



**Remarks By Maj. General Lawrence A Onoja (rtd)
CFR, Phd, mni, President, Alumni Association of the
National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies
(AANI) at Courtesy Visit to His Royal Majesty, Omo
n' Oba n' edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewaure N'
Ogidigan II, Oba of Benin by the National Executive
Committee (NEC) of AANI on Wednesday February
22nd, 2017**

PROTOCOLS

GREETINGS/APPRECIATION

Your Royal Majesty, I bring to you fraternal greetings from the National Executive Committee (NEC) of our prestigious Alumni Association of the National Institute (AANI). We are indeed honoured to be so graciously received by the 40th Oba of Benin, "a direct descendant of Oronmiyan, the son of Oduduwa" in the ancient kingdom, and a cradle of rich culture and traditions dated back to the 12th Century. For me as the 10th President of AANI, I can only seek the prayers of your Royal Majesty, for longevity and enduring survival of our association as well as our country just like Benin Kingdom.

ENDURING INSTITUTION

Your Royal Majesty, you will recall that former President Obama of United States addressed Ghana's parliament, on Saturday July 11, 2009 during a state visit. There he made the most quotable remark that "Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions'. With the benefit of hindsight today, I guess if the

former American president knew the history of Benin kingdom, he would have realized that indeed Africa had long built strong institutions such as Benin monarchy which had survived the challenges of the time. Through the enduring history of Benin Kingdom, AANI strongly believes that it is the Africans that must be teaching the world about the virtues of institution building, not the other way round.

CONDOLENCE

Your Royal Majesty, kindly permit me to once again convey our heartfelt condolence on the gracious departure of our father, OMO N'OBA N'EDO, Uku Akpolokpolo EREDIAUWA, CFR who joined his ancestors after 37 years of remarkable reign. He was truly a visionary Oba and indeed philosopher Oba whose ideas and legacies are well captured in his printed works;- "I remain, Sir, your Obedient Servant" (Auto-Biography) and -"Cradle of Ideas: A Compendium of Speeches and Writings of OMO N'OBA N'EDO, Uku Akpolokpolo EREDIAUWA, CFR Omo N'Oba Erediauwa of Great Benin". Your Royal Majesty, apart from prayers, AANI EXCOs would be most delighted to have the two autographed historic literary works of OMO N'OBA N'EDO, Uku Akpolokpolo EREDIAUWA, CFR as our royal take-aways. In similar vain your Majesty should count on the presence of AANI members at the proposed posthumous coronation of your dear late Mother - PRINCESS IKUOYEMWEN AKENZUA, of blessed memory with the title of IYOBA, (QUEEN MOTHER). May their souls rest in perfect peace.

CONGRATULATION

Your Royal Majesty, many of our members were witnesses to your historic coronation on the 20TH OCTOBER, 2016, as the 40th Oba of Benin! We are here to once again congratulate your Royal Majesty for a successful coronation. The grandeur and lessons of that singular peaceful colorful and all inclusive coronation are worthy legacies for future generation. For one, in a continent in which successions of both traditional and democratic leaderships are proving intractable, we must learn from (to quote your Royal Highness!) "time-tested, rancour-free succession process" of Benin Kingdom! Secondly for us in AANI your inauguration speech carries great ideas necessary for good governance in modern Nigeria. AANI fully supports the call of your Royal Majesty for Government to include mother tongue/language and history in our schools' curriculum.

AANI's motto is Towards Better Society. To this extent, AANI commends the call of His Royal Majesty for Agro-allied industries to address the problem of youth unemployment and curb criminality. AANI also feels strongly about the rate at which Nigerian youths are trooping out of the country in search of economic opportunities which ought to be available at home here.

