

2022 SECOND QUARTER MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT CARLTON GATE HOTEL, IDI APE, IBADAN, FROM JUNE 22 TO 24, 2022

COMMUNIQUÉ

PREAMBLE

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), under the leadership of the Co-chairmen, His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, and the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), His Eminence, Rev. Dr. Samson Olasupo Ayokunle, held its 2022 Second Quarter Meeting at Carlton Gate, Hotel, Ibadan, from the 22nd to 24th of June, 2022. The theme of the meeting was “Promoting Mutual Love and Understanding in Nigeria”.

After the courtesy visit to the Governor of Oyo State, Engr. Seyi Makinde, who expressed his delight to host leaders of the two faith communities in Nigeria, and reiterated the importance of peaceful coexistence, the opening ceremony was held at Le Chateau, Awolowo Avenue, Old Bodija, Ibadan. The meeting was declared open by the Governor and was attended by senior functionaries of the Oyo State Government as well as religious and political leaders in the state. Other stakeholders within and outside government were also in attendance.

While the Co-chairmen and Executive Secretary of NIREC delivered stirring opening remarks that addressed the theme of the meeting and drew attention to the imperative of mutual love and understanding at the critical stage in Nigeria, two paper presentations were made by Dr Ibrahim Uthman of the University of Ibadan and Sr Dr Maria Natalia Ajayi IHM of Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Major Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan.

RESOLUTIONS

After extensive deliberations on the theme of the meeting and State of the Nation, the Council unanimously:

1. **advised** politicians to play politics of development, not politics of bitterness, and move their people away from poverty to prosperity, not from stability to insecurity;
2. **stressed** that the fundamental teaching of both Islam and Christianity is love and that Nigerians should embrace one another in spite of their ethno-linguistic and politico-religious differences as one nation under God;
3. **urged** Nigerians to rise above partisan politics and divisive political ambition to live together in mutual love, respect and genuine brotherhood;

4. **resolved** to monitor preachers and engage, expose and sanction those who engage in hate preaching and religious bigotry;
5. **condemned** blasphemy as an evil act that is not acceptable and deplored the blasphemers of religious figures as sinners who do not represent anyone other than themselves;
6. **denounced** jungle justice and extra-judicial killing while urging religious fanatics not to take law into their own hands but rather report any infraction to the law enforcement agencies;
7. **expressed** serious concerns about the porosity of the Nigerian borders especially some states like Borno state that share borders with three countries (i.e. Chad, Cameroon and Niger) from which foreigners invade Nigeria to perpetrate crime and killings;
8. **warned** politicians against dividing the society along religious lines and cautioned religious leaders against publicizing religion for their selfish gains;
9. **enjoined** politicians to demonstrate their religious commitments through uprightness and adhering to ethical standards in their actions;
10. **advocated** the sustenance of a dialogue of friendship between the two major faith communities in Nigeria;
11. **called** for mutual love and understanding, not just tolerance, among Nigerians, regardless of their ethnic, religious and political affiliations in agreement with the old national anthem which partly states, "Though tribes and tongues may differ, in brotherhood we stand."
12. **tasked** government and security agencies to set the necessary machinery in motion to stamp out the menace of banditry, kidnapping, ritual killings and other vices that holds Nigerians to ransom;
13. **acknowledged** that Nigeria is diverse but the diversity is not a problem in itself but its management is what is posing challenges to Nigerian leaders;
14. **noted** that both Muslims and Christians should work together as Islam and Christianity share many fundamentals like deferring to God, recognizing the temporariness of this world and believing that we shall all return to God to render the accounts of our sojourn in this temporary abode;
15. **appealed** to all Nigerians to imbibe the principles of mutual affection, mercy and compassion in relating with one another while training their children on the values of generosity, kindness, piety, humility, dignity and decency;
16. **appealed** to ASUU to suspend its ongoing strike in the interest of millions of Nigerian students and urged the Federal Government to expedite action on resolving the impasse;

17. **charged** Nigerians to promote family faith and caring conversations along political, religious and ethnic lines while ensuring that all hands are on deck to achieve a better and greater Nigeria based on mutual love and cooperation;
18. **called** on government to revive and revitalize the Ajaokuta Steel Company as a way of boosting the distressed Nigerian economy and addressing the infrastructural deficits that challenge the country;
19. **urged** Nigerians to take advantage of the ongoing voter registration exercise, obtain their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and discharge their civic responsibility by electing competent leaders that will bail Nigerians out of their current economic and developmental challenges;
20. **canvassed** the need for Nigerians to be their brother's keeper and revalidate their spirituality by being righteous in their relationship with others and fellow human being;
21. **affirmed** its avowed commitment to the promotion of peaceful co-existence, mutual understanding and inter-faith cooperation among Nigerians;
22. **implores** the Government to establish State Police in order to stop the daily bloodshed which renders human lives worthless in Nigeria; and
23. **commended** the outgoing Co-Chairman and President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) for his leadership and contributions to the nation-building, especially through NIREC.

APPRECIATION

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) immensely appreciated the cooperation and support of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, towards the success of the meeting. The Council also expressed its profound gratitude to the Government and good people of Oyo State for their hospitality. NIREC especially thanked the Governor of Oyo State, Engr Seyi Makinde, for warmly receiving its members at the Government House and personally attending the opening ceremony and declaring it open.

Besides, the Council expressed its gratitude to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Gida Mustapha, for supporting NIREC in all its programs. The Council is no less grateful to the Guest Speakers, Dr Ibrahim Uthman of the University of Ibadan and Sr Dr Maria Natalia Ajayi IHM of Ss. Peter and Paul Major Catholic Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan, for adding value to the meeting through their thoughtful presentations. The Council is equally grateful to all the dignitaries and stakeholders who participated in the opening session and thereby contributed in their own ways to the success of the meeting.

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His Eminence Alhaji Muhammed Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni
The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General,
Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)
CO-CHAIRMAN

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His Eminence Dr. Samson Olasupo Ayokunle
President, Christian Association of
Nigeria (CAN)
CO-CHAIRMAN

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Rev. Fr. Prof. Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua
Executive Secretary