

**THE MEETING OF NIGERIA HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE
UNITED KINGDOM, H.E. DR. DALHATU SARKI TAFIDA, OFR,
WITH IBUZO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UNION
LEADERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM ON WEDNESDAY,
26TH AUGUST, 2009.**

In attendance:

- i) Mr. Job Oniwon - Head (Consular Education & Welfare)
- ii) Mr. Damian E. Agwu - Head (Information Section)
- iii) Mr. Sola Enikanolaiye - Minister (SAHC)

Introduction:

Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, OFR, High Commissioner of Nigeria to the United Kingdom, on Wednesday, 26th August, 2009 received a four-man delegation of the Ibuso Community Development at Union (ICDU) leaders in the United Kingdom. The delegation comprised:

- i) Mr. Rowland Nwanze - (President)
- ii) Diokpa Benjamin Okechukwu - (Community Adviser)
- iii) Mr. Ephraim Emenanjo Adilofu - (General Secretary)
- iv) Mr. Andrew Okechukwu - (Financial Secretary)

Proceedings of the Meeting:

In his opening remarks, Mr. Rowland Nwanze, President of the ICDU, U.K. informed the High Commissioner that he had come to him with three objectives. These were to pay him a courtesy call; declare interest in playing an active role in Nigerian Citizens Affairs in the U.K, exchange of mutually beneficially views with the Head of Mission and seek his assistance in some areas of need. The assistance sought included:

- i) Helping the Community through the formal processes of procuring Nigeria's travel documents (passport) particularly for their elders who might be frail;
- i) Invitation to the High Commissioner whenever the Community, require His Excellency's esteemed presence at any of their major functions and vice versa;
- ii) Assistance in helping to send charity and charitable items home; notably, medical equipments, books etc which are collectively or individually bought and are deemed to be needed at home in any of the Nigerian communities.

Responding, Dr. Tafida informed the delegation of some noticeable positive changes in the High Commission since his assumption of office in April, 2008. He was of the opinion that notwithstanding the attractions of the host country, there was no place like home where Nigerians of various shades of opinion and class live communal life. He expressed the optimism that in the next one hundred years, Nigeria would have achieved most of the attractions of the United Kingdom, socially, economically and politically. He then urged Nigerians to be more patriotic and less critical of their country. The High Commissioner recalled similar visits by some Nigerian sub-community organisations, such as Plateau State, Kogi State, Akwa-Ibom State and Rivers State Unions, as well as, the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, UK branch.

Mr. Ben Okechukwu, Community Elder and Adviser expressed delight for collective responsibility as practised by resident Indians in the UK. He opined that it was worthy of emulation by the Nigerian Community. Second, he commended the free access which Nigerian Community organisations now had with the High Commissioner as well as

Home Based Officers of the Mission. Third, he sought to know from High Commissioner what kind of assistance the Ibuzo Community, UK could render to government back home, considering perceived indifference among many Nigerians back home to issues of development. Four, he stressed the need for the Mission to help the various Nigerian communities here to teach their indigenous languages, particularly to their children born in the host country, but cannot speak any of them.

Contributing to the issue of developing Nigerian native languages in the UK, Mr. Nwanze suggested that children should be taken along by their parents, when attending Community meetings. He stressed the role of the family and the community leaders in this regard. He expressed elation with the preparedness of the High Commissioner to receive problems from Nigerians resident in the UK. He cited as an example, the High Commissioner's appearance on Ben-Television UK last year and how he was highly delighted at the end of the interview.

In his concluding remarks, H. E. Dr. Tafida described his meeting with the Ibuzo Community Development Union delegation as very positive, expressing delight that they were much conversant with social and economic development needs back home. He promised to look into their major request. He again expressed optimism that Nigeria would ultimately become a better country, where all Nigerians would be satisfied with the prosperity and stability of their motherland. He however took a swipe at some Nigerians in the UK who unfortunately had developed the "Settler Syndrome". He therefore suggested that all Nigerian community organisation leaders should emphasize the need for members to register with the High Commission to enhance the communication of the Mission with them, thereby reducing the problem of "Settler Syndrome".

Dr. Tafida also seized the opportunity of the meeting to explain the procedures for the acquisition of the new Nigerian e-Passport, other immigration documents and related services. He stated that the Mission's reformed immigration service was aimed at improved quality of service delivery and reducing the number of conditions to be met by clients before services are rendered to them. The High Commissioner also informed the visiting Community Leaders that dual citizenship is allowed by Nigeria constitution. In this respect, he stated that any Nigerian who wished to travel home with British passport should endeavour to obtain the necessary Nigerian visa, while those who intend to use Nigerian passport should ensure that the appropriate British passports are presented at the point of re-entry to the UK.

Before the end of the meeting, Mr. Nwanze, noted the forthcoming Independence anniversary and the High Commissioner described the series of events lined up for the year's celebration and the importance of CANUK and NIDO, UK on the 3rd October, 2009 celebration. Mr. Nwanze however informed the High Commissioner of the problem encountered by some Nigerians trying to access the CANUK website to register as a member. According to some members of the delegation, the website had remained dys-functional for sometime, thus making access difficult.

On this note the meeting ended and was followed by group photographs.

**INFORMATION SECTION,
NIGERIA HIGH COMMISSION,
9 NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,
LONDON WC2N 5BX UNITED KINGDOM
8TH SEPTEMBER, 2009**

