



The Executive Governor
Niger State of Nigeria

PRESENTATION BY THE CHIEF SERVANT, DR. MU'AZU BABANGIDA ALIYU, OON (TALBAN MINNA), EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF NIGER STATE ON THE OCCASION OF 60TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2008

“BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TOWN AND GOWN FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA”

1. PROTOCOL:

2. Let me start by sincerely expressing my gratitude to the leadership and Management of this unique University for the invitation. I must first of all congratulate the University of Ibadan for attaining 60 glorious years; I think we must recognize that 60-years is a lot in the life of an institution and sufficient to assess the success or failure of such an institution, especially a University. I also think that the role, success, failure and shortcomings of the University of Ibadan are indeed reflections of the challenges all our Universities (Gown) are facing in today's Nigeria (Town).

3. I am very delighted to be part of the celebrations of 60 years of achievements by a pioneer and premier University and exceedingly happy to speak and discuss with this distinguished audience on a topic that is probably very familiar to you, which might appear to many as preaching to the already converted. However, my consolation is that in an academic environment there is always room for new insights and further enquiries as we engage in exchange of ideas. I do believe therefore that at the end of today's discussion we might be able to see things differently, however slight, from our perceptions or indeed to reinforce our views about the concept of 'Town and Gown' dichotomy and the need to bridge the gap for our nation's socio-economic and political development. We all need to come together and re-establish that symbiotic relationship of the Town and Gown for our overall development as a nation and as a race.

4. Secondly, I am pleased to be here because I believe I represent a new breed of those with the opportunity of exercising political leadership in Nigeria, with the obligation of providing responsible servant leadership that will among other things return the lost glory of our educational institutions at all levels and to prove that not all politicians are necessarily 'anti-intellectual elites'. This is very important because the torch has been handed over to a new generation of national leadership under President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, GCFR and some of us, who have been to the University and know how to maintain a University. We have a duty now to prove that the assertion of Professor Bimbo Aboyade may probably be wrong when she said "...none of our national leaders since independence has ever passed the inside of the University as a student, let alone experience what it takes to maintain a good University system".

5. Thirdly, I am in fact here to pay my tribute, respect and appreciation to a university which has contributed immensely to Niger State by producing illustrious Nigerlites, who attained excellence and distinguished themselves in their respective careers while contributing to the growth and development of Nigeria. I have a long list of such exemplary personalities, but it suffices to mention a few of them: His Excellency, General Abdulsalami Alhaji Abubakar, GCFR, former Head of State and current Chairman of the University of Ibadan Advancement Centre and recipient of the prestigious honorary doctorate degree of this University; Alhaji Shehu Ahmadu Musa, CFR, former Secretary to the Government of the Federation and current Chairman of Economic and Social Advisory Council of Niger State (ESACON); Alhaji Muhammadu Liman, retired federal Permanent Secretary, Late Etsu Nupe, Dr. Umaru Sanda Ndayako, CFR, late Dr. Michael Angulu, former Registrar, JAMB, and most recently two young Nigerlites who made first class degrees in Petroleum Engineering from this University, and of course Professor Mohammed Audu, current Vice Chancellor of Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUTMIN) – a Mathematics first class graduate of this university, who we consider as a Nigerlite, although born in Kogi State, because in Niger State we consider any Nigerian who finds our State convenient to live and work as our indigene. This is why we think no Nigerian should work on a contract system in Niger State on account of non-indigeneship; he/she should be on a permanent and pensionable arrangement. It is not only cheaper in Naira and Kobo but it makes the officer more comfortable and committed to give his/her best.

6. I must not forget to mention one of the outstanding of the UI Alumni from Niger State, your own Dr. Mohammed Kuta Yahaya, our ingenious Secretary to the Government of Niger State. Mr. Vice Chancellor, I am happy to note that Dr Yahaya is a shining example of how the University intellectuals can become a dynamic force in aiding the nation to realize its socio-economic and political development aspirations, through adherence to high ethical and professional standards. This should be the starting point of my discussion today, with the hope that more academicians and intellectuals who find a sojourn in the town will remain good ambassadors of the gown, upholding the high moral and ethical values associated with the academia from time immemorial. Indeed, we need to deliberately encourage the revolving door policy of encouraging those in the academia to come to mainstream public service and those in

the public service to come to the academia – that way we might appreciate the real world and as a result proffer real solutions to well defined problems.

