

## CHAPTER SIX

### **The Report of Rapporteurs on the Economic Summit**

**Dr. Kadri B. Ismail & Comrade Ishowo Lateef,**  
Department of Business Administration, University of Ilorin  
and Ishowo Compound, Ilorin.

The programme started at about 11:00am with Professor Hassan .A. Saliu introducing the guests as well as other notable personalities at the occasion. The list included the Chairman, Speakers as well as other key participants. Dr. Hamzat Abdulraheem led the opening prayer.

The National President of the Ilorin Emirate Descendants' Progressive Union (IEDPU), Honourable Justice Saka Yusuf, OFR (Rtd.) read his captivating welcome address. He posited that the economic situation of Nigeria is continually faced with of challenges. The value of the naira is declining, unemployment is on the increase thereby creating insecurity as well as other economic and social problems for the nation. He opined that there is an urgent need to checkmate these anomalies so as not to allow them to degenerate into chaos, thuggery and insecurity. The speakers he believed, would do justice to the topics assigned to them. He also used the occasion to call on all Nigerians, Kwarans and Ilorin indigenes, in particular, to assist the Emirate by creating employment and support the establishment of Endowment Fund to develop the community.

Originally, Honourable Justice Mustapha Akanbi, CFR and Alhaji AGF Abdulrazak SAN, OFR, were scheduled to co-chair the seminar, but the latter sent his words that Honourable Justice M A. Akanbi should stand-in for him. The Chairman of the occasion, Honourable Justice Akanbi thanked members of the IEDPU for their

initiative in organizing the first ever Economic Summit as he said that he was happy to identify with such an innovative idea. In his words, "this is a progressive departure from the usual annual Almanac launching". He noted that the current trend in the IEDPU where new grounds, discoveries as well as innovative ideas were sprouting should not be allowed to die.

Justice Akanbi reiterated that the name of Alhaji Dantata will forever remain fresh in the minds of the people of Kano State for his contributions to the economic development of the city. He enquired why such a development could not be replicated here in Ilorin? The Chairman, therefore, challenged the paper presenters to live up to expectations by bringing forth the possible ways of reducing poverty in the Emirate. More so, Justice Akanbi charged all parents in the Emirate to take the education of their children very seriously. He noted that the height attained by him today was due to his untiring efforts at educating himself.

He added that, although he established a cyber-cafe, but those he employed mismanaged the business which forced him to discontinue the operation. He, however, emphasized that this should not deter people from assuming business risk. The chairman concluded his speech by reiterating that if new businesses are opened in Ilorin, the issue of street begging, prostitution etc will be reduced to the barest minimum.

### **Papers' Presentation**

The first paper titled, **A Survey of the Economy of the Emirate: Past, Present and Future** was presented by the renowned scholar, Alhaji L.A.K. Jimoh. The paper noted that the Emirate, no doubt, is a frontier of Islamic Knowledge and teachings, but the past glorious economic role of the city is yet to be accorded its recognition. He said great scholars have noted that until 1870, after Kano, Ilorin

was the largest town in the caliphate and the major trading and manufacturing centre south of the Niger. The geographical location of the Emirate made it accessible to both the north as well as the southern part of Nigeria. The economic success of the Emirate continued to flourish until the coming of the colonial masters to Ilorin in 1897. Alhaji L.A.K Jimoh observed that the first tile industry in Nigeria was established in Ilorin which was beautifully showcased in London in 1924. More so, the Emirate in the entire Northern Region was the first to install and operate a big electric plant. A Private European investor also established in Ilorin a confectionery which produced biscuits that were popularly branded "Kangu Adeta". Furthermore, another European established a pilot textile mill in Pakata area of the city.

In the recent past. Philip Morris Tobacco Company, Tate and Lyle Sugar Company and a match manufacturing industry MATCHCO as well as an international paper mill called Jebba Paper Mill were all established in the Emirate. The paper also said the current land policy of the state government should be re-examined, as indigenes, especially those in the urban areas of Ilorin, are not comfortable with the policy. He then concluded by re-emphasizing the fact that the past was glorious and that the present is bad. He, therefore, highlighted certain things that could be done to save the future.

The second paper **Generating Capital for Businesses** was presented by Alhaji Ibrahim Yinka Yahaya from Harmony Holdings Limited. The paper X-rayed the various kinds of capital available to business owners in Nigeria. He was of the opinion that capital can be generated through primary sources (individual resources, borrowing from families and friends) and secondary sources (financial institutions). Nigerian governments, over the years, have put in place different agencies to assist business owners sometimes with business skills, information or finances. These institutions include; SMEDAN, Bank of Industry, NERFUND, Bank of Agriculture, Nigeria Export-Import Bank, Infrastructure Development Bank of Nigeria,

Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria, Commercial Bank, Microfinance Bank and the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The Challenges faced by business owners in accessing funds from these institutions, among others, include:

- I. High cost of borrowing
- II. Stringent lending condition
- III. Inadequate funding
- IV. Overlapping functions
- V. Lack of knowledge of business environment.

The first and second papers were jointly introduced for discussion by the Chairman, Hon Justice Akanbi. He thanked the two presenters for a job well done. Participants were then allowed to comment on the papers or ask questions. The first reaction came from Alhaji Sheu Ahmad Moyosore from Jos, representing IEDPU northern Zone. He said the call for joint collaborative efforts of the five local Government Councils making up the Ilorin Emirate may not be realizable because all the Local Government Areas in the state operate a joint account with the state government. Comrade Ishowo Abdullateef submitted that a big event like this should have had more participants from the Emirate. He opined that people like the business moguls such as Alhaji Umaru Saro, and Alhaja Muinat Shagaya and others from the Emirate are needed to hear from them their practical experiences in the Nigerian business environment. On the second paper, Comrade Ishowo reiterated the efficacy of Zakat as a potent source of capital in a Muslim dominated community like Ilorin. Another participant Alhaji Tajudeen Hadi, from Idi-Igba, Adeta, Ilorin commented that Ilorin indigenes most especially the wealthy ones should be ready to take business risks and invest in the economic development of the community. He, however, charged those holding public offices to move closer to the grassroots and invest in the community.

