the responsibility for assisting such students through loans, bursary awards and scholarships. The State Governments are closer to the homes and families of such students and they can best ascertain their needs. Some financial assistance has been provided to encourage State Governments in shouldering loan responsibility for their needy students. Federal Military Government will, therefore, no longer grant new loans but those already enjoying loan facilities will continue to enjoy them to the end of their courses in accordance with the terms of the loan.

Special attention will continue to be paid to high-level manpower which this Administration believes is an essential ingredient of national development. To this end, and in spite of tight budget, the existing policy of free tuition in our universities will continue.

BUDGET PROPOSALS

As you know, there has been a significant reduction in the demand for crude petroleum which is our main source of revenue and foreign exchange earnings. The projected revenue for the next financial year will certainly be less than we realised last year. The Supreme Military Council has therefore decided to reduce Federal Military Government recurrent expenditure commitments from about ₦3.1 billion during the outgoing year to about ₦2.8 billion for the next year. In order to make this reduction of 10 per cent in recurrent expenditures it became necessary to cut down on some areas of expenditure and to affect savings wherever necessary as in the re-organisation of Departments and Ministries. The exercise is indeed continuing and a Committee is currently looking very critically at various Government agencies with a view to reducing waste by avoiding duplication of effort or repetition of functions by several public organs.

In spite of the necessary reductions in recurrent spending, it will still be necessary to raise loans and make special efforts to collect more revenues, as our ongoing development programmes must continue to be prosecuted. The projected short-fall on capital accounts to be made good through these efforts, amounts to about ₦4.3 billion. This figure clearly dramatises the need for sacrifices on the part of all citizens. No country has yet developed in history without sacrifice either of its people or of others. In antiquities, and even in more recent history, many societies had the cushion of other people's labour to absorb the shock-waves of development. Some had the

advantage of the slow occupation and exploitation, through cheap labour, of vast Continents, rich in natural resources and abundantly endowed by nature. Some arrived at self-sustaining economy through bloody revolution and pressure.

Today, such conditions do not obtain anywhere or in Nigeria. There are no slaves or the cheap labour they provide; no vast and undeveloped resources to tap and exploit at leisure, nor do we want a bloody revolution. But if we accept that there is no salvation without sacrifice, we all have to make the sacrifices. We must get out of the illusion of wanting to be like Europe or America without making the necessary sacrifice and without going through some of the process those settled societies have gone through. Development has never been a painless process. We must all embark on the greatest care and economy in expenditure by all public institutions, and a return to sanity in the interest of a national economy. The nation must cut its coat according to its cloth. Realism must take the place of expensive and unjustifiable taste for foreign goods of all description.

Apart from reducing recurrent expenditures, the Federal Military Government has decided to consolidate its development efforts during the next fiscal year by confining capital expenditure for the most part to projects that are already being implemented. Of course, a few new projects will be embarked upon, especially those that will complement investments already made and maximise utilisation.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The accepted Capital Budget for the 1978/79 financial year is ₦6.7 billion. As of now, the total capital expenditure approved by the Supreme Military Council stands at ₦5.2 billion. Of the ₦5.2 billion now approved, ₦3.3 billion or approximately 63 per cent will be disbursed in the directly productive sectors such as agriculture, industry, transportation, and so on.

FISCAL MEASURES

To be able to finance our recurrent and capital commitments, as already described, it has been necessary to introduce and revamp a number of fiscal measures. In this connection, there has been a general upward revision in import and excise duties as a means of raising additional revenue, protecting domestic industries, and discouraging the importation and consumption of non-essential foreign manufactures. Furthermore, a port development surcharge which was first introduced during the civil war, has been re-introduced as a means of raising additional revenue for sustaining Government port development efforts. Similarly, company tax which now stands at 45 per cent will go up to 50 per cent during the next financial year.

Hitherto, the payment of tax by a number of companies was often delayed for several months or even years, either because the accounts were not ready or auditing had not been completed or because there had been some disagreement about the tax assessed. This has meant, in practice, that revenues due to Government are often held up for long periods with adverse consequences for the national treasury. In view of the tight financial situation the country faces and in order to ensure that companies pay their taxes promptly, it has been decided that henceforth, companies, declaring interim dividends will immediately pay, within 30 days, provisional tax on the interim dividend on the understanding that any excess payment will be refundable at the end of the assessment year. Non-resident share-holders who have paid their tax will be allowed to remit their share of the interim dividend on production of necessary tax clearance.

Provisional accounts must now be prepared by companies not later than 3 months after the end of the accounting year and advance payments made to the Revenue

Department on the basis of the unaudited accounts by a process of self-assessment within 30 days.

Amended Assessments, where applicable, will be made later on, when final and audited accounts are prepared and submitted to the Federal Inland Revenue.

To raise more revenue still and make citizens recognize and accept the need to pay for services and facilities provided by Government, it has also been decided to introduce the payment of tolls on our major highways and bridges and also increase substantially, airport tax which will be paid by those who are wealthy enough to afford international travels. Furthermore, as a means of discouraging tax evasion or tax avoidance, all those, be they individuals, partnerships or companies who may wish to transact any business or have any dealing whatsoever with any agency or organ of Government will be required henceforth to present tax clearance certificates as a condition precedent for the transaction of such business. In consideration of these various tax measures, it is envisaged that Federal Government revenue from non-oil sources, will substantially increase. This marks the beginning of a conscious and deliberate effort by Government to reduce the vulnerability represented by heavy dependence on oil. From now on, we shall endeavour to progressively develop and nurture other sources of income and revenue.

As in the case of the Federal Government, the State Governments have recurrent and capital commitments which exceed by far, the resources available to them. In order therefore to raise more revenue at the State level, purchase tax will be introduced by the State Governments in the course of the 1978/79 fiscal year in respect of professional fees, charges, etc., and also Hotel and Catering services.

Other sources will be tapped which in addition to providing revenue for the States will also serve the purpose of moderating the society along the path of fairness, justice, humaneness and services. This is absolutely necessary if we as a nation must avoid the political and social instability which will ensue if nothing is done at this stage to arrest the social polarisation which is occurring even now as a result of the existence side by side in our society of the extremes of affluence and abject poverty. Government commends and supports hard work and has no objection to any individual enjoying the fruits of his labour. But we must also accept that every Nigerian should work for and earn his or her living regardless of the accident of parentage and the advantage that might accrue to an individual. What the nation must guard against is the tendency that our error of omission or commission might produce and facilitate in founding a generation of idle parasites who will live on the wealth and achievement of others without having to make any meaningful contribution to society through individual effort. In the circumstances of today, Government at all levels in this country must make effort not only to widen sources of revenue collection so as to reduce the incidence of avoidance and evasion of taxation.

There is, therefore, one point I should again emphasise and that is the decision already taken to establish a Task Force which will examine the issue of equitable burden of taxation on some segments of the society with particular regard to self-employed individuals, professional practitioners, partnerships and un-incorporated businesses and make recommendations. We must all shoulder our tax burden adequately and should not depend on whether we derive our incomes through monthly salaries and wages or by other means.

MONETARY AND BANKING POLICY

The Supreme Military Council has decided that the credit guidelines approved last year will remain substantially unchanged during the next financial year. The only major modification is the reduction in the permissible rate of increase in credit

expansion from 40 per cent to 30 per cent in respect of major banking institutions. The purpose of this reduction is to regulate total money supply in the economy as a means of moderating the rate of inflation. Similarly, the stabilisation security introduced last year will continue to be issued while additional liquidity in the system will be mopped up through advance payments for non-essential imports. This has already been introduced on a selective basis by a number of commercial banks. The change now being made is that the advances to be paid with effect from 1st April, 1978, will be 100 per cent of the value of non-essential imports and these will be deposited with the Central Bank so as to effectively demonetise such deposits and thereby reduce the level of liquidity in the banking system. It should be explained that essential imports such as machinery, raw materials, medicaments and selected food items will be exempted from this scheme.

INCOMES POLICY

The wage and incomes guidelines introduced last April have been substantially successful as evidenced by the existence of industrial peace during the year and by a small but definite drop in the rate of inflation. Government has had to introduce a few measures in this Budget which would compel all of us to tighten our belts a little. Experience has shown that increases in wages and salaries have rarely produced the desired result. More often than not they have resulted in disproportionate increase in prices thus more than nullifying the advantages of the wage increases to the wage earner. Instead of granting a general wage increase to workers the Supreme Military Council has decided to look into ways and means of giving non-wages or salary relief to them in such a way that it will be more meaningful and non-inflationary. Towards this end, a Panel to work out the best way of giving relief to workers without causing increase in prices of goods and services is being set up. The panel will comprise members from the public and private sectors of the economy as well as representatives of the Nigerian Labour Congress and its functions is to examine various areas with a view to bringing relief to workers. Areas which come readily to mind are food, transport and housing. In the case of transport, the Federal Military Government will take immediate measures that are bound to bring improvements by assisting the State Military Governments particularly as regards transportation in State Capitals. In the case of Lagos, the Federal Military Government will supplement the efforts of the State Government by providing more buses in order to ease mobility within metropolitan Lagos.

DIVIDENDS

In recognition of the need to encourage fresh investment in the industrial sector and in the country generally, it has been decided that gross dividends to be paid to investors should stand at 40 per cent. With a new tax rate of 50 per cent, this means a net receipt of 20 per cent. As in the case of last year, however, script issues will not attract dividends.

PRICE CONTROL

After giving due consideration to the various commodities under price control, Government has decided to take the following commodities, among others, off price control—Beer, Stout, Soft Drinks and Cigarettes. In respect to beer, stout and soft drinks, it is obvious that de-controlling their prices will end the illegal hoarding which has virtually removed these commodities from the open market. Retail price maintenance for these and other selected products of local manufacture will however be introduced to reduce profiteering.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Following the drop in foreign exchange earnings as a result of projected lower sales of crude petroleum, a modest but adequate foreign exchange budget has been prepared for the new financial year. One of the measures to be taken to ensure adherence to this new budget is the introduction of import supervision before shipment. This is a scheme whereby competent company and reputable international institutions will be retained by the Federal Military Government to examine all shipments of certain categories of goods destined for the Nigerian market *before* shipment from the countries of manufacture. The task of the company will be to confirm that the goods are in accordance with the specifications of the importer and that the prices being charged are reasonable and competitive. When the scheme is operational, applications to the Central Bank for foreign exchange in respect to goods coming under the scheme will have to be accompanied by certificates issued by the designated company. As an additional precaution, public officials with the requisite expertise and orientation will cross-check the work of the agents from time to time.

REVENUE ALLOCATION

Fellow citizens, in my Budget speech last year, I informed the nation that a Technical Committee on Revenue Allocation would be appointed to examine the adequacy of the present revenue allocation formula and make recommendations. The Committee has already submitted its Report, along with its recommendations. For reasons which have adversely affected our body politic in the past, the Committee has rejected the old emotive and controversial revenue-sharing criteria such as population, derivation, equality and so on. Instead the Committee has recommended five new principles, namely:

- (i) equality of access to development opportunities;
- (ii) national minimum standards for national integration;
- (iii) absorptive capacity;
- (iv) independent revenue and tax effort; and
- (v) fiscal efficiency.

The adoption of these principles raises the problems of definition and measurement. Such problems can certainly be solved as the Committee has tried to show in its Report. The attraction of the new system is the fact that it avoids the use of the old controversial criteria and substitutes for them, objective economic, financial and social criteria which cannot be manipulated easily to the advantage of any particular State. There is also the point of flexibility made in the Report that the new criteria should be reviewed each time a development Plan is being prepared, which is about once in five years.

The Supreme Military Council has approved the major recommendations in the Report and has directed that the new criteria should be used for incremental revenue allocation among the States during the 1979/80 fiscal year. In addition, the Report has been forwarded to the Constituent Assembly for consideration along with the Supreme Military Council's comments and decision on it.

MILITARY

The Federal Military Government is aware of the current debate going on in the country on whether or not the Nigerian Army should demobilize so as to reduce military expenditures. I would like to reiterate that the Federal Military Government would not release soldiers without preparing them for civil life. Already, the Government has established rehabilitation centres and other measures are being planned so that on leaving the Army, any soldier can be easily integrated into the society without any difficulties. In the last one year over 12,000 soldiers have gone on discharge after proper training and preparation for civilian life. Most of them have settled down in their new surroundings and have been fully integrated with their various communities. Efforts will continue in this direction during the new financial year and soldiers leaving the Army will be trained and given their retirement benefits before discharge.