7. As you might have already noted, my background with a first degree from Bayero University, Kano, a Masters and Ph.D in Public Policy and Strategic Studies from University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA prepared me for a very fulfilled career in the civil service and now as a politician has placed very high stakes on me not to fail my generation of political leaders in this country, who have not only had the privilege of sound university education, some of us at the highest level, but who equally had and still have the best opportunities to take policy decisions that will take our country to the next level of socio-economic and political development.

8. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is interesting to note that there is abundant literature on the sordid state of our educational system, especially the universities in Nigeria today. Many respected scholars have variously expressed their strong views on the unfortunate situation, some describing our Universities as ‘Ivory Tower or Intellectual Cemeteries’, while others passing judgement on what some people did or did not do in bringing the ‘system to its knees’. I do not need to bore you with all of that. The beauty of this kind environment is the ‘protection’ that everyone has to express his views without let or hindrance, no matter whose ox is gored. I am however agreed on one point, that there has been a failure of successive leadership at different levels in this country in safeguarding education as the foundation of the development of any given society.

9. Indeed, I truly believe that our major problem in this country is the problem of leadership; that is, the lack of genuine, visionary and committed leadership. My heart bleeds when I compare what our educational system has become with what existed in the past, when I recall that in our days some of us were paid to go to and to remain in school, while others had their education paid for them by public funds through the foresight and selflessness of our past political heroes like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe and Sir Ahmadu Bello, among others. Then our Certificates and students were accepted and respected all over the world. Our Professors were sought after by the most prestigious Universities the world over. Alas, things are different today.

10. Perhaps, we might wish to ponder at this point to search our souls to find out what has gone wrong, where and when, with a view to doing a reality-check on how we found ourselves in this unfortunate situation, because I believe that this did not happen overnight. It is either we did not do something right or we didn’t do something at all in relation to giving education the priority it deserves. My strong view at this junction is that we have found ourselves in this sad situation because we have lost our traditional core social values as Africans and as Nigerians, and instead of promoting the virtues and principles of honesty, integrity, hard work, community spirit, love for one another, service, selflessness, and sincerity, we all seem to be driven by greed and materialism. We seem to have elevated corruption to the highest level by calling it Nigerian factor. Unfortunately, we are all as guilty in this as one another, albeit in varying proportions relative to the opportunities that individuals have and the environments they find

themselves. The danger in the replacement of our core values with instrumental values is that it breeds corruption in all facets of our society; unfortunately we celebrate it and accept it as a norm. We must resist this temptation, because corruption breeds poverty and poverty is a debilitating disease.

11. Distinguished scholars, when we talk of corruption in our polity, we would be unfair to ascribe it only as a phenomenon of the political class or the town, for we are all living witnesses to all forms of corrupt and immoral acts taking place in the gown, from extortion, admission racketeering, sexual abuse, examination malpractices to cultism, jealousy and unhealthy rivalry often perpetuated by highly placed members of the academia. Other forms include absenteeism, intellectual laziness and lack of concentration on research. I know the argument might be that the political class does not adequately fund the universities or the educational sector as a whole. We must however not forget the fact that throughout the regimes that have had the longest tenure in Nigeria, those of Generals Gowon, Babangida (in the military era) and Chief Obasanjo's democratic dispensation, members of the academia (the gown) played key roles in policy formulation and execution. Indeed, many contributed to the mess by dazzling the town with misleading and distorted theories. In addition, argument about lack of government funding may not stand if the Universities and faculty members could generate revenue through research, Alumni Associations and endowments. We must have the initiative and be innovative rather than playing the "blame game".

12. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF TOWN AND GOWN: Historically, Town and Gown are two distinct communities of a 'University town'; the 'town' being the non-academic population and the 'gown' metaphorically connoting the university community, especially in the ancient seats of learning such as Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews and even in the modern towns. In the middle ages, students admitted to the European Universities held minor responsibilities in the Church and donned garb similar to those worn by the Clergy. These vests evolved into the academic long black gown, worn with hood and cap. The gown served as a social symbol, as it was impractical for any manual work; thus by their distinctive clothing, the students were set apart and distinguished from the other citizens of the town; hence the phrase "town and gown". Unfortunately, what has happened now is that you can hardly distinguish a student from a truck-pusher, beggar or the vagabond on the street, probably again because of poverty.

