

AN ADDRESS BY EKPO NTA, ESQ, CHAIRMAN, INDEPENDENT CORRUPT PRACTICES & OTHER RELATED OFFENCES COMMISSION (ICPC), DURING THE 22ND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN LITERATURE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE (ICALEL) ON CORRUPTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, 9TH MAY 2013

Protocols.

I am highly elated to be invited to give a talk on "Corruption and National Security" at the 22nd Annual international Conference on African Literature and English Language (ICALEL) anchored by the University of Calabar. This is probably one of the longest-running (if not the longest) International Conference in the University of Calabar which has brought international honour and respect for its organizers: the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Calabar. It's proceedings which are published in the CALEL Journal have remained a hallmark of scholarship in the field of African literature and the English language. This year's theme, which focuses on Corruption and National Security, could not have come at a better time when our Country, alongside some other nations, is facing severe security threats arising from violent challenges to State Authority and which fueled by international terrorist and criminal cartels.

ICPC is at this Conference for two major reasons. First to support and acknowledge the highly effective and strategic socialization role literature and writers have played, and must continue to play, in shaping national consciousness positively. African literature had in the past been in the forefront of the fight against colonialism. Today more than ever, it must throw its weight in the war against corruption and help democratic institutions develop. Chinua Achebe's novel *No Longer At Ease* (1960), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Wale Okediran's *Tenants of the House* (2009) among others give an insight to the evolution of corruption in our society which leaves you laughing and weeping at the same time. The second reason ICPC for being here is to source for

novel ideas that will enrich our fight against corruption and seek out new partnerships individually and collectively from your fold.

CORRUPTION

Corruption thrives in situations where there is little or no transparency in decision-making processes. Wherever public officials, occupying positions that confer major economic or social benefits, enjoy wide discretionary powers with little or no accountability, there is tremendous opportunity for corruption. Section 2 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000 defines corruption to mean: "Bribery, Fraud and Related Offences". On the basis of our investigations and successful prosecution of offenders, corruption has been judicially interpreted to include the following acts: bribery, especially where cash, favours or assets are offered to public officers to circumvent policies and procedures for unmerited advantage and profit; embezzlement and stealing of public funds; falsification of official records like transcripts; nepotism through the filling of public offices with ones family members; unauthorized virements involving movement of funds from one vote to another e.g. personnel votes to overhead items; concealment of corruption and failure to report acts of corruption; examination malpractice; sexual harassment of both staff members and students; plagiarism which may attract civil and criminal sanctions; contract manipulation, etc.

NATIONAL SECURITY

National Security is the ability to preserve the territorial integrity of a country, protect to a reasonable extent, its economic and commercial relations with the rest of the world, and have absolute control of civil, police and military authority internally. Professor Femi Odekunle in a lecture delivered to participants of Executive Intelligence Management Course 5, 2012, Institute for Security Studies,

Abuja on 17th Feb. 2012 further described national security as a "function" of development which must be perceived in terms of the secured needs of the generality of the population in terms of physical, econo-political, social and psychological security of the average citizen, and not just for governments, its officials and associated elite.

CORRUPTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The symbiotic relationship between corruption and national security can only lead to an unhappy marriage. Corruption prevents good governance, hinders sustainable growth and development. It promotes unemployment, low direct foreign investment, poor National image. It puts under threat the territorial integrity of a nation if corrupt officials do not ensure compliance with immigration, customs and excise laws and requirements.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished audience, please permit me to, by way of conclusion, give a rundown of the role of ICPC in promoting national security. If we agree that corruption breeds insecurity, then it goes without saying that whatever we do in ICPC should be seen in the light of promoting national security.

ICPC is involved in detection, investigation, enforcement, preventive and education and enlightenment functions in the fight against corruption. In respect of preventing corruption, ICPC has established Anti-corruption Monitoring Units (ACTUs) in Ministries, Departments and Agencies, including Nigerian Universities. ICPC is actively involved in system study and the review of corruption-prone processes in Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and proffering and enforcing new processes and procedures. Currently, in collaboration with the National Universities Commission (NUC), we are reviewing corruption-prone processes in all of our Universities.

In partnership with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) we have developed and infused core-values into schools curricula for teaching ethics and civics in our primary and secondary schools including Teacher's Guides thereto. ICPC has formed anti-corruption clubs in secondary schools and anti-corruption vanguards in tertiary institutions.

On behalf of ICPC, I wish you fruitful deliberations and assure you that we shall continue to collaborate with the academia to reposition our society positively. You must as individuals help sustain the fight against corruption through literary products which is now gaining worldwide audiences courtesy of film and social media. We are prepared to assist in supporting Writers' workshops in the area of corruption, good governance and integrity.

Thank you.