Fellow Nigerians, the outgoing year has been eventful both on the domestic and foreign front. I believe as a nation, we faced our problems squarely and with determination. The incoming year will bring in more problems especially as we move towards the full implementation of our programmes. There are issues that require examination and change where necessary. We need to be more self-reliant and less dependent on imports we could do without. We must curb our expensive taste and consume less. We must gear ourselves to greater production and should aim at self-sufficiency in the areas of essential commodities we could very well produce for ourselves. As an agricultural country, we should be able to feed ourselves and others and not rely on food imports.

We cannot seriously regard ourselves as economically advancing until we have been able to lay the firm foundation for economic take-off into sustained growth by ensuring the local manufacturing of most of our consumer goods, agricultural and industrial machinery and transport equipment. Trading activities in manufactured goods of other economies and commission agencies though remunerative in terms of quick profit, will not give us the necessary foundation for economic take-off. I therefore call on our entrepreneurs and businessmen and women to involve themselves and their foreign contracts more in productive sector of our economy either agricultural or industrial. Every encouragement will be given at all levels of Government.

Some of the measures we have taken are bound to cause hardship, but nothing worthwhile is achieved or endures that does not entail sacrifice and hardship. In any case, it is time that we in Nigeria, like most developing countries, learn to realise that the mode of living we have adopted for ourselves has no foundation or relevance to our cultural and material background. The false start has to start giving way now in order to enable us to build on a firmer ground and in consonance with the national attributes and the level of our attainment. Nigerians must stop to believe and behave as if we are a member of the club of developed nations. The reality of our situation is that with a population of well over 80 million people judging by the number of registered voters and our present Gross National Product, we must, by our capital income, be one of the poorest nations in the world.

Our emphasis will continue to be on self-reliance and self-sacrifice in development rather than helping others whose situations and background are different from ours for solutions to our basic socio-economic problems. The burden and sacrifice of development and of creating a wholesome society must fall proportionately on all those living within our borders according to their means and ability.

Good night.

The Khartoum Address

The 15th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government was held in July 1978, in Khartoum, Sudan. In a powerful address to the assembly, which received world wide coverage, General Obasanjo analysed situations in Africa and handed down admonition to all those who deserved it—foreign powers as well as African states. For instance, he told foreign powers: "We totally reject as instrument of neo-colonialism any collective security scheme for Africa, fashioned and teleguided from outside Africa for economic, political or military interest of any super bloc." And for the African leaders he had this: "We African leaders must also realise that we cannot be asking outside powers to leave us alone while in most cases, it is our own actions which provide them the excuse to interfere with our affairs . . . We must have the courage to tell ourselves what is unjust and what is immoral so that we can ensure amongst ourselves certain minimum levels of decent leadership and good government for our people"

May I begin by associating myself as well as the Government and entire people of Nigeria with the expressions of felicitations and support addressed to you on your well-deserved election as Chairman for this our 15th Ordinary Session. Your past record of statesmanly interventions on behalf of your immediate neighbours in particular and the African Continent in general, strengthens our confidence and belief that you are more than suited to the onerous responsibility of giving prime guidance to the affairs of our Organisation during the coming year. We reiterate our constant support and wish you well as you assume the office of the Chairman of the O.A.U. Our good wishes and congratulations also go to all the members of the newly elected Bureau.

Mr. Chairman, I recall that at our meeting last year in Libreville, I highlighted three broad areas of major concern for us and for our Continent. These were the various intra-African conflicts, the continuing liberation struggles in Southern Africa, and the problem of apartheid and the neglected question of our people's socio-economic development and the need for increased intra-African co-operation to find solutions to them. In the intervening year, we have made some headway in tackling these problems. We showed awareness of the sense of crisis that the moment demanded through various *ad hoc* mediation groups. We have made a degree of progress in our continuing search to restore normalcy in the area of conflict between some neighbouring member-States of our Organisation, and the doors are still open to negotiations to resolve the complex problems in other areas. We are also happy to note that a spirit of detenté is gradually manifesting itself among the members of the East African Community whose demise we very much lament. These developments are significant, Mr. Chairman, and we should not overlook their importance in our desire to see more dramatic breakthroughs. Of course, in the meantime, new intra-African conflicts have flared up and much remains to be done to consolidate and build upon the gains we have already made in resolving the older conflicts. This task requires us to continue to show statesmanship and a willingness to understand the other side's point of view. I am confident that these qualities will prevail.

The past year has witnessed new developments in the quest for the establishment of a truly independent Zimbabwe under genuine African majority rule as well as the efforts to secure the independence of Namibia from the illegal occupation of the racist

regime in South Africa. The Internal Settlement in Zimbabwe agreed upon between the White Minority and the illegal regime and some African groups who were formerly regarded as nationalist leaders has been rightly rejected by the majority of the Africans in Zimbabwe and by the entire international community. The Internal Settlement enables Ian Smith to continue to assert white supremacy in Zimbabwe and offers the mirage of power and a false sense of participation to his African acolytes. The Internal Settlement settled nothing. It brought no peace to Zimbabwe and indeed, it motivated the people of Zimbabwe to raise the level and intensity of their resistance. What has been settled, however, is the fact that, as we have always said, it is only the Patriotic Front which had been fighting the armed struggle against the Smith Regime. It is significant that the joint calls of Bishop Muzorewa, Rev. Sithole and Chief Chirau for a ceasefire have gone unheeded by the fighting forces. Under the circumstances, the duty of free Africa is clear. We should continue to fully support the Patriotic Front, duly recognised by the O.A.U. as the leaders of the military campaign to free Zimbabwe in their efforts to prosecute the war. We, in return, demand from the Patriotic Front their reciprocal duty to speedily complete the process of bringing their political and military forces under a unified command. And now that the responsibility for the speedy liberation of Zimbabwe revolves primarily on them, we hope that the Patriotic Front, in the spirit of our decision in Libreville last year, will continue to keep the doors open to other nationalists willing to be engaged in the armed struggle to free Zimbabwe and who may wish to join forces with them. It is through such conciliatory postures that the bloody civil war which we all dread might follow in the wake of independence can be averted. It is also through such postures that outside military intervention can be avoided in an independent Zimbabwe.

We have always maintained that it is only through the armed struggle that the Zimbabwe impasse can be speedily resolved. Even if a peacefully negotiated and acceptable settlement were possible, it is only through the pressure of success on the battle field that Ian Smith would be induced to the negotiation table. Thus, while we are firmly committed to the armed struggle, we have never closed the doors to the possibility of a political settlement. We believe that there should be a place for all Rhodesians, African as well as white, in an independent Zimbabwe. For this reason we particularly welcomed the Anglo-American proposals. However, these proposals now appear to have been largely overtaken by events and we hope it is clear to all that no negotiated settlement acceptable to all the parties in Zimbabwe can be achieved without first removing Smith, who is the major impediment towards this end, and without setting aside the unacceptable principles of the internal settlement. We therefore urge realistic and responsible white opinion in Zimbabwe to add theirs to the voice of reason and to see the internal settlement for the mirage that it is. This is the way that the impending holocaust can be avoided.

Coming to Namibia, the new element which our meeting in Libreville and the agreements reached recently in the proximity talks between representatives of the five Western Nations on the Security Council and the SWAPO leadership: We welcome this agreement as providing the basis for final negotiations for independence of Namibia. We hope that the South African regime will avoid characteristic double dealings and blind intransigence in these negotiations. In the meantime, we shall continue to give our full support to SWAPO in every way we can. Certainly we reject any attempt from any quarter to impose on Namibia a minority illegal regime which does not enjoy the support of SWAPO, the authentic representatives of the people of Namibia. I am sure there will be appropriate opportunities during this session for us to contribute to the discussion of other equally important subjects, particularly the

situation in the Horn of Africa, where Nigeria, as Chairman of OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMISSION made some efforts toward a resolution of the dispute. We hope that the courageous initiative of President Sadat in seeking just and honourable solutions to the problems of the Middle East will not continue to be spurned by Israel. At this stage, I think it would be appropriate to address our minds to a development which by far poses the most serious challenge to Africa's sovereignty and the freedom of our people. I refer to the aftermath of the recent event in a sister African Country. Let me, at the outset, reiterate Nigeria's position on the question of external intervention in the affairs of any sovereign nation. We condemn all such interventions without reservation.

We are, however, of the view that we need to be quite clear about what we mean by external intervention in the context of contemporary political developments in Africa. Typical examples of this kind of foreign interference we have in mind and which I believe were foreseen by the O.A.U. Charter were the criminal mercenary-led aggressions against the Republic of Guinea in 1970 and the externally organised invasion of the Republic of Benin in January last year and the recent foreign mercenary take-over of the Government of the Comoro Islands. These were operations purposely mounted in order to protect foreign interests and to subvert the stability and sovereignty of specific African States. Unless we wish to indulge in self-deception by avoiding unpalatable truths, we should recognise the recent intervention by certain ex-colonial European powers in Central Africa for what it really was. Simply put, it is a most naked and unashamed attempt to determine what Africa's true collective interests should be. We reject the notion that Africa's interests or collective security needs can be discussed or determined by the Western nations or anybody else for that matter without our consent or without consultation with delegations mandated by the O.A.U.

We are aware, Mr. Chairman, of the West's concern at what they consider to be Soviet and Cuban intervention in Africa. Our own assessment is that, considering the peculiarities of our social systems, no African country is about to embrace communism wholesale any more than we are willing to embrace capitalism. To the extent that any African country can be considered by the West to have "gone communist", it was a direct result of the failure of Western policies. The fact of the matter is that Africa was colonised by Western powers and not the Soviets. In the struggle for independence and freedom, the only source of effective support was the Eastern Bloc countries. The Soviets were therefore invited into Africa for a purpose and that purpose was to liberate the countries to which they were invited from centuries of cruelty, degradation, oppression and exploitation. Unless we wish an undesirable situation to remain in Africa—and recent maneuvers in Europe and America strengthen our suspicion in this respect—we should not be over-concerned by the presence of those we invited to fight for specific causes and *no more*. The Cubans are, of course much of a newcomer to Africa. Their presence has the same background as the Soviets. In every case where Cuba's intervention was established, they intervened as a consequence of failure of Western policies and on behalf of legitimate African interests. We have no right to condemn the Cubans nor the countries which felt they needed Cuban assistance to consolidate their sovereignty or territorial integrity.

In the context of foreign intervention in Africa, there are three parties involved. There are the Soviets and other socialist countries, the Western Powers, and we, the Africans. If the interests of Africa are to be safeguarded, there are certain considerations which each of the parties must constantly bear in mind. To the Soviets

and their friends, I should like to say that having been invited to Africa in order to assist in the liberation struggle and the consolidation of national independence, they should not over-stay their welcome. Africa is not about to throw off one colonial yoke for another. Rather they should hasten the political, economic and military capability of their African friends to stand on their own. We recognise that African countries are unequal partners in an inter-dependent world community, and we shall, therefore, continue to need external assistance of all kinds for many years to come. But in the effort to develop our economies and improve the quality of life of our peoples, we must be the prime determinants of our destiny. We need in Africa massive economic assistance to make up for the lost ground of the colonial era, and not military hardware for self-destruction and sterile ideological slogans which have no relevance to our African society. The longer we continue to be spoon-fed by other powers, the longer we delay our indigenous capacity to learn and improve from one level to another. The Soviets should therefore see it to be in their interest not to seek to perpetually maintain their presence in Africa even after the purpose for which they were invited has been achieved. This way, they run the risk of being dubbed a new imperial power as indeed they already are being called even by those with whom they have had long association. Let the Soviets and their collaborators heed this timely counsel.

To the Western powers, I say that they should act in such a way that we are not led to believe they have different concepts of independence and sovereignty for Africa and for Europe. A new Berlin-type conference is not the appropriate response to the kind of issues thrown up by the recent Kolwezi episode. Paratroop drops in the twentieth century are no more acceptable to us than the gunboats of the last century were to our ancestors. Convening conferences in Europe and America to decide the fate of Africa raises too many ugly spectres which should be best forgotten both in ours and the European's interests. The detente which the Western nations seek with the Soviets in Europe cannot be effective without extending it to include Africa as well. The Western nations' primary interest in Africa is our raw materials. But they should begin to see the market Africa offers to their manufactured goods as even more important since they can develop substitutes for raw materials, but not for markets. If they see Africa primarily as a market rather than a source of raw materials, they would realise the importance of ensuring that they do not disturb our peace and stability. Conflicts and their effects cannot be contained within easily definable boundaries and it is in the interest of all concerned to avoid them, let alone initiate and encourage them. We totally reject as instrument of neo-colonialism any collective security scheme for Africa fashioned and teleguided from outside Africa for economic, political or military interest of any super power bloc. It is an insult to the dignity and intellect of the African man.