13. It might interest you to note that the idea of a school of higher learning as a distinct and autonomous institution within an urban setting dates back to 'Academy' founded by Plato c. 387 BCE. The Academy was established as a sacred sanctuary for learning outside the city walls of Athens. The medieval universities which came into being in the 12th century were founded without physical campuses. The teachers simply rented lecture halls in the host cities. Most students took lodging in the university towns. The scholars often congregated in identifiable areas of cities. Consequently, the universities were largely independent of municipal revenues and to a great extent, of civil authority.

14. Unfortunately, the protection from the civil laws gave medieval students free rein in the urban environs to break secular laws with impunity, and often led to abuses and outright criminal behavior amongst students. This situation exacerbated tension between town and gown, as the tenor of town-gown relations became a matter of arrogance on the one hand and resentment on the other, which should not be the case.

15. Coming nearer home, let us briefly note the evolution of Universities in Africa, especially in modern times. Whereas Africa also has few ancient universities like Al-Qwarawiyin, Fez, Morocco (c9th century); Al-Azher, Egypt (c10th century) – a greater part of what may be termed as Africa's modern higher education history is rooted in the 20th century. These institutions were largely the consequence of the post second World War global situation which witnessed agitations by Africans, especially the political elites most of whom had been privileged to receive higher education in Europe for the realization of self rule in Africa.

16. Indeed, the universities established in that period were part of the struggle for the emancipation of Africa from colonial rule. These universities included Gordon University, Khartoum, Sudan (1946), our own most famous University College Ibadan (1948), and Makerere University, Kampala (1949). However, it should be noted that few higher institutions had existed in Liberia and Sierra Leone much earlier than that period, because of peculiar colonial circumstances in those areas. Liberia, for instance had established the Liberia College, Monrovia and Cuttington College, Harper-Cape Palmas in 1862 and 1889 respectively, while in Sierra Leone the Foray Bay College had been established first as a Seminary by Church Missionary Society for the training of ministers in 1872 and upgraded to a higher education institution affiliated to Durham University in 1876.

17. Why should we continue to have a close look at Town and Gown? I believe it is important for us to understand the unique characteristics of the town and gown in order to bridge the gap through innovative partnerships for the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. The gown is inhabited by individuals who are bold, courageous, assertive and devoted to research for the good of society. 'The hallmarks of a university are its inclusiveness, its diversity, its wholeness and comprehensiveness' The town on the other hand provides the socio-cultural milieu for the gown to flourish and prosper. This discussion is therefore very important because we all need to appreciate that the university is ideally expected to provide a focus for the society, without necessarily withdrawing into itself – by building higher walls and stronger gates in an attempt to maintain a separation from its surrounding communities. We need to appreciate the place of the University in society as the bastion of knowledge and the bedrock for the progress and transformation of society.

18. The University and its community should therefore, in my view, have a semblance and shared cultural values, in the buildings, aesthetic designs and so forth; for example the walls separating the University of Ibadan and its neighbouring Agbowo and Ajibode communities need to be revisited, such that the aesthetic appeal, the clean

environment of the University typical of a boulevard can be replicated in these communities. It shall create confidence in the minds of the common people as to the usefulness and viability of University.

19. This brings me to what I will call the ***Town-Gown Transactional model for socio-economic and political development***. Here, it is proposed that the walls of the 'ivory tower' which isolate and alienate the university from the community must be broken down both physically and metaphorically and replaced with the concept of the 'engaged university' which seeks to understand the complex problems of society through interaction, collaboration, partnerships, participation and consultation with a view to solving them for socio- economic and political development of a people.

