

THE COMMUNIQUE

THE 2013- FIRST QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT THE LE MEREDIEN IBOM HOTEL AND GOLF RESORT, UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE FROM 11TH TO 13TH FEBRUARY, 2013

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), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafar, OFR, held its 2013-First Quarterly General Meeting at Le Meredien Ibom Hotel and Golf Resort, Uyo, from the 11th -13th February, 2013. The meeting was attended by the principal officers and members of NIREC.

The formal Opening Ceremony was held at the Ibom Hall Ground, Uyo. In attendance were, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Dr. Godswill Obot Akpabio; Her Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Mrs. Valerie Ebe; the Deputy Governor, Delta State, Prof. Amos A. Utuama (who represented the Governor of Delta State and also the Governors of the South South geo-political zone); Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Umana O. Umana; Head of Service to the Government, Mrs. Cecilia Udoessien, Members of the State Executive Council and Special Advisers.

Amongst other dignitaries present were His Eminence, Dr. Sunday Mbang (foundation Co- Chairman of NIREC), the Obong of Calabar, Immediate Past Chairman of Akwa Ibom State Council of Chiefs, Edidem-Uwa Umo Adiaka and other Traditional Rulers from the South South States as well as the State Chairmen of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

A paper titled “**International Relations and Terrorism**” was presented by Prof. Samuel Egwu, of the University of Jos.

The Council:

- Expressed its immense appreciation to the Governor, and the good people of Akwa Ibom State for their hospitality to members of NIREC;
- Thanked the Governor of Delta State, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan for sending his Representative, the Deputy Governor, Prof. Amos A. Ituama who delivered the Goodwill message on behalf of the South South Governors

- Thanked the Founding Co-Chairman of NIREC Prelate Emeritus, Dr. Sunday Mbang for his presence at the Opening Ceremony

Observations

The Nigeria Inter- Religious Council (NIREC) observes after serious reflections and deliberations that:

- Religious and Traditional Leaders have critical and major roles to play in promoting political harmony, peace, stability and correcting societal ills;
- No religion teaches violence;
- The persistent loss of lives and property occasioned by acts of terrorism, pipeline vandalisation, communal strife, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, political and religious intolerance in several parts of this country has become very worrisome;
- The sacredness of human life must be safeguarded at all times;
- Peace and security are necessary ingredients for the sustenance of democratic principles and economic development of the country;
- Equity and Justice are the basis of peace in any society;
- NIREC remains an essential medium in addressing issues that affect the corporate existence of Nigeria as an inseparable entity.
- The outbreak of political violence is strongly associated with poverty, underdevelopment and mal-distribution of resources;
- The act of terrorism and its attendant problems have assumed frightening dimension threatening the cordial relationship between two main religions in the country thereby working against national unity and cohesion;

NIREC therefore:

- reiterates its appeals to Political, Religious and Traditional Leaders at all levels to desist from making offensive and divisive comments capable of heating up the polity;
- Urges political, Traditional and Religious leaders to imbibe the spirit of courage to speak the truth at all times, be forthright in all their utterances and demand accountability from the Governments at all levels;
- Appeals to both Muslim and Christian religious and Traditional Leaders to make concerted efforts to reach out to the citizenry in order to dissuade them from intolerance;
- Recommends continuous interfaith dialogue amongst adherents of the major religions.

Acts of Terrorism , Violence and Vandalism

NIREC:

- Condemns very strongly the orgies of terrorism, violence and vandalism that have permeated the country and calls on the perpetrators to desist from their evil deeds;
- Condemns the vicious attack on HRH Alhaji Dr. Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano and his entourage and calls for a halt of such dastardly acts;

- Detests seriously the killing of the 10 Health workers who were killed in Kano, Kano State in the discharge of their duties and the killing of 3 North Korean Doctors in Postikum, Yobe State;
- Commiserates with the families of the 10 health Workers and the 3 North Koreans and pray that they be strengthened in their moments of grief;
- Calls on the Federal, State and Local Governments to detect, expose and prosecute those responsible for these reprehensible acts;
- detests preachers who preach/promote hate and violence. Such preachers should be identified and appropriately prosecuted;

Furthermore:

- The Federal Government must exhibit the political will to tackle all forms of security challenges using its relevant Agencies;
- Police-Community Relations Committees should be established where they do not presently exist and encouraged at the grassroots level to strengthen security and peaceful coexistence. Nigerians should be security conscious and report all suspicious movements and activities around them;
- The Security Agencies should be repositioned to be more proactive and people-friendly.
- The Agencies should be appropriately funded, the personnel adequately trained, equipped and motivated at all times for maximum results;
- Inter-service collaboration should be encouraged for effective and efficient results;
- Governments are to focus attention on designing and implementing pro-poor policies and developing an inclusive framework that integrates the poor and the vulnerable into the process of decision-making in order to discourage terrorism.

Review of the Constitution

NIREC:

- Appeals to the National Assembly to let the will of the people prevail in the current review of the Constitution;
- Urges the NASS to make laws that would ensure that no Nigerian is made a “Settler” anywhere in the country.

On Corruption

NIREC:

- Strongly condemns the extent at which corruption has eaten deep into the polity and urges the Governments at all levels to put in place strategies that would ensure that corrupt people are severely punished;
- Urges Government to promote good governance and be accountable to the people.

Creation of Employment

NIREC:

- Calls on the Government and the Private sector to create more jobs for the teeming youth and reduce poverty in the land;
- Urges the Federal Government to expedite action on power generation to facilitate the employment of more Nigerians, ensure economic development and reduce restiveness in the land.

Other Issues

NIREC

- Commiserates with the family of the late Secretary General of NSCIA and respectable Council Member, late Dr. Lateef Adegbite, CON and prayed for the repose of his soul;
- Congratulates His Eminence, the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja Diocese, John Cardinal Onaiyekan on his recent elevation to the status of a Cardinal;
- Congratulates all Nigerians on the recent victory of the Super Eagles in South Africa. NIREC notes that in this victory, there was unity of purpose by all players without discrimination as to tribe and religion and recommends that Nigerians learn a lesson from the victory and remain united in all our endeavours in the country.

Prof. Is-haq Oloyede

National Coordinator/Executive Secretary

**His Eminence,
Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni**
The Sultan of Sokoto and
President General, Nigerian Supreme Council
for Islamic Affairs.
Co-Chairman (NIREC)

Pastor Ayodele Joseph Oritsejafor, OFR
President, Christian Association of
Nigeria (CAN) and
Co-Chair (NIREC)