We African leaders must also realise that we cannot be asking outside powers to leave us alone while, in most cases, it is our own actions which provide them with the excuse to interfere with our affairs. We must begin to depart from the diplomatic habit of closing our eyes to what should be deprecated simply because it is happening in an African country or because it is being committed by a fellow African leader. We must have the courage to tell ourselves what is unjust and what is immoral so that we can ensure amongst ourselves certain minimum levels of decent leadership and good government for our people. The idea of divine leadership in Africa is as past as the idea of divine kingship is in Europe. We hold sacred trusts for our people and their interests, and the interests of succeeding African generations must be paramount in our minds at all times. Government, in its broadest sense, is justice and nothing more; and nothing that is morally wrong and grossly unjust can be politically right within any

society and no less in an African society. For as long as we neglect the true interests of the generality of our peoples, so long will other powers find it easy to interfere in our internal affairs and divide our peoples. There is no better defense against external forces than the Government which endeavours to carry the majority of the population along with it and treats its people fairly decently. It is safer and more secure than the one-sided so-called mutual defense pact between unequal partners of European and African countries based on colonial relations. We must not allow the East and the West to divide us and set us against ourselves under any guise.

All this is not to say that Nigeria does not recognise the cruel dilemmas facing all of us in Africa. Most of us are still grappling with the basic questions of national integration, and consolidating our independence. Some of us have not even begun to enjoy the kind of internal peace and stability necessary for planning the improvement of the material conditions of our people. But sooner or later, we must begin to pay attention to the real problems of Africa. And the problems which affect the daily lives of our ordinary citizenry are not questions of foreign ideologies and which foreigner has greater right to be in Africa. Their problems are about sustenance, education, health and about shelter. After nearly two decades of independence, we still have not begun to satisfy the expectations early generations of African leaders have raised. Now, we can no longer delay meeting these expectations, and certainly we can no longer hide behind real or imagined foreign machinations for our own failings. We cannot continue to tolerate ever widening gaps between the few rich and the overwhelming poor of our populations. However, there is need to overhaul the machinery provided in the Charter of our Organisation and other arrangements so far made for dealing effectively with genuine misunderstanding and conflicts amongst African states. We need to ensure that we have adequate machinery that can grapple with the problems of modern and contemporary Africa. Therefore, as we endeavour to pick our way through the many pitfalls that lie in our path, we need to face the brutal realities of our situations and not grope around in darkness. We must not shut our eyes to realities and we must come up with realistic solutions. It is the hope of my delegation that the 15th Summit of the O.A.U. will be a Summit of realism and not one of self-deception. We hope that it will be a Summit of frank exchanges and concrete results and not a Summit of pleasantries and empty rhetoric which achieve no purpose.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.



Fig. 37 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo discussing a point of interest with President Nimeiri of Sudan when he attended the 15th Ordinary Session of the OAU in Khartoum in July, 1978.



Fig. 38 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo is seen welcoming guests at the State House, Marina, for the Garden Party on the 18th Independence Anniversary Celebrations.



Fig. 39 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo is seen reviewing the Forces Parade at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos during the 18th Independence Anniversary Celebrations.



Fig. 40 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo is seen watering the first tree he planted after launching the Afforestation and Land Conservation Campaign in Sokoto.

Afforestation Programme to Combat the Sahara Threat

Nigeria launched her Arid Zone Afforestation Programme to check the encroachment of the Sahara Desert on the northern parts of the country. On Thursday, August 17, 1978, General Obasanjo performed the formal launching ceremony of the programme in Sokoto.

We are gathered here today on this very important occasion to witness the formal launching of the afforestation programme which is designed to check the encroachment of the Sahara Desert on the Northern parts of our country. It is imperative that this programme is pursued with all seriousness at all levels of Government as well as through individual and community effort to ensure its unqualified success. The consequences of failure are too grim to contemplate.

The sub-Saharan drought of the early 1970s and its effect on the people of our Continent drew world attention to the chronic problems of survival on those occupying areas bordering the Sahel as well as the general development of areas on the desert margins. Most alarming was the apparently relentless spread of deserts and for us, the southward extension of the Sahara in particular. The world-wide reaction to the phenomenon of desertification is reflected in several resolutions of the United Nations praying the International Community to take urgent and meaningful measures to combat the spread of deserts especially in Africa where so far not much has been done to vitiate this serious threat.

In Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, the process of desertification is a result of a combination of several factors some of which are natural and completely beyond our control while others, as we very well know are the direct result of human and animal inter-action with the environment.

An important factor, outside our immediate control, in the desertification process in the Sahelian areas is the variable rainfall from year to year. In years of very low rainfall, there is less growth of vegetable matter to support human and animal populations. General degradation of vegetation results in desert conditions in areas formerly covered by vegetation. When there are two or more successive years of below average rainfall, the effects of the droughts become even more disastrous resulting in extensive crop failures and livestock mortality. In serious cases, this leads to migration and desertion of homes by their owners. Among the few examples of such calamity in living memory was the recent 1972 drought that affected Nigeria among other West African countries. Droughts are natural phenomena which constitute a major aspect of the desertification process. But we do also know that their harm can be mitigated greatly through a variety of means in land consolidation through the correct land use, water control, preservation of vegetation to protect the soil, controlled grazing, etc.

Desertification has also been known to accompany a prolonged use of traditional farming methods in the semi-arid areas of our country. The results of such methods often lead to complete removal of vegetation from the soil surface as well as burning of plant and other organic matters on the farms both before, during and after harvests. Grains and plant stalks are often burnt, leaving the ground bare and unprotected after the harvest. This practice renders the sandy soils very vulnerable to erosion by wind and water making them less capable of supporting crops and other forms of vegetation. Consequently, yields from the farms decline rapidly over a few years. Because of the semi-arid nature of the environment, the rate of soil improvement through fallowing is very slow and the pressure on land due to population density and growth makes fallowing impracticable. Thus farmers are ultimately forced to abandon the locations for new sites where the process of soil and landscape degradation is repeated all over. To this must also be added the problem of over-grazing which occurs in the dry season.

Apart from over-grazing of the available pastures, branches of evergreen trees are lopped to provide fodder for livestock during this season. This practice results in further degeneration of the already scanty vegetation which characterises the semi-arid areas. Quite often the herdsmen intentionally set fires to the grasses to stimulate growth of dormant grass buds, as a means of ensuring availability of fresh green pastures. These fires, which are mostly uncontrolled further help to destroy existing vegetation and interfere with natural regeneration.

The dense population which inhabits the semi-arid zone depends entirely on firewood as fuel for cooking and heating their homes during the cold harmattan nights. The result is that there is an intensive exploitation of the scanty vegetation to meet the ever-increasing demand for firewood, and for building purposes. Even roots of plants are dug up in the search for fuel wood, while grasses are cut for roofing and fencing. The slow rate of tree growth in this zone makes it impossible for the regeneration of forest vegetation to cope with the rate and intensity of exploitation. This has predictably led to a decline in vegetation cover and a general deterioration in environmental conditions.

Our total landmass seriously threatened by the encroachment of the Sahara Desert stands today at approximately 125,000 square kilometers (about 12 per cent of the total land area of the country). In Sokoto State, desert conditions now extend for about 240 kilometers South of the Nigerian border. This has rendered about 17,000 square kilometers of farmland almost barren. Similar situations exist in the extreme northern parts of Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Borno States. As you know, most of our people live by farming and the loss of farmland is therefore a very serious matter, a matter of life and death.

It can be seen therefore, that the scanty vegetation which characterises the semi-arid areas of Nigeria together with the prevailing unfavourable climatic conditions, the loose fragile soils and the high population density, together provide a rather favourable setting for the various agencies of desertification.

The problem of desertification has long been with us, but greater awareness was created by the 1972 drought of which we are all witnesses. Efforts to combat the desertification commenced in Nigeria nearly thirty years ago: organised tree planting campaigns and exercises were reported in the early 1940s in Borno and Katsina Provinces. In those provinces alone, some 2,000,000 seedlings were said to have been planted over a short period of time. The enthusiasm of those days has not however

been kept-up despite the occasional fillip individual and interested administrators gave the scheme. Since 1958, Shelterbelts have been established, principally in Sokoto and Kano States, where by 1974, over 190 kilometers of belts had been established with over 48 kilometers of roadside plantations completed in Borno State. These were achieved by the various States through their appropriate ministries and the Local Governments. But the seriousness of the problem has now demanded a new approach in the combined efforts of everybody. Thus, the Federal Department of Forestry has to date established 16 nurseries, and the number of shelterbelts planted has gradually increased. In 1976 alone, approximately 200 kilometers (600 Hectares) of belts were planted, and over three million seedlings raised for distribution to farmers. The Federal Department of Forestry field offices have been established in Sokoto, Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguru and Bauchi to improve the execution of this project.

All that has so far been achieved is no more than scratching the problem on the surface compared with the magnitude of what is required to arrest the situation. It has long been realised that the solution to the problem of desertification in the Sahelian Zone lies in the establishment of restoration of vegetation cover over the affected areas, and that whatever strategy is adopted should from the start aim at improving the living standards of the people. Therefore in tackling the Sahelian problem in Nigeria, action programme based on forestry activities had in the past been directed at:

- (i) establishing adequate vegetation cover for purposes of restoration and maintenance of soil fertility and improvement of the environment;
- (ii) meeting the needs of the people in the locality in wood for fuel and construction purposes;
- (iii) protecting and developing pasture lands;
- (iv) support for agriculture;
- (v) protecting and rationally utilising wildlife.

But now, the forestry programme should not be seen as a mere tree planting programme to provide immediate needs of the people but rather a development programme closely integrated with other sectoral programmes, namely: the rainfed and irrigation development programmes for agriculture, the livestock and fishery programmes.

To this end a National Committee on Arid Zone Afforestation has been set up by the Federal Military Government under the Chairmanship of a distinguished scholar, Dr. Ango Abdullahi of the Institute of Agricultural Research, Ahmadu Bello University. It is proposed that a State Afforestation Committee in each of the affected States consisting of professional forestry officials and other experts will also be set up to prosecute the programme on a day to day basis. A Unit of this Committee in each Local Government area of the affected States is also contemplated.

In this connection, the Federal Military Government released a sum of ₦2 million towards the end of last financial year to enable the project to take off. In the current financial year, the Federal Military Government has also voted money for the scheme to supplement communal and other efforts.

Since firewood is extensively used by the people in the affected States, I will once again like to appeal for modernisation of our cooking habits so that we can move away from using the traditional firewood to the use of hydro-carbon products. In the

development of our Oil Industry, it is the intention, in the near future, to provide not only gas but kerosine in sufficient quantities for domestic use. As a matter of deliberate policy also, encouragement steps are being taken to increase existing capacity in the production and manufacturing of kerosine stoves locally. Therefore, in due course, when kerosine is produced in large quantities from the refineries at Warri and Kaduna and simple kerosine cookers become available at reasonable costs we should change our cooking habits in order to help to preserve plant life and hence the vegetation of the environment.

One other possibility being considered is the use of coal, under strict health conditions, as alternative sources of fuel to firewood, leaves and animal dung. Deposits are available in Enugu mines and other areas and plans are on hand to produce charcoal from the woods and wood wastes in the high forests of southern states, particularly from the afforestation centres where large hectarages of forest lands are opened up each year.

While the problem of desertification is plaguing the northern parts of the country, other critical cases of water erosion, wind erosion and flood abound in several parts of the country. The hardest hit States include Anambra, Imo, Oyo, Benue, Plateau, Bendel, Lagos, Cross River, Ogun and Rivers. Early conservation programmes were highly localised. The earliest attempt being tree planting programme in Awka Division of Anambra State to check notorious gully erosion. Other programmes include mines and reclamation of the Jos Plateau. A mine's land reclamation unit which was set up also achieved a degree of success in establishing tree plantations on the levelled mine-dumps on the Jos Plateau. To date over 1,320 hectare of the desolate landscape mounds in the State have been reclaimed and planted up. Imo, Anambra, Cross River, and Rivers States respectively have drawn up anti-erosion and flood programmes which are being implemented. Many important watersheds in Nigeria, most of which are within forest reserves, have been protected by the establishment of forest plantations. Early this year, a National Committee on Soil Conservation was set up to deal with the problems of soil conservation throughout the country including the problems of floods and silting, and management of attachment areas. An international team of experts has been engaged to study soil erosion in these States and measures to be taken to combat this menace.

The destructive effect of forest fires cannot be over-emphasised. It is a matter for regret that our people still indulge in indiscriminate bush burning inspite of repeated campaigns pin-pointing the effects. Sometimes the fires spread into adjacent forest plantations established at great expense. We must take all possible measures through enlightenment campaigns, appeal, etc. to abate this criminal act and wanton destruction. Federal Government, State Government, Local Government, Traditional Rulers and Community leaders must all join in this crusade. The Federal Military Government is committed and determined to preserve and conserve our limited land heritage for this generation and generations yet unborn.

