

A DAY SYMPOSIUM ON

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE AS A FUNDAMENTAL TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HELD AT THE

STELLA OBASANJO HALL, ILORIN

ON THE 13TH DECEMBER, 2006.

WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. MUDASIRU SALAMI, CO- ORDINATOR GENERAL , MAF

It is my greatest pleasure and honour to welcome you all to this all-important symposium organized by Mustapha Akanbi Foundation. Your physical presence at this auspicious occasion is indicative of the tremendous regard you have for this Foundation, headed by no less a person than a distinguished legal icon, a notable jurist of both National and International repute, Hon. Justice M.M.A. Akanbi CFR, former Chairman of ICPC. It is our hope that from time to time we shall be organizing lectures, symposia, seminars and workshops for public enlightenment and awareness on matters of national importance such as we have today.

We are therefore gathered here in fulfillment of one of the objectives of the Mustapha Akanbi Foundation, organizing symposium to promote the culture of good governance, participatory democracy and the enthronement of the rule of law. You will agree with me that our march forward from the period of military interregnum is fraught with problems and hurdles such as prevalence of corruption, intolerance, oppression, and abuse of due process and fundamental human right to mention a few.

Going by the challenges facing our nascent democracy most especially the task of fighting corruption which has eaten deep into the fabrics of our body

polity and which is the root cause of most of our socio-politico-economic setbacks, you would agree with me that the main theme of this symposium, “Participatory Democracy and Good Governance as fundamental tools for sustainable development” could not have come at any better time than this. Furthermore it is our hope that this symposium will provide solutions to some of the problems likely to be encountered during elections in Nigeria, particularly the 2007 election. As stakeholders we all have roles to play in ensuring a peaceful, smooth, hitch free election and transition from one civilian rule to the other. All stakeholders have a role to play in the rebirth of Nigeria to make it a place of pride in Africa. The judiciary has a duty in ensuring that justice, and fair play obtain and the checks and balances in our constitution are not jettisoned overboard. We must uphold the rules of the game. We are here to rub minds on crucial national issues relating to good governance and enthronement of democratic ethics and values, which are necessary ingredients for socio economic growth and development.

We have invited eminent and erudite scholars to do justice to the sub themes arising from our main theme. Despite the fact that we gave them short notice I have no iota of doubt that they are going to do justice to the various topics. I do not want to pre-empt our speakers. The taste of the pudding it is popularly said lies in the eating.

We have created room for participants to contribute through making comments and asking questions. We have invited a cross section of the society so that the message here today will be spread far and wide.

At the end of this symposium we hope to come out with a communiqué that will reflect our collective stand on some of the issues to be discussed. It is our hope to also publish, in future, some of the papers delivered at our symposia.

Finally, I welcome all participants to this occasion. I thank you all individually and collectively for responding to our invitation. I wish us a very happy deliberation with the hope that at the end of the day, we shall all benefit and come out with resolution for the betterment of our Great Nation.