OPENING REMARKS BY PROF. SIYAN OYEWESO, THE EXECUTIVE

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**PROTOCOLS.**

I welcome you all to the Centre of Black Culture and International Understanding, Osogbo. The Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU), Osogbo, was set up in 2009, and officially commissioned as an affiliate of UNESCO on January 7, by Koichuro Matsuura, the then Director-General of UNESCO. Since then, the Centre, as part of its shared mandate from the global body, has made peace and nation building a cardinal objective which it promotes through cultural exchange, education, dialogue, and communication and information programmes.

Your Royal Majesties and Highnesses, we have gathered here, from all corners of Nigeria not to throw blame on government or agencies of government or to castigate any ethnic group or social entity as the cause of insecurity in Nigeria but to holistically interrogate the security challenge in Nigeria and look at how the traditional institutions can provide alternative solutions to the numerous challenges confronting our nation. The existence of traditional institutions in Nigeria predates the coming of Europeans and their powers are derived from norms and values of their societies. The importance of traditional institutions in the promotion of peace and security cannot be underestimated. The traditional institutions are so much cherished and very important in mobilization and are relied upon for the promotion of ethical values in the society. This is largely due to th e legitimacy enjoyed by these institutions seen as the custodians of customs and traditions of the people.

It is important to state, that crime and insecurity is not a modern phenomenon nor was it restricted to areas of “civilization” and greater differentiation in the past. Both what the Sociologists and Anthropologists choose to call literate and pre-literate societies experienced this painful and unfortunate malady called crime and insecurity. However, insecurity was less and controlled by traditional institutions in the past. There were many reasons for less crime in pre-colonial Nigerian societies. Life in the society was such that less chance existed for individual deviation. Members were interested in one another as persons. They confided hopes, fears and shared experiences, gossiped together and filled the needs for intimate human companionship. In sum, there was intimacy, sympathy and a comfortable sharing of many interests and activities.

But, these were not all; norms were enforced with impunity and individual fears of the forces of nature and of the gods, were not small in coercing individuals into conformity.

Presently, insecurity has become the order of the day and nobody is free including traditional rulers. Permit me to take you throw a number of traditional rulers who have at one time or the other fallen victim of insecurity. In Katsina on January 6th, 2018, Mr Babangida Lawal a traditional ruler of Zandam community in Jibia Local government area of Katsina state was kidnapped by armed bandits. He was kidnapped alongside a popular businessman in the community, Mr Murtala Rabea. It was reported that the Kidnappers invaded their homes at night and whisked them away. Also, on May 1st, 2019, Magajin Garin Daura, Alhaji Musa Umar Uba, was abducted from his Daura residence shortly after maghrib prayers. The abductors made contact with the family after some hours. The Magajin Garin Daura regained freedom after two months in captivity, when he was freed by his abductors in Kano on July 1st In Edo, unknown gunmen abducted a traditional ruler, the Enogie of Ukhiri, in the Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State, Godwin Osayande Aigbe. Known by the title, Enogie (Duke) of Ukhiri, he was a retired Chief Superintendent of Police, who took over the traditional stool from his late father some years ago.

In Enugu, the traditional ruler of Obom Autonomous Community in Agbogugu, Awgu local government area of Enugu state, Sunday Orji, and his wife were kidnapped. The monarch and his wife were kidnapped along the Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway near Ogbaku town in the evening. In Abuja, Mohammed Ibrahim Pada, a third class traditional ruler of Rubochi in Kuje Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT was kidnapped from his palace on by armed kidnappers. He was rescued after two days in captivity on the 30th of November. In Kaduna ‘Men in military uniform’ abducted the district head of Birnin Gwari Alhaji Yusuf Abubakar Yahaya alongside a Former Educational Secretary of the Local Government, Ibrahim Musa, who was travelling in the same vehicle with the district head.

In Lagos, Gunmen abducted a first class traditional ruler , Oba Yushau Goriola Oseni, the Oniba of Ibaland, killed his guard and shot his wife. The gunmen, stormed the monarch’s palace at Iba area of Lagos, Southwest Nigeria on the 16th of July, 2016 and took the monarch away, escaping through the waterways.

It would be recalled that there have been reported cases or of kidnapped traditional rulers all over Nigeria. In 2011 nine traditional rulers were kidnapped, 2015 witnessed four cases, 2016 had eight cases, while 2018 recorded eleven cases. As it appears, the government is presently overwhelmed by this level of insecurity in this country. This state of insecurity in the country has shown that there is need for an alternative mechanism to confront this ugly trend.

This among other reasons is why the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding has conveyed this national summit on security and insecurity. To look at how the traditional institutions can provide alternative strategy that would aid agencies of government in curbing the security challenge of this country.