AANI wants to use this opportunity to strongly condemn the indiscriminate unprovoked xenophobic attacks on Nigerians resident in South Africa. As a former diplomat, your Majesty must impress on our government to hold South African authorities accountable for the security of all Africans in South Africa. Your Majesty can count on the support of AANI to promote the great ideals of Justice, Peace and Unity in Benin Kingdom and Nigeria as

a whole. Let me also use this opportunity to call on our politicians to emulate the Oba of Benin in building the bridge of unity in a diverse world. The all inclusive presence of Nigerians at your coronation is a food for thought for the political class that there is indeed room for corporation for nation-building among the ruling elite. We were happy to note that His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar III mni, who is also the Chairman of AANI Heritage Council in show of unity and love brought the famous Durbar tradition of Sokoto Caliphate to Benin to support your coronation. As a matter of fact your motto: "AMAMIESON AIMIUWA, OSAKHUE NO KHUODIN" meaning: No reward without industry, God protects the defenceless appropriately resonates with the motto of AANI; towards a better society.

ABOUT AANI

Your Royal Majesty, we are also here to intimate you about our association. The Federal Government in 1979 established the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Plateau State. The Institute was conceived as a high-level centre institution with the primary objectives of serving as the nation's foremost policy Institute, developing a crop of top-class technocrats of high intellectual capacity, who will conceptualize and anchor the implementation of innovative and dynamic policy initiatives and strategies critical for national development.

So far over a thousand policy research papers have been commendably generated from NIPSS. The Institute has successfully run 38 Senior Executive Courses (SEC) after about

38 years of existence and has graduated close to 2000 members who are members of the National Institute.

AANI's Membership list includes former Heads of State, serving and past governors, heads of public service agencies, Customs service, military, para-military, traditional leaders, organized labour and organized private sector as well as the civil society. Others are serving and past top level executives from the Banking and financial sector, the presidency, states and local governments and the academia.

AANI has two administrative organs namely; Board of Patrons headed by former Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida, GCFR, mni. Members include former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, GCFR, mni, Late Vice Adm. O.M. Akhigbe (rtd), GCON, mni, Maj. Gen. David Jemibewon (rtd), CFR, mni, Senator Olabiyi Durojaiye, mni, Lt. Gen. (Senator) J.T. Useni (rtd), mni and Prince J. Adelusii-Adeluyi, mni.

The second administrative organ is the Heritage Council which includes His Eminence, Alhaji Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar III mni, Sultan of Sokoto as Chairman, His Royal Majesty, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Ugochukwu Achebe, mni Obi of Onitsha, HRM Oba Rilwan Babatunde Aremu Akiolu mni, Oba of Lagos, HRH Alhaji Iliyasu Bashar mni, Emir of Gwandu, HRM Alhaji Sani Sami, mni Emir of Zuru, HRH Alhaji Ahmed Hassan II, mni Emir of Nasarawa and HRM Orhue Felix Mujakperuo, mni Orodje of Okpe.

EDO HAS PRODUCED REMARKABLE AANI MEMBERS

A good number of members of National Institute is from the great Benin kingdom. Chief Oseni S. Elemah mni, Chief Executive Officer of Edo State Internal Revenue Service is a pride of AANI and interesting one of your anointed chiefs; Okaivbiore of Benin. Others include;

- Dr. Mojeed Momoh, mni
- DIG Parry Osayande, mni
- Gen Charles Aichiavbere, mni
- Dr. Dominic Osaghae, mni
- Brig. Gen. D.D. Idada Ikponmwen, mni
- Gen. Godwin Abbe, mni
- Gen. Enahoro, mni
- Gen. John Edokpelor, mni
- Chief Eddy Kponmwen, mni
- Mrs. Betty Igboyi, mni
- Dr. Tonia Nwabueze, mni
- Iyom Josephine Anenih, mni,
- Comrade Adams Oshiohole, mni among several others

Indeed our visit to Edo state apart from paying homage to your Majesty is to celebrate the successful tenure of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, mni who is the first mni governor in this democratic dispensation. Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, mni is a respected member of the National Institute. Much has been written about how he had positively transformed Edo state during his two term tenure as governor of Edo State. Notable achievements include massive rural and urban reconstructions, public schools reinventions, innovated sporting facilities (remaking of Ogbemudia

