

Text of a Speech Delivered by the Chairman, Board of Trustees, Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding, at the National Summit on Security and (In)security in Nigeria: The Role of Traditional Institution, held at the Ulli Beier Hall, CBCIU, Osun State.

[Protocol]

A decade ago, precisely on the 7th of January, 2009, the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU) was commissioned by Koichuro Matsuura, the then Director General of UNESCO, and in March of the same year opened officially for business. Ever since that historical moment, the CBCIU has held a very potent reputation for cross-cultural and trans-national dialogues. This can be seen in virtually all the programmes the CBCIU has organised or part-organised, beginning with an International, UNESCO-supported Colloquium on Slavery and the Slave Trade in Iloko; an International Conference of Black Nationalities in Osogbo; and an International Conference of Black Mayors in Osogbo, all held in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Also recently, the CBCIU in collaboration with Ajayi Crowder University, Oyo, hosted an International Conference on the Institution of the Alaafin in Yoruba History, Culture and Political Power Relations in 2018, and a National Colloquium on Africa's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2019. All these and many more are a testament to the CBCIU's mission to place humanity at the forefront of human progress.

Distinguished Guests, I have started this speech to keep you abreast of the CBCIU's investments and commitments in the past one decade to both societal and human-centred development. It is, therefore, not a surprise that we have set aside a day such as this to critically discuss and find pathways to resolving one of the most challenging issues in our national life today. A National Summit on Security and (In)security in Nigeria: The Role of Traditional Institution, comes at an auspicious

time. For those who follow daily socio-political currents of our national life, there is no denying the fact that Nigeria is currently undergoing a serious security challenge. This worrisome issue have seen in recent times the call for a paradigm shift in the country's security architecture. Only recently, governors of the Southwest floated its own security architecture or network, popularly referred to as Amotekun. Whether as an inspiration or in retaliation, we have seen other regions coming up in recent weeks with their own regional security outfits such as *Shege-ka-fasa*, *Ogbunigwe* among others. It is clear, therefore, that a full proof solution will have to be contrived sooner than later to avoid known or imaginary crisis across the country.

Today, Nigeria is confronted with several non-state actors which continue to disposes citizens and threaten the relative peace enjoyed by all. The daring raids of Boko Haram militants, rampaging herdsmen, wanton kidnappings and the new one, banditry, are worrying signs. Incidentally, kidnappers have gone on the prowl, targeting traditional rulers across the country. In 2011, nine traditional rulers were kidnapped, four in 2015, eight in 2016 and eleven in 2018. The recorded cases in 2019 doubled that of 2018 and until something drastic is done, the figures may surge in 2020. If our traditional rulers are kidnapped right in their palaces, what it means is that citizens are barely safe and secure from imminent danger. This explains why this National Summit is organised today for us to brainstorm and possibly come up with a policy statement or key ideas that will aid in resolving the challenging security crisis in the country today.

Traditional rulers are not only custodians of our culture and tradition but also protectors of their subjects within their domain. They, therefore, have a very pivotal role to play in securing lives and properties. Incidentally, this important role appears to have been taken from our traditional rulers and given to other agencies or

institutions which barely understand and have the knowledge of the terrain. A fundamental duty of traditional rulers is to ensure the promotion of peace and tranquility and also to protect the peoples' interests. In time past, they were the chief security officers of their respective domains but this is not the case in recent times. I am of the view that it is time this task is vested on our traditional rulers as part of a collective effort to curb insecurity in the country.

The essence of this National Summit is to bring together our highly respected traditional rulers across the country to give them the opportunity to contribute to the current debate on insecurity and to also play a prominent role in the security architecture of the country. Also, it is an avenue to create the much-needed synergy between the Federal, State and Local Governments, Intelligence Agencies and Traditional Institutions in finding a lasting solution to the rise in armed non-state actors across the country. We have also extended invitations to experts in the area of native intelligence and global security, members of the academia and key stakeholders involved in peace and strategy in the Diaspora.

Distinguished Guests, it is my sincere hope that this summit will come up with the necessary resolutions to address the challenging security situation in the country. I am, indeed, hopeful that the task we are about to carry out today will, no doubt, generate interesting debates not only for the sake of peace but for the stability of our dear country, Nigeria.

I wish to use this profound opportunity to sincerely appreciate all our Royal Fathers present here today. In no particular order, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II, Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba (Dr.) Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III, The Alaafin of Oyo, His Eminence, Sultan Muhammadu

Sa'ad Abubakar, Sultan of Sokoto and Members of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria. I also express my sincere appreciation to the Special Guest of Honour, His Excellency, Alhaji Gboyega Oyetola, Executive Governor, State of Osun, who is a partner in peace, stability and progress. To everyone who is here as a stakeholder, the CBCIU express her profound appreciation.

I must not forget to mention that the mission of the CBCIU transcends racial, religious and ethnic divides and as such, we are calling on well-meaning Nigerians and those who have the cultural and heritage at heart to support our noble intentions for this agency which is simply to advance the conditions of the humanity. Our intention going forward is to make the CBCIU Africa's biggest export of culture and promoter of international understating. This year promises to programme-intensive and we hope stakeholders will key into every one of our forthcoming programmes.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Management and Staff of the Centre, I thank you all for honouring us with your warm presence. Thank you for listening.

Prince (Dr.) Olagunsoye Oyinlola

Chairman Board of Trustees
Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding
Wednesday, 12 February, 2020