20. The modern University should ideally follow the market and be demand-driven. It should be proactive in knowing the problems of society and in generating and applying the knowledge relevant to the needs of society. The gown needs to relate and collaborate with the corporate, public and Non-profit sectors in designing curriculum that will produce the manpower needed by the latter in meeting their aspirations. The role of relevant research is imperative here, so that there will be a balance between what the Universities are producing on the one hand and what the industry and larger society require on the other hand. This way we hope to be able to reduce the rate of graduate unemployment, avoid the tragedy of collective poverty, corporate poverty, spiritual poverty and related circumstances of deprivation and general socio-economic degradation. As a direct consequence, we expect that if the above relationship is entrenched the corporate entities in the town will be most willing to offer financial support as part of their research development budget, which the Universities can conveniently draw from, thereby making the Universities relatively self catering and less dependent on Government.

21. I therefore urge Management of the University to strengthen its relationship with the corporate world through the activities of Advancement Centre, where my elder brother, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, GCFR is the current Chair, through the Alumni league, as well as through other net worth individuals who may be affiliated to this University one way or the other. I can assure you, Mr. Vice Chancellor, you will be able to bring in numerous benefits, which will include programmes or projects sponsorship, endowments, and other forms of patronage in terms of consultancy services, which I am sure you have faculties that can provide high quality resource persons. I must however hasten to warn that this proposition should not lead the University to lose sight of or deviate from its primary responsibilities and mandate of research, teaching and community service, for there lies its integrity. There are many donor agencies out there in many countries but you must have some of your officers who are good in fund raising to pursue such matters. However, such donors demand transparency and accountability, which many organizations in Nigeria are in deficit.

22. GOWN-TOWN MODEL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE: THE NIGER STATE EXPERIENCE

In appreciation of the capacity and the value systems of the gown, our administration has based appointment into public offices purely on merit, developmental considerations and values. We made it clear that there is a distinction between governance and politics, and advised that politicians should engage more in party activities while they allowed elected and appointed public officers to provide good governance and real service to the people. It is therefore no accident that we place high premium on education. We have many PhD holders in Government, including my humble self, the Secretary to the State Government, some Commissioners, Special Advisers, Directors-General, and Permanent secretaries. Indeed, appointment of permanent secretaries in Niger State is now also predicated on the possession of at least masters' degree by career civil servants. For any career civil servant to be invited for promotion interview to the next level, he must have successfully undergone a prescribed course. This is done deliberately to encourage people to acquire knowledge and higher qualification in order to understand the complexities of our society for the realization of our Vision 3-20-20, which is our dream of transforming Niger State into one of the top three most developed economies in Nigeria by the year 2020.

23. The concern may be raised that acquisition of higher degrees does not guarantee necessarily good governance; probably that could be true. However, we believe that with good value orientation and attitudinal change it requires only little effort to get a well educated person to provide good and purposeful leadership than would have been possible with an uneducated, ill prepared fellow. In Niger State, we came from a recent experience where anti-intellectuals held sway in government and trivialized governance to 'sharing money' and disparaged the few educated people in the State, calling the latter names and boasting that although they didn't go to school they could pay the salaries of professors. And they could do so at the time because they had access to state resources and didn't have the faintest idea of what governance was all about, not to talk about transparency, accountability, and participatory democracy. A sound education encourages planning which has now been jettisoned by virtually every tier of government. We need planning so that everybody could be carried along in the quest for development.

24. The onus is therefore on us to prove that education is the best weapon for societal transformation and the well educated person is best equipped to exercise leadership with a view to getting the society out of its problems. Again, this can be a subject of further debate and academic work. But I am happy to say that we are making modest contributions to the development of Niger State and the people seem to appreciate what we are doing. For instance, we are proving to them that highly educated or being in leadership position does not remove the human element in us; it only places a higher burden on us to behave in a different and much more refined and responsible manner than others. It requires us to show more respect for the dignity of the people we serve, by serving them honestly, transparently and accountably. It requires us to prove that we are not superior to or more special than the people we serve. Indeed, being highly educated and in leadership position only requires us to mingle with the people freely to gain insights into their real problems in order to guide and assist them to solve their problems. Indeed, the common people who gave us their

votes are our real employers and masters, who deserve our service and we should serve them and not some few elites who more often than not do not even vote.