Stadium), new public transportation (comrade Buses), improvement in maternal and child care, record mass public employment, bold and innovative approach to security through job-creation, mass beautification of the ancient city of Benin, massive water project, mass job creation through public works and prompt payment of salaries, including 25 per cent increase in minimum wage above the statutory N18,000 among others. AANI is proud of these remarkable achievements by the Comrade Governor. However these achievements are only possible due to the support of your Royal Majesty. AANI hereby registers its appreciation to the Oba of Benin and calls on His Royal Majesty to extend this fatherly support to the new government of Governor Godwin Obaseki who was indeed notable part of the development team brigade in the past eight years administration of the Comrade Governor.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF AANI

The main objectives of AANI include;

- To serve as a think-tank to all levels of government;
- To establish the means of contributing objectively to national discourse on any issues affecting the positive development of Nigeria and proffer appropriate recommendation and implementation strategies to the Government;
- To promote the noble ideals of the National Institute as embodied in its motto: "Towards a Better Society";
- To interact with the Federal, States and Local governments and

other organisations or associations, with similar objectives. Our visit is in fulfillment of these objectives.

37TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Your Royal Majesty, we are here also to intimate your Majesty about our 37th Annual General Meeting (AGM) which comes up on Saturday March 4th 2017 at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos. At this historic meeting, your subject Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, mni will be among the recipients of AANI Towards Better Society award given his remarkable achievements as a two-term governor of Edo State.

I was elected the President of the Alumni Association of the National Institute (AANI) at the 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) at NIPSS Kuru in March 2013. I was re-elected for a second term in office as AANI President at the 35th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association held Saturday March 7th, 2015. Other duly elected National Officers include; Dr. Garba Usman Tetengi, Ph.D, SAN, mni, Vice President, Comrade Issa Aremu, Bsc, MA, NPOM, mni, Secretary General, Mrs. Nghargbu Maryamu Patricia, mni, Assistant Secretary General and Mrs. Comfort Olu Eyitayo, CFA, FCA, mni Treasurer. Others are Hon. Sola Ephraim-Oluwanuga, LL.M, BL, MA, FCI Arb (UK), mni Legal Adviser, Dr. Pat Emembolu Eze, MON, PhD, mni, Welfare/Social Secretary, Alhaji Abbas Bello, FCA, mni, Financial Secretary, Air Cdre Clement Ogbeche, DSS, CNA, mni Internal Auditor and Dr. Juliana Mulmicit Mafwil, Ph.D, mni Publicity Secretary.

AANI also has elected executive members in the 36 States of the Federation including the FCT.

One of the highlights of our 37th AGM is election of new national officers of the Association. As usual, we look forward to a successful election.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Welfare of Members
- AANI held Special Town Hall Meeting/Policy Dialogue on "Effective Implementation of the 2016 Budget" in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture on Tuesday August 9th, 2016 at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja. We plan to have another edition this year.
- Resuscitation of AANI State Chapters
- AANI Reunion in 2014.
- Annual General Meetings (AGMs)
- AANI Magazine
- AANI Calendar
- Renovation of AANI Secretariat
- Intervention and advocacy on broad national issues
- Periodic interactive session with the Media (Meet-the-Press)
- Support for Nigeria's diversification/industrialization. We recently bought a made in Nigeria car (IVM saloon car) from Innoson Vehicles Manufacturing (Nigeria) Limited.

SUPPORT/APPEAL TO GOVERNMENT

AANI supports and identifies with the Federal government in its quest to reposition the country

NIPSS is a policy bank for all the ideas that will assist this administration to realize these three-point noble agenda of fighting insecurity, fighting corruption and revival of the economy. We therefore call on all Nigerians to support the President in realizing these objectives.

We recall that past administrations have commendably utilized NIPSS research findings to bring about Niger-Delta Amnesty Programme (Late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua), Federal Road Safety Commission (former President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida), FERMA, Ministry of Women Affairs among others.

We suggest that President Buhari should inaugurate the board of NIPSS and other corporate policy Institutions to enhance their corporate governance.

Thanks.