

**Being a Text of Speech Delivered at the National Colloquium on Alhaji  
Yusuf MaitamaSule (1929-2017) at the Centre for Black Culture and  
International Understanding, Abere, Osun State**

By

Prince (Dr.) OlagunsoyeOyinlola

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Management and staff of the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding, I welcome you all to this National Colloquium in memory of Alhaji Yusuf MaitamaSule (1929-2017), one of Nigeria's revered elder statesmen and respected nationalist.

'A National Hero and Nigerian Nationalist for all Seasons' as the theme of today's Colloquium best describes the position occupied by Alhaji Yusuf MaitamaSule (1929-2017) in Nigeria's history. Aforemost statesman, nationalist, politician, intellectual, orator, a consummate diplomat and the Dan Masanin of Kano, the late MaitamaSule became an emblem of hope and aspiration when the country was faced with myriads of national challenges. Alhaji MaitamaSule stood against military dictatorship and all forms misgovernance, and ultimately stood for peace and unity of Nigeria. No wonder he is fondly called the genius orator and the golden voice by reason of his oratory prowess where he laid emphasis on his greatest dream for Nigeria among leagues of nations. His everyday saying reflects this:

I have a dream that Nigeria will soon be great; I have a dream that Nigeria will be a united country, a prosperous country that will take her proper place in the comity of nations and will lead the rest of Africa, inspire Africans all over the world. I have a dream that we will come to love one another...

Alhaji MaitamaSule's understanding of Nigeria's political landscape draws from his years of experience in public service. In 1954, he served as First Republic parliamentarian and Minister of Mines and Power. Between 1955 and 1956, he was the Chief Whip, Federal House of Representatives. In 1960, he led a Nigerian delegation to the Conference of Independent African States and became the Head, Public Complaints Commission as pioneer ombudsman in 1976. In early 1979, he was the presidential candidate of the National Party of Nigeria but lost to Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who later emerged president. Alhaji MaitamaSule also served as a United Nations Ambassador where he chaired the United Nations Standing Committee Against Apartheid. In 1983, MaitamaSule

was appointed Minister for National Guidance, a portfolio designed for him to assist the president fight corruption back then.

Alhaji MaitamaSulewas a strong advocate of national unity, and stood for justice at home and abroad. He was a man whose vast knowledge of contemporary Nigerianhistory pulled lifelong friendship and solidarity to him across the Atlantic. He was a man of family value and culturewho held local traditions with high esteem. His concept of family institution, respect for elders, respect for constituted authority which he considers the cardinal principles of our society and bane of our challenges, is incomparable. No wonderAlhaji MaitamaSulereiterates these principles at several public fora where issues regarding the country is discussed.

MaitamaSule was also a strong believer in traditional values. His respect for the institutions of monarchy is without comparison. His strong advisory roles in the Kano Emirate and Nigeria did not go unnoticed. It explains why he was conferred with the traditional title of “DanMasanin Kano” by the late Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero. MaitamaSule used his position to protect the poor and the downtrodden and advocated at all timespeaceful co-existence among the vast majority of our people.

The Dan Masani,since his demise in 2017, has been missed. He was a true Nigerian Nationalist whose genuine interest and passionfor the future of Nigeria cannot be measured. Alhaji MaitamaSulewas never tired of expressing his displeasure about the rulership and not the leadership of the country. Without doubt, he served Nigeria and its people selflessly.

The Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding is the collective heritage of Nigerians and the Black Race all over the world. The mission and vision of the Centre promotes the Black race and focuses on the celebration ofgreat men and women of history.By celebratingAlhaji MaitamaSule, we are only reminding ourselves that we have not only a rich historical past but a past that is worth celebrating today and at all times. I wish you all an exciting Colloquium and may Alhaji MaitamaSule’ssoul continue to rest.

**Prince (Dr.) OlagunsoyeOyinlola**  
**Chairman, Board of Trustees**  
**CBCIU, Abere, Osun State.**  
**Saturday, 22 July, 2020**