

TEXT OF A SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE GUEST SPEAKER PROFESSOR MUHAMMED TAWFIQ LADAN DIRECTOR-GENERAL, NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES, ABUJA/LAGOS, DURING THE NATIONAL POLICY ROUND TABLE FOR POLICYMAKERS TO SUPPORT RECONCILIATION, PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA. ORGANISED BY THE KING ABDUL AZEEZ CENTRE FOR INTER- RELIGIOUS AND INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE(KAICIID), IN COLLABORATION WITH THE INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION(IPCR),AND THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES. HELD AT IPCR HALL, MONDAY 4TH APRIL, 2022.

PROTOCOL

It is a great honour to address our eminent Jurists, royal fathers and religious leaders, honourable policymakers etc. on today's important theme:- Policy Makers: - Supporting Reconciliation, Peace, and Security in Nigerian.

Undoubtedly, Nigeria is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation of about 200 million, and the largest economy in Africa. Above all, It is operating a constitutional federalism founded on the principles of Peace, freedom, equality, non-discrimination, Justice and unity. Despite her numerous social-economic and political challenges in the recent past, the citizens have continued to see the traditional and religious leaders / institutions as the voice and hope of the voiceless/ common and vulnerable group in Society. On the other hand they see policymakers as those with enormous Constitutional powers, roles and responsibilities to address the root causes of conflicts, prevent conflicts from becoming violent and to support reconciliation process on the basis of the principles of Freedom, Equality and Justice for all, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people (See preamble to the Constitution, sections 13-14 and 24 on duties of citizens).

Distinguished participants, permit me to raise and respond to three fundamental questions relevant to today's topic under consideration.

Firstly, why is imbining a culture of Peace, Justice and reconciliation necessary in every human or politically organised Society? In my view, the answer to the above question lies in the following:-

- a. The culture of Peace promotes a sense of common values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and intolerance, prevent conflicts by tackling the root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among

individuals, groups and communities or Nations; (Section 15-Social Objectives; Section 16-Economic Objectives);

- b. The culture of Justice promotes a sense of equity/fairness, non-discrimination and rejects marginalization, exclusion and putting people in disadvantaged positions; (Section 17 on Social objectives)
- c. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is a foundation for culture of peace.

Second, what are the factors responsible for/or undermining the culture of peace, Justice and reconciliation in Nigeria? In my view, the answer lies in that fact that the civil Society, including the media and the academia have failed to hold successive governments accountable to their constitutional obligations to address social and economic imbalances, inequities, exclusion of citizens to participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives, discrimination against vulnerable groups in Society, marginalisation and disadvantage of individuals and groups in society, as well as manipulation of religion and ethnicity for Political gains and selfish interests of the elite class including religious and traditional leaders/Institutions. The resultant consequence is widespread generalized violence, underdevelopment and widening poverty gap.

Finally, what is the way forward? I think that we can strengthen the culture of Peace, Justice and reconciliation in Nigeria, through the following measures:-

- i. By faithfully implementing existing national policies on Peace (2012), Justice (2017/2019) and of Deradicalization, Reintegration etc(2017/18);
- ii. Strengthening existing infrastructure for peace, Justice and security;
- iii. Empowering Citizens and the civil society to hold all levels and arms of government accountable to the primary purpose of government under section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 constitution on the "Promotion of security and welfare of all people". Because all those exercising executive, legislative and judicial powers at the federal, state and local government levels have no reason being in government if they cannot promote the security and welfare of all people as the primary purpose of government in Nigeria.

Thank you for listening

