



## CBAAC, An Excellent Parastatal, Says Minister



Honorable Minister of Tourism, Culture & National Orientation, Alhaji Abubakar Sadiq Mohammed inspecting CBAAC's museum. With him are Mrs. G. C. Chuma-Ibe, Director of Exhibition & Museum and Mr. Shedrack Y. Golen, Director of Finance & Administration.

IN LESS than two months of assumption of duty, the new Tourism, Culture and National Orientation Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad, has commended the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation, (CBAAC) for performing excellently.

To the thunderous applause of more than two thousand children and distinguished guests, the minister, through the Permanent Secretary, Alhaji Bello Sheidu Ozigis "congratulated the CBAAC management led by Professor Babawale

for always organizing excellent programmes..." adding "I must confess that I am impressed by this mammoth gathering of children" Indeed, the Chair of the Governing Board of CBAAC, Otunba Semiu Adesina Bakinson, also announced that "I am also proud that CBAAC whose governing board I chair organized this event". The occasion was the commemoration of this year's edition of the International Children's Day which the Centre organized.

Earlier, while touring the parastatals

under his ministry in Lagos, the minister declared that CBAAC had "lived up to its mandate by being the repository of knowledge of African arts and civilisation."

Alhaji Sadiq Muhammad who was the first minister to visit the Centre within the first two months on assumption of office was visibly elated at the level of organisation and professionalism he met on ground. He enthused: "I am impressed.

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# ...Champions Debate On Good Governance



L-R, Prof. Alaba Ogunsanwo and others.

IN A rare demonstration of consciousness for inclusivity for which democracy should be cherished, the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization, CBAAC recently supported two public sessions focused on better political future for Nigeria. The first was the public lecture on Electoral Reforms and the Future of Democracy while the second which also doubled as an entertainment session featured school children's debate. The theme of the debate was: "Should Traditional Oath-taking be Encouraged among Public Office Holders in Nigeria?"

Speaking at the public lecture which held at the university of Lagos, the duo of the Director General of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation, Prof. Tunde Babawle and Prof. L. Adele Jinadu, of the Political Science Department of the University of Lagos called on all concerned governmental officials and civil society groups to ensure a free, fair and transparent election in the coming 2011 general elections.

Jointly organized by the Department of Political Science, University of Lagos and Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC), the public lecture provided a veritable platform to vigorously canvass for good governance, sincerity of purpose in the conduct of election, as well as inculcation of the spirit of sportsmanship. It was also an occasion to condemn the tendentious "winner takes all" syndrome, which Prof Babawale said had led to categorization of losing an election as

a "cardinal political sin."

The CBAAC boss further noted that "the success of a democratic electoral system is measured by the willingness of political contestants to abide by the rules of the game, including the acceptance of the verdict of the electorate."

He therefore admonished that Nigeria's democratic practices must reflect its traditional practices, and that political leaders must be prepared to change their strategies particularly that of "perpetual betrayal of the expectations and trust of the electorate, coupled with disregard for such values as equity, social justice and fair play and a right sense of morality"

While expressing concern over the uncharitable role of Nigerian electoral umpire in the past elections, Babawale noted that the bodies had remained more of political than constitutional, "difficult to divorce from the prevailing nature of politics in violation of its umpire status," According to him, the partisan role of the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) could only be resolved by making the body truly independent. "A truly independent INEC must not be made to function at the mercy of any of the arms of government," he said. INEC funds, he added, must be put in a dedicated account that would not be subject to executive control.

Prof. Babawale advocated that the ballot box must be empowered to reflect the people's will and that President Goodluck Jonathan must of necessity cede

the power to appoint INEC officers to the National Judicial Council as recommended by Justice Muhammad Uwise's Electoral Reform Committee.

Prof. Babawale argued further that INEC's autonomy was not the only aspect that could guarantee a credible election. Other aspects he considered sine-quantum were voters' registration and the quality of staff. He therefore, implored INEC to improve its system of voters' registration through constant updating and upgrading of its facilities. "It must endeavour to constantly train and retrain its personnel on administrative and technical assignments" he added.

The guest lecturer at the occasion, Professor Adele Jinadu identified 22 deficits in election and electoral administration in the country. Among these are abuse/misuse of the power of incumbency, manipulated nomination process at party level and by electoral bodies or

their officials, inadequacy of staff of electoral bodies to conduct elections, lack of allegiance of party polling agents/observers to their candidates, falsification of results, the partisan role of the police, tardy and expensive adjudication process and paucity of polling booths among others.