Alhaji Abdulraheem Ibrahim said there was an urgent need to make papers presented at the seminar available to people. Alhaji Yusuf Pakata opined that, "It is a pity that indigenes of Ilorin Emirate found themselves in this present predicament of poverty and unemployment." He suggested the formation of a Council of Elders to work out the modalities for bridging the present gap existing between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in the Emirate. Alhaji Taiye Olowo, in his own submission, noted that Ilorin indigenes should showcase its traditional attire (Aso Ofi). It should be put on during weddings and other social engagements. This, he noted, will go a long way in encouraging local cloth-weavers to go back to business. Justice Abdulkadir Orire, CON, (Rtd) suggested that the wealthy and influential Ilorin indigenes outside the state should be contacted and encouraged to come home to assist others. Alhaji L.A.K Jimoh, in his response, suggested the abolition of Joint Account System between the State and the Local Government Councils. The presenter concluded by stating the need for the indigenes to be honest so as to encourage the wealthy and influential ones to come home and establish industries. Experiences have shown that the few industries established by some of them were mismanaged as a result of dishonesty and corruption. The Chairman, Justice Mustapha Akanbi, however, remarked that there was the need to change our orientation and abandon the idea of relying solely on the wealthy indigenes. He emphasized that we should be ready to take our destiny in our own hands.

The third paper titled **Harnessing the Human Resources of Ilorin Emirate** was presented by Professor Shehu Ahmad Jimoh, OON. The central theme of the paper revolves around how the human resources can be harnessed to bring about development of the Emirate. He noted that Ilorin is one of the few communities endowed with a large human resource, all that is needed is how to make use of them to move the Emirate forward. He further observed that human resources are not limited to educated Ilorin indigenes,

and that here are so many other areas in which Ilorin indigenes have established themselves which can be tapped to help the community attain its desired development. He reiterated that Ilorin is one and that it is more important than individuals or group that make up the Emirate. The bottom line of the paper is that every individual in the Emirate is important and that we should tap maximally from individual potentials regardless of one political party affiliation. He concluded by enumerating some recommendations that might guide the community towards maximizing its human resources to the advantage Ilorin Emirate, which include diversifying knowledge acquisition making a data bank of our experts from the Emirate, revival of local industries and more importantly the unity of purpose among the people of the Emirate.

The fourth paper titled, **Available Business Opportunities in the Emirate** was delivered by Alhaji Tunde Salami, whose central point is how business opportunities in the Emirate can be created. He noted that there are business opportunities within the Ilorin Emirate but it takes the sensibilities of a creative mind to notice them: he cited such area as agriculture (e.g. farming), landed properties, auctioning of properties and machines, money market, etc. as commercial activities that can bring profitable and veritable income. Regardless of their associated risks, he mentioned investment in transportation, information and technology, establishment of private educational institutions, waste management textile, etc. as few of the many areas which can be *looked* into. He, however, emphasized in his conclusion that the paper only serves as a reminder of available businesses within the Emirate, and not a feasibility study to an investor embarking on a *new* business.

Discussing the paper, a participant, Alhaji Abdulraheem emphasized the need for our professors and leaders to encourage Ilorin youths in their various areas of study. He said some elders do deride some courses mostly when they are approached for assistance in the area of employment. Thus, there was a consensus

of opinions by the participants that the IEDPU, should look at the possibilities of a career guidance summit for would-be students, students and even graduates from the Emirate, as this will go a long way in helping them to know what subject combinations are needed for various courses and where and when professionals are needed. Professor Shehu Jimoh responded to the comment that all courses are important, and should be taken as such by our elders. He, however, added that students' interest in their courses of choice is as important as the societal interest as well as the future of the courses. Dr. Abdulrasaq Ajao from the University of Ilorin, equally noted that officials of local governments should always be part of such important" programmes of IEDPU as this so as to bring integration between the government and the community. He noted that they are policy interpreter, executors and managers at the grassroots. He was corroborated by Alhaji Abbas Karara who added that good programmes as this should not be allowed to die. He concluded that in view of the absence of the Chairmen of Local Government Councils in the Emirate at the Summit, the IEDPU should reach out to them with the outcome of the programme. He was optimistic that they would receive it well.

Another participant noted that the wealthy and influential ones from Ilorin should not be discouraged on the basis that Ilorin people have mismanaged their industries in the past. Alhaji Tunde Salami responded to this by explaining that there is the need to demonstrate honesty wherever we are placed, so that our investors will not be discouraged. Alhaji LAK Jimoh corroborated the submission that negative attitude to work and dishonesty are major factors discouraging our wealthy ones from re-investing in the community. While majority seemed to be apportioning blames to the workers at the defunct industries, a participant warned that the would-be industrialists should pay attention to the welfare of the workers, adequate remuneration, prompt payment of salaries and necessary

training for the staff. Failure to do these contributed to the collapse of many companies and not necessarily fraud and dishonesty.

After the discussion of issues arising from the papers presented, the organizers, IEDPU, as a way of winding up, promised not to rest on her oars until the goal of the Summit is attained. It however called for continued support for its programmes. The concluding prayer was said by Justice Abdulkadir Oba Imam Fulani (Rtd), OFR, at about 3:30pm.