

APPENDIX IV

THE COMMUNIQUE

1ST QUARTER MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT THE CONFERENCE HALL HILL STATION HOTEL, JOS PLATEAU STATE. 18TH-20TH MAY, 2009.

The Nigeria Inter Religious Council (NIREC) under the Co-Chairmanship of the Sultan of Sokoto, who is also the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni; and the President of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), His Grace Archbishop, Dr., John Onaiyekan, (CON) ably represented by Archbishop Daniel Okoh, held its 1st Quarter General Meeting at the Conference Hall, Hill Station Hotel Jos, Plateau State, between the 18th and 20th of May, 2009. The meeting was attended by the principal officers and members of NIREC from across the states of the Federation.

The formal Opening Ceremony of the meeting was attended by His Excellency, the Governor of Plateau State, Da Jonah David Jang, who also declared the meeting open.

Other dignitaries included the Speaker, Plateau State House of Assembly; Secretary to the State Government; members of the State Executive Council; Traditional/Religious Leaders and Elder Statesmen from the North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Whereas NIREC has preached religious tolerance, promoted understanding and co-existence among adherents of different faiths and made dialogue the bed rock of religious harmony in the country; the Council (NIREC):

- ❖ Expressed its immense gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency, the Governor of Plateau State Da Jonah David Jang; Government, people of Plateau State and Gbong Gwom Jos for the support and hospitality extended to the members.
- ❖ Sympathised with the Government of Plateau State on the passing on of the late Gbong Gwom, Da Victor Dung Pam.
- ❖ Rejoiced with and congratulated the new Gbong Gwom of Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba OFR.

○ **The Council observed that:**

- ❖ Peace and security are gradually returning to Plateau State.
- ❖ Several probe Panels had been set up by the Federal and State Governments as well as the National and State Assemblies and await the outcome of their Reports for further deliberations. We hope that their findings and recommendations will lead to permanent peace in the State.
- ❖ Peace is a process of ensuring and sustaining justice, fairness and equity to all in the society.

- ❖ The two major religions in the Country, Islam and Christianity, preach peace and respect for other religions.
- ❖ Adherents of both religions must uphold peace in all their undertakings.
- ❖ Sources of conflicts are multi-dimensional and are mostly socio-economic and political in nature.
- ❖ The elite are often involved in inciting people and fomenting social unrest to promote political or personal agenda.
- ❖ Corruption in the country is of great concern and efforts must be intensified to reduce and if possible, erase it from our polity.
- ❖ Some media houses have through sensationalism, inaccurate reporting and wrongful manipulation of facts and other details fueled religious and other crises in the society.

RESOLUTIONS

The Council resolved to:

- ❖ Use religion as an instrument for societal harmony, growth and recipe for a stronger and united Nigeria.
- ❖ Be totally committed to the cause of promoting peace, justice and fair play without fear or favour.

- ❖ Call on Governments at all levels to carry out specific activities aimed at promoting peace in their domains.
- ❖ Caution some religious preachers who conduct inciting sermons and thereby fan the embers of religious disharmony, misunderstanding and strife.
- ❖ Urge adherents of the two religions to adopt discourse as an effective means of encouraging peoples' understanding of peaceful co- existence.
- ❖ Affirm our commitment to the pursuance of practical actions towards the resolutions of conflicts arising from interactions of peoples in a multi ethnic and multi religious society so that the impact of the Council would be felt by all.
- ❖ Urge Faith-based Organisations to build an effective and efficient platform for peace and religious harmony in Nigeria through the promotion of socio-economic justice, transparency and good governance.
- ❖ Call on the electronic and print media to abide by the ethics of their profession which promote social responsibility and demand factual and accurate reporting of events.
- ❖ Urge the media to use their strategic position to promote religious harmony in the society.
- ❖ Urge the Federal and State Governments of Nigeria to create and sustain the requisite environment for the

actualization of the fundamental rights of all Nigerians to live, work and practice their trade or profession in any part of Nigeria without the fear of any molestation or expulsion without the due process of law.

- ❖ Urge all Nigerians to cultivate the culture of peaceful co-existence and promotion of religious understanding and harmony.
- ❖ Urge those States that have not established State chapters of NIREC, to do so without delay in order to further promote love, peace, interaction and cooperation between Christians and Muslims.
- ❖ Commend the Co- Chairmen of the Council for their dynamic and purposeful leadership.
- ❖ Thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua GCFR, for his continual support for the activities and programmes of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC).

Prof. Is-haq Oloyede
National Coordinator/Executive Secretary

His Eminence,
Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar,
CFR, mni The Sultan of Sokoto and
President-General Supreme Council
For Islamic Affairs
Co-Chairman

His Grace, Archbishop
Dr. John Onaiyekan
President Christian Association
of Nigeria (CAN)
Co-Chairman