I wish to seize this opportunity also to appeal to all the citizens of this country particularly those living in the Sahelian zone to augment Government efforts by planting trees as individuals, organisations, communities, etc. We must all participate in this programme. Your active support in this matter is necessary to avert future wood shortage in the country, check further advance of the desert, improve the environment and the quality of life not only for ourselves but for future generations as well.

The Brigade Commander and Military Administrator, the Sultan, Emirs, Chairmen of

Local Government, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, may I invite everyone present here to join me in planting a tree each to mark this memorable occasion.

THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT

When the present Administration, headed first by the late General Murtala Muhammed, and now by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, took over the helms of Government of the Nation in July 1975, one of the reasons for its action was the reluctance of its predecessor to honour the commitment to return the country to civilian rule. Thus, this new Administration pledged to proceed unswervingly to a handover of power as quickly as possible. To further underline the solemnity of this undertaking, the Government embarked on perhaps as thorough a programme of preparation of the people and nation for electoral, civilian politics as has been witnessed in recent times. As the Administration prepared to enter the final year of its programme, the Head of State, His Excellency, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, and the Government, unfolded each final step in their irreversible fulfilment of the pledge. These crucial steps are covered in the speeches that follow. Together, they constitute the denouement of sorts, of a bold and exciting programme, with perhaps a touch of valediction.

The Role of Traditional Rulers in the Transition to Civilian Rule

In preparation for return to civil rule, General Obasanjo addressed various sectors of the society. Traditional rulers were the first to be so addressed—on Monday September 11, 1978. He said the rulers, as fathers of the nation along with other leaders, had a grave responsibility.

You have been invited here today in recognition of the crucial role you are expected to play, especially during this delicate period of transition from Military to Civil rule, not only to ensure a smooth transfer of power from the Military to the elected representative Government but also to ensure moral regeneration, peace and stability thereafter. As traditional and community leaders, it is your duty to bring the full weight of your moral authority to bear on the people of this country—a country that has had more than its fair share of difficulties since our independence.

The deliberate weakening of national cohesion and integration through differential social, political and economic development by the colonial power and the haphazard manner in which the colonialists handed over power to Nigerians ensured that Nigeria at independence was a child of unusual compromise and hence, weak and unstable. The country thus became a perfect breeding ground for internecine wranglings arising out of mutual distrust, suspicions and misrepresentations sometimes due to genuine ignorance but, more often, due to purely selfish motives. The consequences were catastrophic. Wide-scale civil disorder was inevitably followed by Military rule and a disastrous civil war. It has taken us some time to fully recover from the traumatic effect of all these. During those harrowing days, many were the traditional rulers who behaved as though they were not responsible to God or man: rather than seek to exercise a moderating influence, some of them plunged headlong into the affray. It must now be accepted that if *all* our traditional rulers had lived up to their responsibilities as leaders, the country would probably have avoided most of the turbulence and destruction of the past.

As we are about to enter a new era, it is your responsibility to prevent a recurrence of the mistakes of the past. Rather, you should use the full weight of your authority to bring the people to reason whenever they tend to go astray. In doing this, you should bear in mind that areas of dis-integration exist in every society no matter what degree of cohesion may be indicated by the facade. And in our own case the fabric of the cohesion and integration of our society still needs to be strengthened. It is your duty to devise means of promoting unity and solidarity amongst the various national groups that constitute our great country by deliberately playing down differences that tend to divide us while at the same time, exploiting to the fullest those national attributes that enhance cohesion and integration in the full realisation that the various components

of the nation are dependent on one another.

As leaders, you must lay good examples for others. The national pastime of running ourselves down should now be replaced with a conscious show of faith and confidence in Nigeria no matter what her faults may be. Let us through positive and constructive actions reduce the deficiencies of the society rather than contributing to its destruction. Your fatherly role and responsibility in a non-partisan way to all Nigerian citizens within your areas of jurisdiction must not be impaired. You must live above partisan politics and parochial interests. The well-being of all Nigerians should be your primary concern.

It would appear that the falling standards of morality especially among the youth is being bemoaned with apparent helplessness. Traditional values, ideas and concepts are being relegated to the background in favour of blindly copied, ill-digested Western ideas: in the traditional society, sanctions were sure and swift for such lapses as disrespect for elders and constituted authority, dishonesty and lack of integrity. In addition, everybody was expected to contribute his quota to the overall development of society including the upbringing of the young as a decent, honest, responsible and reliable individual. It is unfortunate that, for the most part, this is no longer the case. Everywhere, there is evidence of flagrant disregard for authority and a refusal to undertake public service except in consideration of material rewards. Destruction, confrontation and lawlessness are now regarded as fashionable among our youths. It must be pointed out however that the misbehaviour we so much deplore in our youths is nothing but part of a reflection of the misdeeds of most of the elders of the society. It was not the youths that engineered the fratricidal squabbles that brought down the first Republic. If we had been sufficiently sensible and tolerant, if we had approached the consideration of national issues with the same level of humaneness and magnanimity for which the black race is so famous, if we had not discarded the virtues of moderation, justice, fairplay and consideration for others which had been the guiding principles of our forebears in all their relationships, it is conceivable that we would have escaped much of the calamity that overwhelmed us.

The elders have responsibility for the up-bringing of the youths within the community. We should ask ourselves why so much less attention is now being paid to the total up-bringing and education of the youth. We are beginning to feel the ruinous effects of an undiscerning, wholesale importation of foreign ideas, values, attitudes and culture. Ideas that encourage the destruction of the society and all it stands for. Society is so much engrossed with the rat race for material possessions that all sense of decorum appears to be lost. The elders have all but lost their moral authority. Yet, we wonder why juvenile delinquency is so much on the ascendancy. It stands to reason therefore that we must all get involved in the total up-bringing of our youths and inculcate in them traditionally cherished values such as respect, honesty, truth, sacrifice, dignity of labour and service to the community and a sense of humaneness and magnanimity. We should resist at all costs the inculcation of unwholesome foreign ideas, values and attitudes into our youths through our homes, our educational institutions and the mass media. Only by so doing can we hope to tackle the problem of increasing lawlessness, indiscipline and crime at the root. Our own attitudes, actions, utterances and behaviour are being constantly watched and copied by the youths. We must lay good examples for them to follow. We cannot afford to fail as a nation and you as the fathers of the nation along with other leaders have a grave responsibility.

I would like to record my appreciation to all our traditional and community leaders who have lived up to their responsibilities in co-operating with Government at all levels to maintain peace, law and order amongst our people. Let us continue to work and pray for the good of our country. May God guide and protect us all.

Thank you.

The Role of Religious Leaders

Speaking to religious leaders before the ban on party political activities was lifted, General Obasanjo told them on September 14, 1978, that the events which led to military intervention would have been avoided if religious leaders did not fail in their duty to God and the nation to call a stop to the excesses of political elites. He warned that they would be more blameworthy if the nation went aground again.

In this crucial period of our history when we are about to take the final leap forward in our march towards civil rule, I wish to call you, as our spiritual leaders and custodians of our faith, to join hands with the Government and all well-meaning Nigerians to ensure a peaceful and painless transition, and help to maintain henceforth a united, stable and peaceful nation. A glimpse backwards into the recent history of this nation reveals a chain of sad but quite avoidable events which nearly destroyed us.

We have for upwards of twelve years been under Military rule and the comparative quiet and tranquility that has prevailed since the end of the civil war is a direct result of conscious efforts by the Government to achieve unity, stability and progress in the country. These efforts have probably been boosted by the peculiar characteristics of a Military regime, but very soon the ban on political activities will be lifted and political contestants will enter the stage again seeking, in their own way, political power. The atmosphere, that will from then be unleashed by political activities, calls for watchfulness and readiness in order to avoid a slip backward into the dark days before the Military came on the political scene.

From time immemorial, religion has provided for man a solace and sanctuary from the weariness and distress which the material demands of this world have brought on him. And in religion, he has found unchanging happiness, hope, and succour. It has shown him the futility of earthly principalities and power, and the ephemerality of personal and material aggrandisement. All religions have sought to bring men together in love and peace through spiritual and moral regeneration. It has exalted eternal virtues such as humility, faith, forgiveness, love, charity and honesty.

You, as religious leaders, are the shepherds of the people and their outlook to life is a reflection of how well you have led them. The influence you are capable of wielding on the people by virtue of your access to their hearts and souls is tremendous and in the struggle for national development, you should be in the forefront.

As I said earlier, the circumstances which brought this country under Military rule could have been avoided if our political elites had put the fear of God and the love of their fellowmen into consideration. They went on unchecked in their destructive thoughts and actions, unchastised by their conscience which, in fact, could not have been very much alive. They forgot the virtue of humility and spiritual happiness and pursued, with fratricidal recklessness, world power and material hegemony. Like a

rudderless boat, they allowed the nation to drift aimlessly while they either relished in the drift or looked on with criminal satisfaction. In all of this, most of you failed in your duty to God and the nation to call a stop to these excesses. Some of you even openly encouraged them. The ultimate result was the Military entering into politics and a situation which soon degenerated into a civil war. The losses, in terms of physical and economic retrogression, destruction of lives and property, are unspeakable, but luckily, we have all had our bitter experience and, I hope, learnt our lessons as well.

Now that we are again going into civil administration, and all the real and psychological peculiarities of the Military regime will disappear, which, in addition to efforts in other directions guaranteed peace and stability, we cannot allow a relapse into the ways of past politics or retrogression in our national life. Preaching will not be enough, your regular prayers are important. You should also be vigilant to ensure that your places of worship and prayers are not turned into dens of political meetings and evil machinations. The religious leader of the past saw the success of his ministry in terms of acceptability of individual behaviour and the general comportment of his followers. He has never tired of inculcating in their minds the eternal virtues of simplicity, humility, love, faith, integrity, peace and harmony. He was always on the lookout to guide the footsteps of his followers in times of difficulty, and difficulty to him did not mean absence of luxury but it meant a situation or position which could make the faithful waver and slip off the path of rectitude.

As we move towards the lifting of the ban on politics, we are today still abiding in difficulties—difficulty of denigration of others and character assassination for selfish interest; difficulty of temptation to eliminate our opponents through thuggery in order to get power; difficulty of temptation to employ methods inimical to the interests of the nation and the citizens of this country in the bid to secure political power; difficulty of deceit and falsehood; difficulty of unforgiving spirit; difficulty of temptation to employ all sorts of devious and fraudulent means to obtain power, and difficulty of using political power for self-aggrandisement. It is your duty, therefore, as shepherds of the people to stand by all your sheep and ensure that they don't follow the wide path which leads unto destruction. You are to lead the people by your own examples so that you can be the light which shows them the way.

I believe in the power of the major religions in our country to inspire in their adherents and followers the highest human qualities. Our nation greatly needs such qualities which are not necessarily inherent in any political philosophy and dogma or in any sociological principles and economic theory. Whatever may be our faith, we need spiritual re-awakening and re-generation in the months and years ahead. And nobody is better equipped to bring these about amongst our people than our religious leaders.

Let our religious leaders constantly endeavour to spread and apply nation-wide the teaching of love, brotherhood, unity and selfless sacrifice which our major religions in this country stand for. Let our youths and leaders be guided by truth, honesty and justice. If we go aground again as a nation, we should all have ourselves to blame, but those of you who have responsibility for our moral and spiritual direction and upliftment will be more blameworthy. Your success as religious leaders is inextricably bound up and you must exert your spiritual influence to get your followers to work towards this goal.

May God grant us His peace and His protection. Thank you.



Fig. 41 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressing Traditional Rulers at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in Lagos.



Fig. 42 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo discussing matters of interest with some Religious Leaders after addressing them in Lagos.



Fig. 43 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressing Civil Servants.



Fig. 44 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo addressing media executives in Lagos.

One Hundred

The Presidential System and the Civil Service

The presidential system of government in 1979 after the military withdrawal will impose certain demands on the Civil Service. This point was emphasized by General Obasanjo on September 15, 1978, when he addressed very senior public servants.

In addition to other recent actions of the Federal Military Government unfolding our steadfastness and determination in our march towards civil administration, I have chosen to address some sectors of the society which, to my mind, have vital roles to play in the process of transition and in the body politic of this country. You will agree with me that the Public Service, especially the Civil Service, has in this regard a major and definite role to play and a heavy responsibility to shoulder.

