



WELCOME ADDRESS

BY

**DR DALHATU SARKI TAFIDA, OFR
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED KINGDOM
AT THE RECEPTION MARKING THE 49TH ANNIVERSARY
OF NIGERIA'S INDEPENDENCE,
NIGERIA HOUSE, LONDON
1ST OCTOBER 2009**

It is with profound pleasure that I welcome you to Nigeria House, to join me in commemorating the 49th Anniversary of Nigeria's Independence.

As a nation, occasions such as this offer unique opportunities to reflect on our past, examine our present and chart a new way for the future.

For us, there is a lot to celebrate. We certainly have made some progress in many areas, although much needs to be done in several others. What is important is the useful lesson we learn from our past, as the basis for moving with confidence in to the future. Our source of optimism is the strong determination of the Government of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, to tackle present and future challenges.

May I seize this opportunity to thank all those who have stood with our country in partnership and collaboration through the years, to demonstrate their faith in our capacity to usher in a new era of prosperity and security for our people.

As a responsible member of the international community, Nigeria values its friendship with all peace-loving countries. Our Government is committed to building strong and mutually beneficial relations with all countries, especially the United Kingdom with who we share traditional bonds.

The 49th Anniversary of our country's independence is a forerunner to the Golden Jubilee events that we plan to hold next year. Our hope is to make it a year-long celebration, to be held in major towns and cities across the United Kingdom. I urge you to join me in the celebrations, which already began with the Seminar we organised on UK-Nigeria relations last week, 23rd September 2009. Today's event is a major aspect of these historic celebrations.

May I ask you to enjoy the occasion as I convey to you my best wishes for your personal well-being and for great improvements in UK-Nigeria relations.

It is now my singular honour and privilege to propose a toast to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and to UK-Nigeria relations.

Once again, I thank you all for coming to celebrate with us.