

ILORIN EMIRATE DESCENDANTS PROGRESSIVE UNION (IEDPU)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 43RD
ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTED BY ALHAJI AHMAD
HAMEED ON THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER, 2008

1. Introduction

On behalf of the Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressive Union (IEDPU), I humbly welcome you to the formal opening ceremony of the 43rd Annual National conference of our great union.

The union has transformed into Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressive Union as advised by His Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin and the Grand Patron of our Union to conform with the geographical constituency of the union

Prevailing peaceful and harmonious co-existence are essential bedrocks of social, political and economic development of any community. The conducive atmosphere in Ilorin Emirate and Kwara State in general puts us in an enviable position in the country. May I seize this golden opportunity to express our profound gratitude to Almighty Allah for granting our prayers, and for crowning the efforts of our leaders in achieving this prevailing peaceful position. Alhamdu Lillahi –All praise be to Allah.

We appreciate very greatly the resolute commitment of the Executive Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki, the Turaki of Ilorin, our Royal Father and Grand Patron of the Union. His Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin and his other traditional heads for the peace in the State of Harmony.

We appreciate the support of all to the Union, particularly, our Grand Patron, HRH, the Emir of Ilorin, His Eminence, the Waziri of Ilorin, Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki, and our brother, the Executive Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki.

2. Our efforts

The union continues to contribute its quota towards the educational development in Ilorin Emirate. We appreciate very sincerely the assistance of the Community Based Poverty Reduction Project, put in place by the Kwara state Government on the provision of essential infrastructural facilities in various educational institutions in the State. The Union offered bursary awards to brilliant Secondary School Students of Ilorin Emirate, spread across five Local Government Areas of the emirate.

A Conference Hall capable of accommodating over 200 people in the premises of the Union's National Secretariat Annex at Geri Alimi Area was constructed in the year, and the plenary session of the National Delegates' Conference shall, insha-Allah, hold in the new hall. The construction of the hall was made possible from part of the income generated from last year conference and good spirited members of the union and host of others. We greatly appreciate their support and pray to Almighty Allah to reward them manifold.

The Union submitted a memorandum to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to create more electoral constituencies in Ilorin Emirate Local Government Areas. The present arrangement puts the area at a disadvantage. It is note worthy that Ilorin Emirate Local Government Areas are unjustly short-changed in the present arrangement in which a Local Government Area in the Emirate is seven times the size of a Local Government Area in the State. In the spirit of equity, justice and fair play, the union is passionately appealing to INEC

to correct the anomaly. We did present a memorandum also to Electoral Reform Committee suggesting ways to curb election malpractices.

You will recall my passionate appeal to all indigenes of Ilorin Emirate last year, to buy shares in Ilorin Community Bank, to enable her transform to a Micro Finance Bank, as required by the Federal Government. I am happy to report that the bank has comfortably transformed into a full-fledged Micro Finance Bank, as result of effort by the Union and other Stakeholders and has been contributing to the economic development of Ilorin Emirate. The Board of Directors of the Bank, its Managing Director and Staff are contributing their quota towards making the bank serve the purpose for which it was established.

The administration of Governor Bukola Saraki has taken giant strides in addressing the sorry situation of electricity, water, education and infrastructures. In addition to the above areas action plans had been laid out on developmental projects. We have digested information coming from the Government on how they want to handle projects. We have studied the explanations on the need to go to the capital market. If foundation for our economic prosperity is to be laid and knowing that Internally Generated Revenue cannot be waited for to be accumulated and be enough to face economic projects, going to the capital market by way of bonds becomes inevitable. Of course, we know that Federation Account Allocation eventually goes, largely, to pay Salaries and Wages. Out of the economic projects to be tackled through the capital market some should be of particular concern to the Ilorin Emirate. They are the Truck Plaza project, the Cargo airport, the public water supply, Aviation College and the University project.

We commend the Kwara State Government for conceiving these projects and for the determination to see them to fruition. The Government is facing squarely its responsibilities. How do we take advantage of these

projects in Ilorin Emirate? How do we benefit from all the economic fallouts of these projects? By way of similitude, how do we get “buckets to draw the water coming down the hill”? Ilorin Emirate must start working seriously to get the “buckets” and getting them fast and getting them many. We must empower ourselves to take benefits, our fair share of benefits, that will accrue from these economic projects of the Kwara State Government. Nobody would blame those that have full “buckets” already to want to take all the available advantages, if we render ourselves unable to participate in the competition. We must make ourselves able to participate. We must study the ripple effects of government efforts in these developmental projects.

It is fair to publicly acknowledge the Kwara State Government’s efforts as regards water supply. Some few days ago, we read in the media that new water pipeline distribution network for Ilorin Metropolis had been awarded in addition to the earlier awarded for purchase of high and low pumps. The setting up of a Committee to look into how the concrete tanks erected across Ilorin metropolis could be put into maximum use is commendable. The dry season is fast approaching and all efforts must be made to make water available in all corners of the metropolis. Urgent interventions are therefore, necessarily called for.

The picture of things as regard electricity supply is promising. It is an area that clearly shows Kwara State Government’s determination to achieve success. The supply of electricity is in the main Federal Government responsibility. The intervention and participation of the Kwara State Government has contributed a lot to the rapid progress in the Ganmo Step-down project. Information has it that 132/33KV has been concluded since June 2008. The 330/32KV aspect should by now be handed over to PHCN. All these achievements are made possible by Kwara State Government’s facilitation of some percentage of the work.

