

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF EGBE OMO YORUBA, NORTH AMERICA, AARE ADEOLA ODUSANYA ON THE OCCASION OF THE 15TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF EGBE AT MARYLAND, BALTIMORE ON AUGUST 3, 2007

Your Royal Highness, Káábíyèsí Michael Sónáriwo, the Àkàrigbò of Rémoland, Your Royal Highness, Káábíyèsí Oba Adéfúnmi II, ti Abúlé Òyótúnjí, Your Excellency, Prince Olágúnsoyè Oyinlolá Governor of Òsun State, Your Excellency Òtúnba Gbénga Daniel, the Governor of Ògùn State, Distinguished Senator Senator Ayò Ajise, Honorable Diya Member of the House, Chief Bísí Àkàndé, Chairman of the Action Congress, Òtúnba (Sir) Olú Awótésù, former Commissioner of Agriculture, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ogbeni Dele Adedeji, General Manager Fidelity Bank, Mrs. Cecelia Ibru, General Manager Oceanic Bank, Members of the National Executive Council (NEC) of Egbé Omo Yoruba, North America, Professor Gabriel Tè nabè, President of the Egbé Omo Yoruba ti Baltimore or gracious host. Representatives of Yoruba Organizations worldwide, Delegates from Egbé Omo Yoruba Europe, members of Egbé Omo Yoruba, North America, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Akíí írí kékeré ekùn. Gbo gbo yín la kí o.

It is a privilege and a great honor to address you today, on the instance of Egbe Omro Yoruba, North America's 15th National Convention.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Almighty God/Allah for protecting and preserving us individually and collectively in our difference locations here in America and in our homeland, Nigeria.

I wish I could overcome the temptation by which I would not speak on some issues concerning social and economic development in Yoruba land, but, I think it would be tantamount to an act of betrayal toward the entire members of Egbe Omo Yoruba and the million of Yoruba people back at home.

The situations in Yoruba land in term of socio-economic policy at this time deserves sober reflection and also demands a strategy to revived it; so that our children would not be trapped in the perpetual social economic tragedy which may befall Yoruba land in the near future as a result of careless leadership.

In May 2004, President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced a home-grown economic reform program which was named the NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NEEDS).

NEEDS, was intended to promote fiscal discipline and due process in public procurement, reform the civil service, the society and banking system and, by this, introduce privatization and transparency.

Regretably, NEEDS could not be said to have translated its philosophy as well as its objectivity into reality. Nigerians are still growling under the pains of social and economic hardship.

Now, talking about the situation in Yoruba land, social and economic development are

gravely distressed. Having witnessed the deplorable condition of some infrastructures and economic policy in Yoruba land. I began to search for those factors or instruments which could create an enduring social and economic development in our land.

Using the developed nations as parameter to measure my findings, I discovered that our leader are lacking adequate information about the suffering and starving of our people in Yoruba land. Leadership trust, transparency and accountability which remains the panacea for the development have been eroded and thereby replaced with greed, selfishness and sycophancy.

Though, we are very aware that energy sector-oil, gas and power as well as the economic policy in many areas of our life are strictly at the purveyor of the federal government in Nigeria. Since this is not just an issue that only affects the Yoruba, working with our partners and other stakeholders, we plan on sending some delegates including people here tonight, to appeal to the Federal Government so that they would complete all the repairs necessary on the energy sector.

It is imperative to mention here that our Governors in Yoruba land do not have any excuses why infrastructure and economic policy within their domain are malfunctioning. Some of the problems mentioned can be solved without the assistance of the Federal government.

We wish to use this medium to appeal to our governors to review their actions and inactions on the following social and economic sectors so that things can get better for out our people:

- PIPE BORNE WATER
- AFFORDABLE HOUSES / HOMES
- COMMUNITY BANKS
- GOOD ROADS / TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
- TOURISM
- PUBLIC / SCHOOL LIBRARIES
- QUALITATIVE EDUCATION
- SMALL AND MEDIUM SCAL INDUSTRIES
- HEALTH CARE SERVICES
- CURBING PUBLIC / POLITICAL CORRUPTION.

As a complimentary effort, our governors are advised to partner with private investors in order to establish and develop electricity projects and refineries in Yoruba land.

Our leaders must take advantage of seventy billion naira textile revival fund by partnering with banks to secure loans for the establishment of textile industries which would eventually mass produce 'Adire' and 'Ofi' or 'Aso-Oke' for the purpose of exportation.

Our governors should endeavor to work in tandem with the existing economic policy of federal government by running a transparent administration in their states.

Our young graduates deserve better treatment and are also willing to enjoy the gains of democracy which has eluded most of them. Government facilitate employment that will earn our young ones a living wage.

While our leaders must realize that providence has entrusted some responsibilities in their hands, "The traditions of and institutions by which authority is exercise" I would like to



Adeola Odusanya
National President

admonished them to exercise that authority wisely and also for the benefit of sons and daughter of Yoruba In their states.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would not end this keynote address without mentioning some political issues in respect of recently conducted 2007 general election in Nigeria.

As you are all aware, the recent elections in Nigeria were very disappointing; there were several killing and destruction of properties. Hundreds of people became homeless as a result of massive burnings, primarily in our Yoruba cities.

The major problems stemmed from inadequate organization, the late opening of polling booths, lack of ballot papers and prohibition of secrecy in the voting exercise. More serious was the fact that evidence of considerable vote-rigging came to an existence as well as INEC's Non-Compliance to their own electoral act. The Electoral Acts was grossly and willfully violated due to spontaneous riggings and non-compliance with statutory regulations.

Nevertheless, our hope lies in the Judiciary system. My question is that can we continue to trust our Judiciary system for Justice and fairness? I hope the electoral tribunal will sympathetically look at the case of electoral malpractices with objectivity and dispense justice accordingly.

I wish to use this medium to appeal to our leaders not to obstruct the wheel of Justice as it may be the case in their states. The outcome of Electoral Tribunal must be respected. It is only through this act of obedience to the Rule of Law that Nigeria will be at peace.

This is not the time to turn our backs on our country Nigeria. The stability and the development of our country is crucial not only for Nigerians but for the whole Africa. If the Millennium development goals are not achieved in Nigeria, it could not be achieved in any African country. The Nigeria Government is now being confronted with numerous challenges; including the effective monitoring of our resources but more importantly is the on-going insecurity in the Niger Delta which must be tackled.

I will also like to use this opportunity to appeal to the European Union (EU) to help Nigeria to overcome the challenges and to intensify its efforts to strengthen responsible governance and democracy. It should help establish a system that will promote respect for human rights in Nigeria. This support must be accompanied by the cooperation of Nigeria and on the basis of clear assurance from the Nigeria government.

Permit me at this juncture to commend you to the statement of former president Olusegun Obasanjo "Let this triumph of democracy renew our strength as we face the challenges of development in our merge toward the Promised Land".

I thank you so much for your attention.

Long Live Egbe Omo Yoruba, North America
Long Live Yoruba People
Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria
May God bless our Country, Nigeria.

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