25. As a responsible government, these are some of the things that have informed our approach to governance. First, we decided that there is nothing 'excellent' in being in leadership position unless you do excellent things to your masters – the common people, the voters; hence, I rejected the title 'His Excellency' and settled for 'Chief Servant', which best describes the job that I do, serving the people, who gave me their mandates at the polls. I make bold to say that every member of my cabinet and all public office holders in Niger State see themselves first as servants of the people, as of today. And we are all proud to be so addressed, because that is the source of our livelihood – serving the people. Secondly, as the Chief Servant, I see my job like the good medical Doctor who can't claim to have particular hour of work because he can be called upon any time. I gave out my GSM numbers for public access, through which Nigerlites are encouraged to send text messages to their servant on any issues of concern. I am happy to announce that I receive on average number of 150 text messages daily, majority of which I try to reply. In Islam, the rights and privileges of those in authority/leadership and followership are the same. Islam encourages consultation in decision making. Indeed, it places more burden on those in Authority/leadership as they shall account for their action or inaction as it affects the well being of the people. While those of us who read the Bible may appreciate Mark Chapter 10, Verses 42-45: "whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave to all...." To me therefore it is very easy to comprehend that exercising excellent leadership, provision of good governance and encouraging participatory democracy are a form of worship of my Allah (SWT) – God.

26. In addition, in the spirit of participatory governance, we are doing the Jama'a Forum (people's parliament) where the government is taken to meet the people in their domains for their contribution and participation in decision-making as well as policy formulation. We have vowed that as elected representatives of the people, we must be accountable to the people at all times. We must not wait only for election period (once in four years) to go back to the people to make new promises, after failing to keep the old ones. We have asked ourselves: What is the mark of a responsible government? In our view, it is to keep its words and to ensure the safety of lives and property, as well the prosperity of the people being governed. This is why we are prepared at all times to make sacrifices in the interest of the people and to keep all promises we make to them. We have vowed not to be deterred, distracted or derailed by anybody.

27. Let us ponder at this point to examine if our approach is making any meaningful impact to good governance in Niger State. We believe, as I have pointed out earlier that we cannot be coming from our backgrounds of the gown and not make meaningful impact on the people we are serving. For the first time ever, the government has agreed on a vision/mission for the State; secondly, for the first time in probably 10 years, the civil service is given its due recognition as the engine room of development; public office holders now have work to do and are allowed to make their contributions. Similarly, public expenditure is now tied strictly to budgetary provisions and fiscal allocation, as no

approval is obtained from the Governor or any appropriate officer if the relevant vote of charge is not indicated, with accurate statement of availability of funds to cover the proposed expenditure. However, we are aware that some people who see Government as an avenue to plunder and make money selfishly are not happy with us; they abuse us, they call us names and try to devalue our work. We are very happy that majority of the people are with us and we are immune to blackmail and rumour mongering. .

28. Realising our precarious financial situation, with 85% dependence on the federation allocation, we have adopted the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) initiative as alternative source of funding for our development projects. This approach is successfully driving our efforts in providing services to our people. For instance, through the PPP we have been able to intervene in the housing sector, infrastructural development, healthcare delivery, tourism development and in agricultural development, among others. We are also drawing the attention of the Federal Government to the status of Federal Routes in Niger State, unless our roads, rail-lines and other infrastructure are good, all our endeavours to salvage the nation may come to nothing. Given the economic situation of the country and the world, we also need to look at other sources of revenue generation. It is my firm belief that if people are confident that their money will be judiciously and accountably utilized, they may be willing to part with it by contributing either as development levy or taxation. The Gown should therefore help the Town with viable options to avoid future calamities. People must begin to take their future in the hand by contributing to the development of their communities.

