

**TEXT OF AN ADDRESS**

**BY**

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(UBANDOMAN PYEM)  
CHAIRMAN  
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**ON THE OCCASION  
OF  
A COURTESY CALL**

**ON  
HIS EXCELLENCY  
CHIEF RASHEED LADOJA  
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF OYO STATE  
DATE: 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2005**

## {PROTOCOLS}

Census taking is like science. It has procedures which must be rigorously followed in order to achieve the desired results. The quality of the data generated or the success of the entire census process depends on how well the scientific principles or methodology have been adopted. Like in science too, new frontiers are being broken in census taking. With the adoption of modern scientific methods of Geographical Information System (GIS), Global Positioning System, the use of Satellite Imageries in Enumeration Area Demarcation, and the use of Optical Mark Reader (OMR) forms and machines in data collection and processing, the conduct of censuses is becoming highly scientific and automated.

In spite of the increasing scientific nature of census taking, census is basically a human activity that does not take place in laboratories but rather in the society where there are norms and values. The success or otherwise of the census depends not on the efficacy of the scientific methods but on how well the process of consultation and consensus is well nurtured. Census is all about counting people and not objects and their attitudes is a critical factor in the success of the exercise. The people need to be consulted in order to allay possible fears and clarify grey areas while also neutralizing stereotypes that have developed over the years. Advocacy visit to State Governors, traditional institutions, the media and the civil society in each state of the Federation is one of the ways through which the National Population Commission seeks to build the much needed consensus for the 2005 population and housing census.

It is on this note that I wish to express my profound appreciation to His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Oyo state, Chief Rasheed Ladoja, for granting me and my entourage the privilege of paying this courtesy call. I am in Oyo state in continuation of the advocacy and public enlightenment drive for the 2005 population and housing census. There is, however, no better place to start this mission than the exalted office of the Executive Governor of Oyo state. Your Excellency is the occupant of an office that has played very important role in the political evolution of Nigeria. Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo state was also the capital of the former Western Region. The city holds special attraction to the Commission. I do not know the situation, but the ancient city of Ibadan was reputed as the largest city in the West Africa sub region. The city was the centre of the great economic and social revolution that occurred in the 50s and 60s. The remarkable successes of these initiatives under the progressive leadership of the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, particularly the Universal Free Primary Education, the great transformation in social infrastructures, the vibrancy of the economy including the trade in cocoa and the building of the First African station are sources of inspiration that Nigeria can plan and must plan for development.

Your Excellency, advocacy visit of this nature usually offers the Commission the opportunity to create awareness on the conduct of the 2005 population and housing census in the state being visited. But I am delighted that this vital duty is being satisfactorily carried out in Oyo state, courtesy of the support your Administration has given to the Oyo State Census Publicity Committee, the vibrancy of the

electronic and print media, and above all, the enlightened nature of the people of Oyo state. I am encouraged with the level of awareness on the 2005 census in Oyo state. My task therefore is simply to assure the government and people of Oyo state that the 2005 census will be accurate, reliable and acceptable.

The journey towards the 2005 population and housing census has begun. Preparatory activities for the exercise have since commenced. The phase III of enumeration area demarcation (EAD) which involves the division of the counting into small land areas that a pair of enumerators can conveniently cover during the census period is now being implemented. Over 300 local government areas have been fully demarcated. The phases I and II had been executed in 44 local government areas in all the states of the federation. The questionnaire and instruments had been designed and a national workshop of all stakeholders was convened in Kaduna in September 2004 to deliberate on the contents of the questionnaire. The Census 2005 questionnaire had been ratified by the National Council of States. Other preparatory activities that are being implemented include the conduct of pretest of census instruments, training of census field staff, rehabilitation of state offices and establishment of logistic networks.

Permit me to state that the 2005 population and housing census is being conducted on a solid foundation, to serve as the platform for sustained economic development and progress of Nigeria. The Census 2005 vision is that of the long term development and progress of our father land, rather than the short term economic gains of sharing national revenue. The 2005 census

data will be a wealth creating formula for all tiers of government and the private sector. Nigeria does not need all the efforts and as much as N40 billion just to provide formular for sharing revenue. The National Population Commission is determined to promote a new culture of proper appreciation of census figures for development planning. This is necessary in order to ensure that the nation derives maximum benefit from the huge investment on the census.