Ordinarily, one may be tempted to think that the Civil Service knows its functions too well not to need to be reminded at times like these. It is, however, necessary to awaken your minds to the peculiarities of these times, which if glossed over can do considerable damage to the Service and the nation as a whole. Traditionally, the Civil Service is not partisan and its main functions consist of assisting in the formulation of policy and of executing Government policies faithfully once they are formulated. But in 1966, with the advent of the Military in Government, this tradition changed and civil servants, at least initially, became 'de-facto' formulators of policy as well as executors. This trend might be unavoidable but like the Military in politics, it was an aberration which threw civil servants into new circumstances favourable to the Service.

The Public Service is everywhere a powerful instrument of development. To actualise this, the Service in Nigeria requires individual commitment to duty, and general patriotism among its men and women. The Civil Service in particular should be the reservoir of vision and dynamism in its outlook towards the future; a future of national greatness, peace, unity and stability. The civil servant's advice must therefore be identifiable with national goals and he must know that the realities of national development have no room for selfishness, pride, indiscipline and dishonesty. The Public Service must be a fountain of courage, vision, knowledge, commitment, justice and uprightness. During the Military Administration, the civil servant has to a large extent been seen and heard. It must however be realised that it was what the time dictated and an air of anonymity which he will soon start to breathe should not be seen as derogatory. Rather it should be seen as an advantage that enables him to put in his best dispassionately, without a populist motive. It will certainly be in the interest of the Service and the nation for all public officers to prepare themselves and conform with

the norms and discipline of the Service.

This Administration has taken some measures which are seemingly unpalatable to public servants, and their reaction, in the face of criticisms emanating from distorted vision and selfish hearts, has ranged from culpable claim of ignorance, through joining the gullible crowd in the condemnation of Government policies to outright disinterestedness. This is rather unfortunate because the Civil Service is part and parcel of the leadership group within our society and this type of attitude on the part of any civil servant is condemnable and only tantamount to disloyalty. In the process of our rapid economic development, popular and unpopular policies will have to be implemented. Needless to say, the civil servant by virtue of his intimate relationship with the Government occupies a special position in the society. Also by virtue of his being able to assist in the formulation of policy and being the sole instrument of execution, he has the added moral responsibility to enlighten those that come his way about Government policies and to avoid any action that can ridicule the good intention of Government or stultify general development. It is wrong for a civil servant to identify himself with so-called popular policies and join the chorus singers of those who attack Government for the so-called unpopular but necessary policies just as it is wrong for political leaders to blame their actions, good or bad, on civil servant advisers. It is antithetic for him to find his virtue in apathy, or to be unable to draw a line between what is good in the interest of the nation and what is expedient in terms of personal gains. He must show enthusiasm, commitment, and national direction in the discharge of his duties.

It is necessary to emphasise to the Public Service and most especially the Civil Service that the political system which will be ushered in after the Military rule is completely new. The new system will not easily admit of non-performance as the executive political head who must have been hopefully elected on a programme will spare no effort to ensure successful implementation of his programme. This calls for new awareness, new orientation, new attitude and new approach by the civil servant. The Civil Service of today must adapt to the rapid changing conditions of our society and in fact become the catalyst of that change.

Of course the new political system and the managers of the system will have to admit and appreciate the indispensability of the Civil Service as largely a vehicle of implementation of policies and execution of programmes. With the right approach and understanding on both sides the transition should be painless, smooth and mutually rewarding.

At this juncture let me specifically call on our university administrators to give serious consideration to development of African character and personality in our youths. Be enterprising and develop new norms relevant to our society rather than imbibe foreign norms lock, stock and barrel under the guise of universality of education. Lack of originality and imagination which have emanated from some sections of our university community can only be the product of unfertile and infantile mind and laziness. Let no university be used as a hatching ground for violent political campaigns, destruction of political opponents and de-stabilisation of the society. The universities which are funded to build and develop the society should not be the destroyer of it. Let our university teachers think and teach constructively, let them and their students bring forth new positive ideas for the improvement of the society and not negative ones for destroying the society. The university should be the citadel of academic intellectualism, originality and rationality in our efforts to build the nation

and develop the society. The universities will have themselves to blame if they become irrelevant in the Nigerian situation and they will be irrelevant if they are not innovative, positive and constructive.

The leadership position of the Public Service should endow it with a vision of greater tomorrow which in a developing nation like ours cannot be reached in excessive consumption of what we do not produce and in unnecessary luxuries. We must all learn to wear the garb of discipline, sacrifice and sweat. Let your mind and actions revolve round the axis of a united, stable and great Nigeria. Then and only then can the Public Service boast of its invaluable service to the nation and urge other sectors of the society to follow its example.

Thank you.

The Press and Nation Building

The fourth group General Obasanjo spoke to on the transition to civil rule were the mass media representatives. On September 18, 1978, he emphasized to them that a responsible press has a crucial role to play in relation to national development especially in a heterogeneous society. He urged them to refrain from fanning the embers of hatred, sectionalism, tribalism, intolerance and use of indecent language when political campaigns started. They should publish to build and strengthen the nation, and not publish to destroy or be damned.

You are quite aware of the various steps we have taken of late aimed at achieving a smooth and painless transition from Military to Civil Administration. The process of Military disengagement has started. The ban on political activities will soon be lifted. By now, there should be no doubt in the mind of anybody as to the steadfastness of our determination to return this country to an elected Government by next year. We all must ensure that peace and tranquility are maintained during this delicate period of transition so that in our march to civil rule, the nation could be spared the sad experience of the first Republic.

Indeed, a responsible Press has a crucial role to play in relation to national development especially in a heterogeneous society like ours. It can emphasize the virtues of patience, tolerance and love, stressing the need to live harmoniously together irrespective of religious belief, ethnic grouping, politics or social status. It can effectively help the country to learn from the mistakes of the past while putting the anguish of those mistakes behind it and concentrate on the realisation of the vision of a glorious future. It can help reform society by discouraging the increasing acts of indiscipline and the unbridled pursuit of material wealth leading to creeping violence and rising waves of crime and corruption which undermine the corporate existence of the society and undermine Government efforts to create a just, progressive and stable community. Misguided militancy and hostile confrontation, not rested on genuine efforts at understanding other people's point of view, is becoming fashionable but those could only be a menace to our common cause and to public safety, a situation too grim to be taken lightly. The forces of law and order have braced themselves to face the new challenge, but nonetheless, you, as part of the conscience of the nation, are most advantageously placed to help in stamping out the evils of lawlessness and indiscipline from our body politic.

When political campaigns start, I urge you to refrain from fanning, through the Press and mass media, embers of hatred, sectionalism, tribalism, religious intolerance and use of indecent language. No matter how irresponsible or careless a political aspirant or political group may be in their utterances and actions during this exercise, their effect will be dimmed and blunted if they are not sensationalised and put on a high

pedestal by the mass media. Let the overall interest of the nation be the deciding factor of what you print and what comes out on the electronic media.

Unfortunately, by their activities, certain sections of the press have shown a tendency towards the negative approach capable of wrecking this country. In the so-called civilised countries of East and West, people cherish their institutions and build them up. Criticisms are constructive and aimed solely at exploring areas of their strength which they fortify and guard jealously. The media is used to educate, not to incite. Rather than seek to besmear, divide and destroy, their concern is to instill internal cohesion. This contrasts sharply with the negative approach adopted by some Nigerian journalists who indulge in vicious sensational journalism, unmindful of the fact that, by their actions, the prestige and stability of the country is to that extent affected, possibly with unpredictably grave consequences for the well-being of the citizen. If we are not to sap our self-confidence and become a laughing stock in the eyes of others, this attitude, this denigrating exercise which is fast becoming a national sport, must change. It is high time we put an end to this sort of ruinous journalism in favour of something more constructive.

Rather, the quest for stability and indivisibility through restraint, tolerance and moderation must continue to occupy our attention at all times. This is crucial to our very survival as a nation. It is imperative not only to maintain good and orderly Government but also to guard against subversion from all directions as well as against the incursion of undesirable foreign influences calculated to impose on our way of life alien and undesirable tendencies. Sensitive issues require careful handling since this nation cannot afford another round of acts of lawlessness capable of disrupting the current programme. I will like to count on and trust your high sense of judgment and responsibility.

You should not allow your judgment to be beclouded by prospects of temporary gains at the expense of the overall stability of the nation. The nation expects you to rise above selfish, clannish and parochial interests and petty jealousies that could be divisive and self-defeating. Deliberate attempts to exacerbate areas of conflict or to breach national security cannot be tolerated and should be avoided. Between now and the inception of an elected Government a number of sensitive issues will be tackled which I will expect the media to handle with the utmost care.

Gentlemen of the Press, let me impress on you and the nation, that while we will continue to be accommodating and tolerant, we will deal firmly with any presentation in the mass media and any act or situation which will tend to divide and destroy the unity and corporate existence of this country. And let me advise our journalists and mass media men and women to learn to know Nigeria by travelling to all nooks and corners of this great country. You cannot understand or value what you do not know or know enough about. And what you do not fully appreciate or understand you cannot love or cherish. And what you do not love or cherish, you can discard or treat with levity. To know Nigeria, you must see it, explore it and feel it in its full dimensions.

The respect which your profession of journalism will continue to enjoy among the rest of Nigerians will depend to a large extent on the quality of journalists and practitioners of the mass media. To earn respect and admiration a journalist must be as knowledgeable if not more knowledgeable than the public he is trying to inform and educate. Special efforts must therefore be made by all journalists to improve not only their knowledge of this country and its people but also their knowledge of their profession. The path of hard work, truth, integrity, honesty, incorruptibility and

objectivity should be the path of honour for a good journalist and practitioner of the mass media. Being facile with your pen or your tongue is not enough.

Always exert yourselves to get at facts as far as Government business and policies are concerned. Within the limit of national security we will continue to make facts available to you, but it will be more than irresponsibility and bad faith if you disbelieve a set of facts just because they fall short of what you imagined or wildly dreamt of.

By all means let us have informed, dispassionate, courageous and constructive comments, debates, discussions and criticism. There should, however, be no room for shallow, narrow-minded, jaundiced, self-opinionated, ill-informed, self-centred and destructive comments and criticism. They do not elevate the individual, the media or the profession.

Your special privilege of access to, and control of print and electronic media should impose special responsibility of awareness, and restraint on you in the interest of Nigeria and your fellow men.

Today, we stand at the crossroads of history and in the interest of the nation we cannot allow considerations of short-term advantage, pride or prejudices to becloud our sense of propriety and good judgment. The months ahead will put to test the dedication and sincerity of all those whose responsibility is to help shape the destiny of this country. The nation is watching. The world is also watching. I have implicit confidence in the high sense of responsibility of the overwhelming majority of the people of this country and in the generality of media practitioners in particular as to their ability to continue to show understanding, restraint, tolerance, patriotism and moderation in the difficult days ahead. Let your guiding principle be: publish to build and strengthen the nation, and not publish to destroy or be damned.



Fig. 45 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo receiving the Draft Constitution from the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Chief F.R.A. Williams at Dodan Barracks, Lagos.



Fig. 46 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo chats with some members of the Constitution Drafting Committee after receiving the Draft Constitution.



Fig. 47 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo (centre in uniform) among members of Nigeria's Constitutional Drafting Committee.

One Hundred Two

The Historic Accomplishments of the Constituent Assembly

Before the Constituent Assembly was dissolved, General Obasanjo held a cocktail party in honour of members of the Assembly on Wednesday September 20, 1978.

Let me seize this opportunity to express to you all the nation's gratitude for the historic task you have just performed.

Your task was arduous and your responsibility was onerous. The fact that you have been able to produce the Constitution document presented to the Government, however imperfect, is in itself, a testimony to your devotion and dedication.

There is no gainsaying the fact that, in a multinational, multilingual society like ours with diverse cultures, creeds and religions, the task of producing a single document acceptable to all interest groups is not only arduous but also delicate. You have had to deliberate on so many potential areas of conflict that it would have been miraculous if things had gone on without any hitch. For example, the question of revenue allocation in a vast country whose components are at various stages of under-development could be a very thorny issue. Undue attention is apt to be focussed on the distribution of resources, even where those resources are dwindling, without sufficient thought being given to the necessity to diversify and maximize the sources of revenue. Yet, you can only distribute what you have.

Moreover, the difficulty of your assignment was by no means lessened by our past experience. Against the background of the excesses of the past, seemingly innocuous clauses assume undue prominence and become subjects of protracted and often debilitating arguments. Apparent mistrust and inconsiderate behaviour and approach from different quarters did not help the situation. Such was the impasse that all but marred your deliberations on the judicature.

Furthermore, in an Assembly so much representative of the conflicting opinions, beliefs and ideologies struggling hard for recognition, and given the basic imperfection of the human being, it would probably have required divine guidance and inspiration to produce a flawless document absolutely acceptable to all.