29. We have made education our number one priority because we appreciate that education is the bedrock of development. Hence we have declared free education from Primary to Secondary schools; free WAEC/NECO for all final year secondary school students in our public schools, regardless of State origin, for we believe that as long as someone is resident in Niger State, he adds value to our State. We are also exploring avenues for the establishment of students loan scheme. The current scholarship scheme is not adequate and realistic. It is a shame that we have graduate unemployment in Nigeria. As a result, we have introduced Youth Engagement Programme for those with NCE, HND and University Degrees by adding value to their certificates through a six-month induction course to prepare them for the real world of work and make them employable anywhere. We are of the position that there should be no graduate unemployment in Niger State during our tenure. However, it is sad to note that some Universities graduate students who should have been disengaged immediately after admission because either they were wrongly admitted or have not been detected that they couldn't benefit from University education. This unfortunate situation should stop so that the credibility of university education should not be further eroded. I am sure we are all very much aware of the benefits to many underprivileged Nigerians from the free education policy of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo and late Sir. Ahmadu Bello, Sardaunan Sokoto in the first republic. I wish to seize this opportunity to call on my colleagues, the State Governors to pay attention to education at all levels, while we strengthen the Universities in our States through our moral and other supports to enable them fulfill their task of generating and applying knowledge relevant to the society's needs. I believe that as a nation we can do better with limited but strengthened

Universities. My humble submission is that we should discourage the establishment of too many unviable Universities, which nowadays appear to be seen in some quarters as 'democracy dividend' or 'political mileage'. Rather, we should equip and support the existing ones to overcome their difficulties and to restructure them to make them discipline-based centres of excellence. Furthermore, I am coming to the conclusion that Federal Government should free itself from directly running/administering educational institutions and be more concerned with quality enhancement and control.

30. Realising the important role of Local Government Areas where majority of the people live, we are making sure that they receive their funding allocations to ensure rapid development. We are also experimenting with a community empowerment initiative called 'Ward Development Committee' in all our 274 wards, where government is disbursing funds directly to the wards for community-driven development projects on a monthly basis. This is aside from the statutory allocations to the local government councils for their capital projects and recurrent expenditures. It might interest you to note that this initiative, even though still undergoing trials is stimulating keen competition for the delivery of services to the people at the grassroots level with respect and dignity. We ensure in Niger State that Local Governments receive their allocations and that well articulated development projects are executed in accordance with due process and the codes of transparency, probity and accountability. We ensure that we track down each Naira and Kobo by tying them to projects and programmes so that there will be none to be stolen. Our aim is to gradually reach the polling units as centres of development and radicalize the people to appreciate and demand for their rights and quality service from those in leadership; to see anybody who come during elections to bribe them and corrupt them with a tin of salt and a cup of rice as their enemy.

31. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no doubt that the gown has occupied and will always occupy a crucial place in the socio-political development of nations. It epitomizes intellectual and cultural springboards which have propelled nations forward along the path of greatness and achievement. Thus, it is hoped that our institutions of higher learning shall produce the critical high-level manpower and the appropriate leadership in all facets of our national development. Perhaps, a major challenge to the Gown in Nigeria today, is the need to conduct research into and perpetuate the values, ideals and legacies of the founding fathers of our nation's political history for the good of present and future generations of Nigerians. This, in my view will represent the biggest contribution that the gown can make to the town in this era. Rather than the unnecessary tensions and opposition, there is the need for confidence building and mutual trust on both sides. The town must appreciate the abrasiveness, consistency, straightforwardness and attention to details which characterize the gown. Conversely, the gown needs not be intimidated by the affluence and self-seeking tendencies of the town. All must work together for the common good of society.

32. In Niger State we have put in place a solid foundation for effective engagement of Town and Gown as exemplified in our support to federal educational institutions in our domain and catchment areas. Recently, we signed a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) with FUT Minna covering diverse areas of interest to our Ministries, Departments and Agencies. We are also collaborating with the Training and Doctrine Command of the Nigeria Army (TRADOC), Minna in the areas of capacity building, research and analysis. We have adopted a policy of appropriating and co-owning every federal establishment in the State, believing that such relationship can only add value to Niger State. I note with regret that the recent attempts by various State Governments in establishing State Universities where they could not fill their quota in their catchment Universities. Establishment of University is not and should not be an 'ego-trip'; where a State University must be established the State should provide funds and cash for ten and twenty years. Appointments in those Universities should not be 'job for the boys'. I commend the courage of my colleague and brother, the Governor of Plateau State, Governor Jonah Jang on his decision regarding the Plateau State University.