In order to underscore the fact that the 2005 Census is a solid foundation for sustainable development, I wish to state that the 2005 Census has an housing component. Though there was listing of houses in the 1991 census but it was not a housing census. The listing of houses was merely to facilitate counting and the data on housing was not published. The data on houses will be published and the following relevant questions will be canvassed on houses –

- Type of living house;
- Type of housing units;
- Number of sleeping rooms;
- Main construction materials used for the floors and the roofing;
- Tenure status (rented, owned etc).

The data on housing will not only make the verification of census data possible but also generate more useful data for planning. As the Commission has always insisted, census is about people and the quality of life. The people stay in houses. The data on housing will provide information on the living conditions of the people.

I wish to stress again that population census is the counting of people where they are normally resident. For census to perform its important role of serving as guide in the provision of social infrastructures, it is important for people to stay where they are normally resident during the census moment. The practice of migrating from one place to another for the purpose of being counted is anathema to the noble mission of generating relevant data for development. This is because census migration distorts the trend of population distribution and often subjects census result to undue criticisms by those individuals who are yet to come to grasp with the distorting influence of census migration. The relatively low figures usually recorded by most urban centres in Nigeria, including Ibadan, in past censuses is a product of the massive migration during the census period. It is my hope that Your Excellency would use your goodwill to appeal to the residents of Ibadan not to leave Ibadan for other places during the census period.

One of the lapses that had been identified in past censuses was the acute shortage of materials which often led to non or late enumeration of persons. This problem will not be experienced in 2005 census as adequate arrangements have been made for the distribution of census forms and materials. A decentralized approach is being adopted in the distribution of materials. Instead of the materials being delivered to the headquarters at Abuja, they are being delivered to the respective states directly. This removes the delay often experienced in the transshipments and possible damage.

The delay in data processing and publication of census data will also be minimized. The data capture and processing will take place at the zonal data processing centres in Ibadan, Lagos, Enugu, Port

Harcourt, Kano, Kaduna and Yola. The data will thereafter be collated at the headquarters. In order to save time, the Commission will use Optical Mark Reader (OMR) forms for data collection. This will make the census data to be processed electronically instead of manually. The OMR forms will also help to detect errors and malpractices in the enumeration process. Cases of double or multiple counting would be detected through the Automated Finger Identification System (AFIS).

We must constantly remind ourselves that census is not politics and should not be treated as a political contest. ***While politics is about the next election, census is about the living conditions of people and the generations yet unborn.*** Census should not be toyed with on the altar of short term political gains. I therefore urge all men of goodwill to resist any attempt to politicize the 2005 Census. We do not owe this great nation anything less.

I wish to end this address with a note of appeal for the 2005 Census from the Oyo state government. The Commission would require the assistance of Your Excellency's administration in the provision of logistic facilities such as vehicles for effective coverage of the entire state during the census period. For effective census administration and storage of census materials and equipment, the Commission requires befitting office accommodation at the state and local government levels. The offices, particularly at the LGA levels, are not only inadequate but also lack working equipment. The support of Your Excellency's administration in this direction would be highly appreciated. The greatest task before the Commission is not just to create awareness on the census but how to ensure

fundamental shift in negative attitudes and stereotypes about the census. This is because attitudes are deep seated and cannot be changed overnight. Sustained media campaign would be required in order to dissolve the negative attitudes. The support of the state owned media would be required in making the 2005 census messages acceptable to all and sundry.

Given the track record of commitment and support of your administration to national development efforts, I have no doubt in my mind that Your Excellency would come to the assistance of the National Population Commission and make the 2005 Census a resounding success in Oyo state.

I wish to assure Your Excellency that your Administration would find the data to be generated from the 2005 census extremely useful in the formulation and implementation of the many development initiatives of the Oyo State Government.

Once again, I thank Your Excellency for giving me the privilege of paying this courtesy call.

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

**18<sup>th</sup> April, 2005**