We, however, have to guard against potential seeds of future conflicts. This is all the more so since perfect constitutions are non-existent. The best constitutions are probably unwritten. We will learn to adapt, re-adapt and modify the provisions of our Constitution in the light of our experience in our determination to ensure cohesion, indivisibility, peace, stability and solidarity in our great country. In doing this, we should all exercise caution, restraint and vigilance to ensure that our future legislators will always take into consideration the wider interests of the masses of our people as

opposed to the selfish motives of the privileged but vocal minority.

No constitution, however well written, will attain the purpose for which it was written without the will to make it work. In the overall interest of national unity, peace and stability, we must continue to demonstrate the spirit of give and take and show restraint, tolerance and moderation in all our deeds and utterances. And as duly elected representatives of the people, now on completion of your task, it will be your duty to ensure that sanity prevails especially at this delicate period of transition thereby ensuring a smooth and peaceful transfer of power from the Military to an elected Government next year. You should also ensure that nothing you do or say either collectively or individually may conceivably be misconstrued as constituting a threat to unity, peace and stability.

Once again, on behalf of the whole nation and the Supreme Military Council, I thank you all for your historic contribution to our process of political evolution.

Good luck.

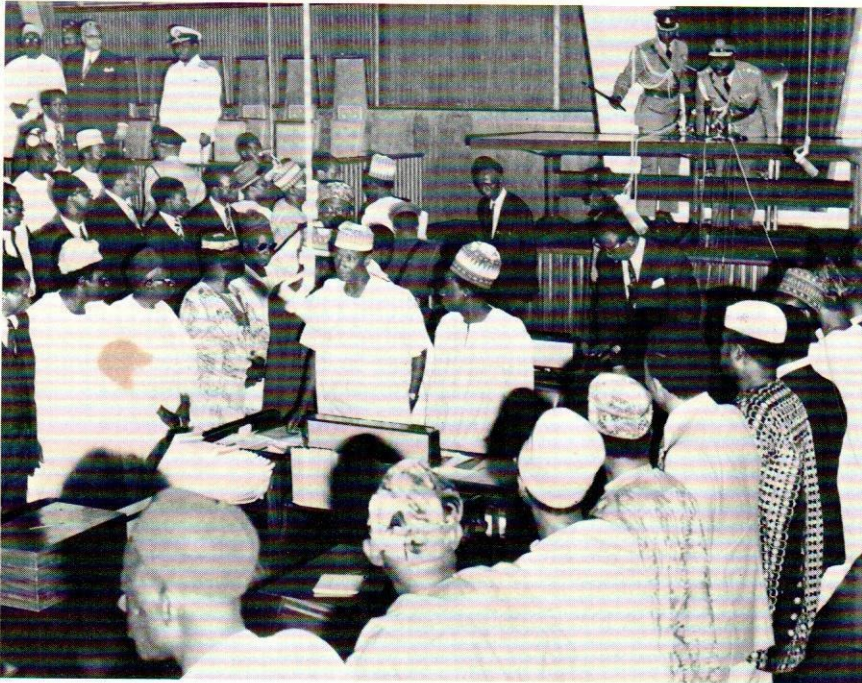


Fig. 46 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo arriving at the National Hall to address Members of the Constituent Assembly.

One Hundred Three

The Return of Party Politics

(State of Emergency Lifted)

After twelve years of army rule, the ban on party politics was lifted. So also was the state of emergency declared in 1966. General Obasanjo made a nation-wide broadcast to this effect over the national radio and television networks on September 21, 1978.

You are all aware that the Constituent Assembly has completed its task of fashioning out a new Constitution for our country; you are also aware that I have formally expressed the gratitude of the nation and that of the Supreme Military Council to the entire members of the Assembly for the successful completion of their historic assignment. However, in proceeding to consider the document, the overriding concern of the Supreme Military Council has been the need to ensure good government, orderly progress and harmony of the nation. Conscious of this responsibility to the nation, it became imperative for the Supreme Military Council, as the highest institution of administration, to amend certain provisions which, in its opinion, will either hinder or prolong the attainment of these objectives. The Supreme Military Council, having deliberated upon the Constitution as produced by the Constituent Assembly and as submitted to me by the Deputy Chairman of the Assembly, made the following amendments:

- (1) The preamble has been amended to reflect the process of the document's evolution.
- (2) The Capital Expenditure of the Judiciary has been taken out of the Consolidated Fund. However, in order to maintain the independence of the Judiciary recurrent vote will continue to be charged to the Consolidated Fund while its capital vote will be provided for by the Government like other capital votes, that is, as and when funds are available.
- (3) The provision for admission and incorporation of another State or part of another State as part of the Federation of Nigeria has been deleted from Section 8. This Section is at variance with our foreign policy objective as enunciated in the Constitution itself.
- (4) The provision on Legal Aid has been amended to ensure that it is made available only to indigent citizens of Nigeria as opposed to just *any* citizen of Nigeria. Section 42 is so amended.

- (5) At this point in our development as a nation it is unacceptable to make English language the only language of business of our National Assembly and to proceed even further to enshrine it permanently in our Constitution. Section 51 of the Constitution has therefore been amended to ensure that Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba shall be additional languages of business in the National Assembly and shall be so when appropriate arrangements can be made for their use.
- (6) In the interest of the security of the State, the Attorneys-General have been vested with the power to enter 'nolli prosequi'. Sections 160 and 191 have been amended accordingly. However, in exercising such power, the law officers must be guided by the interest of justice, the public interest and the need to prevent an abuse of legal process.
- (7) The Right of Fair Hearing which gave the State the same rights and obligations as an ordinary citizen has been amended. In the interest of good government and security of State, subsection 2 of Section 33 has been deleted.
- (8) Section 197(2) has been amended to read: "The composition of the officer corps and Other Ranks of the Armed Forces of the Federation shall reflect the Federal character of the Federation". This administration is of the opinion that the effectiveness of the Armed Forces should neither be incapacitated nor rescued. And any proposition that specifically relates the Armed Forces with the population of each State is fraught with difficulty and danger.
- (9) The non-removal of Judicial Officers for any reason whatsoever except by an address supported by two-thirds of each House of the National Assembly at the Federal level or two-thirds of the State is out of consonance, and out of touch, with the realities of our society. Thus, Section 256 has been amended to read: "by an address supported by two-thirds of the Senate" for the Federation; and "two-thirds of the State Assembly" in respect of the Chief Judge of a State. Removal of other Judicial Officers will be by the President or the Governor, as the case may be, on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission.
- (10) Like other public officers, Judges will be required to put in fifteen years of service before qualifying for pension and they will be entitled to their full salary as pension on retirement at the age of sixty-five. Section 255 has been amended accordingly.
- (11) Section 258 has been amended so that a Court does not require the additional seven days to furnish all parties with authenticated copies of its decision. The Supreme Military Council is of the view that the period of three months from the conclusion of evidence and final address is quite sufficient.

- (12) The Supreme Military Council has decided that disqualification for the first election in respect of person found guilty of corruption, unjust enrichment, or abuse of office by any Tribunal, will be effective from January 15, 1966. This date is consistent with the provision of the Electoral Decree as well as with the conditions of the elections already held to the Local Government Councils and to the Constituent Assembly. However, since this provision is only to affect the first election before the Constitution comes into effect, Section 271 is considered unnecessary and thereby deleted.
- (13) The proviso in Section 276 as it presently stands will create insecurity of tenure for public office holders. The Section is therefore amended to remove the proviso.
- (14) Bearing in mind our experience so far since independence and in pursuance of our national goal to establish a disciplined, fair, just and humane African society, the Military Administration over the past twelve years had made some laws which must be entrenched in our Constitution in the interest of the nation. These are the National Youth Service Decree, Public Complaints Decree, National Security Organisation and Land Use Decree. The process of repealing or amending these Decrees will therefore be as prescribed in the Constitution.
- (15) The provisions in the Code of Conduct, that is, the Fifth Schedule, have been further tightened to ensure higher morality and selfless service from public officers. A section prohibiting any public officer holding executive position (including all Members of Legislatures in the Federation) from operating foreign accounts has been added. Also, Section 2, of the Schedule on private business has been amended to read that public officers shall not "engage or participate in the management or running of any private business, profession or trade."
- (16) The composition of a number of public organs as proposed by the Constituent Assembly will be unwieldy and, in the end, these organs may become unnecessarily politicised and more costly to administer. Hence, the maximum number of Judges in the Supreme Court has been fixed at sixteen. Section 210 has been accordingly amended. The composition of the Federal Civil Service Commission has also been fixed at ten and relevant part of the Third Schedule has been amended.
- (17) The designation as proposed by the Constituent Assembly, for public officers of the Federation has been amended to reflect the different levels of government. In order to reflect these differences and status of government, the following changes have been made. The 'Chief Justice' of the State shall be designated the Chief Judge and Section 234 is so amended. The Ministers of State Governments shall be designated Commissioners and Section 173 has been so amended.

Finally, the Auditor-General of the State shall be designated the Director of the Audit.

These amendments are meant to strengthen the Constitution and to further ensure stability, progress and continuity after the Military would have handed over the reins of government. An enabling Decree has therefore been promulgated to bring the Constitution into effect on October 1, 1979, and the document will therefore be titled "The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979".

The Electoral Decree of 1977 will be amended to take cognisance of the provisions in the Constitution pertaining to the age qualification for a Senator as well as the established procedure for electing the President and the Governors. The number of constituencies and senatorial districts for the National Assembly and State Legislatures will also be amended in that Decree to accord with the provisions of the Constitution. Finally, a number of Decrees which will become irrelevant in the context of the New Constitution will also be repealed.

The new Constitution is the product of two years of dedicated effort to evolve a workable and more meaningful Constitutional arrangement for the nation. This Administration, in setting out to devise a new Constitution, was guided by the belief that there is not one political system that contains all the answers to our problems: even if there were, there is no better way of bringing about an acceptable Constitution than for the representatives of the nation to do so themselves. It is a reflection of both the realities of our society and the goals and aspirations of our people. Representing the spirit of give and take as it does, it aspires, and I believe it will attain, to a height whereby all needs and ideas compatible with the larger national interests will be reasonably accommodated.

Thus, what we have tried to achieve, and I very much hope that subsequent development would bear me out, is an arrangement that would promote the best interest of the whole country. It is quite conceivable that certain people might not be happy with the outcome of this exercise wholly or in part, because it does not conform with their own conception of the best political arrangement for this country. Such people must realise that in a nation as big and complex as ours it is inconceivable to make everybody happy on every point at every stage. However, they should take consolation in the fact that their alternative view had helped to stimulate the debate for more reliable and acceptable constitutional arrangement for this country and had made significant contribution to the final outcome.

There is need to remind ourselves and especially those aspiring to rule this country of the fact that, no matter how good a constitutional document may seem to be, its ultimate and utilitarian goodness depends on the will, disposition and vision of its operators. Whether it is a vehicle of justice, fairness and progress or an instrument of oppression and tyranny will depend on the maturity, the sense of purpose and the responsibility of the political leadership. The fate of over eighty million people of this country today and of millions yet unborn depends on the co-operation, understanding and behaviour of these leaders.

The Federal Electoral Commission has laid down rules and guidelines regarding the conduct of politics within the new system. These rules are borne out of our practical experience of the past and the experience of others. These guidelines are meant to ensure, at all cost, an orderly progress to civil rule: they must not be breached. With the field prepared and the Constitution Decree promulgated, the ban on politics is lifted with effect from today and the state of emergency is also lifted. However, a new

Decree with necessary safe-guards will be promulgated to last the remaining period of Military rule and it will empower the Chief of Staff and Inspector-General of Police to detain undesirable elements beyond twenty-four hours.

With the resuscitation of party politics, I would like to remind all aspirants, participants and indeed all Nigerians that the issues which led this country into a tragic civil war are not too far behind us, and we must refrain from them. Democracy is not synonymous with unhealthy and excessive competition for power: neither does it necessarily mean getting, at all times, the best man or the best team to run a government. Rather, democracy means that government should be guided by the wishes of the majority in the interest of all. In that situation, those participants who hold contrary views from the Government, would have to wait for a legitimate mandate from the electorate before they can govern. Our new system allows for difference of opinions and ideas which must be put to the electorate for their judgment and decision. Their decision must be respected and we should do nothing to trample on their wishes and desires. We must move away from insisting that the country must either be shaped after a particular conception, with or without mandate of the people, or be destroyed. Our future leaders must not only display a thorough understanding and appreciation of our diverse cultural differences and bring this understanding to bear on all political activities, but they must also ensure that the democratic process become implanted in their minds and in the minds of their supporters for the greater interest of the nation.