In addition, facilities for evacuation of power from Ganmo projects have been made possible by the building of two power sub-stations at Adeta and Budo Efo. Without these expenses on evacuation facilities, benefiting from Ganmo Step-down would have been impossible. We commend the Kwara State Government for not only contributing to complete Ganmo Step-down projects but to also evacuate and distribute generated power from it (Ganmo Step-down) for the use of the entire people of Kwara State and beyond.

Let me thank those who have contributed directly or indirectly either by putting up pressure or by direct influence to make Ganmo projects and its consequential ones possible. Your actions will touch many lives positively. May Allah accept them as part of your good deeds.

Let me as this juncture behave as Oliver Twist, always wanting more. We wish to request that a total overhaul of the equipment and facilities available at 132/33/11KV Switch yard and Control rooms at Sawmill, Ilorin be carried out to prepare it for better services to the people of Ilorin metropolis.

The Union commends the Bukola Administration on its Education Reform which has “every child counts” as its theme. The concern of the Reform to revamp the appalling position of our educational system is well appreciated. It is our fervent hope that the Reform will achieve the desired objectives.

The Union wants to note with joy the directives of the State Government that all Local Councils in the State should embark on “massive and accelerated empowerment programme to reduce poverty among the people”. We want to add that we, I mean, Governments at state and local, must make skill acquisition a cardinal objective of our education. The role of technical vocational skills in economic development has been recognized as very basic.

We want to submit to the Kwara State Government and all the Local Government Area Councils in the emirate to work with banking, private and corporate bodies operating in the State to partner with government so as to provide post NYSC graduates of Kwara State origin with experience that will enhance their employment chances in the Labour Market. This is a tremendous avenue for capacity building and manpower development of our youths so as to enhance a positive and a prosperous Kwara State.

Let me at this juncture also plead for cooperation of all religions in the sustenance of the Peace Agenda of Kwara State in particular and Nigeria as a whole. We must not injure the religious feelings of others. Religious contempt disturbs peace of society. For us to be able to sustain the Peace Agenda of Kwara State, we must, all religions, accommodate each other by respecting each others sensibilities and peculiarities. Ilorin Emirate has some sensibilities and peculiarities, which for peace to reign, must not be disturbed. A group that thinks that environment and peculiarities of a people do not matter is sowing hate-generating seeds. Please accept Ilorin Emirate people as we are, respect our sensibilities and Ilorin, indeed, Kwara will forever continue to be a place where people of all colours run to when their survival and peace are disturbed elsewhere. Ilorin itself is peace. It will forever remain so, we pray.

We want to publicly acknowledge the financial contributions of Kwara State Government to the union. Its donation of two million Naira in the year is appreciated. Our thanks and appreciations go to our chief Launcher, last year, chief Faysal Harb, M.D. Bulletine Construction Company, who donated N1.2million, Dr. Balogun Olayinka Rabi of UITH, Dr. Toyin Gambari Sulyman of Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Kaduna, Major Adamu Ilyasu, (rtd), Alhaji Saidu Bamidele Ahmed, Federal Commissioner, National Population Commission, Arc. Halima Tayo Alao, Former Minister of Environment, Housing and Urban Development, Alhaja Asiata Ayinke Saka, Hon. Commissioner for Health, Kwara State,

Home makers club, Ambassador (Dr.) Nimota N. Akanbi and Hon Justice Ahmed O. Belgore, Judge, Federal Court of Appeal, Jos and other members of his immediate family. We thank, also the following people for their contributions: - Dr. S. A. Kuranga, Justice Mutalubi Ambali, Justice Saka Yusuf, (rtd), Alh. Mumeen Malik, Alh. L. A. K. Jimoh, Hon. B. F. Ishola, Alh. Saka Saadu, Hajia Halimat Yusuf

We want to specially recognize the contributions of Alhaji L. A. K. Jimoh to the construction of our hall at the Union's headquarters Annex. The hall would have remained uncompleted without his immense financial contributions and moral support that kept us going. Some patriotic and selfless indigenes of Ilorin Emirate who begged to remain anonymous donated materials and cash. We are grateful to them. Another patriotic son of Ilorin has helped the Union to be on the internet. He has begged not to be named. You can reach us now; know about us, live, on website; www.iedpu.com and E-mail: info@iedpu.com

Bereavements

We mourn the passing away of Professor Musa Ally Ajetunmobi, Dr. Muhammed Ali Olukade, Alhaji As-Shaikh-L-Islam Hanafi Abdul Kadir Ibraheem Gere Al-adabbiy, Alhaji Yusuf Amuda Taofiq Were, Alhaja Hassanat Ibrahim Sulu Gambari and Alhaji Issa O. Ahmed. May Almighty Allah grant them Al-jannat L-Firdaus, amin.

Appreciation

The union expresses her profound gratitude to the Executive Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki, His Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin, Special Guests of Honour, Hon. Dimeji Sabur Bankole, Speaker House of Representatives, Chairman of today's occasion and National Secretary of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) our own Alhaji Abubakar Kawu Baraje, the Chief Launcher Alhaji Dr. Alimi Abdulrazaq, the

Chairman, Ilorin West Local Government Council, Co-launchers and distinguished guests for honouring our invitation and for your moral and financial supports towards the successful holding of this year National Conference. May Almighty Allah reward you abundantly. Amin.

Conclusion

I want to publicly express my thanks to my maker, the Almighty Allah for making it possible for me to serve my people squarely for four years. May Allah accept these years as years of good deeds. Before I conclude I want to passionately appeal to all indigenes of Ilorin Emirate to get involved in all efforts to lift the Emirate. We must be committed to do good to our people. May Allah help us, all, amin.