



EGBÉ OMO YORÙBÁ

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YORUBA ABROAD REJECT SECOND FIDDLE IN THE PROPOSED NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRADITIONAL RULERS

COTTAGE CITY, MD September 12, 2007 ...The National Executive Council (NEC), the highest decision making body of the Egbe Omo Yoruba North America held an emergency meeting on Wednesday, September 12, 2007.

The emergency meeting, which was called to review President Umaru Yar'Adua's proposed plan to set up the National Council of Traditional Rulers (NCTR), was attended by most member chapters of the Egbe.

The NEC commended the President Yar'Adua-led administration for its effort to lay a solid foundation for the rule of law and the "zero tolerance" policy toward corrupt individuals as well as corruption in the country in general.

While deliberating on His Excellency's plan, the NEC hailed the proposal and expressed its absolute support for the constitution of the NCTR. The NEC stated that the NCTR would pave ways for the roles of traditional rulers to be expediently appropriate for inclusion in the Constitution of Nigeria.

The proposal was also considered to be an excellent approach that may in future obliterate all kinds of agitation by some Nigerians on the constitutional position and roles of traditional rulers in the country.

But, the proposed conferment on the Sultan of Sokoto as the leader of this group was rejected based on the fact that it would not be in the best interest of all Nigerians and would not provide for a fair and equitable leadership structure of the traditional institutions.

In view of this, members deliberated exhaustively on the merit and demerit of the NCTR and its leadership. It therefore unanimously agreed not to accept any orchestrated traditional institution, which may be used to incarcerate any Yoruba Oba. The NEC would also not support a plan that will undermine the traditional and cultural values of Yoruba people and other Nigerian ethnicities.

Tradition by inference, in Yoruba land is the historical legacies and practices of the people (ASA ATI ISE ILE YORUBA). Our traditional rulers are priestly, endowed to be custodians of these traditions, culture and customs. They are enthroned to provide political and military guidance for the Yoruba. They also possess the powers and authority to act as spiritual and ceremonial leaders to Yoruba communities.

It would be a misplaced calculation for the Government to put any traditional ruler over the control of his peers in the Nigeria of the 21st century. The idea will automatically infringe on the traditions and customs of the other.

By way of reasoning, putting any traditional ruler in Nigeria under the 'command' of the Sultan of Sokoto is considered a strategy to make all Nigerians comply with the philosophy, tradition, language, culture, customs and the faith of the Sultan.

Yoruba will not allow this to happen in our community and will own up to its identity without any compromise.

Nevertheless, Egbe Omo Yoruba, North America hereby makes the following submission for genuine and acceptable National Council of Traditional Rulers in Nigeria:

1. That the Constitution of NCTR by the intervention of the traditional rulers should serve as a forum for effective dialogue in the political and social conflict between the Government and the communities.
2. That the Federal Government should collaborate with the State Council of traditional rulers, the State Governments and Local Government Areas to appoint representative(s) to serve in the NCTR.
3. That the State Council of Traditional Rulers should be allowed to choose representative amongst them to serve as representative at the NCTR on a rotational basis, for a specified term.
4. That the opinion leaders, political leaders, and the traditional chiefs in the six geo-political zones should deliberate and appoint a traditional ruler to represent each zone at the NCTR as Vice-Chairman or Deputy Director of NCTR. This also should be on a rotation for specified terms.
5. That the Vice-Chairman or the Deputy Director General or as the President may decide, should be assigned to perform some functions in the NCTR while the Chairman or Director General as a technocrat should be in charge of all operational affairs of NCTR.
6. That the President should appoint the Vice President to be the Chairman of the NCTR and the Minister of Culture to be the Director General of NCTR.
7. That an act to establish the NCTR should be forwarded to National Assembly for legislative process and approval.

It is in our opinion that this process would provide a triangular positive result for everyone. The Government will benefit from the wise counsel of the traditional rulers, the people will look up to the traditional rulers to resolve any social or political matters in their domain and the traditional rulers will see NCTR as the window of opportunity to serve and contribute to the development of Nigeria. This process we feel, would also guarantee fairness, equity and justice to all the ethnicities within Nigeria. Nigerians are equally born under one God and one destiny.

Signed:

//SIGNED
Adeola Odusanya
National President

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