These days, one hears pessimistic predictions and expressions of fears that the political elite has learnt nothing and has forgotten nothing about the destructive political practices of the past. Although my colleagues and myself in the Supreme Military Council do not share these fears, primarily because we have confidence in the ability of Nigerians to continue to build on the foundation we have laid, such fears however must not be ignored, as they serve as indicators of our recent political past. For example, the recent experience during the process of Constitution-making has indicated the practice of horse-trading, shifting alliances, sectional interests, and petty loyalty: these are political practices which have failed to inspire confidence and hope in the future. Also, discussion outside the Assembly as well as the political language of would-be participants have shown some ugly signs of things to come. Therefore, all leaders must work hard and through their deeds and utterances allay these fears and instil confidence and hope in all citizens for the future.

It is lamentable that some political aspirants count their interests higher than national interest. It is very unpatriotic and selfish of any Nigerian to mortgage the interest of this country to foreign powers for the sole purpose of gaining political leadership of the country. The foreign powers concerned have, among others, been warned not to get involved in our internal political activities. They have also been advised not to allow their citizens under any pretext to interfere in our internal political affairs. The Nigerians concerned are also being closely watched. Our political aspirants should stay at home and sell their programmes to Nigerians rather than sell themselves to foreign interests. Let me reiterate once again, that this Administration will not allow any individual or group of individuals to subjugate the higher national interest and overall interest of our citizens to their selfish and narrow interests. Let us all resolve to promote the higher interest of the nation, and by so doing show our commitment to a new form of political practice based on consensus and total well-being of our people.

Let our political leaders learn from the lessons of the past. Let all of us solemnly

resolve and pledge to learn from the past, knowing that those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it. If we have to survive as a stable, virile and progressive nation—and we must survive at all cost—then we must subjugate our passion, emotion and greed to wisdom and reason. Political recruitment and subsequent political support which are based on tribal, religious and linguistic sentiments contributed largely to our past misfortune. They must not be allowed to spring up again. Those negative political attitudes like hatred, falsehood, intolerance and acrimony also contributed to our national tragedy in the past: they must not be continued. These negative attitudes must not be allowed to enter into the practice of the new political system. If they are allowed in, they can only lead to personal and group frustration, sense of failure and exclusion and the subsequent national calamity that may follow. Let our past experience enrich and enlighten our future; we cannot afford to disappoint Nigeria, Africa and the world.

Fears and lack of faith have led to whisperings and unaltruistic campaigns in some quarters for the military to reconsider their political programme. As professional military men, we believe that the greatest heritage we can leave behind, apart from a united, stable and economically strong country, is an untarnished and respected Armed Forces. Armed Services that are professionally competent to protect and defend the country in peace and war. Whatever may be the motives of those who have embarked upon this subtle but dangerous campaign, it cannot be in the best interest of our country, more so when there is no cause whatsoever for this Administration to reconsider its political programme. As men of honour, we in this Administration, are bound by our words and pledge and 1979 remains realistic. It is the duty of all Nigerians to make it happen peacefully and painlessly.

And to build a strong nation of our dream, we need all hands on deck and no section of the society should be institutionalised into opposition. All the essential arms of the State, the Civil Service, the Military, the Police, the Judiciary should be able to perform unimpeded and work hand-in-hand without fear or favour and within the Constitutional framework. They, with the Executive and the Legislature, should form an indivisible vehicle for the progress and development of the country in all directions. The effectiveness and success of any Government depend on the wholesome interaction and inter-relation within these vital and indispensable institutions. Let all Nigerians who are apprehensive and sceptical have faith; faith in the new political system; faith in the future; faith in the foundation we have tried to lay and faith in the collective will of all Nigerians to live happily together, in solidarity, peace and concord. These goals can be attained under enlightened, nationalistic, broadminded, fair and firm leadership. I hope that the new system will bring forth these individuals in our midst. Let them rise to the occasion.

Fellow citizens, when political parties are being launched, manifestoes and promises are being released, we should do well to remember how we got thus far as a nation. Let us also keep in mind our present political, economic and social situation and the best direction for the future of our people and our country. Let our political aspirants be guided by a keen sense of mission as Statesmen and not just seek for the trappings of office. As Statesmen, their actions must be guided not only by the higher interest of Nigeria, but also by the impact such actions may have on the future generation; whereas, politicians are interested in immediate election victory and immediate political gains. I would like to appeal to all political aspirants and the

emerging political groups not to embark on politics of deceit, false hopes, empty expectations, bitterness, discontent and unhappiness of the electorate.

Nigerians, we must get out of the colonial mentality of opposing Government and Government policies and measures solely and simply for the purpose of achieving fame or popularity and seek national acclaim through positive and constructive contribution to all facets of our national life. Whatever we may try to pull down today belongs to all Nigerians and not to any individual, no matter his role within the nation. We should not oppose policies without any workable and constructive alternative.

A developing country like Nigeria has no other way to individual well-being and national prosperity than through hard work, sacrifice and the elimination of the ills of the past that nearly destroyed our corporate existence. And let no Nigerian be deceived, there can be no national progress without individual sacrifice. The well-being of the individual is somehow ephemeral in a society without orderly progress. If we all have to be saved, then we must all make the necessary sacrifice. We should not encourage and enthrone the salvation and well-being of the few on the sacrifice of many. Denigration of others and falsehood may secure temporary advantage, but truth and honesty, even when crushed and trampled upon, will rise and live and triumph over temporary advantage of victory based on hatred, dishonesty and falsehood. Let the discussions, debates and campaigns be on issues, issues that are relevant and of national importance and supported by facts.

From now on, let the game of politics be played according to the laid-down rules. Let all players be good sportsmen. No matter the result of the competition, let all players remain friendly, and without bitterness, look forward to another competition. Let the players, the spectators and the umpires all resolve to make the competition a successful one. And let the umpires be firm, fair and just. Let all Nigerians show commitment in bringing about a civil rule through the process of peaceful and fair election. I wish all of you peaceful excitement in the weeks and months ahead.

Good Luck and Thank you.

Nation's 2nd Petroleum Refinery at Warri Commissioned

On September 26, 1978, General Obasanjo commissioned Nigeria's second petroleum refinery at Warri, built at a cost of ₦478 million. This refinery is one of the two projected for execution during the 1975-80 Development Plan Period. The other, sited in Kaduna and costing about ₦500 million, will become operational in 1980.

I am particularly delighted at the opportunity to preside over the two events of today which constitute a realisation of further significant objectives in our Third National Development Plan. I appreciate the efforts put in by our two public Corporations responsible for the accomplishment of these projects: the NEPA, whose thermal Power Station I opened in Sapele this morning and the NNPC whose Refinery we are about to commission. I congratulate them.

The history of the use of petroleum as an energy source in Nigeria dates back to early this century with the advent of the kerosene trade. Its importance grew over the years with major international Oil Companies like Mobil, Shell, BP, Texaco, Total, Esso, and later Agip, assuming total responsibility for determining our national needs of these products and arranging their importation to meet those needs. There was no supply problem then as these international companies had access to their world-wide Refinery Networks. The discovery of crude in the early fifties and its exportation from 1957, made possible the commissioning in 1965 of the Port Harcourt Refinery to supply the then modest domestic consumption of the country which stood at less than 30,000 barrels per day.

From 1970, however, after the civil disturbances, the dramatic economic recovery and boom, largely stoked by increased revenues accruing from crude oil sales, engendered an unprecedented expansion in all the various sectors of the economy. Public spending grew with improvements in our per capita income, and energy consumption which is a major indicator of such economic well-being, was jolted into an unprecedented growth trend. Consumption of products escalated at an annual rate which only very few countries in the world could have superseded. Products like the motor Gasolines and Gas Oil showed phenomenal growth rates averaging about 30% per annum from 1971; whereas in advanced countries, growth rate normally ranges between 3 to 5% per annum.

Quite apart from this boom in the economy, certain policy factors had direct effects on the growth pattern. The establishment of uniform prices for petroleum products throughout the country resulting in a nation-wide price reduction of as much as 90% in some locations; the pegging of products prices at the lowest levels in consonance with the philosophy of passing on to the people a part of the bounty of nature; the maintenance of pump prices of products at the same level for over twelve years in spite

of the galloping inflation in the economy; government subsidies to the tune of ₦29 million per year on petroleum products, not to mention that on crude oil estimated at ₦5.5 million per month, or ₦66 million per year. All these measures brought petroleum products within every easy reach of the averagely well-off citizen: an inescapably increased consumption rate—such that the modest national consumption in 1971 of 60,000 barrels per day, easily met through the Port Harcourt Refinery, had escalated to 235,000 barrels per day in 1978, an increase of 292% over a period of seven years. If we continue at this rate and with our proven reserve, we may become a net importer of crude within the next ten years.

In spite of the increased demands which had to be met through substantial re-importation, the marketing and distribution facilities of the Oil Companies was not correspondingly expanded to cope with the explosion and retail outlet capacities paradoxically decreased. Petroleum products were still being largely hauled to long distances in small parcel sizes by road tankers which hardly increased in number. All these led to chaos in the products distribution sector, which manifested itself in the form of countrywide shortages of petroleum products in past years.

The opening of the Warri Refinery today, is therefore a major landmark in the history of public sector participation in the oil industry in this country which started in 1962 when the Federal Government, together with the then Regional Governments, acquired 50% participation in the only Nigerian Petroleum Refining Company at Port-Harcourt. In 1971, the level of participation was increased to 60% and in 1973, another 35% participation interests in Shell-BP, ELF and Agip was acquired. Since then, our participation in the Oil-producing Companies has increased to 55%, but right now, the NNPC has embarked on its own 100% exploration activities and the progress so far is quite encouraging. Our investments so far in the exploration and production sector total over ₦1 billion. In the marketing sector, we acquired 60% participation in the Shell marketing company in 1975 and completely took over Esso, now Unipetrol in 1976.

In order to give full effect to Government's aspirations in the Petroleum Products sector, plans are well under way for Government to assume full responsibility for the provision of sufficient petroleum products and for ensuring their effective distribution locally from the Oil Marketing Companies. With this, the new policy aimed at throwing the products marketing sector open to independent indigenous entrepreneurs can be realised as soon as the criteria for an orderly implementation are established.

Abundant production of Liquified Petroleum Gas or cooking gas at the Warri Refinery will not only make it cheaper for the local consumer, it will also enhance our policy of forest conservation which is aimed at preventing undesirable desertification of our farmlands. It will also stimulate extensive utilisation of gas in preparation for the possible construction of a national gas distribution grid in the future.

The Warri Refinery will also mark the introduction of a new grade of petrol into the Nigerian market. The Five Star Gasoline rated at 97 octane number will now be available to motorists. The Five star petrol represents about the highest grade of petrol that is normally marketed anywhere in the world. This product will not only permit longer life for Automobile Engines now in use, it will also bring about significant fuel consumption economy and effective reductions in the total petrol bill of the motorist.

As I said earlier on, the prices of petroleum products have not changed for the past twelve years. At the time when the international price of crude was about \$2.00, or ₦1.30 per barrel, it was being charged for the domestic market at a subsidised price

of ₦1.43 or 92 kobo per barrel, which is 30% subsidised. At the present time, when the international value of the raw material is around \$14.00 or ₦9.00 per barrel, the charge to the Nigerian public is still at about \$1.93 or ₦1.24 per barrel, which is 86% subsidised: the slight increase in the current subsidised prices was due completely to increase in the rate of royalties and petroleum profit tax. The full cost of this commodity is currently over \$12.00 or ₦7.70 per barrel. There is no longer any justification to preserve the status quo. The time has come for the consumer to pay a price which approximates to the value of the commodity. There will therefore have to be revised prices for most of the other products as well. The new prices will reflect largely the establishment of crude oil prices at near their proper levels.

In pursuance however, of Government's anti-inflationary policies, no further excise duty will be charged to the consumer. The Government has invested heavily in the effort to achieve a sufficiency of petroleum products for the domestic market and to ensure the adequacy of its distribution. The current programme of offshore refining of Nigeria's crude oil and the reimportation of products for domestic consumption will still continue, but the scope will be drastically reduced, and when the Kaduna Refinery, estimated to cost about ₦500 million becomes operational in 1980, the exercise, I hope, will no longer be required.

