

TEXT OF AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

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(Ubandoman Pyem)
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL POPULATION COMMISSION**

ON THE OCCASION

OF

A COURTESY CALL

ON

**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
OBA CHARLES OLADELE IBITOYE
THE OLOMU OF ARAN**

DATE: 16TH JULY 2005

[PROTOCOLS]

I wish to convey the sincere greetings and good wishes of the National Population Commission to His Royal Highness, Oba Charles Oladele Ibitoye, the Olomu of Omu Aran. My colleagues and I are particularly delighted and honoured to be the guests of Your Royal Highness. As you are aware, the National Population Commission will be conducting the 2005 population and housing census later in the year specifically from 29th November to 3rd December 2005. The 2005 Census is very crucial to the development of Nigeria as it will provide the data and information required for planning. It will serve as guide to governments at all levels in the provision of education, health facilities, water supply and other social infrastructures that would improve the living conditions of the people.

Preparations for the exercise commenced in 2003. It is a tradition on advocacy visit of this nature to brief my host on the level of preparations for the 2005 census. Permit me, therefore, to enumerate the steps taken so far.

I. Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD): This is the division of the entire country into small land areas called Enumeration Areas and can be conveniently covered by a pair of enumerators during the census moment. The phases I and II of the exercise had been executed in 2004. This covered a total of 44 local government areas. The Phase III began in January 2005 and over 60% of the country has been fully demarcated. I wish to assure Your Royal Highness that no locality in Nigeria will be left undemarcated for the 2005 Census. Towards this end, the Commission has acquired satellite imageries with very high resolutions covering all parts of the country. In addition, verification

of the EAD is being carried out with the intention of detecting cases of over sized and undersized enumeration areas and making necessary amendments.

II. Design of Census Questionnaire: This is a very important preparatory activity because the questionnaire is the vehicle through which census data are generated. The Census 2005 questionnaire was designed following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the public and private sector. The objective was to accommodate the data needs of all potential users. Respondents would be expected to answer questions on their names, sex, date of births, relationship to heads of household, literacy level, occupation, state and LGAs of origin as well as on their housing conditions. For the avoidance of doubt, Census 2005 will not canvass questions on ethnicity and religion of respondents. The Census 2005 questionnaire has already been approved by the government.

III. Conduct of Pre-test and Trial Census: Census is a very complex exercise. The strategies and procedures for the conduct of the exercise would have to be tested in order to get it right. The Commission conducted the pretest of Census 2005 instruments, first in the Federal Capital Territory in November 2004, and later in all states of the federation in April 2005. The Trial Census, which is a full dress rehearsal of the 2005 Census will take place in August 2005.

IV. Logistics arrangements: Conducting census requires massive deployment of personnel, materials and equipment to every nook and cranny of the country including remote areas and places with difficult terrain. The Commission has acquired trucks, lorries, jeeps, motorcycles, bicycles and speed boats with a bid to

strengthening logistic arrangements for the 2005 census. The assistance of state governments and local government councils in the provision of vehicles and other logistics is being solicited to supplement this effort.

V. Advocacy and public enlightenment: Census taking requires adequate dissemination of information and mobilisation of the populace. This is also necessary in order to overcome deep seated prejudices that marred previous censuses. This is being done through intensive publicity programme and the adoption of multi media approach. Publicity materials such as posters, handbills, stickers etc are being produced and widely disseminated. Campaign in the radio and televisions is being carried out at the national and state levels. An enduring partnership is being forged with the media, civil society groups, governments at all tiers and the traditional institutions.

VI. Data processing and analysis: The data collected from the field would have to be collated, processed and analysed in order to be useful for planning purpose. To ensure speedy and efficient processing of the Census 2005 data, the Commission is going to use Optical Mark Readers (OMR) forms and machines. This would ensure early release of the census result. The zonal data processing centres are being rehabilitated while modern computer hardwares and softwares for data processing have been acquired.

I wish to assure Your Highness that the National Population Commission will do everything possible in order to make the 2005 Census accurate, reliable and acceptable. The present Commission is conscious of the controversies, tensions and ill feelings generated by past censuses. Our mission is to conduct a census that will be a total departure from the past and commands,

within reasonable limit, the acceptability of the generality of Nigerians. We have resolved to be fair, firm and transparent in all issues relating to the next census. No stone will be left unturned towards inspiring the confidence of all Nigerians in the census process. Our door shall always remain open to useful suggestions on the exercise. National and international observers will be welcomed in order to let them have a first hand account of whether things are being done rightly.

I wish to appeal to Your Royal Highness to take the lead in this bold initiative to make Nigeria proud in census takings. Your Royal Highness holds the key towards the positive mobilisation of your vast subjects for the census. The people to be counted are your subjects, you are the custodian of their culture and tradition and you have decisive influence on what they do and how they do it. The people see in Your Highness an embodiment of their collective aspirations. Your respected voice will add the much needed credibility to the 2005 Census messages.

The Commission therefore counts on your goodwill in ensuring adequate and intensive dissemination of census messages in your domain and Kwara State as a whole. Census operations require massive deployment of personnel/field workers, majority of who have to work outside their normal places of residence. The Commission would appreciate if Your Highness could assist the Commission in the provision of temporary accommodation for field workers during the preparatory work and the actual census.

The challenges before the National Population Commission in the conduct of Census 2005 are enormous though not insurmountable. I am, however, confident that Your Highness

would make the conduct of 2005 Census a resounding success in Kwara State. The Commission counts on the immense goodwill and influence of your exalted throne in this sensitive national assignment.

Once again, I thank you for granting us the privilege of paying this courtesy call.

Chief Samu'ila Danko Makama (*Ubandoman Pyem*)
Chairman
National Population Commission

16th July 2005