33. I will like to seize this opportunity to inform the authorities of this great university that Niger State is desirous of establishing linkages with the University of Ibadan for manpower development, where public officers from the town can attend short and long term planned courses. I am of the conviction that the University of Ibadan offers a great promise in promoting the concept of servant leadership in Nigeria, hence I wish to propose the establishment of an **Institute for Leadership and Democratic Studies** at the University of Ibadan, which will probably be the first of its kind in Africa, where Nigeria's political actors and indeed African public office holders will be required to attend regular executive courses in Leadership, Good Governance, Ethics and Democratic Studies. There are many such Leadership Studies Programmes in the developed world. The University of Ibadan has the internal capacity for starting its own programme. Indeed, one of your staff who has succeeded to a large extent in linking the Town and Gown in terms of his conflict management work in different parts of Africa is a product of the United Nations International Leadership Academy in Amman, Jordan. I am sure the University has many such capable hands to drive new initiatives that could make the University of Ibadan become more development-relevant.

34. I recommend that the Course of the proposed Ibadan Leadership Studies be designed with focus on the core values of fairness, accountability, transparency and ethics, and with the aim of equipping participants with the skills to function as responsible servant leaders. Amb. Maitama Sule (Dan Masanin Kano) once observed "our society needs good leadership...if a congregational prayer goes wrong, it is the responsibility of the Imam who is leading...." This Course should be targeted at governorship aspirants, serving governors, members of the Federal and State Executive councils, members of the National and States' Assembly, Heads of government parastatals and agencies, and principal public office holders, who should see public office not as opportunity to plunder and steal public resources but as service, sacrifice and self denial in the extreme. This imperative for value reorientation about servant leadership was illustrated further by Dan Masanin Kano when he advised that:

Nigerian leaders must adopt the philosophy of the herdsman. If you see the Fulani herdsman, he leads his

cattle; he does not drive them...He is perceived by the cattle as a friend, as they are willing to follow him from the rear. If he whistles, they will disperse into the forest, if he makes another sign, they will come near him...If he takes shelter under a tree, and the cattle fear that he is in danger, they would chase him away from the location. Why do the cattle have such a relationship with their leader? It is because he has sacrificed everything for them. He sleeps where they sleep. In fact, when they are sleeping at night, he is half asleep, with his ears open to hear the cry of a cow or hyena. When there are signs of danger, he grabs his stick and makes sure the cows stay alive. That is the type of leadership we want...

35. Essentially, the message is that those in position of authority and exercise of leadership must lead by example, be truthful, committed, passionate, honest, trustworthy, accountable and transparent. In addition, to be an 'effective servant leaders, we need to ensure that the highest priorities and needs of our followers are served; we need to dignify the people by making them partners in solving their own problems; we need to give them a sense of responsibility for ownership and maintaining the solutions they have arrived at. Importantly, we need to imbibe the principles of listening, consultation, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of others and building community'. I must add that all of us must commit to radicalize the common people to appreciate and understand their rights, to demand for quality service from those in leadership position.

36. Before I conclude this presentation, let me say that the University of Ibadan has all it takes to be one of the greatest Universities in the world. I will be available to serve as a part-time faculty member and to deliver lectures if such an Institute is established here and if I am found suitable, but whatever happens I shall be one of the students. Such short courses shall give the opportunity to be 'out of the box', to be on the 'balcony' for good decision-making. It is indeed time that the gown took its rightful position to lead the town out of the present socio-economic and political logjam that Nigeria has found itself. I challenge the Management of the University to come up with a blueprint for its take-off within the next academic session. To flag off this Institute, I call on my colleagues, friends, captains of Industry to kick start their support from this moment and I place the onus of the success of this enterprise on my friends and brothers, Governors of Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti and Oyo and the Vice-Chancellor.

37. I should at this point commend this University for its collaboration with National Defence College for the Masters in Strategic Studies programme. We should see more of these collaborations in other areas. I also commend the University for being the first to start a Ph.D programme in Peace and Conflict Studies in the West African sub-

region. I take particular interest not only because of my background in Strategic Studies but also because the course offers for people to appreciate how to maintain peace and avoid conflict. This shall strengthen the relationship between the Town and Gown thus bridging the growing gap. We are all in the boat and everybody should play his role properly for socio-economic and political development of this country.

38. I thank you immensely for this opportunity. May Allah bless us all; amen.

READINGS AND REFERENCES

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