A vast network of products pipeline is currently under construction. About 21 depots dotted all over the country from Lagos to Maiduguri, from Calabar to Gusau, are being constructed or being considerably expanded. A total storage capacity that will hold initially an average of 40 days of the overall national requirement of petroleum products has also been provided for. The first of these depots will become operational next month and by March 1979, almost all will have been commissioned. Along with them, the network of over 3,000 kilometers of products pipelines will also have been put into operation. Government's investments in these pipelines and depot facilities now stand at five hundred million naira. When all these are completed, Government's investment in facilities for the refining of crude oil and the storage and distribution of products shall have amounted to one thousand, five hundred million naira. This is a huge investment indeed, but it has been decided to regard such an investment as more of a public utility than a purely commercial venture. For this reason, the recovery of capital will be stretched over the life of the project, that is, 20 years, and the NNPC has been directed not to aim for the realisation of commercial rates of return of investment since to do so will result in the need to increase prices to a much higher level. The new prices will therefore still be preferential and represent some of the lowest existing anywhere in the world including the petroleum producing countries of OPEC.

This address will not be complete without due acknowledgement of the efforts of those who participated in making this programme a reality. I thank the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, its chairman and Board, its management and staff for the effective supervision and commitment which had led to the successful execution of the project. I also thank the Italian firm of SNAMPROGETTI, one of the Companies of the ENI group, whose President, together with a high-powered representation of the group, is with us on this occasion, and who in collaboration with their main sub-contractors made commendable modifications to the construction methods and schedules without counting the cost to themselves and also for their untiring and unbroken efforts to meet the target date in spite of occasional unfavorable weather. I thank also the firm of BEICIP, our consultants, the subsidiary of the French IFP (Institute Francaise du Petrole) Group for their excellent performance.

Finally, my appreciation goes to the Chiefs and people of the local communities who have co-operated with the Government throughout the construction of the project. And now that the Refinery is a reality, we hope that it will be taken with pride by all brothers in this locality as a National Treasure, and safeguarded on behalf of all Nigerians.

Thank you all.



Fig. 49 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo commissioned the second Oil Refinery at Warri on 26th September, 1978. Above is the pipeline at the refinery.

Sapele Thermal Power Station Commissioned

(Power for Social and Economic Development)

Speaking before he commissioned the first phase of the Sapele Thermal Power Station on September 26, 1978, General Obasanjo urged consumers to assist the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), by maintaining the most economic use of electricity.

This occasion represents an important milestone in our efforts to meet the power requirements of this nation. During the last five years, we have, owing to increased economic activities in the country, witnessed a phenomenal rise in the demand for power. The first year immediately after the civil war, 1,388,400 mwh was generated, and 1,148,015 mwh was sold to 390,000 consumers, while in 1976/77, 4,298,670 mwh was generated and 3,374,804 mwh was sold to 597,970 customers.

At this rate, it is estimated that in 1982/83 a generation capacity of 15, 197,744 mwh will be needed to meet the sales volume of 12,230,170 mwh. It is in appreciation of this gigantic need that the Federal Military Government has geared up its efforts to see that these demands are met, and to this end additional hydro-electric power projects are being constructed at Shiroro and Jebba. The establishment of a 720 mw thermal plant in Lagos is also under active consideration.

The significance of the commissioning of the Sapele thermal power station is the increase in the overall generation of power. With the rise in water level, there is already an improvement in the performance of Kainji. With the commissioning of this station therefore, it will be possible to generate the minimum power demand of the nation and, barring any accident along our transmission lines and distribution network, electricity supply to homes and industries should be more regular from now on. It is also hoped that consumers will assist NEPA in its task by maintaining the most economic use of electricity. The growth in electricity demand is so far the result of increase in domestic rather than industrial use.

Let me seize this opportunity to express appreciation of the efforts of those who contributed to the successful completion of this phase of the project. I hope they will not rest on their oars but persist relentlessly until the whole project is completed.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have great pleasure in dedicating the first 120 mw unit of the Sapele Thermal Plant to the service of our nation and for the improvement of social and economic development of our country and the well-being of our people.



Fig. 50 The Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo commissioned the new NEPA Power Station at Sapele on 26th September, 1978. Here, His Excellency is seen pressing the button at the control room to declare it open.



Fig. 51 H.E. Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo is seen inspecting the new NEPA Power Station at Sapele after commissioning it.

One Hundred Six

Let Us Always Remember the Lessons of Our Recent Past

*The 18th Independence Anniversary Celebration broadcast to the nation on October 1, 1978,
by the Head of State, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo.*

Fellow Countrymen and Women,

At its inception this Administration defined certain objectives within given time limits for our society and economy and set a course for the nation in domestic and external relations. It will be for history to determine what impact these objectives and this direction have had on the nation. It is, however, proper that those of us charged with the responsibility for achieving these objectives and for guiding the direction should on occasion like this take stock for ourselves and for the nation. In this regard, the present Administration has striven in the past twelve months to maintain the pace of development, set a high standard for individual, corporate and communal behaviour and create the basis for building a nation in which a high quality of life, shelter, education and health will be guaranteed to the majority of our citizens.

We note with a degree of satisfaction the decline in unnecessary flaunting of material wealth, the disfavour rendered to ostentation, and a new readiness to pour scorn on ill-gotten wealth. We have cause to feel that tardiness and indolence in the course of public services are now acknowledged vices deserving of summary punishment. It is now established that indiscipline and disregard for properly constituted authority will not go unpunished. In general, a tone has been set for discouraging anti-social behaviour and encouraging an ethic of justice, duty and orderliness in our society.

It is our belief that unless the moral fibre of society is firm, material success would be meaningless and vulgarity will debase achievement. I am still to meet a Nigerian who prefers injustice to justice. I do not know any who rates indolence higher than industry. I am not aware that any of us would choose chaos over stability. We are committed to fashioning a new Nigerian—man of dignity, a person respected for honesty and industry.

To continue to reward service and merit other than by means of material consideration, 64 Nigerians from all walks of our national life have been honoured with national awards. To further enshrine selflessness, commitment and dedication to duty and national service, as worthy of every Nigerian's pursuit, the Supreme Military Council has decided to create a Register of National Heroes for Nigerians who most exemplify

the best of our societal values and virtues. The Register, which will be kept in the National Hall, will contain the names of Nigerians who have made outstanding contributions to the social, economic, political, cultural and scientific advancement in the country. The modalities for according this great honour have been designed to discourage politicisation and commercialisation of the recognition and encourage the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness in the service of the nation. Accordingly, the late Herbert Macaulay, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Alvan Ikoku, General Murtala Muhammed have been made the first National Heroes of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

None of these men can be said to have this honour because of any materialistic considerations. The lesson is clear. While not denigrating hard work which can lead to honest material success, it must be clearly established that there are other values superior to the pursuit of the base material wealth. This nation's greatness and future depend more on how readily Nigerians are to make sacrifices and give honest, dedicated and selfless service. All the men have made the supreme sacrifice so that this nation can be strengthened and prosper and they are being honoured accordingly. As the highest and greatest that the nation can bestow on any individual, dead or alive, it will neither be cheapened nor debased. Consideration in time started when Nigeria became a political entity in 1914. As we embark on yet another year of nation-building, it is my hope and prayer that those values which make a nation great will be further inculcated and ingrained visibly in our interactions with one another. For our part, and in the time available to us we shall continue to consolidate the gains of this period in the hope that our successors can and will uphold that which is in the best interest of this society and this nation.

On the same note, the structure, quality and pace of development in the economy have and will continue to be of central importance to this Administration. Decisiveness has been brought to bear on economic management and we have not shied away from sacrifices where we believe that denial today will make for abundance tomorrow. We have opted for economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency because only thus can we regain control over our destiny and be capable of giving meaning to the black man's dignity and making our potential credible. To this end, we have identified a number of structural weaknesses within our economy. The Nigerian economy remains basically monocultural and is characterised by heavy dependence on imported manufactures of processed and semi-processed goods, neglected agricultural sector, limited contribution and therefore gains from invisible trade, fragile and over-loaded infrastructures and a temperamentally volatile general level of prices. Until these weaknesses are corrected, economic management must remain primitive, and meaningful economic development a pipe dream.

Realising this we have set the course for improving the productive capacity in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors to reduce the rigidities in our international trade pattern and balance of payments position. We have also embarked on improvement of basic infrastructure. In so far as we remain net importers of food and other *basic* needs of our society, we must live in fear of being cut off from these supplies either through not being able to finance their purchase or through other acts beyond our control. The second major problem of economic management has been the scourge of inflation. For sometime, we attributed this to external factors, but time came when we had to take measures to restrain prices. To combat the twin evils of external dependence and price inflation, we have imposed a number of physical controls and taken firm fiscal and monetary measures. The decision to tighten our

belts and control our appetite for that which we do not produce has been spread fairly evenly across all sections of our society. These measures were aimed at encouraging Nigerians to produce more of our needs at home, take over the essential spheres of economic activity and to enhance the purchasing power of the naira. To a large extent, these measures have bitten hard and are having the desired effect on the economy. Yet factors like speculative stock-piling, administrative and legal loopholes, socio-economic indiscipline continue to bar the way to faster progress in the direction we have mapped out.

We owe a duty to this nation and to posterity to carry through this economic struggle. We shall, therefore, continue to lay the foundations of structural change in the hope that Nigerian goods will hold sway at home and can compete in external markets to reduce revenue fluctuations which result from reliance on the extractive sector as foreign exchange earner. For now, and in view of the slow response of the value of imports and recovery of our external reserves, additional measures will be announced to remove from our import bills those items which can easily be substituted by local production. Measures will further be taken to reduce public sector spending, tighten the loopholes exploited by the private sector and further increase public revenues and the value of what the naira can buy in the market.

Over the past three weeks, I have repeatedly entreated you all, in a series of addresses which I gave to selected groups of leaders at various levels of our society and in my address to the nation announcing the decision of the Supreme Military Council on the new Constitution, to bear in mind at all times the lessons of our recent past in whatever you do during the political activities that will lead to elections next year.

All Nigerians and particularly we in this Administration have cause to be grateful to God that the course we have charted up to this moment has been free of serious turmoil. With the return to active party politics, it is my hope that all those who have responsibilities for running, managing and leading political parties will exercise the greatest restraint in their utterances and general conduct and maintain a firm control over the activities and behaviour of their party functionaries, followers and supporters. Politics may entail hard work, toil and anxious moments, but it need not be accompanied with tears, bitterness, hostility and destruction. We can disagree among ourselves on policies, principles and methods and maintain an air of civility and a courteous attitude to one another. Let us not at this final phase of our evolution from Military rule, commit any act for which posterity will hold us to blame. Let us resolve to make the rest of the journey smooth, uneventful and dignified.

At this juncture, I wish to congratulate all those involved in the administration and management of the labour movement in Nigeria. Their commitment to making the new organisational arrangements a success can only facilitate the attainment of industrial peace and economic progress. To this we must add the admirable enthusiasm and surefootedness with which Nigerians all over the country are seizing opportunities in entrepreneurship which the measures introduced by Government have made possible to ensure that the economic destiny of this country is in the hands of Nigerians. We are committed to this course because unless our economy is bouyant, substantially owned and controlled by us, the political and social aspirations of our people will be frustrated and our external influence diminished.

In the past year, Nigeria continued to play a progressive role in Continental African and international relations. We have used our influence to advocate moderation and

mutual respect among African countries. We have appealed to negative external influences to leave Africa alone and encouraged our brothers to free themselves from the domination of foreign dogma. In spite of threats to the security of the Continent, giant strides have been taken towards reconciling warring neighbouring African States. Presently, a battalion of the Nigerian Army is serving with the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations in Lebanon. This is an honour to our arms and acknowledgement of our commitment to world peace.

Our support for the Liberation Movements in Southern Africa is also beginning to yield fruit. We had expected all parties concerned to co-operate in making the United Nations transitional arrangements in Namibia a success. The government in Pretoria is however reported as proceeding with arrangements to hold elections outside the United Nations approved process. The SWAPO has therefore rightly decided to further intensify the armed struggle. In this they have our fullest support. Zimbabwe continues to be delicate and fractious, but even here the end cannot be far. We continue to appeal to the Patriotic Front to move forward and present Africa with the leadership that Zimbabwe needs. We hope it will not be long now before we welcome a free and independent Zimbabwe to the Organisation of African Unity. Further South, the domain of apartheid must take stock of events and open the door to favourable change. As we have always indicated, Africa must be saved the holocaust of a racial war. To the regime in South Africa therefore we recommend the course of peaceful change.

As we celebrate another Independence Anniversary, I commend to the young, order; to our elders, maturity; to leaders, responsibility; and to all, dedication to a greater Nigeria. Finally, wherever we go throughout these holidays, let us all spare a thought for others and reduce the death toll on our roads. In this regard, I am cheered that motorists continue to show road discipline on the new expressway. While this is commendable, there is increasing concern that we are not keeping to the prescribed speed limits. Speed kills and we cannot continue to lose human life through recklessness on our roads.

I wish every Nigerian and this great nation happy Anniversary and commend all of us to God's care.