To rid the country of electoral fraud, he advocated for a sweeping reform in all facets of electioneering processes. He suggested that there was need to adopt some modified form of proportional representation as against the "first-past-the post simple majority system." According to him, the modification would counter the zero-sum or do-or-die approach to competitive electoral politics.

He also suggested a major overhaul and strengthening of electoral bodies. To him, "this requires that the mode of appointment of its members, their tenure, in other words, how they get disabled, and source of funding should be insulated from partisan politics, and made seriously independent of political office holders." In a situation where electioneering laws are breached, Prof. Jinadu said regulatory bodies like electoral body and the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission could intervene more aggressively to find out the culprit and apply appropriate sanctions or requisite action under the law.

He canvassed for expeditious conclusion of electoral cases before any

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The centre is being manned by people who are professionals. You have done a lot and you can do more.”

In a manifest show of his confidence in CBAAC, he added: “...your impact should go round other countries that participated in FESTAC 77 and were party to the formation of CBAAC.” He further charged the leadership of the Centre to collaborate with other countries all over the world in order to propagate African culture and civilisation.

Not taking the minister's commendation for granted, CBAAC's Director of Finance and Administration, Mr. Shedrack Golen, used the opportunity of the minister's visit to formally register the high points of the achievements of the organisation.

According to him, the Centre had organized international conferences and colloquium in Niger, Benin Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil. It has also impacted on the youths and the children through many programmes. The Centre is working round the clock to mark the 50th independence anniversary of the country

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elected officer could assume office and to forestall abuse of power of incumbency the professor of Political Science, proposed that the “the elected government resigns” once elections are around the corner.

The Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, Prof Adetokunbo Sofoluwe, who was represented by the Dean of Science, Prof. Ninalowo, affirmed that a thorough electoral reform was long over due. Prof. S.O. Akinboye, The Head of Political Science Department, Prof. S. O. Akinboye in his welcome address, said achieving a credible election was the responsibility of all Nigerians. The Chairman of the occasion, Prof. Alaba Ogunsanwo, enjoined all Nigerians to engage with electioneering process.

At the children's session were no fewer than 27 schools comprising 18 secondary schools and nine primary schools. Apart from the thematically focused stage shows paraded by the schools, they also spoke on the theme of the day.

Setting the tone of the debate, Prof.

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in October this year.

Having presented a long list of achievements, Mr. Golen took the opportunity of the visit to make three requests from the minister. He asked the Minister to raise the status of the Centre to “Grade A parastatal” so that it could have some measure of autonomy and do more work. He also requested for a bigger accommodation that could house all the collections of artifacts in the Centre. The CBAAC official alerted the minister to the fact that the organization needed a much bigger space than it currently occupies. Lastly, he appealed for enough funding that would enable the Centre execute its programmes and projects.

While responding to the requests, Alhaji Muhammad promised to look into the issues of funding and the status of CBAAC. He further added that he had entered into discussion on making the Centre a part of African Union. When, this

is done, the Centre could do a lot and make its impact felt in other African countries. “You know, they will expect you to work round the African countries. But I believe you will do your best”, he said. On the accommodation, he said “it is not neat to use government money to rent another government property.” He then promised to raise the issue at appropriate level.

The Minister, his entourage and journalists from different media organisation were conducted round the galleries by CBAAC's Director of Exhibition and Museum, Mrs. Gloria Chuma-Ibe, who explained what each artifact represented as well as the place and or country of origin. ■

### Culture Courier Is One

AS STRONG believers in excellence, Development Partners strives for additional value by the day. Beginning with this edition therefore, Culture Courier commences a new column, **BIRTHDAY OF THE MONTH**. Though not born in June, we use the opportunity of this landmark for CBAAC and Culture Courier, to honour and present to the world, the new minister. Read on:



### Alhaji Abubakar Sadiq MOHAMMED

Abubakar Sadiq Mohammed, the new Minister of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation, was born on October 14, 1961. He hails from Nafada LGA of Gombe State. Mohammed holds a bachelor and masters degree in physics.

He went on to become a lecturer at the Federal University of Technology Yola, between 1986 and 1996. He was MD/CEO of various companies between 1996 and 2002. Muhammed also worked at the National Teachers Institute (NTI) Kaduna, between 2002 and 2008 before becoming the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives. He is regarded as an unassuming personality. ■

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